

The coronavirus pandemic currently shocking the world gained entry into Nigeria with its first case confirmed on the 27th of February, 2020 in Lagos state. The discovery spiralled into a frenzy of misinformation as the NCDC and Federal Ministry of Health worked to allay citizens' fears and contain the outbreak. It is important that we all play a role in beating the virus by sharing only validated information and promoting effective preventive measures.

The Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC) gathers rumours, concerns and questions from communities across Nigeria to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, NGOs and citizens. By providing the public with facts, the CCC ensures a better understanding of needs regarding the coronavirus and debunks rumours before they can do more harm. Information sharing will be critical to defeating the virus, due to the diverse cultural backgrounds and drawbacks in national education. About 47% of the Nigerian population have access to internet services in according to a 2018 estimate by Statista.



Source: Alamy stock photo

WORKPLACE IMPACT

The coronavirus pandemic has forced changes in workplace interaction. In Lagos state for example, about 70% of the workforce has been asked to stay home. In the light of this, it is necessary for business owners to find innovative ways to ensure productivity, connectivity and high morale among co-workers to reduce the impact of the outbreak on the workplace. For unaffected businesses, it is important we introduce ways to ensure reduction in the risk of spread in the workplace.

CONCERNS



VS



SOLUTIONS

Restriction of my business during the lockdown will cause me losses from lack of activity.

Business owners and MSMEs whose livelihoods have been affected by the Lockdown can apply for credit facilities through NIRSAL Microfinance Bank here: <https://nmfb.com.ng/covid-19-support/>

What do I do if my employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, do I tell others?

Employers should treat all information about an employee's illness as confidential and contact the NCDC by calling 112 or 080097000010 for further guidance. As a precaution, an employer may consider asking employees who worked closely with that employee to self-quarantine for 14 days and workplace fumigation.

As an employer, how can I monitor work activities of employees working from home?

Business owners and MSMEs whose livelihoods have been affected by the Lockdown can apply for credit facilities through NIRSAL Microfinance Bank here: <https://nmfb.com.ng/covid-19-support/>

There are rumours that businesses are being asked to pay bribes to access NIRSAL credit facilities

Business owners are encouraged to report illegalities in the application process to the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) by calling 0800-CALL-ICPC (080022554272)

CONCERNS



VS



SOLUTIONS

How can I reassure my workers from fear of contracting the virus?

Employers can try to reassure employees by strengthening company measures to protect employees, such as by provision of sanitizers and face masks, referring to information from the NCDC and Federal Ministry of Health about the risks of workplace exposure, and entertaining suggestions on further reducing the possibility of exposure.

What do I do if my employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, do I tell others?

Employers should take steps to ensure that worktime is well recorded. Telecommuting arrangements should encourage employees to maintain safe conditions at home and ensure regular feedback on their assignments.

As an employer, how can I keep employee morale high?

Employers should ensure reliable lines of communication where employees can interact with each other in semi-formal settings. Employers can also consider introducing online self-improvement opportunities and access to mental health resources for employees.

ADVICE FOR HEALTH WORKERS

All health workers are strongly advised to maintain a high index of suspicion for COVID-19; always observe standard infection prevention and control measures when attending to patients; and take detailed information. For sample transportation and advice on a case

that fits the national case definition, health officials are advised to call their State hotline or 07032864444.

It is important that health workers maintain contact with loved ones either through the phone or online for reassurance during this distressing time. They should also be allowed sufficient periods of rest to avoid stress and mental breakdown.

ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES

In addition to the lockdown in the FCT, Lagos and Ogun States, some state governments have issued directives for the closure of non-essential businesses. For businesses that are not affected, the following are advised:

- a) Adapt the #TakeResponsibility campaign and disseminate information to all employees, clients and visitors
- b) Ensure the provision of and access to facilities for hand washing, emphasising the importance of hand hygiene
- c) Mandate 14-day self-isolation for staff who have recently returned from outside Nigeria
- d) Mandate sick employees to stay at home
- e) Ensure routine cleaning of high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones etc.

Any instances of abuse during this lockdown period can be reported to Nigerian Police Force hotlines catalogued here: https://www.npf.gov.ng/information/emergency_number.php

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

To reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19, members of the public are advised to adhere to the following measures:



Wash your hands frequently with soap under running water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based sanitiser if water is not available.

Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness.



Maintain at least 2 metres (5 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing repeatedly

Do not mingle with people or congregate if you feel unwell with symptoms like fever, cough, sneezing or difficulty breathing.



Cover your mouth and nose properly with a tissue paper when sneezing and/or coughing. Dispose of the tissue properly immediately after use. You may also cough into your elbow if a tissue is not available.



Obey national and state directives requesting the cancellation and avoidance of large gatherings, including places of worship, social and sporting events