

Friends and Colleagues

## **WORDWORKS IN SOLIDARITY**

Wordworks is very mindful of the need to protect the people in our team and network from illness, as well as to help slow down the spread of Covid19 in the spirit of social solidarity. We are cognisant of the Cabinet's decision to close schools and ECD centres, and the appeal that we practice careful hygiene and social distancing. In the light of the above, here are the decisions that we have taken.

## **RELATIONSHIPS STILL MATTER**

While physical distance is necessary to prevent the spread of this virus, we appeal to our staff and networks to be extra friendly, warm, supportive and encouraging to one another. Please reach out safely to those that might be isolated, lonely or in need. Humanity and kindness are particularly important during this difficult time.

## **TRAINING ON WORDWORKS PROGRAMMES**

All Wordworks hosted events have been cancelled and will be reviewed in mid-April. Programme staff will be in touch with our partners with further information.

## **SUPPORT FOR WORDWORKS PARTNERS**

We will not be conducting any on-site learning visits during this time but our usual Whatsapp and email support systems will still be operating as needed. Our Wordworks mentors will be in touch with partners.

## **THE WORDWORKS OFFICE**

The Wordworks office will remain open with a skeleton staff between 9 and 3 each day..

Please communicate with us via phone or email:

Email: [info@wordworks.org.za](mailto:info@wordworks.org.za)

Tel: 021 788 9233 (9- 3pm)

If you have material to pick up or drop off, please be assured that we have instituted strict hygiene routines and our staff will respect your need for physical distance.

## **MEETINGS**

All internal and external meetings have been postponed or rescheduled using virtual platforms.

## **LITERACY WORK CONTINUES**

We are very aware that families and communities will continue caring for and engaging with children during this time, with even more responsibility than ever to keep them safe and occupied. Look out for tips and suggestions on how to keep up the work of changing lives through literacy on our Facebook Page (@wordworksSA), Instagram ([wordworks.za](https://www.instagram.com/wordworks.za)) and website ([www.wordworks.org.za](http://www.wordworks.org.za)) over the next few days, and through our WhatsApp groups. We will also be distributing free language and literacy materials from our offices during this time.

### SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION (with thanks to Nic Spaul)

On the 11th of March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Coronavirus (COVID-19) as an international 'pandemic'.

#### 1. What is a "pandemic"?

A pandemic is the most serious classification of a disease epidemic and is declared by the WHO. Less severe outbreaks of diseases are classified as "outbreaks" or "epidemics." Only once a disease outbreak has spread across multiple countries and is deemed 'out of control' is it classified as a pandemic (for example Ebola and Zika virus were not pandemics). According to the WHO, since 1900 there have been four pandemics (1) Spanish Flu (H1N1-1918), (2) Asian Flu (H2N2-1957), (3) Hong Kong Flu (H3N2-1968) and (4) Swine Flu (H1N1-2009). All of these were strains of the influenza virus. The current pandemic is the first pandemic of a coronavirus.

#### 2. What is a "coronavirus"?

Coronaviruses are usually found in animals (not humans) and only appear in humans when they are transmitted from animals to us. Previous coronaviruses have come from civet cats (SARS-CoV) and camels (MERS-CoV). The current "novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)" has not been previously identified in humans and the animal source of COVID-19 is still being debated, although many think it came from pangolins.

#### 3. What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

From World Health Organisation (<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>): "The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention."

#### 4. Guidelines from the WHO

The WHO is the highest medical authority on diseases. These are their guidelines (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>) and here is their Q&A page (<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>).

5. South African Department of Health guidance on Coronavirus  
This is the South African Health Department's website on Coronavirus  
(<https://sacoronavirus.co.za/> ) which has all the details on South Africa's response,  
contact numbers etc.

**With best wishes for your health and safety**

**The Wordworks Team**