



Created by the Bulungula Incubator based on our experience setting up Safe Homes at the Bulungula Lodge and in rented homesteads in our communities.

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rejane@bulungulaincubator.org

Creating Safe Homes

Ikhaya Lokuzikhusela

COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE STRATEGY PROTECTING THOSE MOST AT RISK:

THE ELDERLY AND THOSE WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Contents

Introduction	2
Example of Management Circular to Staff.....	3
Example of appeal for Funding and Support for Safe Home Venues	4
Safe Home Venues	5
Standard Operating Procedures	6
Profile of the most vulnerable	6
Venues.....	6
Minimum Requirements of Safe Home Venues:	6
Staffing Rules and Requirements for each Safe Home Venue:	7
What Will Be Provided at Safe Home Venues	7
What Community Members Have to Bring	7
Daily Procedures Implemented by Staff	7
Questionnaire to be completed by every community member and staff member entering a Safe Home Venue (iKhaya Lokuzikhusela)	8
Consent, Indemnity Required to be signed by Residents before entering Safe Home.....	11
Social Distancing and Self-Isolation Recommendations for the Broader Community	12
Additional Resources	12
Links to Video and Audio Resources.....	12
Bleach Mixing Instructions.....	12
Contacts	13



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Introduction

Many rural communities in South Africa have limited or no access to clean running water, no access to electricity, have no access to ambulances (or if you call an ambulance you have to wait more than 4 hours), local hospitals without any ICU or High Care facilities and terrible road infrastructure. On top of that, these communities have a high concentration of persons with chronic illnesses and compromised immune systems.

Here are some of the strategies that could have been immediately implemented by organisations following the President's announcement on 15 March:

1. Engagement with key stakeholders: management and staff, traditional leadership, community members, funders, and partners
2. Education of management on the COVID-19 Coronavirus, its effects and the appropriate response, as received from official government sources
3. Immediate creation and dissemination of an information circular for management to use in the education of staff and subordinates
4. Training of Community Healthcare Workers on how to educate households on the virus and assist in the set-up of handwashing stations and disinfectant cleaning regimes using cost-effective and available materials. A register of this process has been kept to ensure that all households are reached.
5. Set-up of handwashing stations and hand sanitizing stations at all work sites and sites of lots of community traffic (e.g. spaza shops).
6. The use of the local radio stations/ community radio stations to disseminate information to community members as widely as possible.
7. Consultations with experts: the Clinical Head of your local government hospital, any Infectious Disease Specialists and legal counsel.

The next level implementation, following the engagements and consultation above, consists of three spokes:

1. Set-up of a Coronavirus Task Team and community hotline at your offices
2. Development of a long term information campaign for daily information dissemination through the local community radio stations
3. Set-up and implementation of ikhaya lokuzikusela (safe home venues) to protect the elderly and most vulnerable

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT IS LAID OUT IN THE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE BULUNGULA INCUBATOR'S RESPONSE

Example of Management Circular to Staff

COVID-19 MANAGEMENT CIRCULAR (note: this FOLLOWED THE DECLARATION OF A NATIONAL DISASTER, BEFORE LOCKDOWN ANNOUNCEMENT)

16 March 2020

What is COVID-19, also called the Coronavirus?

The Coronavirus is an illness like a cold or flu virus. If you are young and healthy you are at a very low risk of dying. If a young person contracts the coronavirus, they will experience cold or flu symptoms like fever and coughing. They are likely to recover in the same way as they have from cold or flu in the past.

If you are older than 60 years and have a heart condition, Diabetes, TB or hypertension then you are at high risk. If you start to get a fever or cough, you must go to the hospital. It is very important to prevent transmission of coronavirus, that is the best thing you can do right now for your family and community.

This coronavirus normally infects you through your mouth or nose or eyes. If someone has this virus and touches a surface and then you touch the same surface afterwards then the virus is now on your hands. If you touch your face then the virus can enter your body. This is why it is important to constantly wash your hands.

Following the announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Sunday, 15 March, the Bulungula Incubator is following these directives from government for preventing transmission:

Practice regular handwashing: wash your hands with soap and water at least every hour on the hour. Please ensure that you have a convenient place with soap and water at your work place and at your home. If you don't have soap and water, use a hand sanitizer. Try not to touch your face at all if possible. Wash your hands after every time you go to the toilet and before preparing and eating food.

Practice social distancing: do not shake hands, hug or kiss anyone. If you have had physical contact with someone wash your hands immediately. Do not share cups, plates, spoons or any other utensils. Do not go to any places where there are more than 100 people.

Avoid non-essential public transport: do not travel on public transport unless you cannot avoid it.



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rejane@bulungulaincubator.org

Example of appeal for Funding and Support for Safe Home Venues

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE DURING THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

The Bulungula Incubator is located in one of the poorest and most remote villages in the country where there is no access to running water, electricity, healthcare and adequate road infrastructure. Furthermore, we have a high concentration of persons with chronic illnesses and compromised immune systems.

We are working hard to educate our communities and healthcare workers on social distancing, helping households to set up hand washing stations and make accessible and affordable hand and home sanitizing solutions. We have distributed information about the profile of those most vulnerable and the appropriate care responses. Pre-existing conditions that make one vulnerable are: heart conditions, TB, HIV, diabetes and hypertension. Our Bulungula Community Radio is playing a key role in disseminating this information.

While South Africa's response has been relatively early, we can't be sure that the disease won't reach our areas and reach it soon. Already children, learners and students who study outside the area are returning home and migrant workers will soon be returning home for Easter *en masse*.

We are in consultation with an Infectious Disease Specialist who has lived and worked in remote rural areas and the with the Clinical Head of our nearest local hospital. Following their advice, we are working on a plan to isolate the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions in partnership with the local traditional leadership and our communities.

If this protection plan is to work, it has to be done before anyone is infected. We will need to act immediately – this week. If we act now and isolate those most vulnerable: the elderly and community members with pre-existing and compromised health conditions, we can save them. In an area like ours without running water, access to healthcare facilities and food delivery services, this is best done in specific Safe Home Venues with trained staff, rather than at each home. Staff employed to cook, clean and run the Safe Homes will be required to live onsite and avoid movement in and out of the facilities. This way we can help flatten the curve of the spread of the disease and prevent peak health-care demand (see Imperial College London research supporting this strategy: See research paper: ["Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions \(NPIs\) to reduce COVID-19 mortality and healthcare demand"](#) Imperial College London, 16 March 2020, Ferguson, N.M et.al.). We are in a position now to be able to learn from those countries who acted too late and are now suffering behind the curve of this crisis.



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The Bulungula Lodge (the 100% community-owned Lodge that we set up) has no foreign guests and can be closed and used solely as a Safe Home Venue. Funds used to run the Safe Home Venue will also serve to save these community jobs while providing life-saving facilities in this crisis. Additional people can be protected at village-based venues that can be set up properly.

We could partner with other accommodation venues and homesteads in villages along the Wild Coast to roll out this model too.

In the budget below, food costs are kept as low as possible and personnel costs are largely at minimum wage. Vehicle costs allow for the high cost of rural travel and includes trips that might be needed to get to hospital. Rental is based on overheads not regular hotel rental prices. The budget that follows will cover 100 people in central safe homes. In order to roll out to more people, we would have to engage in partnerships with other venues and NGO's but the plan should be able to be executed at a similar per person cost. This plan would be reviewed regularly and will end as soon as the National Disaster status is revoked (hopefully at the time that schools are expected to resume on 15 April). Therefore, the budget is for one month only at this stage. Any funds unused for this specific purpose will be returned.

Contact: Réjane Woodroffe: rejane@bulungulaincubator.org, +27833951691 www.bulungula.org

Safe Home Venues

This is particularly aimed at organisations working in remote rural village where life is lived communally and toilet, cooking, clothes washing and water collection are all located outside the hut. This is also aimed at communities who carry a high burden of pre-existing conditions including TB, HIV, diabetes and hypertension, that make them particularly vulnerable to the Coronavirus. The nature of life and home infrastructure make it hard to isolate effectively away from other family members and community members, children in particular.

Following consultations with the Head of your local hospital and Infectious Disease Specialists, the remoteness of your location may provide a window in which to implement a plan that can protect our community and those most at risk before they are exposed. Due to your remote location, it may be that community members are not yet been exposed to the virus. This will



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change. In particular, migrant workers will return home soon and once the disease spreads across the country, infections are likely to reach even remote rural areas. Avoiding exposure in a rural area is best done through Safe Home Venues set up for purpose. This way we can help flatten the curve of the spread of the disease and prevent peak health-care demand (see Imperial College London research supporting this disease mitigation strategy: [“Impact of non-pharmaceutical interventions \(NPIs\) to reduce COVID-19 mortality and healthcare demand”](#) Imperial College London, 16 March 2020, Ferguson, N.M et.al.)

These Safe Home Venues will follow careful standard operating procedures that no-one will be allowed to move in or out, including staff. Groceries and other essentials will be carefully cleaned before entering.

Entry and stay is voluntary. Entry can only be at the final date chosen for entry, for the latest the start of the National Lockdown – midnight on Thursday 26 March 2020. Anyone is free to leave the Safe Home Venues at any time but will not be allowed to return.

Standard Operating Procedures

Profile of the most vulnerable

Current information from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) and the Centre for Disease control (CDC) is that those most at risk are older persons and persons with heart disease, lung disease and diabetes. You must therefore prioritize persons older than 65 and persons older than 60 who also have pre-existing conditions (TB, HIV, Diabetes and Heart conditions) to be offered a place at the Safe Home Venues:

Venues

In consultation with our traditional leadership and community, chose a local Lodge (which will be closed anyway) or large homesteads as Safe Home Venues.

Minimum Requirements of Safe Home Venues:

- Sufficient space to sleep groups of people
- Toilet facilities
- Fencing around the property

Procedures being followed before entering the Safe Homes

- A full history of anyone who has visited the safe home venue in the last two weeks. Determined that no persons who could have been exposed to the virus have been to the location.
- Any staff who will work in the safe home must have completed a questionnaire about whether they have recently been to a town and if anyone they could have come into contact with might have been to or come through town.
- All community members who would like to enter the Safe Home will complete the questionnaire. No possible at risk persons will be allowed to enter the Safe Home.



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- Advice on how to self-isolate will be given to anyone who could possibly have been exposed.

Staffing Rules and Requirements for each Safe Home Venue:

- Staff who choose to apply to work at the Safe Home Venues have to agree to remain at the Safe Home for the entire period of that the protection plan is in effect (this is likely to be at least one month and could be months longer, we have no way of knowing at this stage)
- Sufficient staff to ensure that staff members can have the regulatory required time off during the isolation period
- 2 cooks
- 2 cleaners
- 2 security guards (also to ensure that no one leaves and enters)
- 1 Site Manager
- Fundraise for salaries

What Will Be Provided at Safe Home Venues

- All goods and services are provided free of charge
- 3 meals per day including fruit and vegetables
- Sleeping facilities
- Adequate soap and hand sanitizing materials
- Washing and toilet facilities
- Recreation spaces
- Transport to hospital if required (based on recommendations from the NICD and in consultation with medical professionals)

What Community Members Have to Bring

- Personal clothing and bedding
- Grassmats, if desired

Daily Procedures Implemented by Staff

- Checking hand washing hourly, at least hourly, by all residents (set alarms for this)
- Wiping down of all surfaces with a bleach solution 3 times a day (set alarms for this)
- Daily health assessments by Site Manager of critical symptom development by any resident as described by the NICD: Persons with acute respiratory illness with sudden onset of at least one of the following: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or fever [$\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ (measured)]. Critical symptom development will trigger a call to the Local Coronavirus Hotline (managed by your organization) who will contact a health care professional for advice on the next steps to follow
- Groceries delivered to the Safe Home Venues are sprayed with bleach solution



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before entering the facility.

Questionnaire to be completed by every community member and staff member entering a Safe Home Venue (iKhaya Lokuzikhusela)

To the person conducting this interview: you are about to conduct an interview with an applicant to a Safe Home Venue (iKhaya lokuzikhusela) for the purposes of ensuring that the other occupants of the Safe Home will not be at risk.

Date of this interview: _____

Name and Surname of person conducting the interview:

Name and Surname of community member or staff being questioned:

Please answer the following questions as carefully and honestly as possible:

- Do you understand that the information that you give in answer to the following questions could affect the lives of others?

ANSWER:

- Do you commit to providing the information to the questions that follow to the best of your knowledge?

ANSWER:



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- Is there anyone in your household or anyone who you have come into contact in the last two weeks who has come from or been to a town?

ANSWER:

- Have you attended a funeral or a church service in the past two weeks?

ANSWER:

- How do you collect your child grant, old age pension or disability grant?

ANSWER:

- Are you taking any medication that will run out (be finished) in the next month?

ANSWER:



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- Are you experiencing the following symptoms today (please tick all that are relevant to how you are currently feeling):

Coughing

Sore Throat

Fever or High Temperature

Difficulty Breathing



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Consent, Indemnity Required to be signed by Residents before entering Safe Home

EXAMPLE OF CONSENT FORM FOR IKHAYA LOKUZIKHUSELA

The Coronavirus is an illness like a cold or flu virus. If you are older than 60 years and have a heart condition, Diabetes, TB or hypertension then you are at high risk of dying if you get the virus. If you are older than 65 you are also at high risk of dying from the virus. The best thing we can offer our elderly population is to provide a safe, clean and sterilised environment with nutritious food until this high risk period passes. This is what the iKhaya Lokuzikhusela programme is for.

iKhaya lokuzikhusela is a planned response organised by the Bulungula Incubator to minimise the risk of exposure to the Corona Virus (Covid-19) to the elderly population of the Xhora Mouth Administrative Area. The programme will provide a clean, safe and sterilised environment with nutritious food. Those 65 and above are eligible as well as those over 60 years and a pre-existing condition of diabetes, respiratory conditions (TB), heart conditions, HIV or hypertension. The programme is a voluntary programme where eligible community members elect to move into the Bulungula Lodge and stay there for as long as the Corona Virus continues to pose a risk to our population and funding allows for.

I _____ hereby consent to moving and staying in accommodation based at the Bulungula Lodge under the Bulungula Incubator's programme "iKhaya lokuzikhusela". Community members opt into the iKhaya Lokuzikhusela programme and agree to strictly abide by all the rules of the programme at all times. The rules of the programme are as follows:

The entry date for the programme is 26 March 2019

No visitors will be allowed to the lodge at all. This includes family and friends

Only trained staff and participants in the programme are allowed within the fenced Lodge facility

I will wash my hands at least every hour, including straight after going to the toilet

I will not shake hands, hug or kiss or have any physical contact with any of the other participants or staff

I will not share any cups, plates, spoons or any other utensils with staff or participants

I will report immediately to the Site Manager should I experience any symptoms at any time of coughing, sore throat, shortness of breath or fever

I will ensure that the area where I am sleeping is clean and tidy

I will respect the peace, comfort and privacy of other participants or staff

I will not harass or intimidate any other participants or staff

I will respect the rights of staff, BI staff and other residences

I will not intentionally or recklessly cause damage to property to or injure anyone

I will respect village rules and the law of South Africa

Any additional rules deemed necessary by the staff and BI staff to ensure the success of the programme

I _____ acknowledge that if I break any of the rules that I put the other participants in this programme at risk. I therefore accept that I will need to leave the fenced Lodge area immediately and will not be able to return under any circumstances.

I agree to appoint the Site Manager at the Bulungula Incubator as my agent to make reasonable decisions about my healthcare should I not be in the position to do so myself. I hereby indemnify, hold harmless and absolve the Bulungula Lodge, the Bulungula Incubator and their Staff and Volunteers acting in good faith against all claims whatsoever that may arise from accident, injury to or loss or damage of any property which may occur whilst participating in this Programme.

Name and Surname: ID Number: Date: Signature

Closest Family member under 60 years old: (Print Name and Contact Number)



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Social Distancing and Self-Isolation Recommendations for the Broader Community

- If you have not joined a Safe Home Venue and you feel that you are at risk due to a pre-existing condition you must self-isolate in your home and keep away from other family members
- Stay at least 2 metres away from other people. Do not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home
- You can use your garden within your homestead, if you have one. You can only leave your homestead for food shopping and medical reasons – but stay at least 2 metres away from other people.
- As we have been told by the Department of Health, it is critical to keep the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions in our families protected. In order to do this, you can choose a hut in the homestead to keep these vulnerable people isolated. It is better for these vulnerable people to be alone in this hut but if they **absolutely** need to have someone look after them, this person **must** stay in isolation with them for the full period of the lockdown and not make contact with others in the homestead. If it is necessary for food to be prepared by someone outside of this isolation hut, they should put the pot of hot cooked food outside the hut and the person in the isolation hut should use their own utensils to dish from the pot. Pot handles should be wiped with cloths dipped in bleach water. See below for bleach solution mixtures.
- As soon as anyone in your family experiences symptoms like coughing or fever, make contact with a healthcare professional for their advice or make a plan to get to your nearest clinic.

Additional Resources

Links to Video and Audio Resources

We are in the process of recording the following video and audio recordings in line with government directives (once the links are ready, it will be added to newer versions of this document, please use the contacts below if you would like to access them):

- How to set aside a safe hut inside your homestead where the elderly and vulnerable family members can be isolated safely in (Indlu yokuzikhusela)
- How to live safely in a rural area during the Coronavirus lockdown
- A video you can show you Spaza shop owner on safety around handling food and money
- How to use communal taps and toilets safely

Bleach Mixing Instructions



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For Econo Bleach brand (3.5% Sodium Hypochlorite)

1. Hand washing/ukuhlamba izandla

(300ml Bleach per 20L water = 0.05% Sodium Hypochlorite)

One and a half cups bleach + 20 litres water

2. Sterilising Surfaces/ukucoca iitafile

(2900ml bleach per 20L water = 0.5% Sodium Hypochlorite solution)

4 x 750ml (big) bottles bleach + 17 litres water

First pour in bleach into bucket then add water up to the 20 litre mark

Contacts

BI Rapid Response Team: +27 63 204 9832

Réjane Woodroffe: rejane@bulungulaincubator.org, +27833951691 www.bulungula.org