



fivetalents

To All Five Talents Partner Staff, Bishops and Boards

Guidance from Five Talents on COVID-19, 13th July 2020

UPDATED 7th AUGUST 2020 to add further guidance for trainers

We send greetings in the name of Christ to all Five Talents partners around the world.

We give thanks that we have all journeyed together through many joys and challenges - including this ongoing Coronavirus crisis. We continue to pray for all those affected by the pandemic, whether in body, mind or spirit, and we pray especially that it will pass over soon.

*As the virus remains in circulation in our communities, we urge all of our partners to **take great care to protect staff, program members and communities. This is particularly important now as many communities begin to ease lockdown restrictions and travel becomes more frequent.** We ask all Five Talents partners to continue doing all you can to prevent the further spread of Coronavirus.*

In the box below are some steps we recommend - and we know many of you are already doing these; thank you.

Please also continue to check, and comply with, [WHO advice](#) regularly, as well as guidance from your country.

Prevention and Protection:

We urge all group members, partner staff, volunteers, boards and all connected with the programs to:

- **Isolate** themselves if they have any Coronavirus symptoms. Do not go to work, go to church, travel, or go to anyone's home. Do not attend meetings or any program activities.
- Hold all meetings and training **outdoors** where possible.
- Stay at least **one meter apart** at any meetings (whether indoors or out)
- Wear **face coverings** where possible (we know some groups have been making their own face coverings and can share advice on how to do this)
- **Wash hands** regularly, including before and after meetings (we know some groups have been making their own soap and/or 'tippy-taps' and can share advice on how to do this).
- **Adopt these practices (keeping at least one meter distance, covering nose and mouth, regular hand-washing) in daily life**, not just in program activities.
- **Minimise travel** where possible. Where travel is necessary, think 'safety first.' How can you minimise the risk of catching or passing on coronavirus?
- Continue to **raise awareness** of Coronavirus in Savings Groups, and encourage Savings Groups members to raise awareness in their communities:
 - What Coronavirus is, how it spreads, how to prevent its spread, countering false rumours. We know awareness and trust is low in many places, so this is essential. (Some partners have worked with community health workers to deliver this training/advice, and we have shared resources to help partners with this, too).



- Also, raise awareness of the increased risk of **gender-based violence and abuse of children's rights** in this period, and encourage communities to promote women's and children's rights where possible. (We are seeking resources to share with partners to help with this.)

Prevention and Protection:: Special Guidance for Trainers

As trainers travel from community to community, **trainers are at higher risk of catching and spreading the virus.** We therefore ask that all of our partner staff / trainers / anyone visiting groups should:

- **Wear masks** when with a group
- **Wash / Sanitise** their hands before and after visiting a group
- **Avoid touching** anything in a group eg do not handle passbooks or cash, or greet members physically
- **Stay at least 1m away** from all group members at all times
- **Keep a record** of all groups visited so that if you do become ill, you can warn the groups you have visited they may be infected (also encourage groups to keep registers of attendance so they can alert members present if there is a risk of infection)
- Anybody who discovers they have been exposed to someone with CV19 should **quarantine** themselves and not visit any groups for 14 days to ensure they are not infected

In addition, we are pleased to attach **(with thanks to the Mothers' Union)** some further recommendations for safe savings group activities which we ask you to consider, and adopt or adapt as suitable in your context.

Preparation:

We urge all partners to encourage and support Savings Groups to:

- **Make plans for their Savings Group** in case Coronavirus gets worse.
 - How will members keep in touch with each other? How will they keep their funds safe? Will they continue trying to save and make loans? How will they respond if several members wish to access their savings at once? (Most of our partners have already begun this - we have shared resources to help.)
- **Make plans for how group members and their wider communities can prepare how to cope** if Coronavirus gets worse.
 - For example: where are the nearest health centres? How could group members get there? Who are the most vulnerable who might need extra care in their community? How could members help to meet their own needs and their community's basic needs if they get sick or are really struggling? What organisations or resources are available locally to help? (Most of our partners have already begun this - we have shared resources to help.)

Following WHO and your local and national government's advice:

The program should not violate the advice of the government or the World Health Organisation - even if this means that normal program activities cannot take place. Five Talents asks to be informed if this is the case in your program, and we will understand if this means that program targets are not reached in the timelines expected.



As a church-based program, we know your members, staff and volunteers are trusted in their communities. As government restrictions lift, it is each citizen's responsibility to minimise the spread of Coronavirus - and it is our responsibility jointly to minimise the spread through our program activities. We pray that our program members, boards, staff and volunteers will be a blessing and an asset in this period, helping to protect themselves and their neighbours. And we pray that our 'normal' Five Talents program activities of saving, loaning and skills training will help businesses and livelihoods to be rebuilt as restrictions ease.

With our best wishes and prayers for God's blessing and protection at this time,

Peterson Karanja, Dale Stanton-Hoyle and Rachel Lindley, on behalf of Five Talents International