

COVID-19: fepa policy, version 1.4

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COVID-19 affects Zimbabwe and South Africa. Both countries are currently under a sort of ‚lock down‘.

This policy formulates how fepa plans to manage its response in light of our solidarity with people in southern African and our partnership with grassroots and civil society actors in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Key points

- fepa supports safe work spaces
- fepa contributes to salaries even if project activities are interrupted
- fepa tries to support partner’s activities in response to COVID-19, notably in information sharing within communities
- contains some basic information on COVID-19 and adequate response

fepa observes developments

- We try to follow the medical and policy response situation so that fepa can make informed decisions about its program/partnership support and advocacy work.

fepa follows best practices

Whenever possible fepa will listen to advice by partners or other organisations on how to respond to Corona/Covid-19 situation.

➔ Partners are invited to share their own policies and experiences.

fepa shares experiences

Switzerland has been experiencing Corona virus infections for a couple of weeks more than Southern Africa, and fepa members are actively sharing their experiences and lessons learnt with our partners.

fepa is in solidarity with the most vulnerable persons and defends democracy and human rights

- Where necessary we will raise our voice in defence of human rights, vulnerable people and democracy.
- We call on government and international organisations to secure access to basic goods and service especially for the vulnerable members of society (vulnerability in terms of health, social standing, and economic livelihoods).

fepa appeals to project partners to protect themselves

Hygiene measures are crucial, because even though most people will only have mild symptoms, it is the responsibility of everyone to help protecting sisters and brothers belonging to risk groups¹.

¹ The World Health Organisation says: «People of all ages can be infected by the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

Our understanding of the outbreak in Zimbabwe is that the health system is currently not likely to have much capacity to respond. We therefore remind our partners and friends that for most people it will be particularly important to protect themselves and their communities from the virus.

- fepa continues to repeat the basic messages about handwashing, not touching faces, physical ('social') distancing and, when necessary, responsible self-quarantine.
- Feпа calls on all partners to make sure that their offices or other spaces they are using, including workspaces at home are equipped well with sanitary facilities (access to water, sanitizer or soap) and that all of your team members know the rules. fepa will contribute to the cost of this.

If somebody falls ill

- We advise partners to identify and regularly update the adequate channels of communication with health professionals. We hope that there will be a toll-free call center soon.
- If you develop symptoms of COVID-19² remember that it could also be something else that needs treatment (like Malaria), or that it could be just a common flu or cold). Therefore if you develop fever, cough or difficulty breathing try to speak to health professionals about your situation, ideally without visiting the health facility.

Continuation of basic allowances to project staff/volunteers

Project staff/volunteers livelihoods should be safeguarded.

- fepa will, at least for the first 3 months, continue to give support for basic allowances even if project activities came to a halt.
- Feпа may also give support to sustain basic allowances that are normally linked to other project/donors within a partner organisation.
- Support means that we contribute to, but maybe not cover the full level, of basic allowances. Partners who want to claim support from fepa have to present a list of staff, basic allowances, and sources of funding (under normal circumstances and under current situation) repre-

WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, for example by following good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene.»

Are people living with HIV/AIDS at risk? There is little data at this moment. People who are positive with HI-Virus and who are not on ART must be considered part of the risk group, because they are immune-suppressed. Nothing is known at present about PLWHIV who are on ART.

² WHO says « The COVID-19 virus affects different people in different ways. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease and most infected people will develop mild to moderate symptoms and recover without requiring special treatment. People who have underlying medical conditions and those over 60 years old have a higher risk of developing severe disease and death.

Common symptoms include:

fever
tiredness
dry cough.

Other symptoms include:

shortness of breath
aches and pains
sore throat

and very few people will report diarrhoea, nausea or a runny nose.

People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should self-isolate and contact their medical provider or a COVID-19 information line for advice on testing and referral.

People with fever, cough or difficulty breathing should call their doctor and seek medical attention.

senting the situation in the time period for which a claim is being made for. Time periods may be as short as one week.

fepa supports working from home

Teams should continue to stay in touch internally

- fepa supports extra cost of communication using IT/airtime so that teams can coordinate their work in home office and keep in touch about organisational matters.
- Partners who wish to claim such support may contact Marcel with their budget for April.

Supporting partners' advocacy and information of communities, and partner's psychosocial support and counselling work when they have specific qualifications

- Partners who use their networks for advocacy and information work related to Corona Virus and response can claim support from fepa of up to USD 250 based on a simple sketch of the planned communication.
- Partners who want to monitor (from a civil society perspective) the Covid-19 situation and response in the communities they serve may apply to fepa for special funding.
- Partners who have capacity to give special support to target groups (assisting their claims to state/donors cash transfers; counselling to individuals and groups on all aspects of their life using phones/digital channels) may apply to fepa for special funding. Priority will have programs that address people and communities that are already working with fepa partners.

Fepa hopes that partners can allocate time to work on documentation, reporting etc

In our own experience we find that working at home, or with limited contact at office, has disadvantages, but also advantages. A notable advantage is that it is an opportunity to clean up desks and use the time to finalize reporting.

- ➔ Partners who are receiving basic allowances support by fepa will therefore be expected to partially re-allocate time to documentation and reporting.

Response to special needs is not a priority for fepa

Partners who identify special needs within their organisation or their communities resulting from the Covid-19 crisis are very much welcome to inform fepa. fepa might even try to mobilize networks or resources for support, but not as a priority.

Medical interventions are not within fepa's reach

fepa possess neither specific technical know-how, nor free funds to engage in medical interventions.

Updating the policy

This policy is updated regularly. If you have feedback, advice or wish to share your policies, please contact: marcel.dreier@fepafrika.ch

Thank you and stay well!