



# Bench Marks Foundation NPC

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## Way Forward

### Guide on How we Should Carry Out Our Work Activities within the Context of the Ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic

#### *Building solidarity and alternatives in a time of great need*

This Guide is for Bench Marks staff, part-timers and community activists. It follows the statement issued on 24 March 2020 in response to the advent and rapid spread of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Since March 2020 the organization has faced many challenges but has succeeded in adjusting, including working remotely, and continued with its programmes.

Looking back the guidelines issued then, along with awareness raising and educational activities carried out, have proved to be appropriate. We believe they have made an important contribution to the prevention of infection of our people and the spread of the virus.

Unfortunately, based on all available information, the situation has not only not improved, but is rapidly getting worse. This calls for Bench Marks to issue a further guide on how we should work together and carry out our activities.

#### **Keep working remotely!**

Firstly, due to the further deteriorating covid situation in South Africa, with high levels of uncertainty, we are calling on all Bench Marks staff, part-timers and activists to continue carrying out all activities remotely, no matter how difficult this is.

We have developed approaches and systems to work remotely over the past fourteen months and we need to keep using and developing them further. We must continue to not have face-to-face meetings and workshops, for example.



Partner Organisations: CDT Foundation, South African Council of Churches,  
Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation, Industrial Mission, Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference  
Board of Directors: Rt. Rev. Dr Jo Seoka, Mr Allan Wentzel, Ds Piet Beukes, Henk Smith, Fr Stan Muyebe,  
Mr. Mokhethi Moshoeshoe, Ms N Magwaza, John Capel

If anybody is experiencing difficulties with remote work, please communicate with your Bench Marks monitors and staff for advice and assistance.

### **Keep to all best practices!**

Secondly, please keep to all covid safety protocols and practices regarding the prevention and spread of infection. There is much information on this topic and a synopsis is added below.

It is particularly important during these times to also keep yourself healthy, both physically and mentally. There is also much information on this, including Bench Marks materials.

### **Keep informed!**

Thirdly, please keep well informed on developments regarding the virus and share your information with others. The scenario keeps shifting and it is important to keep abreast and assist others to do so.

### **Keep supporting each other!**

Now more than ever is the time for solidarity and support for each other, along with standing together as communities. This includes assisting each other with the terrible impacts of the virus and lock downs. It is important to pay special attention to the most vulnerable in this regard, including the aged, women and children.

### **The struggle continues!**

Our work continues and we must carry on devising creative ways to do this, while remaining safe. We have made very good progress since the advent of the Covid Pandemic and we have ambitious plans for this year!

We will be reviewing and assessing the situation on a regular basis and will keep you informed. For any clarity and information needed, please contact the Bench Marks monitors and staff in your area.

*Solidarity starts in our homes and spaces.*

Issued by Bench Marks Executive Director

The Bench Marks Foundation is chaired by the Right Reverend Dr Jo Seoka

# Stay Safe!

1. **Keep to the basics:** wash your hands regularly with water and soap; never touch your face unless you have just washed your hands; wear a mask and wear it properly; keep your distance from other people (not less than 1 ½ metres); when away from home keep outdoors as much as possible, avoid enclosed spaces and keep away from crowds.
2. **When travelling:** if walking, keep to the basics; if going by taxi or bus, make sure all the windows are open even if cold, wear a double mask and try to sit near a window; if you travelling in a car with other people, do the same as for a taxi.
3. **When at a place outside your home, such as a taxi rank:** keep to the basics and try and make sure everyone else is keeping to the basics, including your friends and comrades; encourage discussions on keeping to the basics.
4. **When inside a venue, such as a shop or a clinic:** make sure you are at least 1½ metres apart; do not share seating places that bring you closer than 1½ metres; wear your mask properly and we recommend a double mask; make sure all the windows and doors are open, even if cold; where any of these precautions are not happening, raise with the people responsible.
5. **If sick:** do not go out if at all possible and get professional assistance and advice.
6. **Have the vaccine when the chance arises:** our recommendation is that you have the vaccine to prevent yourself from serious illness. Where two shots are needed, please remember that you will only be safe from serious illness after the second shot.
7. **Remember:** there are a new types or variants of the virus which are much more infectious and harmful. Young children are now also getting infected. Enclosed spaces, such as taxis, shops, churches and classrooms are when you are at most risk of getting infected. Please keep to all the guidelines for your sake, the sake of your family and for the safety of your community.

## Be a Coronavirus Activist!