

## Responding to COVID-19: Highlights of a Survey in Zambia

### Summary

- Almost all Zambians know about COVID-19 and basic understanding about transmission and the importance of regular hand washing is high. However, a sizeable minority seek more information, which may help address some misconceptions on avoidance and ‘cures.’
- Most Zambians are positive about the government’s response to date and trust the information it provides on it
- Zambians see the virus as both a high personal risk and a threat to their country. As such, they are supportive of a wide range of personal and community non-pharmaceutical interventions (PHSMs) to help limit the spread of the coronavirus at this comparatively early stage of its spread in Zambia.
- Such interventions may be difficult to comply as many do not have separate rooms at home to isolate those who may become infected. Effective risk management and relief measures are essential to ensure the successful implementation of public health measures.
- National and local TV and radio, along with social media are the key information sources the public relies on.

### Background

Public health social measures (PHSMs) are an important strategy to delay and reduce the magnitude of COVID-19. PHSMs particularly those that restrict movement or entail the closure of services, can place a significant burden on populations. The effective implementation of PHSMs will require public support and compliance. Hence, this survey was conducted to assess public support for, and the likely social impacts of PHSMs in Zambia.

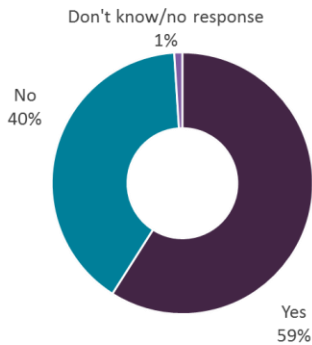
### Key Findings of the Survey

#### **Awareness of COVID-19 is high - but a sizeable minority seek more information and there is considerable misunderstanding on prevention and ‘cures’**

- Almost everyone has heard of COVID-19 (99%). Three-quarters spontaneously associate the symptoms with a dry cough (75%) with two-thirds citing fever (65%) or flu/cold like sickness (62%). Nevertheless, two in five (40%) of Zambians – younger ones in particular – feel they do not have enough information about it.
- One in five or more would like more information on ‘how to cure it/is there a cure’ (22%); ‘how to protect myself/my family from it’ (21%); almost one in six would be interested in ‘how it spreads/how you catch it’ (17%).
- Approximately half believe that COVID-19 can be prevented by drinking lemon and Vitamin C (54%) or that hot climate prevents the spread of the virus (49%). One in four think it can be cured with garlic (25%) and sizeable minorities believe that Africans can’t get it (15%); or that drinking bleach cures it (9%).

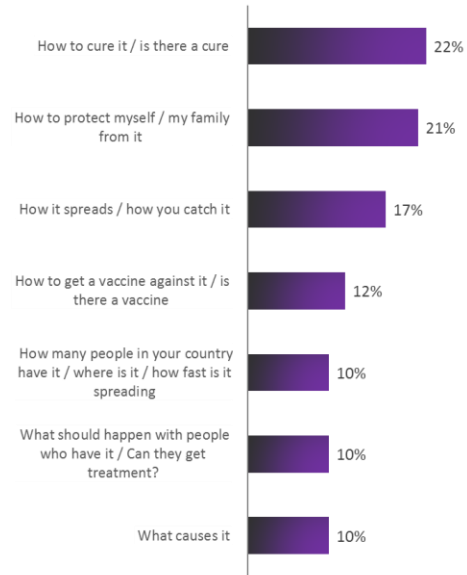


Q10. Do you feel you currently have enough information about the coronavirus/Covid-19 situation?



% who feel they have enough information	
<b>Gender:</b>	
Male	61
Female	57
<b>Age:</b>	
18-25 years	47
26-35 years	54
36-45 years	67
46-55 years	69
56 and older	62
<b>Monthly Household Income:</b>	
\$0-100	47
\$101-200	58
\$201-500	68
\$501+	73

Q11. What are the two things about it that you would like most to have more information about?

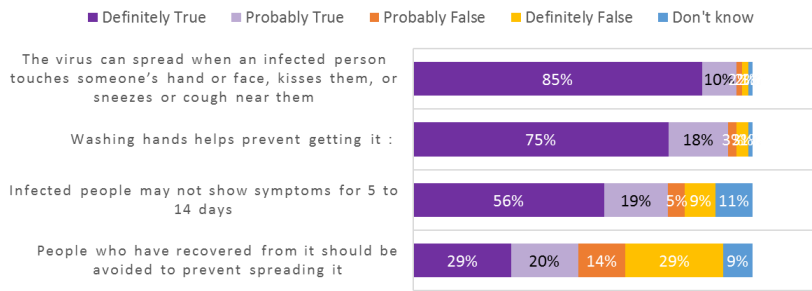


**Nevertheless, the basic understanding of close contact transmission and the importance of hand-washing stands high**

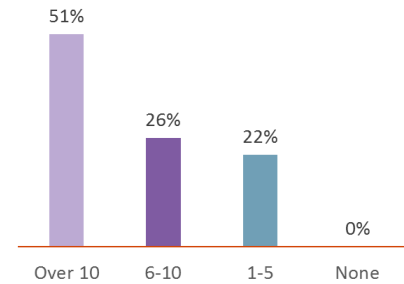
- Almost all think COVID-19 can be spread by touch, kiss, sneeze, or cough (95%, including 85% thinking this is 'definitely true') and that washing hands helps prevent getting it (93% including 75% 'definitely true'). Half (49%) think people who have recovered from it should be avoided due to risk spreading the virus.
- Half stated they washed their hands 10+ times in the day prior to their interview compared with one in five washing 5 times or fewer (51% vs. 22%). Younger Zambians tend to wash their hands less often.



Q14. I'm going to read things people have said about coronavirus or Covid-19. Please tell me if you think each is definitely true, probably true, probably false, or definitely false.



Q40. Yesterday, how many times did you wash your hands with soap or use hand sanitizer?



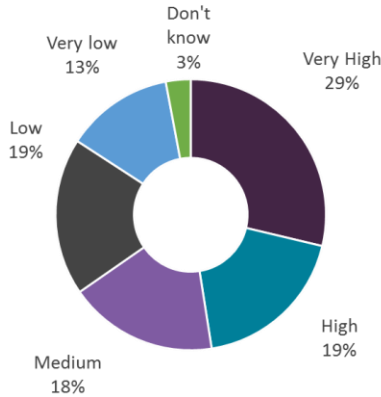
Q14. Share who agree definitely/probably true (%)	Male	Female	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56 and older	\$0-100	\$101-200	\$201-500	\$501+
The virus can spread when an infected person touches someone's hand or face, kisses them, or sneezes or cough near them	96	95	98	95	95	96	89	94	95	97	93
Washing hands helps prevent getting it	93	93	94	93	94	88	94	91	94	94	93
Infected people may not show symptoms for 5 to 14 days	76	74	81	75	71	80	72	71	74	80	86
People who have recovered from it should be avoided to prevent spreading it	46	51	57	47	43	56	47	49	46	53	43

## 92% of Zambians believe that COVID-19 poses a big problem for their country; 47% see themselves at high risk for contracting COVID-19.

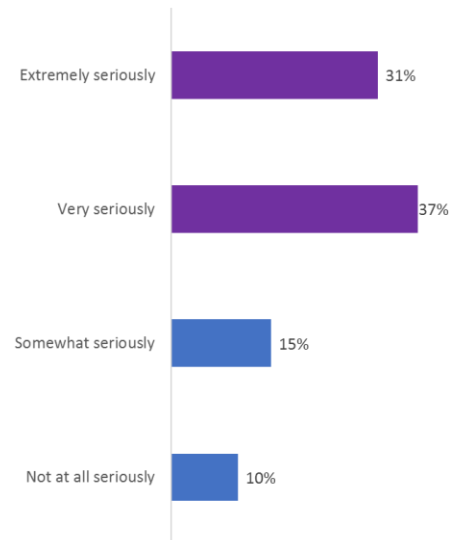
- Almost all Zambians think that the coronavirus will be a problem for Zambia (92%, including 67% thinking it will become 'a big problem').
- Almost half feel they are at high risk of catching the coronavirus (47% including 29% 'very high' risk) while a third believe they are at a low risk (32% low, including 13% 'very low').
- The clear majority believes that infection would seriously affect their health (68% 'extremely/very seriously' vs. 25% 'somewhat/not very seriously').
- The most commonly cited rationale for understanding the perceived effect on health is 'it could kill me/make me very sick' (44%), followed by 'it seems serious' (30%), 'it caused a lot of problems abroad' (10%) and 'it can require hospitalization' (9%).
- Zambians are, on balance, optimistic about receiving help they would need to deal with the illness if they become infected – with twice as many confident about being able to get immediate help as not those not confident (69% vs. 27%).



Q5. Please indicate what you think your level of risk of catching coronavirus or Covid-19 is?



Q6. If you were infected by coronavirus or Covid-19, how seriously do you think it would affect your health?



% who think coronavirus would affect their health extremely seriously/very seriously:	
<b>Gender:</b>	
Male	72
Female	65
<b>Age:</b>	
18-25 years	65
26-35 years	70
36-45 years	65
46-55 years	74
56 and older	74
<b>Monthly Household Income:</b>	
\$0-100	67
\$101-200	68
\$201-500	71
\$501+	70

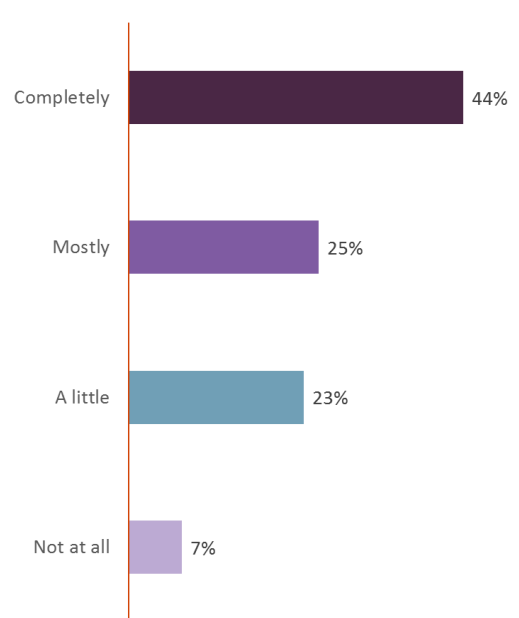
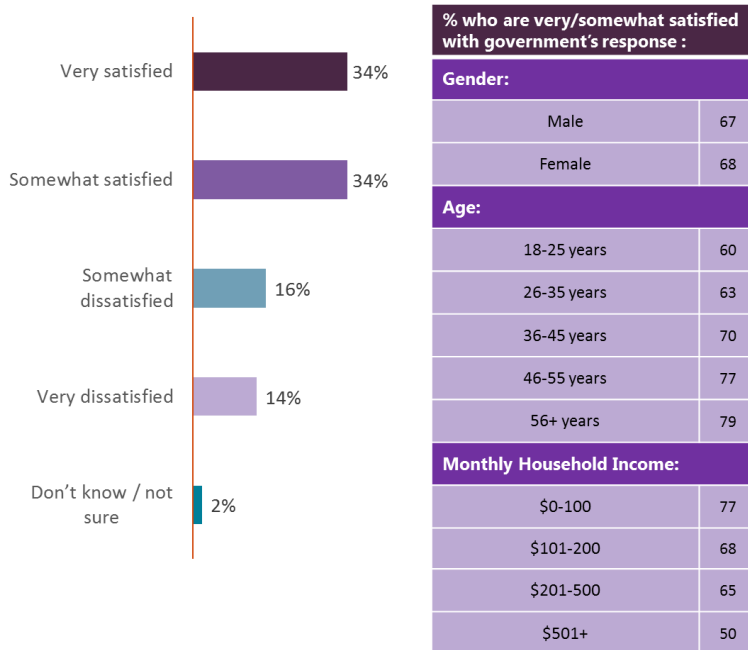
### Zambians' perceptions of the governmental response to COVID-19 is broadly positive

- The majority is satisfied with their government's response (68%; vs. 30% dissatisfied). Older Zambians as well as those with lower income are more likely to be positive.
- Zambians are also more likely than not to trust the information provided by the government (69% including 44% 'completely trust' vs. 30% including 7% 'not at all'). In line with the satisfaction with their government's response, older and those with lower income are more likely to trust the information from their government.



Q12. How satisfied are you with the government's response to coronavirus or Covid-19?

Q13. How much do you trust information from the government about the coronavirus or Covid-19?



### Support for personal non-pharmaceutical interventions (PHSMs) runs high

- Almost all Zambians support stopping handshake/kiss greetings (93%); requiring those who have contact with infected people to self-isolate (82%); and requiring those with COVID-19 to remain home until they are well (80%).

### Zambians also support restricting public gatherings

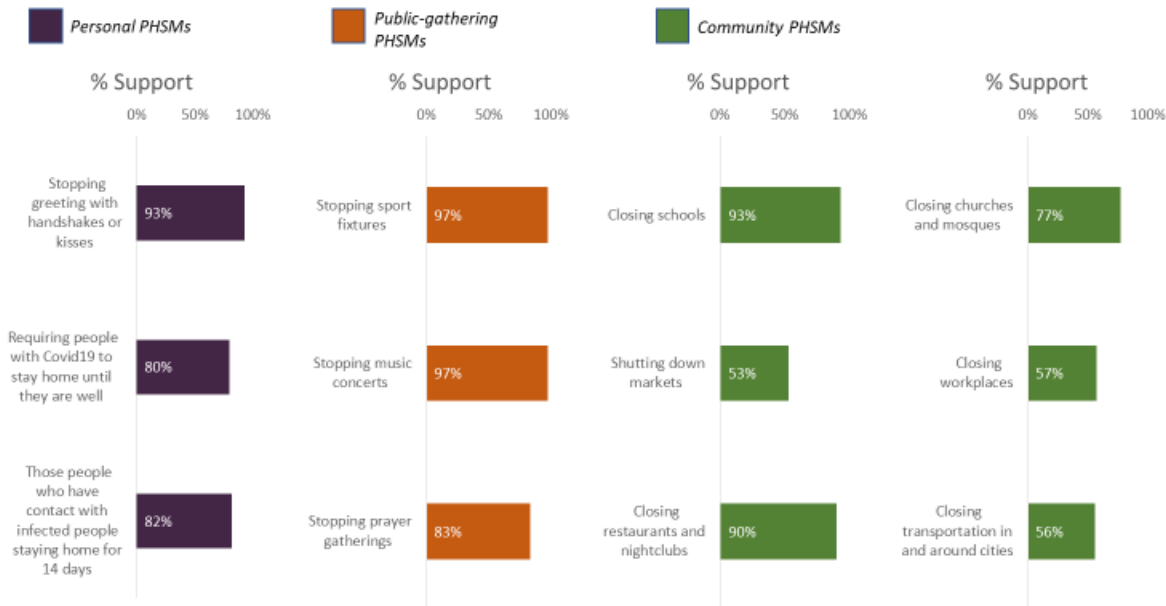
- Support is almost universal for restricting public gatherings to help limit a COVID-19 outbreak by stopping music concerts (97%); sports fixtures (97%); and prayer gatherings (83% - with those with higher income more likely to be in favor). The majority say that stopping prayer gatherings would be made easier by TV/internet (57%) or radio broadcast (44%).

### A clear majority of Zambians also support other temporary 'community PHSMs' to help slow the COVID-19 outbreak

- This includes closing restaurants/nightclubs (90%); churches and mosques (77%); and markets (53% - with those with higher income more likely to show support).
- Around three in five would support closing transport between cities (62%); closing a city off for two weeks (60%) and closing transport in and around cities (56%).
- Nine in 10 (93%) would support school closures, regardless of whether, or not, they have children. Of those with children, around four in five say they would have someone to look after them.



## Level of support for Public health social measures (PHSMs) by type of intervention

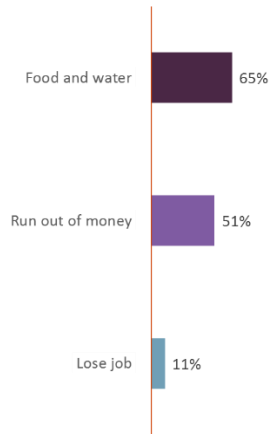


### PHSMs may place a significant burden on many Zambians

- Three times as many work outside the home as in it to earn money (45% vs. 16%). Three in ten of those who work outside their home doubt that their workplace could accommodate staggered shifts (31%). Women are more likely to have such doubts than men (36% women vs. 28% men).
- Two in five have a separate room to isolate someone who becomes sick (41%).
- Asked about the biggest problems posed by staying at home for two weeks, most spontaneously talking about access to food and water (65%). Half talk of running out of money (51%), while more than one in 10 say losing their job (11%).
- If asked to stay at home, on median average, Zambians would need to get food and money after 7 days.



Q17: What would be the biggest problems for people like you to stay at home for 14 days?



Share who think the following would be the biggest problem... (%)	Food and water	Running out of money	Losing your job
<b>Gender:</b>			
Male	66	55	14
Female	63	47	8
<b>Age:</b>			
18-25 years	54	47	14
26-35 years	63	56	14
36-45 years	66	56	11
46-55 years	66	37	5
56 and older	80	44	8
<b>Monthly Household Income:</b>			
\$0-100	77	54	12
\$101-200	64	51	11
\$201-500	57	53	10
\$501+	49	43	13

Q38. Would you have a separate room in your home to keep someone isolated if they are sick?



### TV is the main source of information relied on for finding out what is happening in the country, supplemented by friends and family and radio more locally, suggesting that multiple channels are useful for communicating COVID-19 information

- Two-thirds of Zambians say they normally get their information on what’s happening in the country from TV (66%); with sizeable reach also coming from social media (36%) and radio (31%). For local news, friends and family also provide for an important source of information (35%); along with local TV (35%), local radio (25%) and social media (20%). WhatsApp and international TV channels also have a smaller but important role (10% and 7% respectively).

### Technical Note

The fieldwork on this study was conducted by Ipsos with results based on 1,035 interviews with adults aged 18+ in Lusaka. Fieldwork was administered by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) using a Random Digit Dial (RDD) approach incorporating both landline and mobile sample. Data are representative of the populations of the urban area (s) included and are unweighted. Fieldwork took place between March 30 and April 2, 2020.

This program of research is an outcome of a partnership between Resolve to Save Lives, an initiative of Vital Strategies, Africa CDC, the World Health Organization’s African Regional Office (AFRO) and Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO), and the World Economic Forum to form a new public-private partnership to support evidence-based implementation of PHSMs to reduce COVID-19 transmission in African countries (“flattening the curve”) while working with governments to mitigate social and economic disruption and other unintended consequences.