

Covid-19 Guidelines for Savings Groups

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About FSD Zambia

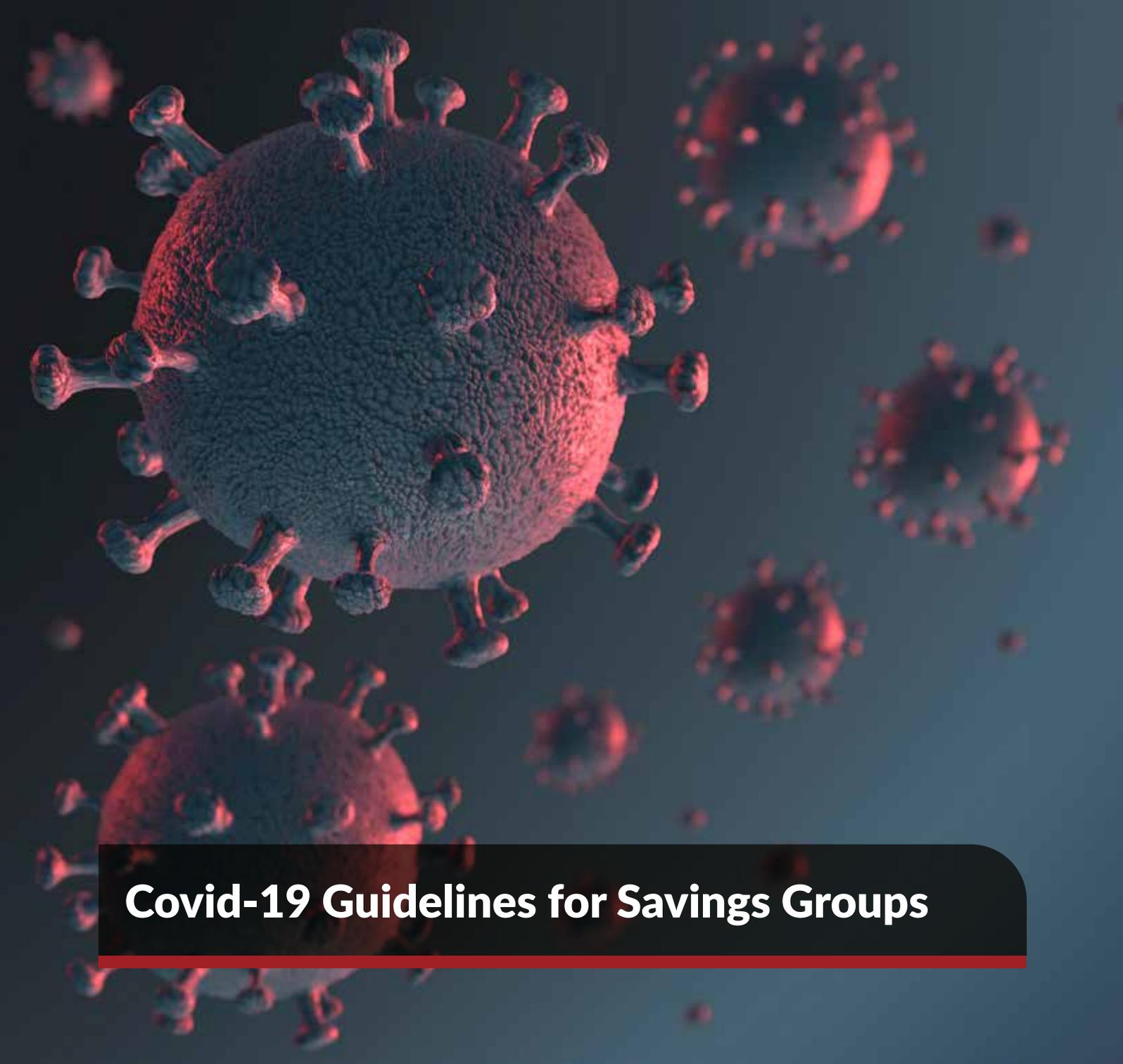
Zambian Financial Sector Deepening Limited (FSD Zambia) is a Zambian organisation working closely with key players throughout the economy to ensure that all Zambians are financially healthy, particularly the most excluded and underserved. We help rural families, women, youth, low income people, and other households in Zambia to understand and access a wide range of sustainable, comparable and affordable financial services. To expand financial inclusion, we collaborate with both public and private sector institutions to make financial markets work better. FSD Zambia enhances trust between clients and suppliers of financial services by helping to bring people together, cultivate understanding, stimulate innovation, and lower costs. In this way all women, men, girls and boys can learn about, choose, and use a wide range of financial services that have the most positive impact on their lives. FSD Zambia enjoys the active support of financing partners UK Aid, SIDA, Rural Finance Expansion Programme (RUFEP) and Comic Relief/Jersey Overseas Aid.

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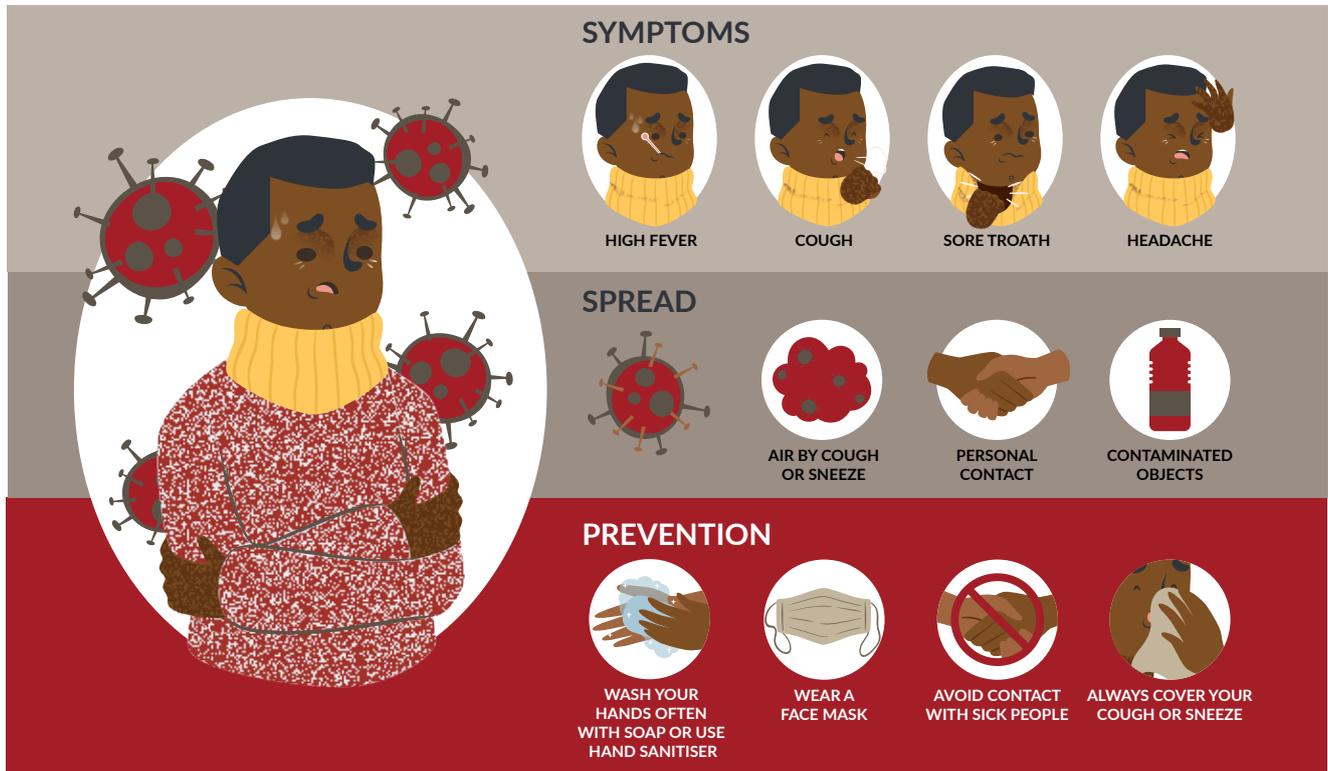
Covid-19 Guidelines for Savings Groups

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Covid-19 stands for Corona Virus Disease 2019. It is a disease caused by a virus called Corona.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

Covid-19 is spread through direct contact with infected people or objects used by the infected person¹.



The infographic is divided into three horizontal sections: SYMPTOMS, SPREAD, and PREVENTION. On the left side, there is a large illustration of a person with a red, speckled sweater and a yellow turtleneck, surrounded by several red, spherical virus particles with black spikes. The SYMPTOMS section features four circular icons: a person with a thermometer in their mouth (HIGH FEVER), a person coughing (COUGH), a person holding their throat (SORE TROATH), and a person holding their head (HEADACHE). The SPREAD section features four circular icons: a virus particle (AIR BY COUGH OR SNEEZE), a cluster of virus particles (AIR BY COUGH OR SNEEZE), two hands shaking (PERSONAL CONTACT), and a red water bottle (CONTAMINATED OBJECTS). The PREVENTION section features four circular icons: hands being washed with soap (WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP OR USE HAND SANITISER), a face mask (WEAR A FACE MASK), a hand with a red 'X' over it (AVOID CONTACT WITH SICK PEOPLE), and a hand covering a cough or sneeze (ALWAYS COVER YOUR COUGH OR SNEEZE).

SYMPTOMS

- HIGH FEVER
- COUGH
- SORE TROATH
- HEADACHE

SPREAD

- AIR BY COUGH OR SNEEZE
- PERSONAL CONTACT
- CONTAMINATED OBJECTS

PREVENTION

- WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP OR USE HAND SANITISER
- WEAR A FACE MASK
- AVOID CONTACT WITH SICK PEOPLE
- ALWAYS COVER YOUR COUGH OR SNEEZE

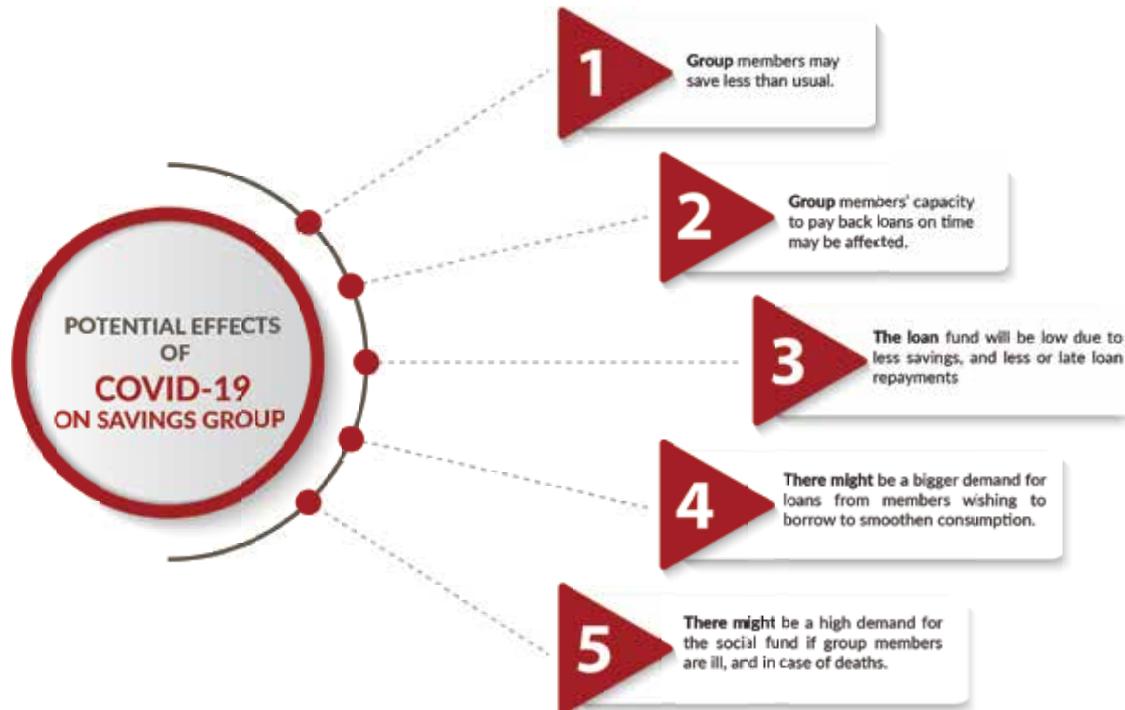
¹<https://www.who.int>

HOW WOULD COVID-19 AFFECT YOUR SAVINGS GROUP?

1. When you meet as a group, you come from different homes and some members may have been exposed to COVID-19. You are at risk of infection during the meeting if for example, you;



2. Some of your group members may experience financial difficulties during this period due to loss of income. Restrictions on movements during this period might mean that some group members will not freely go the market to trade, (similarly, buyers will stay at home and not buy goods and services), companies may close and lay off workers and some members may stay at home sick or will be nursing sick family members. This may affect your savings group in the following ways;



The World Health Organisation and Government have put in place measures to ensure you, your family and fellow group members are safe and healthy. There are also rules and measures to regulate meetings which everyone must adhere to.

In addition, it is recommended that savings groups also follow the guidelines below².

²Some recommendations have been adapted from: <https://www.care.org>

WHAT CAN SAVINGS GROUPS DO DURING THIS PERIOD?

Meetings

- Reduce meeting times (for example, instead of weekly, meet once a month) and encourage only a few members to attend meetings to avoid overcrowding especially if meetings are held in a small room.
- Practice social distancing – sit at least one metre from each other. Remember not to shake hands or hug.
- Members in high risk categories like the elderly, pregnant, sick or have pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes, asthma, bronchitis, cancer and HIV, should appoint a relative or friend they trust to participate on their behalf. Members should also avoid coming to the meeting with children.
- Please enforce handwashing; provide a hand washing bucket or container with soap/sanitiser for members coming to the meeting. Ensure gloves are available for money counters and persons holding keys to the cashbox. If gloves are not available, use hand sanitiser before and after the meeting.
- Members, especially money counters should not touch their faces when counting money.
- If all members have cell phones, consider having a digitised meeting where members send savings, loans and social fund through mobile money or other virtual means. This could be safe but requires that all members learn how to do this properly.
- Please ensure that your group funds and cash box are always secured.
- Your group could also consider safer places to keep the group fund such as in a mobile money account, or microfinance institution or bank.

Social Fund

- Decide on how you will handle social fund to assist members in emergency cases.
- Consider having a special COVID-19 fund.

Savings and Loans

- Continue saving even as little as the minimum share amounts as these will be helpful during the post-pandemic recovery process.
- Where possible, avoid in-person meetings and consider transacting using digital means or mobile money. This could include having a few people collect the funds, record member contributions, and consolidate them. The management committee can then disburse loans and pay out social fund on request.
- In the worst case:
 - o Consider revising or rescheduling savings and repayments which could include shorter lending cycles; revised loan terms; lower loan values or stop lending altogether.
 - o Where there is an immediate need to access savings or there is a risk of keeping funds in the near term, consider accelerating the share-out. Share-outs should only take place once outstanding loans are repaid.

WHO CAN SAVINGS GROUPS TURN TO FOR FURTHER SUPPORT?

- Follow official Ministry of Health updates to ensure that you comply with all safety measures.
- Contact your savings group trainer if you need any clarifications on the guidelines.

REMEMBER, MEMBER SAFETY COMES FIRST!!!



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