



TO: All Trees for the Future Field Staff and Partners

FROM: Trees for the Future Programs Director, Brandy Lellou

DATE: June 12, 2020

RE: 4th COVID-19 Response for Field Staff

June marks the third month of a new way of living for us all. We want to thank you for all the hard work and dedication you have shown to your farming communities. Thank you for continuing to work remotely through unideal conditions and staying connected with farmers to assist them with nursery development, pest management, vegetable production and access to markets. Because of your commitment, farmers will be able to continue planting trees and producing vegetables in 2020. Now communities are slowly reopening in each country and our reopening plan will vary country to country based on local guidelines. By following these guidelines you will protect yourself, your family and the farmers you work with, and help to shorten the time in which this pandemic affects everyone. Please continue to stress the seriousness of COVID-19 and take the proper precautions.

Although Countries are slowly reopening COVID-19 has not disappeared. Please remember we all MUST continue to follow these guidelines:

1. All staff should wash their hands regularly, including after visits to farmer homes or fields, and in the office. Handwashing facilities with soap should be available at each office and work site.
2. All staff should wear washable (reusable) face masks while in the office, in public and when visiting farmers.
3. Face masks can also be given to farmers, see your country director for guidance.
4. If feeling sick with a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath, all staff should notify their supervisor, refrain from meeting in person with anyone, and stop work immediately until they can obtain a test or recover.
5. For office staff, all staff should still be given the option to work from home with a portable wifi device charged with data credit. If the office is the only place they can work, staff should be separated by a distance of 4 meters (or be in opposite rooms) and wipe down all hard surfaces (including door knobs, light switches, desks, etc. with disinfectant wipes or soap and water several times a day.

6. Technicians should not shake hands, hug or share food and drink with farmers and their families. While this may go against acceptable cultural norms, you can explain that it is to preserve the health of the people you are working with, and you can share that as an organization we care about everyone's health and well being. Also, smiles and friendly words go a long way. Some people have no symptoms but can still transmit the virus so avoiding contact is the best protection.
7. When working with other staff or farmers in small groups, all should keep the recommended distance of 6 feet (2 meters) between each person.
8. There is currently NO vaccine and NO medication that can prevent or cure COVID-19, a lot of misinformation has been spread about this. Please do not try to take a recommended medication for this virus as it can cause other illnesses.

Farmer Registrations, Nursery Checkups and Trainings: Technicians who are scheduled to do farmer registrations, nursery checkups or small group trainings in the next month should use the following guidelines and remember to limit all contact to conversation at a distance of 6 meters and all group trainings to 5 people or less:

1. All farmers have been registered remotely on Taroworks, however, some information and the GPS and photos are missing. Technicians can register farmers and/or ask questions to complete the registration at a safe distance of 6 feet (2 meters).
2. Only **Uganda** and **Cameroon** are currently conducting small group trainings with farmers. When conducting trainings with farmers, Technicians will train lead farmers from each group, with no more than 4 Lead Farmers being trained at one time. Technicians will keep a safe distance of 6 feet (2 meters) between participants during the training.
3. When training lead farmers, technicians should ensure the lead farmer understands the concepts and techniques in the lesson and is also well equipped to deliver that content to the farmers in their group. Technicians will state the seriousness of the virus and inform lead farmers that they can only meet with 4 or less farmers in their group at one time to deliver this training information. Technicians will remind lead farmers to keep a safe distance of 6 feet (2 meters) between participants during the trainings.
4. Lead farmers go back to their group and train individuals in groups of 4 or less. Thus for a farmer group of 25, they will need to have 6 separate meetings. Technicians will attend and observe the first 2 to 3 meetings ensuring that the lead farmer is adequately teaching the concept. The technicians should advise but let the lead farmer do the teaching.
5. Technicians will then follow up with farmers via phone to answer any questions they may have and record the communications via Taroworks.
6. Technicians will not conduct TDF or Sample Survey at this time.
7. Technicians will limit travel and in-person communications with farmers. All regular checkins with farmers should continue to be done remotely.

8. TREES staff will continue to make short in-country videos in local languages for countries where lead farmers have smartphones. . These videos will be sent to lead farmers to use as references during training and describe specific processes like outplanting, pruning, compost development. The protocol for developing in-country videos can be found [here](#).
9. No refreshments (food and drink) should be served at trainings during this time.

Communications: The key to TREES' program's continued success during COVID-19 has been the remote communication systems that each country has developed. It is remarkable how quickly this was implemented with staff and farmers.

All staff will continue to:

- 1) Use the WhatsApp groups that were created for staff communications.
- 2) Track communications with farmers so that the regional coordinators and country directors can follow-up with you on 'real time' issues farmers are facing. To view all remote communications records that have been recorded by country follow these steps:

- Go to <https://tfff.force.com/taroworks/00O/o>
- Log in using your TaroWorks login info
- Click on your country's Remote Communications report

This report will show you a list of all remote communications received via TaroWorks for each project. Please read through the notes every few days and work with your supervisor to report and resolve issues farmers are having. By default, the communications are only shown for the current calendar quarter (April through June), but this can all be changed as needed. Please feel free to contact your country's M&E Coordinator (or Andrew@trees.org) for additional training or to request a customized view of this information.

- 3) **COVID-19 Health Messaging:** All official health communications about COVID-19 that you give to farmers or partners should only be relayed by the country director to ensure information is correct and uniform. *We caution that all these groups are meant to share **official** information, coordinate between staff and farmers, and check on each other's health and safety to ensure everyone in the program feels supported and calm. These communication groups should never be used to share 'home remedies for a cure', rumors, or unofficial news updates that provide misinformation and create panic and fear.*

Staff Trainings

Over the next month country trainers and training coordinators can provide small group refresher trainings for technicians to practice and improve on training skills. These trainings will be field based at the demonstration site or at a lead farmer field and must follow the protocol. Above all, unnecessary training should be postponed. If you have questions about what is essential please contact Deputy Director of Training Elizabeth Moore via email, Elizabeth.Moore@trees.org

About Training of Trainers (ToT) Events

All ToTs are currently postponed. We will be communicating the same information to those who request information about training via email. For training new partners we will do 1 on 1 trainings and follow the protocol above.

If Reopening Status Changes

If the federal government or local jurisdictions change the reopening status of your country, all TREES staff will follow the guidelines laid out by their respective country. Although planting trees and working with farmers to improve their lives is of great importance, the primary concern is always the health and welfare of farmers and our staff.

Partners

This protocol should be sent to all partners and partners should be encouraged to follow it for their health and safety and for that of the community.

As leaders in your farming communities, people look to you for answers. This is the time to show, in both words and actions, the steps needed to protect your community. If you have any questions, please reach out to Country Directors at this time or feel free to contact Brandy Lellou, Director of Programs at brandy@trees.org

Thank you, welcome back, and stay healthy and safe!