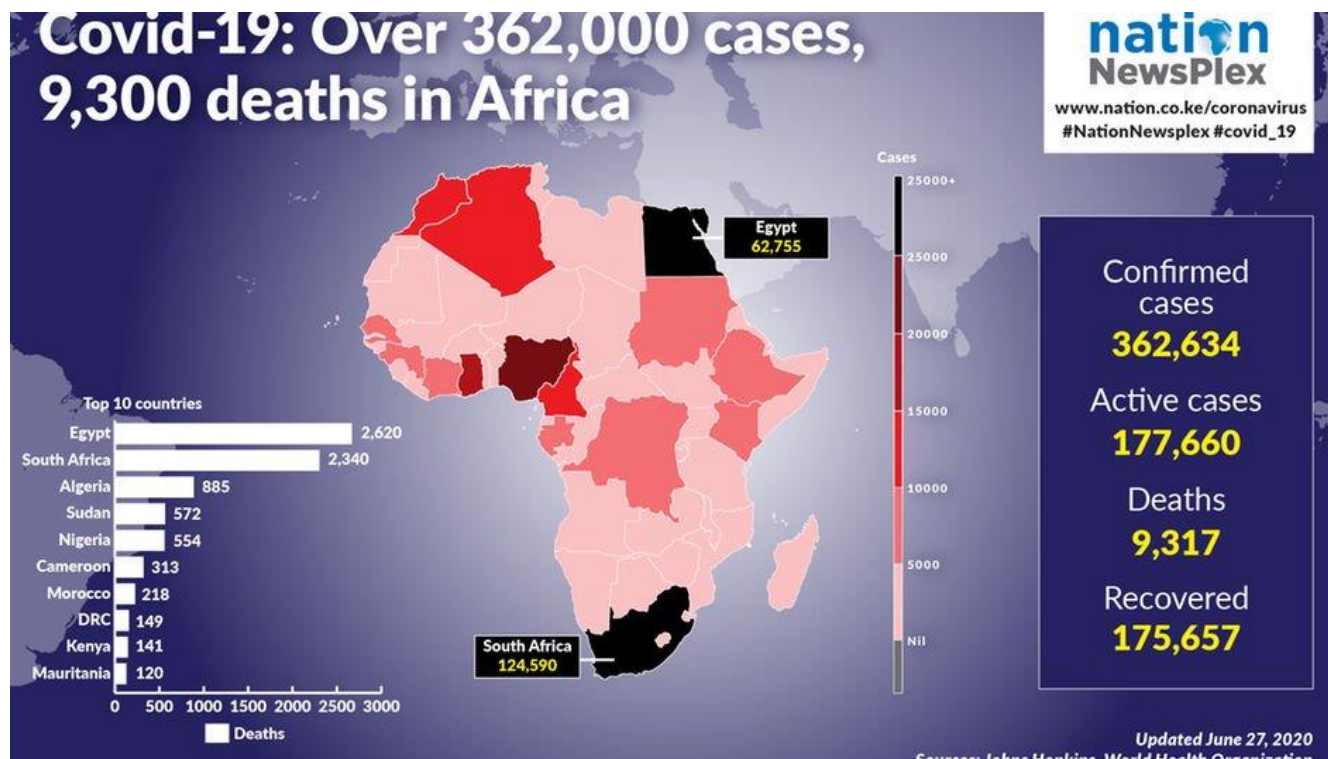


# COVID-19

## Our Safety Protocols: Risk Mitigation in Fieldwork



# The Impact of Covid-19 in Africa



- So far, the numbers of infections and Covid-19 related casualties for an entire continent remain relatively low, when compared to a single country, the UK, where almost 44,000 have succumbed to the virus
- And yet, no African country has remained unaffected; and containment measures have severely impacted on operations in our industry
- To keep our business going, while protecting both staff and respondents, we have put in place our own mitigation measures

- The Kenyan government implemented lockdown measures on March 17<sup>th</sup>; in Nigeria, lockdown of three states (Lagos, Ogun, and FCT) began on March 30<sup>th</sup>
- Our Kenyan association, MSRA, announced a ban of F2F fieldwork, which lasted until the end of April; the Nigerian association, NiMRA, did not follow suit
- After the Kenyan regulatory body, NACOSTI, as well as ESOMAR, did not pronounce a blanket ban on F2F research activities, agencies were advised to use due diligence and common sense in devising individual protocols for risk mitigation – as long as country-specific regulations were strictly adhered to
- That research activities should not put staff or respondents at risk and should not contribute to the spread of the virus, goes without saying; however, we also owe it to staff to pull them through the crisis without exposing them to additional hardship



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**Two Names... One Company!**

- For some years now, we have already been conducting IDIs with experts via Skype
- But now we also do virtual Focus Group Discussions on Zoom; Dyads on Skype; and Bulletin Boards on WhatsApp
- In quantitative research, we rapidly
  - Recruited an Online Community
  - Carried out Pilot Online Polls across our main markets
  - Established a panel of respondents for targeted telephonic interviews; our database now comprises almost 200,000 contacts across West and East Africa, including all socio-economic groups as well as urban and rural locations
  - Experimented with RDD CATI in Kenya and Nigeria
- The reports on our various pilot exercises can be downloaded at

<https://www.infiniteinsight.net/news.html>

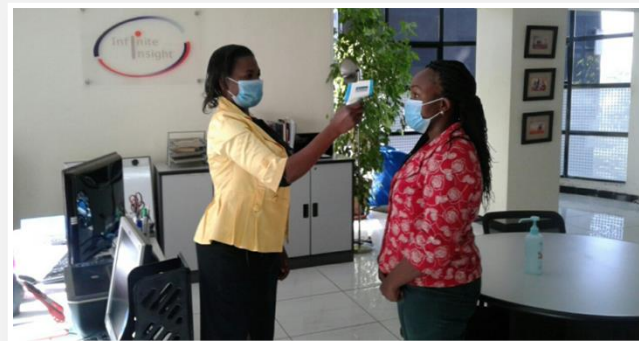
<https://www.consumerideasafrica.com/news%20&%20reports.html>



- Since March 16<sup>th</sup> 2020, permanent staff and directors alike have been working from their home offices
- All staff are provided with internet credits, so their work continues as smoothly as possible
- “Touch Base” internal meetings are conducted via Zoom videoconferencing
- By the same token, meetings with clients take place in cyberspace; even our association’s (MSRA) AGM was held on Skype
- Although some experienced cabin fever, the office was not greatly missed, either
- In fact, it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify the expense of maintaining a brick & mortar office



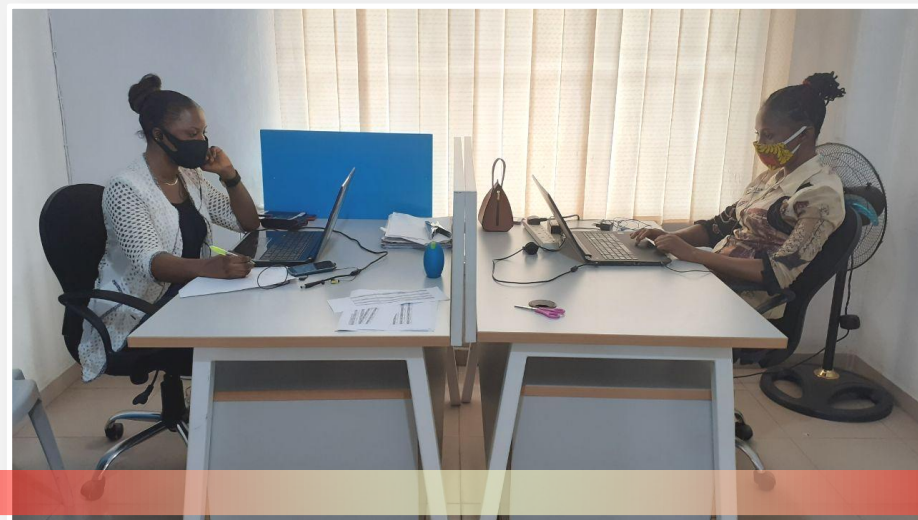
- A few activities, such as data entry for our last remaining PAPI project, are easier done in the office than at home
- We also used the office as impromptu call centres as office Wi-Fi supports VOIP better than individual 4G connections at home
- For such occasions, the following protocols have been implemented:
  - All staff and visitors are fever-screened before entering the office
  - Hand sanitizers are available to all
  - We also provide face masks to all members of the team; their use is mandatory
  - Work stations are placed 6 feet apart and are disinfected before and after a shift



- Although most briefings are done via Zoom or Skype, at times, this is not an option
- So, distancing rules are implemented; and face masks are mandatory for all in attendance, including the briefer



- When running telephonic projects, workstations for interviewers are set up 6 feet apart
- All interviewers are still wearing face masks, even while making calls
- Hand sanitizers are provided
- And work stations are disinfected before and after every shift
- Due to curfews in place at the time (7pm to 5am/now 9pm to 4am in Kenya; 7pm to 5am/now 10pm to 4am in Nigeria), we created the following schedule:
  - In-office shift: 9am to 3pm
  - At-home shift: 3pm to 9pm
- Using these measures, we successfully carried out several CATI projects during lockdown



- Nowadays, F2F interviewing is very much the exception; although we are confident of soon being able to go back into field in some of our markets
- At the moment, however, the only F2F interviews being conducted are with farmers, especially smallholders
- As farmsteads are usually separated from each other by great distances, there are no risks associated with personal visits; interviewers are advised
  - To use private cars instead of public transport
  - To keep a distance of at least 6 feet
  - Not to hand show cards to respondents
  - And to conduct all interviews outdoors, preferably close to the fields, where the crops of interest are being cultivated





[https://www.infiniteinsight.net/RDD\\_Pilot\\_Report.pdf](https://www.infiniteinsight.net/RDD_Pilot_Report.pdf)



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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtwQdyi6Hn0>



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