

Quality of political leadership

Our politicians have responded well to the challenge. This is in sharp contrast to the policy indecision that characterised the national response to the HIV/AIDS problem in the 1990s. However, South Africa is woefully underprepared in terms of infrastructure. Implementation of the physical-distancing measures is nearly impossible given the living and transport infrastructure available for most black South Africans.

The threat to cultural creative sectors

The impact on cultural and creative sectors is immense. Multinational companies as well as small companies and freelance professionals essential for the sector are facing an uncertain future. This crisis creates a structural threat to the survival of many

firms and workers in cultural and creative production. The availability of cultural content contributes to the mental health and wellbeing of our population, and many cultural institutions have provided online and free content in recent weeks for that purpose. All of this is under threat.

The fragility of the South African economy

Lastly, and more significantly, the impact on the South African economy, already relegated to junk status by major rating agencies, will be immense. My fear is that we might not have an economy after this pandemic. The IMF might have to assist us to put the pieces together.

Staff members reflect...

Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director: Marketing and Communications

My first observation, even before the University took an early recess, was how quickly we were all adapting to the elbow greeting. South Africans in general, depending on age, greet by shaking hands or giving each other a hug. It was quite endearing to see students doing elbow greetings and laughing about that. It showed that while the elbow may not be so intimate, the camaraderie between people still exists.

Never before has the world seen so much washing of hands. Someone commented jokingly that even Pontius Pilate never washed his hands so many times. The washing of hands has always been sacrosanct. Even in church, priests wash hands before serving bread. In the public health sector, the washing of hands is what health professionals have been advocating for many years. Many infections are transmitted by hands, and this marks a watershed moment where we take hygiene back into our lives.

The social distancing part is heartbreaking for many families. Many are used to spending weekend lunches together. While it was brutal at the beginning, my sister came up with an idea that the family could still be 'together' on Sundays. We agreed that we



Mbali Mkhize

would wake up to attend a virtual mass together through live streaming. Being in different provinces and even abroad for some family members, we felt this togetherness as we prayed together. Six hours later, we would then live-stream family dinners. We would all agree on a recipe the day before and as we live-streamed our dinners, we would joke about whose presentation looks best. This has been a true communion for us and we hope that we will continue to do this beyond the lockdown. We have had to get together as families virtually and started paying attention to one another.