

Case Study 1: Outbreak of the Vaca virus

This was a one-day simulation activity on the course Global Health Security, which recreated the governance decisions of an outbreak of 'Vaca Virus' in the country of 'Esperanza'. The activity unfolded over the course of the day with new information, such as the development of vaccines, civil unrest and community resistance, which each actor had to react to in real time. An overview of the schedule for the day is outlined below followed by examples of play cards that were handed to students containing new information that they needed to respond to.

The Vaca Virus

A Case Study In Pandemic
Management



Schedule

Introduction:	9:00 – 9:15	Phase 3:	1:30 – 3:00
Phase 1:	9:15 – 10:45	Break:	3:00 – 3:15
Break:	10:45 – 11:00	Phase 4:	3:15 – 4:45
Phase 2:	11:00 – 12:30	Conclusion:	4:45 – 5
Lunch:	12:30 – 1:30		

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Dr Clare Wenham, LSE Department of Health Policy

GAMEPLAY

LSE Simulations ■

Simulation Roles

Esperanza

- Minister of Health
- Minister of Trade and Finance
- Senior Science Officer

Esperanza – affiliated

- Mabaz Representative CDSP Party
- Women's Affairs Shadow Minister – CDSP Party

Azacion

- Foreign delegation (representing economic, political and social concerns of Azacion)

International

- World Bank
- WHO
- Red Cross
- Doctors Without Borders

Ancillary Stakeholders

- Beef Industry Lobby
- Pharmaceutical Companies

Phase One

Meeting at the Office of the President

15 July

- Is this a Public Health Emergency of International Concern?
- What steps should be taken?
- Who should be alerted?
- What legal obligations does Esperanza have under international law?

Phase Two

WHO Videoconference

Tuesday, 21 July

- Should Esperanza accept the \$50 million dollars from Azacion or receive funds from the PEF?
- What national and international public health measures should be adopted?
- What requests should be made of other countries?
 - > Anti virals
 - > Health care workers?
 - > Impartial advisors and consultants to supervise an equitable distribution of the provision of health care in Esperanza?
- How can the Pharmaceutical Industry contribute at this time?

Phase Three

WHO Videoconference

Tuesday, 21 July

- WHO Director General calls an emergency videoconference to address the rising crisis over vaccine access and the lack of agreement with Pointus .
- The DG will consult with interested stakeholders in the:
 - > Lack of a SMTA with Pointus ;
 - > The engagement of states with populations that have the Vaca Virus and their negotiations with Pointus for their orders of the Vaca Virus vaccine.
 - > What, if any, obligations all parties have under contractual and international agreements.

Phase Four

WHO Videoconference

Tuesday, 21 July

- WHO DG calls an urgent videoconference to address the increasing number of measures states are taking to reduce the transmission of H9N1.
- **Participants:** Representatives of all countries.
- **Issues:**
 - > What steps, if any, should be taken with the migrant crisis?

□ Appendix - Phase One

Background: Vaca Virus

May-June

In Esperanza there is an influenza outbreak. The primary location of reported cases are in Nivea.

- **May:** initial reports of mass culling of cattle stock after a mysterious affliction leads livestock to bleed from orifices and collapse.
- **Early June:** 40 human cases of an influenza outbreak in Esperanza are reported.
- **Late June:**
 - > 1000 human cases are reported of the influenza outbreak. The influenza outbreak is reported as the Vaca Virus.
 - > A government spokesperson reports that there are 200 deaths but media reports speculate that there have been 800 deaths from the Vaca Virus.
 - > The WHO requests an update on the situation.
 - > Esperanza refuses to cooperate with international bodies and refuses to send samples of the Vaca Virus.

Phase One

Excerpt from an article in The Washington Post, report by Sebastian Wu

Friday, 5 July

"Unofficially, the Mabaz cannot seek treatment in Esperanza's public hospitals. After yesterday's national address by President Lopez Dorso on the state's official channel, Corporación Esperanza de Televisión, a memorandum on the "Quarantine of the Undesirables" was issued to all state funded hospitals. Penalties against hospitals that are found to offer assistance to those infected include imprisonment of healthcare workers, a suspension of medical licenses and cuts to funding. This was made lawful under an amendment to the Institute Protocols.

...Adia Valeria Marcos took her six year old daughter, Gigi, to the Hospital Clínico de la Universidad de Esperanza. Valeria Marcos stood outside the hospital in the sweltering July heat of Nivea, holding the limp body of her daughter. Doctors told her that they could not treat her daughter. Valeria Marcos sat outside the hospital until she was removed by police. Her daughter died that evening. Valeria Marcos is now being treated in a community health centre. Her symptoms are consistent with the Vaca Virus".

Phase One

A collection of Tweets from @MirandaAcuna

Saturday, 6 July

- **Tweet One:** They are killing us. They once distracted us with beads and blankets covered in diseases to murder us and steal our land. Now they kill the lifeblood of our community and feed us poisoned beef. #Gigi
- **Tweet Two:** There is no question in my mind that the 'Vaca Virus' was devised in some lab in Azacion with the support of Lopez Dorso , to get rid of the Mabaz problem once and for all.
- **Tweet Three:** Women are 80% more likely to die from this disease. They are killing your mothers, daughters, sisters and wives. Will you defend us, will you save your women?
- **Tweet Four:** Where is the international community? Today it is the Mabaz of Esperanza, tomorrow it is your families killed by the Vaca Virus.

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Phase One

Facebook post by Doctors of Nivea (DoN)

Monday, 8 July

"We the Doctors of Nivea (DoN) proclaim the right of every person to access healthcare. We officially announce industrial action against these inhumane working conditions. We will no longer go to hospitals that do not serve their purpose in treating the ill. We will make sure that the citizens of Nivea receive treatment for any disease. Locations for treatment will be distributed in the coming days.

The Vaca Virus is not a political disease. It is an influenza outbreak. It does not discriminate the people it will infect. We will treat it like any other disease with medicine and patient care. If deaths can be avoided, we will help you avoid them.

We call for the international community to assist us in our struggle against the Vaca Virus.

Without action, today it is our families, tomorrow it may be your families".

Phase One

Press Release by Doctors Without Borders (MSF)

Monday, 8 July

“Doctors Without Borders pledges our support and resources to the Mabaz population of Esperanza.

The recent reports of an outbreak of the H9N1 Virus is of serious concern, not only to the population of Esperanza but for the global community.

We will send a delegation to Esperanza to support the healthcare workers that have taken industrial action and have setup their own makeshift health facilities. We urge the international community to support any effort to contain the H9N1 Virus”.

Phase One

Press Release by the Red Cross

Tuesday, 9 July

"Initial reports of the Vaca Virus detail that the virus is highly transmissible and has a high rate of fatality. Local reports from Esperanza detail the imprisonment and prosecution of healthcare workers that attempt to support and provide health services for the Mabaz population, under the Institute Protocols

The lack of support from the government of President Lopez Dorso and the recent pressures placed on the healthcare workers of Esperanza should be condemned by the international community."

Phase One

Statement by the Senior Science Officer of Esperanza

Tuesday, 9 July

"Without the support of the Office of the President, Esperanza is at risk of contracting the Vaca Virus. The worst sins of science have come at a time when we as scientists have allowed ourselves to become pawns of politicians or corrupt institutions.

The Vaca Virus is real. We need the support and resources of the government to measure and to record incidents of this virus to contain the threat.

We implore the government of Lopez Dorso to support us in our aims, and to support the scientists of Esperanza to do their job."

Phase One

The Council of Beef and Cattle Farmers of Esperanza (BCFE) (aka the Beef Lobby)

Wednesday, 10 July

"There is no conclusive evidence that the current virus outbreak in Nivea is linked to beef and cattle products. Numerous reports by domestic and international scientists state that the culling of beef and cattle products in June 2019 in Nivea were not related to the recent outbreak of a human based virus pathogen.

We believe that the continual use of the term Vaca Virus is therefore detrimental to the integrity of the beef and cattle industry in Esperanza.

We implore members of the media and the public to being referring to the virus as the H9N1 Virus in their public discussions of the virus".

Phase One

Statement by the Minister of Health

Friday, 12 July

"The Vaca Virus will spread outside of the Mabaz community. This is not an outbreak that will be continued to be contained to one community. This is a threat that will spread throughout Esperanza, unless decisive action is taken.

We, the Ministry of Health, stand with DoN . We are listening to the 80% of healthcare workers in Nivea who have left the hospitals to contain this threat before it is too late.

We implore the Office of the President to take action and support those who seek to heal the community. We work alongside all Esperanzans who want to achieve the health of their fellow citizen.

We ask the President to also work with the international community and contain this threat.

Without action, today it is our families, tomorrow it may be your families".

□ Appendix - Phase Two

Office of President Lopez-Dorso

Friday, 17 July

"The Office of the President can confirm widespread human outbreaks of the Vaca Virus. The outbreak is currently contained within the borders of Esperanza. The focal point of the outbreak remains Nivea and our government is working hard to contain the threat in the localities of Batista and Trubea .

9000 cases of the Vaca Virus have been reported across Esperanza. The rate of casualties have not been confirmed.

Initial laboratory results from the government are inconclusive and do not show any relationship to any known influenza strains where vaccines are currently available.

The epidemiologists at the Ministry of Health suggest the new strain is significantly virulent and is easily transmissible. Fact sheets on the Vaca Virus will be distributed shortly.

We ask for the support of the international community for resources, research and support in fighting the Vaca Virus".

Phase Two

A collection of Tweets from @MirandaAcuna

Friday, 17 July

- **Tweet One:** No one is talking about how the women of Esperanza are dying at a higher rate than anyone else in this epidemic. Is this how you treat your Mothers?
- **Tweet Two:** Only when they started dying, did they take notice?
- **Tweet Three:** They have the official rates of the dead. They are not releasing it. Since when have genocidal maniacs listed their kill score?
- **Tweet Four:** Prosecute them in every criminal court the world has to offer. They are killing us. They are killing us for our land.
- **Tweet Five:** They will offer us a vaccine, next. It will sterilize us. They will not quit until they rob our land of our descendants.
- **Tweet Six:** Do not take their medicine! We will find our own vaccine!

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Phase Two

News Report from Julia Shafak Khan of the Guardian

Saturday, 18 July

"There are preliminary reports of arson attacks by the supporters of Lopez Dorso that have been said to target Mabaz in Nivea. A community health center that was responsible for the wellbeing of 200 patients afflicted with the Vaca Virus was said to be subject to one such attack. All the patients in the clinic were said to have died, along with the clinic's 20 healthcare workers and volunteers...

The community health center, located in an underground bunker, had few means of escape.

According to eyewitness reports, "they stood at the top of the stairs, even if they could have escaped the fire, those bastards pushed them back into the flames. They laughed watching them die. They are demons".

Nivea's Attorney General has stated that investigations are underway but that initial investigations by the police and fire department suggest "no suspicious circumstances".

"Unfortunately, even though the hospitals are open again, people continue to go to these rogue doctors and medical facilities. These places are not built to be hospitals so sometimes the wiring goes wrong. We will say prayers for those who have been lost and we urge citizens with symptoms of the Vaca Virus to go to the hospitals".

Phase Two

A collection of Tweets from @OfficeOfThePresident

Sunday, 19 July

- **Tweet One:** Do you see how the international media lies about us? My supporters as murderers? Fuck those lying journalist dogs. #FakeNews
- **Tweet Two:** We open up the hospitals to these ingrates and they still call us murderers. When we have the vaccine, only those who are loyal to Esperanza will be the ones to receive it.
- **Tweet Three:** The Pope has condemned me and said I do not have Jesus' love in my heart. Yet, I have so much love for the Mabaz that I wish to send them all to meet with our saviour .
- **Tweet Four:** Fire is cleansing. What a way to cleanse Esperanza of the Vaca Virus...
- **Tweet Five:** Fuck Azacion . Fuck those dirty fucking dogs for turning their backs on us. We won't accept a dollar from them.

Phase Two

Official memorandum from the Ministry of Health of Azacion

Sunday, 19 July

"The State of Azacion reports that we have 1000 cases of the Vaca Virus. We currently have experienced 400 fatalities. The whole of Azacion mourns with the families of those citizens that we have lost.

As a precaution we ask all workers and citizens of Esperanza to leave Azacion , until the threat of the Vaca Virus can be contained. Until Azacion can contain the threat of the Vaca Virus, Azacion will no longer permit entry to citizens of Esperanza to our state.

In consultation with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Trade, we will also immediately cease the import of beef and cattle products from the state of Esperanza.

If the PEF funds cannot be secured for any reason, Azacion will contribute \$50 million to the State of Esperanza to contain the threat of the Vaca Virus. We pray that this outbreak will not continue to grow.

We will work with the international community to contain the threat of the Vaca Virus in our borders".

Phase Two

The Council of Beef and Cattle Farmers of Esperanza (BCFE) (aka the Beef Lobby)

Monday, 20 July

"The BCFE receives the news of Azacion's moratorium on the import of Beef and Cattle products from Esperanza with great sadness.

Despite various reports and precautions taken by the beef and cattle farmers of Esperanza, Azacion has without basis dealt a blow to our industry. There remains no conclusive evidence that this disease is derived from the beef and cattle products of Esperanza.

We are confident that other states will not impose any similar conditions on the import of the high quality beef and cattle products of Esperanza. We will continue our conversations with those states and stakeholders to dissuade them of their concerns".

Phase Two

Press Release by the Red Cross

Monday, 20 July

“Official reports by the government of Azacion and Esperanza on the rate of infection of the Vaca Virus within their population are believed to understate the extent of the outbreak.

According to epidemiologists with MSF and the WHO, the estimate of the rate of infection of the Vaca Virus in Esperanza is approximately 60 000 persons and in Azacion it is closer to 10 000 persons. We urge the government of Esperanza and Azacion to work with the international community with openness and transparency”.