



VOICES FROM COMMUNITIES

LIVING NEAR MINES IN
SOUTH AFRICA ON THE IMPACT OF
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC





In this booklet we present the voices of communities living in the shadow of mines across several provinces in South Africa - since the coronavirus pandemic emerged in March 2020. The booklet will be followed by others that will continue to cover communities' stories from the whole of Southern Africa. The pandemic and the lockdowns that followed plunged communities into even greater suffering and hardship, a position they have been in for several decades now since mining descended upon them.

The experiences and observations of community activists are reflected through powerful and moving statements, including the pain, the anger, the desperation – and the courage, determination and activist action. The photographs, taken with cell phones, bear gritty visual testimony to the daily lives of community members under the menacing shadow of the pandemic and lockdowns.

These reports emerge from the Bench Marks Foundation programme to support informed, skillful, sustained and independent community action.

Forty-four activists participated in the 2020 Activist Action Training Programme from thirty-two villages, townships and informal settlements in Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West Province and Gauteng.

The ongoing work of community monitors can be viewed here:
<http://communitymonitors.net>

October 2020

A powerful community grows when we build a network of community care.

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This booklet reflecting the lives and views of mining impacted communities comes at a time when now more than ever the voices of communities must not only be heard but also acted upon. Now is the time for this to happen with great urgency. The devastating impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on top of an already horrific situation for communities will be with us for a long time and calls for rigorous action. The first step is to listen to what community members are saying and this booklet is an important contribution! I wish to acknowledge all those who made it possible and especially community activists who wrote the reports and continue to monitor in the communities on a daily basis. Their reports are the authentic voices of communities and are extremely important. I wish our community activists and monitors every strength moving forward in the struggle for an alternative and better world.

Contents

1.	Community thoughts on Covid-19 as a disease -----	4
2.	Struggling to implement the hygiene and social distancing measures -----	9
3.	Experiences and the impact of lockdowns -----	12
	• How the lockdowns were enforced-----	12
	• The impact on livelihoods-----	14
	• The effects of lockdowns on healthcare -----	22
	• Education -----	26
	• Violence against women -----	28
	• Impact on culture, church and funerals -----	30
4.	Experience of government relief measures -----	32
5.	What Covid has revealed: ongoing struggles -----	37
6.	New struggles and experimentations-----	40

The work presented here is part of the Bench Marks Foundation Community Monitors School, Independent Problem Solving Service and Independent Capacity Building Fund programmes aimed at supporting communities to speak in their own voice and take independent action for change.

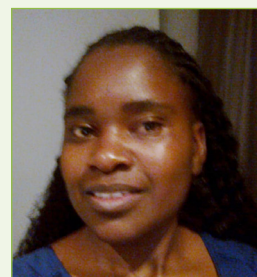
The programme is coordinated by three community based activists - Susan Moraba, Olebogeng Motene and Mmathapeo Thobejane supported by a Bench Marks technical team.



Mmathapeo Thobejane



Olebogeng Motene



Susan Moraba

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*We are in fear,
day in day out*

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1. COMMUNITY THOUGHTS ON COVID-19 AS A DISEASE



The first cases of Covid-19 in South Africa were in early March 2020. After that community transmission took place largely in circuits of people with the first hospitalisations and deaths happening in private hospitals. In July and August national infection rates peaked and so did deaths, with fears that poor, working class communities would be hit hardest.

So how was the virus perceived by the communities and did that change from March to September?

NELLY NKOSI, ERMELO, MPUMALANGA, JUNE

It affected me in such a way that my life has changed within a blink of an eye. I am no longer living freely and happy. I am in fear day in day out. Pity I can't even identify the person who has the Virus, because it is hidden amongst the community members near and far. People I used to spend time with, we no longer able to trust one another. We keep on reminding each other about the Virus that has no cure. I am afraid to sneeze or cough near someone.... because I don't know what the reaction in return will be. I feel like I am dead while alive.

RONALD MHLAKAZA, VOSMAN, EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA, JUNE

I'm a father .. I'm a big brother .. I'm the bread winner I have people whom they depend on me it's difficult for me to stay home doing nothing, I have to provide for them but how?

It's hard to protect yourself and someone from something that is invisible. You don't know when it's gonna strike.

SUSAN MORABA, MAANDAGSHOEK, LIMPOPO, JUNE

This virus and the lockdown came as a shock and I was confused as to what to do. How safe am I? How will I protect my family? This virus was something new and its symptoms were similar to other illnesses we know. Illnesses which are not serious, but this virus was very dangerous. I couldn't understand. Confusion was all we had.

We are trying to be safe by distancing ourselves, washing our hands always and wearing face masks when going outside the yard like town, shops, getting water and wood.

The members of my community are confused as they say they have never seen anyone with the illness. They say the Corona virus doesn't exist, that it is just an evil spirit sent to haunt people and test their faith.

I interviewed a local mine worker in his early forties who said "I am not scared of the virus as I know that in this province or rather in this district we don't have the virus and people are still safe. The area is hot and we have traditional herbs which we can drink and stay strong and not get ill".

TOKELO MATUPU MAHLAKOANE, MOROKE FEKUTLON, FETAKGOMO, LIMPOPO, JUNE

This covid-19 pandemic came as a joke, confusing and distracting all plans I was having. As an activist I used to meet with different people to share some opinions and learn from each other. So since March when the covid-19 pandemic started everything has stuck and I personally don't know if I'm still in the right track or what. It took me time to adjust with the new regulations that our government announced. So now I'm used to it and I'm starting to build myself on how to look after myself in this new world - because there are things that we learn and see things in different ways.

MAGARET MOLOMO, MASODI VILLAGE, MOKOPANE, LIMPOPO, JUNE

I am disturbed when I hear about so many people dying around the world. What hurts me most is to see most of our community members they don't take this virus seriously. Children are playing openly without protection. Some families are still calling family gatherings without fear. There is no social distancing, no protection of masks or sanitation. How can a family celebrate a birthday party for a young kid as little as year old and yet invite other children to come and celebrate with them.

OLEBOGENG MOTENE, RUSTENBURG, NORTH WEST PROVINCE, JULY

Each day the virus affects someone close to us and their stories are different. Rustenburg stats go up rapidly, we are the epicentre of the North West Province. One of the biggest problems with regards to testing positive is the stigma

it comes with, and that has had some people opting to keeping the results to themselves and even symptoms. My close friend shares his obsessions of working in the mining industry and how employees are behaving. He noticed that some people who have tested positive just kept it to themselves and submitted notices that they are working from home. Some lie when going through the daily screening to avoid being sent for testing. And the medical aid schemes are not helping because it's said if you are tracked down after being in contact with a person who tests positive they pay once. This came to his attention after one of his colleagues was to be tested because his colleague and husband were positive and she tested negative. Two weeks later she started developing the symptoms and was sent to get tested but the medical aid refused to authorise the test.

My close friend had what he called really bad flu and after 3 days of medication he was feeling better and lost his smell and taste senses and went back to the doctor with no temperature at all by the way. The doctor advised a covid-19 test and he went and had one done. The results came in positive. He was given Vitamin C and D and 10 days of isolation and he then recovered fully. On our daily conversation he said "you know the virus is like a ghost, I did everything right, washed my hands, sanitized, took vitamins and drank lengana but still it got me. One can't be too careful especially in the mine environment, but we have to work for money"

I asked how is the family responded to the news and he said they were afraid of him. He feels that screening is not enough because one doesn't always carry the symptoms and people are not always honest. Let's do our part and follow the rules, take vitamins and avoid stigmatising people who tests positive as we kill their spirit to fight off the virus.

TSHEPO SIBIYA, STEELPOORT, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO

He said that Covid-19 to him it came as blessing in disguise, he is sad that people are affected and and that people are dying but he got a job for the first time because of Covid-19. Now he is working for a bus company to sanitize and disinfect the bus.

He said " My contract it based on Covid-19 so what am I supposed to say or do, who wants his contract to end. I am sorry if I hurt you somehow but this is a sad truth I am talking about."

CHRISTINAH MOGOBYE, SEFIKILE VILLAGE, MOSES KOTANE, NORTH WEST

I am living in fear and always wondering when it will blow over.

It affected my family life in general and in our social life. In our society, there is a strong communication spirit and there is unity. Normally when there are funerals, weddings or any social gathering we help one another, we comfort each other, and we give support in different ways. Covid19 has denied us this. Ceremonies have been cancelled except for funerals. Death is natural so it really affected many families including mine. We could not bid our farewell to our loved ones.

GOITSE GABORONE, MOTLHABE VILLAGE, MOSES KOTANE, NORTH WEST

This pandemic affected me so deeply that my partner broke up with me from fear that I may have a corona virus. I had an extreme flu on 24 March after everyone been aware of covid-19. Even my family were afraid that I may have been infected with covid-19.

EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA: INTERVIEW

I am a cashier, working at Pick and Pay. That puts me at risk every time I go to work. But what worries me the most is that I might get infected by people without knowing and when I get back home I may infect my family. So I try my best to be safe as possible and sanitise my hands and don't touch my face at all.

MMATHAPELO THOBEJANE, DITWEBELENG VILLAGE, LIMPOPO, SEPTEMBER

Since the start of the lockdown there have been many deaths in the communities. What worries us is that we don't really know if these deaths are Covid 19 related. Most of the people don't want to take their loved ones to hospital when they are sick because they believe that public hospital don't take good care of the patients and also the fear of hearing the bad news about this pandemic. Some believe that Covid 19 is treated easily at home were you have the loved ones taking care of you.

The issue is that people die from home and now the community will never find out if the cause was due to covid-19 and now that there are so many deaths it really brings frustration

Now we have moved to level 1 of lockdown and more people are allowed to attend the funerals for which we need to be careful because of the above mentioned subject.

I think we are not safe at all as communities we might see an increase again of covid-19 and that will put us on risk.

GILBERT MOELA, MONAMETSE VILLAGE, ATOK, LIMPOPO, AUGUST

The pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis, with countries increasing their health spending budgets. With respect to mining, many governments have established strict rules as a condition for workers to return to work. However

they have not extended those strict rules to communities affected by mining.

In small mining affected communities like Monametse Village in Limpopo Province, the unknown effect of Covid-19 has left many community members with unanswered questions and concerns. While mines arguably have the capabilities to manage the requirements regarding employee health including screening, testing and quarantine facilities which they claim they have extended to communities affected by their operations, Monametse Village is yet to see and or receive any assistance from the mine in terms of screening, testing and contact tracing processes.

Although amongst the residents there is a big confusion within the community, there are those who believe that as a regulatory process the mine must and should ensure that not only the safety and well-being of their employees is considered. They believe that they're part of the sector and therefore they should receive the same treatment as mining.

MMABORE MOGASHOA, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO, AUGUST

Covid19 cases are increasing, people who work at the companies, mines and shops are not sure if they are safe. What happens if employers find out that one of the employees is infected? Do they continue working or not? What happens to the person who tested positive? What happens to those who were working together with him/her? Do employers keep quiet about the cases that happens in their workplace? Are employees scared to talk because they don't want to lose their jobs? Is profit put first before the health of the people?

People need income to survive but their health comes first. We want the pandemic to end and employers should save the lives of their employees too by following the right procedures after finding out that some employees have been infected.

**KGOTHASO HUMA, THEKWANE,
RUSTENBURG, BOJANALA DISTRICT, NORTH
WEST, MAY**

As from the 1st of June the country will be going into Level 3 of the lockdown regulations. All industries will be active and back into business. In my village there are still people who don't wear masks, people who still don't practice social distancing and some of those people are working in the mines while some go to town regularly with a high possibility of contacting the virus.

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They will bury us

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2. STRUGGLING TO IMPLEMENT HYGIENE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES



Across the country the government on the advice of health experts, tried to slow down the rate of Covid 19 infections by promoting hygienic practices and social distancing. They encouraged people to wash their hands as often as possible, to wear masks covering their noses and mouths and to keep distances of at least 1.5 metres apart.

But what was the experience of communities?

**PROMISE MABILO, EMPUMELELWENI,
EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA, JULY**

Water is life but not in EMalahleni Empumelweni since the lockdown started. Only in level 5 did they show concern and that they care. Now is a different story - people are back to the stream to get water. Even the Jojo tanks they placed in some areas are always empty and nobody knows when are they coming, so people don't wait for that, not knowing for sure they will come or not.

The saddest part is that we are still seeing numbers growing for affected people with Covid 19 and when I visited the stream people were not even wearing their mask. It is not real safe but what can they do, we have to wash our hands regularly. When I asked them why they didn't wear their mask they just laughed and say when you think of the line and rushing can you think of that mask. They will bury us because this is maybe what our government want.

**RAPULE MOILOA, VUSIMUZI, TEMBISA,
EKURHULENI, MAY**

This morning I realised that the water pressure is relaxed and I had to fill buckets with water while the government has been advising people to wash their hands regularly or sanitize their hands. Now there's no water and maybe people were not even aware that water is being cut off now that Ekurhuleni is one of the metro's that was spotted as one of the hot spots. The question is with what will the people wash their hands regularly when they don't have a sanitizer, for it is not every one who afford can afford a sanitizer.

People in Tembisa pay rates and taxes every month but there is no water. Many people prefer washing their hands with water and soap and this must be done while the tap is running because this is the only way to have clean hands. But to my surprise there is no water.

We are facing a deadly virus that must be washed out from our hands every time but without water we don't know what will happen because many people don't have sanitizers. The question is does the municipality care about the health of the people. At least they were supposed to have announced to alert the community so that people can fill the buckets with water.

SIPHO ZWANE, ERMELO, KWAZULU NATAL

As a young person I was looking forward to make a difference in my mom's house this year, but now Covid 19 changed all that. But I have hopes and faith that things are going to get better. Everyone is living in fear, life has changed and it feels like we're in prison in our own country. We must at all times wear a mask when we going out to meet other people, wash our hands with soap and water regularly and use an alcohol sanitizer. I am a bit worried about those who don't have drinkable water, how do they cope?

**RONALD MHLAKAZA, VOSMAN,
EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA**

Problem is that this pandemic is something new to all of us. We also have problems of distancing because we have tenants in the yard.

The sad part is I'm staying in an area where we don't have electricity. We are still relying on coal and we are forced to go to the nearest mine and get coal since it's cold and we are using the coal to cook and warm our water. How can we not go out because we need coal?

**INTERVIEW: MADADENI, MARULA,
MPUMALANGA**

Water is a serious issue although the Nkomazi municipality is trying to supply it every second day. It is a problem as if they finish the water before the water truck comes back it means they have to use the wheelbarrows to fetch it.

**BUTI BOTOPELA, IKEMELENG, NORTH WEST,
AUGUST**

The Bolane community is an informal settlement made up by mine workers who opted for living out instead of hostel accommodation over 40 years ago. The settlement is located in Kroondal just 9 km outside the Rustenburg CBD

The Bolane community and concerned residents are not happy with the shortage of basic human needs such as proper roads, electricity, running water and sanitation.

We get water delivered once or twice in a week from the municipality, but during this pandemic time we have to buy water from people driving around the community selling water. This was better before Covid 19 as we used to buy water with R5 per 25 Litres now it's R10 and if you don't have the money, you have to walk to the Ikemeleng community which is +-3 Km away from Bolane to fetch water. It's not safe for women and children as they can get raped easily and also for us men as we come from work tired and have to walk more than 3 Km to fetch water.

**MAGARET MOLOMO, MASODI VILLAGE,
MOKOPANE, LIMPOPO**

I interviewed a community member who made his living by doing a small garden at his mother's back yard. He complains he is not able to buy seedlings for planting. He also tells about the challenge of water that is controlled by electricity. If there is no electricity, then there is no water.

**DAVID GAANAKGOMO, KLERKSDORP, NORTH
WEST, AUGUST**

People are not social distancing at Level Two. Was it a mistake? Since level two people started to change their behaviour. They are now living as if the novel coronavirus is no longer existing. Social distancing is no longer observed, even the numbers which were required at the funerals are no longer taken into consideration. As for social life, people are now socializing without any consideration. If you go to the taverns they are always full, without face masks and no social distancing. Even the officials are scared to control them.

Come to think about it, it is better for the economy of the country to come back to normal at the expense of people's lives? The leaders thought of the country's economy instead of the lives of human beings. Even if one is cautious one will never know. I pity our essential workers who risked their lives to save our own. If only some of the businesses were not opened like where people gather. Now it seems like the lockdown was a waste of time and money. The officials are scared to go to the taverns to check if lockdown regulations are followed but instead go to the churches and funerals because there people are obedient.

**TUMI MOKGATLE, PHOKENG, RUSTENBURG,
NORTH WEST, JUNE**

The South African State President summarily ended the lockdown after announcing that alcohol will be on sale from the 1st of June. Yesterday there were scenes reminiscent of the festive season where people would go on a drinking spree. Today after a funeral of one gentleman, people were back at their old ways. Many were seen at various homes having a jolly time. Some tavern owners indicated that many insist on buying after 17:00 which is the official closing time of trade. The buzz and vibe is on now. During level 5 and 4 the streets were quiet. Speeding and blasting sound systems from cars are back, the lockdown is effectively over.

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Pain for the Poor

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3. EXPERIENCES AND IMPACT OF THE LOCKDOWNS

On 21 March 2020 the government declared a national state of disaster as Covid infections increased. To slow the rate of infections in the country it said that it was imposing a lockdown, in which people had to stay at home and that schools and non-essential businesses had to close and that all gatherings, including funerals, were banned. Government would assess the infection rate and the state of the healthcare system in the country and slowly shift from the most extreme lockdown, level 5, to less harsh lockdowns when appropriate.

How did communities experience the lock downs?

“Fear the soldiers and SAPS”: How the lockdowns were enforced



The government relied on the SABC and other media to inform the people together with its big business and official labour partners in institutions such as NEDLAC. It has also consulted the main religious bodies. But vast numbers of the poor and the working class fall outside these networks. So in addition to trying to get a buy-in of the South African people, government also relied on the police and army to ensure that people complied.

VUSI MABASO, VOSMAN, EMALAHLENI

I am stuck in this prison called my home. I am not able to go even to the shop as I fear that the soldiers and SAPS are harassing and killing innocent people in streets.

In the beginning of level 5 we lost a family member. The SAPS and soldiers counted people who came to comfort us and chased those exceeding the number. On the funeral day it was like war. People from the community came in numbers to fight the police. The family had to intervene to calm down the situation. It was so bad. This pandemic has caused so much trouble financially. I am not employed. No one is working at home. We feed ourselves with the family selling fruit and vegetables.

LAURHA CUMBA, A MOZAMBIQUE CITIZEN

"I came into South Africa illegally in 2008 from the area called Nyambane in Mozambique. I came here with a mind of making a living for me and my family.... Then I started to hear people talking about something called Corona virus, and SA's president announced a lockdown. My small business needed to close down for 21 days as the president said. I told myself that 21 days will pass soon. I sat in my room and waited for the 21 days to pass. To my surprise before the end of 21 days of lockdown the president announces the extension... and I was like oh my word there comes the problem. I don't have income, how am I going to pay rent and what am I going to eat because I don't have money to buy food!? I had no income and I had no one to go to and ask for any help.

The soldiers were all over so I had to stay home. When the small businesses restriction were lifted with a condition of having working permits, that affected me. To have a permit ID/passport documents was needed and I hadn't any of those. That extended the closing period of my business. There was no money to send for my kids, no money for rent and no money for food. I wish I had gone back home but still it wouldn't make any difference."

VICTORIA MAKGOO, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO

Today a policeman took us out from the taxi. They arrested the taxi driver because he left the taxi rank at 15.50 and not 16:00. We were forced to walk a long distance back to the taxi rank. This is a story from my neighbour who is from Burgersfort. town.

BENERD NGOMANE, NKOMAZI, MADADENI, MPUMALANGA

A family member passed on the month of May and the family was not allowed a gathering of more than fifty people. We had to prepare permits to travel daily instead of staying with them until the day of funeral and that affected the travel costs. The challenges were the law enforcement officers on pushing us to comply no matter what we were faced with. Only fifty were allowed to enter the graveyard and it made us feel like the law is against us.

“We can’t stay indoors and die of hunger”. The impact on livelihoods



Prior to Covid-19 most people in these communities relied on piece work or forms of informal trading for their livelihoods. Even in the mining areas of the North West piece work was the norm. Under the lockdown people are unable to go out to find work and this can mean starvation for many. It is difficult for people to observe the lockdown when they have to find ways of putting food on the table. Waste pickers, for example are prevented from working and even if they ignore the lockdown the scrapyards where they sell their recyclables are closed during the lockdown. Also shops and taxis put up prices. Thus further increasing the likelihood of hunger.

MMATHAPELO THOBEJANE, DITWEBELENG VILLAGE, LIMPOPO

There’s one thing that I realized during the covid-19, it has shown us that South Africa is in poverty and most people are without jobs and most have never worked in their life. The question is if this is something that resulted from loss of jobs during Covid 19 or if this pandemic has revealed it. I was shocked yesterday when seeing people at the post office at Burgersfort, all of them were fighting to get in to get their R350 Covid grants. This situation is because people are poor and have no jobs. I wish the government can do something about it. And it is a lie if they can say this is the results of the pandemic. People are poor and they have been poor. This means the government needs to deal with the unemployment rate accordingly.

THOKOZILE MNTAMBO FROM THULANI SNAKE-PARK (SOWETO):

Waste pickers in the area still continue to look for recyclables because that’s the only way they make a living. It’s really hard for them to survive in this lockdown because scrapyards are closed and no one is assisting them with food parcels. They can’t stay indoors and die of hunger. They must go outside and try to find something to eat. This is one of the most vulnerable townships, with low-income black women and children living with disabilities the most marginalised and displaced. They will suffer the highest risk of devastating losses from covid-19.

**AMO TSHABALALA, SEFIKILE VILLAGE,
MOSES KOTANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY,
NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

For people who are depending on piece jobs its hard for them now to put bread on the table as we all know that there is no movement. Builders also got affected by this lockdown as they also can't do anything and we all know what that means, no food on the table again. Now, how many homes have no food on the table because of corona virus?

**PROMISE B MABILO, EMPUMELELWENI,
EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA**

A lot of people around the area are not working at all and are depending on a social grant. Some are not working and don't have the social grant. They depend on piece jobs and it is a very difficult time really.

Those who don't have pay and are relying on grants also are in a bad situation, as staying at home you have to spend more than usual on eating and the grant is not enough to sustain the situation. The days of the lockdown are not moving and try something to survive. This is what is happening in our area in Mpumalanga, eMalahleni.

**TINTSWALO MNISI, EMPUMELELWENI,
EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA**

The Pakistanis that my father used to get credit from and payed back month end were closed and the one that was operating during this lockdown were at Mariti and he had to take a taxi to get to him. And the local taxi had increased fares by R5 which is R15 and when he got there he found a long queue just waiting to buy 50kg super maize meal with R350 that we used to buy it with R280...so many things are expensive. We can't even afford and we can't even eat healthy food that can boost our immune system which is very vital in this time of need.

Restrictions on the numbers of people that can travel in taxis during the lockdown also cause problems for people. Social distancing requirements mean that there are long queues at shops.

**MARAPONG, LEPHALALE MUNICIPALITY,
LIMPOPO**

Spaza Shops are closed and they are forced to buy at Marapong Complex and they are forced to stand on the queue for more than 1 hour before they can be able to buy. The reason of taking so long is because they are using the strategy of 1 meter away from the next person and they only take ten people after some several minutes.

**MMABORE MOGASHOA, JANE FURSE PLAZA,
MAKHUDUTHAMAGA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY,
LIMPOPO**

Food store queues are very long but people are maintaining the distance and workers from the shops come and check if people are standing in the right positions. Elderly people were taken out of the queues to the shops which is a good thing to do. I also saw few trucks delivering to the stores. People are also selling fruits, vegetables, tobacco, salt and other food outside the gates. There is one shop on the main road that gives customers wipes to use and most of the people are not wearing masks. The only problem is people take off the masks and put them back. Another problem is people who are done shopping had to sit down at the taxi rank with their groceries waiting for taxis to come in the evening. If there were taxis maybe after 12/13h00 (taxis in the morning, after 12h00 and 16h00) the number of the people at Plaza will be less.

MPHO TJALE, MOKOPANE, LIMPOPO

There was a high visibility of community members at Mahwelereng shopping complex where there were only two supermarkets operating. There were also few police officials at the shopping complex, community members were arranged nicely on the queue and some were seated on the chairs. Taking the social distance into consideration, only 50 customers were allowed to get into the shop at once and they were given 5 minutes to get whatever they needed so that other customers can also have a chance to do their shopping.

Transport became a very serious challenge for customers who finished doing their shopping after 9am, as public transport stops operating at 9am and continued again at 16:00 in the evening. Some members had to walk a distance from 200 metres to 1 kilometre away from road-blocks conducted by traffic police officials and to hitch hike with any car that might take them to their respective homestead. Other members had to walk such distances carrying too many plastic bags of groceries.

MAGARET MOLOMO, MASODI VILLAGE, MOKOPANE, LIMPOPO

Spaza shops are open and we are able to go buy bread due to the transport operating for those who are able to go to town. The transport started today for those who get grants and they were able to go to town. Some of us are depending on that income which is a challenge. Government must provide food parcel to help the poor.

PROMISE MABILO, EMALAHLENI, VOSMAN, EZINAMBENI, MPUMALANGA

The locations and Empumelelweni are facing a big struggle of shops not opened and the abuse of being threatened and being locked up if found on the streets during patrols. The shops are closed and there is no stock as the shop owners are not allowed to go buy stock in town, they are told that they need permits to open their shops and also need permits to go to stock goods.



INTERVIEW: THENJIWE MAVUSO

“COVID19 has personally affected me negatively in such a way that everyday life is not the same anymore, physically and mentally (stress). Financially for my family due to COVID 19 there’s a big gap that I don’t think will be filled anytime soon. We used to survive with money from selling food, but now even those few rands is no more.

Now it’s winter I can’t even buy myself a pair of socks to warm myself up. Prices are rising. Some essentials are expensive, even if it has gone up with R2, that R2 would have made a difference because I would buy at least 2 tomatoes to eat with my family.

MARIA MADONSELA, EZINAMBENI, EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA, INTERVIEW: INTERVIEW - MAPULE MDHLULI

My family is affected a lot from this pandemic as my father is working as a bricklayer and he works when he is called or asked by people to do some work for them. So in these stressful times of lockdown we were unable to go out and get some jobs from the neighbourhood and that leads to no income to bring in the house. We cannot get paid without doing anything,

My mom is the only person who is having a job in the house, but also she was getting half salary payment as she was staying at home during the lockdown.

The pandemic affected my family especially when the lockdown started from stage 5. We were not able to get most of the stuff we used to have every month and we were not eating our meals the same way we used to.

BENERD NGOMANE, NKOMAZI, MADADENI, MPUMALANGA

I was at Voslorus in Gauteng Province busy with my colleagues when the covid19 started. The start of the lockdown was announced and we had to leave our activities and rush back home to be at a safe and right place. We travelled back to Mpumalanga at Madadeni (home). From the start of the lockdown up to the current we never went back to resume our activities. Loss of clients and reliability on them is the biggest fear, our marketing strategy is affected, saved money is used and the prices of the raw materials is increasing.

Taking care of the movement of kids is just like a dog barking on the elephant. Kids can’t understand how to stay in a closed environment.

On kids are not going to school and this created another challenge of food at home, while the local shops increased the prices. The kids gathering on the street for playing.

No active business. We resorted to sewing masks and had to sell them cheap for the community to benefit and also to get the petty cash to buy bread. Transport (taxi) and food prices are increasing.

Mrs Yvonne Molapo (not her real name) is the mother of three children. The first two children are suffering from sinus and asthma. It is always a burden over her shoulder to nurse her children during winter. The lockdown brought relief to the children as most mines and industries were not fully operational. But life was very difficult as their income comes from worn car tyres and the husband could not risk his life by opening the service station. This brought hunger to the family. “If it was not for my brother we could have been dead of starvation “ added Yvonne with tears on her face.



**HLABIWA LETHLAKA, WATERBERG DISTRICT,
LEPHALALE MUNICIPALITY, MARAPONG
TOWNSHIP, LIMPOPO**

The outbreak in March 2020 has affected me very badly. I have my company that works in different communities and for now I am not able to make any income because people lost jobs. I don't have peace of mind because my kids are not going to school anymore and I have to look after them when they are playing.

My family is not able to visit each other. When someone is sick we are not allowed to visit that person at hospital and that create a stress to that person and us.

We buy more groceries because everyone is here with us. There are unnecessary arguments because of stresses and pressure.

**INTERVIEW: ABRAHAM NUKERI A LOCAL
BUSINESSMAN FROM OUTSIDE SOUTH
AFRICA**

He did not have a chance to go home as borders were closed. His life is badly affected by the situation because he lives under strict regulations

and his business needs groups of people. He can't afford to buy food because of price adjustment. He is struggling with basic needs such as water and health measures that say we must wash hands frequently.

He was planning to have a wedding but ended up cancelling because his family from Botswana won't be able to attend.

We started to limit unnecessary needs and we don't buy food that costs a lot so that our money can last. This is because the outbreak of the corona virus affected our work. Some are getting paid half salaries. There's no good life at all.

**AMO TSHABALALA, SEFIKILE VILLAGE,
MOSES KOTANE, NORTH WEST**

Now that there is this Pandemic (COVID19) things are worse. I am not working, I don't have a source of income and I won't be making any other plans like I used to be before because I have to stay home and save the lives of the others and mine too.

I am an Activist and my line of duty requires me to travel, ask questions, investigate, take photos, solve problems, convene meetings etc. I can't do all of that. It feels like something is missing and like all that am doing is incomplete, if you know what I mean. So it delays everything that I have to accomplish, but with the help of the community at large I am hoping that this COVID19 ends very soon so that I can do what I like most.

My life is on hold. I can't do anything and go everywhere as I used to. I can't attend funerals or ceremonies. As leaders of the community we should be seen in those kinds of ceremonies so it is hard not to be seen.

It has affected my family badly. We have one bread winner and now she is at home. And it means there is no source of income and we are back to square one. We can't attend family funerals. Going to town to buy essentials is difficult as the public transport has times for when to travel.

I interviewed a female mine worker: "Right now I feel like am being left out because most of the people are called at work and I am left because I am a woman. I am the only bread winner at home

and I also have children. In terms of finance it very bad. We can't do piece jobs. It is hard and difficult to deal with this COVID19. I wish it ends now.

I interviewed an unemployed male youth: "Life has been difficult but now with this COVID19 it is worse. We can't do anything, can't go anywhere and this makes me frustrated. It is like this COVID19 is watching me in everything that I do. My girlfriend getting fed up of me not working. I am about to lose the woman that I love because of this COVID19. Everything to do with COVID19 it is a mess. In terms of finance, I never had enough money so now I have nothing and I can't do anything about that.

BUDA LENTSWE, MOTLHABE, MOSES KOTANE, NORTH WEST

I have never been in a situation like the one I am currently in. I come from a rural area 85km from the nearest town, Rustenburg. It is so hard to access a lot of things or have knowledge about some things. I have always been interested in being a DJ, so I have been buying a sound system bit by bit. I rented some of my system to local taverns and I make money on weddings,



tombstone ceremonies and ditlhomamiso (Baptism ceremonies). But since lockdown I'm not making any money. Lockdown regulations stopped taverns from operating and there are no gigs. At my home we are a family of 6 - myself, my mother and 4 siblings. I happen to be the older one. It is not easy to survive.

DAVID MATJILA, LEPHALALE, LIMPOPO

Almost half of my life I was depending on going to the dumping site to collect waste like plastic, steel and tins - that's what I do for survival. Then Covid-19 came to our lives with a bang unexpectedly. We were restricted not to go out and I felt like a prisoner in my shack with no means of survival. I remember sleeping 5 full days on an empty stomach, no food and only water was my meal. If it wasn't for the NGO to help us with food parcels, house breaking had crossed my mind.

Life is not fair to some of us poor black people. Why do we have to suffer like this?

MOSHABI SELOWA, MONAMETSE, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

The pandemic crisis of covid-19 put everyone's life at risk. The first day this pandemic was announced through social media and on different networks it sounded like a joke and I did not believe that it will be serious case. The lockdown did not allow anyone to move out from our yards. I felt stressed without any direction of what to do from the first day of lockdown and my family and I struggled a lot to survive.

There was hardship for many in the community. Government tried by all means to supply food to their citizens but that was never sufficient to help the poor of the poorest. Mines shut down and workers became unemployed. Being one of those listed on the unemployment data base became a serious issue on how to survive for my family.

Life became difficult for me up to the fourth stage of the lockdown and I started trying a different way to survive, not even knowing where to look. We struggled to get enough food to survive for a month. Prices in our local shops began to rise. I was also concerned that we did not have good health facilities. The sad part is that the pandemic crisis happened during winter in our country.

PRINCE MABOTHA – INTERVIEW

Prince is one of the community youth who lost his job because the mines closed and is on care and maintenance. Life became difficult for Prince, for example, money to fulfil his destiny, like future family plans. However, the COVID relief funds offered to him meant nothing to his life demands. He and his family found it difficult to survive on the relief funds (food security). The government provide grants to the poor of the poorest, but the more food prices are raised up left, right and centre, the more money has to be spent on food.

DAVID KODIBONA – INTERVIEW

Mr Kodibona indicated that as an elder person, he is seriously affected, as is most of his generation. He indicated that elders are living with sickness like coughing especially during wintertime and they now live with fear of death. Family life was affected seriously. Those who lost close family members failed to give them last respects due to covid-19 rules to control spreading of the pandemic. They were not allowed to go to funerals. The family suffered a lot as they depend on the grant which was taken up by food price increases.

Both the people I interviewed understood they had to stay safe and put on masks until the end of the lockdown. They mentioned again how people must stay safe by sanitizing and washing our hands regularly as per the covid principles, and also by social distancing.

MOLIN MOSAEMEDI, MOGABANE VILLAGE, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO, JULY

All these years I was not getting any income until 2020 when I decided to sell Table Charm so that I could get something. Table Charm did make a huge difference. I was able to help mom where I can with the commission I got. By that time everything was good until the lockdown was extended. In April 2020 I did not sell anything because the company did not deliver because of lockdown. Covid-19 affected my family in a way that it's been difficult for my father to put food on the table. It's been very hard because we were only depending on a social grant. Before Covid-19 things were easy because there was an income. It also affected the community because there will be no more weddings and parties, with some having to cancel their ceremonies. It's a must that we should wear masks and practice social distancing. Everything had to stop because of Covid-19.

INTERVIEW OF TWO NEIGHBOURS ABOUT HOW COVID AFFECTED THEM

The first interview

The pandemic has affected me both in a good and a bad way. I wanted to go to school but I couldn't and I was not able to register because of Covid-19. Everything had to stop because some of my family and friends died and I didn't get a chance to go to their funerals because there is a certain number that are allowed to attend. I feel sorry for students who have to study at home without being taught by a teacher. Some of us don't have enough airtime to buy data for the whole month.

As for family life we are spending much time together. There is no income while we eat too much because we are always at home. It could have been much better if the government provided food parcels for everyone in the community. The

child support grant is not enough for my family. The only thing we can do as a community is to follow the Covid-19 rules that say we have to wear masks and practice social distancing.

The second interview

I had to stop selling vegetables because of the pandemic and it is the only thing that keeps me going. During this pandemic everything had to stop because I didn't have a permit to sell. We didn't even get food parcels from the government. SASSA started double payment for outstanding June and July accounts for the R350 special relief grant. Beneficiaries are reminded that they should visit post offices once they have received an SMS saying that their money has been paid in and is ready for collection. People from Ga Mongatane and even those from Mafefe come to collect their money at Atok. What made them happy is that they did get their money.

“Because as old people our life is not safe even when we go to hospitals.”: The effects of the Lockdowns on Healthcare.



The official reason government gave for the lockdowns were that they were necessary to slow down the rate of infections so that the healthcare system could cope. But, unlike the wealthy and people with medical aid, poor people are dependent on the public healthcare system, which was severely under-resourced for years prior to Covid. Government was also committed to further cost-cutting in 2020.

So what was people's experience of healthcare during the lock downs?

**TOKELO MAHLAKOANE, MOROKE
FEKUTLONG, LIMPOPO, INTERVIEWED MISS
YY A PENSIONER**

We used to have Home Based Care workers check us but since the lockdown no one visited us. We thought that they are the ones who will assist us during the pandemic. So why did government stop them checking on us. Because as old people our life is not safe even when we go to hospitals. This covid-19 pandemic is really confusing us.

FRANCINA NKOSI, SHONGOANE, LIMPOPO

As I'm a mother of two girls and grandmother to two baby boys who depend on me financially. Before the Covid-19 pandemic I used to survive by selling herbal products and goods to sustain our lives. Everything changed instantly without a warning to us. Covid-19 negatively impacted me as a breadwinner of the household.

As an activist I had to render essential service to the community as most of them were affected dearly.

My grandmother was admitted at Steve Biko Academy for an operation due to Covid-19 and we were denied access to visit. Being in the hospital alone is stressful and affecting the patient emotionally. On the other hand the pandemic made us to bond as a family and read books. As a family we continue eating healthy vegetables from the backyard gardens.

**INTERVIEW: MPOMOKENI, PHAHLADIRA,
LEPHALALE, LIMPOPO**

When the President announced the lock down I was heavily pregnant. With many more other moms I was affected by the uncertainty to be welcoming a new bundle of joy during the lockdown with potentially life-threatening challenges.

I was worried about contracting the Corona virus. Then the anxiety of leaving my kids alone without a guardian hits me hard. Unfortunately my husband “lost his job due to the lockdown” she said. with tears filled in her eyes, as he was working at the Guest house around town. I had to give birth during level 5 of lock down and all the shops selling baby clothes were closed and transportation was scarce and limited. The lockdown affected me and my family badly and we had to adjust to a different way of life. My husband being unemployed due to Covid-19 pandemic and having a new born baby needing clothes and milk got me worried. But luckily a good samaritan helped with blankets and some baby clothes. What a relief. Visiting by that time was restricted to help stop the spread of Corona virus.

After giving birth with C-section I was discharged from the hospital after 3 days. My husband managed to come to help me carry the baby and we were forced to walk again a bit of a distance to the taxi rank with my condition. Reaching home my wounds were swollen due to strains. As fragile as I was with no resources my husband had to nurse me. I’m grateful to the support I got from my husband.

PHINDILE NGOBENI, IKEMELENG, KROONDAL, NORTH WEST

I feel like I’m still in prison, because everything I do it must happen under the law that was given. On the 13 April 2020 I lost my baby boy whereby I didn’t get support from my biological brother and sister because of lockdown was announced by President on March 2020. As an African woman still living under the Tsonga law, before and after the funeral my family was supposed to follow our culture way and take the baby to the graveyard, but all that was happening through the phone. Also, for me to lose my baby I feel like if the ambulance had arrived early my baby would be alive. I lost more blood and I received four (4) litres of white blood cells.

MAHADIO MOHAPI, KANANA, KLERKSDORP, NORTH WEST

When the lockdown started on 21st of March 2020 my sister was admitted to Kopanong hospital in Vereeniging. We were not allowed to enter the ward because of lockdown regulations. This hurt me deeply because my sister was very sick at that time. The nurse gave us the ward’s contact numbers so that we can call my sister to check if she’s doing okay or not. I phoned each day to hear how my sister is doing. Unfortunately, the nurses didn’t tell me the exact story. I’d been told my sister was recovering but when we asked to speak to her, they refused. They told us that they’re not allowed to do this.

A few weeks later, on the second of April I called the ward and was told that my sister was fine and recovered. I called my mother to tell her that my sister has recovered. Later that day I received a call from my sister’s first born that my sister has passed away. I was shocked.

RAPULE MOILOA, DIEPKLOOF, SOWETO

I was talking to someone close to me about the work that he does and his position at work

He works at a certain hospital that I cannot name plus the area. The person is a porter and the dangers that porters face daily are as much as nurses and doctors. He said that he is scared and many people forget that people who work as porters are also in the front and exposed to the virus for they are the ones receiving patients regardless of their sickness,

The work environment has changed tremendously due to Covid 19 because before they would receive patients without thinking about their situation or the case but now all that has changed as the working conditions have changed.

Protective gear is given to them but he said they not safe because wheel chairs and stretchers are not disinfected and they are there working as the second group of people after paramedics.

He said that there's a place called short stay wards at the hospitals where people who tested positive are kept. Soon a number of wards will be closed for the public and be used for the people who are infected by the virus. What is said is that nurses are afraid to move the same patients to where they supposed to go instead they will wait to see if there's one of the porters coming at casualty so that the patient can be moved to a short stay room.

It was better to receive someone who was either mugged or maybe involved in an accident.

VELILE KHOZA, MFIDIKOE VILLAGE, NORTH WEST, JULY

Clinics are closed on weekends, but what do we do if we have high temperatures over the weekend? For the past years of the seventies and eighties this village was never taken care of by corporates who were operating in those years. It was the early nineties after South Africans saw themselves voting when we saw Anglo American donate a clinic to the community of Mfidikoe out of their social labour plan. It was our brothers who challenged Anglo American to do something since the community didn't have a health facility like a clinic.

Today this clinic is under the Department of Health, a government institute that is advocating the health of the country and guess what, this clinic has never worked seven days a week, it works five days a week while South Africa is facing the pandemic which is C-19. My concern is that North West is the epicentre of C-19 since the mining industry started operating. We even saw on eNCA news that one of the Sibanye Stillwater's shafts that is plus minus seven km from the village was closed due COVID-19. Most of its employees are backyard room renters here in Mfidikoe and now you find the clinic being closed on weekends. What if someone's temperature goes high with infections from corona, where will help come from while the clinic is closed? As a community

member and activist of this village, I think the department of health should be notified about how the clinic operates.

PETRUS MOSHE, JOUBERTON, KLERKSDORP, NORTH WEST, JULY

The provincial hospital in Tshepong is in Covid-19 crisis. The Tshepong Hospital is in Klerksdorp situated in Jouberton. It was recently rated as the best for curing T.B. of brains. However, the present monster causes a dilemma that will destroy that good reputation. On the 7th July 2020 the hospital was recorded as having infected seven people. This is indeed a shocking and worrying factor. The institution which needs to rescue patients is facing a health hazard. I ask why? The problems are being exacerbated by people who are not adhering to Covid-19 requirements. It was a long queue with no social distance. Mostly people are not washing hands, one of my informant replied. I really agree on this as well and people need to follow protocol.

The Intensive Care was closed and people were told to quarantine at home. This is why other systems need to be checked as well and the problem is not only behavioural. In some cases an audit is important not only on behavioural aspects, but also systems and structural aspects. I recommend that we recommend that the North West Minister to do an Audit for both Tshepong and Klerksdorp on what had happened. I recommend the ombudsman of Health be involved so that this may not be a trend with other hospitals and that other remedial solutions to crises be found.

TSHEPO MMUSI, KLERKSDORP, JOUBERTON TOWNSHIP, NORTH WEST, AUGUST

The new normal is now in effect and it is impacting negatively to the poor of our community who are dependent on public health care. Because of high numbers of Covid-19 infections health care facilities have changed their schedules and members of the community are the ones paying

the price. Community clinics have cut the number of days for consultation and people are being subjected to visiting the facilities on scheduled dates. Members of the community cannot go to the facilities when they feel sick immediately and they have to wait for their appointment dates. For many this is inconvenient because people get sick at any time and their illnesses cannot wait for their appointments.

These measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of health workers but it is seriously disadvantaging the people. This impacts mostly on women, the elderly and children. People who are suffering from chronic illness feel the heat too because many are used to getting their treatment on scheduled week days and a change to visit the facility once in a month and on a specific date is not working for them. Many have already missed their appointments. This leads them to default on their treatment and their health conditions worsen. Meanwhile the Department of Health has since built a state of the art health facility in Extension 20, which is gathering dust and not being used to help members of the community. The facility was said to be operational a few months ago just after the country went on lockdown. It is believed that the facility is waiting for a grand opening before it can accept patients. How many people must die first before it can be of help to the community?

KGOKONG MORAKA, KRAALHOEK, NORTH WEST, MAY

Kraalhoek village is one of the deep rural areas of the North West province. Yesterday the 12 of May a pensioner left his house to the clinic for consultation. After a walk of almost a kilometer, he arrived at the clinic only to be told by a security guard that wearing of a face mask is compulsory. He then decided to return home without enquiring about this situation to the nurse in charge. This old man went back but before reaching his house he fell. According to a young man who saw him first, there was a white foam coming out of his mouth. He then called a car to return him to the

clinic. On their way back, this old man told them about what security guard said. They gave him an extra mask and he consulted. After few minutes of his consultation a group of 5 men who saw this old man and got angry and decided to approach the security company. Their operational manager came and there was a meeting between nurses in charge, the security company and these five men.

According to the nurses they did not know of anyone who was returned due to face mask. But on the other hand they have been requesting face masks since yesterday from the department. The security company says it is the responsibility of the clinic to have additional face masks. And this old man said he totally forgot about face mask. It was concluded that a nurse will give two community representatives of this case a letter which requests face masks from the mines as a temporary measure while waiting for the department.

Education



The spread of the coronavirus and the South Africa's lockdown has had a huge impact on children's education. Schools have been closed and were the subject of struggles and debate as to when they should open again. Private schools and many middle class parents lobbied government to open schools from July.

Teachers and working class parents were concerned about safety and what measures were going to be put in place to make up for learning lost and the poor state of public schools. The provincial education departments asked for children to continue learning using "online learning", "e-learning" and "e-teaching". This means they need to have computers and data to go online to continue learning which. This was also the case with tertiary education.

SUSAN MORABA, EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA

Where my child attends school they circulated newsletters to parents notifying them that they should provide their children with a smartphone, laptops or computers and internet in order for them to be able to continue with their studies. This happened after the long weekend of good Friday. They also urged parents to continue paying school fees as they depend on it for salaries, school maintenance, etc. This is a problem. What about the costs of the internet and those who don't have smart phones or any means of getting involved?

The problem with online education is that as a parent you are also learning with your child because you need to be with him or her throughout

the lessons so that you can assist after lessons with homework given. A lot of time is wasted as a parent because you can't do your daily routine chores and all has to wait for weekend as we put our children's education first.

I am very sad with public school learners who are not doing anything. My grade 8 child is learning online from an independent school. They communicated with parents and I am part of that as he learns, even though it's not easy. My other family members' children who attend at public school doing Grade 5,6,7 and 10 are not on online studying and they have heard nothing from their teachers. The Grade 10 learner wishes he had a study group or a smart phone

to connect with other learners from private or independent schools so that he can catch up and that unfortunately is not happening.

He said even that if he takes his books and study on his own he is struggling because other work is new and it needs some guidance and lessons. So he feels frustrated when he thinks about studying. My son on the other side enjoys studying at home but he doesn't see the pain and how worried I am about the cost of data.

MMABORE MOGASHOA, GAMOGASHOA, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO

I was speaking to a friend of mine from Gauteng about the lockdown and she mentioned something about schoolwork. Her children are getting schoolwork for a week and submit through Whatsapp. My concern is children who attend school in the villages or public schools. Some don't even have phones and the last time they spoke to their educators was on 17 March 2020 when the schools closed because of the Corona Virus. What must be done to make sure that children will have good marks at the end of the year?

MMATHAPELO THOBEJANE, DITWEBELENG VILLAGE, LIMPOPO

I am very worried about the future of my kids and younger siblings. There has been no communication whatsoever from the principal or the teachers on ways our kids can learn sitting at home unlike other children who are for example doing online learning.

The most devastating fact is that our kids will not be having any online lessons because of the poor background they come from and the lack of resources from the public school's side.

I would suggest that the government offer our kids in public schools tablets and data. If they can hand R350 out to non-working South Africans why is it so hard to provide the future holders of SA with resources to further their education?

INTERVIEW WITH A TERTIARY STUDENT, DITWEBELENG VILLAGE, LIMPOPO

The pandemic has affected me both in a good way and in a bad way. It has caused me some anxiety especially because there are people close to me that died and I did not manage to attend their funerals. I had to pack my bags and come home because I was scared I will get the virus since Gauteng had many people infected by that time and at the University I'm attending there were learners who tested positive.

Studying at home has been a big struggle because of the big shift from face to face learning to online learning. Sometimes it is very hard to grasp the concepts when there is distance between you and your lecturer. Network service has also been a big problem. I live in a rural area where there is most of the time no internet service. We do get data from our institution but it is hardly enough to get us through half of the month. Even though the president promised that there will be no load shedding it has been happening a lot during the day.

As for family life it brought us closer to each other because we are together most of the time and we have time to bond. We are playing games together and cook together. It is really good for me and my family.

We are having financial strain, we are always home and everyone needs to eat especially when home. We are finishing the food before month end and end up stranded. I personally feel that the government should have provided food parcels for everyone because even those who are working don't afford to put food on the table for their family during this difficult time.

Violence Against Women



The combination of stresses of unemployment, loss of livelihoods and being forced to stay at home has seen a rise in violence against women, children and LGBTI people in many countries and also in South Africa. Aggressive male attitudes and increased dependence of women on men is a murderous cocktail for the poor.

So what has happened in local communities?

**HAPPINESS KOMA, MOSHIRA VILLAGE,
FETAKGOMO TUBATSE MUNICIPALITY,
SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO**

Children and wife beaten. We need help.

In our community we have a man that beats his children and wife all the time. The wife does not tell her next door neighbour because she is afraid. Until the children cry all night. Last night he beat his wife again. A boy in the neighbourhood saw the whole story. The gender based violence is going high in our area and we need help.

**AMO TSHABALALA, SEFIKILE VILLAGE,
MOSES KOTANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY,
NORTH WEST**

Speaking from a man's perspective. Let's stop the Violence against women.

What the whole universe is saying about G.B.V.? What SA our country is saying about G.B.V. since the rate has gone high during COVID 19? Is bringing the doers to book enough? Are the doers learning something out of their

actions and are they proving to be men enough about what they are doing? What about those who witness all the actions? Is it being taken into consideration that they also need help about what they have witnessed?

What is the government is saying about this? How about bringing education to the G.B.V. doers so that they can know that what makes a complete man is not about abusing your loved one?

All complete men out there are protecting their loved ones, what is so different with you who is abusing our women compared to those who protect them? Who are men enough between the two?

Let's stop G.B.V. in our areas. What about our little girls in the process of witnessing all that? Aren't they having nightmares? We're building hatred towards men in their lives, is that a good thing to do?

I am speaking from a man's perspective. Let's protect, build, love care for them all and stop building what we don't want to see being revealed and used against us.

What is the state saying all about this? What are we (men) saying all about this?

Enough is enough...Damage has been done and now is the time to fix all that and show our women that we are not animals. We are here and there to protect them, we are the shelter for them, and we are always there and here for them.

Let's we (men) stop G.B.V. and make this universe a better place for all.

RAPULE MOILOA, DIEPKLOOF, SOWETO, GAUTENG

The abuse of women and children is inhuman. This is done by people who live near - be it a husband, boyfriend or a trusted someone.

Fear is now a friend of women and children because they are affected day by day because of what men doing. This is not something that we must put our masks on nor use sanitizers to prevent GBV from happening.

Men should start checking themselves not physically but mentally. Today I came across an old man drunk with a bottle of alcohol in his hand swearing at a young woman in Diepkloof zone 1 because of her dress, but the lady kept walking so that she may not be a victim because of her clothes.

TINTSWALO (VEM), BUSHBUCKRIDGE, MPUMALANGA, SEPTEMBER

Another woman killed and rapedand the family of a 14 year-old lesbian has been left devastated by her murder.

The community of Chochocho outside in Mpumalanga decided to fight justice for Zinhle LGBTQI member

ZINHLE SEKGOAPA was kidnapped by unknown people on Wednesday morning and her body was found by her mom dumped next to a pit toilet on Saturday morning.

As the community we are saying put a stop to women and children abuse. As I light this candle with humble prayer asking God to protect women against the abuse.

Impact on Culture, Church and Funerals



KGANG MOLOKO, PHOKENG VILLAGE, RUSTENBURG, NORTH WEST

As a family we have been affected negatively by covid19. We had spent money on the burial of our father in mid-December 2019 and before recovering lockdown started. This became a huge setback as industries closed and there was no income. More food was needed but there was no finances to support the need. There are family gatherings which we can't do. Traditional ceremonies are prohibited. As a family we can only attend close relative funerals. No weddings are allowed.

I interviewed Kgomotso Rangaka (71): Covid19 is depressing and frightening. Life has been difficult. As a staunch church member, I have not been able to attend church. I am a seamstress and I cater for church members, now I cannot do this. My daughter rents out tents, chairs and catering equipment and all this has stopped. Food prices have increased so this has put a strain on the finances.

I interviewed Karabo Dihutso (32): it has actually brought loneliness. I cannot visit family members and relatives like my mother, sister and my kids as they don't live in the same area. I had to dig deep into my savings as there was no income from work. There was a need for more food as members are eating a lot.

MARIA MADONSELA, EZINAMBENI, EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA, INTERVIEW: - MAPULE MDHLULI INTERVIEW - MAPULE MDHLULI

Talking to Mapule Mdhuli she said that the pandemic has affected her big time as her family is staying in Limpopo. She is unable to visit them even to attend funerals back home as there are restrictions that only 50 people have to attend funerals or any gatherings. This is not our culture and it is hard to adapt to that. Also we are unable to interact with people like we used to.

THEMBISILE MBETHE, EMPUMELELWENI, EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA

Lock down affected my family life especially when it comes to funeral gatherings. As a family we believe that when death strikes being present is much better than sending messages of support. Since lock down there were four funerals that we couldn't attend due to the restriction that says no more than 50 people should be allowed in funeral gatherings. This took away our right to pay our last respects and pass last goodbyes.

**MAHADIO MOHAPI, KANANA, KLERKSDORP,
NORTH WEST**

I went to the police station to ask for a provincial traveling permit – I live in North West, my sister lives in Gauteng and lock down regulations did not allow travel to another province. The station commander said he is not permitted to issue permits. I went back to the house to download the permit and went straight to the magistrate court. Fortunately, the magistrate permitted us to go.

When I arrived at my sister's house the following day we went to the mortuary and were been told that we are not allowed to put up a tent, that chairs and tables will not be issued and we're not even allowed to slaughter a cow or cook for people. We were told only close family can attend the funeral, that only 50 people were allowed, and the service must take one hour. My sister was a member of the woman's league and some of the family members are from other parts of the country such as Free State, Mpumalanga and Rustenburg. Unfortunately, they didn't make it to the funeral.

When we arrived at graveyard the police, traffic police and the bylaw unit were at the gate counting people who entered the graveyard. Some family members were left outside the graveyard. After the funeral we went back home, and no other people were allowed to sit with us. That was the most painful and insane situation I've ever experienced in my life.

**MARIA MADONSELA, EZINAMBENI,
EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA, INTERVIEW:
MARTHA MABELANE**

I was sad not to go to Moria on Good Friday because they banned all gatherings and we are Zion Christian Church (ZCC) members at home and every year during Easter we go. The way things are we won't even go in September because for us as ZCC, it a new year as we celebrate a new season.

“

We thought government food will make it easier

”

4. EXPERIENCE OF GOVERNMENT RELIEF MEASURES



In June the Government announced a number of relief measures, which they falsely claimed amounted to a total of R500b. By far the bulk – R200b - was government underwriting (standing as a guarantor) for loans that commercial banks could offer to businesses that applied for relief. Employed workers who lost their jobs as a result of the lockdown could claim from the UIF.

For the 17 million people living off social grants there would be an increase in the Child Support Grant and there would be a new grant of R350 for people who do not have other SASSA grants. This grant would apply for 9 months.

And because so many more people were starving government said it would get SASSA to make food vouchers available that could be used to buy food parcels.

What was the experience of communities – already facing destitution – of these measures?

**TOKELO MAHLAKOANE, SEKHUKHUNE
DISTRICT, LIMPOPO, MARCH**

I went to the Social Worker's office where people from different villages were called to come and take food parcels. What worries me is that the selection of those people was unfair. They said a person who is not qualified is a person who gets a grant. But when we check our mothers and our sisters who have children who get grant, they are the people who are suffering and taking care of the entire family.

**PHINDILE NGOBENI , IKEMELENG
KROONDAL, NORTH WEST**

I received a call to collect food parcels for myself and my family. I just want to give thanks to the organisations that help me during the hard times of lockdown. I give thanks to all people who are helping me since I come back from prison, because life is not easy for me. I can't even get a job because of a criminal record.

INTERVIEW: MISS YY A PENSIONER

Here in our rural village, government is giving food parcels since we are in this lockdown but the food parcels have term and conditions. They are saying the people who qualify for those foods must not be in the government system of grants. But that social grant is not sufficient to buy the food needed.

**RONALD MHLAKAZA, VOSMAN,
EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA**

My big brother is staying with his wife and his 13 year old son. They are both not working and are relaying on a social grant and for them it's difficult. They were happy when Government announces that there will be food parcels and a social distress grant to be given to people as they should stay at home. But they didn't receive any of those food parcels and both of them applied for the grant but they haven't received any response.

Even now I am still at home, it is hard and tears flows... I thought when the government said we will be given food it will be easier but we ended up seeing those food parcels on our TV screens and we had never seen one coming to provide that to us.

**EUSTINE MATSEPANE, MODIMOLLE VILLAGE,
SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO, AUGUST**

SASSA together with the mine were distributing food parcels during this level 2 of the pandemic in our village

I have experience that Government and the mine are friends, because they were together to distribute those food parcels but what surprised me is that they were taking only 40 people on the list. Many people return to their homes without food.

This is very painful knowing that you don't have food at home and Government shows me very well that they don't care about the community.

**DONALD MPHETHI, FETAKGOMU TUBATSE
MUNICIPALITY, GA-KGWETE VILLAGE,
LIMPOPO, AUGUST**

Today has been a busy one with many more people assembled at Makgalemane drop-in centre, near Makopi high school for their share of Covid-19 food parcels donated by Marula Platinum Mine. However, the process had to affect some people negatively because they did not receive their food. In April 2020 there was a call that people should come and get enlisted for food parcels. When the list arrived it had about about 180 people. The same people were worried that they didn't receive anything until now in August.

When the food arrived, only those who appeared on the list were given and the rest were very saddened by their rejection. It was a chaotic situation that made most of the people return to their homes very sad.

The state of poverty is too serious in this neighbourhood during these difficult times. According to the interview conducted at the scene, Charles Moraba said that he felt relieved when he saw the dishing out of food to the poor people. He is struggling to find piece jobs and the SRD grant declined him, so the food parcels were his big hope but unfortunately as he was not on the list he didn't receive anything. He emphasised that the list procedure must reach the doorstep of every deserving household and the remaining food must not return but rather be dished out to the people and especially those who did not find the privilege to enlist.

Residents are pleading to the Marula Mine to please cater for a larger number of these people by increasing the food so as to cover every needy home.

MMABORE MOGASHOA, SEKHUKHUNE, GAMOGASHOA, LIMPOPO, AUGUST

As per government arrangements, people who are unemployed had to register for a R350 grant so that they will be able to have something during the lockdown period. Most of the people who are registered have no income at all and some depend on their grandparents' pension money, which means they are already struggling in life. People registered and some got the money.

One had to go to the Post Office to collect the money, where most of the people had to wake up as early as 03h00 to queue at the post office. Most of the time there was no social distancing and network challenges also made matters worse. Our post offices have been experiencing network problems even before COVID19 because it was always full.

Some people spend the whole day waiting to get money and even go again the following day because they couldn't get help. SASSA then introduced a flexible way to change from getting grants at the Post Office to the beneficiary's bank accounts in August 2020.

People who were unable to change now had to travel as far as Lydenburg and Rossenekal Post Offices to get the money. Lydenburg is in Mpumalanga province and going there costs a lot. This leaves the beneficiary with less money, increasing the level of stress to the people. Services at our Post offices should improve because the Corona virus is still there.

TOKELO MATUPU MAHLAKOANE, MOROKO FEKUTLONG, FETAKGOMO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO

We applied for the R350 government grant our President talked about. But so far we have not got the grant.

MMABORE MOGASHOA, SEKHUKHUNE, GAMOGASHOA, LIMPOPO

I am self-employed and for me to get an income I have to use internet and meet people. I had to stay at home to be safe. My poetry and music events at Johannesburg, Belabela and Tafelkop were cancelled. I had also planned to sell a book I co-authored (Excuse my Color) and things did not go well as going door to door was not allowed.

I also recorded music but due to COVID19, I was unable to release it as my producer was in Gauteng because of lockdown. I couldn't do online music promotions like other artist as a result of no income. While on lockdown I write poetry and am busy with a novel.

Financially it was difficult, children were at home and we had to force them to stay at home the whole day so that they can be safe. The SASSA grant was increased and it wasn't that bad. We don't have a garden at home as a result of water scarcity and it was sometimes difficult to get vegetables and fruit. Our parents used to plough mealies and sorghum and now people have turned the fields into houses and this forces us to buy everything.

**MARIA MADONSELA, EZINAMBENI,
EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA, INTERVIEW:
MARTHA MABELANE**

We rely on the child support grant from SASSA. The thing is because we don't know when we are getting it because dates have changed and sometimes when we get that money groceries have finished here at home. We have to beg and borrow some money to buy here and there. So it is difficult financially, the children here are eating 4 times a day and it is costing us much money.

BUTI BOTOPELA, IKEMELENG, NORTH WEST

The Covid-19 Pandemic affected me financially and academically. With no source of income, I had to drop out of school. The institution logged me out of their system. Registration after registration for food parcels but still not getting food parcels. I had hoped that I will get food parcels because of social workers registering people in queues. I had trust that there would be no favouritism, but I was totally wrong.

STEVEN RAMOKHULA, IKEMELENG, NORTH WEST

Covid19 affected me deeply since I'm unemployed and a new father. I have to provide for my family and because of the regulations by the government, it becomes more and more difficult. I used my savings to put food on the table. Prices of goods have increased and this makes it harder. I can't get the relief fund from the government. There's been no response to my application.

**RAPULE MOILOA, PALM SPRINGS, VAAL,
GAUTENG**

This week is the same as month end grant payments with many people queued outside the gate of Palm Springs mall for SASSA grants. People are going to different shops, ATM's and for whatever reason that they may be at the mall. I have realised that there is no law enforcement to maintain rules and regulations of the lockdown to keep social distancing and see to it that there's no contact amongst the people. People pushed the gate and started running inside the mall and this stampede caused problems for the security of the mall because everyone went in running. These actions could increase the numbers of the virus if there are people who are already infected without knowing that they are.

Many of these people don't have masks nor anything that to cover their faces with. I have a video of people running without thinking about the stampede, not thinking of the current situation of the virus and if they could be infected.

LIVING HAND TO MOUTH DURING COVID19

When locked in my yard I cannot find piece jobs which help me and my family. Covid-19 is separating the poor from the rich. We are suffering more as the poor because we live from hand to mouth. To sit at home and see my family suffer like this is a very unpleasant. We were promised food parcels which we never got. Life is tough for us. If lockdown does not end families are going to be broken. My partner and myself argue a lot because there is no food in the house. Now it is winter my garden is not looking good and not giving that much. The cold kills the plants. My partner was taking care of a baby because the mother was working, now the mother is at home and does not need her anymore which means no pay. I used to assist with gardens and cleaning but since lockdown people are home and doing it by themselves. I applied for the relief grant of R350 and still have not received anything.

VUSIMUZI, TEMBISA, EKURHULENI

We have been following the food parcel theft story. Councilors were told not to be part of any food parcel distribution by any means but I have heard how it has been difficult for people to get these food parcels since the announcement by Cyril Ramaphosa. Unfortunately people have been helping themselves with these food parcels. Early this month many people registered to get food parcels but only a few got them. I heard today that a councillor had his car filled with the same food parcels that were supposed to have been given to people in Vusimuzi.

He was caught in Limpopo with food parcels in his car and he was arrested for theft then released with R5000 bail. Also the anonymous person said that the same person took some of the toilets that belonged to the people who stay at informal settlement in Vusimuzi to Limpopo to rent them out. He said it's a shame to look up to a councillor of a party that many believe is for the people and that will lead with honesty, with love and integrity plus fairness - that prevents the community to have excess to the food that is donated not by his party but by HCI and partner.

5. WHAT COVID HAS REVEALED: ONGOING STRUGGLES



The Covid 19 pandemic exposed all our inequalities in South Africa. So, although many commentators tried to say that “we are all in this together” the truth is – whether it is about livelihoods, access to services, schooling and healthcare we are the most unequal country in the world. Covid did not cause this – it exposed this fact.

Prior to Covid many working class people were involved in struggles, even when there was a stage 5 Lock Down. Then the unfairness and inequality of the measures – whether it was about the lock downs, testing, when it was safe to go back to work or to school or relief measures that were supposed to help us all fight the pandemic – stimulated new struggles.

Activists have also not forgotten that they are fighting against mining companies, for a environmentally sustainable future and for an end to violence against women. The following interviews and reports highlight these.

STRIKES AND OTHER DISPUTES

JACOB KHOZA, NKOMAZI, MADADENI, MPUMALANGA

I had an interview with coal mining workers from Nkomati Anthracite mine at Madadeni Nkomazi. During the lockdown they didn't get money for holidays and overtime. They decided to strike and management decided to terminate their contract without notice. Some of them are worried about their future in the mine and also debit orders are their big problem.

I interviewed my friend. He complained about food parcels supplied by the community development workers and different businesses. He said they gave food parcels to people from rich houses and to their friends. Community members who called to receive food parcels were told that they have to wait for next time because parcels were limited.

MMABORE MOGASHOA, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO, INTERVIEW WITH MR X.

He came home after the announcement from the President of South Africa. The company he was working for closed for that time and it was no work no pay. As a bread winner his family struggled from March and April 2020. He has now gone back to work and the problem is that his employer claimed UIF and did not pay them. He said that colleagues who tried to question his employer have been stopped to come to work and he is scared to ask as he will lose his job. His wife is unemployed and losing his work will be a problem.

KENNEDY PHOLOSE, THEKWENA, RUSTENBURG, NORTH WEST, INTERVIEW WITH A FEMALE MINE WORKER:

Right now I feel like am being left out because most of the people are called at work and I am left because I am a woman. I am the only bread winner at home and I also have children. In terms of finance it very bad. We can't do piece jobs. It is hard and difficult to deal with this COVID19. I wish it ends now.

I INTERVIEWED TSHEPO MORE:

We were on strike underground 3 weeks before lockdown at Lanxess mine. I am a breadwinner with a family of six and two children. I had to use my last R500, 00 in the bank wisely for my family, to have a single meal a day. I had suicide thoughts and I secretly cried every day because it was really tough to see my family starving. We had to use fire for cooking, hot water for bathing and to keep ourselves warm because we could not afford electricity. The Unemployment Insurance Fund made a difference. We became very close to each other and prayed 3 times every day as if it was our last day on earth. We cut ourselves from the outside world in order to avoid infection and envy others who can afford to survive the lockdown financially. I made a vegetable garden to minimize unnecessary stress and costs on food.

I am still jobless, with debts for past 5 months. Our family is still safe because we observe lockdown regulations particularly social distancing by avoiding unnecessary movements.

COMMUNITY CONFLICT OVER JOBS

MBETHE THEMBISILE, EMPUMELELWENI, EMALAHLENI, PHOLA/OGIES V/S WITBANK, MPUMALANGA

On the 12th of August 2020 the people in the community of Phola/Ogies decided to strike for employment of Witbank community members in the mines that are allocated in and around Phola/Ogies. The Phola/Ogies community barricaded the mines entrance so that the employees from Witbank cannot enter the mines premises. They claim that the mines are employing people from outside Phola/Ogies community, while they are unemployed as the community that lives nearby the mines.

The issue escalated to the Witbank community. On the 13th the community of Witbank decided to go to the municipality offices to forcefully evacuate the employees who are residing at Phola. They also went to the shops in Witbank CBD to do the same, shouting that people from Phola/Ogies are not allowed to work in Witbank anymore, and saying "keep your Phola/ Ogies... we will keep our Witbank".

ACCESS OF WATER DENIED IN STEENBOKPAN

FRANCINA NKOSI, SHONGOANE VILLAGE, LEPHALALE, LIMPOPO

Now that schools have reopened how are the kids going to bath, how are they going to cook food whilst there is no access of water, how are they going to brush their teeth and drink water? Are we still forced to buy water while we were promised clean accessible water by our President? The rivers are also dry and it's been a while since it rained. So for now we are still facing the same situation and there's still no water filled up to today. The

community of Steenbokpan is still struggling to access blue tick water.

MONITORING THE PROVISION ON FEEDING SCHEMES IN SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN.

THOKOZILE MNTAMBO, THULANI SNAKE PARK, SOWETO, GAUTENG

On the 31st of July 2020 learners in Thulani Snake-Park went to school for the feeding scheme program to get food as instructed by the minister of education. Learners were given food and consent forms for parents to sign, and we were also promised to receive food parcels on Monday when they go back to the feeding scheme.

Learners went to school early in the morning with the hope that they will get food parcels. When they got to school they were served pap and milk and each child was given a fruit. They did not get the promised food parcels and were sent back home and told to come back on Tuesday.

Many learners don't have face masks and the school does not hand them out when they come for the feeding scheme program. So many learners are sent back home if the mask is dirty or if they are not wearing any mask. The school does not seem prepared because some of the fruit they gave was rotten and the school does not have PPEs to give to children who are attending the feeding scheme program.

SASSA SRD BENEFICIARIES TAKE ACTION.

HAPPINESS KOMA, MOSHIRA VILLAGE, FETAKGOMO TUBATSE MUNICIPALITY, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO

In the alert I indicated challenges related to SRD, and that included:

- Beneficiaries' applications which are still pending from May 2020.
 - Beneficiaries' who are eligible to apply and benefit from the grant but were declined.
 - Beneficiaries' who have outstanding previous payments.
- Those who have queries and local SASSA offices cannot attend to them.

Unemployed people who included mostly youth and men gathered next to the Jouberton Post Office on the 21st of September 2020 led by Matlosana Development Forum. They were voicing out their frustration regarding the SRD grant which seems to favor certain people and left them vulnerable, and SASSA offices not wanting to take their frustrations up to the relevant division.

The March demonstration is scheduled to take place on the 25th of September 2020, where a memorandum of demands will be delivered and handed over at the Jouberton Police station where provincial SASSA officials are expected to receive it and put the public at ease.

6. NEW STRUGGLES AND EXPERIMENTATION



Notwithstanding the pain of unemployment, hunger and the abandonment of the working class and poor during the Covid 19 pandemic, activists are still engaged in many forms of struggle and culture that have a vision of life beyond the bleak present. We highlight a few...

RAPULE MOILOA, PALM SPRINGS, VAAL, GAUTENG

Bad land that was a community waste land for many years behind these shops has been successfully turned into good land for food security during the lockdown. This piece of land used to be a home for rats for years and the community used to dump waste when it was not collected on the day that was supposed to be collected.

The bad smell had affected people staying close by for years, along with rats. Today the piece of land was cleaned to be used for something that will benefit people and at least people will have fresh food from this garden. This garden is started by an old man together with a couple of guys who were called nyaope boys because they were addicted to a nyaope drug that is still terrorising young boys and girls in townships.

Today the community of Palm Springs in section H is happy to have this vegetable garden rather than rats. What makes even the community happy is the boys don't steal anymore but are a great help, as said by those who saw this vegetable garden begin.

NELLY NKOSI, KHUTHALA ENVIRONMENTAL CARE GROUP, ERMELO, MPUMALANGA

A Climate Change Programme was held on the 31/08/2020 at 11:00 am in the Sibusiso Sethu Day Care Centre. The Workshop was supported by WOMIN and hosted by Khuthala Women's Movement. Women were given a platform to talk about the challenges they're facing like Unemployment, Water Scarcity and where taps are far, having to travel with wheel barrows to collect water every single day. Animals that go astray was also a challenge to those who have back yard gardens. Many had no space to set up a food garden. Electricity is expensive and they only have a small amount of money to buy and survive.

They were taught about the impact of Climate Change, how to save seeds and were encouraged to protect their back yard garden from heavy rain, extreme weather and to have a tree in their yards. Seeds were donated to the Women and they were shown how to make soap. Many are looking forward to it because getting a job is still a dream to come true? Some decided on formalising themselves to do Community Food Gardening. A short Climate Change video documentary was played for them to see what they were taught and that this is a World Wide challenge. Solutions are in our hands, just to act and clean up the mess that we are experiencing. Its either we act and stand up or we relax, sit down and watch our one and only planet earth perish in front of our eyes!

MMATHAPELO THOBEJANE, DITWEBELENG VILLAGE, SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO

Today I took the initiative to give seedling to the community of Atok who are doing gardening. This was just to encourage them in what they have started. It is always good when youth and women at their village start food gardens to make sure that they put food on the table for their loved ones and also to try to survive with the little they sell to the community. All we need is land, water and dedication to have gardens.

We can also harvest the seeds and use them later. It is a critical time, people are losing jobs and unemployment is going up, so this initiative will help people to make sure that their loved ones do not go to bed with empty stomachs. There's a hope and what we need is to share our knowledge and experience on how one can grow vegetable gardens. Our government has failed us so people need to start doing things for themselves.

I will love to help other groups in my region (Sekhukhune) and hopefully it will happen one day.

This is a start Halaala. Atok community garden. I'm personally happy that this group is also part of the Sekhukhune Environmental Justice Network and they are also fighting the environmental injustices.

We have primarily taken an initial decision to enter the Art Competition because it aligns well with the vision of SEJN to care for and protect the environment. We are doing so because we strive to achieve clean energy and discourage air pollution.

SEJN especially through this competition adopts art as the best tool of communication to make government consider promoting clean energy and stop funding companies that pollute the atmosphere.

IKEMELENG WOMAN IN FARMING STEVEN RAMOKHULA, IKEMELENG, KROONDAL, NORTH WEST

Ikemeleng is based in Kroondal outside Rustenburg in the North West Province. It is well known for hosting multiple mining companies in the Rustenburg area.

Over the years people of Ikemeleng have been depending more on the mining sector to provide employment and boost the economy of the Rustenburg area.

The 2014 platinum belt strike has left people stranded and out of employment. The economy of the entire country has collapsed. Rustenburg was the most affected as many of the platinum mining companies are based in Rustenburg.

The Pandemic that saw the entire country go on a lockdown also left people stranded for a better economy that does not only rely on mining. People are now starting to wonder what will happen after mining. An alternative economy is needed now. People need to prepare now for an alternative economy.

Women in Ikemeleng have now decided to move away from relying more on the mining sector but to start up a farming cooperative. I facilitated their meeting today and make arrangements for them to meet with the mine official for making a presentation.

VOICES FROM COMMUNITIES
LIVING NEAR MINES IN SOUTH AFRICA
ON THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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