

# Vuk'uzenzele

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July 2020 Edition 2



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## COVID-19 is dangerous and we must take care

**WITH 196 750** coronavirus cases and 3 199 deaths recorded by 5 July, government is again urging citizens to protect themselves and adhere to lockdown regulations.

Allison Cooper

**S**outh Africa is seeing a fast rise in its number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and government expects infections to surge in July and August.

The word surge entails a sudden and big increase in the number of positive cases, as recently seen in Gauteng, where the number of infections has grown to over 63 400 in a short period of time.

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize explains that various factors will contribute to the surge, including people moving around more; people getting together in groups; and people not wear-

ing face masks and not social distancing.

As a result of the increasing number of cases, President Cyril Ramaphosa has extended the employment of 20 000 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members from 27 June until 30 September.

Apart from helping to maintain law and order and protect the country's borders, the SANDF will work with the National Department of Health in managing the virus through the provision of field hospitals, medical screening and quarantine facilities. It will also support the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' efforts to maintain and enhance the



**President Cyril Ramaphosa has extended the deployment of 20 000 South African National Defence Force members until 20 September 2020 to help manage the virus.**

living conditions of the population. This will include the supply of water.

After visiting Mpumalanga on 3 July, President Ramaphosa said he was pleased with the province's efforts to fight the

virus. Mpumalanga is one of the least affected provinces. At the time of the President's visit, it had 1 478 cases, with 520 recoveries and nine fatalities.

He warned, however, that while more industrialised prov-

inces with bigger populations had far more cases, the surge in infections would hit all regions. People must not let their guard down, he said.

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CORONAVIRUS  
UPDATE

## New ways of running schools

**S**chools across the country have welcomed more learners back to school.

"The Council of Education Ministers (CEM) noted that provinces may be at different levels of readiness for the return of Grade R learners. Therefore, the CEM agreed that those provinces that are not ready to receive Grade R on 6 July 2020, must provide strategic and realisable plans for ensuring the reincorporation of Grade R learners to schools within, but not later than the end of July 2020," Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, said.

The Minister was addressing a media briefing following a CEM meeting held recently.

"What is critically important is that all Grade R and pre-Grade R learners, who have already returned to school,

must remain in school. Schools that meet the health, safety and social distancing protocols can reopen for their Grade R and pre-Grade R learners," Motshekga said.

The Department of Basic Education will continue to work with the national associations responsible for learners with special needs to streamline the return of these learners to school.

"A further agreement by CEM is that all Grades that are part of the second cohort should return to school in an orderly, staggered fashion within July 2020," the Minister said.

She said a number of overall patterns continue to emerge from the monitoring and evaluation process carried out by the department.

"Across most thematic areas in the tool, there were rela-

tively high levels of readiness on average, with the lower levels recorded for psychosocial support, school nutrition, and personnel provisioning, as well as the highest levels of readiness recorded for facilities, water and sanitation, and compliance with COVID-19 protocols," the Minister said.

The Director-General for the Department of Basic Education will continue to have one-on-one meetings with the Heads of the Provincial Education Departments to ensure that there is continuous sharing of experiences and working together.

"We unfortunately lost the lives of 11 teachers and four non-teaching staff in the Eastern Cape to the virus; as well as three learners, who are reported to have succumbed to COVID-19.

"The reports show that

some of these teachers and learners could not have the opportunity of reporting back to school on school reopening. We convey our deepest condolences to the affected families," the Minister said.

**Differentiated timetables and trimming of the curriculum**

The department has noted that many schools may have spacing challenges when more grades return to school.

"Almost all schools are going to have to adopt innovative approaches with respect to timetabling and classroom management, in order to ensure that all children can return to school, while at the same time, maintaining the necessary social distancing measures.

"Options such as rotating different grades coming to school on particular days of the week, and other innovative approaches based on the different contexts, will need to be considered," the Minister said.

As a result of the loss of schools days this year, revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) have been developed and adapted by provinces, and have been communicated to schools and teachers.

"In some cases, innovative approaches are being used, like training teachers using Microsoft Teams and other virtual approaches. It is of critical importance that young people are kept constructively occupied, engaged and connected through schooling," the Minister said. **V**

– SAnews.gov.za

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"We must ensure there is protective behaviour among our people, who must take care of each other and themselves," he stressed, explaining that one of the strongest weapons we have against the coronavirus is to change our behaviour.

People must be accountable for their actions, said the President. If we see someone not wearing mask, we must ask where their mask is, he advised.

We need to learn to live with this virus, which may be with us for up to two years or more, he said, saying that hand washing and sanitising, social distancing, wearing a mask in public and coughing and sneezing into a bent elbow need to become everyday behaviour. "The virus is spread when we don't do all these things."

He praised the Mpumalan-

ga Provincial Government for the interventions they have taken to protect vulnerable people by focusing on the food supply chain to ward off hunger; balancing health with people's livelihoods; community engagements; and mass screenings.

Sibusiso Sithole (27), who lives in Daantjie near Mbombela, says everyone in his community has been screened and that sanitisers and soap have been handed out. "We have been told how to change our behaviour to protect ourselves against infection," he says.

President Ramaphosa reacted positively to the news that coronavirus forums were being formed to facilitate discussions in Mpumalanga's communities about the coronavirus and how people can safeguard themselves. He said he hoped open dialogue would help combat the stigmatisation of those

infected. "High levels of intolerance are being showed by some in our nation," he said.

Minister Mkhize says case management is very important to control the rate of infections but says some people remain don't want to go to government quarantine and isolation facilities, even though they do not have the space at home to self-isolate.

This worsens the risk of infections in communities, he warns.

His message remains that when not at work, people should stay at home as much as possible because outbreaks are mainly seen in places where people cluster.

"Overall, we expect that all provinces will start experiencing an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases – even those with low numbers now. We are closely monitoring all districts, whether they are high-trans-

mission or low-transmission areas," the Minister says.

The number of people being admitted to hospital is increasing. By 27 June, the majority of hospitalised patients were admitted in the Western Cape (36 percent), Gauteng (26 percent) and the Eastern Cape (17 percent).

"We have engaged industries to secure what we need to meet our increasing oxygen requirements... The procurement and acquisition of ventilators is on course – we feel confident we will be able to meet demand," says Minister Mkhize.

The Minister says government is extremely concerned that South Africans are letting down their guard at a time when the spread of infection is surging. "We see poor or no social distancing in communities. Masks are being abandoned or not worn properly and there is laxity setting in around frequent

hand washing... This will directly influence the rise in numbers.

"We do not have a vaccine. We do not have a cure. Our ability to break the cycle of infection depends on our willingness to remain focused and disciplined," the Minister says.

The elderly and those with co-morbidities – like hypertension, diabetes, cardiac disease, chronic kidney disease, malignancy, HIV and obesity – are the most vulnerable and the Minister appealed to them not to miss their clinic or hospital appointments and to make sure they have enough medication.

"In addition to regular hand washing, social distancing and the correct wearing of masks, early case detection, contact tracing, quarantine and isolation are the key to breaking the cycle of infection," says Minister Mkhize. **V**



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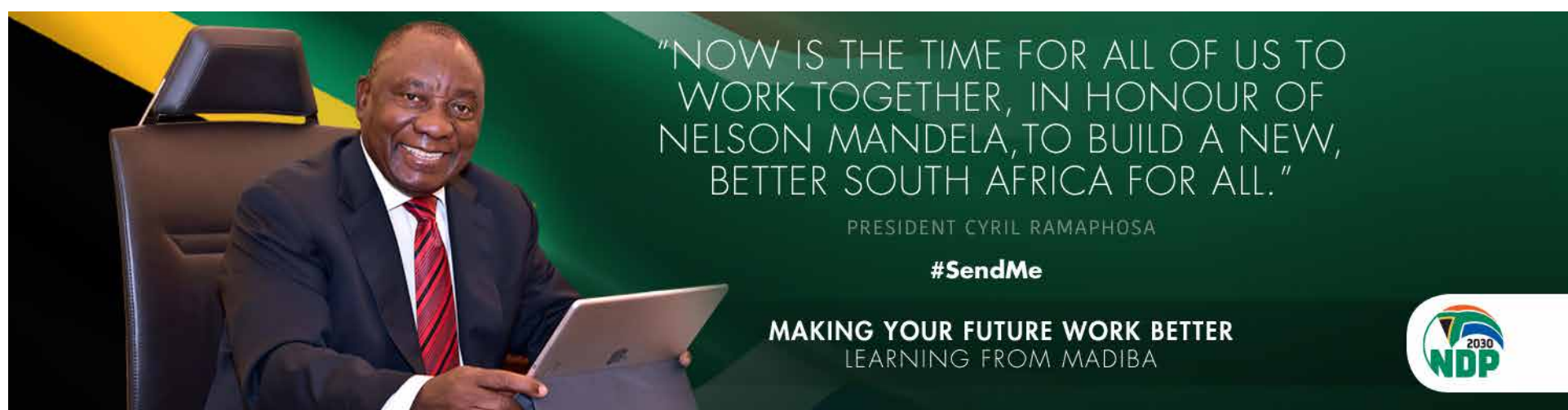
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# A special tribute to our healthcare workers

**T**he number of deaths from coronavirus recently passed the 2000 mark. Among those who have lost their lives are healthcare workers, consummate professionals who cared for the ill, and were a support and comfort to those in hospital isolated from their families.

That the men and women carrying out this most noble and sacred of duties are themselves falling ill and dying is a devastating blow.

They are on the frontline of fighting this pandemic. They are working under great pressure and must carry the psychological strain of knowing they are at risk of contracting the virus. They are the true heroes and heroines of our battle against coronavirus.

We salute these brave South Africans who leave their homes, families and loved ones to report without fail for duty every day in clinics, hospitals and other health facilities. There they provide medical care, administrative support and other services like cleaning and catering.

Just as they perform what is their professional duty, we too have a duty to them and to their families. Their health and their safety must be paramount.

We honour them and uphold them as the men and women who have demonstrated they are prepared to risk their lives so that we may live.

For them to do their Herculean work they need our support as well as protection through the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE).

With the support of the Solidarity Fund and donations



from many individual South Africans, businesses, foundations and other governments, we have been able to procure personal protective equipment for these brave frontline workers. Where there have been shortages of PPE our hospitals are urgently attending to ensuring that they are available.

We know that access to PPE is not the only challenge our healthcare workers face. Across the country clinics and hospitals are facing staff shortages. This problem is being attended to.

To support the work that our frontline workers are performing around the country we are deploying Ministers and Deputy Ministers to each of the districts in the country to get a line of sight of specific challenges in these districts and to work with provincial

health authorities.

We need to work together to safeguard the health of not just our frontline workers but the entire workforce.

There has already been sterling work done by unions in educating members around infection control and prevention and hygiene. They are also supporting the work of the Department of Employment and Labour in conducting workplace inspections to ensure health and safety protocols are in place for returning workers. Many of our trade unions are also providing coronavirus information to their members and employers are running awareness campaigns.

One of the challenges that has emerged in our country is the stigmatisation of people who have proven positive with coronavirus. As a society,

we have a collective responsibility to stamp out the stigmatisation of people infected with the coronavirus. There have been disturbing reports of individuals being ostracised from their communities and of communities protesting against coronavirus patients being admitted to local hospitals and clinics. This must stop.

Just as we came together to promote acceptance of people living with HIV and stood firm against victimisation, we must show understanding, tolerance, kindness, empathy and compassion for those who are infected with this virus and for their families.

It is said that this stigmatisation is driven by fear of contracting the disease and lack of understanding. The best way to overcome our instinctive fear of illness and contagion is

to observe the hygiene protocols that are in place. The fear of infection is well-founded and real. At the same time, we know what we have to do to protect ourselves and others.

We know what causes the virus and what we can do to protect ourselves from becoming infected. We know we have to maintain social distancing, to self-isolate if we have come into contact with those infected and to present to a hospital if we have symptoms.


We must continue to be guided by facts and not rumours.

The time when anyone could say they do not know anyone who is infected or affected by coronavirus has long passed. Now, more than ever, our friends, families, colleagues and neighbours need our empathy and support.

In the days, weeks and months that lie ahead, we will at times find ourselves despondent and fearful as we see the numbers of people infected and dying continue to rise. It may be that things have gotten worse, but we are certain that they will get better. Our scientists and medical advisers told us that the rate of infections will go up as we move towards our peak. But it will certainly come down.

We pay tribute to the healthcare workers who lost their lives caring for the sick. In their memory, let us keep ourselves and our fellow citizens safe by playing our part.

We shall overcome this virus and rebuild our society. We have seen darker times and we have prevailed.

Let us spare neither strength nor courage as we work together to save lives. 



# Young farmer receives COVID-19 support

**AN EMERGING** Eastern Cape farmer is one of the beneficiaries of government's Coronavirus Relief Fund.



**Nomagcinandile Suduka** has converted her family's subsistence farm into a small business.

**Silusapho Nyanda**

**N**omagcinandile Suduka (27) is growing her family's legacy and wealth by investing in agriculture.

The owner of 4 U and 4 Me Primary Cooperative in Mooiplaas village received support from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Relief Fund for her egg, livestock and vegetable farm.

The department has awarded R1.2 billion worth of vouchers to farmers in need.

Suduka says her vouchers will help her grow the egg producing side of her business. "I received three

vouchers totalling R19 000. A voucher for R12 000 to buy layer egg chickens, a voucher for R6 500 to buy feed and a R500 voucher to buy medicines."

She started her egg production farm by feeding her family's traditional chickens with layer grower feed, which enables them to produce eggs without mating. Her chickens now produce 50 eggs a day, which she sells weekly.

Suduka, who also farms with 73 goats, 25 sheep and 25 cows, started farming in 2015 after obtaining a Public Management N6 Certificate from Ikhala Training and Vocational Education and Training College. After realising that there were not a lot

of job opportunities out there, she decided to take over the family's then subsistence farm and turn it into a profitable business.

Suduka says: "We grew up practising farming, so after graduating I decided to farm rather than look for a job."

This proved to be an inspired decision, as she has grown the number of goats and cows.

Suduka's six-hectare vegetable farm produces maize, potatoes, peas and beans. The maize is planted on four hectares, the potatoes on one hectare and the peas and beans share the last hectare.

Suduka has learnt a lot from COVID-19, especially that her best assets are her hands and hard work. **U**

## Grow your own food and save money

**Silusapho Nyanda**

**A**gardener in Kwa-Zulu-Natal has proven to be a smart businessman, selling his home-grown produce to put money in his pocket. This is thanks to the One Home, One Garden and Fruit Tree programme aimed for Kwa-Zulu-Natal residents.

Muziwakhe Nsele (42) is a popular man in Hlathini, a village near Melmoth where he lives and sells vegetables such as beans, cabbage and potatoes.

Nsele's business grew in leaps and bounds following the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19), with people buying from him rather than travelling

to the shops.

With his profit, Nsele has bought six goats and plans to expand his agriculture business. "I will also be investing in layers and broiler chickens to expand my income streams through the sale of eggs and whole chickens," Nsele says.

The father of six says his business received a boost from the One Home, One Garden and Fruit Tree programme run by the province's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

The programme encourages people to start gardening at their homes as a means of fighting poverty and Nsele received seeds, fertiliser and advice from DARD.



**Muziwakhe Nsele is becoming a successful businessman, thanks to his vegetable garden.**

DARD MEC Bongiwe Sithole-Moloi says the One Home, One Garden and Fruit Tree programme assists families that are suffering because of COVID-19.

She says: "The programme

remains a crucial seed for a sustainable rural economy and with specific interventions and support from DARD, it can reduce and eliminate poverty through subsistence farming." **U**

To be part of the programme, visit the office of DARD at your local municipality. The contact details of the DARD offices can be found on the department's website [www.kzndard.gov.za](http://www.kzndard.gov.za). Alternatively, call the department at 033 355 9100.

### Tips on how to start a garden:

- Make sure you know which plants your soil will support.
- Ready your garden by first ploughing the land more than once without planting.
- Add fertiliser.
- Remove all weeds.



# Centres readied for little ones' return

**ANY EARLY** childhood development facility that intends to reopen when the green light is given, needs to complete a reopening self-assessment form.



**Silusapho Nyanda**

**A**lthough an official date for the reopening of early childhood development (ECD) centres is yet to be announced, the Department of Social Development (DSD) has outlined reopening guidelines.

Before ECD centres can reopen, they must make sure that they have completed a self-assessment test designed by the DSD.

"An ECD centre or par-

tial-care facility that intends to reopen for the duration of the state of disaster needs to complete a pre-opening self-assessment form that must be submitted online or in paper at the nearest office of the DSD," says DSD Acting Director General Linton Mchunu.

The form is to ensure that the centres follow the measures put in place to stop the

spread of the virus. Once the ECD centres fill in and submit the form, the department's officials are allowed to make unannounced on-site assessments.

Mchunu says: "The DSD may visit an ECD programme or partial-care facility that intends to reopen for an onsite assessment to check that it complies with the health, safety and social distancing measures."

## Before the children return

Over two million children attend ECD centres. Before the children return, a centre must disinfect its premises, all stationery, toys and other materials. This must thereafter be done on a daily basis.

The DSD also requires that all ECD centres have a space for people to wash their hands when entering the premises. Another re-

quirement is that there must be a screening process at all ECD centre entrances, during which people wishing to enter must answer a number of questions that relate to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

To protect children from the spread of COVID-19, ECD centres must have basic personal protective equipment. The DSD requires that every ECD centre has:

- masks for every adult at the centre,
- additional masks or visors for children,
- a temperature gun,
- a sanitiser for cleaning hands, stationery and surface areas,
- social distance markings,
- rubber gloves for cleaning and the disposal of waste materials and
- cleaning cloths.

## Training for staff

In order to ensure that

children enrolled at ECD centres are safe, the DSD insists that all staff must be given training on the new measures that are to be implemented to stop the spread of COVID-19.

"It is the responsibility of the management or body responsible for the employment of staff at the ECD centre or partial-care facility to ensure that staff meet the minimum safety and social distancing measures before they return to work," says Minister Mchunu.


The training of staff can be done through an in-service training or peer-to-peer training programme. The department says the training must provide staff with opportunities to develop and share ideas that will make the reopening of an ECD centre or partial-care facility practical and safe for them and the learners.

When filling in the self-assessment forms, ECD centre owners or managers will have to provide information about the centre.

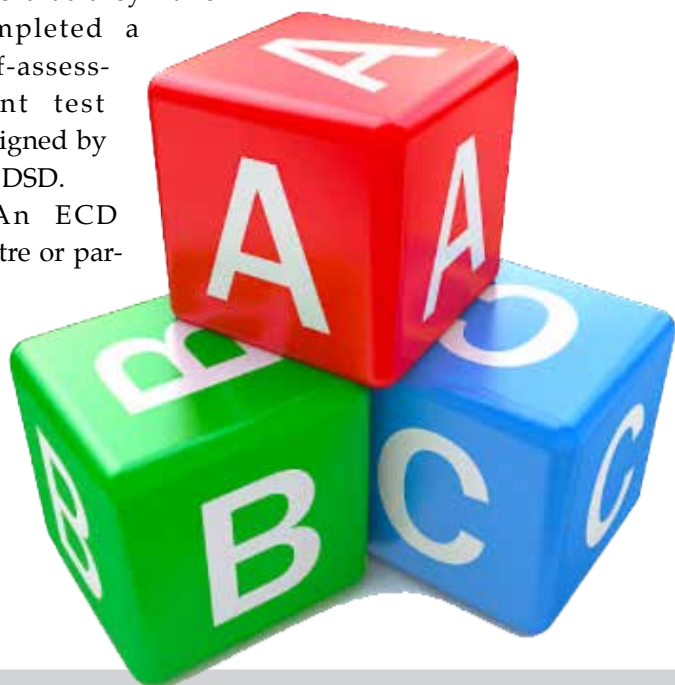
The information will include;

- contact details and the physical address of the ECD centre
- the type of services offered
- the registration status of the centre.

If a centre is not registered, it will be given six months to do so as a condition of reopening.

ECD centres must also state whether they get funding from the DSD or not. The age groups of the children in the care of an ECD centre is also required. 

**For more information on how to get the self-assessment form, visit your nearest DSD office or call the department at 012 312 7727.**



# Field hospital helps patients beat COVID-19



**Babalwa Posa** says a field quarantine hospital in Port Elizabeth helped with speeding up her recovery.

**Silusapho Nyanda**

**A** field quarantine hospital in Port Elizabeth helped a woman diagnosed with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) recover speedily.

Babalwa Poswa (33) from Cradock in the Eastern

Cape says that being at the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium hospital fast tracked her recovery. The Department of Correctional Services official says that she was placed in an isolation unit which prevented her from spreading the virus while providing the treatment she needed.

Having contracted the

virus from her cousin, Poswa chose to isolate at the hospital rather than remain at her work quarters. "We share bathrooms in the staff residential area, there was a high risk that I could spread the virus and I did not want to be responsible for that," Poswa says.

Unfortunately, by the time Poswa learned of her COVID-19 status, her live-in partner had already been infected. Poswa's partner was also admitted to the field hospital.

Patients at the 213-bed quarantine hospital have health checks done twice daily and receive three meals a day. According to Poswa, there were several very sick patients in the hospital while she was there, and all made a full recovery.

She says that as patients, they drew strength from being around other people diagnosed with COVID-19. "Since there is no cure for

the virus, one needs to be mentally strong and focused as the body fights the virus," says Poswa.

She explains that the hospital has strict protocols to make sure the virus does not spread. Patients at the hospital have to wear a mask at all times. They are allowed to go outside, but not all at the same time.

The hospital offers counsel-

ling for patients who find it hard to cope with their diagnosis or with quarantine.

According to Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality spokesperson Mamela Ndamase on 28 June, the hospital had admitted 543 patients, of which 403 had recovered and were discharged. **U**

## DID YOU KNOW?

A number of field hospitals have been set up around the country to ensure that government is able to accommodate all patients needing to be treated or quarantined.

- The Eastern Cape also has the 1000-bed Rev. Dr Elizabeth Mamisa Chabula-Nxiweni Field Hospital which stemmed from a partnership between Volkswagen and the Department of Health.
- The Western Cape has converted the Cape Town International Convention Centre into an 800-bed COVID-19 hospital.
- In Gauteng, the Johannesburg Expo Centre is now a COVID-19 healthcare centre that can accommodate 2 200 patients.
- The KwaZulu-Natal health department has converted a part of Clairwood Hospital into a separate facility for admitting COVID-19 patients. The new wing has 145 beds and 40 isolation units.

# One blood donation can save three lives

**Dale Hes**

**B**lood stocks in South Africa, used for life-saving hospital procedures, remain very low. You should know that donating blood is safe, even during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, and that your donation can help to save lives.

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) is appealing to South Africans to donate blood during this time, as the organisation is struggling to meet its collection goals.

"With people going back to

work, we are experiencing less donations and a decline in blood stocks. We have also seen some reluctance from our corporate partners and schools to host us on site, so we are struggling to meet our collection goals," says SANBS communications officer Khensani Mahlangu.

Many people may worry about donating blood during the coronavirus outbreak. But the SANBS has put in place a number of measures to ensure that blood is donated safely.

The measures include frequently disinfecting all equipment, surfaces and donor beds, wellness screening of donors and proper social distancing between donors.

"In addition to thoroughly assessing donors and staff at all entry points to our facilities, we have equipped all sites with supplies of alcohol-based antiseptic sprays

and wet wipes," Mahlangu explains.

The blood donation process is painless and takes less than 30 minutes to complete. Afterwards, you will also receive juice and a snack.

## Donating blood saves lives

One blood donation can potentially contribute to saving the lives of three people. Blood is needed to save people with illnesses such as blood cancer or kidney problems, or for people who lose blood from injuries suffered during incidents like car accidents.

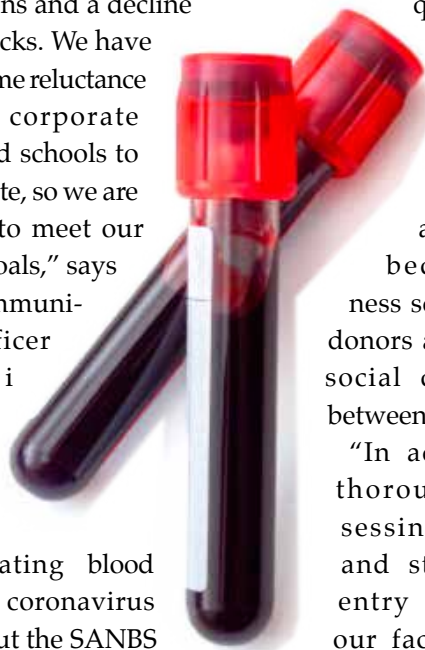
Tebogo Mphahlele suffers

from a disease called haemophilia, which causes blood thinning and causes people to bleed for long periods of time after an injury. He needs regular blood transfusions to keep him healthy.

"If we as haemophiliacs do not get blood transfusions, many of us would die. I am living proof that blood saves lives. To everyone who donates blood, I want to thank you for letting people like me live a normal life," says Mphahlele.

Mahlangu says that despite these uncertain times, there will always be a need for blood. **U**

**To find out more about how to become a blood donor, contact the SANBS on 0800 119 031.**





# Stopping drug use before it starts

Allison Cooper

**M**inister of Social Development Lindiwe Zulu says every South African has a role to play in creating awareness about the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse.

Minister Zulu recently outlined government's National Drug Master Plan (NDMP) 2019 – 2024.

The five year plan focuses on demand, supply and harm reduction strategies, for youth and high-risk and vulnerable groups. As such, the department has focused on expanding free access to public substance abuse



facilities, particularly in the Eastern Cape, Free State, Northern Cape and North West, where previously there was none.

"Substance abuse treatment at private treatment centres is not affordable for many. There is now at least one public drug treatment

centre in each province, which renders treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare services to substance users to ensure full reintegration back into families and communities."

The Minister says the high levels of alcohol and drug abuse and the emergence of

cheap and easily accessible drugs has reached epidemic proportions.

"Along with the emergence of greater availability and trafficking of these cheap, highly addictive drugs, we must also confront the emerging crisis of intravenous drug use which is driving new HIV infections and hepatitis," she says.

The plan focuses on these priority areas, namely:

- Demand reduction, through the prevention and treatment of drug use, misuse and abuse.
- Ensuring availability of and access to controlled substances

exclusively for medical and scientific purposes.

- Identifying trends and control of new drugs.
- Promoting governance, leadership and accountability for a coordinated multi-sectoral effective response.
- Strengthening data collection, monitoring, evaluation and research evidence.

Minister Zulu says the seven priority areas will ensure that the country focuses on the things that matter most. "Key amongst these is preventing drug use before it starts... Prevention is better than cure," she says. **U**

## Being clean and sober is addict's new high

Allison Cooper

**W**hen Buhle Sebona (34) had no option but to live on the street as a result of his alcohol and drug addiction, he realised that he had hit rock bottom.

Sebona started drinking alcohol when he was 16 years old. "At that stage it was just for fun. I was experimenting, not trying to run away from anything," he says.

As he got older, Sebona started drinking more, but says alcohol made him too drunk to function. By the time he was 23, alcohol was no longer about having fun. "I was frustrated and using it to escape. I was hardly ever sober," he says.

That's when he turned to drugs. "I started using cocaine and cat, along with alcohol," says Sebona. He



was 27 at the time.

After a 'very heavy night' on Christmas in 2014, Sebona quit everything cold turkey. As a result, 2015 was a great year for him. "I was doing well at work and nurturing good relationships with positive people and realised that this is how good life can be," he says.

Sadly, it didn't last. Sebona started using drugs and drinking again in April 2016. "At the time, I thought, I don't have to be this extreme'. I can do this

in moderation. Even then, I didn't see it as a problem," he says.

In the years that followed, he spiralled to rock bottom. "I went to rehab centres and would remain clean and sober for a while, before relapsing. From 2017 to 2019, I really 'went to town'," he says.

In 2019, Sebona was living in a house that 'no one really owned'. "I had no money and no job. I had stolen from my family and pushed them all away. Going home

wasn't an option."

In September 2019, he bumped into an old friend. "When he asked me what was going on, I couldn't lie to or manipulate him. He knew," says Sebona.

The friend told him about Wedge Gardens Treatment Centre, a government subsidised alcohol and substance abuse treatment centre in Whitney Gardens, Johannesburg.

The day before his appointment at Wedge Gardens, Sebona's mother saw him walking around Edenvale. "She drove past me and then reversed. I had to walk towards the car to avoid drama, as people were behind me. We were both so emotional. I got in the car and she took me home."

This was followed by Sebona checking into Wedge Gardens, where he underwent the three-month

Full Circle Recovery Programme. He then found a sponsor and went to live at Wedge's halfway house.

Two days before Level 5 of the lockdown was announced, Sebona was offered a job and he re-joined the advertising industry and moved back home. "Now, my mom is my therapy. We do everything together," he says.

As for other addicts, he says, "Give yourself a chance and try to recover. But really try." **U**

For more information about Wedge Gardens, visit [www.wedge-gardens.co.za](http://www.wedge-gardens.co.za). If you need help in overcoming drug addiction, call Sanca on 011 892 3829 or logon to [www.sancanational.info](http://www.sancanational.info)

# More support on the way for poor families



Allison Cooper

**S**outh Africa's poorest households can expect a total of 25.5 billion in support from the Department of Social Development. This is one of the key features of Finance Minister Tito Mboweni's updated budget which he presented to Parliament recently. The coronavirus pandemic has turned the global economy upside down and South Africa has not been spared. This made it necessary for Finance Minister Tito Mboweni to table a Supplementary Budget for South Africa.

A supplementary budget sets out a plan on how a country is going to stabilise debt and revive the economy.

"We have many strengths... But debt is our weakness. This downturn will add more. This year, out of every rand that we pay in tax, 21 cents goes to paying the interest on our

past debts. This indebtedness condemns us to ever higher interest rates.

"If we reduce debt, we will reduce interest rates for everyone and we will release investment and growth," he said.

## Shrinking economy

When he announced the February Budget, the Minister expected the global economy to grow by 3.3 percent in 2020. He now expects it to decrease by 5.2 percent.

"Throughout the world, tens of millions of workers have lost their jobs," the Minister said.

He confirmed that South Africa's unemployment rate increased by one percent, to 30.1 percent, in the first three months of this year.

South Africa's economy is now expected to shrink by 7.2 percent in 2020. "This is the largest reduction in nearly 90 years."

## Avoiding a debt crisis

The Minister said public

finances are dangerously overstretched.

"If we remain passive, economic growth will stagnate. Our debt increase and debt service costs will crowd out public spending on education and other policy priorities. We already spend as much on debt service costs as we do on health in this financial year."

The Minister explained that a sovereign debt crisis is when a country can no longer pay back the interest or principal on its borrowings. "We are still some way from that. But, if we do not act now, we will shortly get there."

The country thus needs to take active steps to rapidly stabilise debt and grow the economy. "By doing this, we will create jobs, reduce the cost of doing business and build a competitive economy."

## Zero based-budgeting

The Minister said government will narrow the deficit

and stabilise debt at 87.4 percent of GDP in 2023/24.

"The Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) process will be guided by the principles of zero based budgeting."

Zero-based budgeting is a process in which government departments get rid of projects and programmes that aren't priorities or are wasteful or unworkable.

## Driving job creation

Minister Mboweni said unemployment is the greatest challenge. "The

Economic Support Package sets aside R100 billion for a multi year, comprehensive response to our jobs emergency."

The President's job creation and protection initiative will be rolled out over the medium term. "It will include a repurposed public employment programme and a Presidential Youth Employment Intervention. In this year, R6.1 billion is already allocated and a further R19.6 billion has been set aside mainly for this purpose." 

## Budget highlights

- R21.5 billion for COVID-19-related healthcare spending.
- R12.6 billion to COVID-19 frontline services.
- R5 billion to provinces for the education catch-up plan and other responses.
- R3 billion to recapitalise the Land Bank.
- The national share increased from R758 billion to R790 billion.
- The provincial share decreased from R649 billion to R645 billion.
- The local government share increased from R133 billion to R140 billion.



# Building a better life

**F**rom humble beginnings in KwaNongoma village, KwaZulu-Natal, 23-year-old Silondiwe Magwaza has conquered many obstacles to reach her dream of becoming a construction manager.

Growing up surrounded by poor infrastructure motivated Magwaza to explore new ways to uplift her community. She is now the first member of her family to obtain a degree.

Magwaza qualified at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2019, obtaining an undergraduate degree in construction studies.

"KwaNongoma has very poor infrastructure. Looking at all the challenges faced by my hometown, I was encouraged to do something



■ As the first graduate in her family, Silondiwe Magwaza has MISA to thank.

relating to construction so that I can be one of the people to change the current state," she says.

Obtaining her qualification was no easy feat. Magwaza says she found it difficult to concentrate due to her constant worry about fund-

ing. Then, the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) stepped in to assist.

"I used to stress a lot about funding as I come from a disadvantaged background. That was until 2018, when I received a bursary from MISA. This helped me to

complete my degree without any more stress. I had everything paid for, all I had to do was focus on my studies," she says.

Magwaza is one of hundreds of students who pass through MISA's youth development programmes each year. The programmes provide funding and support and help students find job placements once qualified.

"I was really looking forward to our graduation ceremony. It would have meant a lot considering that I was going to be the first graduate in my family. I am still hoping that we have our graduation ceremony, but this might not be possible given the coronavirus pandemic," she says.

The construction industry mainly consists of men.

"At times, women are made

to feel small because their ability to bring about change is doubted. Sometimes their voices are not heard.

"I still chose construction management because I believe that I have the power to change the industry and improve it where there is a need. I have seen women in this industry making it to top positions and having influence. I believe that I too can make it," she says. **U**

MISA bursaries are advertised on [www.misa.gov.za](http://www.misa.gov.za) from September, on Facebook @MISA, on Twitter @MISA\_CoGTA and on Instagram @MISA\_CoGTA.

## Don't share fake news!

Allison Cooper

**N**elisiwe Dlamini (30), a researcher at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), says it's important to verify stories from social media, especially those about the coronavirus (COVID-19), before sharing them.



■ Passionate researcher at the CSIR, Nelisiwe Dlamini, warns South Africans, especially the youth, not to share fake news because it creates panic especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Some young people are becoming ringleaders of the spread of false information. This has the potential to create panic," she says.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the CSIR has created a dashboard to assist government and health institutions to track the spread of misinformation, in order to avoid unnecessary public panic. The dashboard categorises information as misinformation (misleading content), disinformation (information that is untrue and mal-information (hate speech).

Dlamini is part of the team that does research and also helps categorise information in the dashboard.

A data dashboard is an information management tool or website that tracks, analyses and displays information to monitor the performance of a business or department.

According to Dlamini, social media platforms become a great danger when used to share false information.

"Whether it's with the intention to harm or not, it creates social conflict, distracts people from the real issues and undermines government's, public authorities' and other organisations' efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 and maintain social order."

She says there are numerous ways to identify fake news, including reading the whole story and not just the heading, being critical of everything you read and examining the source of the story.

"Reporting fake news is necessary, as it will help

to take down fake news stories from multiple platforms," says Dlamini.

### A journey to research

Dlamini joined the CSIR in 2014, when she was awarded a studentship to pursue her MSc Computer Science degree. "It was a foot in the door for me and has since afforded me great opportunities," she says.

She was also awarded a grant from the Young Researcher's Establishment Fund, which she sites as a wonderful opportunity in her career.

Born in Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal, Dlamini says women hoping to follow in her footsteps need to be interested in and have a passion for research.

To become a researcher, learners need to take maths and science in high school. "After school I studied computer science and information systems and technology,

which laid a strong foundation for me," says Dlamini, who also holds a BcomHon Information Systems and Technology degree.

She didn't always know she wanted to be a researcher. "When I joined the CSIR, I was so amazed by the multi-disciplinary research that is done to make a difference in our country," she says.

This Women's Day, Dlamini says if there was ever a time for women to be bold and do everything they have ever wished to do, it is now. "We need to support each other and unite and always remember to celebrate each other. This alone will propel us." **U**

You can report fake news by emailing [fake-newsalert@dtps.gov.za](mailto:fake-newsalert@dtps.gov.za), sending a WhatsApp to 067 966 4015 or on the website [www.real411.org](http://www.real411.org).

# Honouring Madiba amid the COVID-19 pandemic



■ Nelson Mandela Foundation CEO Sello Hatang assists with distributing food parcels during the Each1Feed1 campaign. Photo:Nelson Mandela Foundation



■ Mandela: Each of these food parcels can feed a family for up to five months. Photo:NMF

## Dale Hes

In this, the 30th anniversary year of Nelson Mandela's release from prison, South Africans must work harder than ever before to fulfil the dreams envisioned by the father of our nation.

As our economy struggles under the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a great responsibility to live up to the expectations of the public this Mandela Month.

This year, Mandela Month is being celebrated under unprecedented circumstances. Millions of South Africans have been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, which

has magnified the challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) has played a major role in driving social upliftment efforts in South Africa since it was established in 1999.

As a crucial implementing partner of Mandela Month initiatives, the foundation has focused strongly on the biggest issues facing South Africans during the COVID-19 pandemic and is intensifying its work during a time when it is needed the most.

## Food security, education and sanitation

This year, the foundation is

building on the strategy of last year, which focuses on the five pillars of education, food and nutrition, shelter, sanitation and active citizenship.

Yase Godlo, foundation Director of Mandela Day and Special Projects, says that since the COVID-19 outbreak struck, there has been an intensified effort on supporting poverty-stricken families with food parcels.

"Through the Each1Feed1 campaign, hundreds of vulnerable families in rural communities around the country have been provided with food parcels that can feed a family for five months. The campaign is being supported by government departments and foundations such as the Imbumba Foundation and the Kolisi Foundation, among others," says Godlo.

Beyond distributing food parcels, the foundation is working with its partners to come up with new initiatives to improve food security over the long-term.

"We are engaging our partners on ways to develop sustainable food production solutions, and also to create a voucher system for families to be able to access food."

NMF CEO Sello Hatang

says that South Africa's food security can be solved through collaborative actions between all sectors of society.

"South Africa's hunger problem is now better understood, and can be solved through flexible and collaborative action from government, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, the private sector, economists and communities. The necessary expertise and knowledge are available in South Africa, as are trusted conveners, organisers and problem-solving methodologies."

Education has been a strong focal point for the foundation in 2020. Through the Nelson Mandela School Library Project, in partnership with engineering firm Hytec, seven libraries have been built in schools in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Gauteng.

Meanwhile, the foundation has also been active in ensuring proper protection of children and teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, by donating personal protective equipment to schools.

Sanitation is also particularly important during this time, as good hygiene practices are critical to preventing the spread of COVID-19.

"So these are the three areas of focus that we would like everyone to participate in this Mandela Month – food security, education and sanitation," says Godlo.

## Adapting to COVID-19 challenges

The NMF is well aware that the challenges posed by COVID-19, which will have an impact on the way that Mandela Day will be celebrated this year.

"For example, we acknowledged that people cannot come together in large groups as they did in previous years to participate in activations," says Godlo.

The Mandela Day website has now become a crucial platform which will advise members of the public, corporates and NGOs on the types of activities they can get involved in on Mandela Day.

Godlo was privileged enough to interact with Mandela on several occasions. He believes Madiba would call on all South Africans to rise up to the challenges posed by the current crisis.

"Mandela once said that 'It is in our hands' to make true difference, and to understand that together, we are the solution to the challenges that we face. It is in the hands of government, community members, corporates and civil society to make a difference."

For more information on how you can get involved in Mandela Day initiatives go to: [www.mandeladay.com](http://www.mandeladay.com)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Nelson Mandela International Day was launched in recognition of Nelson Mandela's birthday on 18 July 2009 by the UN General Assembly.
- It was inspired by a call Nelson Mandela made a year earlier, for the next generation to take on the burden of leadership in addressing the world's social injustices when he said that "it is in your hands now".

Source: Nelson Mandela Foundation



# Yes4Youth participants become WiFi Entrepreneurs

Dale Hes

**T**en Yes4Youth participants have become WiFi Entrepreneurs who will be better prepared for the digital future, thanks to their involvement with non-profit organisation Project Isizwe.

Yes4Youth is a national government initiative that places unemployed young people in companies for a 12-month paid internship.

Project Isizwe, an organisation which focuses on improving access to free and low-cost WiFi in South Africa, have taken on the ten youth entrepreneurs for a one-year paid internship to help develop digital skills which will help them boost their entrepreneurial skills and earn a sustainable income in the future.

"We were approached by Yes4Youth and this provided us with an opportunity to expose youth to work



experience in the technology field," says Siobhan Thatcher, manager of the project.

The youth are based in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape and play a crucial role in monitoring WiFi hotspots that Project

Isizwe has helped to set up in these provinces.

"They are deployed at our access points, monitoring whether things are running properly. They have been trained through mentorship and on-the-job training, and

they have also been able to do online training courses where they can get certificates," says Thatcher.

The WiFi Entrepreneurs are also given a chance to earn an income by selling affordable internet vouchers to customers. They have an opportunity to earn up to 15 percent commission on sales.

"This is where the entrepreneurial aspect is important. By giving these young people the chance to learn entrepreneurial skills, they can be better equipped to earn an income after the internship," says Thatcher.

Nwabisa Dondolo (25) is one of the WiFi Entrepreneurs, who is working in KwaZulu-Natal. She comes from a disadvantaged background, sharing a shack with her parents and siblings in Lamontville outside Durban.

This initiative is giving her an opportunity to learn more about technology, while earning an income.

"The field of technology is

something which I am very interested in. This internship has given me so much knowledge about technology, especially WiFi. I will also be able to sell vouchers to people and make an income. I am very thankful for this opportunity given to me by Yes4Youth and Project Isizwe."

Dondolo is studying to be an IT technician at the same time as doing her internship, as she hopes to get a career in IT one day.

"There are a lot of job opportunities in IT. Being a WiFi Entrepreneur has given me some good work experience, and I hope that after my internship, I will be able to find a job in the field and help support my family."

**\*If you're a young person looking for work opportunities, then you can sign up for Yes4Youth at [yes4youth.mobi](https://yes4youth.mobi).**

## UIF explains COVID-19 TERS payments

**T**he Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) has confirmed it will continue to accept and process COVID-19 TERS claims submitted for April, May and June.

However, the Fund will not be accepting and processing claims for July and onwards, said Fund Commissioner, Tebogo Maruping, in a statement.

The three-month relief was

introduced by government in March.

"Although June was the last month for the COVID-19 TERS [Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme] benefits, as per the directive, the UIF will continue to process and pay claims submitted for this period until the cut-off date is determined.

"However, we will not accept claims submitted for July onwards, as that falls

outside of the time period stipulated in the directive for the COVID-19 TERS benefits," Maruping said.

The Commissioner said while the Fund will accept claims for the determined period, the Fund is currently experiencing minor technical glitches with the opening of the system for June submissions.

"The main problem is with the swapping of employer profiles when users try to

submit claims, which causes a potential security breach.

"We initially opened the system for June applications on 23 June 2020, and our aim was to start making the first payments on 25 June to ensure that employees do not wait too long for their salaries.

"Unfortunately, we experienced problems with the swapping of user profiles and we immediately shut it down for June and rolled back to May to fix the problem.

"We deployed the system again on the 24th of June but the problem persisted and our IT engineers have ultimately increased the capacity of the system to be able to simultaneously process claims for April, May and June. The good thing is that the data is safe and we

will ultimately be able to finalise the claims and pay monies due to employees once we have resolved the current issues," said Maruping.

To resolve problems expeditiously, the Commissioner said the Fund has roped in external resources to help. However, the Fund will make sure that the system is completely stable before re-opening for June applications.

"I wish to apologise to employers and employees for the further delays. We are, however, working around the clock to fix the problem. We anticipate complete testing by Friday, so that we can open the system again over the weekend if everything goes according to plan," Maruping said.

**SAnews.gov.za**

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

# NSFAS improves payments of student allowances

**T**he National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) says it has been working on innovations to improve the payment of students' allowances to remove all third parties from the payment chain.

For the 2021 academic year, NSFAS will pay allowances directly into the bank accounts of all students.

"The direct payment system is convenient and allows a student to be in charge and have access to their allowance 24/7 with no limitation or additional administrative processes," NSFAS said.

In 2019, NSFAS replaced the anti-competitive voucher



system with cash allowances to allow students to manage their own finances.

"By disbursing directly to student's bank accounts,

NSFAS will eradicate fraudulent activities and scams which students have been subjected to. Recipients of NSFAS payments will have

the added security offered by administered accounts.

NSFAS urges students who would like to enrol at a public TVET college in 2021 to open accounts in preparation for the roll out of allowances through bank accounts.

As the banking project is currently out for tender, students on NSFAS Wallet will as an interim measure be moved from the \*134\*176# USSD channel to \*120\*176# USSD channel with effect from 01 July 2020. A transaction on the \*120\*176# USSD channel will cost approximately 20 cents per 20 seconds.

Through this platform, a student will have access to their NSFAS Wallet account,

make withdrawals, and view transactions. There will be a smooth transition to ensure that there is no disruption in the system.

The next phase of the direct payment system through bank accounts will be rolled out to students at universities to create uniformity and further efficiencies. **U**

**SAnews.gov.za**

NSFAS is accessible from 08h30 to 17h00, Monday to Friday on [info@nsfas.org.za](mailto:info@nsfas.org.za) or on NSFAS Connect: [www.nsfas.org.za](http://www.nsfas.org.za) or on NSFAS social media accounts.



**Oageng Manana is the overall winner of the Innibos National Craft Awards.**

**Allison Cooper**

**T**he overall winner of the 2020 Innibos National Craft Awards, Johannesburg's Oageng Manana, is going to plough his R50 000 in prize money into his emerging interior design and furniture crafting business.

The 28-year-old grew up in the Jouberton township near Klerksdorp in the North West. He has a BSc in Med-

ical Physics, acquired from the University of Pretoria, but nine months into his in-service work, he decided a more creative career would be a better fit for him.

"I decided to go where my heart took me," he says.

Today, he is the owner of CityBirds Craft Co, which focuses primarily on interior design but also makes furniture and a range of crafts.

In 2018, he entered the Innibos National Craft Awards for the first time, and ended

in the Top 60. Last year, his entry reached the organisers too late, but 2020 proved third time lucky for him, when his hand-crafted chest of drawers, inspired by the dashiki, a boldly patterned West African garment, beat 1 360 other entries to win the competition.

"This award means a lot. It validates my decision to change careers, despite all the years I spent studying," says Manana.

The chest of drawers that earned him first place sets the narrative for his future designs. "They will blend traditional with modern and remain highly functional."

Second place was shared by Krugersdorp's Pierre Fourie and Nelspruit's Yolandi Diesel. Pierre's entry was a

majestic horse's head crafted from hundreds of individual strands of 4mm-steel round bar, while Yolandi entered a beautiful hand-carved animal skull.

Third place went to Boksburg resident Clement Maeneta for his stunning range of ceramic plates, created to resemble the enamel plates of his youth.

This year, four categories were added to the competition, thanks to the support of the National Department of Arts and Culture. The categories recognise craftsmen who make a living from their talent and who use recycled or heritage material.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the exhibition and prizegiving had to be held online.

The Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation spokesperson Sibongile Nkosi said at the online announcement of the winners on 26 June that she was pleased the organisers of the awards had adjusted to the 'new normal' of life during the coronavirus pandemic by creating an enabling platform for the participants' work to be acknowledged. **U**

If you would like to enter next year's competition – it's free – like the Facebook page [www.facebook.com/Innibos-NationalCraftAwards/](http://www.facebook.com/Innibos-NationalCraftAwards/) to receive details of when the 2021 competition opens.

## Creative entrepreneur wins R50 000



# COVID-19

## What is social stigma?

In an outbreak people may be labelled, stereotyped, discriminated against, treated separately or have a loss of status because they are seen to be linked to the disease.

## What is the impact of social stigma during an outbreak?

Stigma may contribute to a situation where the virus is more likely to spread. This can cause more severe health problems.

Stigma can:

- drive people to hide their illness to avoid discrimination
- prevent people from seeking healthcare immediately
- discourage people from adopting healthy behaviours

COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999

**For healthy people wear a mask **only if you are taking care of a person with suspected coronavirus infection****

**Wear a mask, **if you are coughing or sneezing****

**Masks are effective only when used **in combination with frequent hand-cleaning** with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water**

**If you wear a mask then you **must know how to use it and dispose of it properly****



**health**

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**World Health  
Organization**



# COVID-19



Just like with any other disease, people who are ill with the COVID-19 Coronavirus have a right to **PRIVACY**.

This right is protected by the Constitution of South Africa and the National Health Act.

COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household detergents. Read the instructions on the detergent label.

COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Division of the National Health Laboratory Service





# Female coach spreads cricket passion

**A FEMALE CRICKET** coach is using the sport as a catalyst for change in her Western Cape community.

Silusapho Nyanda

**B**abalwa Zothe (26) is spreading her passion for cricket to young girls in Khayelitsha outside Cape Town.

Zothe grew up in a rural village outside Mthatha in the Eastern Cape. While in primary school, she saw boys playing cricket on the field after school. “I was inquisitive and wanted to join in but I received several rejections from the boys because I was a girl,” says Zothe, who was 11 at the time.

Eventually, however, the sports master at her school gave her the opportunity to join the team. “It was a big challenge for me. I was the only girl in an all-boys team. I was kept on my toes and



had to learn faster than the boys to keep up.”

Zothe’s love of cricket grew and she went on to

form an all-girls team.

After matric, she moved back to her birthplace of Cape Town, studying at Boland College. She put cricket aside for a while, but after completing her studies, she joined the Khayelitsha Cricket Club as a part-time coach.

She has since mentored and coached girls from the ages of six to 18, helping to develop a thriving women’s cricket culture in Khayelitsha. Today, she is a full-time coach at the Gary Kirsten Foundation, coaching around 70 girls.

Zothe believes that cricket has the potential to keep girls engaged in healthy activities and stay safe.

Tim Human, general manager of the Gary Kirsten Foundation, says Zothe is

an inspiration to young girls and women. “She has been through a lot, but always has a smile and a positive attitude when it comes to her work. She is developing some talented girl cricketers in our programme and is a leader in women’s cricket in Khayelitsha. It is inspiring for all of us to see her go from strength to strength and drive positive change in her community, using cricket as the catalyst.”

If you’re interested in learning more about how to get young girls involved in playing cricket, call the Gary Kirsten Foundation at 082 481 8262.

## Support for artists saving livelihoods

**T**he Department of Sport, Arts and Culture has provided much-needed support to over 2 000 practitioners in the creative industry.

The department has a R150-million relief fund to assist artists, athletes, technical personnel and the core ecosystem of the sector, whose gigs were cancelled due to the COVID-19 induced shutdown.

“We remain resolute in improving the quality of life for South Africans, in spite of the huge socio-economic impediments brought on by the restrictions of COVID-19.

“We know that as a department, ours is to save the lives

of our sector’s practitioners so that they can utilise their skills to better their lives and those of our communities,” the department said.

One of the beneficiaries of the relief fund, author and musician Loyiso Lindani, could not stop singing the department’s praises.

Lindani has since signed a purchase order for her books, thanks to the money from the department.

“I used the relief funds to pay for expenses and I am now selling copies.

“The book I published, titled How HIV Saved My Life, is listed on the South African Publisher’s Network. The funds assisted in paying that off. The book is also listed

with the National Library of South Africa, where we obtained its International Standard Book Number. I want to thank the DSAC [Department of Sport, Arts and Culture],” said Lindani.

Meanwhile, the department said it has noted concerns raised by the sector about the delays in processing the applications.

“We are empathetic to the impact of our lengthy processes. Laborious as this exercise was to our sector, the principles of empathy, responsiveness and agility became the cornerstone of our measurement framework of engaging the sector as we move forward.”

The department said it

would be exploring the possibility of a second application process.

“For ease of reference, the updated list of beneficiaries and digital applications can be found on our official website published on 6 July 2020. Furthermore, we will continue to update the nation on developments pertaining to the COVID-19 Relief Fund, as we have consistently done along the way.”

In line with the National Development Plan’s 2030 vision, the department said it intends to build

a cohesive society in which everyone has access to sport, arts and culture resources, facilities and opportunities.

“While COVID-19 has robbed our industry of gaining fruitful employment, this challenge has further inspired us to ensure that our mandate becomes even more pronounced,” the department said.

– [SANews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za)



# Gcina Mhlophe entertains children with African stories

Dale Hes

If you're looking for an easy, educational way to keep your children entertained, then legendary South African storyteller Gcina Mhlophe is here to help you.

Mhlophe joined up with tertiary institution Mancosa to produce recordings of 15 audio entertaining African stories for children. The last five stories also contain videos to go with the audio.

The storytelling series includes five-minute recordings of uniquely African stories such as How Lion Got His Roar, Queen of the Tortoises, Princess Nozizwe and the Ogre, and many others.

Each story is not only entertaining, but also contains an educational or inspirational message for children.

The initiative came about through Mancosa's School of Education's partnership with the Gcinamasiko Arts and Heritage Trust to get Mhlophe – a world-renowned actress, playwright, storyteller and author – to keep children captivated with her iconic voice and talent for storytelling.

The stories are available free of charge on Mancosa's website and their social media pages.

Mancosa Director Martha Moyo says the idea came about during the closure of schools during Level 5 of the

national coronavirus lockdown.

"As part of our humanitarian activities aimed at giving back to communities during the pandemic, we decided to focus on children by keeping them entertained with stories, even if only for a few minutes," Moyo says.

Even as children go back to school, the stories will remain available for free, helping parents to keep their children busy and stimulated at home.

Mhlophe says she chose stories with an African theme and also focused on making sure that children were exposed to a wide vocabulary and important life lessons.

"I specifically chose stories with the theme of compas-



Picture credit: courtesy MANCOSA

Gcina Mhlophe tells African stories virtually to children.

sion, care and love – these are the qualities that we need most while the world is battling the severe coronavirus crisis," says Mhlophe.

Mhlophe, who was born in KwaZulu-Natal in 1958, was first exposed to storytelling when her grandmother told her tales as a young child. She went from being a domestic worker to becoming a newsreader, and then turned sto-

rytelling into a professional career.

She has since travelled around the world, appearing in theatres from Soweto to London, America, Europe and Japan, and also gives storytelling workshops. **V**

To access the stories, go to [www.mancosa.co.za/lockdown-stories/](http://www.mancosa.co.za/lockdown-stories/)

# Become an Mzansi Tourism Champion!

Dale Hes

A new online initiative is giving members of the tourism industry the chance to come together to support one another during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Mzansi Tourism Champions was set up with the main purpose of meeting the needs of tourism employees who have been left without an income during this time.

Heinie Bosman who is one of the founders of the website said in 2019, South Africa welcomed 16.6 million visitors to our country. Many of these used tour companies to experience the people and nature; hostels to get into the country's local vibe; hotels and BnBs to relax and sleep



Mzansi Tourism Champions was set up to help tourism employees who have been left without an income during the pandemic. Picture credit: Wikimedia Commons

over; and were met with friendly faces, hugs and smiles.

"Now, all of these people are without work. Because of the international lockdown measures, companies cannot

pay their staff and hostels and hotels cannot keep their employees on," says Bosman. The website aims to match people in need with people who can help them.

"Through an honest online

platform, we aim to unify efforts and bring various parties together, thus facilitating the distribution of donations and any form of help offered to people in tourism who cannot directly benefit from the South African funds and schemes," explains Bosman.

In order to get assistance, affected tourism employees can sign up on the website and join the 'Needs for Assistance' group. Here, these employees can list their needs and donors can assist them.

Bosman says the needs can include anything from needing data to do work, to requesting food parcels for employees who have been unable to earn an income for their families.

The website also includes a 'Think Tank' page, where

members of the tourism industry can get involved in discussions on how to improve the industry and collaborate to solve the challenges facing tourism.

Members who sign up can also create their own profiles to share more information about themselves, while there is also a messaging service available to chat with other members.

## How to Join Mzansi Tourism Champions

- Go to the website at [tourismchamps.co.za](http://tourismchamps.co.za).
- Fill out your details and get registered at [tourismchamps.co.za/register/](http://tourismchamps.co.za/register/).
- Once you are registered, your profile will be created and can be seen by other users of the website.
- If you are looking for assistance, go to the 'List a Need' section of the website. This will connect you to people who may be able to help. **V**