



UNIVERSITEIT
iYUNIVESITHI
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY



saam vorentoe · masiye phambili · forward together

Statement and Policy Brief by the Social Justice Think-Tank - Digital Roundtable on Social Justice and Mental Health in the face of the Coronavirus COVID-19

Introduction

We, social justice practitioners and activists from civil society and the academic community gathered under the auspices of the Law Trust Chair in Social Justice, came together to discuss and assess the social justice and implications of the Coronavirus COVID-19 (Covid-19) pandemic and the policy responses to it. The exercise also considered constitutional compliance of the policies in question, comprising Regulations, Directions, Guidelines, Statements and By-laws issued by government under the Disaster Management Act 57, of 2002.

Our intervention is motivated by concern over the global health threat posed by COVID-19, and the implications of this pandemic and policy responses to it for social justice, as reflected in equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms, the rule of law and peace.

The purpose of the dialogue was to identify, review and assess the policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, noting what has worked, not worked and why, and to emerge with proposals designed to engage key sectors of society for more socially just responses and outcomes.

We acknowledge with deep gratitude and applause, the swift policy and relief responses by government, business, civil society and the international community to COVID -19, and note the underlying goodwill.

We further join the World Health Organisation in recognizing as exemplary, our government's responsible and effective governance efforts regarding equalizing access to health services and containing transmission of COVID-19 through testing, physical distancing measures and availing treatment while maintaining regular and confidence building communication from the President.

We particularly applaud the investment of considerable resources by the Government to minimise and offset the unequal adverse impact of COVID-19 and policy responses to it on historically disadvantaged groups.

We are mindful that stringent measures were necessary to contain the spread of COVID-19, prevent predatory commercial and other practices that undermine equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms, and to maintain the rule of law and peace.

We are equally mindful that COVID-19 and related policy responses were bound to have an unequal impact across diverse contexts, and that, due to pre-existing socio-economic fault lines, the exacerbation of poverty and inequality was inevitable unless consciously addressed.

Policy Review Objectives

The policy review process has focused on assessing policy responses to COVID19, comprising regulations issued under the Disaster Management Act together with Directions, Guidelines, Government Statements and By-laws, from the perspective of their impact on social justice and compliance with the equality duty as imposed by the constitution and related international instruments.

The policy design process was also reviewed, particularly focusing on the extent of use of disaggregated data in planning and the involvement of all impacted groups and communities.

The review process focused on seven thematic areas with Working Groups assigned to conduct a deep dive social justice impact analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic and policy responses in that thematic area.

Going forward, we aim to assist the Government in monitoring the implementation of the COVID 19 policies to ensure responsiveness to the day-to-day realities of the most vulnerable communities in all Municipal Wards to ensure implementation does not undermine the achievement of equality, human dignity and advancement of human rights and freedoms for all while forming a social accountability bulwark against corruption

The Review Process

At the core of the policy scrutiny is testing for social justice impact and related compliance with government's equality duty. The exercise has been framed by the Social Justice Impact Assessment Matrix (SIAM), piloted by the Law Trust Social Justice Chair, comprising the following questions:

9-Dimensional Social Justice Impact Assessment Matrix (SIAM)¹

1. *What is the purpose of the planned or existing policy/decision/law and is it congruent with constitutional objectives and values concerning the achievement of substantive equality or social justice and advancing human rights for all?*
2. *Who or what group is the targeted or main beneficiary of the policy/decision/law?*
3. *Does the policy/decision/law differentiate or treat everyone on a one-size-fits-all basis?*
4. *What data has been relied on and is it sufficiently disaggregated in terms of the constitutional grounds of prohibited discrimination, including overlaying grounds and has the data been integrity assured?*
5. *Does the policy/decision/law confer disproportionate advantage to any group identified in terms of one or more of the 17 grounds in the Constitution (16 listed plus any analogous ground) or does it*

¹ Copyright © Social Justice Chair- Stellenbosch University, 2020.

disproportionately withhold advantage or privilege to any group identified in terms of the constitutional grounds?

6. *Does the policy/decision/law advance or reduce historical disadvantage with a view to advancing equality, including equal enjoyment of and all human rights and freedoms as envisaged in section 9 (2) read with section 7(2) of the Constitution?*²
7. *If the policy/decision/law disproportionately advantages and disadvantages a group or groups identified in terms of constitutional grounds, how important is it and can its purpose be achieved through less intrusive means?*
8. *If the purpose can't be achieved through alternative means, what compensation measures have been built in to offset the disproportionate disadvantage to one or more groups or combination thereof?*³
9. *Have all affected groups been consulted or involved in the policy design and afforded opportunities to influence the design and possible rethinking of potentially unduly harmful impact.*

General Observations and Conclusions

Policy responses to COVID -19 show a level of appreciating that preexisting racial, gender, age, social class and geographic disparities predispose any epidemic to a disparate adverse impact on disadvantaged groups. However, it appears that more attention needs to be paid to the use of disaggregated data to predict the likely impact of any intended policy on poverty and inequality and avoid undue harm. Some of the Disaster Management Regulations, Directions, Guidelines, Statements and By-Laws seem not to have considered the likelihood of preventable and unequal adverse impact on disadvantaged groups in the policy design. Examples include public transport users and the informal economy, which are the backbone of township, rural economies and the livelihoods of a significant cohort of the middle class. The impact on family life, particularly parenting, needs better consideration and so does the impact on education, mental health and social cohesion. The impact of school closures on food security for children, child-care arrangements for the poor were not factored in the planning process. It also appears that poverty and inequality and geographic disparities in internet access were not considered in initial policy decisions to temporarily shift to online education.

The disaggregated data and participatory inadequacies are apparent in the fact that COVID-19 Regulations, Directions, Guidelines, Statements and Bylaws imposing one size fit all movement restrictions have unduly harmed some groups more than others. The paucity of disaggregated data anchoring and inclusive participation in policy design, is also apparent in that the Social Relief and Economic Support Package (SRESP) primarily focusses on health and the economy despite the impact of the physical distancing disaster management policies transcending life and livelihoods and impacting on education, family life, communication and mental health,

² The presumption here is that poverty is an inequality issue and that an equality impact assessment will invariably include social class disadvantage mitigation or exacerbation.

³ The design of SIAM has considered the unfair discrimination test outlined by the Constitutional Court in *Harksen v Lane No and Others* (CCT9/97) [1997] ZACC 12; 1997 (11) BCLR 1489; 1998 (1) SA 300 (7 October 1997)

among others. The economic focus itself needs a broader understanding of the diverse livelihoods that have been disrupted and possibly curtailed by the restrictions.

In South Africa's context, for example, where the gig economy and small business are fundamental to households and overall economic infrastructure, the cost of the lockdown is unsustainable for the majority. At worst, the Harvard Business Growth Labs (Hausmann, 2020) concludes that in developing countries, people may have to decide between a 10% chance of dying from the virus and a 100% chance of starving to death.

Awareness of the everyday lived experience of the most vulnerable persons must be an ongoing source of qualitative and quantitative data collection, feeding into policy formation. The rate of infection is most important, since this will fluctuate, as measures loosen. Keeping the public abreast of the impact of easing lockdown in relation to the rate of infection, is also critical to win buy-in towards compliance. Equally, the impact of COVID-19 policy measures on households in terms of food security, withdrawals from alcohol, domestic violence, mental health and education, is important in devising coherent responses. Responding meaningfully to the diversity issues presents an opportunity amid crisis that can be harnessed to fortify economic and social life for all. This would foster the elusive inclusive economy to be achieved by transcending legacy poverty and inequality, ensuring better governance and foster a more prosperous socio-economic trajectory for the country.

Policy decisions must be a response to scientific evidence, which must include public inputs in addition to being explained to the public at large, educating them as to the context of each decision, its purpose, and what the government hopes to achieve. Involvement of all social classes in the policy design process is not only a requirement of democratic governance, it also enhances tailored and demand driven as opposed to supply driven to policies thus optimizing efficient and responsive policy choices. Broadly inclusive policy making processes further optimize socially just outcomes by meeting all groups where they are thus ensuring that no one is left behind as envisaged in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The success of policy decisions relies on public buy-in and trust, which cannot be gained without inclusive participation and regular clear and concise communication in all official languages, through channels such as mobile messaging, radio and television. Equally, citizens must feel heard and their needs responded to considering that different circumstances entail different impact. Account is taken of the fact that the Constitution permits certain deviations from democratic governance in an emergency. But this does not allow gratuitous departure from or a prolonged curtailment of democratic governance. Two-way communication is critical in a pandemic so that the cooperation of all can lead to safeguarding COVID-19 policies and the fostering of horizontal and vertical peace, which can be fragile in times of crises.

It is encouraging that in some cases, the resultant injustices were corrected halfway through the implementation process, which confirms the need for inclusive involvement in policy design while signifying that government does listen.

Summary Reports on Thematic Areas

1. Poverty Mapping

It is well known that South Africa, with around over 55% of its population living in poverty, which is at 64.2% among those classified as African, is one of the most unequal societies in terms of distribution of wealth (Stats SA). The preamble of our Constitution prescribes, as a priority, the acknowledgment and dismantlement of these

injustices. And advancement of equality in a democracy anchored in social justice. This consideration should inform policy design in all circumstances, including the COVID-19 policy responses.

The use of aggregated and purpose-driven data detailing the extent and partitioning of poverty and in society should be the basis for policy responses in planning the distribution of resources. Equal consideration should be given to the constitutional duty to achieve equality. Failure by the Government to effectively use this resource has, and will further, impact on many lives. Community-based and integrative data collection, using resources such as the Stats SA Poverty Map 2018, and data gathered by the THUMA foundation, South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and One Map South Africa will not only be instrumental in policy formation for COVID-19, but provide an adept tool in the Government's continued efforts to achieve equality and end poverty while responding in a targeted manner to COVID-19 .

However, given that available data is mostly dated and insufficiently disaggregated because the main source is the 2011 Census, there is an urgent need for a Poverty and Inequality Mapping exercise that will also take into account the poverty and inequality impact of COVID 19 and policy responses to it. The resultant Poverty and Inequality Map(s) will inform both the implementation of the recently announced R500 billion (SRESP) and design of the Phase 3 long-term socio-economic restructuring strategy transcending the COVID-19 response.

2. Food security and other Social Rights

Food security and preventing people from dying from hunger and malnutrition are apex priorities in the COVID-19 context. Planning for the lockdowns must consider the relationship between food and its links to health and well being, water and sanitation conditions, and the microbiological and chemical safety of the food. The right to food is enshrined in the South African Constitution. Section 27(1) (b) of the Constitution states that, "everyone has the right to sufficient food and water" and Section (27) (b) emphasizes that "the State must formulate reasonable legislative efforts and take other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realization of these rights." The right to food requires that food is available, accessible, and adequate for everyone without discrimination. The Food and Nutrition Security Policy is key in achieving the objectives of the National Development Plan and that of the global SDGs especially during COVID19.⁴

It is important that food security elements of the SRESP expeditiously reach every person in each of the 4392 wards, preferably simultaneously, to prevent hunger and anger, which left unattended will undermine human development, social cohesion and the rule of law.

3. Education

More attention should be paid to the impact of COVID-19 and policy responses to it, to education from cradle to grave, with emphasis on early childhood development and the promotion of equality of access to e-learning resources, particularly in higher education. If this is not done urgently, existing inequalities in access to education will be exacerbated as will be the impact of education as a social determinant of poverty and inequality. Failure to address early childhood development also has a disparate impact on women's livelihoods.

The SRESP should incorporate an investment of a considerable amount of resources toward facilitating equal access to the digital learning environment that all have been leapfrogged into. Urgent requirements in this

⁴ Towards measuring the extent of food security in South Africa: An examination of hunger and food adequacy Report: 03-00-14"; (accessed 2019-04-24)

regard, include access to data, digital instruments such as laptops, extension of internet coverage to all villages and investments in technology and digital literacy for education to break the cycle of poverty. Media channels currently extended to basic education, comprising websites, youtube, facebook, whatsapp, television and mobile apps, should be expanded to reach all persons and communities. Institutions such as Wits and UCT that have responded with e-learning equalizing packages, could be emulated in this regard while government, business and civil society step in to help historically disadvantaged universities and students.

The review of the child grant to address, among others, nutritional requirements of children that can no longer be met through school feeding systems. However, clarity needs to be provided regarding the apportionment to ensure equitable treatment of children whose indigent parents have more than one child as equal access to prevention of hunger and brain stunting resources is critical for human and sustainable development.

4. Rule of Law and Policy Tracking

All policy responses to the national public health emergency of COVID-19 must be formulated against the backdrop of South Africa's Constitution including the right to equality (section 9), dignity (section 10) and just administrative action (section 33) and government duty to protect and advance human rights (section 7(2) and to give priority to constitutional responsibilities (section 237). Due regard should be paid to the duty to protect, promote and fulfil all the rights in the bill of rights (section 7(2)). Policies must also advance the rule of law, democratic governance, transformation and broader social justice (Preamble). To achieve this, policy formulation should be social impact conscious. This requires evidence-based policy design incorporating socially disaggregated data and qualitative information sourced through consultation with all communities and all levels of business, including the informal sector. The policies must be able to be implemented and enforced effectively and with context specific realities in mind. Any policies adopted must have a clear desired outcome that is communicated to the public at large. To protect the rule of law, policies enacted by Government must inspire trust rather than sow discontent and much of this boils down to communication and active consultation. Consideration should be given to the costly nature of stringent physical distancing, an unsustainable reality for South Africa's developing economy and concomitant social context. Policy analyses of global COVID-19 recommendations for developing countries with little fiscal space (Hausman, 2020)⁵, is that investments should be ramped up towards widespread reliable diagnostic testing, with short turnaround times in yielding results, contact tracing and self-isolation of those ill, elderly and those who have been in touch with someone infected. Alongside this, investments into antibody testing to identify those safe to return to work. This has been earmarked as the most low-cost way of engaging with the pandemic so that lockdown policies can be negotiated for the economy to continue incrementally, but crucially, in relation to the rate of infection. This strategy is especially recommended by global health experts as effective where numbers of deaths are still low, as is currently the case in South Africa, and as the only interim measure to negotiate lockdown measures until a vaccine is made available.

5. Gender

COVID-19 policy responses need to mainstream gender considerations also known as a gender lens to anticipate and reduce adverse impact on women and others because of preexisting difference and disadvantage.

⁵ Hausman, R. 2020. The Macro-Economic Implications of COVID-19 in our partner countries. Harvard Kennedy School.

Policy considerations should also respond to the overlaying of gender, race, disability, social class and geographic circumstances and related needs.

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, the World Economic Forum estimated that the gender gap in economic opportunity will potentially close in 2186. It noted that the global gender gap across health, education, economic opportunity and politics had closed by just 4% over the past 10 years. The triple role of women in terms of the division of labour is an analytical framework used to highlight the work that women do. In terms of this, women generally take on a reproductive role that entails both childbearing and rearing responsibilities which is required to ensure the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force, and a community management role in addition to their productive role. COVID-19 has reinforced the economic inequity between men and women, particularly in relation to the provision of care work in society. Women working in informal sectors of the economy and workers in sectors such as domestic work and farm work, are rendered particularly vulnerable. For this reason, a gender lens must be applied to the design of fiscal stimulus and social assistance interventions.

More consideration should also be given to the impact of COVID 19 policies on Gender-based violence which was declared a national crisis before the onset of COVID-19. The conditions of the national lockdown have led to a significant increase in such violence. Responses should include paying attention to police and army excesses when enforcing the emergency regulations and the provision of resources, including shelter and communications facilities in all Municipal wards. This should be accompanied by greater transparency and heightened scrutiny of all COVID 19 conduct with an eye to impact on Femicide and related sex and gender-based violence in line with the declared national crisis.

6. Economy and Economic Rights

Financial responses to a global health crisis must always be secondary to measures prioritising human life: “a government trying to privilege the health of its economy over the health of its citizenry would in all likelihood end up with neither” (The Economist 2020). That being said, the effects of a lockdown as has been implemented in South Africa and elsewhere globally can often lead to a similar magnitude of loss in human life through economic instability and inequality where its effects are not mitigated by a competent and able authority. A mere glance at the overwhelming response to the offers of financial support by business-owners is sufficient to gauge the simple fact that what is being done is insufficient to save our economy. This fact has been well established by Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni, who claimed that this pandemic was almost certain to bring about “a deep recession in 2020” (Phillip 2020). The structured financial support programmes offered to small businesses have been notable and well-advertised. In addition to applying for the many financial support programmes offered by the government and the private sphere, “over a fifth [reported that they] will defer tax payments” (Vollgraaff 2020). This indicates that tax regulations are perhaps one of the more useful tools in providing financial relief to business-owners during this pandemic.

Over 3.6 million South Africans are employed as part of the informal sector, whether working for their own account or as domestic workers. While these concerns have been highlighted by many, with the majority calling for a universal grant, there have yet to be any concrete proposals from the authorities (Philip 2020; Buthelezi 2020; Cotterill 2020). The government has acknowledged these calls with the response that support to the informal business sector would be forthcoming but is still under development (CNBC Africa 2020).

COVID-19 impact measures should transcend economic recovery and include deliberate transformative and restructuring dimensions for regeneration and transformation of the economy. A fresh approach to the

economic framework requires structural transformation that is linked to shared growth enhancing changes. This includes boosting aggregate demand and unlocking supply of goods and services while enabling equitable access to all resources released under COVID 19 for all groups and communities. Financing models, in this regard, should eschew taking away already committed resources in a manner that reinforces existing poverty and inequality cleavages. Wasteful and redundant state institutions and expenditure should also be discarded.

7. Health and Mental Health

Mental health is an integral part of the right to health yet in disaster emergencies, this tends to be a secondary issue. In gauging the impact of policies to mitigate COVID-19, it is important to build in mechanisms that engage with its effects from a mental health perspective.

The conditions of the lockdown have a significant impact on mental health and well-being, with perilous implications that include heightened incidences of depression and post-traumatic stress disorders. The inability to engage in certain physical activities, being confinement in abusive domestic conditions and financial strain are examples of situations that can have a detrimental effect on mental health. Special consideration needs to be given to mental health effects of COVID-19 particularly on socially marginalized groups such as moving homeless people into camps and prevention of marginalized groups from trading in informal essential services such as traditional medicine food services.

An amount of R150 million was allocated to the Solidarity Fund to fight the spread of Covid-19, R700 million was allocated to SMMEs and R3 billion was set aside for vulnerable companies. Policy responses have excluded the informal markets, resulting in financial strain as a result of a dramatic halt in the flow of funds. This has a link to health as well as mental health issues in communities because they affect supply and demand chains, resulting in high levels of frustration and desperation and the R350 distress grant will not adequately meet this challenge.

Recommendations for action

Government

- Engage in an ***ongoing review*** of the lockdown restrictions mindful of the constitutional equality duty and related social obligations and a cost-benefit analysis that seeks to socio-economically fortify the country beyond COVID 19 while fostering the rule of law, sustainable development and peace.
- Conduct ***risk assessments***: Government needs to carefully assess the impact of policies on diverse groups and communities and constantly monitor the impact on socially disadvantaged groups.
- ***Employ disaggregated data*** in impact review and planning of new policy responses to COVID-19 and maintain a weekly updated SRESP Index to ensure accountability and social justice, including even distribution of benefits across all Municipal Wards.
- ***Local level consultation*** is critical to securing buy-in to policies. Policy design models should incorporate disaggregated data-based planning and consultation with community forums such as the newly emerging street community feeding groups and NGOs working in high risk areas.
- ***Expand financial support*** directed at economic security and participation as well as ensure that systems are put in place to support the timeous disbursement of relevant SRESP funds
- ***Restructure the food parcel system*** in terms of tailoring to needs, management and accessibility to all Municipal wards and those who need them but mindful that these do not destroy local economic and

social ecosystems particularly in townships and villages. Better monitoring to avoid over and underservice is urgently needed at ward level and foreign nationals are not to be excluded when confirmed to be residents.

- **Mobile cash transfers** and/or vouchers should be used to supply food to enable households to be more autonomous and to support local businesses, thereby ensuring sustainability. This already reduces the security threat posed by looting of food delivery trucks.
- **Extend assistance and adequate resources** to foster equal access to education, early childhood development, gender-based violence, mental health, e-learning, e-governance and e-commerce.
- Conduct urgent **poverty mapping** to foster demand-driven as opposed to supply-driven service delivery and general democratic governance This will also limit corruption, improve responsiveness, advance equality and reduce the public trust deficit.
- **Transparency on policy design process:** Procurement; entitlements and municipal ward-based service delivery index updated on a weekly basis to improve social accountability, public trust, the rule of law and policy legitimacy.
- **Communication channels** with civil society must be created and used regularly, for example radio, mobile application, TV - notably in and through local languages. Communication channels should facilitate two-way communication to facilitate citizen access and participation, i.e. through polling surveys in mobile apps and radio. Through such measures citizens can indicate their needs and levels of distress, share vital information, etc. Tech business could help to create and monitor this by linking alerts to local NGO's and government clinics/police, to enable the Government to track and monitor where and when high risk and volatile communities require resources.
- Uphold a reasonably possible level of **democratic governance** to elicit public input from diverse stakeholder groupings to ensure policy responsiveness while fostering public accountability trust and legitimacy of the COVID -19 policy measures thus fostering the rule of law, social cohesion and peace.
- **Ensure SANDF and police** are all effectively trained in appropriate crisis response mechanisms, consistent with peace keeping, with clear guidelines and standards for the protection of civilians and where there are breaches swift action should be taken and justice should be seen to be done..
- **Re-investment in the growth, skills development** and operation of productivity-enhancing sectors such as healthcare, mining, agriculture, sport, fashion and others while **restructuring the economy** to create vibrant and resilient local economies in all municipal districts particularly villages and townships and foster enterprising communities, young people and women
- **Utilise fiscal and monetary policy instruments** to relieve market pressure and boost aggregate demand. This can be achieved through zero-rating of South African Reserve Bank interest and implementation of capital controls to retain domestic capital.
- **Restructure and reprioritise the state budget**, with efforts to raise alternative sources of finance domestically, utilizing capital markets, institutional investors and pension funds for meeting the finance gap without taking away resources from equality advancing measure.
- **Reject loan agreements** or conditions that undermine constitutional obligations relating to advancing equality and related social justice commitments or threaten democratic governance.
- **Defer in VAT payments** for qualifying businesses negatively affected by the pandemic as a means of effectively getting money into the hands of business-owners.
- **Partner with the private sector** to increase awareness and accessibility to the Solidarity Fund. This can be achieved through, for example, the implementation of a donation portal in banking and personal finance mobile applications.

- ***Maintain support for the Social Justice M-Plan*** aimed at advancing equality and ending poverty by 2030 in line with the NDP, AGENDA 2063 and SDGs thus fortifying constitutional democracy and peace and encourage synergy with COVID 19 solidarity initiatives.

Business

- ***Adopt a ward*** to assist with the continuation of services, supply of goods and boosting the resilience of local economies while ensuring no one is left behind.
- ***Ensure Transparency, accountability and equity*** in Social relief criteria and maintain distribution index updated weekly to limit underservice and over service.
- ***Support poverty mapping*** and civil society initiatives towards gathering disaggregated, current and accurate data on poverty and inequality to support government policy planning
- ***Expand and coordinate across the banking sector***, synergistic efforts to assist customers with finance restructuring
- ***Expand Repurposing of production lines***, where possible, toward necessary hygiene and medical products such as COVID-19 testing kits, provision of protective equipment, thereby securing local supply and providing much-needed employment and economic stimulation.
- ***Increase local capacity*** for productivity-enhancing sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, chemicals, food and agricultural processed goods, and clothing and textiles.
- Support ***Civil Society based Social Accountability, Cohesion and Inclusion*** initiatives aimed at combatting corruption and ensuring that no one is left behind, through research, advocacy, monitoring and resource mobilization to complement the Solidarity Fund and keep South Africa on track regarding ending poverty and inequality in terms of Constitutional and Sustainable Development Goal commitments.

Civil Society

- ***Uphold social accountability***, including educating the public about rights and privileges in time of the pandemic, combat corruption and undue deviations from democratic governance and assist those struggling to access to SRESP benefits they are entitled too.
- ***Rationalise and consolidate relief services*** to avoid over-servicing and under-servicing as well as ensuring demand as opposed to supply-driven relief, while ensuring equitable distribution of public sourced funds.
- ***Support community-based food security measures*** such as urban gardening to fortify families and communities against hunger, malnutrition and poverty.
- ***Highlight resource distribution deficits and mobilize resources*** for underserved communities and socially impacted areas such as education and access to digital platforms by disadvantaged groups and communities.
- Uphold the principles of solidarity especially as a nation as it is enshrined in our constitution and spirit of **UBUNTU** through initiatives under the Social Justice M-Plan and others, that are aimed at ensuring that no one is left behind, through research, advocacy, monitoring and resource mobilization to complement the Solidarity Fund and keep South Africa on track regarding ending poverty and inequality in terms of Constitutional and Sustainable Development Goal commitments.

International Community

- Funding to the Government and NGOs for policy and relief implementation and monitoring compliance and combat corruption while preserving the rule of law and a fair level of democratic governance
- Research assistance to civil society
- Knowledge share of systems and strategies that have worked well to manage the crisis
- Solidarity in preventing bullying, mobbing, harassment, stigma and whistleblowing where and when it matters
- Continue to help foster global solidarity and related relief.

Our Future Role

Continue tracking COVID-19 policy responses and their impact having reconstituted ourselves as Social Justice and COVID-19 Policy and Relief Monitoring Alliance (SCOPRA), also monitoring ongoing unintended consequences of both policies and conduct of state functionaries and others across all Working Group domains.

- Help government consolidate COVID-19 legislation into one place easily explained, for public consumption per geographical domain, with purposes explained and provided for each regulatory change and provide a Digital Portal as a resource where all the consolidated policies can be accessed by all.
- Through piloting of the Social Justice Impact Assessment Matrix (SIAM) and other relevant assessment instruments, that involve leveraging data analytics to catalyze the advancement of equality and broader social justice in line with SDGs 10 and SDG 16 on advancing equality and responsive law and policy reform, recommend specific policy changes (Amendments and changes to specific regulations, guides and directions).
- Establish a consolidated COVID19 Responses Index covering:
(i) COVID-19 Policy directives from WHO (ii) National Policies and Statements (iii) Relief Action by Government and Civil Society, indicating relevant stakeholders, resources involved, target group and municipal wards that have received assistance among the 4392 Municipal Wards (iv) Designated Groups impacted such as Children; Older Persons; Unemployed; Self- employed; Students; Immigrants and the Informal sector/gig economy.

Contributing Authors

Professor Thuli Madonsela, Marna Lourens, Kamesh Flynn, Cat Walker, Celine Oates, Professor Erin McCandless, Joy Watson, Professor Linley Chiwona Karlton and Student Social Justice Ambassadors

We would like to thank all the Social Justice Digital Roundtable attendees, and would especially like to mention Working Group Members who contributed towards the rich and insightful thematic area discussions and the written reports:

Poverty Mapping and Data

Dr Pali Lehohla
Prof Thuli Madonsela
Marthe Muller
Emile Vercuil

Gender

Sesonasiphosihle Ralarala
Marna Lourens
Prof Sandra Fredman
Katy Lund
Marthe Miller
Joy Watson

Economy and Economic Rights

Cat Walker
Dr Nthabiseng Moleko

Health and Mental Health

Fanelesibonge Ndebele
Charl Davids
Babalwa Gusha
Babatope Adebisi
Wenzile Madonsela
Diane Gahiza

Education

Mary Nel
Nicolette Roman
Motsoari Nthunya
Jacques Pretorius
Portia Davidse
Kabelo Mahlobogwane
Maya Sutherland
Celine Oates

Food security and other Social Rights

Prof Linley Chiwona-Karltun
John Cluett

Karabo Mogashoa
Wantu Madonsela
Nokwanda Sihlala
Akhona Sandaza
Heidi-Lee Ruschenbaum
Nolwande Made

Rule of Law and Policy Tracking

Garrick Blok
Kamesh Flynn
Maricia Froneman
Prof Thuli Madonsela
Advocate Xoli Maduna
Prof Erin McCandless

Facilitated by the Law Trust Chair in Social Justice- Stellenbosch University with Social Justice Partners