



ENHANCING CONTACT TRACING CAMPAIGN

Solidarity Fund close-out report



DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT ALLOCATED	AMOUNT SPENT
Civil society campaign	R1 577 022	R 1 415 598

01

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN

On 1 July 2020, South Africa had 159 333 positive coronavirus cases and was experiencing its first wave of the virus. Learning from best practices in other countries, the South African National Department of Health (NDoH) began developing two contract-tracing platforms to help contain the spread of the virus. Contact tracing for COVID-19 requires identifying persons who may have been exposed to COVID-19, and following up with them daily for 14 days from their last point of exposure.¹ Contact tracing is a critical tool for breaking chains of transmission and controlling COVID-19. To be effective, the platforms used for contact tracing require a high coverage and utilisation rate.²

At the time of conceptualising this campaign, the testing eco-system for COVID-19 was only partially understood. Similarly, implementing the contact-tracing platforms was at a preliminary stage, and had not yet been rolled out. As such, the NDoH approached the Solidarity Fund to support contact-tracing efforts by "...enhancing contact tracing through the placement of behaviourally-informed promotional materials at COVID-19 testing sites".

The purpose of the campaign was to increase awareness of contact tracing among people who were testing for COVID-19; and to inform them how contact tracing works. This was envisioned to increase the number of persons using the contact-tracing platforms, which in turn was expected to enhance isolation among persons who may have been exposed to COVID-19, and in this way help to contain the spread of the virus.

¹National Department of Health, National Guidelines for Contract Tracing for COVID-19, June 2020.

²World Health Organization, Tracking COVID-19: Contract tracing in the Digital Age, September 2020.

CITIZENS IN SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN MANDATE

The Solidarity Fund was created on 23 March 2020 to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in South Africa. It is a platform for the general public, civil society and the public and private sector to contribute to the consolidated effort to fund various initiatives.

The Citizens in Solidarity Campaign, which is part of the overall communication campaign of the Fund, aims to lower the spread of COVID-19 through strengthening the Funds objectives of prevention, detection and care. Being a Citizen in Solidarity is easy. Our message is to invite all South Africans to become Citizens in Solidarity. The CIS campaign moves beyond the facts around COVID-19 to offering agency to every South African to play their part in preventing the further spread of the virus. The message is that a few simple change in our own behaviours, saves lives. And it is easy to do.

“Wash your hands to protect your neighbours, wear a mask to protect your friends, keep a safe distance to protect your family and just be kind.”

As we anticipated a growing sense of fear, anxiety, mistrust and grief spreading through our communities as COVID-19 cases burgeoned towards the peak. The mandate of the CIS campaign is about scaffolding networks across key sectors of society to change these simple personal behaviours that could significantly spread the rate of infection. We seek to reduce the spread of the virus through changes in personal behaviours across a wide variety of sectors.

CITIZENS IN SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN PHASE 1

During the first phase of the campaign the Fund has engaged with and established partnerships and programmes with the following sectors:

- Business – through partnering with the Return to Work Campaign, B4 SA and PPGI
- Traditional Leaders – through the National House of Traditional Leaders
- Faith Leaders - through the South African Council of Churches, and other interfaith leaders
- Civil Society – through networks in the Eastern Cape hotspot
- Education – through a programme supporting School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies
- Youth – through the 6 million in 6 week campaign
- Track & Trace – Improving the uptake of the COVID Connect application in order to trace cases and reduce contact

Why implement a Track & Trace campaign?

One of the recognised methods to reduce the spread of infection is through contact tracing and the subsequent isolation of all contacts. The National Department of Health (NDOH) launched COVIDConnect, a WhatsApp platform where those who have tested for COVID-19 can receive their results, and if positive, upload their contacts to be notified that they've been in contact with a positive case.

After consultation with the NDOH and the Solidarity Fund, Genesis Analytics has developed a behaviourally-informed approach to improve uptake onto COVID Connect to ultimately enhance contact tracing of positive COVID-19 cases in South Africa.

Who is SK52?

SK52 is a graphic installation company providing its clients with quality products ranging from digital wallpaper to printed flooring. SK52 design and print all interior graphics, as well as signage. SK52 graphics are more often than not custom designed to suit the client and brief.

Who is Genesis Analytics?

Genesis Analytics' purpose is to unlock value in Africa. They make use of a strong analytical capabilities to improve decision-making and, through better decisions, to unlock substantial value for their clients and society. While Genesis is the largest economics-based consulting firm in Africa, they use a large number of techniques and approaches to achieve clarity for decision-makers. Genesis work across various domains.

Early specialisations were competition and regulatory economics, and then financial services strategy. Since then they have added: agriculture and agribusiness, applied behavioural economics, infrastructure, health, monitoring and evaluation and shared value. Genesis often combine their areas of expertise to craft services that recognise the multifaceted nature of their clients' challenges and opportunities.

04

PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDED THE FUND'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE EFFORTS



Speed

Build networks across key sectors before the peak in order to reduce the peak and flatten the curve. All ideas needed to be quickly executed.



Targeted Hotspots

Phase 1 adopted a hotspot strategy where the energy and resources of various sectors of society would be harnessed in the fight against COVID-19. We initially started in the Eastern Cape due to the issues faced in the province at the time, with the intention to expand to Gauteng and KZN.



Resource efficiency

The PMO set up for this campaign has been tasked with ensuring effective delivery of contract requirements to enable maximum reach and impact.



Inclusion

The Fund aimed to reach vulnerable households through a wide variety of partners across civil society, private sector, and government. Partners included faith & traditional leaders, non-governmental organisations, care institutions and partners in business.



Safety

The Fund ensures that its partners adhered to social distancing and safety measures while engaging with citizens on the ground.



Building a large network

Build a large network of Citizens in Solidarity through harnessing the support of large sectors of society such as business, faith leaders, the youth, education and civil society. Scaffold a campaign with key behaviour change messages and activities.

Given that testing and contact-tracing processes were opaque when the campaign was being conceptualised, the Fund needed to conduct initial research to ensure that the campaign could be rolled out successfully and have impact. Some of the key questions were:

- What does the COVID-19 testing process look like?
- Does the process differ in public and private testing settings?
- What steps does a patient take to get tested?
- Where on this testing journey are people most likely to be exposed to promotional materials that they will engage with?
- Which testing sites are seeing the highest volumes of patients?

Genesis Analytics, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has been providing technical support to the Solidarity Fund. A Genesis Analytics behavioural science team conducted the initial research to establish how behaviourally informed promotional materials could best enhance contact tracing. The team conducted a series of rapid interviews with various stakeholders involved in COVID-19 testing in the private sector, and also at various public and private testing sites. These culminated in a deeper understanding of the testing process and of the promotional materials that were hypothesised to boost the use of contact-tracing platforms.

Around this time, the NDoH had officially launched one of two contact-tracing platforms in South Africa.

Named **COVID Connect**, this platform allows persons who had tested for COVID-19 to receive their test results via WhatsApp. If they tested positive, they were asked to submit the cell phone numbers of everyone they had been in contact with over the previous 14 days. Those contacts would then receive an anonymous SMS alerting them that they may have been exposed to the virus and should isolate safely at home for 14 days.

For COVID Connect to successfully support contact tracing, patients needed to take a number of steps to get to the point of submitting the cell phone numbers of their contacts. This included receiving an SMS that their test results were ready, following a hyperlink to the WhatsApp message with their results, verifying their identity with their ID number and then following subsequent prompts on WhatsApp. This process was onerous, and it was important for the materials to provide clear guidance on using COVID Connect.




The second platform, **COVID Alert**, was launched after COVID Connect. COVID Alert is a Bluetooth-enabled app that performs contact tracing automatically when a user's cell phone has the Bluetooth switched on. If a user has been in contact with a positive COVID-19 case, they will be alerted by the app and encouraged to isolate safely at home.

The key enabler for contact tracing via COVID Alert is for patients who test positive to update their status on the app, so that their contacts will be automatically notified. Bluetooth-enabled apps such as these can raise privacy concerns, and the materials needed to make it clear that no user data would be collected, and that the alerts to contacts were anonymous.

The Enhancing Contact Tracing campaign was aimed at two distinct audiences. The primary audience was people who were testing for COVID-19. The secondary audience was healthcare workers and other persons who may come across the materials at the testing facilities. The objectives of the campaign were two-fold:

1. To increase awareness of COVID Alert and COVID Connect; and
2. To provide clear guidance for using the COVID Alert and COVID Connect apps to receive COVID-19 test results and perform contact tracing.

With these objectives in mind – and with the understanding of the testing process deepened by behavioural insights³ – three different promotional materials were designed for distribution. The description and rationale for each item is described in the table below.

MATERIAL	TARGET AUDIENCE	RATIONALE	PROPOSED LOCATION	IMAGE
NDoH branded pen	Persons testing for COVID-19. Healthcare workers assisting patients to fill out forms.	Persons testing for COVID-19 sometimes need to sign forms. A small “gift” of a pen can complete this function and subtly encourage people to use COVID Connect. Receiving a gift can evoke a sense of reciprocity, making it more likely that they will perform the desired action.	Upon arriving for a test and filling out the screening form, patients are given a pen.	
Floor stickers	Persons queueing for COVID-19 tests. Healthcare workers in the facility.	People have time to read information while waiting in a queue. A series of understandable, sequential information on how to use COVID Connect can be shared this way.	On the floor in the area where patients are waiting to be tested.	
Posters	Persons testing for COVID-19. Healthcare workers in the facility.	People have time to read information while waiting in a queue. The poster provides key steps to using COVID Alert and addresses concerns that may arise.	On the walls in the area where patients queue for testing.	

³The Solidarity Fund was supported by a team of behavioural scientists at Genesis Analytics. This team identified potential behavioural barriers to uptake of the platforms, and used these insights to ensure that the materials were designed to overcome these barriers. Some of the behavioural insights included making use of the concepts of reciprocity, endowed progress, picture superiority effect and channel factors.

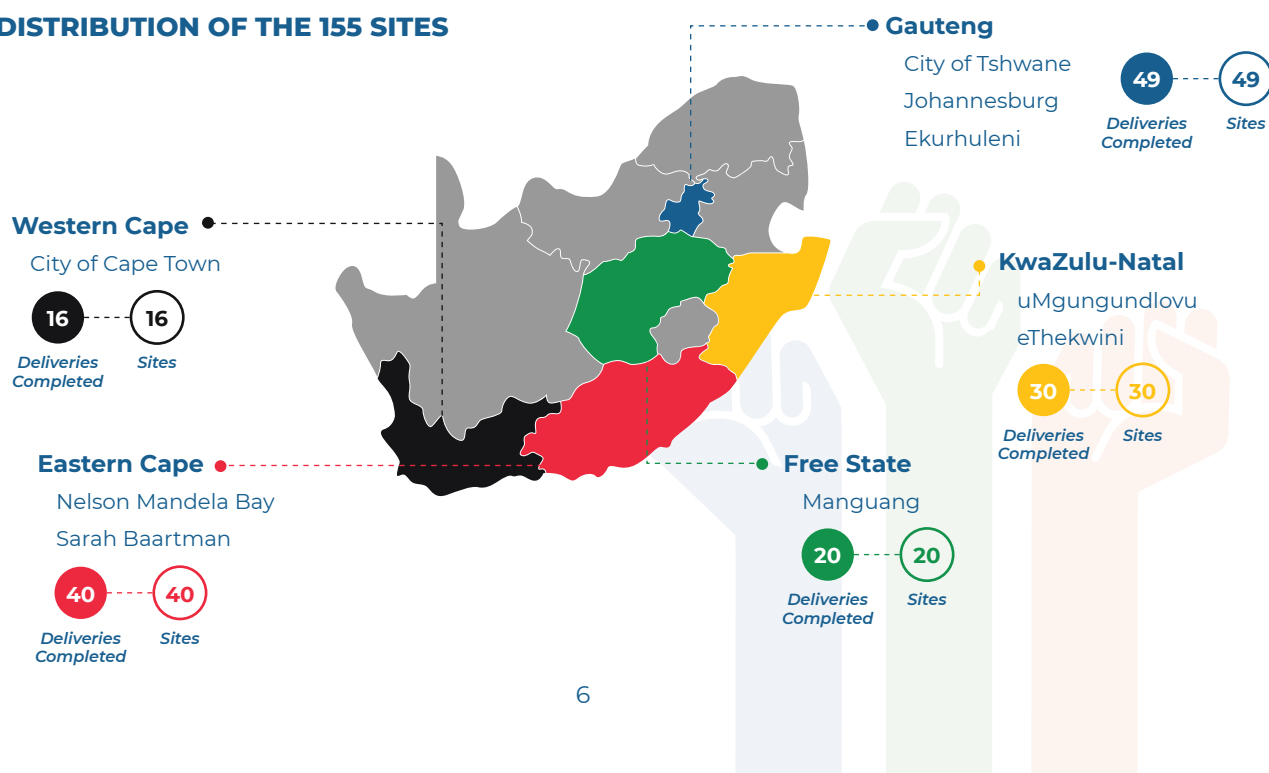
The campaign was envisioned to complement existing initiatives promoting COVID Connect and COVID Alert; and was designed to target areas where the impact of the materials would be the highest. The campaign was also intended to be responsive to the pandemic, targeting areas with higher COVID-19 caseloads where possible.

The rapid research phase revealed that private testing sites predominantly used separate channels to communicate test results. As such, the campaign focused explicitly on delivering materials to **public testing sites** in **certain districts in South Africa**. The selection of these districts was based on the number of active cases at the time of distribution, and metro areas that were current or anticipated hotspots.

The **public testing sites** were selected based on testing volumes, with testing volumes being treated as a proxy for the number of cases at a given facility. The materials were translated into relevant languages for the various districts. A breakdown of the selected provinces, districts, number of facilities and languages of the materials is provided in the table below.

PROVINCE	DISTRICT	NUMBER OF SITES	LANGUAGES
Gauteng	City of Johannesburg	11	Sesotho, isiZulu and English
	City of Tshwane	22	Sesotho, isiZulu and English
	Ekurhuleni	16	Sesotho, isiZulu and English
Free State	Mangaung	20	Sesotho and English
KwaZulu-Natal	uMgungundlovu	12	isiZulu and English
	eThekweni	18	isiZulu and English
Western Cape	City of Cape Town	16	English and isiXhosa
Eastern Cape	Sarah Baartman	20	isiXhosa and English
	Nelson Mandela Bay	20	isiXhosa and English

DISTRIBUTION OF THE 155 SITES



DELIVERY, CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS

Once the materials had been conceptualised and designed, the Fund contracted a graphic installations company to produce, deliver and install the materials at the 155 sites. This was carried out by SK52 Design Studios from October to December 2020. During this period, 227 750 pens, 3 250 floor stickers and 290 posters were delivered to the 155 sites. The delivery timelines in each province are detailed in the diagram below. The Eastern Cape had not initially been included in the campaign, but owing to the spike in cases in December 2020, the campaign adapted to include 40 facilities for the receipt of materials in the hope of increasing contact tracing.

PROVINCE	DISTRICT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Gauteng	City of Johannesburg			
	City of Tshwane			
	Ekurhuleni			
Free State	Mangaung			
KwaZulu-Natal	uMgungundlovu			
	eThekweni			
Western Cape	City of Cape Town			
Eastern Cape	Sarah Baartman			
	Nelson Mandela Bay			

CHALLENGES

Impact-related challenges

- There are no other materials or communication campaigns promoting either of the contact-tracing platforms. This means that the materials on their own are likely to have limited impact.
- It is difficult to measure the impact of the materials. More than 50% of COVID-19 testing takes place at private facilities, where these materials had not been placed. Since the uptake data for both COVID Connect and COVID Alert reflects both public and private testing sites, it is difficult to disentangle the impact of the materials that had been placed in public testing facilities.

Logistics-related challenges

- A core challenge related to securing permission to deliver materials to public facilities. In order to follow the due procedure, permission was required at a provincial and district level. In addition, delivery to hospitals also required permission from the hospital CEO. This resulted in a slight delay in timelines, and meant that delivery sometimes took longer than anticipated. In the end, all materials were successfully delivered to all facilities.

- A second challenge, which was harder to overcome, was being responsive to the shifting nature of the pandemic. Owing to the time lag between the selection of sites and producing and delivering materials, transmission rates had sometimes already begun to slow down in the targeted districts. This was addressed in two ways. First, it explains why the Fund decided to extend the campaign to include the Eastern Cape in December – as a response to the spike in cases in that province. Secondly, while the spread of COVID-19 may have slowed down in those districts, the importance of contact tracing remains constant. Even if facilities are testing fewer patients, continually increased awareness of contact-tracing platforms and how they work is considered a success. In addition, the districts most affected by the second wave of COVID-19 are very similar to those affected by the first wave. As such, there has been a second opportunity for people testing for COVID-19 to engage with the materials.

LEARNINGS

The learnings from this campaign point to the importance of swift action and collaboration. The rapidly changing nature of the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa demands responsive and rapid action. It was important that materials were approved and distributed as quickly as possible.

In contexts where time is of the essence, numerous initiatives promoting the same platform can often be seen running in parallel. This can be problematic, as contradictory messages can be published, or efforts duplicated to promote the same message. It is important for future campaigns intended to promote uptake of contact-tracing initiatives take into account existing campaigns.

07

IMPACT OF THE CAMPAIGN

As has become increasingly apparent, the COVID-19 pandemic is set to continue and countries need to be able to respond to spikes in cases. In this context, contact tracing is an important tool. This campaign sought to enhance contact tracing in its early stages in South Africa. It was successful in that it reached 155 facilities in four different provinces within a three-month period. The Solidarity Fund plans to continue supporting responsive campaigns as the need arises.

