

PRESS RELEASE

Solidarity Fund and National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders mobilise over 200 young people to bring vaccine literacy to communities and to assist with over 60 registration

Johannesburg, June 2021 – Vaccine education and literacy have been identified as an important focus area in building vaccine confidence and trust as South Africa rolls out COVID-19 vaccines throughout the country.

With a view to bringing an innovative solution to addressing this, while giving young people an opportunity to contribute to their communities, the Solidarity Fund and the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders (NHTKL), have entered into a partnership. The partnership has seen over 200 young people in five provinces - KwaZulu Natal, Eastern Cape, North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga – embark on a rural focused door to door campaign, engaging with community members about maintaining preventative behaviours and having meaningful conversations on vaccinations, while also assisting with the registration of people 60 years old and above.

The foot soldiers, who have already visited and engaged with just over 21 000 households across the selected provinces since the start of the campaign 31 May, are tasked with reiterating the COVID-19 safety protocols which include: the proper wearing of masks, covering the nose and mouth even when in the company of friends and family, avoiding large gatherings, ensuring good ventilation, especially when using public transport and maintaining social distance.

Further, the young people will also assist those who are aged 60 and older to register on the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) portal to ensure they receive their vaccination.

While South Africa reached the milestone of vaccinating over 1.7 million people throughout the country on 1 June 2021, government reports that registration to receive vaccines through the EVDS is slower than expected. This campaign and partnership is aimed at addressing the concerns of people in respect of the vaccine rollout to encourage greater uptake of the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Speaking on behalf of the Solidarity Fund, Executive Head of the Humanitarian Response and Behaviour Change Pillars, Ms Wendy Tlou said, “Vaccinations against COVID-19 have been shown to protect people from serious illness and death. It is also an important mitigating measure against the rampant spread of the virus, and will allow the economy, and our borders, to stay open. This will allow various sectors that can contribute to the country’s economic stability and employment to begin their recovery from the first year of COVID-19 which was characterised by various stages of lockdown restrictions.”

“Vaccinations can also contribute to the development of population immunity against COVID-19 which will also be a positive step towards bringing the pandemic under control. Face to face, direct communication still remains one of the most powerful forms of information sharing. This campaign is conceived understanding the need for direct communication with people, in accordance with COVID-19 protocols, to encourage the uptake of vaccinations,” concluded Ms Tlou.

Speaking on behalf of the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, the Deputy Chairperson who is currently the Acting Chairperson, Nkosikazi Mhlauli said, “The partnership with the Solidarity Fund allows the young people who are working on this campaign, to provide information to people, to empower them to make informed choices about being vaccinated.

To encourage registration on the EVDS, young people from our identified communities have been enabled to assist those who are 60 and above, to register to be vaccinated, and have to date facilitated nearly 6 000 registrations. ”

“The young people on the ground will also be able to demystify the issue of vaccines in local languages while being culturally sensitive. The training received from the Solidarity Fund to conduct this campaign will also be useful to the young people as they look for other employment opportunities. We therefore see this campaign as a win-win solution despite the dire circumstances in which it is taking place,” concluded Nkosikazi Mhlauli.

The campaign which kicked off on 31 May, will roll out across the selected provinces until end of June, in full adherence with COVID-19 safety protocols. Communities are urged to please welcome and engage with them to unpack concerns about vaccines and the registration process.

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