



HUMANITARIAN PILLAR II

AFRIKA TIKKUN FOOD VOUCHER PROJECT

Final Impact Report

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DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT ALLOCATED (EXCL. VAT)	AMOUNT DISBURSED (EXCL. VAT)	RETURNED TO SF
Afrika Tikkun	R14 940m	R12 240m	R2.7m

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HUMANITARIAN PILLAR MANDATE - PROMOTING FOOD SECURITY

The Solidarity Fund's Humanitarian Pillar worked to support the most vulnerable South African's affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A key focus for the pillar was supporting and promoting food security, working with government and civil society partners to help vulnerable households' ability to access food. This support began with the distribution of food parcels, and then evolved to the distribution of vouchers to households most in need to purchase food and essential supplies.

To reach more rural beneficiaries and strengthen more sustainable food security, the pillar then supported the distribution of farming input vouchers to subsistence farmers, enabling them to buy the farming supplies they need to maintain and even grow their farms. This served to benefit not only individual households, but also their communities.

COVID-19 has had a sustained effect in the country, continuing to negatively impact the vulnerable in particular. The Fund sought to make a further impact on food insecurity as it started the process of mapping out its transitioning to a scaled down state. The Fund therefore decided to implement a rapid Humanitarian Pillar project focused on providing additional food relief support.

From October 2022 to February 2023 the Fund partnered with four civil society partners to implement various rapid food relief projects to support the vulnerable South Africans who face the daily struggle to afford sufficient food for themselves and their households.

This report discusses the activities and impact of the Afrika Tikkun food voucher project.

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AFRIKA TIKKUN PROJECT BACKGROUND





The Afrika Tikkun Foundation is a non-profit that has been dedicated to the reduction of youth unemployment in South Africa for more than 28 years. It focuses on tackling the socio-economic drivers that make it difficult for young people to access the economy as productive citizens. The Solidarity Fund had partnered with Afrika Tikkun on previous food voucher projects.

For this humanitarian project, the Fund partnered with Afrika Tikkun to distribute R1 000 food vouchers to over 13 000 vulnerable households across South Africa who are struggling to feed themselves and their families due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other disasters that have affected several provinces in recent years. Beneficiaries could use the voucher at participating retail partners to purchase food and other essential items they need to help alleviate the impact of food insecurity and economic challenges in their lives.

Beneficiaries

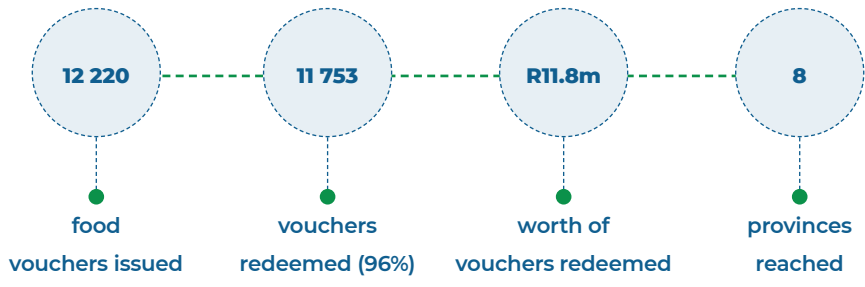
Afrika Tikkun identified beneficiaries from their network partners across the country, including urban township communities - 59%, rural communities in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces – 30%, and peri-urban rural township communities - 11%.

Beneficiaries were identified based on their level of need with a focus on:

-  those that are unemployed or on a minimum wage or less
-  child-headed households, orphans, or those in care facilities
-  households where a pension or social grant is the main source of income
-  households with a large number of dependants

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IMPACT AT A GLANCE



PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project purchased 12 750 food vouchers from four bulk suppliers:

- 10 603 Pick n Pay digital food vouchers
- 1 618 personalised Game vouchers
- 196 personalised card vouchers from Spar Lusikisiki
- 153 food vouchers/hampers from Boxer Westville; and 180 pending

The voucher distribution began around the end of November 2022. Afrika Tikkun carried out in-person distribution sessions up to 23 December 2022. Partners also distributed vouchers with beneficiaries collecting them on-site at beneficiary shops until the end of December 2022. To address some voucher validation issues, and speed up distribution of vouchers, approximately 10% of vouchers were distributed electronically via SMS until the end of January 2023.

From mid-January 2023 the verification and follow-up on voucher redemptions began. This mostly involved updating the final list of verified beneficiaries based on distribution evidence such as signed registers, scanned documentation of redeemed vouchers and evidence of digital voucher redemptions. This also included the blocking of vouchers distributed in error and the replacement of invalid vouchers. The funding for vouchers that weren't redeemed and those that were invalidated was returned to the Solidarity Fund.

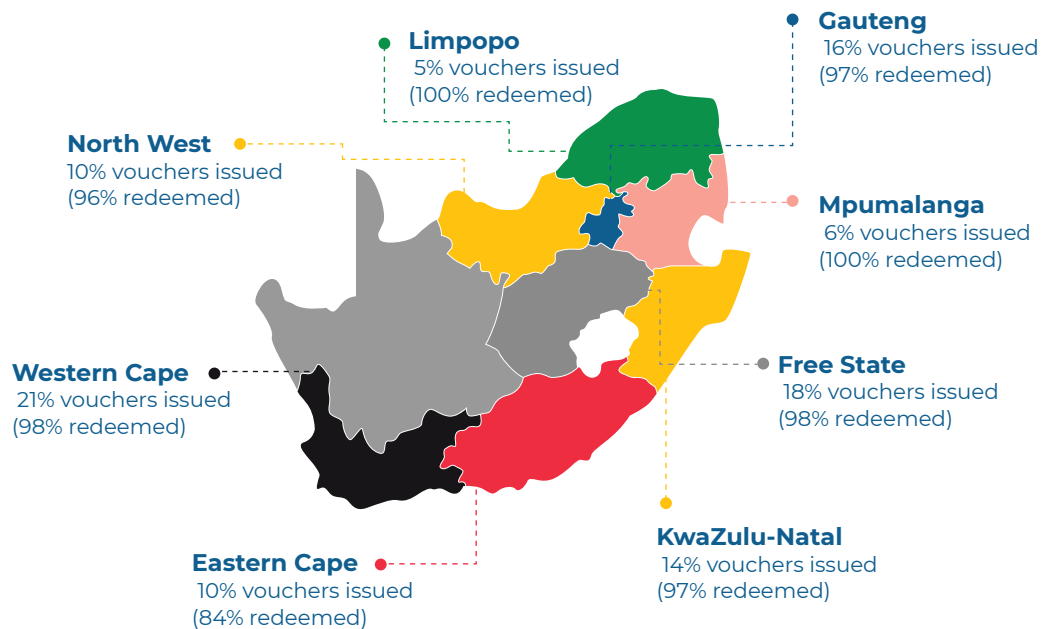
PROJECT IMPACT

The project was successfully able to **issue 12 220 vouchers** to the **value of R12m** and support the **redemption of over 96%** of issued vouchers to the **value of R11.8m** in four months. These vouchers **helped almost 12 000 vulnerable households to buy food and essential supplies** and provide them with the ability to support themselves and their families with dignity, even if for a short while. This gave them the breathing space to not have to worry about food for a while and be able to focus on other aspects in their lives. It also showed beneficiaries that they are not alone.

The table below shows the number and value of vouchers distributed and redeemed per province across the various suppliers.

PROVINCE	NO OF DISTRIBUTED VOUCHERS	VALUE OF DISTRIBUTED VOUCHERS	NO OF REDEEMED VOUCHERS	VALUE OF REDEEMED VOUCHERS
<i>Limpopo</i>	640	R640 000	640	R640 000
<i>Gauteng</i>	1 959	R1 959 000	1 900	R1 900 000
<i>Mpumalanga</i>	719	R719 000	719	R719 000
<i>Free State</i>	2 122	R2 122 000	2 081	R2 081 000
<i>North West</i>	1 182	R1 182 000	1 130	R1 130 000
<i>Eastern Cape</i>	1 358	R1 358 000	1 142	R1 142 000
<i>Western Cape</i>	2 528	R2 528 000	2 478	R2 478 000
<i>KwaZulu-Natal</i>	1 712	R1 712 000	1 663	R1 663 000
Total	12 220	R12 220 000	11 753	R11 753 000

The map below shows the percentage of vouchers issued in each province and the percentage of issued vouchers that were redeemed per province. In total 96% of all issued vouchers were redeemed.



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CHALLENGES AND MITIGATIONS

RISK DESCRIPTION	MITIGATING ACTIONS
Delays to project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some instances incomplete and/or incorrect beneficiary data was received. The team verified and updated the data and ran the relevant algorithms to verify beneficiary identities. Some stores refused to redeem vouchers until they received approval from their head offices. This delayed the redemption process. Timeous provision of redemption reports from some partners delayed close out reports. The matter was escalated to ensure the process was finalized.
Duplication of vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some duplication of issued vouchers occurred. These were blocked and an investigation into how this occurred instigated. There were also some blocked vouchers that were subsequently re-issued. This process was stopped as the project had already concluded and the cost of these vouchers refunded to the Solidarity Fund.
Beneficiaries not reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unconfirmed proxies for elderly and other beneficiaries who could not get to the stores were turned away as there was no way to verify them. This contributed to some vouchers not being redeemed.

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aligning the process between all partners and unique beneficiary groups was sometimes challenging. This was resolved by issuing more than one voucher type (including digital and physical vouchers) and using more than one bulk supplier.• Afrika Tikkun communicated regularly with the Fund to ensure that verification and audit requirements were met and reported. This was a much longer and slower process due to having to deal with individual stores.
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LESSON LEARNED

- The project was not as easy to execute as anticipated, especially considering the rapid timeframe. Appropriate timelines and resources should be considered in future projects.
- The selection of Bulk Suppliers was key in having as wide a reach as possible.
- Not all retailers, especially in rural areas, were willing to provide vouchers. This needs to be considered when determining partners to work with.
- The selection of key local implementation partners, especially in rural areas, is paramount in the execution of such projects.

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CONCLUSION

This additional food voucher programme provided food relief to almost 12 000 vulnerable households affected by the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other tragedies that have left many South Africans struggling to feed themselves and their families. It is a cost effective programme that has proven to be successful in helping to address food insecurity and empower those in need with dignity.

