



COVID-19 HOPE VOUCHERS

PROMOTING FOOD SECURITY
STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS
FLATTENING THE CURVE

The Problem

South Africa began a 21-day lockdown on Friday 27 March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has now been extended for a further 14 days. This dramatic and yet critical step is having a very significant impact on the country, especially on the food security of millions of people.

In response to this many organisations are distributing food parcels into poor communities. We have joined this effort, and over the last three weeks have focussed on distributing “Hope Buckets” to vulnerable people around the province. The buckets contain sanitization products, information about Covid-19 and food relief. Between the 25 March-27 April 2020, 6091 Hope Buckets were distributed reaching about 24 000 - 25000 people.

While the items in the buckets are essential, packing and distributing them pose a number of problems in our current context. Each step of procurement, packing, transport and delivery represent multiple opportunities for the transmission of the disease. Additionally, food aid is only the best option in disaster contexts where local food and market systems may be temporarily destroyed (such as a flood or other natural disaster). Large scale production and delivery of food parcels over the longer term can negatively impact or even replace existing food and market systems, destroying important local livelihoods and sources of income as the food is generally sourced externally and then delivered to the community.

The Solution

The KwaZulu Natal Christian Council (KZNCC) together with the KZN Response network have partnered with the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the Warehouse (Cape Town) and Intellimali, a well established SMS voucher service provider, to develop a solution that sends vouchers via SMS to beneficiaries identified by local community leaders and church networks. These vouchers can be used at any Shoprite, PicknPay, Usave, Checkers or Boxer store, in full or in part, to purchase food and other essential items. With operational costs funded by a designated grant, and Intellimali supplying the system at cost this solution is extremely cost effective with 99% of funds getting directly to the beneficiary. We are also exploring options around the ability to use these vouchers in local Spaza shops around the country.



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Who We Are

KZN Covid-19: Churches Respond is a broad and inclusive coalition of Churches, Christian Associations, NGOs, Ecumenical Networks and Ministers' Fraternals committed to using our extensive footprint across the KwaZulu Natal Province to respond more effectively to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Lockdown and their respective impact.

Our response is based around leveraging our extensive footprint as the church to be able to respond the immediate needs in each of the towns, villages, neighborhoods and informal settlements across our province. At a provincial level we are seeking to provide communication and support to the local level with a specific focus on 5 'strategic drivers': relief, communications, care (pastoral and practical) and advocacy around social and economic vulnerability. The 5th strategic driver around prayer and theological reflection undergirds all of these.

The Relief arm of our strategy is led by **KZN Response**, a network of organisations involved in Disaster Management and Response work, including South African Red Cross, CityHope Disaster Relief, Nation Changers, The Domino Foundation, and Zoë Life. The group has coordinated on regional disasters over the past 6 months and have partnered once again during this pandemic. This network is working closely with **KZNCC Regional Staff** and local churches in every district of KZN to identify the most vulnerable households at this time and to ensure that essential relief reaches these people.

The Process

Beneficiary identification: KZNCC Regional Staff and representatives are present in every district of KZN. They will work in close collaboration with district representatives, local churches, community and traditional leaders and community health workers to identify 1000 of the most vulnerable families. Basic biographical data is collected on each family for tracking purposes. As money is raised, we will work through these lists to distribute vouchers.

Funding Allocation: Funding procured centrally by the KZNCC and our partners will be allocated across the region on a proportional basis depending on a District's poverty density ratio.¹ Local networks, organisations and denominations can source their own funding allocate this towards vouchers.² For organisations a simple Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) will need to be

¹ All funds raised will be allocated to districts according to statistical modelling. We're using the district's proportion of the number of people below the Upper Poverty Line (UPL) as the initial factor (i.e. if this factor was the only one then if a district has 10% of the country's population below the UPL then it'll get 10% of the resources). We then adjust this using the poverty gap (which represents the average distance from the UPL - the higher the number the further the distance) so that a District with a high poverty gap get more than a District with a lower gap.

² The system allows for local communities, NGOs or church groups to raise their own funds for their areas and send money directly to the beneficiaries in their area. We can help to facilitate this process too and will track all work done via this channel to get a better understanding of the footprint of our work.



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signed between the Hope Voucher Project and the Organisation providing the funds and the beneficiary details.

Fundraising: We are asking churches across KZN to join us in this fundraising initiative. We would need approximately R13.8 million to be able to give a voucher to 1000 families per district over three months. Each beneficiary will receive a R400 voucher with the donor paying a cost of R405 to cover the transaction and SMS costs.

Distribution of funds: Twice a week, KZN Response staff will calculate the funds that have come in over that period, work out what this equates to in vouchers and then use the calculation to allocate these to Districts. District leads will then send through beneficiary information for the relevant number of vouchers. This data is captured and sent through to The Warehouse who is coordinating this project nationally.

Voucher use: Within 36 hours of money transfer to the SMS voucher service provider, the beneficiary will receive two SMS messages, one containing the voucher number and another with instructions for its use. The beneficiary will then be able to go to any of the partner stores and use the voucher as cash to purchase food and other essential items. The voucher can be used in full immediately or utilised over multiple visits to the store.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Once beneficiaries have spent their voucher the voucher vendor will supply data to the Hope Voucher Project indicating date of spend, location and some high-level spending data. This will be consolidated into reports for donors and other stakeholders along with data collected when beneficiaries are identified. If the voucher is not used the funds will be retained for future use.

Bank Details

Donations can be made via our website – www.covid19response.co.za and are pointed to the Domino Foundation which is our partner organisation. EFT payments can also be made:

BANK: First National Bank
BRANCH NAME: Durban North
BRANCH/SORT CODE: 220426
ACCOUNT NAME: The Domino Foundation
ACCOUNT TYPE: Current Account
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 62070191962
SWIFT NUMBER: FIRNZAJJ
VAT NUMBER: 4160255206

A finance committee made up of representatives from the KZNCC, the YMCA, the Domino Foundation, CityHope Disaster Relief and two church representatives from the project SteerCom is responsible for funding oversight and reporting.



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