

Positive and united during an invisible pandemic

By [Kevin Barbeau](#)

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South Africa is grappling with the worst unemployment rate in its history and millions are faced with abject poverty. With children out of school, many are denied access to relief meals or without a safe place to stay while their parents are at work. Yet it is heartening to see that South Africans are working together to navigate the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic.



The *ubuntu* shown among ordinary people, NGOs, businesses and others is the silverlining during these dark times. Although many members of the lower to middle class live paycheck to paycheck, they are showing remarkable generosity to others in the same boat as them. Neighbours are helping each other with food parcels and a sense of camaraderie is growing in South Africa.

Small businesses, hit from all sides by economic woes, are supporting each other to get through this crisis. And many citizens are making a concerted effort to support local, small businesses to strengthen their communities and keep others employed. Bartering for goods with an exchange of products instead of cash is also becoming a form of currency.

Women and Men Against Child Abuse

[Women and Men Against Child Abuse \(WMACA\)](#) as an organisation has also benefitted from the sense of *ubuntu*. Our Alexandra community in particular – through the [Kidz Clinic](#) and under the guidance of the clinic manager Elizabeth Mokoena – has received massive donations of food parcels from concerned businesses and community members every week.

While many deserving recipients have not been able to access grants or government food parcels, many caring people and organisations have refused to allow children to go hungry. They have filled the gap for people who do not meet the sometimes incomprehensible requirements for government grants – those who do not earn much to support a large family, but too much for a grant, for example, and those who don't have a South African ID book.

Both our clinics have received numerous donations of comfort packs from the Angel Network, new and gently loved stuffed toys, sanitiser and protective apparel for our employees and beneficiaries, furniture, offers to paint positive murals at the clinics to uplift the mood of everyone who walks in, and so much more. This gives us great hope amid the difficult circumstances.

As we go through this pandemic not knowing how long it will be with us, we will continue engaging with our communities as a team. And we are dedicated to persevering with our support and keeping the positive attitude we adopted at the beginning of lockdown. It doesn't have to be a gloomy journey. An adaptable attitude will help us affect our communities and children in a positive way.

We are in this together.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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