



## **SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC**

When the COVID 19 pandemic hit our nation, our first thoughts and priority were our community partners on the ground. The people we already knew were facing difficult challenges and have little resources available for their daily survival. With the assistance from different individuals, groups, and organisations we were able to source and distribute some much needed aid and relief to communities around the country. We are delighted to report that our efforts made a positive impact in their lives and their communities, and it also strengthened our solidarity with the realisation that, they are never alone.

# MIDDLEBURG ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NETWORK (MEJN)

For the past couple of months, MEJN has been struggling to find a way to assist people during the COVID-19 lockdown, as most families have lost their capacity to provide food and other necessities due to restrictions. What was apparent was that the levels of poverty will be high as most children relied on school nutrition programs for their daily meal.

As MEJN we were lucky to have partnered with Groundwork and MEJCON-SA on our daily environmental and social justice struggles, and when the lockdown hit us hard, they were there to assist.

MEJCON-SA managed to raise funds to assist people with food parcels and we covered both Middelburg and Witbank in our efforts. We managed to distribute food parcels to a total of 100 families, which we identified through our volunteers. But also Groundwork came up with a similar initiative to support activists and community members. The process of giving people a grant meant people could take a decision on how they spend the money. To MEJN this meant a great deal as we are part of the campaign for a basic income grant.

We would like to thank both MEJCON and Groundwork for the support they gave us, as an organisation but most importantly the community people we interact with daily.



Community Members in Extension 04, Mhluzi, Middelburg, with Bafana Hlatshwayo from MEJN



Busi Buhali and Lindi Matshiane handing out food parcels in Ackerville, Emalahleni



### **Sesi Mtswene, Doornkop**

I would like to thank the community leaders in this area for thinking about us during this hard time. As you can see, the house is dark because we do not have electricity and the municipality is failing to assist us. With the money, we will be able to do other things as we have food for a couple of days. The money will assist a great deal as we do not get a grant because none of us has an identity document. We wish this could be done to others as well.

### **Appreciation Letter to GroundWork**

This serves as a Token of Appreciation. It is a known fact that COVID 19 Pandemic came with much life threat to everyone as was not prepared for.

That forced government, to enforce a country wide Lockdown which has been a hard and straining period from March till now as we are on Level 2. Lockdown came with so much Stress, Hunger and Fear as we were all unable to go out and make means to get basic needs like food, as regulated.

We truly appreciate GroundWork and everyone who helped us get Food Parcels as from March until now. The monthly assistance has been so helpful to us and our families throughout this difficult period.

We so happy to know that we are with an Organisation that cares and It brings hope that we will work together hand in hand fighting for people's justice going forward.

Thank you very much.

**Themba Khumalo**  
**Newcastle On Green Environment**

### **From Billy Mnqondo**

Hi Robby and the team hope these email will find you and the team well as we are fine at Fuleni only the drought seems like its hitting us again.

We like to thanks groundwork about the food parcels in our communities you really place a good party especial to those communities who are depending on our government grand and those who don't have any income so our communities said we really appreciate your support as Fuleni branch. also the stipend really places a great roll about to share the information about what going on in our community while most of we don't have any income we really like to thanks the team

**Regards the Fuleni team**

## **The state of our community during lockdown**

It has been a long struggle for many members of our community including Ncebalmi Ngozo who heads a family with his siblings. He is currently waste pickers and an operator of a grass cutter for garden service which is seasonal. If it wasn't for the only assistance offered by groundWork through HEJN I have no idea how we could have survived. It was a huge burden on our shoulders to survive with my siblings, providing food on a table was a daily stress because seeing your loved ones starve while you watch is trauma, but this relief came at a time when all hope was lost and gone"

We are forever grateful and thankful to the donors such as groundWork for stipends, food parcels by WOMIN to vulnerable families including 350 [AFRICA.ORG](http://AFRICA.ORG) for face masks that assisted us when we really needed it the most. We were all failed by our government that prioritized bailing out big companies and forgetting us the people.

We are still recovering but we are not yet out of the woods because many people have lost their jobs and those numbers have increased the number of the unemployed and have pushed more people into poverty and hunger.

## **Khuthala**

### **Dear: Partners/ groundWork**

During the last 3 months of the pandemic that took the whole world to its knees, the need to save human kind from inevitable poverty was more necessary than ever before. I'm happy to share the details of how the Emergency Relief Fund from groundWork has been able to make a huge difference to its beneficiaries.

We started receiving the emergency fund 3 months back. When we were in great need to extinguish the engulfing flames of poverty fuelled by the advent of COVID 19 pandemic. Through this fund we were able to find relief and were able to provide our families with something to put on the table. The pandemic period was severe in most families and groundWork relief fund was so helpful that, it allowed life to be normal without harsh realities that COVID 19 brought like poverty.

We like to thank the interventions that was able to feed so many activists across the country. It made a huge difference and supplemented on the little that we have. This is much appreciated and shows that solidarity is the best weapon in joining forces and conquer all the challenges lying ahead.

Many thanks

**Nkanyiso Mthombeni**

**NEJA**

## **COVID 19 relief grant**

This hard times of the lockdown was a nightmare to me as the organization is has unemployed members who are dedicated themselves to the work we are doing. But the sad part was that we were under lockdown indoors and had no idea how we were going to survive. Most of us rely on doing odds jobs to make ends meet, but due to lockdown and restricted movement, we were meant to face hunger.

Thanks to the initiative taken by groundWork to make sure that those people were taken care of during this time, that was a big relief also on my side and the organization. It helped a lot.

Thank-you.

**Mapule Mdhuli**

### **The relief grant**

The COVID-19 relief grant has helped in a way that I was able to help my mom with some of the money and buy a few things here at home. It really helped me to cover some of my needs and wants. It really did give me a financial boost in a time where I really needed it the most.

Thank you

### **Thembisile Mbethe, Empumelelwini**

The relief grant I had received in the past few months was very helpful for me and my kids during this tough times of COVID-19 pandemic period. Even if I encountered the food prices increasing time and again, with the grant I managed to pull through at least my kids didn't go to bed with an empty stomach and it made it much easier for us to cope with the lockdown stress. I admire the initiative, much appreciated and thank you.

### **Blessing Sthole**

The relief grant that I received helped us a lot in my family of 6. As no one is working we used to search for piece jobs around but during this time of the lockdown it was hard to do this job. I really appreciate the approach of taking care of those in need.

Thank-you.

### **Vusi Mabaso, Vosman**

The relief grant that I received from groundWork meant a lot to me and it helped me as I am unemployed it brought so much relief to me and my family during the lockdown.

I am very grateful and appreciate what groundWork has done it really shows that you care for us the activists.

### **Thank you Groundwork Mabola Alternatives Committee**

As Masithobelane and Impilo Yesizwe we would like to thank you for helping us during the tough time of COVID 19. This has made a huge difference into our lives. As care givers doing the volunteering and also single mothers we manage to make a difference in our families lives and our community.

We want to thank groundWork and the rest of the team and we would love to have long relationship with you guys. A big thank you, we bow our heads we have no words we are humble.

### **Masithobelane and Impilo Yesizwe HBC (Home Bases Care)**



## **Letter of appreciation for Social Relief during COVID 19 Lockdown**

As Mabola Alternatives Committee, we would like to thank groundWork for the support their have given us during the difficult times of lockdown. The social relief that some of our community partners got made a huge difference and brought hope to them, as they appreciate and realise that someone is able to take care for them, this means a lot to us.

As the Alternatives Committee, we are concerned about helping and supporting the community even though we have limited or no resources at all. The involvement of groundWork not only assisted people but make us realise our goals when working with the community but also encourage us to continue as activists.

We really appreciate the support and strongly hope that this partnership continues and we can get more support to develop our area.

Kind Regards

**Mabola Alternatives Committee**

*Please see statements below from some of the people who received money:*

### **EUNICE NCENGANI NKONYANE**

I bought food for family as I live with 10 children and am not working. I am also not receiving any child support grant as the youngest child is above 18 years old and their not working. The money also assisted me to travel to Wakkerstroom to collect my medication at the clinic.



### **SONTI HARRIET SHABALALA**

I used the money to buy food for the children as am not only living with my kids, but have four more kids who are without parents. The money assisted us greatly and hope others could be helped as well.

### **MARY MADONSELA**

The money I received from groundWork and the committee really helped me a lot. I normally pay my treatment to the doctor for bone problems every month. This time I used the money to pay and used my old age grant for other needs. I wish I can get it again. We thank the committee for their efforts in helping us.



I have lived in Masakhane for a long time and one struggles to travel from home to the clinic to get medication for asthma, the money assist me a lot to do that. We haven't managed to get help or food parcels during the lockdown even though the local municipality promised us. I appreciate the help from Katane (ward committee member) and Thomas and his organisation groundWork, who came knocking at my door to offer help. I thought living next to a power station and mines will provide opportunities for us, but most of us are sick with nowhere to go. The money assisted us a great deal to cover some of our needs as we do not work and have to take care of the kids.

Lizzy Mashilo,

### **XOLISWA QHAKANA**

The COVID 19 relief grant has helped me and my family as a single parent I manage to take care of my family. I bought all that we needed, from the bottom of my heart I would like to thank groundWork for the great job you are doing please continue to help us and GOD will show his wonders and bless you.

Groundwork we really appreciate your help

**THANK YOU**

### **BETTY MASILELA**

A Big thank you from me to groundWork and the rest of the team, with the relief I managed to get my medication which I struggle to buy may God bless groundWork to grow I really appreciate your help

A big thank you

