

Report on Love to Give During the Time of the Virus

The Situation in South Africa

The lockdown came into effect on 27 March and continued at level 5 for five weeks. During this time only shops selling groceries and medicine could operate. All other businesses had to close down or have their staff work from home. No travel was allowed and everyone other than essential workers were confined to their homes unless buying food or getting medical attention.

On 1 May South Africa moved to level 4 lockdown. This allowed for more shops to reopen (namely clothing stores and shops selling items essential for winter (heaters, bedding etc.). Additionally restaurants and fast food stores were allowed to open providing that all food was delivered to the customer.

The impact in a community like Kayamandi has been considerable. The only people who were able to work were those in essential services. Most small businesses in the community had to close and the possibility for piece work and casual work dried up entirely. Very few businesses were able to continue to employ staff and all casual workers have been laid off. Whilst the government has put in place funds to be able to support both businesses and the general population, this has taken time and quite often systems have been overwhelmed by the demand. Additionally the financial assistance available is not sufficient to provide for all of a family's needs and many people have just not been able to access any financial assistance at all and are subsequently on the brink of starvation.

How Love to Give is responding to the Situation

Love to Give was able to apply for an essential service certificate and this allowed us to keep our premises open as we were distributing food parcels to families in need. We have divided our staff into two teams that work on alternate days at the centre. This means that when one of our staff does get the virus that hopefully only one team will have to go into quarantine and the other team can keep operating and keep the centre open. We have also instituted protocols to minimize the chance of spreading the virus at our centre and becoming a vector for infection. All visitors have their temperature taken when they arrive at the gate, they wash their hands at a hand washing station, have to cover their mouth and nose either with a mask or with a piece of fabric, and sign a register so that we have a record of all visitors and their contact details should we need to trace contacts at any point. We also practice physical distancing and ensure that the number of people on the premises is limited at all times to acceptable numbers.

We have been working with community leaders as well as our community workers to identify families and individuals in the community who are most at risk and the most vulnerable. We have

also been working with individuals and other groups in the Stellenbosch area to raise funds for additional food parcels and channel donations of food, soaps and hand sanitizers to the community.

We are currently assisting approximately 600 families in Kayamandi and are being approached constantly with additional families that are in need.

In addition to our normal food parcels we are also issuing vouchers for a local supermarket. This has made it easier to distribute and get the assistance to those in need as quickly as possible. We have also had funding that we could spend on facemasks for our beneficiaries. These have been ordered from small businesses in the community thus ensuring that the businesses are generating an income and that our beneficiaries have the added protection of well-made facemasks.

Project Education Sweden Assistance

With the funding that Project Education Sweden has provided we were able to purchase 500 x 5kg bags of My Life maize porridge. Each of the bags will feed a family of four a nutritious breakfast for a month. These are being distributed to all the additional beneficiaries that we have taken on as a direct result of the Covid-19 lockdown.

We also purchased infra-red thermometers that we are using at the entrance to our premises to screen all visitors. This has ensured that we can do proper screening and can add this to the safety protocols we have put in place for all people coming to the centre.

We are deeply grateful to Project Education Sweden for your continued support of our programme particularly over this difficult and unprecedented time. We are grateful to be in a position where we can assist families in crisis and can alleviate hunger in some of the households in Kayamandi. We will be monitoring the situation carefully and will ensure that assistance is given to those that are most in need.

We look forward to the time when the economy is again fully operational but anticipate that due to restrictions on travel and the effect of this on tourism (both local and international) many tourist based industries in Stellenbosch will continue to be negatively affected well into next year. In the light of this and the likelihood of other businesses not surviving the lockdown we believe that providing nutritional support to families in this community is going to be a priority at least for the foreseeable future.



