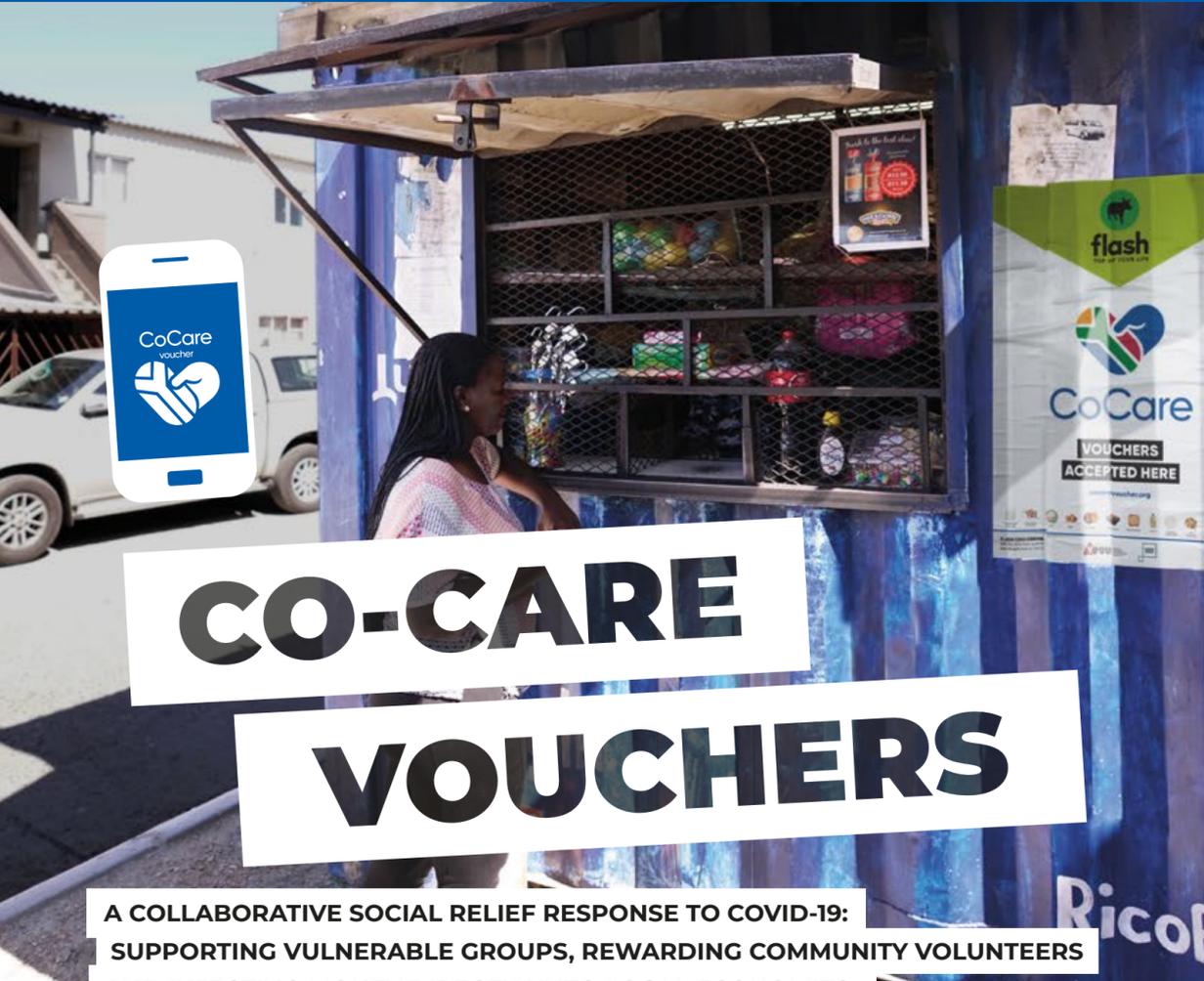




Targeted nutrition intervention

Supporting community heroes

Money injection into local economies



CO-CARE VOUCHERS

A COLLABORATIVE SOCIAL RELIEF RESPONSE TO COVID-19: SUPPORTING VULNERABLE GROUPS, REWARDING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS AND INJECTING MONEY DIRECTLY INTO LOCAL ECONOMIES

The Community Care digital voucher is a targeted approach to addressing the socio-economic impacts of Covid-19.

Over the next months, six cycles of R300 digital vouchers will be rolled out to provide social relief to selected vulnerable groups and reward community volunteers in eight neighbourhoods across Cape Town. This provides safe, immediate, convenient and cost-effective social relief and directly benefits local businesses.



Between February and April 2020, **3 MILLION** South Africans lost their jobs¹.

2/5 adults reported that their household had lost its main source of income.

47% of adults interviewed in the NIDS CRAM Wave 1² study reported that their households ran out of money for food in April.

Between May and June 2020, **21%** of adults reported that someone in the household went hungry in the last 7 days, and

15% reported that a child went hungry in the last 7 days.³ These figures persist despite the significant emergency relief efforts, such as the announced

500 MILLION fiscal relief package and the R3 billion Solidarity Fund (of which R1,36 billion has been disbursed since 15 Oct 2020)⁴

The Community Care voucher builds on the social relief efforts of non-state institutions to respond to the Covid-19 crisis by providing a targeted intervention for the most needy, recognising and supporting community

heroes and injecting money directly into local economies. Non-state institutions' have the advantages of agility and collaborative partnerships to respond as needs arise to supplement State efforts. In this way, the

Community Care voucher has the potential to go beyond the relief effort and forms a key part of the restart project, Towards Building a Community Circular Economy.

Targeted nutrition intervention for those who need it most: pregnant women and children 0-6 years

The first 1000 days of a child's life (from conception up until their second birthday) is a crucial period of health, growth and neurodevelopment that forms the foundation for the rest of their lives.

Children's healthy development relies on adequate, healthy nutrition which in turn requires a food secure household.⁵ As such, pregnant women and children under seven are eligible for the Community Care voucher, which supplements household food security so as to provide healthy nutrition. Working with Early Learning Research Unit as an intermediary, local ECD Forums, and other ECD organisations connects VPUU to children 0-6 years, who need nutritional support in this vital early learning stage.

Partnering with Embrace Movement for Mothers and Grow Great offers pregnant women the nutritional stability they need for healthy development of their baby and their own health.

Recognising and supporting community heroes

More than 6 months into the Covid-19 crisis in South Africa, community organisations are flagging. Donors and volunteers are fatigued, and resources limited, and yet the need for social relief is increasing.⁶ The Community Care voucher provides a much-needed injection of money and support to sustain community organising efforts – ECD teachers, community gardeners and food kitchen volunteers. Offering a voucher to ECD teachers supports the ECD sector as they struggle to re-open, with limited resources and few paying learners. Partnering with local food production initiatives connects the project to members of community garden groups providing stability and rewarding those who volunteer their time for community development. Working with local Food Kitchen initiatives and local leadership assists in providing direct food relief to the most vulnerable in communities and rewards volunteers.

The Community Care voucher initiative will provide a test case at scale in Cape Town of the first steps of unconditional cash transfer as response to the crisis and allow for a better understanding of whether vouchers can be used as a tool in long-term partnership as a possible ongoing reward for volunteer work or microjobs.

Money injection into local economies

The Community Care digital vouchers are redeemed through Flash and Kazang at local spaza or house shops. This is a direct injection of money into local economies.

Eight neighbourhoods (Manenberg, Hanover Park, Bonteheuwel, Kuyasa, Harare, Monwabisi Park, Nyanga and Gugulethu) in Cape Town in which the partnership between the City of Cape Town and VPUU has been operating are part of the project Towards Building a Community Circular Economy. This project is a logical consequence of the up to fifteen-year relationship



THE PROJECT OPERATES IN 8 NEIGHBOURHOODS ACROSS CAPE TOWN

Why vouchers?

At the beginning of the lockdown period, social relief efforts focused on food parcels to address the most immediate food security needs, while more systemic solutions were developed.

Nearly 1 million food parcels were provided by a number of organisations, including the government.⁷ While this commendable, there are issues with food parcels – its content (high carbohydrate and lacking perishable goods), the amount (too little for large

families), its sourcing (local or not), the risk and cost of distributing food parcels. Food parcels also often bypass local markets as the products are sourced from outside the neighbourhoods where the parcels are distributed. However, social relief efforts are not limited to food parcels. The Community Care voucher moves beyond food parcels as it is done in this project in partnership with DGMT, Kazang and Flash.

The Community Care voucher, as a digital voucher, provides social relief without the risks, logistics and costs associated with distributing food parcels. In a time-sensitive context, a digital voucher provides immediate

relief. To make redeeming the voucher convenient, the Community Care voucher can be spent at local spaza and house shops for goods sold there, although it is strongly associated with the ten 'best buys' of affordable, nutritious food (costing approximately R300).

This allows choice and supports small businesses in the local economy, benefiting the local community and building social cohesion.

¹Spaul et al. 2020. NIDS-CRAM Wave 2 Synthesis Findings. September. Working paper.
²NIDS-CRAM is the National Income Dynamics Study - Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey. The survey investigates the socioeconomic impacts of the national lockdown associated with the State of Disaster declared in South Africa in March 2020, and the social and economic consequences of the global Coronavirus pandemic. For more details, see <https://cramsurvey.org/>
³Wills, G., Patel, L., van der Berg, S., Mpetla, B. 2020. Household resource flows and food poverty during South Africa's lockdown: Short-term policy implications for three channels of social protection. Working paper. National Income Dynamics Survey Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey, Wave 1. Available: <https://cramsurvey.org/reports/>
⁴Solidarity Fund, 2020. Media Release: The Solidarity Fund Update. 21 September. Available: <https://solidarityfund.co.za/news-updates/>
⁵Cusick, S. & Georgieff, M.K. The first 1,000 days of life: The brain's window of opportunity. Available: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/958-the-first-1000-days-of-life-the-brains-window-of-opportunity.html#:~:text=The%20first%201%2C000%20days%20of%20life%20%2D%20the%20time%20spanning%20roughly,across%20the%20lifefspan%20are%20established.>
⁶Western Cape Economic Development Partnership. 2020. Coordinating Food Relief during Covid-19: Lessons from the NGO-Government Food Relief Forum in the Western Cape, April – September 2020. October. Available: <https://wcedp.co.za/case-studies/#covid-19>
⁷Wills, G., Patel, L., van der Berg, S., Mpetla, B. 2020. Household resource flows and food poverty during South Africa's lockdown: Short-term policy implications for three channels of social protection. Working paper. National Income Dynamics Survey Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey, Wave 1. Available: <https://cramsurvey.org/reports/>