



## Transformative change

VPUU has a long-standing relationship with the 8 neighbourhoods of the project. The project contributes to transformative change, unusual in a short-term project, as it complements the other development projects running in these areas.

The Community Care vouchers are an example of how a public-private partnership can pioneer a **culture of choice**. Public beneficiary organisations DG Murray Trust and Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading partnered with private technology companies Flash and Kazang, to offer digital vouchers to approximately 20 000 beneficiaries. This is an institutional change, both in the development sector and in public-private partnership potentialities.

The **collaborative nature** of the project, drawing on partners in municipal and provincial government, multiple NGOs and community organisations; on an area-based level and facilitated by an intermediary (VPUU) is transformative. This serves as an example of the transition from immediate short-term disaster relief efforts (e.g. food kitchens) to addressing the longer-term societal impacts of a crisis (e.g. reviving the early childhood development sector).

**Recognising the importance of informal and unregistered organisations**, such as spaza shops, crèches, community gardens and food kitchens, reflects the transformative nature of the project.

Engaging collaboratively on a project of this scale has solidified the networks established in response to the pandemic into formalised structures across the Western Cape (e.g. working with Community Action Network groups and the Western Cape Food Relief Forum). This models how a development project can contribute to societal change and equalise power relations through its choice of partners.

The project provides a pilot **offering pregnant women an unconditional cash transfer**, in the form of the Community Care voucher. This contributes to the campaign by partner organisation Grow Great, to achieving zero stunting by 2030 through advocating for a Maternity Support Grant. This is reflective of an effort to transform institutions and policy to better support pregnant women and their babies.

The **V-NET** element of the project **enables communities to bridge the digital divide** by creating, sharing and curating content and knowledge, thereby shifting online power relations. Internet access enables communities to be consumers of web content, but more importantly, to be active producers of their own web content.

## South African context

South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world with the second highest income inequality – a Gini coefficient of 0.625.<sup>1</sup> The City of Cape

Town has a Gini coefficient of 0.621, marginally below the national level. Across the province, income inequality has worsened between 2011 and 2019.<sup>2</sup>

Gender is one such form of inequality, as on average, female-headed households are more likely to be poor compared to individuals living in male-headed households.<sup>3</sup> As such, building a social inclusive society is crucial. The Towards Building a Community Circular Economy project prioritizes gender and social inclusion by working with some of the most vulnerable groups within our society – moving from providing the minimum standards and empowerment, to transformative change. This is possible as the project builds on VPUU's history of partnership in the 8 designated neighbourhoods in Cape Town.

## Measuring social inclusion

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs uses three sets of indicators to measure social exclusion – access to opportunities (education, health services, infrastructure), access to employment and income, and participation in political, civic and cultural life.<sup>4</sup>

VPUU and its partners are uniquely positioned to improve social inclusion in urban neighbourhoods by recognising diverse cultural narratives – improving ECD programs, activating the local economy and partnering with community members.

<sup>1</sup> The Gini coefficient ranges from 0 (0%) to 1 (100%), with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality. See more at <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country>

<sup>2</sup> Western Cape Government Provincial Treasury. 2020. Provincial Economy Review and Outlook 2020. Available: <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/provincial-treasury/pero-mero-and-socio-economic-profiles>

<sup>3</sup> Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development, 2019. The Gender Wage Gap in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Research Brief 2/19. Available: SA-TIED.WIDER.EDU. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 25.