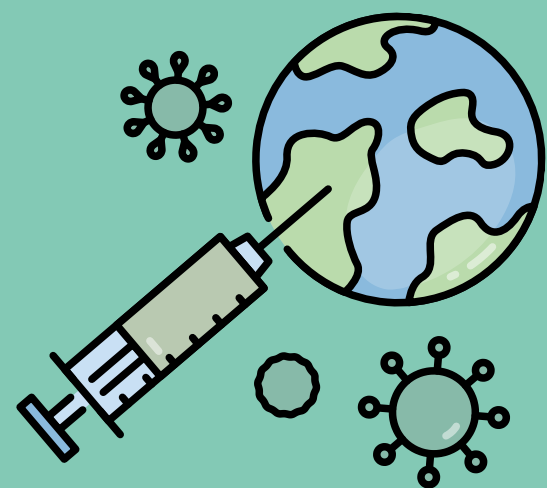
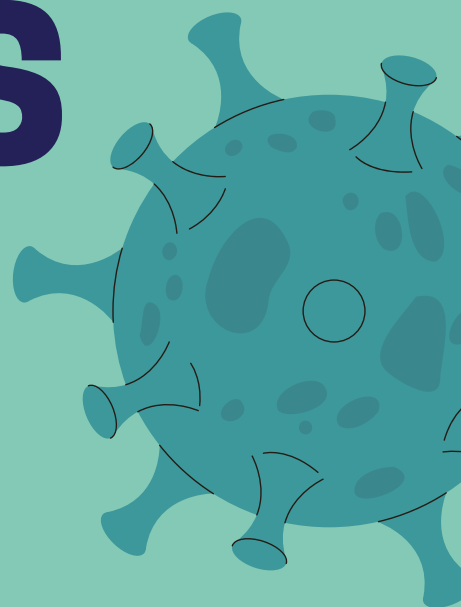




CHILDREN'S VOICES DURING COVID- 19

Project by Global Atlantic Fellows



Introduction

The COVID 19 pandemic and its consequent global shutdown during 2020 led to limitations in movement, access to education and routine participation in the economy. For low-middle socioeconomic communities this led to a direct disruption to schooling, household income, the risk of violence and abuse, teenage pregnancy, and threats to food security. Our project sought to create collaboration between children in Indonesia and South Africa, both middle income countries, to locate the voices of children about how they experienced the lockdown of 2020

GOALS AND AIMS OF PROJECT



What are the similarities between children from underserved communities in South Africa and Indonesia in respect of how they experienced the COVID-19 lock down

To have guided focus group discussions with children across communities irrespective of the existence of forums and or their participation in forums but with a special focus on underserved communities in South Africa.

To understand the similarities in the lived experiences of children in LMIC's during the COVID-19 lockdown and to establish if they felt seen and heard during this time at household/community and policy level

To engage youth in Indonesia and South Africa about their inclusion in the vaccine rollout as a response to the pandemic

Creating an opportunity for children from Indonesia and South Africa to connect and to share their experiences and views. To use this exchange of information as a catalyst for ongoing work in their local communities that allows them to be more vocal about their views and to be active in decision making processes.

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Corona viruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses and causes illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Dry cough

Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms.

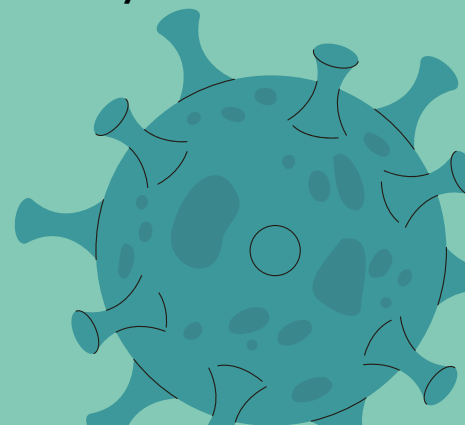
Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment.

WHO'S AT RISK:

- **OLDER PEOPLE**
- People with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, asthma.

WHAT TO DO:

When you experience symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.



QUESTION

What do you understand by the Covid-19 pandemic?

A virus that is contagious and has affected people all over the world"

"Pandemic impacts the world and area"

"It ruined more people's lives and lost their jobs. The president made decisions to lockdown the country"

"People were very sad because they thought it was the end of the world"

"Covid-19 is a pandemic that has spread around the world."

"Is a disease that has spread and affected the entire country."

"It is a pandemic that has sickened many people around the world. Millions of people have died as a result of Covid-19."

"People's daily lives were affected, many were unemployed and stress was placed on them because there was no income"



Children's Voices during the Pandemic.

FINDINGS OF THE COVID-19 RESEARCH

Children felt **confused, sad, angry, bored, anxious and afraid**

Unequal distribution of information and services in our farming and rural communities

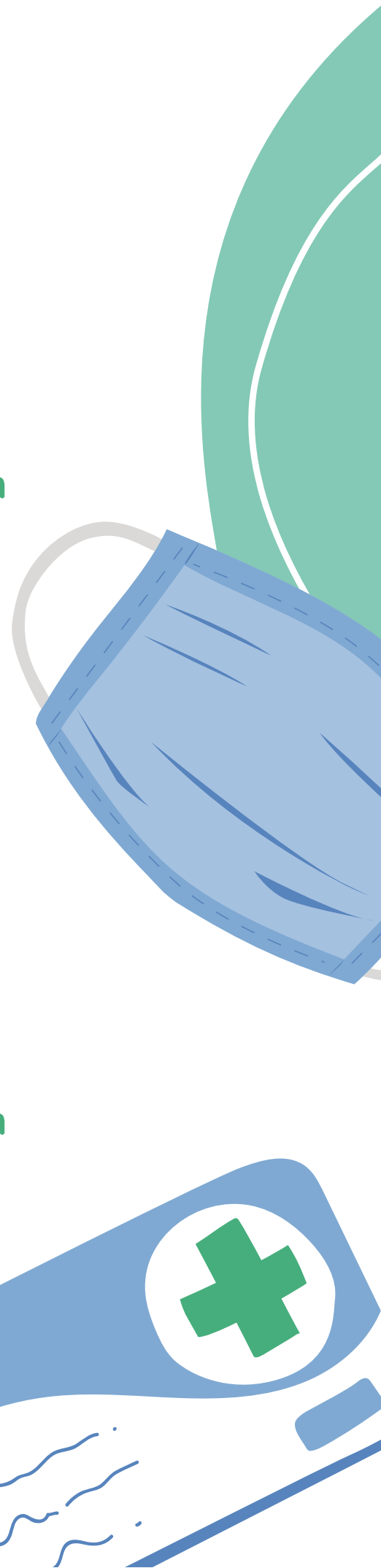
Increase of job losses, income and financial strain in households

Children did not feel included **in the decision-making processes**

The lockdown and closure of school resulted in **children missing school and effecting mental health**

Unequal distribution of information and services in our communities

The vaccine roll out in the country was **inequitable and inconsistent.**



CHILDREN'S VOICES DURING COVID-19

PROJECT BY GLOBAL ATLANTIC FELLOWS



Unequal and inadequate access
to healthcare.



The myths and misinformation
of COVID-19 led to children
feeling anxious and confused



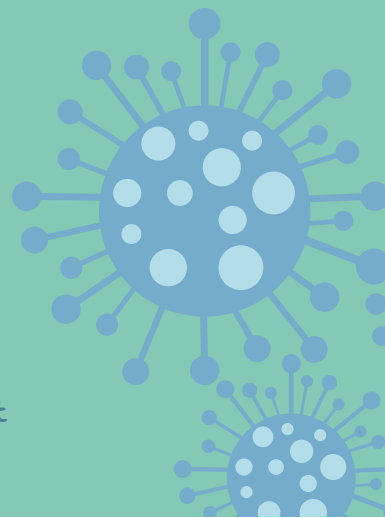
Increase of mental health
and emotional trauma



Not being at school, and lack
of activities and not being near
friends caused them to feel
lonely, sad and confused



Social media and lack of
information resulted in children
not feeling safe to take the vaccine



What was your experience during COVID-19?



- 01 "It wasn't nice. It was not fun for me to see my mother being sick, because she was also affected by Covid-19 and I needed to stay in the indoors."
- 02 "We struggled a lot. My mother didn't work everyday."
- 03 "It affected me, because I could no longer spend time with my friends and family and could not make any contact with anyone."
- 04 "It was a very emotional experience, because my Auntie lost her life due to Covid-19."
- 05 "I couldn't go to school and it had a big impact on my school career because we didn't cover enough work in the previous grade. Many of my relatives died in the Eastern Cape and my mother had to spend money to go to the funerals."
- 06 "My grandmother and my aunt were in quarantine. The house was empty without them. We were afraid we would lose one of them. There was no money for food because they were not at home..."
- 07 "People died and others got vaccinated to protect themselves. I felt unsafe and unhappy at the same time. Too many people died hence why the government imposed "lockdown".

PICTURES

OF IMPLEMENTATION



SCAN ME

Indonesia and South Africa connection session between children in Indonesia and South Africa has led to children having a better understanding and new perspective of the conditions and challenges experience of the two countries.

Where did you get information about the vaccine?



Parents



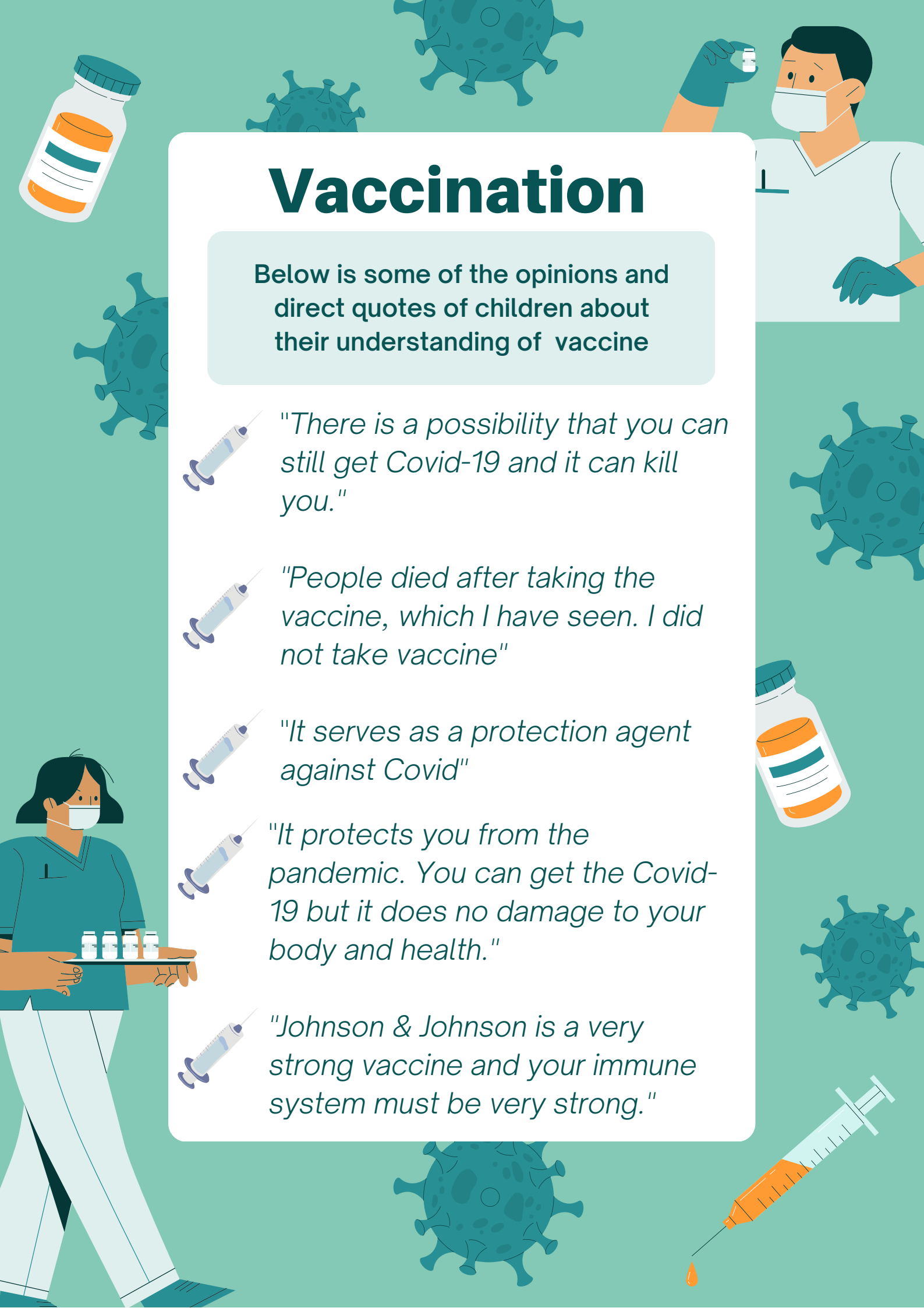
Teachers



social media



Tv/radio/people



Vaccination

Below is some of the opinions and direct quotes of children about their understanding of vaccine



"There is a possibility that you can still get Covid-19 and it can kill you."



"People died after taking the vaccine, which I have seen. I did not take vaccine"



"It serves as a protection agent against Covid"



"It protects you from the pandemic. You can get the Covid-19 but it does no damage to your body and health."



"Johnson & Johnson is a very strong vaccine and your immune system must be very strong."

Do you think children were prioritized in the COVID-19 response?

“NO, children couldn't go to school”

“NO, they were very focused on the older people because it was easier for them to get sick.”

“YES, they closed the schools because they were afraid the children would get the pandemic”

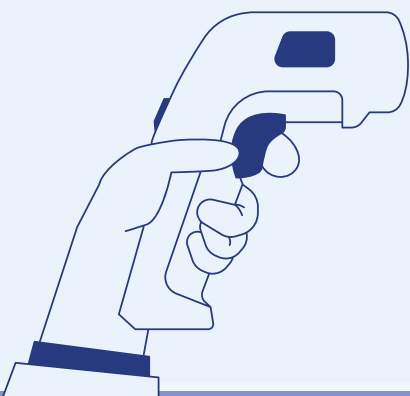
“NO, their focus was more on the economic future”



WHAT DO YOU THINK COULD HAVE BEEN ALTERNATIVES?

" They could have sent the children homework to their homes or they could have posted it on social media."

" They could give children more time to focus on schoolwork such as some schools could have offered online classes."



" They could have made more jobs available and involved children in government plans."

" The government can send people out to come talk to children on farms and make them part of projects"



MY STORY

SASKIA BRINKHUIS

My name is Saskia Brinkhuis and I am a resident of Klapmuts.

My Covid-19 experience was not pleasant at all. The people who know me will know that I am a brave walker so staying in the house all day was just boring.

December 2019 when they announced on the News that Covid-19 had arrived in South Africa, many things went through my head, like what is going to happen now? Are we all going to die? Covid-19 changed many things and ruined many people's lives, people died, many people lost their jobs, families went hungry, schools were closed, and the list goes on. Speaking of school, I feel the government could have made our children more involved in their decisions about the schools.

We had to hear overnight that the schools were going to be closed without any warning. Private schools had online classes while us less fortunate had to sit at home and wonder what the school year would become. Don't get me wrong the days at home were fun but schoolwork still comes first.

My grandmother fell ill and was sent away due to Covid regulations. I took it very hard because I thought I would never see my grandmother again. It went from seeing her every day to video calling for 10 minutes but after prayers and hope that she will get well she was back home 3 weeks later. Covid-19 caught us all off guard, but it also showed us that life can change in the blink of an eye.

Me personally would never want to experience something like that again.





My story

Veronique Clarke

I am Veronique Clarke, 15 years old and a resident of Kromme Rhee farm. I would like to share my experience during Covid-19.

Covid-19 entered our space like a thief in the night, which may make it even more terrifying and we've had to watch helplessly as our lives were disrupted and our freedom was taken away from us. Many people saw it as a great opportunity, while for others it was very troubling. On 5 March 2020, South Africans heard and read with pricked ears and wide eyes that the first South African had tested positive for Covid-19 shock, anxiety and panic overwhelmed us.

We stormed stores to gather emergency supplies for our households. Many questions went through our heads like: what now? What about grandma and grandpa who are chronic?

As a result of the pandemic, my mother lost her job, but my grandfather continued to work. The house was chaos because the income was low and there was no food. A few weeks later, my grandfather caught a bad cold and went to the hospital for a Covid-19 test. The results were positive, and we all had to isolate. It wasn't fun at all because the house was full and there wasn't much food and being trapped in the house for 14 days was very boring. Later, my grandfather became weak because the medication ran low. My mother tried to get him well, but later the whole house tested positive for Covid-19. Things got out of hand...

Two weeks later, most people in the house got well, but my grandfather became very weak. We all just stayed praying. A few days later my godmother also tested positive for Covid-19 and then went to hospital. A few days later the doctor called and said there was nothing more they could do for her. My grandfather began to stress and fell ill on Sunday morning and passed away on Sunday evening.

It was a very sad time for us. The stress and conflict set in more.

On Monday evening, my great grandfather also died. It was a very difficult time for our family, but through the Lord's grace everything was possible.

MY STORY

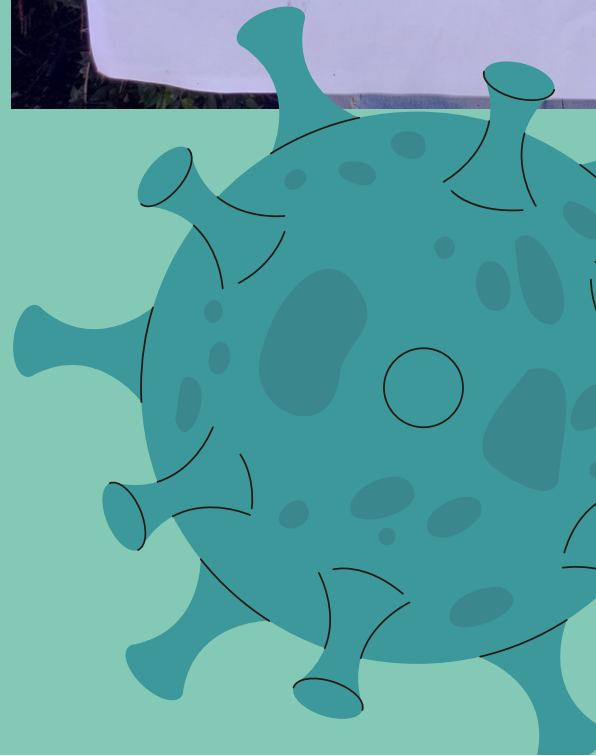
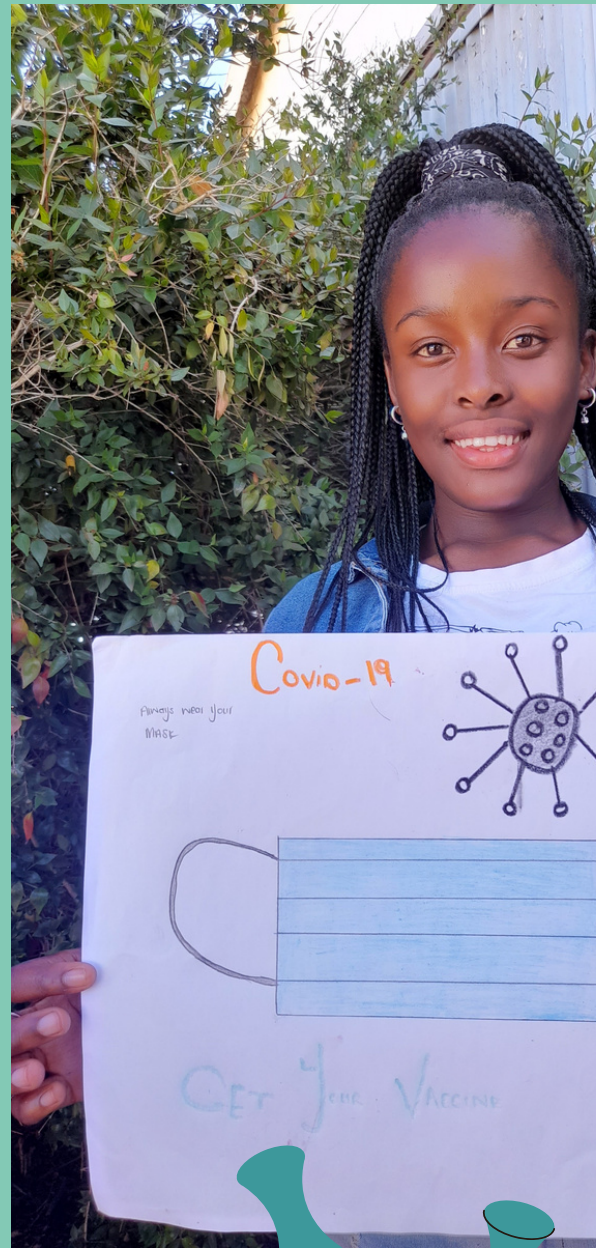
LIYEMA NTSHWEZA

My name is Liyema Ntshweza. The first time I heard about the corona virus I wasn't scared at all. The months passed and people started picking up the virus. People died every day, old people as well as young people and that's when I started to get scared and anxious. In the month of March, many people died and the president introduced lockdown on March 26. The sad part of lockdown is that we can't go to school and my father also lost his job.

I felt there was no time left and we were all going to die because there was no vaccine for this virus yet. People closed to me died, I was sad because every day there were funerals. The stores like Shoprite were empty, there were few items on the shelves because people were panicking, and few products were produced. My mother's money was also very little to take care of us all, but she made sure that we had something to eat every day.

The vaccine was found later, and people did not believe in it. There is a propaganda that vaccine makes people sick. My mother forced me to take the vaccine because she was afraid, I would pick up the virus.

After the vaccine was found, life was a little better and there was hope that everything would be okay.





My story

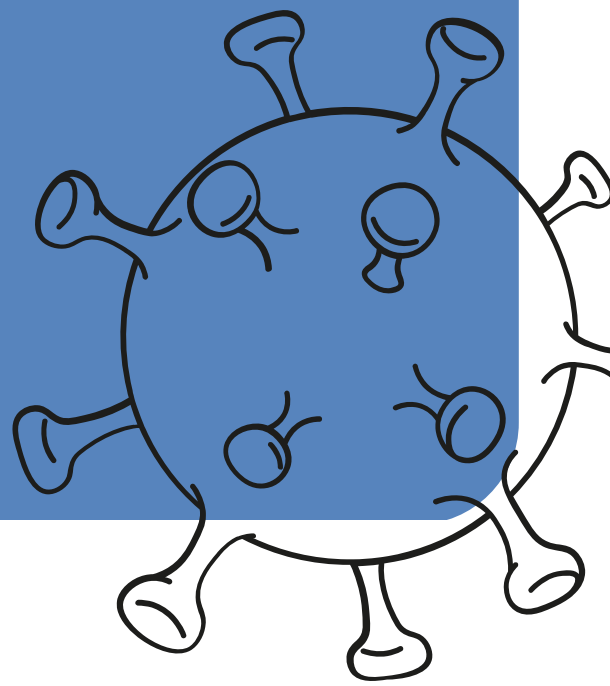
Janika Muller

My name is Janika Muller and I'm a resident of Kromme Rhee. During my grade 12 career, Covid-19 was already discovered. I got pregnant during my matric year, and I considered leaving school. My hardworking mother was my motivation to give my best and complete my career. I was very anxious about the pandemic because I was pregnant. I went to school with my swollen feet, even though many of the people judged me and looked down on me.

During this pandemic things were unstable at home because my mother lost her job and that meant there was no income in the household. I could only imagine how stressful it was for her as a single parent and how oppressed she was. Although there was no income in the house, my mother made sure that there was something to eat and that we did not go to sleep on empty stomachs and for that I will be eternally grateful.

I also think the government mostly focused on the economy's growth and was neglectful of the children.

Covid-19 has torn many of our lives apart and things will never be the same again as they were before.



MY STORY

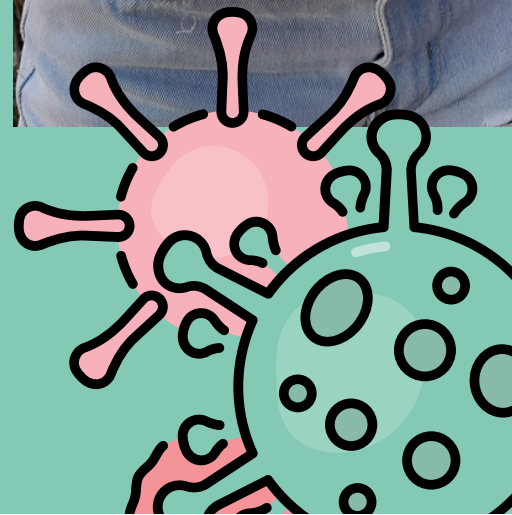
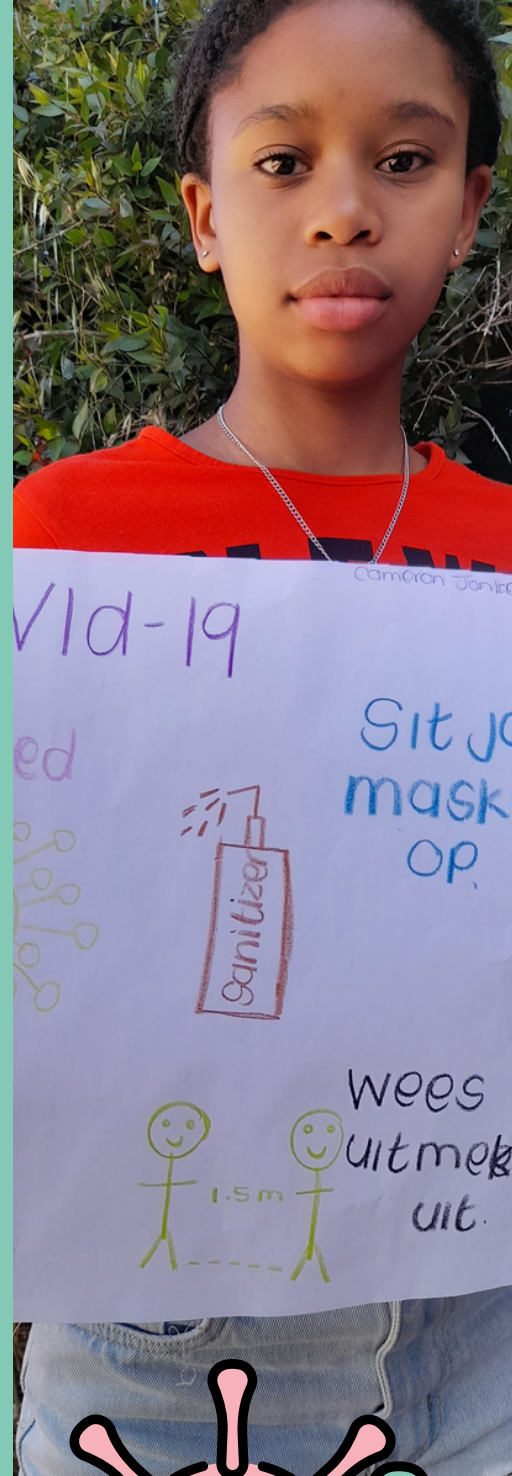
CAMERON JONKERMAN

My name is Cameron Jonkerman, I am a grade 9 learner at Cloeteville High School. Covid-19 was an unexpected virus that affected many people's lives in a bad way. When I first heard about Covid-19 I didn't take it seriously, but when I saw that it really makes people sick, I believed it. When Covid-19 spread around the world everything changed.

I heard about this virus all over the television and social media. I felt anxious and scared. When I saw that it was much more dangerous for old people, I became more careful about getting the virus, because I stayed with my grandmother and grandfather. I live in an environment where there is drug smuggling and violence, but when Covid-19 came in there was no more murder upon murder as usual.

There also came a time when I could no longer walk around. The streets were empty and quiet when you look out, you just yearn more and more for your friends and family you haven't seen in a long time. The schools also being closed and we missed a lot of school work and longed to be among your friends. The virus affected my mother, and it wasn't easy, and I couldn't see her for weeks because she was sick and had to recover first.

My mother was under a lot of pressure because she could not work and was a single parent and had no income. I was in the house a lot and didn't know what to do anymore. I'm just glad things got better, and we don't have to wear face masks.





Trevonia Daniëls

My name is Trevonia Daniels. I am 19 years old, and I live on Kromme Rhee farm, A20. Today I am talking about covid-19 how it has had an impact on my matric career. The time when covid-19 arose it was a very difficult and heavy time in my life. As a 2021 matriculation I was very traumatized because of the covid-19 pandemic, because the schoolwork was too much, and we had very little time to spend on it. During that time, I was also anxious and afraid of maybe covid-19, because it could hinder my education and also weaken my grades, which could result in me not being able to get into a university.

As a result of the covid-19 pandemic, my mother lost her job and things deteriorated in the home. My father continued to work until he went for a covid-19 test and the test was positive. We had to undergo quarantine and things got more out of hand. The house was devastated because there was no income. After there was no more income, chaos and stress began to take over our home. We couldn't stand each other anymore.

The food and money were too little, and conflict also arose, but my inspiring mother did her best to persuade us to always keep our heads above water with what we have. If we look even further, covid-19 also had a big impact on other people's lives "natural life". People could not pay for water later, because there was no income, and no one can manage without water. It was heartbreaking.

If I go even further, people were also beaten and harassed by the police who do not follow the protocols of covid-19, which is wrong and that they should help themselves.



WHAT WAS ONE "GOOD" THING ABOUT THE PANDEMIC?

LOCKDOWN HIGHLIGHTS



"I spent more time with my family"

"The school provided food and masks."

"That we had to learn to always wash our hands."

"Family could sit around a table without interruptions"

"In my area there was no more violence incidents such as shootings and murders"

CONCLUSION

Even though children living on farms have low exposure to advocacy programs and do not participate in mainstream discussions about issues affecting them, the engagement sessions highlighted to us their awareness about the socio-economic risks COVID 19 posed for them. Further, the engagements revealed the agency amongst children to be able to problem solve and contribute to solutions at grass root levels.

Most important was the understanding amongst children living on farms that they are excluded from decision-making processes and do not access support through government led strategies. Despite being a "forgotten people" these young children understand the link between health and education as key determinants for them to emerge beyond the cycles of poverty they are raised in.



