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## Socialsuite COVID-19 Social Impact Survey Interim Report - South Africa



in association with  
Relativ Impact  
May 2020

# About this Report

- In April, Socialsuite, in collaboration with Relativ launched a free online COVID-19 impact monitoring technology to allow South African organisations to rapidly listen, understand and act to help their people during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Importantly, every user can immediately learn what is working for other similar organizations, and then share their results compared to global trends to gain actionable insights.
- The key vision of Socialsuite is that organizations around the world will use this free tool to learn from each other.
- There has been encouraging early uptake, but the more organizations that participate in this initiative, the more learnings and deeper insights there will be to gain.
- We hope you get valuable insights from the data in this report to assist you with how to respond to the crisis.



# Why measure the social impact of COVID-19?

This COVID-19 Social Impact Assessment project comprises an expert-designed social impact assessment survey that has been configured in the Socialsuite technology platform. Socialsuite users are able to collect ongoing survey data to understand people's needs and challenges during the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, as well as being able to:

- inform the mobilisation of resources to targeted initiatives in the delivery of service
- understand and act on the sentiment, fears and aspirations of your people during this critical time
- prioritise resource allocations to respond to most urgent needs
- understand if initiatives that have been or will be implemented are working
- promptly refine and adjust initiatives based on stakeholder feedback



# How it works:

## *Collecting the data*

- Organizations register for free access to a secure portal
- Registered organisations send the survey link to their people - staff, beneficiaries and affiliates
- Follow-up surveys are sent automatically
  - Baseline
  - Weekly for 2 months
  - Monthly thereafter
- Survey respondents can opt out at any time
- 5 - 8 minutes completion time
- Registered organisations monitor their results through their own private dashboards, or view global trends through a global aggregated dashboard



#### Sense of Resilience

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1 - No Stress at all    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10 - Very Stressed

Thinking about the current COVID-19 situation, how would you rate your level of stress during this time?

2. Thinking about the current COVID-19 situation, what activities are providing relief for you during this time?

3. Thinking about the current COVID-19 situation, what support do you require during this time?

4. Thinking about the current COVID-19 situation, are you currently volunteering or helping other members of your community?

No  
 Yes

Next



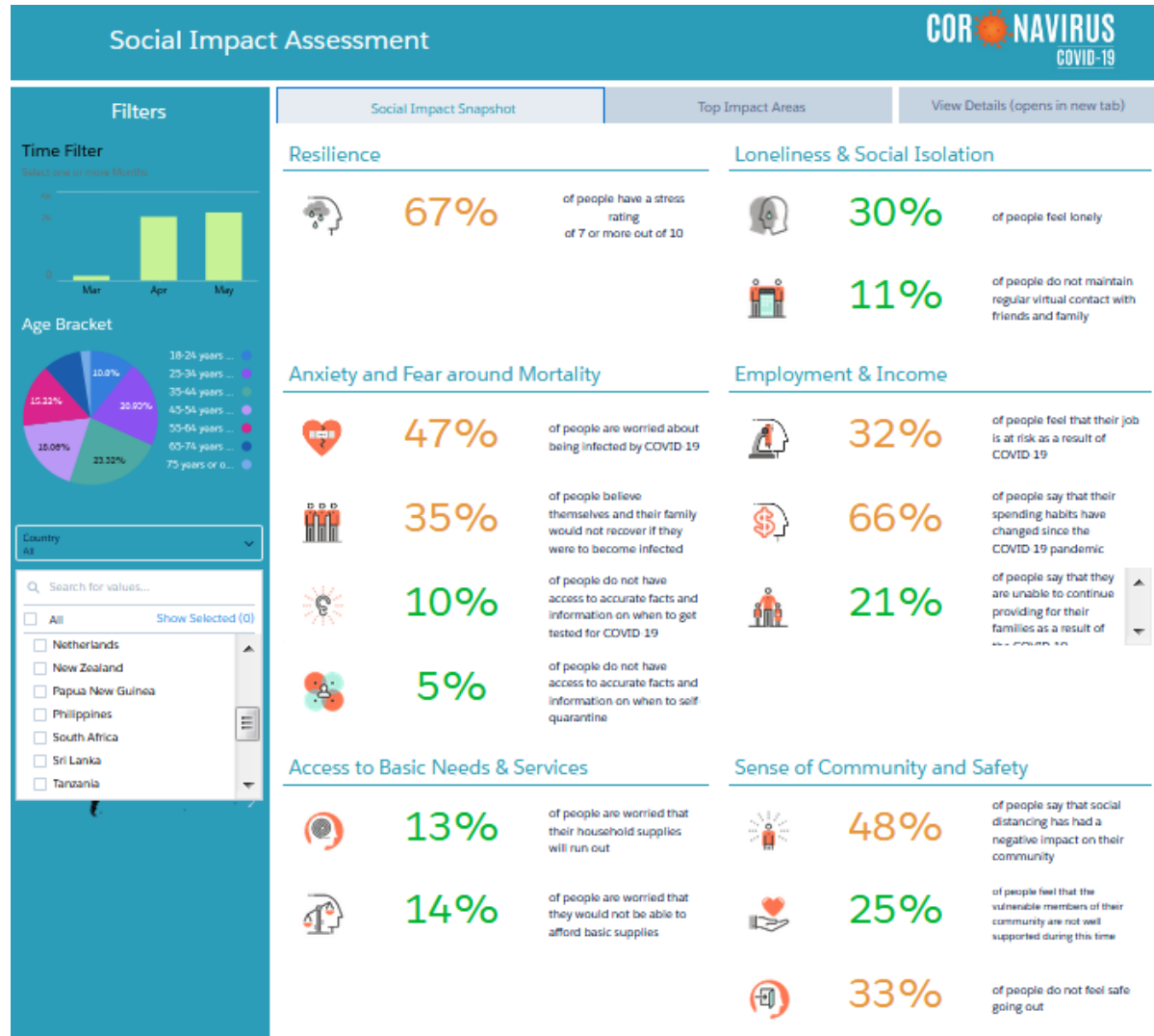
# How it works:

## *Survey structure*

- **Resilience (n=525)**  
Measures stress levels, what support do people require during this time, are people still volunteering or helping others despite the obstacles they themselves are going through?
- **Loneliness and Social Isolation (n=674)**  
Measures people's sentiments towards social isolation and challenges they may face
- **Anxiety and Fear Around Mortality (n=287)**  
Measures people's sentiments towards contracting the virus, fear of death, and whether they have access to accurate and factual information
- **Employment and Income (n=342)**  
Measures peoples sentiments towards their job security, confidence in gaining future employment, how day-to-day living has been impacted
- **Access to Basic Needs and Services (n=216)**  
Measures people's perceptions around their need to stockpile, do they worry that their access to services and essentials will stop
- **Sense of Community and Safety (n=216)**  
Measures people's perceptions around social cohesiveness, whether they still feel safe in their communities, and if they feel vulnerable members in their communities are being supported

# How it works:

## *Dashboards at local and global level*



# Survey participation

*up to 19 May 2020*

Total number of participants globally  
(April) n = 4400

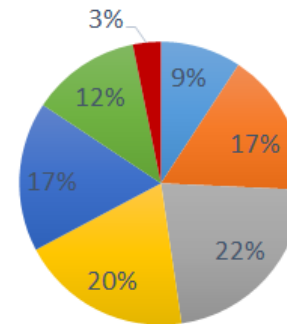
Total number of submissions globally  
(May) n = 2408

Total number of participants in  
South Africa (April) n = 561

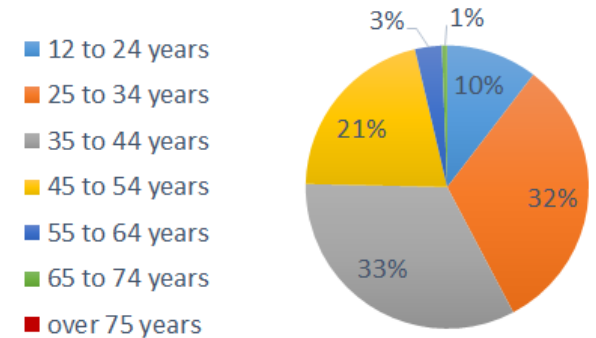
Total number of participants in  
South Africa (May) n = 215



Age breakdown - Global



Age breakdown - South Africa



# Resilience

## *How stressed are people?*

60%+

Across all age groups, more than 60% of the respondents reported having a stress rating of 7 or more out of 10

69%

69% of the people between the age of 55 and 64 reported stress levels of 7 or more out of 10

67%

Globally, 67% of the people reported having a stress level of 7 or more out of 10

- Many respondents cited that they were stressed about the **uncertainty of the pandemic - when will the lockdown be over?**
- Stress responses were also cited around potential **job loss**, or lack of confidence in **securing future employment**
- Some respondents were stressed about their **extended family members** or **vulnerable** community members **not coping** during the lockdown
- Many cited **boredom**, frustration due to **loss of routine and “freedom”**, and **inability to interact with social networks** as causing a mental strain



65%

of people have a stress rating of 7 or more out of 10

# Resilience

*Keeping active is very important to most respondents*

## Top Activities providing relief globally:

- Exercising and keeping active
  - Walking is the most frequently reported exercise type
  - Walking in nature
  - Walking dogs
  - Yoga
- Keeping virtual contact with family and friends
  - Checking in via Whatsapp,
  - Instagram and Facebook
  - Regular video calls

## Other activities providing relief

- Watching TV (e.g. Netflix)
- Self development
- Reading
- Keeping busy with work
- Meditating, faith and religious activities
- Cooking and comfort eating

## Top 3 activities providing relief in SA:

14% said that they have been “exercising / keeping active”

13% said that they have been “spending time with immediate family”

10% said that they had “hobbies”



# Resilience

## *Top areas requested for support*

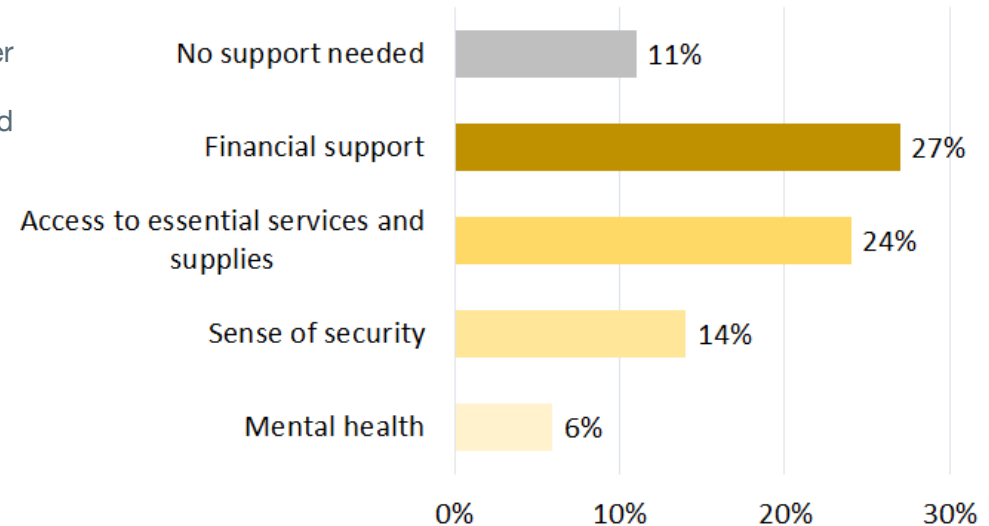
### Top Areas of Support Requested

- Financial Support
  - Due to loss of income or loss of job or partner losing their job
  - Assistance with paying for essential bills and services such as rent, electricity, internet
- Having someone who they can speak to
  - Emotional support from family and friends
  - Someone to talk to due to boredom
  - Sounding board for frustration
- Support from Employer
  - Mostly around retention of job and hours
  - Regular check-ins if working remotely

### Other areas of support mentioned

- Business support
- Access to employment
- Access to clear and accurate information on COVID-19
- Access to better internet

### Support people are asking for in South Africa



# Loneliness and Social Isolation

*The majority of the elderly are worried about a loss of connection in South Africa*

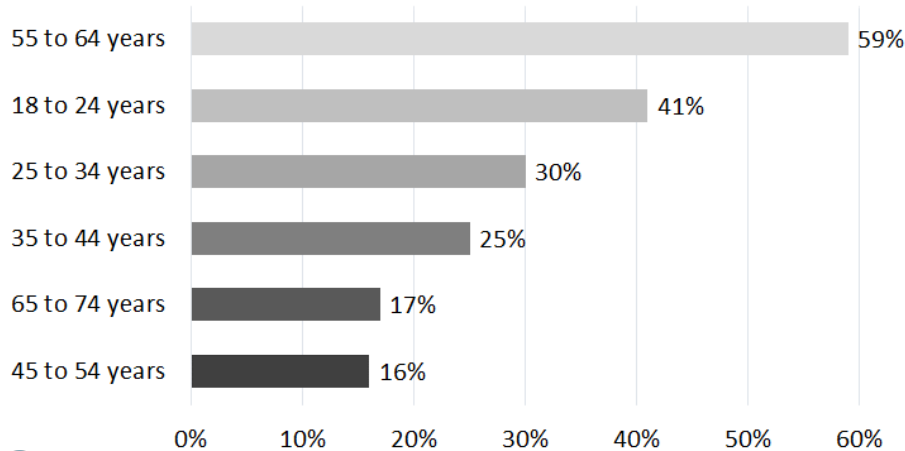


**27%** of people feel lonely. **Global average of 30%**



**15%** of people are not maintaining virtual contact with friends and family. **Global average 10%**

## Loneliness and isolation within each age group - South Africa



## Top 3 concerns about being socially isolated

- **Financial strain (10%)**
- **Loss of job or employment (9%)**
- **Loss of connection with their social network (8%)**

## Other concerns raised

- Impact on education (self and child)
- Loss of routine motivation or freedom
- Personal safety and well being when living alone
- Missing physical contact with friends and extended family members
- There was concern as to when people would be able to see their friends again.
- Many people cited boredom as a primary concern, as well as frustrations due to being cooped up
- Anxiety and depression were the most frequently cited mental health concerns

# Loneliness and Social Isolation

Global sound bites

*“There is a real mental health impact on community as this isolation continues with no social interaction”*

*“Will I ever get to hug my grandchildren again”*

*“What if this never ends and I never see my friends again?”*

*“Due to the restrictions on travel and what we are allowed to do I have been at home a lot. I have hardly spoken to anybody face to face in the last three weeks. I would usually have visitors once or twice a week and would visit others about the same, all that has stopped. Also by staying at home all the casual interactions with people has stopped.”*

*“I worry a bit about how it will all end, what our lives will be like this time next year”*

*“My mental state, sometimes I feel like I am losing my mind just sitting indoors with the same routine everyday”*

“ ”

# Loneliness and Social Isolation

## *South African sound bites*

“ ”

*“My family is in a different province, I was worried about their health and well being during this time.”*

*“I miss my children and are worried about my elderly mother at that old age home”*

*“Miss being able to go hiking in the mountains or walking at the beach”*

*“Anxiety from over thinking (news, country and work, data to surf the internet, what will life after Covid look like”*

*“The confusion this whole pandemic and lockdown has brought to the kids and their routines and lives , trying to explain why they cannot go outside or when they can see their friends again”*

# Anxiety and Fear around Mortality



**57%** of people are worried about being infected by COVID-19. **Global average 47%**



**23%** of people believe themselves and their family would not recover if they were to become infected. **Global average 35%**



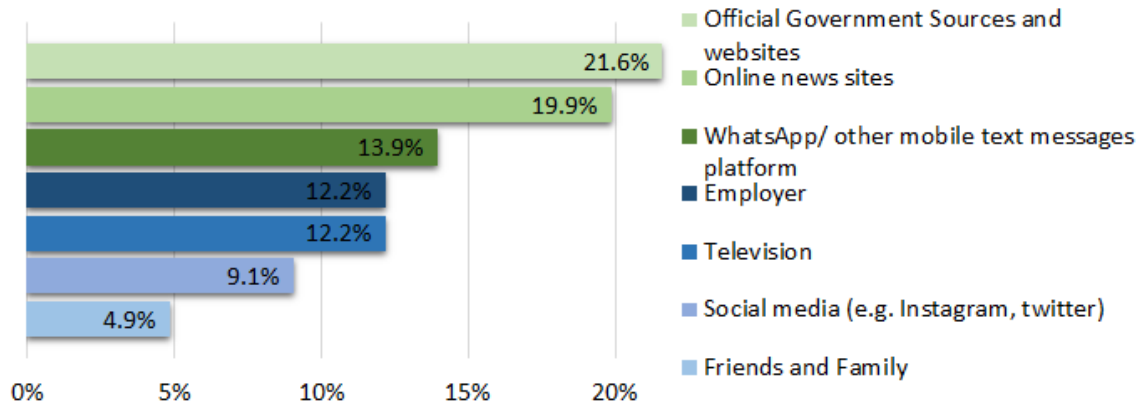
**6%** of people do not have access to accurate information on when to get tested for COVID-19. **Global average 9%**



**5%** of people do not have access to accurate facts and information on when to self-quarantine. **Global average 4%**

- **Over half of respondents are worried about being infected, with some citing that they are worried about spreading the virus to their family members**
- Respondents are generally worried about their elderly parents not coping, or relatives who have pre-existing conditions
- Majority of respondents have access to accurate information about when to get tested or when to self-quarantine
- Majority of people said they prefer to receive information on current public health measures and receive updates on COVID-19 from official government sources and news outlets

**Preferred mechanism to receive information about COVID-19**



# Employment and Income

*South Africans inability to provide for their families is double the global average*



**35%** of people feel that their job is at risk as a result of COVID-19. **Global average 30%**



**76%** of people say that their spending habits have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic. **Global average 64%**



**38%** of people say that they are unable to continue providing for their families as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Global average 19%**

- Many respondents have reportedly changed their spending habits and are **only spending on essential items**
- There is **general worry about potential job loss**, or limited future employment opportunities
- Many respondents have reported **reduced spending on social outings** and reduced discretionary spending
- Respondents are also worried about the **closing of local businesses** and the resulting job losses

## Top 3 economic impacts COVID-19 on people's lives

26% said that they have '**Financial strain on household**'

12% said that they have '**Strain on mental health**' (stress, depression & anxiety)'

10% said that they have '**Strain on small business**'

# Access to Basic Needs and Services

*South Africans are far more concerned about access and affordability of basic supplies*

- Most people feel they did not need to stock up or bulk buy supplies
- Some respondents are worried about being able to afford basic supplies, in addition to paying for utilities such as rent, electricity and internet data



33%

of people are worried that their household supplies will run out. **Global average 9%**



32%

of people of people are worried that they will not be able to afford basic supplies. **Global average 11%**

Globally, respondents tend to be more worried about access to medical care and services rather than household supplies. With some respondents having also cited that they are helping other vulnerable members of their communities with delivery of essential supplies.

*“When going to the shop, I offer to help 2 neighbours with their shopping needs”*

*“I do grocery shopping for elderly and vulnerable family members when I can”*

*“I’m just doing domestic things for my elderly mother, and dropping off little food treats to my neighbour who is a nurse”*

# Sense of Community and Safety

*South Africans feel significantly less safe going out into public*



41%

of people say that social distancing has had a negative impact on their community.  
**Global average 45%**



34%

of people feel that the vulnerable members of their community are not well supported during this time.  
**Global average 21%**



52%

of people do not feel safe going out.  
**Global average 32%**

Global sentiments tend to revolve around **lack of opportunities to socialize** and wanting to **continue supporting their local businesses**. Most respondents are frustrated that they have to stay indoors, and miss doing “the little things” like buying a coffee or having a chat with locals at the shops



# How can you help?

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Hundreds of organisations, their partners, clients and their staff have already begun to participate in collecting data and gaining insights. As more data is collected, more useful and informative data will be generated on the impact of COVID-19.

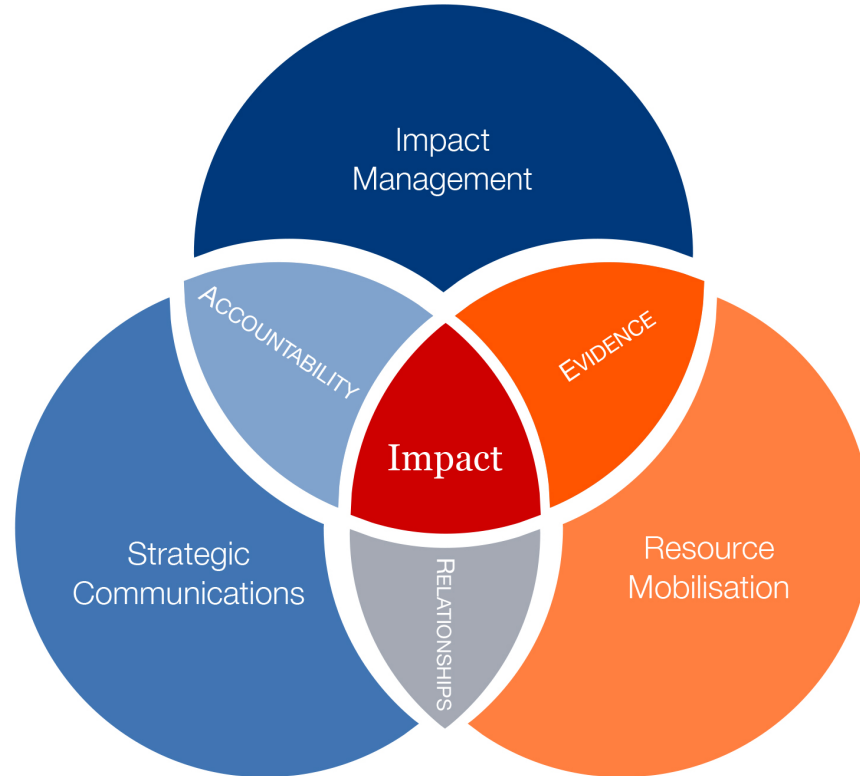
- Share the registration link with organisations you know [covid-19-assessment-South Africa](#)
- Share this report with those who may be interested, who can supplement their research using our global trend data
- Register your own organization and see what is helping others get through the pandemic



*This report forms part of a series of local and global reports on the impact of COVID 19 generated by Socialsuite in collaboration with Relativ Group*

# About Relativ

We believe that the key to building stakeholder confidence is dependent on your organisation's ability to define, deliver and communicate the significance of the impact you promise and practice. We believe that meaningful impact is realised through accountability across stakeholder relationships in your ecosystem.



We consider your strategic objectives by assessing the evidence and experience of how your organisation connects resource mobilisation, impact management and strategic communications. With this understanding we assist in designing and improving solutions to suit your context and purpose to unlock your unique impact potential on your path to sustainability and significance.

The strategic frameworks of the Theory of Change, Shared Value, Design Thinking, the 'Jobs to be done' theory of innovation as well as Relativ's proprietary models and partner platforms are woven into our thinking, tools and training. Find out more at [www.relativimpact.com](http://www.relativimpact.com)



# About Socialsuite

- Socialsuite produces technology that helps a diverse range of organizations monitor their impact on people. It is a global leader in impact-management software.
- Socialsuite's simple, easy to use technology rigorously measures the potency of social investment programs to greatly enhance accountability reporting.
- Its automated data-collection, analysis and reporting tools provide accurate and timely insights for organizations that need to monitor and understand the impact of their initiatives.
- Socialsuite's one-click access to interactive, tailored and dynamic reports help governments, corporate and philanthropic investors determine the best use of their capital. Its data collection and analysis tools help companies and NGOs understand if their actions are meeting objectives.
- And for consultants and analysts, the Socialsuite platform provides a worldwide audience for their own impact measurement metrics, opening the door to 'big data' analysis and global benchmarking.
- Socialsuite is a fast-growing global company based in Melbourne, Australia. It has clients across Asia Pacific, Americas and Europe. They include financial institutions, large companies, government agencies, philanthropic foundations, not-for-profits and NGOs that want to monitor and fully understand how they impact people.
- Find out more at [socialsuitehq.com](https://socialsuitehq.com)



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