

# We must commit to active citizenship in a time of crisis

By [Luvuyo Madasa](#)

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As the country continues its efforts to flatten the curve of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the varying experiences and interpretations by South Africans of the need for physical distancing during the country-wide lockdown depict, now more so than ever before, the stark inequalities that South Africa continues to grapple with.



Luvuyo Madasa, executive director at ReimagineSA

It's no longer about explaining the controversial *Time* magazine cover (13 May 2019), but more about rolling up our sleeves and doing the necessary work to change this sad reality. It is our civic duty to practice physical distancing during this pandemic to not only save lives, but to refresh a few things about what active and responsible citizenship really means. We can only make further progress towards our destination if we show up every day and walk the road together as active citizens.



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## Continuous collaboration and cooperation

Covid-19 has also shown that as important as established digital online education tools like [Civics Academy](#) has been in strengthening democracy and mobilising young people to become active citizens, it is critical to couple these investments with continuous collaboration and cooperation. This alignment must take place between government, business, communities and the non-profit sector that are geared towards sustaining social cohesion beyond the digital world.

By better using our diversity to help people from different backgrounds become part of the dialogue, we are empowering individuals with the understanding that they can make a difference and build a country they will be proud to call home.



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## Engage with grassroots issues

Making democracy real for everyone is about being engaged with changing the world every single day. This requires constant dialogue with citizens aimed at inspiring all of us to put up our hands to help solve problems. We must engage with the grassroots issues, partner with communities to understand their concerns and co-create solutions. But before this, it is vital that we first develop a shared sense of the challenges we face and the roots they have in our divisive history of apartheid and colonialism.

The national lockdown presents an opportunity for active citizens to challenge ourselves to ask where we are needed, for what, by when, and how we get there together. It is in our reach to replace our divisive past and present with an inclusive future, but only if everyone is committed to becoming a change agent.

It is important for us to consistently work together and to envisage scalable solutions to our country's challenges. It is only through facilitating meaningful and sustainable partnerships at community level that we can harness the resources required to address problems at scale.

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