

'Dine in. Do good!' with local NGO StreetSmart

 By [Sandy Peters](#)

21 May 2020

As part of our #LockdownLessons series, Bizcommunity is reaching out to South Africa's top industry players to share their experience of the current Covid-19 crisis, how their organisations are navigating these unusual times, where the challenges and opportunities lie, and their industry outlook for the near future.

Melanie Burke, chairman of StreetSmart South Africa, shares her lockdown lessons and how StreetSmart is navigating the lockdown in stages by keeping hope alive and preparing for the new normal.



Melanie Burke, chairman of StreetSmart South Africa

■ What was your initial response to the crisis/lockdown and has your experience of it been different to what you expected?

Melanie Burke: For me, personally, it didn't feel like such a big deal because I usually work from home. Yet, everything is different. I was preparing to travel to Spain for my annual 'sabbatical' and looking forward to summer there rather than winter here in SA. This has been our lifestyle for the last decade and so for the first time in a while, I am preparing for a Cape winter and have no travel scheduled. The overwhelming sense I have is of deep gratitude that I am 'home' in SA and that my husband and I are together. I realise that I am still privileged, along with many others, to make a contribution during this time.

Fortunately, StreetSmart is a well-managed NGO and can remain open for business during these unprecedented times. We had hoped to come out of lockdown in May, but the lockdown was extended. All indications are that the crisis may take longer to overcome than we expected initially. At StreetSmart, we remain hopeful and continue to refine our organisation's responses to the coronavirus pandemic. We also continue to encourage people to give responsibly and raise funds and other resources for those in need.



#LockdownLessons: We are only as strong as our most vulnerable

Sandy Peters 18 May 2020



■ **Comment on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your organisation or economy as a whole.**

Burke: The very essence of StreetSmart South Africa's fundraising efforts relies on R5 donations received from the public who eat at restaurants, stay at guesthouses and raise a glass at wine tasting venues. In this way, we have been able to raise R1m annually for 38 beneficiary programmes for vulnerable children that support education, skills development and family reunification in the Western Cape, Garden Route and Gauteng.

Social distancing measures imposed right now means that our restaurant, accommodation and wine tasting partners are mostly under lockdown and our ability to raise funds for our beneficiaries is under severe pressure.

StreetSmart has since inception kept our promise that every cent raised by our fundraising partners will go directly to the selected beneficiaries we support. We have also stood by the fact that StreetSmart is a local community driven initiative and that the areas in which the money is raised is where it stays. This means that we are able to support local programmes that make it possible for vulnerable and street children to stay in school, develop skills and reintegrate into their local communities of care.



Covid-19: Making our NPOs' voices heard

Keri-Leigh Paschal, Nation Builder 18 May 2020



■ **How is your organisation responding to the crisis?**

Burke: With so many of us at home cooking more meals than usual and eating in, we have come up with a new concept: "Dine in. Do Good!" as an interim measure we could all include in our lives during lockdown.

We are asking friends of StreetSmart and the public to consider donating the equivalent of R5 a day for 30 days – a total of R150 per month. Of course, if people can afford to give more, we will be so grateful. These funds will enable us to support our beneficiaries' programmes for vulnerable children at the end of the year.

Aligned with our mandate, donors can rest assured that every cent raised through the Dine in. Do Good! campaign will go to our beneficiaries and will not be used for any StreetSmart operational expenses. To donate, click [here](https://streetsmartsa.org.za) or go to [Streetsmartsa.org.za](https://streetsmartsa.org.za) for more information.



Dine in. Do good!

A COVID-19 CAMPAIGN



PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING JUST R5 A DAY

Our heartfelt thoughts are with our fundraising partners who are unable to operate as yet.

During this StreetSmart COVID-19 Campaign, we ask you to donate the equivalent of R5 a day for 30 days – a total of R150.





Every cent raised in this way will support programmes for street children.

#GiveResponsibly



Donate via PayFast



Donate via SnapScan



Donate via Zapper

www.streetsmartsa.org.za

STREETSMART SOUTH AFRICA • Registered NPC 2004/036117/08 • NPO 051-449 • PBO 30015804

[click to enlarge](#)

Comment on the challenges and opportunities.

Burke: We expect that the socio-economic issues as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic will be dire, and the need to support at risk and vulnerable children will be significant. StreetSmart is focused now on preparation to support the need that will inevitably arise for children when the immediate relief measures available during lockdown are exhausted and the economic impact and its ripples will be felt.

How has the lockdown affected your staff? / What temporary HR policies have you put in place regarding remote working, health & safety, etc.?

Burke: We had implemented the recommended health and safety measures for the staff in the office, but as soon as the lockdown was announced, the two staff members were set up to start working from their respective homes. Although this was quite difficult at first, the team managed to overcome the strangeness of being apart and we have clear channels of communication established that make it easy to do the work.

We even had our annual general meeting via an online platform. This was lovely, actually, because people could connect and be part of this meeting from all over the country, usually it is limited to Cape Town, where our head office is situated. Of course, we would all like to return to being able to be in the presence of our partners, supporters and beneficiary organisations, while still respecting physical distancing.



#LockdownLessons: Pandemic reminding us of importance of *ubuntu*, responsible kindness

Sindy Peters 13 May 2020



▣ What do you predict the next six months will be like?

Burke: We expect that the next six months will be really difficult for our sector as hospitality and tourism will have to recover from current difficulties that are worsened by Covid-19 infection risk, and to rethink how to thrive in the new normal. We want to assure our partners that we stand with them and will continue to work towards making a difference through responsible giving.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

Sindy Peters (@sindy_hullaba_lou) is a group editor at Bizcommunity.com on the Construction & Engineering, Energy & Mining, and Property portals. She can be reached at sindy@bizcommunity.com

- ▣ 2022 Lesedi Award winner Faeza Marshman on what drives her giving spirit - 9 Dec 2022
- ▣ #ESGAfricaConference: Why integrating the environmental and social components of ESG is key - 3 Nov 2022
- ▣ #ESGAfricaConference: ESG an opportunity for purposeful shareholder engagement - 1 Nov 2022
- ▣ #ESGAfricaConference: Success in ESG starts with leadership, partnerships and good governance - 31 Oct 2022
- ▣ #ESGAfricaConference: What should ESG reporting look like in Africa? - 26 Oct 2022

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>