

**African
Alliance**

REPORT

JUNE 2020 – AUGUST 2021



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IN THIS HOUSE WE

PRACTICE RADICAL LOVE

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

CELEBRATE DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT

HERE IS TO

THE LGBTQIA COMMUNITY

WOMXN & GIRLS

SEX WORKERS

PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS

PRISONERS & THOSE IN DETENTION

THE MIGRANTS

THE HOMELESS

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

THE DISRUPTORS

THOSE WHO RISE UP

OUR ALLIES

THE ONES WHO DEFY & DESTROY PATRIARCHY

THE ONES WHO SPEAK EVEN WHEN THEIR VOICE SHAKES

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CONTEXT

COVID-19 has impacted our world in ways that were unimaginable in the last 18 months. In less than twelve months, we had gone from the official naming of the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID- 19) by WHO on 11 February 2020 to a full-blown global pandemic. When the pandemic began spreading across the world, it did not spare any community or society. COVID-19 rapidly caused devastating socio-economic impacts such as income loss, business impacts and severe health concerns.

The African Alliance is a 100% African-led and staffed global health, non-profit that works across diverse portfolios, including work to ensure that communities- in all their diversity are meaningfully engaged in all aspects of COVID-19 vaccine research development and eventually equitable access. The African Alliance was formally founded as a queer-led non-profit organisation in 2013 to provide a space where some of the continents best minds in the development and transformation space could come together to collaborate, strategise and collectively advance rights-based work with a shared understanding of our past, our present and our hopes for the future. Over the years, the work of Alliance has grown from being a consultancy agency to a full-service non-profit with partnerships and networks globally with an equally diverse portfolio of work.

We work daily to strengthen our understanding and practice of Feminist and Pan Africanism Principles and live out our desire to undertake thoughtful, inclusive and consultative work that resonates with us personally and professionally. With a 100 per cent African team with a skill set that spans the advocacy, research, evaluation, strategy and media space, the team is uniquely positioned to deliver high-quality work with and value for our partners.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA – African Alliance	IMASA – Official Islamic Medical Association of South Africa
AAS –The African Academy of Sciences	NCCC – National Coronavirus Command Council
AFRICAN CDC – African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention	NHLS – National Health Laboratory Service
ANC – African National Congress	NPA – Norwegian Peoples Aid
AU – African Union	PLHIV – People Living with HIV and AIDS
AVATT – African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team	PrEP – Pre-exposure Prophylaxis
AVDA – African Vaccine Delivery Alliance	PVA – Peoples Vaccine Alliance
CAPRISA – Centre for the AIDS Programme Of Research in South Africa	DSI – Department of Science and Innovation
COVID-19 – Novel Coronavirus	SAMRC – South African Medical Research Council
DA – Democratic Alliance	SANAC – South African National AIDS Council
EANNASO – Eastern Africa National Networks of Aids and Health Services Organisations	SRHR – sexual and reproductive health rights
EFF – Economic Freedom Fighters	TAC – Treatment Action Campaign
G7 – Group of Seven	TB – Tuberculosis
GESI – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	THP – Traditional Health Practitioners
H3Africa – Human Heredity and Health In Africa	UNAIDS – Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus	VARG – Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group
HJI – Health Justice Initiative	W&GLHIV – women and girls living with HIV
HSRC – Human Sciences Research Council	WHO – World Health Organization
HVTN – HIV Vaccine Trials Network	WITS RHI – Reproductive Health & HIV Institute
IAS – International AIDS Society	
IFP – Inkatha Freedom Party	

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, the African Alliance has delivered impact, value, and visibility for the issues we hold close to our hearts.

Our work to ensure that communities were meaningfully engaged in the research and development of the world's first generation COVID-19 vaccines evolved in year two, which saw us focusing on the heartbreaking and outrageous reality that the concept of global solidarity is fragile and has enabled the current situation where Africa remains on the receiving end of vaccine apartheid, and gross injustice as a result of a man-made & greed-fueled pandemic. We anticipate that year three would see much of the same politicking, profiteering and lack of courageous and inclusive leadership that has brought us to this moment.

This fuels us.

We will continue to speak out, lift and amplify community realities, hold research to account, continue to call out the prioritisation of profits over human lives, over our dignity and over our right to be free.

We held nearly 30 community-focused discussions bridging the gap between communities and research, produced a range of podcasts on a diversity of topics related to the current moment and spanned the landscape from detecting the next wave of COVID-19 in wastewater to what intimacy looks like in a pandemic; we took on the country's most powerful judge for his anti-vaccine comments, and, we have several cases pending against doctors who peddle anti-vaccine messages and COVID conspiracy theories.

We have honoured the work of a variety of traditional health practitioners in all nine provinces of South Africa and generated one of the only Islamic legal declarations on the safety of COVID vaccines to counter misinformation in communities of faith.

In 2022, as we finalise our first strategic plan, we embark on an ambitious plan that will see communities monitor and report on the contextual issues and realities that either hinder or accelerate the path of COVID-19 vaccines from Ports To Arms initially in three South African provinces, amplify our demands to rapidly upscale access to COVID-19 testing, amplify our work to accelerate the continental ownership of the COVID-19 response, strengthen community-based psychosocial support for survivors of long term COVID-19, continue our leadership of the Peoples Vaccine Alliance in Africa and at the helm of African Union/African CDC's African Vaccine Delivery Alliance community engagement efforts, support community health advocates with contextualised and evidence-based COVID-19 information, awareness and mobilisation tools and continue our work with Traditional Health Practitioners.

This, the first report of the Alliance lays out some of the work and the partnerships that were cultivated and nurtured to deliver impact. The team at the Alliance remains the reason for our collective success and conscious growth – and this work is a tribute to that passion, dedication and commitment. We look forward to walking with you on that journey over the next year.

In Solidarity

Tian Johnson



The vision of the South African Medical Research Council is to build a healthy nation through research and innovation. In order to reach our goals, we celebrate the benefits of collaboration, and actively seek to support and fund responsive and innovative projects. Research preparedness and community engagement have always been and continue to be areas that we take very seriously and actively seek to support.

In this light, the SAMRC has made the decision to partially fund the COVID-19 Research and Advocacy work of the African Alliance, an activist led NGO that seeks to advance accountable and community owned research.

Given the importance and urgency of the African Alliance's work – particularly given the worrying wave of COVID-19-related misinformation and growing anti-science sentiment, coupled with a rapidly evolving research landscape – we would like to see this work fully funded as you consider our enthusiastic support of their work

Professor Glenda Gray
President
South African Medical Research Council





BACKGROUND

In the last 18 months coronavirus (COVID-19) has our world has impacted our world in ways that were unimaginable. The World Health Organization officially named the virus in February 2020 and since then, the outbreak has become a full-blown global pandemic. When the pandemic began spreading across the world, it did not spare any community or society. COVID-19 rapidly caused devastating socio-economic consequences such as income loss, negative impact on business and severe health concerns.

African Alliance (AA) is a 100% African-led and staffed global health non-profit organisation that works across diverse portfolios. This includes working to ensure that communities – in all their diversity – are meaningfully engaged in all aspects of COVID-19 vaccine research development and equitable access.

In 2013, African Alliance was formally founded as a queer-led non-profit organisation which provided a space for some of the continent's best minds in the development and transformation space to collaborate, strategize and collectively advance rights-based work with a shared understanding of our past, present and hopes for the future. Over the years, AA's work has grown from being a consultancy agency to a full-service non-profit organisation with global partnerships and networks housing an equally diverse portfolio of work.

We work daily to strengthen our understanding and practice of feminist and Pan-African principles, and live out our desire to undertake thoughtful, inclusive and consultative work that resonates with us personally and professionally. With a fully African team with a skill set that spans the advocacy, research, evaluation, strategy and media space, the team is uniquely positioned to deliver high quality work with, and value for, our partners.



AA TEAM



Tian Johnson

LEAD: STRATEGY

Tian Johnson, a queer African activist is founder and head of the African Alliance, a global non-profit working on a range of health rights issues with a current focus on COVID-19 and its social impact, and, member of the South African Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19 vaccines. An Aspen 2021 New Voices Fellow, they are a founding member of the Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group, a global group of advocates working to ensure that vaccine research is accountable, transparent and community-owned. Tian serves as the International Civil Society Observer of the Robert Carr Fund and GBV expert adviser to the Hands Off II programme which works to reduce violence against sex workers in South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In 2021 Tian joined the COVID-19 African Vaccine Delivery Alliance (AVDA) as co-Chair of the Community Engagement and Risk Communication Pillar. AVDA has established the mechanism for immediate shipment of vaccines to countries for rapid deployment, developed a vaccine supply chain implementation & monitoring framework to guide countries and ensure close monitoring of the planning and the implementation phases and identified and responded to enabling factors, challenges and lessons learnt from vaccine deployment. Tian also works with a range of donors and philanthropists to better understand their role in the decolonisation of the development sector.



Maaza Seyoum

LEAD: PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS

As the lead of the People's Vaccine Alliance in Africa, Maaza liaises extensively with civil society groups around the continent and works to ensure that priorities and voices from across the Global South are meaningfully integrated into campaigns and advocacy that address COVID-19 vaccine inequity. In addition, Maaza oversees the conceptualization, execution, delivery, and distribution of the Alliance's podcast series, which seeks to provide a platform for South African and international researchers, advocates, and thought leaders to engage in thought-provoking conversations on a wide range of COVID-19 related issues that will be of interest to a diverse audience. Maaza is a dog lover, feminist and football fan, not always in that order.



Anna Matendawafa

LEAD: COORDINATION

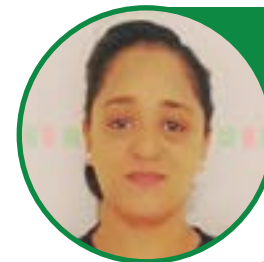
Anna Wadzanayi Matendawafa provides coordination support to all of the Alliance's portfolios. A social scientist and researcher by profession, Anna is the founder of Wadzanayi Girls Association aimed at improving the wellbeing of young girls. She is a passionate advocate for girls education and wants to see a world free from gender-based violence. A social scientist and passionate researcher, Anna is excited about the opportunities research provides for ongoing learning and personal development and the role that research can play in transforming lives and shaping advocacy. With a rich history in clinical trial research, Anna brings a thoughtful eye to the community ownership of research work in the Alliance. Annas' favorite African city is Cape Town, and she loves the saying "The job may be lengthy, but, in the words of the great Kung Fu Tze, a man can eat an elephant if need be, one bite at a time".



Wilfred Gurupira

LEAD: RESEARCH

As the Alliances lead on research, Wilfred oversees the conceptualization, design, sector ownership, implementation, and reporting of all research-related activities, partnerships, and engagements. Wilfred thinks about study design, strategic research partnerships, the design, and development of data collection instruments, how results are reported on, published, and presented, and ultimately how results are translated to inform decision making and resource allocation. Wilfred is a lifelong student, sees the world through systems, and is passionate about road running & reading. Selected to be an HIV Prevention Trials Network International Scholar, he is past President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Zimbabwe and recipient of the University of Western Cape Dean's Award for Academic Excellence.



Vivienne Naidoo

LEAD: COORDINATION COVID-19 PORTFOLIO

Vivienne provides coordination, partnership and contextual support to the Alliance's portfolio of COVID 19 interventions. She has an extensive background in communications, public relations and multimedia projects. She has successfully supported projects and programmes primarily focused on HIV prevention, maternal new-born health, prevention and management of STIs, promotion of sexual health, prevention and management of gender-based violence and human rights. With over 18 years' experience in both the public and private sector regionally and globally, Vivienne is a keen traveller and counts Mombasa, Joburg and Durban amongst her favourite African cities. One of Vivienne's proudest moments has been the conceptualisation and successful execution of Women NOW! 2016 – the first Pan African Women's Summit on Sexual and Reproductive Justice (SRJ) and HIV. The need for the Summit was inspired by a network of Black women and allies working across the HIV and SRHR response in Africa, Europe, and North America to consider the institutional and social drivers that destabilise Black women and girls' sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Vivienne led a team that mobilised a network of leading women across the HIV response that resulted in more than 200 delegates from eighteen countries coming together in Durban, South Africa with more than 100 scholarships awarded to young women who were actively engaged in the programme design and facilitation. Vivienne is excited about bringing this level of energy, insight and planning to the work of the Alliance. Vivienne is passionate about speaking truth to power no matter how difficult it is and working with integrity.



Pontsho Pilane

WORDSMITH / ACTIVIST / TEACHER

An award-winning journalist, Pontsho writes, amongst others, the Alliances monthly column in South Africa's largest daily newspaper, Daily Sun that takes complex scientific news to a critical mass of readers. She is a successful journalist, editor, media lecturer and trainer who has focused on the intersections of gender, health and class in post-apartheid South Africa. She brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in covering sexual and reproductive health, training other journalists on how to ethically and sensitively report on gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health as well as gender in general.

THE PROJECT

In March 2020, African Alliance in partnership with advocacy groups such as the Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group (VARG), and its media and civil society partners sought support and developed a proposal to:

1. Enhance South African online platforms for civil society to engage in COVID-19 research happening nationally.
2. Engage South African civil society and community-based organisations to:
 - a. Dialogue with leading scientists and researchers working on COVID-19 research.
 - b. Develop and release sector-wide advocacy statements on the impact of COVID-19 on the following sectors:
 - i. Children
 - ii. Elders
 - iii. Faith
 - iv. Health professionals
 - v. Law and human rights
 - vi. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Asexual +
 - vii. Mental health sector
 - viii. People Living with HIV and AIDS
 - ix. People with disabilities
 - x. Sex workers
 - xi. Traditional health practitioners
 - xii. Traditional leaders
 - xiii. Women
 - xiv. Detention
 - xv. Climate change and environmental justice
 - c. Serve as a conduit through which accurate, regular information can be disseminated through localised online platforms in all South African languages.
 - d. Ensure that all COVID-19 research in South Africa is carried out using an ethical, accountable, and community-led approach.
 - e. Carry out national COVID-19 engagements with communities who have received screening and testing services as well as gather surveillance data from individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.
 - f. Develop a capacity-building toolkit on COVID-19 (and its links with HIV, Tuberculosis (TB) and chronic diseases) for advocates.
3. In partnership with Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter (through existing partnerships and WHO-supported networks of which the African Alliance and the VARG comprise), aggressively respond to fake news about research being implemented as well as counter the resurgence of anti-vaccine, anti-science communications on social media and other platforms.

We remain concerned that South Africa – a country rife with concurrent epidemics of TB, HIV, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, as well as an epidemic of systemic inequality – continues to have a heightened risk of COVID-19. Despite implementing one of the world's strictest lockdowns, South Africa has become the hardest-hit country in Africa with the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and death toll.

However, in the last year, South Africa has been at the forefront of all aspects of COVID-19 research in Africa. To date, close to a dozen studies have been conducted in the country, including three Phase III vaccine trials.

In April 2021, the global research community was at a point of rapid research scale-up. Scientists were in a collaborative sprint to find treatments and cures for COVID-19 while also working on vaccine development. There was an urgent need for us, as advocates, to ensure that communities remained at the centre of any responses to the pandemic. We were then, as we are now, determined to provide timely, accurate and relevant information about these efforts to ensure accountability, ownership and sustainability of any proposed solutions.

It gives me great pleasure to support the African Alliance Covid-19 research and advocacy work, an activist led Non-Government Organisation.

The Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) has made the decision to partially fund the COVID-19 Research and Advocacy work of the African Alliance into 2021. The DSI is fully supportive of efforts to ensure that the science and innovation sector, respond rapidly to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gm Loots

Glaudina Loots
Director
Health Innovation



PROJECT CONTEXT

As a result of the many lessons learned during more than a decade of involvement in HIV-prevention and TB treatment trials, South African community advocates are particularly well placed to contribute to COVID-19 treatment research. The HIV pandemic taught us that health inequities must be anticipated, acknowledged, and addressed. In addition, vulnerable groups must be identified and provided with targeted interventions. What is true for HIV is also true for COVID-19. The current pandemic has impacted certain groups more than others. It is important to understand the nature of the pandemic at the community level and tailor interventions for the most vulnerable.

Another important lesson learnt from the HIV pandemic is that when effective new treatments and vaccines enter the market, they must be made available to vulnerable groups, no matter where they live. With responses to HIV it became tragically evident that market dynamics drove access to health technologies. Effective AIDS treatments took almost two decades to become widely available to populations in Africa, partly due to pricing restrictions and patent laws. COVID-19 faces a similar fate, since a small group of wealthy countries has already purchased more than half of the expected supply of leading vaccine candidates. This precedent must be overturned, and access to health care innovations must be prioritised for those most in need.

African Alliance's track record and experience working on HIV and TB programs, clinical trial literacy, and initiatives addressing misconceptions around science and research put us in a unique position to positively impact the response to COVID-19. In 2020, based on this track record, the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) committed R1.4-million to partially support a COVID-19 focused initiative facilitated by the African Alliance.

SAMRC was established in 1969 with a mandate to improve the health of the country's population through research, development, and technology transfer. The scope of SAMRC's research projects includes TB, HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular and non-communicable diseases, gender and health, and alcohol and other drug abuse.

With a strategic objective to help strengthen the health systems of the country, in line with that of the Department of Health, the SAMRC constantly identifies the main causes of death in South Africa.

The DSI seeks to boost socio-economic development in South Africa through research and innovation. To achieve its goals, the department provides leadership, an enabling environment and resources for science, technology, and innovation. Through its programmes (administration; technology innovation; international cooperation and resources; research, development and support; and socio-economic innovation partnerships) and several entities that work alongside it, the department is accomplishing ground-breaking science and enhancing the wellbeing of all South Africans.

A year into the intervention an additional grant – doubling the initial investment from the SAMRC and DSI – was received to continue the essential work of ensuring meaningful community involvement in the COVID-19 response.

The midterm additional top-up funds for the project allowed African Alliance to increase time coverage of key project staff, support, and community outreach. Part of these activities included but were not limited to:

1. Ongoing national advocacy on a range of COVID-19 vaccination promotion and research including continued civil society participation in the MAC.
2. Co-leadership of the development of the Government and Civil Society Communications Strategy to counter misinformation and anti-vaccination sentiment.
3. COVID-19 Conversations between leading researchers, donors, and civil society to strengthen accountability.
4. Completed Global Survey on Vaccine Hesitancy amongst Civil Society Leadership.

5. A series of BETA Chronicles which consist of policy and advocacy reports covering all key sectors of civil societies response to COVID-19
6. Podcasts with scientists, thought leaders and advocates about a variety of issues related to COVID-19.
7. Development of the African Alliance Strategic Plan of 2022-2025, which is aimed at assessing the organisational capacity to deliver against the strategy and operational objectives (to be completed in October 2021).
8. Engaging influencers to encourage the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccines and emphasising the importance of vaccination.

Globally, misinformation and anti-vaccination/anti-vaxxer sentiments have grown significantly since the onset of COVID-19. South Africa has seen a proliferation of misinformation and anti-vaxxer sentiment being spread rapidly on platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook.

On the 18 August 2021, the Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg (UJ) in collaboration with the Developmental, Ethical and Capable State research division of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) released findings about vaccine acceptance and hesitancy from the UJ-HSRC COVID-19 Democracy Survey.

The key findings of the study stated that:

- Vaccine acceptance increased between round 3 of the survey and round 4 from 67% to 72%. Younger people are less likely to be accepting of vaccines than older people. While the acceptance rate for those aged 55+ stood at 85%, an increase of 11% since Round 3, the 18-24 group only stood at 55%, a decline of 8%.

- Vaccine acceptance declined amongst White adults from 56% to 52%, while it increased from 69% to 75% for Black African adults. However, White adults were more likely than Black Africans to have been vaccinated (16% compared to 10%).
- Contrary to other research, religiosity plays little role in influencing the willingness to vaccinate.
- Amongst those that are accepting of a vaccine, the most common explanations are the desire to protect oneself.
- Amongst those that are hesitant, side effects and concerns that the vaccine will be ineffective are the most common self-reported explanations. Concerns about side-effects and effectiveness of the vaccine are particularly pronounced amongst White adults, the most vaccine hesitant group.
- Explanations for vaccine hesitancy related to social media or other rumours only make up a small proportion of explanations at 5%. Similarly, reasons related to religious objections or conspiracy theories make up a minority of explanations at 2% respectively.

There is an urgent need to institute and fund a multi-sectoral communications strategy to support the work of government and civil society to ensure that the investment made into COVID-19 related scientific research and vaccine roll-out is protected through the provision of scientifically sound, evidence-based communications and a critical mass of community support. While misinformation and anti-vaxxer sentiment is spread mainly on online platforms, traditional media (print, community radio etc.) are also critical platforms for engagement, as is ensuring that government communications staff are urgently capacitated to manage misinformation and anti-vaxxer sentiment on existing platforms.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Partnership and collaboration with the SAMRC and DSI have allowed for mass communication initiatives and provided valuable lessons to African Alliance. Over the last 18 months the project has held 26 national engagements with communities, scientists, and researchers, published a range of regional and local opinion pieces in mainstream media, presented on several panels about vaccine access and uptake, partnered with SAMRC and DSI on several special engagements and began building partnerships with global and national research agencies.

We have managed to engage influencers whose follower count ranges from 35 000 – 146 000 to help motivate South Africans to get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible. These influencers spread messaging regarding the importance of being vaccinated.

Using existing legal frameworks to identify and take legal action against those who willingly and maliciously spread misinformation (an offence within current law) is vital to our work. We feel this is essential to publicly demonstrate that there are consequences to spreading misinformation and anti-vaxxer statements/claims. In addition, we believe that this additional capacity will allow us to see these cases through to completion and strengthen our relationships with law enforcement agencies; ensuring that provisions around misinformation are respected and upheld.

HOLDING THE POWERFUL TO ACCOUNT



African Alliance demand Chief Justice Mogoeng held accountable for '666' vaccine prayer

Part of this work begun late in 2020 with the drafting of a founding affidavit submitted as a complaint to the Judicial Services Commission against South Africa's Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng. Mogoeng consciously and wilfully contributed to the rise in vaccine hesitancy by making unfounded allegations regarding vaccine safety, stating:

"If there is a vaccine with 666, I want God to destroy it. If there is any vaccine meant to corrupt the DNA of people, I'm asking God to interrupt it [...] You can't impose a vaccine on people. Why should you? Why should I have a vaccine in my system if I'm not positive?"



Such statements made by one of South Africa's most powerful public servants materially impact the potential success of a COVID-19 vaccine roll-out in South Africa and the region, jeopardising millions of Rands being invested in the fight against COVID-19. Our complaint with the Judicial Conduct Committee has been accepted and is under review.

The SAMRC, AA and the DSI submitted a communications strategy for consideration by South Africa's Solidarity Fund. This fund was designed as a rapid response vehicle to mobilise South Africa in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. On request from the fund, the strategy sought to address misinformation, strengthen our ability to engage with high profile social media figures at our discretion, and to support government and sector messaging around research and scientific principles. Communications remains one of the biggest failings of the pandemic and it is critical that work such as this moves ahead.

The intention of the strategy is to ensure that all stakeholders have clear guidelines within which to communicate scientifically sound, evidence-based messages to the public. The strategy is a joint effort by government agencies and civil society. It remains essential to understand what the extent of anti-vaccination and hesitancy sentiment is in the country, and what the main causes of these thoughts and behaviours are from a local perspective. To date this strategy remains unfunded.



EYEWITNESS NEWS

LATEST LOCAL ELECTIONS CORONAVIRUS POLITICS OPINION BUSINESS LIFESTYLE SPORT VIDEO PODCASTS

HEALTH GROUP LODGES COMPLAINT OVER MOGOENG'S COVID-19 VACCINE UTTERANCES

While leading a prayer at the Tembisa Hospital last year, the chief justice asked God to destroy any vaccine containing what he called "666" - numbers Christians believe to be the mark of the devil.

ON AIR

Latest bulletin

GAUTENG

SOUTH AFRICA

Formal complaint lodged against chief justice for his 'devil vaccines' prayer

This follows utterances Mogoeng Mogoeng made regarding vaccines while delivering a public prayer at Tembisa Hospital in December

Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng. File Picture

Covid-19: Charges against Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng over 'devil 666' anti-vaccine stance

JSC refers Mogoeng's 'devil' vaccine prayer remarks to judicial conduct committee

news24 Ntwaagae Seleka

SHARE



* ANNEXURE - AA Chief Justice Complaint Affidavit

ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

The project spanned multiple media genres and initiatives, of which the COVID-19 Conversation series forms part of. COVID-19 Conversations comprise of the webinar series, the podcast series, the Beta Chronicles and Daily Sun columns.

COVID-19 Conversations Webinar Series

African Alliance hosted a weekly webinar series where civil society, community-based organisations and partners were kept up-to-date on the latest COVID-19 research. The webinar series sought to strengthen the culture of accountability between researchers and civil society, which then contributes to shared learning and unlearning in the research sector as it relates to COVID-19. The following webinars have taken place under the COVID-19 Conversations banner.

- **Episode 1 (16 July 2020): Professor Shabir Madhi, Principal Investigator, South African Oxford Trial (Ox1CoV-19 vaccine VIDA-trial)**

In this presentation Professor Madhi explained that South African communities and researchers must be involved in the early stages of vaccine trials in order to generate data applicable to the local context. All evidence in South Africa and around the world points to the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic will not disappear with the change of season or at the end of 2020. Therefore, a safe and effective vaccine is our best hope for returning to something resembling a normal life. Professor Madhi also spoke about his work leading the first COVID-19 vaccine trials in South Africa.

- **Episode 2 (23 July 2020): Professor Glenda Gray, President and chief executive of SAMRC**

Professor Gray provided an overview of the SAMRC's mandate as well as challenges and highlights for the council's work since the advent of COVID-19. Professor Gray also spoke about the rapidly evolving landscape, controversy and mixed messaging around COVID-19 transmission risk prevention and mortality.

- **Episode 3 (23 July 2020): Dr Jackline Odhiambo & Kagisho Baepanye, HVTN/CoVPN Africa Programme**

Dr Odhiambo and Baenyape gave a detailed overview of the two clinical studies to be conducted in South Africa. These studies included the HVTN 405/HPTN 1901 and CoVPN 5001 studies.

The HVTN 405 / HPTN 1901 study will enrol adults who had a positive test for SARS-CoV-2. It can include people who developed Covid-19 illness and people who did not show any symptoms. This study's primary purpose is to learn more about SARS-CoV-2 infection and how our bodies respond to and recover from it.

The CoVPN 5001 study will enrol adults who have had a positive test for SARS-CoV-2, those who do not show any symptoms, those showing mild symptoms, and those showing severe symptoms. This study's primary purpose is to learn more about the immune system during early infection with the virus. The study will help us understand how the body fights COVID-19 infection, and this information could be used to evaluate whether future COVID-19 vaccines candidates work.

- **Episode 4 (24 July 2020): Professor Larry Corey, HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN) & Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center**

This COVID-19 Conversation webinar was facilitated by Dr Samukeliso Dube, general manager of AfroCentric Group. Professor Corey shared his lifetime work at the HVTN, and provided valuable insights into the private sector, civil society, and community advocates and how these stakeholders can contribute to the collective in advancing the global COVID-19 response. He also discussed what HIV research can teach this new network, and what lessons need to be unlearned.

- **Episode 5 (30 July 2020): Professor Linda Gail Bekker, Chief Operating Officer of the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation**

Professor Bekker shared the foundation's ongoing work and what motivated the organisation's name change. She also explained how COVID-19 has influenced their work, and shared forthcoming COVID-19 research plans with the foundation during the webinar.

- **Episode 6 (6 August 2020): Professor Jeremy Nel, Co-principal Investigator, South African Solidarity trial**

Professor Nel introduced civil society advocates to the Solidarity trial, an international clinical trial, launched by WHO and its partners, which seeks to find effective treatment for COVID-19. The trial compares various drug options against the standard of care to assess the relative effectiveness against COVID-19 in patients from multiple countries. The Solidarity trial aims to rapidly discover whether any of the drugs being tested slow disease progression or improve survival.

- **Episode 7 (13 August 2020): Professor Jeffrey Mphahlele, SAMRC**

Professor Mphahlele gave an overview of his work at the council both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also shared some of the lessons he learned through the pandemic, as well as upcoming strategic developments from the SAMRC.

- **Episode 8 (20 August 2020): Professor Koleka Mlisana, National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS)**

Professor Mlisana provided an overview of the national laboratory services, its COVID-19 testing strategy and laboratory response to the pandemic.

- **Episode 9 (3 September 2020): Professor Sinead Delany-Moretlwe, Reproductive Health & HIV Institute (WITS RHI)**

Professor Delany unpacked some of the work that she is undertaking in the COVID-19 space and spoke generally about how COVID research has evolved and changed rapidly. She also provided an update on the Crown Coronation trial, community engagement, and the need to engage trade unions in critical research that affects and impacts the wellbeing of health care workers.



- **Episode 10 (10 September 2020): Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Associate, Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA)**

Professor Abdool Karim discussed CAPRISA's current research portfolio, how COVID-19 has impacted the centre's work, what advocates should be prioritising, as well as how to build solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Episode 11 (17 September 2020): Dr Zameer Brey & Dr Solomon Zewdu, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

Dr Brey and Dr Zewdu shared an overview of the Foundation's work – especially as it pertains to supporting the global, regional and South African response to COVID-19.

- **Episode 12 (1 October 2020): Mabalane Mfundisi, Community Constituency COVID-19 Front**

Mfundisi spoke about how the Community Constituency COVID-19 Front came into being, what inspired its establishment and its methodology. Mfundisi also spoke about what the organisation has accomplished thus far, who their partners are and what critical lessons the Community Constituency COVID-19 Front learnt in ensuring that no community is left behind in the COVID-19 response.

- **Episode 13 (8 October 2020): Ntando Yola, VARG & APHA**

Yola spoke about vaccine development and research and how national and global guidelines lead the process. Yola also highlighted that stakeholders and communities should be engaged in these COVID-19 research processes.

- **Episode 14 (22 October 2020): Sibongile Tshabalala, Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)**

Tshabalala spoke about the work of the TAC, its current partnerships and the evolution that was needed to meet the demands of communities upon the arrival of COVID-19. She also spoke about the personal protective equipment challenges the country is facing and the increased risks that people living with HIV and TB are experiencing during the pandemic.

- **Episode 15 (29 October 2020): Simba Takuva, Azwi Takalani, Kagisho Baenyape, HIV Prevention Trials network /CoVPN**

The HVTN/CoVPN team spoke about trial safety, product regulation in the various phases of trials, how adverse events are communicated and their potential impact on trial participation. The team also explained how the data safety monitoring boards work and how all of these moving pieces come together to shape COVID-19 research.

- **Episode 16 (5 November 2020): 1. F a t i m a Hassan, Founder of Health Justice Initiative (HJI)**

Hassan provided an overview of her work and critical access issues impacting COVID-19. Hassan highlighted the urgent need for research, pharma, and science to be held to account. She described how a lack of accountability and access have created the perfect storm for increased opportunities to manipulate power and profit from the pandemic – with these actions having a direct impact on communities. Hassan also questioned whether a COVID-19 vaccine will be within reach of those who need it most.

- **Episode 17 (12 November 2020): Solly Malatsi, National spokesperson for the Democratic Alliance (DA)**

African Alliance planned a four-part series that was to include four different political parties, invited to share their responses in their constituencies since the advent of COVID-19. Malatsi was the only representative from the four political parties who spoke to us about how the DA responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Episode 18 (10 December 2020): Vanita Daniels, Director at Rise Up Against Gender-Based Violence**

Daniels gave an overview and the position of Rise Up in support of the National Strategic Plan for gender-based violence. She also raised the importance of engaging with boys and men in relation to dismantling the issue of patriarchy by incorporating such issues into the educational system.

- **Episode 19 (14 January 2021): Phinah Kodisang, CEO of the Soul City Institute for Social Justice**

Soul City is a social justice organisation founded on intersectional feminist principles whose work is mainly focused on supporting women and girls to challenge patriarchy. Kodisang spoke about Soul City's rebranding with different programmes focusing on re-engineering health and educating the public about policies in place, such as those about children's rights.

- **Episode 20 (21 January 2021): Dr Anban Pillay the Deputy Director-General of South Africa's National Department of Health**

Dr Pillay spoke of the importance of vaccines in curbing COVID-19 and how they need to be used together with other interventions such as wearing of masks, sanitising hands and social distancing. Dr Pillay explained some of the security features and technology aspects of South Africa's vaccine roll-out strategy, such as messaging individuals on the correct date to ensure their second vaccine dose is taken.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



- **Episode 21 (28 January 2021):** Oliver Meth, Communications Lead, South African National AIDS Council Civil Society Forum and the Community Constituency COVID-19 Front

Meth gave an overview of the support that the Civil Society Forum together with the Community Constituency Front gets from government or private entities. He also shared his concerns about the phase one vaccine roll-out that was scheduled to start in February in South Africa. Meth's concerns were mainly centred around issues of accountability, transparency and engagement with various stakeholders in relation to the roll-out strategy.

- **Episode 22 (4 February 2021):** Dr Gonasagrie (Lulu) Nair, Clinical Research Site (CRS) Leader and Senior Medical Officer for the Desmond Tutu HIV Centres Emavundleni research site and Dr Katherine Gill, CRS Leader and Senior Medical Officer for the Masiphumelele CRS

Dr Nair gave an overview of their work on the Ensemble Trial and her reflections on community engagement – from protocol development to presenting results to people. She also highlighted that COVID-19 presented challenges to traditional recruitment models for studies. Engagement with participants and recruitment was undertaken over WhatsApp, as opposed to traditional face-to-face models.

- **Episode 23 (11 February 2021):** Professor Graeme Meintjes, Infectious Diseases Physician and the Second Chair and Deputy Head of the Department of Medicine at the University of Cape Town and Dr Amy Ward, Site Director of the UCT Khayelitsha Clinical Research Site (CRS)

Professor Graeme spoke of how the 2nd-generation hAd5 is designed for therapeutic cancer vaccines repurposed for use in SARS-CoV-2 & trialled in South Africa. He also explained what the issues of access, availability & using hAd5 vectors is in the context of HIV research. Dr Amy Ward spoke of the ProVIVA-SA-1 study that is being conducted in South Africa and sponsored by the ImmunityBio INC. The study is a Phase 1b trial which is looking at early phase end points mainly safety including immunogenicity.

- **Episode 24 (18 February 2021):** Safura Abdool Karim, Public Health Lawyer and Senior Researcher at the Wits School of Public Health

Abdool Karim spoke about COVID-19 vaccines, the search for equity in an unequal world, and how vaccine inequality is historical. She highlighted that poorer countries struggling to access a vaccine has happened in the past; it is not specific to COVID-19 vaccines. She also explained how we can learn lessons from our mistakes in the past and explore better procurement and production methods as we advance. The attention paid to a COVID-19 vaccine is an opportunity to fix what is essentially a broken system, and to address systemic historical issues to make vaccine access equitable – not just for COVID-19 but for all health issues globally.

- **Episode 25 (25 February 2021):** Rosemary W. Mburu, Executive Director for WACI Health

Mburu spoke about how COVID-19 has emphasised the need for governments to figure out how to invest in domestic resources. Mburu is of the view that civil society needs to have conversations with governments about how to develop and diversify their fiscal space. She mentioned that one of the most significant avenues through which our governments can raise additional resources and expand the revenue base is by strengthening taxation systems – how tax is collected, allocated, generated and accounted for.

- **Episode 26 (6 April 2021):** Solly Nduku, Traditional Health Practitioners (THP) sector leader and Deputy Chairperson for the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) Civil Society Forum

Nduku gave an overview of how the traditional health sector contributes to curbing COVID-19 and ensuring that community voices are, at every opportunity, centred and amplified. Nduku gave a detailed summary of the five types of traditional health practitioners and their role within their communities in relation to COVID-19, and offered an opinion on what bodies like the SAMRC, the DSI and the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) can do to strengthen their relationships with the traditional health practitioner sector.

COVID-19 Conversations were designed to ensure that civil society is kept up to date with the latest COVID-19 vaccine research. The 26 conversations provided African Alliance with an opportunity to capture historic moments in the pandemic and laid the groundwork for in-depth engagement with key figures in the health sector. The webinar series is currently on pause to allow space to reflect on the past 18 months of expertise and information gathered. This has enabled us to regroup and think of other useful strategies that can be employed to attract a bigger audience and remain relevant in an ever-changing COVID-19 world.

COVID19 Conversations seek to ensure that civil society is kept up to date on the latest COVID-19 Research, strengthen the culture of accountability between researchers and civil society and contribute to shared learning and unlearning in the research sector as it relates to COVID-19.





**COVID 19
CONVERSATIONS**

COVID-19 CONVERSATIONS – THE PODCAST SERIES

The podcast series builds on the webinar discussions seeks to provide a platform for South African and international researchers, advocates, and thought leaders to engage in insightful conversations about COVID-19, science, and a wide range of related issues of interest to a diverse audience. The podcast aims to ask good questions, provide accurate information, make connections between different regions of the world – highlighting how interconnected we are in terms of our challenges and solutions.

- **Episode 1 (5 October 2020): Ethics in Public Health Emergencies – Focus on COVID-19**

This episode looks at the role of ethics in COVID-19 research and how that influences communities wherein research is taking place, and the responsibilities of scientists and researchers while conducting clinical trials across the globe. Featuring Dr Samuel Ujewe (Canadian Institute for Genomics and Society in Ontario, Canada) and Professor Morenike Ukpong (Obafemi Awolowo University in Ife, Nigeria).

- **Episode 2 (9 November 2020): South Africa Launches new COVID-19 Vaccine Trial**

This podcast was a conversation on the ENSEMBLE (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine trial, featuring Professor Linda-Gail Bekker, Chief Research Officer of the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation (Cape Town, South Africa) and Co-Chair of the South African arm of ENSEMBLE.

- **Episode 3 (14 December 2020): Volunteering to be a part of history – Meet three COVID-19 vaccine trial participants**

A discussion on participating in a COVID-19 vaccine trial featuring two volunteers in South Africa and one in the United States: Mx. Luckyboy Edison Mkhondwane (Treatment Action Campaign Prevention and Treatment Literacy Training Coordinator), Professor Francois Venter (Divisional Head of Ezintsha at the University of the Witwatersrand), and Dr Brett Kissela (Professor and Chair of the Department of Neurology and Rehabilitation Medicine, Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Research at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, and Chief of Research Services for UC Health).

- **Episode 4 (2 February 2021): Vaccine advocates welcome interim results of ENSEMBLE COVID-19 Vaccine Trial**

In this episode Professor Linda-Gail Bekker unpacks some of the numbers from the ENSEMBLE Phase III COVID-19 trial and talks about what makes this COVID-19 vaccine different from the others that have shown efficacy in the last few months. Critical questions of vaccine hesitancy, vaccine access, and the challenging work ahead are also discussed.

- **Episode 5 (14 February): Loss & Love in the Pandemic**

In this Valentine's Day episode, the organisation spoke to two COVID-19 survivors about grief, guilt, and intimacy during the pandemic. Paida Gurupira is a healthcare worker based in Harare, and her husband Wilfred Gurupira is African Alliance's Research Lead. The Gurupiras' spoke about their experiences with COVID-19 in Zimbabwe – both in terms of how the pandemic has affected the country and their lives on a personal level. They are COVID-19 survivors in every sense. They have lost family members, friends and colleagues to the pandemic, but were also recently infected with the virus themselves.

- **Episode 6 (27 February 2021): Fighting the War Against Vaccine Hesitancy (With Compassion, Humility & Facts)**

In this episode philosopher Dr Lee McIntyre explained how science denialism has a long history, and what research has shown to decrease hesitancy and boost vaccine confidence. Dr McIntyre is a Research Fellow at the Center for Philosophy and History of Science at Boston University, an Instructor in Ethics at Harvard Extension School, and the author of many books.



- **Episode 7: “Not your typical scientist”: Remembering Professor Gita Ramjee**

On 11 March, one year passed since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the WHO. This episode reflects on the life of Professor Gita Ramjee – one of the first in South Africa to succumb to the virus. The excellence of Professor Ramjee’s work and the extent of her impact on the global HIV prevention research field are well known. However, this episode does not only focus on Professor Ramjee’s professional accomplishments but instead getting to know the person she was: Gita the mischievous friend, dedicated spouse, caring manager, proud parent, doting sister, great cook, adoring grandmother, style icon, and lover of good wine.

- **Episode 8 (20 July 2021): What’s poo got to do with it?**

In this episode of the COVID-19 Conversations podcast, African Alliance, in partnership with VARG, speak to two scientists at the South African Medical Research Council’s Environment & Health Research Unit responsible for the exciting and innovative wastewater Surveillance and Research Programme. Professor Angela Mathee (Director) and Sizwe Nkambule (Senior Scientist) are part of the daring team of researchers who are predicting the next wave of COVID-19 through...poo! They explain what our sewage can tell us, and share their entire process of from sample collection to analysis and reporting.

- **Episode 9: Getting On the Table**

Dr Ayoade Olatunbosun-Alakija is the co-chair of the African Union’s African Vaccine Delivery Alliance. In this episode, she talks about her role as public health leader, and the unique perspective she holds as a woman in a male dominated field – in what is still an overwhelmingly patriarchal continent. She gives the audience her take on what inspiring African leadership would really look like and how she maintains her determination and energy in the face of daunting challenges.

- **Episode 10: HIV: The Pandemic that Never Went Away**

In this episode Ethel Makila, Associate Director Advocacy, Policy, and Communications at the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative shares her work on HIV vaccine research and development. Makila talks through the lessons she learned from the COVID-19 response as she continues to work towards finding a safe, effective, and accessible vaccine against HIV. Conversations are also had about what it will take to refocus the commitment of the global public health community on the target of ending AIDS as a public health threat, even as society grapples with a new pandemic that has consumed attention and resources.

- **Episode 11: Whose Lives Truly Matter?**

Long before Lois Chingandu took on the role of the Director of Evidence and Influence at Frontline AIDS, she was an activist and advocate fighting for Africa’s access to ARVs. Now, decades later, she finds herself fighting for Africa’s access to COVID-19 vaccines. In this episode, Chingandu speak about her heartbreak at watching history repeat itself and her rage at the feeling that – once again – rich countries are indifferent to the lives of people in poor countries. She explains about how the fight for ARVs that can be applied today, and how she maintains her energy and hope in the face of devastation.

- **Episode 12: Glenda**

Professor Glenda Gray is President & CEO of the South African Medical Research Council. In this final episode of the COVID-19 Conversations Podcast, Professor Gray gives her thoughts, as the person who (in collaboration with the Department of Science and Innovation), took the decision to fund the African Alliance’s first COVID-19 project, including this podcast. Conversations are had about the accountability of researchers to communities, key milestones from the “pandemic era,” and what she would have done differently if anything. She reflects on her history of fighting for ARVs and looks forward to what she foresees the next big health challenge will be.



Active and informed citizen engagement in issues relating to their health and well-being is critical. The African Alliance's role and leadership in this regard is critical and exemplary. The Alliance's consistent, constant and unrelenting striving for a world where communities are actively engaged in research and programming that directly impacts their lives and are also meaningfully involved in ensuring that the investments and advances in health research reach the intended beneficiaries. I have been privileged to witness first-hand the growth of the success of their efforts in HIV prevention and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, and how nimbly they have been able to adapt to take on the new challenges posed by COVID-19.

They are now well positioned to advance the health and social rights of communities across the continent ensuring that a range and diversity of critical voices are present and heard in historically inaccessible spaces through strategic partnerships with a unity of purpose such as that with the African Union as part of the COVID-19 African Vaccine Delivery Alliance; or through other critical national, regional and global bodies.

Quarraisha Abdool Karim PhD
Associate Scientific Director:
 CAPRISA
Professor in Clinical Epidemiology:
 Columbia University
Pro Vice-Chancellor (African Health):
 University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNAIDS Special Ambassador:
 Adolescents and HIV



I have seen how partnerships between activists and scientists are key to advancing effective evidence-based policy and programming that reach the intended beneficiaries. This is clearest in the HIV space which is why I have always been a strong proponent and supporter of such efforts including that of the African Alliance and why their role must be expanded. Despite limited resources, the African Alliance has commendably responded to the dynamic and evolving nature of community engagement and partnerships with impressive agility including holding key stakeholders accountable.

Thanks to the continued efforts of the African Alliance and their partners, communities and voices from all corners of the continent are starting to take centre stage and is no longer an after-thought. Now is the time, in the face of growing nationalism, to ensure that these voices and efforts are strengthened so that we have solidarity in ensuring that the diversity of African voices are heard loudly and clearly and that Africans who contribute to knowledge generation particularly for global public good also benefit equally from such advances.



COVID-19 CONVERSATIONS DAILY SUN

This part of COVID-19 Conversations saw African Alliance partner with South Africa's most-read newspaper on a regular column that provides Daily Sun readers with the latest clinical developments around COVID-19 written in accessible language.

1. Introduction to Vaccine Research (30 September 2020)
2. All about South Africa's first vaccine clinical trial (20 November 2020)
3. The South African Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine Trial (20 November 2020)
4. AstraZeneca Vaccine Delay: What does this mean for Mzansi (17 February 2021)
5. Plan B for vaccine roll-out (17 February 2021)
6. A few ways Mzansi can get vaccines (February 2021)
7. Emergency buying of vaccines work - ins and outs (25 March 2021)
8. How a vaccine is registered (25 March 2021)
9. Ma2000s can now get their COVID jab! (19 August 2021)
10. Teacher gets the jab after being too scared! (October 2021)
11. Soweto gogo is looking forward to being fully vaccinated! (October 2021)
12. 'Get the jab!' says Thembisa gogo (October 2021)



DAILY SUN

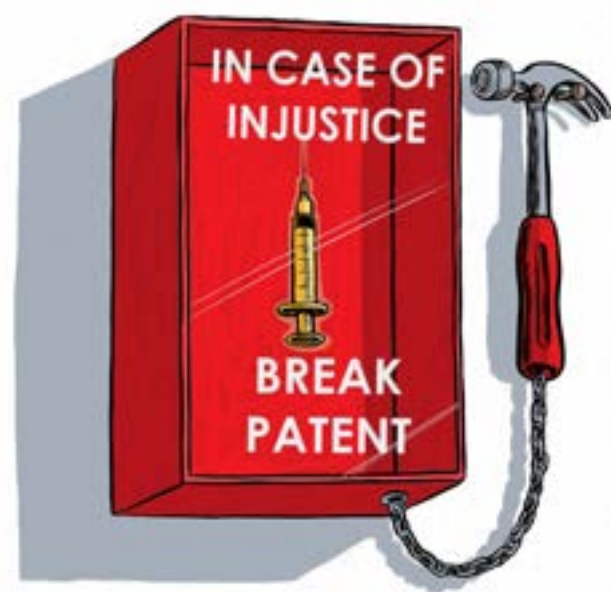
ADVOCACY

COVID-19 Conversations, The BETA Chronicles

During the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic and the inception of this project, African Alliance proposed the development of a series of fact sheets that would be compiled into a flexible community-advocacy targeted toolkit. The sectors covered are:

1. Children
2. Elders
3. Faith
4. Health professionals
5. Law and human rights
6. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Asexual +
7. Mental health sector
8. People Living with HIV and AIDS
9. People with disabilities
10. Sex workers
11. Traditional health practitioners
12. Traditional leaders
13. Women
14. Detention
15. Climate change and environmental justice

As the project has progressed, our commitment to the importance of these specific topics remains strong. However, through the work we conducted with our collaborators and partners in the last 18 months, the rapid developments in the COVID-19 research field, as well as our assessment of what is already available in the COVID-19 advocacy space led us to reimagine these tools. Rather than fact sheets, we are proposing a series of position papers. This compendium, serves as status, progress and advocacy narratives, providing high-level analysis and commentary on the various issues related to COVID-19 that are important to South Africa. The Beta Chronicles are produced in collaboration with relevant and issue-expert collaborators and include: a description of the issues, responses of the state and of civil society to the issue and related challenges over the last year, important upcoming advocacy moments related to the issue, and key advocacy asks and policy proposals.



Realising the strategic importance of these sector summaries, the Norwegian Peoples AID supported the development of a special edition of the BETA Chronicle documenting the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa and the region.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

As the need arises, or in conjunction with another activity or key moment, the project has developed and continue to develop and distribute FAQs , published on the African Alliance website.

- **Seven things you need to know about South Africa's latest COVID-19 Vaccine trial (November 2020)**

South Africa recently launched its third COVID-19 vaccine trial in the country, called the ENSEMBLE study. The clinical trial is conducted by the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation, the South African Medical Research Council, and pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson. African Alliance is working for accountable, transparent, and community-owned vaccine research. Here, we answer some of the most frequently asked questions about South Africa's latest COVID-19 vaccine trial.

Question and answers (Q&A)

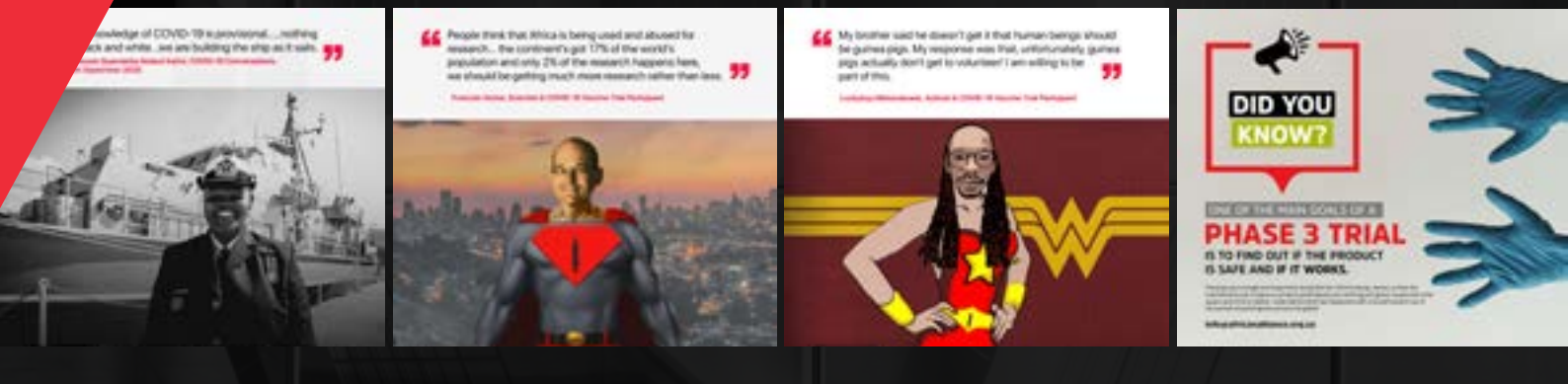
As the need arises, or in conjunction with another activity or key moment, the project has developed and will continue to develop and distribute Q&As published on the African Alliance website.

- **Linda-Gail Bekker on South Africa's latest COVID-19 Vaccine trial - "Equitable COVID-19 vaccine access cannot be put on hold" (November 2020)**

South Africa has just launched its latest COVID-19 vaccine trial, but what will it mean for communities and the country? The African Alliance's Maaza Seyoum, sat down with CEO of the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation and one of the study's lead researchers Linda-Gail Bekker to talk about the trial.

- **Wendy Tlou on The Solidarity Fund: Solidarity fund's approach and response to gender-based violence during COVID-19 (July 2020)**

Following several months of appeals for transparency and accountability, in July of 2020, civil society had a discussion with Wendy Tlou, the Head of Communications for the Solidarity Fund. The Solidarity Fund allows South Africans to support the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic with collective donations. The fund is independently audited and aims to help with supporting measures to flatten the curve and lower infection rates, detect and understand the pandemic care for those in medical need and support those whose lives have been disrupted by the pandemic.



INFOGRAPHICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

In order to make certain key concepts and themes more accessible to a wider audience on social media, the project has developed a series of infographics and illustrations. The development and distribution of these images will continue throughout the duration of the project. These currently include:

1. Understanding trial pauses – CHADOX1 NCOV-19 Trial
2. COVID-19 Conversation podcast guest: Mx. Luckyboy Edison Mkhondwane
3. COVID-19 Conversation podcast guest: Professor Francois Venter

4. Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim on COVID-19 Research
5. Commemorating sex worker pride day
6. Johnson and Johnson Vax Facts
7. Remembering Professor Gita Ramjee
8. Support the Trips Waiver
9. Vaccine Rollout

ENSURING ETHICAL, ACCOUNTABLE, AND COMMUNITY-LED APPROACH

The African Alliance, through its network of collaborators and partners, makes a concrete effort to remain informed about cases of research being conducted in ways that do not adhere to ethical guidelines or act without a community-led approach. When a case of research being conducted in a way that does not meet these standards comes to our attention, we take steps to alert the relevant authorities and ensure that the communities we represent and serve are treated with respect and protected from harm. Below is one such example.

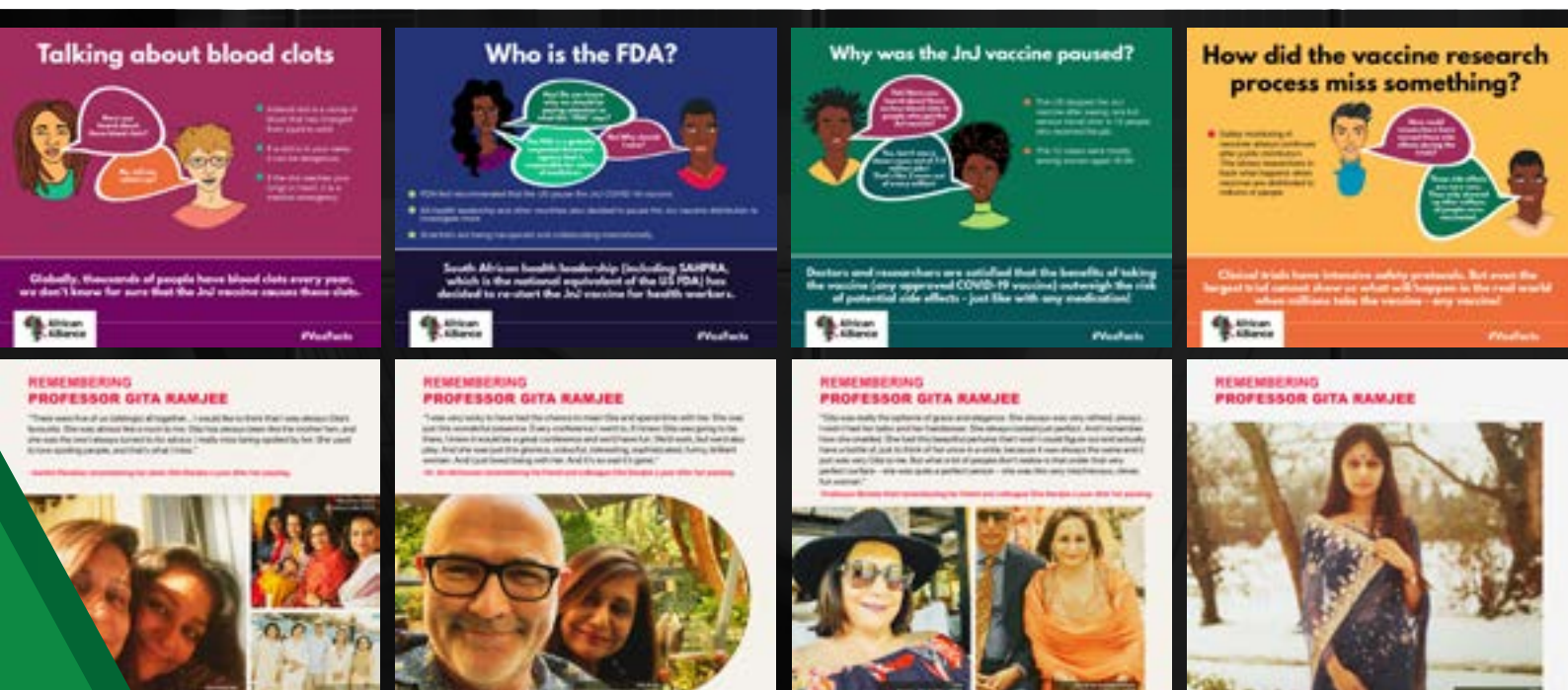
CASE STUDY

In 2020, a small adaptive Phase II, blinded, randomised controlled trial commenced in Cape Town, South Africa to evaluate whether the bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine used to help prevent active TB in children could mitigate COVID-19 symptoms in hospital workers. The study stated an intended sample of at least 500 workers, including both hospital clinical and support staff. The study's primary endpoint was to compare the incidence of hospitalisation among workers due to COVID-19. In an April 2020 version of its protocol, under the subheading "Community Engagement and Civil Society," a single sentence appeared: "The study team has a track record of working closely with local CABs and members from civil society through ongoing research in tuberculosis-related clinical trials."

Despite this, the trial did not include the use of any CAB and instead, the majority if not all community engagement that was made public knowledge relied on the efforts of a single TB-focused civil society organisation. The organisation was the only civil society representative to provide comments on the trial's protocol and made valuable contributions such as advocating for the removal of stigmatising language in study materials as well as the translation of materials from English into local languages. Still, many civil society organisations, including leadership from the national AIDS council and local healthcare

worker unions who would have represented many trial participants, thought that the inclusion of a single civil society organisation was not tantamount to broad consultation. Moreover, although the single TB organisation made use of numerous existing WhatsApp groups and social media channels to distribute information on the trial, it is arguable whether the health workers, activists and policymakers across the country in said WhatsApp groups truly or entirely represented stakeholders from that trial's community. This was especially concerning given what seemed to be a lack of more focused consultations done with unions, hospital workers or boards, or workers' physical home communities. When broader civil society was made aware of the trial, at least seven groups also questioned the trial's minimum standard of care, which did not include providing personal protective gear to those public sector hospital staff during South Africa's COVID-19 outbreak despite national shortages of the equipment.

Thus, although researchers who were part of Cape Town COVID-19 trial argued that community engagement had been done via the networks of a single civil society organisation, advocates contested whether this was sufficient consultation, namely producing a truly bi-directional flow of information between communities and researchers as envisioned in many international documents and guidelines.



Furthermore, it was also debated whether this consultation had, in fact, reached diverse stakeholders both in demographics and geography to have sufficiently represented the community of public sector hospital workers in Cape Town. African Alliance conducted a series of interventions with the leadership of this trial and ultimately wrote to the Minister of Health requesting urgent intervention.

A year later after the commencement of the TASK BOG revaccination trial in health care workers, African Alliance generated a report that provides an update of the trial, its evolution and current status. The report comprises of literature review of media and internal coverage of the trial, stakeholder and trial participants interviews to get a better understanding of what has transpired during the course of the year since the first enrolment in 2020.

A paper in this regard has been submitted to the African Scientist Journal and the Alliance is currently working on the first batch of major revisions received from the journal. A summary is as follows:

Community engagement in COVID-19 trials: An African perspective

The emergence of COVID-19 has necessitated an unprecedented response by the international scientific community to find effective treatment and vaccines for the novel pathogen urgently. Although standard clinical trial timeframes for products have been expedited, international organisations such as the World Health Organization and some local regulators have reaffirmed the importance of meaningful community engagement within COVID-19 clinical trials. However, little to date has been published on the realities of community engagement in COVID-19 clinical trials. In this article, we describe experiences with COVID-19 research in South Africa broadly. We argue that the contested meaning of the term “community” within clinical research can pose a challenge in implementing and tracking community engagement within clinical trials. Moreover, national guidance in South Africa particularly may merely recommend that community engagement plans be submitted to ethics review committees as part of applications. This paper suggests that countries move to include a minimum standard of expected community engagement within clinical trial guidelines as well as regulatory requirements and advocates for the continued capacitation of community representatives to meaningfully engage with researchers.



ENGAGING INFLUENCERS

African Alliance's strategy sought to amplify the traditional work of civil society to consistently counter anti-research and anti-science messaging by paying special attention to traditionally hard to reach marginalised and vulnerable groups. This work includes preparing evidence-based and continuously updated information for the “next phase” of the pandemic.

Researchers have found that a fundamental antidote to misinformation is openness built through transparency and trust-building. Accountability, especially as it relates to research happening at the community level, has been a historical challenge and advocates continue to work with research partners to slowly bend the curve and open up traditionally privileged and exclusionary spaces.

Our initial proposal sought to engage social media influencers to produce strategic pro-science, pro-community messages for the platforms they have influence over. The influencers were selected not only for the amount of followers they have but for the level of engagement and news value they produce. Each influencer was to be provided with an approved script that they would then put into their own words, subject to approval by the project's leadership. This content would then be filmed or posted online at home by the influencer and shared directly on their platforms. These posts would then be promoted and tracked for impact.

As the project progressed, it became clear that influencers who were willing to engage with us on a pro bono or heavily reduced cost price basis returned to their commercial rates as the stages of lockdown eased.



Lebo Mashile

When the Sisonke trial expanded its definition of health care workers the Alliance took one of South Africa's leading spoken word artists and communications advisor, Lebogang Mashile, as a key member of our team to be vaccinated. Lebogang has a huge following of 155.5k on Twitter. Media coverage was anticipated due to the timing of this intervention and before Mashile had even departed the vaccination site two media outlets were leading with headline stories covering her vaccination – and of course questioning how she was able to access the vaccine. The Alliance took advantage of this spotlight to curate a twitter thread with Mashile that documented her experience being vaccinated at the Chris Hani Baragwanath site.

Times LIVE

Cabinet approves the vaccination of South Africans aged 18 and over

In August 2021, the National Cabinet of South Africa received a report from the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) indicating that over nine million vaccines have been administered in South Africa and with over seven million partially vaccinated and over four million fully vaccinated. In light of this, cabinet decided to increase the uptake of vaccines by approving the vaccination of persons aged between 18 years and 35 years from 20 August. African Alliance identified and worked with young influencers to amplify this stage of the vaccine roll-out.

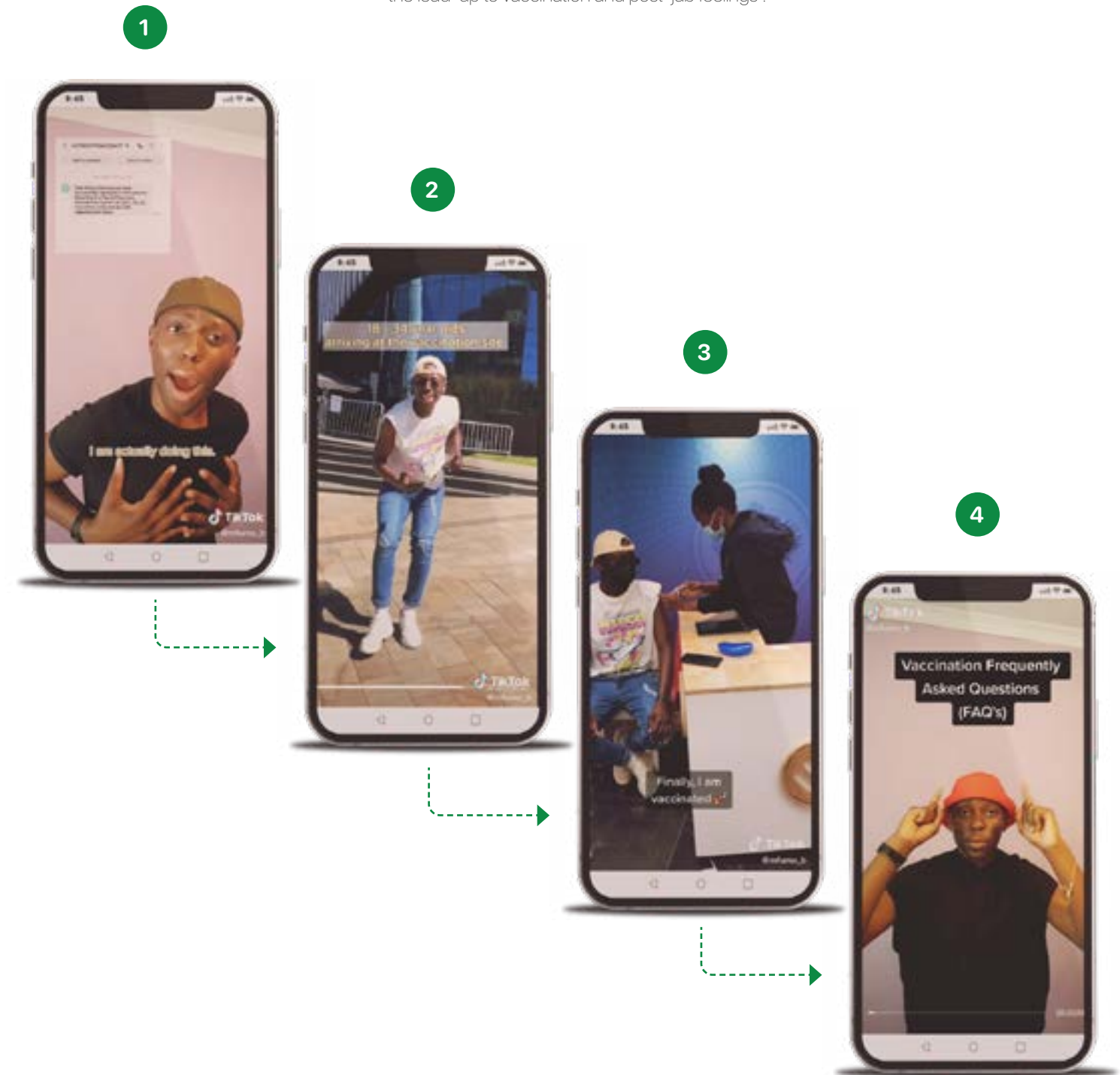
Rosemary Zimu

African Alliance reached out to Rosemary Zimu, a 28-year-old, South African actress, singer, song writer and voice artist popularly known for her role in the Nollywood film, Champagne. On Twitter, her follower count stands at 30.7k followers and on Instagram, 147k followers. This motivated African Alliance to work with her as a youth influencer, potentially engaging difficult to reach audiences and demographics. In order to disseminate messages to get her age group vaccinated, Zimu produced a video that was posted on her Twitter account, Facebook and Instagram pages. The video's core objective was to communicate an evidence-based message to those who are 18 years and older in support of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out programme and vaccination knowledge. Zimu's messaging about uptake focussed on the principles of harm prevention, reducing COVID-19 related hospitalisation, protecting loved ones and communities and stopping new variants. Zimu produced this video with a script that was conceptualised by African Alliance with the assistance of South African Medical Research Council.



Mfumo Bamuza

African Alliance also engaged a popular TikTok personality named Mfumo Bamuza, who has a following of 58.4k on TikTok and 2.8k on Twitter. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamuza has made a few informative TikTok videos about COVID-19 and vaccines. Bamuza was assigned to carry out a series of videos that honestly shared his vaccination experience, including the lead-up to vaccination and post-jab feelings.



COVID-19



should be doing to better engage them and their practices.

**Fatwa on Contagious Diseases
Islamic Perspective**

The greatest Hadith scholar, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (ra) states that the Arabs in Jahilyyyah believed that diseases were contagious by their innate nature, without attributing causality to Allah Ta'ala, as the true originating cause of everything.

من حيث ان العرب في الجاهلية "تعلموا ان الامراض تعدى بطبيعتها من غير اعتدال الى الله فاقبل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم اعتقادهم ذلك" (فتح الباري: ابن حجر المصنوع)

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) accordingly repudiated this false belief by stating in rebuttal: "No contagious!"

فقال في الحديث العدوى بطبيعتها لا يعلم الله تعالى، و لم ينسب حصول البصر عند ذلك بغير الله تعالى و فعله امام النبوي: شرح صحيح مسلم

The reconciliation of the different Hadith on the topic is summarized, after discussion, by the distinguished jurist, Allama Muhyi Tay Usmani in his valuable contemporary Arabic commentary to Sahih Muslim as follows: "In conclusion, if it is established by medical evidence that certain diseases are contagious (such scientific evidence) is however not incompatible with the statement in the Hadith under specific consideration (لا عدوى (no contagious disease)); what is specifically negated, in this Hadith, is the claim that a disease is effected by its own nature, per se, without it being created by Allah. There is no doubt that such belief is stark and kufi. As for the belief that the transmission of bacteria or viruses sometimes cause disease, just as other harmful substances do so, all these causal effects are dependent on the Will of Allah and His divine decree, (Ta'deer), on the understanding that, if Allah does not Will the causality, the transmission of the virus will not occur, or if it is so transmitted, it will not necessarily be divinely decreed to achieve a causal effect. This is the correct belief. However, because certain diseases are in practice contagious, such as plague etc., the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) ordered us to take appropriate precautionary measures, but the adoption of such precautions is not contrary to Ta'deer. Ta'deer, provided that the individual believes that these procedures are not causally effected in themselves, in the sense that their causal efficacy is (at all times) dependent on the divine Will of Allah; such individual (after taking precautions), reaffirming Yes or No trust or توكل in Allah, in a nutshell, contagious diseases, although in practice contagious, however their transmission is (at the level of belief) not effectual in its own nature per se, but their causality is dependent on the divine Will of Allah."

فالحاصل... فان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم امر بالاعتدال منه في درجة اعتبار الاسباب والتدابير الوقائية فان اعتداله لا ينافي التوكل و عليه التفسير... ان هذا التفسير و ان كان يفتي في العادة و لكن عدولته موقوفة على تقدير الله تعالى و ليس ذلك بتقدير الذاتي بل هو موقوفة راجع لكلمة فتح التلخيص الشرح الجليل محمد. نبي المصطفى حفظه الله. الحمد الرابع : مسالة عدوى الامراض :- TVT - TVT

African Alliance
VACCINE ADVOCACY
RESEARCH GROUP

MSOMAR & ASSOCIATES

saMRC

science & innovation
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The messages explain the COVID-19 vaccination process from an Islamic perspective, taking a closer look into vaccination history according to the Islamic world. They also highlight vaccination fears and how these are addressed in Islam with evidence and science-based explanations. In addition to the messages addressing misconception and fears of vaccines, there are FATWA IIFA ruling and recommendations of the Medical Fiqh Symposium, Shari'ah rulings regarding the use of COVID-19 vaccines, their purchase, and the financing of their distribution with Zakat funds.

In order to reach a wider audience, the project developed and strategically placed a series of written pieces (op-eds and press releases) in various media outlets which are accessible both in print and online. In addition, African Alliance staff and consultants have been invited onto various radio and television outlets to provide accurate and timely information about the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa, from a research and advocacy angle. Partnership webinars also form part of African Alliances’ media production and provides a platform for engagement and connection.

RADIO

Radio 786
COVID-19 Clinical Trials Comes Under Fire in Cape Town
12 June 2020

Tian Johnson spoke to Radio 786 to share their thoughts about one of South Africa’s COVID-19 treatment trials called TASK. This trial is looking at BCG revaccination for healthcare workers in the context of COVID-19.

Voice of Wits, TheChatroomOnVOW PrEP
11 November 2020

Wilfred Gurupira was hosted by #TheChatroomOnVOW to speak about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). He mentioned that the main reason people should use PrEP is to prevent the acquisition of HIV. Additionally, he highlighted that as different people have different risks of getting infected with HIV it really is important on an individual level to take the necessary precautions to prevent the acquisition of HIV through PrEP use.

Capricorn FM
Are South Africans warming up to the COVID-19 vaccines?
4 March 2021

Tian Johnson spoke to DJ Complexion and Mpho Mashita about citizen’s attitudes towards COVID-19 vaccines. They stressed that government needs to urgently pay attention to vaccine messaging to relayed to avoid vaccine hesitancy sentiments bubbling up within communities.

Jacaranda FM
African Alliance lodged a formal complaint to the Judicial Services Commission against Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng
13 January 2021

In January 2021, the African Alliance lodged a formal complaint to the Judicial Services Commission against Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng for his ‘666’ vaccine prayer during a hospital sermon in the Tembisa township, Gauteng, Mogoeng called on God to destroy any vaccine that contains the work of the Devil. Tian Johnson says they want the Chief Justice to be held accountable for his remarks about the vaccine, as they regard his comments around the safety of a vaccine deeply troubling especially in light of South Africa’s then plans for national vaccine roll-out.

The Brian Lehrer Show
Covid Vaccine Rollouts From Around the World
5 May 2021

Tian Johnson spoke on the Brian Lehrer Show about vaccine access in Africa. They spoke about how the African countries participate in the clinical trials and yet are now left behind as the Global North is already vaccinating their people. Johnson expressed the need for countries in the Global North to support the Trips Waiver to enable Pharmaceutical Companies to share the know-how of making the vaccines with Africans so that we do not remain as the continent of charity.

TELEVISION

Newzroom Afrika (Television)
The importance of participants in research
12 June 2020

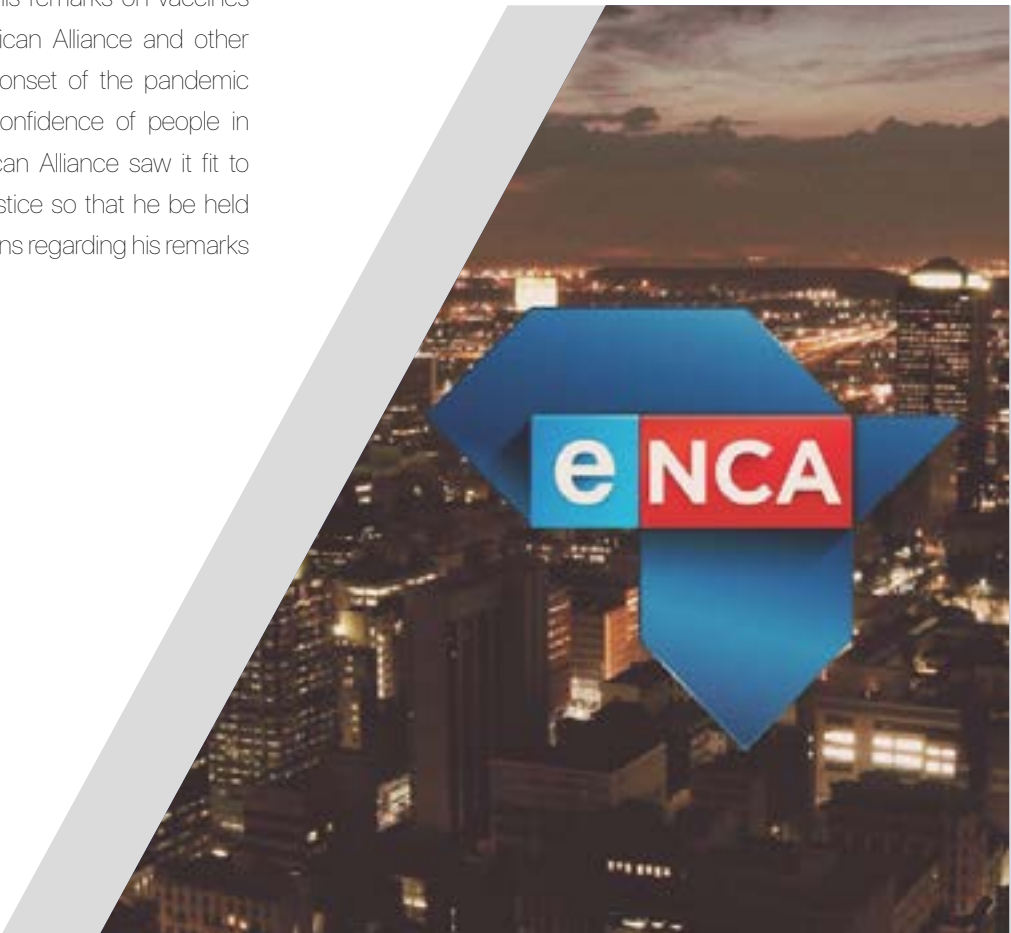
Tian Johnson spoke to Newsroom Afrika to share their thoughts about the importance of participants in vaccine or treatment research. Johnson explains how the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) has set up guidelines on how research should be conducted responsibly.

Newzroom Afrika
A complaint has been laid against Chief Justice Mogoeng
13 January 2021

Tian Johnson spoke to Newsroom Afrika to share their thoughts and concerns on the comments made by the Chief Justice on vaccines. Due to the powerful office that the Chief Justice is in control of, his remarks on vaccines are damaging to the work of African Alliance and other advocates have done since the onset of the pandemic which is building the faith and confidence of people in effective vaccines. Therefore, African Alliance saw it fit to lay a charge against the Chief Justice so that he be held accountable to his words and actions regarding his remarks on vaccines.

Channels TV
Vaccine Independence Managing The Pandemic In Africa
23 June 2021

Tian Johnson spoke to Channels TV to share their thoughts on COVID-19 variants, access challenges and the third wave sweeping Africa. Johnson expressed concern at how countries in the Global North are already vaccinating children who are at minimal risks of getting COVID-19 yet in Africa we are still struggling to even vaccinate our healthcare workers. There is an urgent need for countries who are hoarding vaccines to share with the African continent as people are dying, and we most certainly cannot wait for regional hubs to be set up for vaccine production.



ONLINE

African Alliance continues to write articles and opinion pieces covering issues ranging from vaccine access, misinformation and hesitancy as the global conversations have shifted from clinical trials to vaccine rollout.

Advocates Statement on Standard of Care in COVID-19 Research

LinkedIn

5 June 2020

Who would you trust to watch as the world decides and doesn't get a COVID-19 vaccine?

LinkedIn

1 October 2020

South Africa has launched a third COVID-19 vaccine trial. Here's what you need to know

News 24

1 November 2020

SA's latest COVID-19 vaccine trial crucial for the future access

LinkedIn

9 November 2020

PRESS RELEASES

SA's latest COVID-19 Vaccine trial, ENSEMBLE, crucial for future access

(November 2020)

South Africa's newest COVID-19 vaccine trial is another crucial step in ensuring a future vaccine works for South Africans and should be commended, says advocacy group the African Alliance and partner, the Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group.

Pandemic and plans: Why South Africa needs to reimagine its HIV Strategy

News24

1 December 2020

We are closer to an HIV vaccine more than ever before

News24

18 May 2021

Vaccine Hesitancy or Systemic Racism?

Project Syndicate

22 June 2021

Sex workers, former inmates and people who use drugs help to feed the world during the pandemic

Mail and Guardian

11 August 2021

Vaccine activists lay complaint against South Africa's Chief Justice over vaccine misinformation

(January 2021)

Health advocacy organisation the African Alliance has filed a complaint with the Judicial Services Commission against Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng following the Chief Justice's false and dangerous vaccine claims.

AN OPEN LETTER TO NORWAY (April 2021)

An open letter to the Ambassador and permanent representative to the WTO/EFTA in Geneva and Ambassador and permanent representative to the UN and other international organisations



AN OPEN LETTER
21st April 2021

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE WTO/EFTA
IN GENEVA - MR DAGFINN SØRLI
AMBASSADOR - PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS - MS TINE MØRCH SMITH

Dear Tine and Dagfinn,

Norway's statement to the Council of Trips in October 2020 rings hollow. It rings hollow because it positions developing countries yet again as recipients of charity by having to rely on your donation to COVAX, an unelected, unaccountable body for our vaccines. We don't want charity; we want meaningful solidarity that recognises our agency, ability, and willingness to manufacture our own vaccines if you and your wealthy friends were not standing in our way. It undermines the billions of public funds (including African money) that pharma has received for vaccine research and development; it undermines the humanity, the dedication and the sacrifice of African trial participants who took part in COVID-19 vaccine trials that have resulted in over one million Norwegians being vaccinated so far.

Norway's long history of supporting democracy, human rights and access to health care globally and particularly in the Global South does not reconcile with its current stance against the waiver proposal. We want to see leaders with the moral fortitude and ability to read the global room and then walk the talk that matches the rhetoric of solidarity and the very human rights principles that Norway claims to be founded on. How do you reconcile materially standing in the way of access to a vaccine that represents the only way to end a pandemic that continues to amplify the violent poverty and inequality of countries that you call partners?

Norwegian leaders - how are you sleeping at night when your national football team standing up for human rights in Qatar is showing greater moral strength and consciousness than you are?

As civil society in your "development partner countries" continue to advocate, mobilise and hold those in power to account around their inaction - or complicity - know this, history will remember that you stood up for inequality, you materially contributed to sustaining a global pandemic, and you enabled pharma greed to keep a life-saving vaccine out of our reach.

Tian Johnson is a queer African activist and founder of the African Alliance, a global non-profit working on a range of health rights issues. The Alliance takes an intersectional approach to social justice. The work spans advocacy for the rights of marginalised communities, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, white supremacy culture and decolonisation of the development sector.

Tian is a founding member of the Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group working globally to ensure that vaccine research is accountable, transparent and community-owned. We are committed to solving the unprecedented challenge of equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines on the African continent as soon as they become available.

www.africanalliance.org.za



**THESE “LEADERS” ARE STOPPING THE WORLD
FROM PRODUCING COVID-19 VACCINES!**

#PEOPLESVACCINE #TRIPSWAIVER



PARTNERSHIP WEBINARS

As a result of our collaborative spirit and in recognition of our various accomplishments, the African Alliance was invited to participate in a series of regional and global webinars with partners from across the world. These events showcased the value we place on collaboration while highlighting the global nature of the pandemic and need for a coordinated global response.

Post-COVID Vaccine Development, Distribution & Justice

The Atlantic Institute

17 September 2020

The Atlantic Institute has been organising convenings that are focused on the most significant challenges of our present moment and how we can bring the lens of justice and equity to addressing them. This webinar looked at the question of justice as it relates to vaccine development around COVID. Speakers were Professor Glenda Gray, Professor Allen Buchanan, Research Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona Department of Philosophy and Freedom Centre and Tian Johnson of the African Alliance.

South African UNESCO & National Bioethics Committee

Equity and Access to COVID-19 vaccines

25 November 2020

The South African UNESCO National Bioethics committee hosted a national dialogue centred upon the critical topic of equity and access to COVID-19 vaccines. Speakers included CAPRISA's Professor Salim S. Abdool Karim, Mr Jens Pedersen from Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders and Tian Johnson of the African Alliance.

Rhetoric Society of America

Are Vaccines the Answer?

04 December 2020

Tian Johnson was invited to be part of a panel of vaccine activists and scholars to discuss the historical, cultural, and, therefore, rhetorical considerations for understanding vaccine priorities and how they are communicated to various publics. In addition to unpacking the role of rhetorical/communication scholarship plays in vaccination generally and for COVID-19 specifically, panellists shared how we might use the current COVID-19 situation to connect more effectively to and work more effectively with local, state, regional, national and international communities to improve global health overall. Johnson spoke of the importance of communication and language

African Union (AU), Africa Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention & SAMRC

Framework for Fair, Equitable and Timely Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccines in Africa 14 & 15 December 2020

Tian Johnson shared their thoughts and insights around the “Role of Risk Communication in Vaccine Acceptance”. They unpacked issues relating to understanding collective & individual risk in a pandemic, risk communication of vaccine acceptance, and communicating prioritisation. Johnson spoke of how we acknowledge the power of peers and media in community work as we address the issues relating to vaccines. in conveying the urgency of how the pandemic landed in South Africa, and what people needed to be aware of.

AfroCentric Group

Update on the Science and Access in South Africa

15 December 2020

The Afrocentric Group hosted a webinar to discuss the issues of progress on the clinical trials for the vaccine, pertinent issues on access, and South Africa's preparedness in the vaccine agenda. Panellists: Dr Anban Pillay from the National Department of Health; Professor Greg Hussey: Institute of Molecular Medicine; Dr Samu Dube: Afrocentric Group and African Alliance's Tian Johnson.

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)

Community engagement and vaccine access in Africa

18 February 2021

Tian Johnson had the opportunity to share their thoughts about the consultation and involvement of communities during a process such as COVID-19 vaccine development or clinical trials. They also spoke of how African Alliance need to ensure that community participation is represented, considering marginalised and vulnerable people during the pandemic. Johnson gave a brief overview of who we should be considering as part of our community. In this regard, our communities are a composition of the churches around us, prisons, sex workers and the undocumented migrant who play an important role in community participation of vaccine development and even vaccine clinical trials.

Desmond Tutu Health Foundation

Blood Clots and COVID Vaccines: What's the Story?

4 May 2021

Tian Johnson was a facilitator of the third webinar on COVID-19 hosted by the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation (DTHF), where they spoke about blood clots and the recent pause of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine in several countries across the world with a particular focus on South Africa.

SAfAIDS

Global Gag Rule is Rescinded in 2021: So What for the Women's & Girl's Rights Agenda and SRH Rights?

13 May 2021

Tian Johnson was a panellist in this second of a three-part webinar series. Johnson spoke of how the Biden administration needs to set up and expand abortion access. They also shared their concerns on how the constant push-back from governments against increased comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

SAfAIDS

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Exploring the knowledge, attitudes and practices of global civil society leadership related to COVID-19 vaccines

To contribute to a shared understanding of the status of vaccine hesitancy and anti-vaxxer sentiment within civil society, the African Alliance has completed a global outreach intervention to be released in October 2021. The aim of this outreach is to reveal levels of knowledge and capacity amongst civil society leadership, the impact of COVID-19 on communities in their specific geographical area, how COVID-19 has impacted their work, the National response to the COVID-19 pandemic, awareness of clinical research around COVID-19 and the development and roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines.

PARTNERSHIPS

South African Medical Research Council



The SAMRC partially funds the COVID-19 work of the African Alliance. The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) was established in 1969 with a mandate to improve the health of the country's population, through research, development and technology transfer, so that people can enjoy a better quality of life.

Department of Science and Innovation



The Department of Science and Innovation partially funds the COVID-19 work of the African Alliance and seeks to boost socio-economic development in South Africa through research and innovation. To achieve its goals, the Department provides leadership, an enabling environment, and resources for science, technology, and innovation.

Treatment Action Campaign



TAC is a key partner in the African Alliances' COVID-19 Conversation Webinar. The Treatment Action Campaign was founded in December 1998 to campaign for access to AIDS treatment. It is widely acknowledged as one of the most important civil society organisations active on AIDS in the developing world.

Community Constituency Covid-19 Front



The Community Constituency Covid-19 Front was established as a formal advisory body to facilitate the participation of civil society sectors and networks, including those represented in the national response and implementations of Community-Based Measures in response to COVID-19.

Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group



A strategic programming and advocacy partner of the African Alliance, the VARG is an independent group of global activists who work for accountable, transparent, and community-owned vaccine research.

Norwegian Peoples Aid



Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) partially funds the African Alliance's COVID-19 accountability and engagement work. Norwegian People's Aid is a politically independent membership-based organisation working in Norway and in more than 30 countries around the world. Founded in 1939 as the labour movement's humanitarian solidarity organisation, NPA aims to improve people's living conditions and to create a democratic, just, and safe society. NPA's international work covers three core areas: mine action and disarmament, development, and humanitarian relief aid.

Health Justice Initiative



HJI is a key strategic advocacy and policy partner of the African Alliance. The organisation is a dedicated public health and law initiative addressing the intersection between racial and gender inequality with a special focus on access to life-saving diagnostics, treatment, and vaccines for COVID-19, TB, and HIV, drawing on the expertise of researchers in law, public policy, economics, and public health, as well as on universities and scientific experts in and outside of South Africa.

Peoples Vaccine Alliance



The African Alliance serves as the African lead of the Peoples Vaccine Alliance (PVA) – a growing movement of health and humanitarian organisations, past and present world leaders, health experts, faith leaders and economists urging that when safe and effective vaccines are developed, they are produced rapidly at scale and made available for all people, in all countries, free of charge.

JAMAITY



The African Alliance has partnered with Jamaity as our North African civil society partner. Jamaity is an initiative that aims to bring Tunisian associations together on a platform that allows them to promote the causes they defend.

Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+ Global) and the READY Movement



The African Alliance, the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+ Global) and the READY Movement is a partnership that was established to explore opportunities to strengthen community and civil society engagement with and participation in the International AIDS Society's (IAS) "COVID-19 Conference: Prevention" held on 2nd February 2021. Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (GNP+) is an organisation that was founded after a realisation of the need to virtually connect young people living with HIV to decision-making spaces. In 2010, the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (GNP+) wanted to come up with a youth programme and the Y+ Programme was born.

EANNASO



African Alliance believes in the Eastern Africa National Networks of Aids and Health Services Organisation's (EANNASO) vision of unity, equity and leadership. EANNASO supports consultation and participation of stakeholders at all stages of their interventions and works toward creating a sense of belonging and ownership through sharing and promoting a common voice, vision and valuing the strength of teamwork to achieve its mission. EANNASO promotes strong rights focus that reinforces justice, fairness, respect and compassion. EANNASO fosters leadership development at all levels, encouraging innovation and excellence through continuous learning.

CAPRISA



The African Alliance, in partnership with CAPRISA and other regional partners, are conducting research to determine and describe the multiple impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls living with HIV (W&GLHIV) and at high HIV risk in South Africa. This includes understanding key and vulnerable populations, and the role of community responses in South Africa in addressing HIV and public health gaps. CAPRISA's main goal is to undertake globally relevant and locally responsive research that contributes to understanding HIV pathogenesis, prevention and epidemiology as well as the links between tuberculosis and AIDS care. To achieve this goal, CAPRISA conducts research in four main scientific programmes namely: HIV pathogenesis and vaccines, HIV and TB treatment, microbicides, and prevention and epidemiology.

WRHI



WRHI and African Alliance partnered together to carry out outreach to select priority groups in order to support the development of a national demand creation and communications plan to address barriers to vaccine uptake, such as anti-vaccination sentiment, vaccine hesitancy, concerns over side effects, risk perception, and procedures.

WRHI is a renowned African institute in a world-class African university, addresses some of the greatest public health concerns affecting our region, including HIV and its related problems, sexual and reproductive health, and vaccinology. WRHI does this through pioneering multi-disciplinary research, responsive technical support and innovation in health services, good participatory practice, developing African researchers, evidence-based policy development and advocacy with national, regional and global stakeholders and teaching and capacity building.

SAfAIDS



African Alliance believes in the SAfAIDS mission to be a trend-setter in promoting integrated, effective and ethical development responses to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), by enabling Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and resilience for all.

AA STRATEGIC PLAN

African Alliance intends to mobilise resources to build organisational capacity and to ensure that policies and procedures for all aspects of our work are developed, and a board is appointed to support the transition from consultancy to organisation. In this regard, with the support from the SAMRC and DSI, the African Alliance has engaged a consultant with 15 years' experience in strategic planning, resource mobilisation and strategy development. The strategic plan consultancy includes:

- conducting interviews with African Alliance's stakeholders;
- a process to reflect on the context and propose initial programme framework for review and agreement (areas of focus, aim, objectives and high-level outcomes) for the strategic period;
- developing and agreeing a draft theory of change (ToC) for the strategic plan; and,
- assessing the organisational capacity to deliver against the strategy and define operational objectives (governance, HR, fundraising, partnerships).

GRANT MANAGEMENT

For this project, African Alliance utilised the services of Africorp , a Level 4 BBBEE compliant, South African National Treasury approved financial management agency. The agency will provide all financial reporting services, annual audit and compliance services for this project. Africorp Solutions specialises in Business Advisory, Tax Consultancy, Subcontracting and Procurement and offers an industry-leading range of services. Their specialised team includes lawyers, admitted attorneys, certified financial planners, recruiters, registered industrial psychologists, chartered accountants(SA) , payroll, tax practitioners and master reward specialists. With a management team of experts in conducting business worldwide.

AUDITING

The first 15 months of African Alliance has been fully audited.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Wits RHI

In order to support the development of a national demand creation and communications plan to address barriers to vaccine uptake, Wits RHI in partnership with African Alliance and VARG, carried out outreach work in select priority groups.

The initial intention of the partnership was to carry out the following activities:

- Interviews: A series of in-person interviews were planned with members of priority groups to complement consultations and ensure that the engagements were grounded in the realities of community members. In-person interviews with ten people per province over two provinces were planned with specific attention to race, gender and class representation.
- A rapid series of national engagements: The purpose of these engagements was to have exploratory conversations with key community leaders and civil society groups in South Africa to understand better the context in which vaccine prioritisation and access will happen, what potential challenges may be expected and what key issues should be considered in terms of communications, engagement and mobilisation of communities as a national COVID-19 vaccine roll-out and access plan was developed. To this end it was envisaged that the following should take place:
 - i) An introductory consultation for broad civil society on the practical considerations, evidence and science that we need to have in mind prior to the national COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. This meeting would also ensure strategic representation to include anticipated prioritised groups.
 - ii) Stand-alone sector-specific consultations held online with civil society sector leadership to determine what access could look like for the specific target populations. Three consultations were planned to take place with one meeting per target group – elderly over 65 years, healthcare workers and other essential workers.

- iii) A verification meeting for sharing of findings and reflections from the entire consultative process. This was planned to be shared on sector-wide webinar in January 2021 to gather any additional reflections from the community and civil society leaders, as well as functioning as a verification meeting.

As COVID-19 is ever-changing, an adaptive approach was called for in regard to the protocol and implementation plans. The abovementioned plans were impacted by a second wave resurgence of COVID-19 restricting travel and in-person interviews, as well as holiday shutdowns, together with an abundance of competing web-based meetings and webinars. In response, a revised plan was coordinated. It was decided to do a limited number of in-person interviews in December 2020, and in January 2021, to host one main consultation covering all three target groups thereby providing baseline information on the vaccine roll-out and demand creation strategies. This was conducted on 25 January 2021 via Zoom entitled: "Developing a vaccine rollout plan for South Africa – Together".

All interactions sought to engage with leading voices from respective groups to understand what needs to be considered when designing communications, service delivery considerations and demand creation strategies for a COVID-19 vaccine. It was also an opportunity for convenors to hear first-hand accounts of the identified national groups' needs. The feedback received during both the national consultation and the in-person interviews revealed a clear desire for ongoing engagements between researchers and communities to collectively stay abreast of each other's realities, contexts, and intentions to find solutions to COVID-19 and pave the way for access and equity in the vaccine roll-out in South Africa. The consultation highlighted a range of issues including the need for accurate information from government agencies and researchers regarding different possible vaccine candidates and prioritisation and opportunities to sustain dialogue to build vaccine confidence.

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- GLOBAL ACCESS & POLICY

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY AND CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN THE 2021 IAS COVID-19 PREVENTION CONFERENCE

The African Alliance, the Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group, the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+ Global) and the READY Movement bring you a series of lectures focusing on the four pillars of the International AIDS Society's "COVID-19 Conference: Prevention".

The Conference will feature the latest in prevention-related science, policy and practice on Tuesday 2nd February 2021 and will examine all aspects of SARS-CoV-2 infection.



VACCINES

Dr Nyaradzo Chigorimbo-Tsikiwa
Thursday 28 January 2021
16:00 - 18:00 SAST



GLOBAL ACCESS AND POLICY

Dr Jennifer Mabuka-Maroa
Thursday 28th January 2021
18:00 - 20:00 SAST



NONPHARMACEUTICAL INTERVENTIONS (NPIs)

Dr. Sibusiso Mkwana
Friday 29 January 2021
16:00 - 18:00 SAST



BASIC SCIENCE

Dr Samukeliso Dube
Friday 29th January 2021
18:00 - 20:00 SAST



IAS

The African Alliance, the Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group, the Global Network of Young People Living with HIV (Y+ Global) and the READY Movement hosted a series of lectures focusing on the four pillars of the International AIDS Society's (IAS) "COVID-19 Conference: Prevention" held on 2nd February 2021. These outputs are both housed on the African Alliance website and document titled: "Civil-society participation in the IAS 2019 COVID-19 prevention conference 2 February 2021"

The first episode on vaccines was presented by Dr Nyaradzo Chigorimbo-Tsikiwa a senior researcher in the department of Medical Virology at the University of Cape Town. The second episode on global access and policy was presented by Dr Jennifer Maroa who heads the genetics program Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) and the African Human Clinical Trials portfolio of The African Academy of Sciences (The AAS). The third episode on non-pharmaceutical interventions was presented by Dr Sibusiso Mkwana, a demographer and senior researcher with a background in health. The fourth episode, titled Basic Science was presented by Dr Dube, whose 20 years' experience in health care has included several senior roles in the delivery and financing of health care.

AU/African CDC Vaccine Delivery Alliance (AVDA)

On 13 January 2021, the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) established by the then African Union Chair reported to a special meeting of the AU Bureau of the Assembly that it has secured a provisional 270-million vaccine doses for African countries, with at least 50-million being available for the crucial period of April to June 2021. The African Vaccine Delivery Alliance (AVDA) was thereafter set up to ensure the rapid deployment of vaccines and associated supplies/equipment in the right condition, right quantities, at the right place, and with appropriate messaging.

On 22 January 2021 Tian Johnson, head of the African Alliance was appointed by AVDA chair, Dr John Nkengasong and AVDA co-chair, Dr Ayoade Olatunbosun-Alakija to serve in the organisation and lead AVDA's community engagement and risk communication work. Dr Monique Wasunna, Director of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) Africa Regional Office was appointed as co-chair.

The African Alliance in partnership with the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative Africa Regional Office will host and manage the AVDA community engagement and risk communication secretariat to ensure efficient, impactful delivery of this scope of work and associated activities and partnerships.



Dr John Nkengasong



Dr Ayoade Olatunbosun-Alakija



Tian Johnson



Dr Monique Wasunna

Norwegian Peoples Aid

NPA funded African Alliance for civil society engagement around key COVID-19 issues in both 2020 and 2021. The objectives for each years' work differed to suit the changing nature of the pandemic.

2020

The African Alliance was funded by NPA to ignite civil society engagement around key COVID-19 issues, mobilise national community ownership of COVID-19 research and address anti-science, anti-research trends on social media. The objectives of the project were to:

- Build technical skill set of civil society and community leaders on intellectual property rights. African Alliance took hosted a COVID-19 Conversations webinar that speaks to this object.
- Build the capacity of community-based media to understand and accurately report on intellectual property and it relates to equitable access. This information was conveyed through African Alliance's COVID-19 Conversations - Media Skills Building on IP and Equitable Access.
- Strengthen skill set of civil society and community leaders to understand issues related to and as a consequence of Intellectual Property and generate consensus on priority advocacy issues. This was delivered through the COVID 19 Conversation - Community Leadership & IP for Equitable Access.
- Document the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa (including regional work) and lay out the roadmap for the second year of civil society and community responses to the pandemic. This information is housed in the Special Edition of the BETA Chronicles.

2021

The African Alliance captured the evolution of COVID-19 vaccine access, hesitancy and confidence across the region through the ongoing production of a monthly regional status report about these three issues.

This work positions the African Alliance to utilise our positions of influence where they exist, such as the AU and Africa CDC, to contribute by providing essential information directly to decisions makers and those who hold meaningful power on the national level. Additionally, understanding the role of civil society leaders (within their communities and spheres of influence) in addressing community vaccine hesitancy is another purpose of this project, as most African countries have initiated the first phase of their vaccine roll-out programmes. It is through monthly regional calls with national civil society leaders, as well as data collection tools, that we will acquire information and experiences of each leader, which will then be shared with our partner network.



CAPRISA

African Alliance, in partnership with CAPRISA, seeks to highlight the multiple impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on W&GLHIV and those at high HIV risk in South Africa. This work also encompasses understanding the role of community responses to addressing HIV and public health gaps in South Africa.

The objectives of the project are:

- To determine the impact of COVID-19 on inequalities and socio-economic vulnerabilities among W&GLHIV and women at high HIV risk.
- To determine the socio-demographic, economic, and clinical factors associated with reduced access to health services including HIV-prevention and treatment services, SRH, family planning and TB prevention and treatment services among W&GLHIV during the COVID-19 crisis.
- To identify gender specific considerations related to vaccination for COVID-19 among W&GLHIV, including W&GLHIV in key and vulnerable populations in South Africa.
- To provide insights into gender specific strategies and policies to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on W&GLHIV and in women at high HIV risk.
- To utilise the data and insights gathered from this study to inform interventions for W&GLHIV, KVPs and women at high HIV about living with HIV and COVID-19.



Peoples Vaccine Alliance

African Alliance houses the African secretariat of the People's Vaccine Alliance. PVA is supported by over 2.5-million activists worldwide and 175 former world leaders and Nobel Prize winning scientists.

We join with our collaborators, comrades and partners all over the world to advocate for more equitable global distribution of vaccines (and other COVID-19 products) by applying pressure on governments and companies in the Global North and as well as our own African leaders. PVA's manifesto is available online .

The African Alliance is a key African representative on several key groupings within the PVA:

Steering Group: This group, which meets weekly, develops priorities and key strategies for the PVA. The Steering Group is led by the PVA chair, Max Lawson of Oxfam, and includes regular participation from Winnie Banyima, the UNAIDS executive director.

Southern Influencing Group: Along with the Chairs from PVA Asia and PVA Latin America and Caribbean, this group meets monthly with the goal of ensuring advocacy priorities, concerns and voices from the Global South receive adequate attention. The group is led by the PVA's global coordinator, and in addition allows for brainstorming among and coordination between representatives from the Global South in the PVA.

Influentials Team: This team is one of several PVA working groups developed to operationalise goals developed by the Steering Group. The Influentials Team meets weekly in order to move forward specific objectives that require targeting of "influential" people around the world who can make important contributions to the goals of the PVA through their words or actions. Outcomes from the work of the Influentials Team include, the open letter from former heads of state and Nobel Laureates calling on President Biden to waive intellectual property rules for COVID vaccines , the open letter from British Nobel laureates calling on Prime Minister Johnson to waive vaccine intellectual property at G7 , and the opinion piece from the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba, appealing to the leaders of the G7 nations to dismantle monopolies over technology and know-how to produce Covid-19 vaccines and other medical products

In addition to participating in the aforementioned PVA groups, the African Alliance has spearheaded the development of an Africa-based grouping of civil society organisations interested in on COVID-19 vaccine equity. This grouping, known as PVA Africa, includes about 50 individuals (representing an estimated 25 organisations around the continent) who communicate via a WhatsApp group and meet once a month.



The monthly meetings which are convened, facilitated, and documented by the African Alliance allow for sharing of PVA Global's activities, upcoming advocacy opportunities and discussion of achievements, challenges and goals at country and regional level.

Six new African organisations have been added to the PVA via the information sharing network coordinated by the African Alliance. They are: EqualHealth Campaign Against Racism, Fight Inequality Alliance, Africa Rising, EANNASO, People's Vaccine Campaign-SA, and the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union.

Other achievements include:

1. An open letter to selected European leaders expressing disappointment at colonial and racist tendencies leading them to thwart Africa's access to COVID-19 vaccines. This letter was signed by 160 African civil society organisations and shared widely on social media. An African Alliance tweet of this letter accrued 43,974 impressions with 631 engagements. African Alliance, in collaboration with the PVA and Oxfam, will publish a revised version in the Financial Times.
2. A series of graphics targeting French President Macron during his trip to South Africa in May, pointing out his lack of support for the TRIPS waiver.

3. Representing the PVA and the African Alliance at various global and regional forums, including:
 - a. International civil society roundtable for media during the G7;
 - b. A discussion about feminist perspectives on COVID-19 vaccine rollout at the invitation of GenderLinks; and,
 - c. Introducing the PVA at the Regional Dialogue for Non-State Actors on the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan 2020-30
4. Global Day of Action for #PeoplesVaccine hosted on 11 March 2021. This webinar featured Dr Mohga Kamal-Yanni, Senior Health Advisor and Lois Chingandu, Director of evidence and influence at Frontline AIDS, and was facilitated by African Alliance's Maaza Seyoum. Dr Kamal-Yanni has over 40 years of experience in health policy and programming with international and national development agencies. She is currently providing technical and policy support to UNAIDS and the PVA to access COVID-19 health technology and is a key advisor to the NGO board members to UNITAID. Chingandu plays a central role in generating evidence to support effective HIV programming and engage and influence national and regional governments, international donors, and partners. She has more than 20 years of hands-on leadership experience on HIV, SRHR, gender activism and civil society engagement. She has a long-standing commitment to ensuring the rights of marginalised people, key populations, women, and girls, who form the cornerstone of an effective HIV response.

PVA AFRICA

Monthly Meetings

As part of African Alliance's involvement with PVA coordination and strategy, a series of meetings with African civil society members and leaders were held in 2021. All meetings were held in collaboration with Action Aid and Oxfam, who are all working in solidarity for a #PeoplesVaccine and hosted by African Alliance.

30 April 2021

In this special event, African Alliance hosted the first African civil society meeting. Maaza Seyoum explained the work of the PVA including some key opportunities that African civil societies should look out for in the coming months.

27 May 2021

In the second meeting, Maaza Seyoum went through updates from PVA Global, recent developments, shifts in strategy and future opportunities to look out for. There were updates from the group about their recent activities, plans and brief discussion on the Africa Charter on COVID-19.

24 June 2021

Following the G7 summit, Maaza Seyoum led the discussion on strategizing next steps for African civil society, updates from PVA Global and information sharing about upcoming opportunities for advocacy, and how African civil society organisations can collaborate and get involved. There was also an update on the Africa Charter on COVID-19.

29 July 2021

The topics of discussion at the fourth meeting included updates from PVA Global and their June campaigns from Maaza Seyoum, vaccine rollout data, PVA strategy shift, updates from across the continent, burning issues, recent activities, and points that the collective needed to address or should amplify.

31 August 2021

The fifth meeting continued discussions from the previous meeting, and Maaza Seyoum took participants through updates from PVA Global and across the continent, vaccine roll-out data, strategy shifts, recent activities, and further conversation about points the collective needs to address and amplify.



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Although numerous calls and emails were sent out to the African National Congress (ANC), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) African Alliance received no response to the invitation. First contact was made on 27 October 2020 via email with a follow-up email sent on 30 October 2020 and 4 February 2021.

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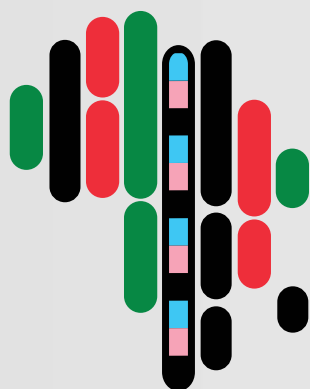
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African Alliance

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