**MEDIA RELEASE**

**MAKE COVID-19 HISTORY**

**The constitution hill COVID-19 DIGITAL ARCHIVE PROJECT**

# Rapid Response Collecting during the Covid-19 Crisis

# Nelson Mandela often spoke of how strength of character is forged during the most difficult moments of our lives. In his book *Long Walk to Freedom* he wrote: “There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lies defeat and death.”

The COVID-19 pandemic represents one of the darkest moments that we as humans have had to face. It has turned our lives upside down. It has separated us from loved ones. Forced us to stop work or having to work from home. Schools have closed. Children cannot play in the parks or streets. Thousands have lost their jobs. We all live in fear of being infected as we watch the number of positive cases and deaths rise across the globe.

Despite our deepest fears, the light of our constitutional democracy has shone through this dark moment and produced new heroes. Medical doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and caregivers daily risk their lives caring for the sick and the elderly on the frontline of the pandemic. Scientists and researchers from both the public and private health sectors have been burning the midnight oil strategizing how to flatten the curve of infection. Police, soldiers, and security officers have been patrolling our streets to ensure we follow social distancing, stay at home and are safe during our period of lockdown. Journalists have been keeping us informed about all the latest developments, acting as watchdogs on behalf of citizens, checking that our basic civil rights are not abused. Farmers and farmworkers, truck drivers, packers and cashiers have all risked exposure to infection by keeping our supermarket shelves stocked with food and essentials.

Globally, COVID-19 has changed the way we live our lives. How we connect with family and friends, the way we work, the way we learn and the way we play. Years from now, our children and grandchildren will want to know what it was like to live in the time of COVID - 19.

How will we show our future generations what it was like living under lockdown, being infected by COVID - 19 or losing a loved one? Constitution Hill like many other museums around the world has started to look at ways that we can document this global pandemic for future generations. We would like to invite you to be part of our ***Constitution Hill COVID-19 Digital Archive Project*** by sharing your story. There are so many stories we can tell as a nation.

Your story can be shared in many ways. It could be an email of an event that was cancelled or a notice that your work offices or factory would be closing. It could be a cell-phone video of you home schooling your children.

It could be the funny memes or jokes that you created and shared. It could be a beautiful song that you and other musicians recorded and shared.

It could be social media posts discussing COVID - 19. It could be pictures that were shared on Instagram or WhatsApp, pictures you took to remember this time. It could be photographs or videos of people practising social distancing or not: the emptiness of the streets, shopping malls, parks or beaches; waiting to enter a supermarket; empty store shelves; the drive-thru testing centres. It could be pictures of your neighbourhood. It could be graffiti or artwork about the virus or lockdown.

It could be a voice recording of how your community members went out of their way to help a destitute family. People in India banged pots in support of health workers. Italians sang opera at night on their balconies to show solidarity with each other. Share what your family, friendship circle, neighbourhood, church group or community did to support each other.

All your contributions will be our shared history of daily life during COVID-19. We want to show future generations how this pandemic affected our country from our cities to the countryside – essential service workers; the police and the SANDF, health workers, supermarket staff, freelancers, shift workers, those over 60 who are the most vulnerable, those who are self-isolating, or those who are alone separated from their loved ones. Every perspective is valuable and adds to the whole. What made you laugh, cry or gave you hope?

Share your history of this moment on the Constitution Hill website by submitting your story to our digital archive [here.](https://www.constitutionhill.org.za/share-your-story) You can also tag us @constitutionhill and @WethePeopleSA on social media using #MyCovidStorySA to let us know how #COVID-19SA has affected your life.

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