

# Poverty and vulnerability to COVID-19 in South Africa:

## What the Individual Deprivation Measure can reveal to inform targeted responses

The Individual Deprivation Measure (IDM) is a new individual-level measure of multidimensional poverty. IDM data collected in South Africa in 2019 can inform COVID-19 responses. **The IDM study included a national sample of 8,652 individuals.**

**Proper hygiene, physical distancing and the lockdown are key policy measures** the Government of South Africa is promoting to contain the spread of the virus. However, there are challenges to implementing these measures – and data from the IDM provides some insights into these challenges – so we recommend some responses.

### IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES THAT INCREASE VULNERABILITY

HAND WASHING	WATER	HEALTH	FOOD	BASIC NECESSITIES
 <p>ONLY 57% HAVE A PLACE TO WASH THEIR HANDS AT HOME WITH SUFFICIENT WATER AND SOAP.</p>	 <p>52% OF PEOPLE REPORTED NOT HAVING ENOUGH WATER ALL THE TIME. 70% in rural areas and 43% in urban areas had insufficient water to meet needs.</p>	 <p>34% LIVE WITH AT LEAST ONE LONG TERM OR COOKING-SMOKE RELATED HEALTH CONDITION, SOME WITH BOTH. This was true for a higher proportion of women (37%) than men (30%).</p>	 <p>SOME 31% OF RESPONDENTS WERE EXPERIENCING SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY and a further 19% were experiencing moderate food insecurity.</p>	 <p>22% OF THE SAMPLE REPORTED THAT THEY DEPENDED ON PEOPLE OUTSIDE THEIR HOUSEHOLD to provide them with basic necessities such as food, water and shelter and they did not always have enough support.</p>

### RESPONSES

All individuals and households require hand sanitiser and/or soap and water as a matter of priority.  Support supply chains to ensure delivery of these items to those who need them.	There have been water tanks distributed and water trucks making deliveries in some areas. However, all households who must collect water from outside the home require a container to carry and store water.	Maintain health services for non-COVID-19 related illnesses.  Good management of these conditions—particularly HIV and TB—despite COVID-19 demands on health services is important.	Food insecurity will worsen as a result of the lockdown. Providing food aid and/or cash grants to the poorest could boost their nutrition and resilience to infection. Staggering the payment of grants would prevent large crowds accessing cash points and grocery stores at the same time.	There is a need to identify those who need help from outside the household with basic needs and explore ways they can be provided with this support safely.
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**Home is not always a safe place.** Ensuring and increasing resources for support services for those experiencing domestic violence and making safe housing available for victims, while also allowing women to move from their homes to escape violence, could reduce risks.

The information in this graphic uses data from the Individual Deprivation Measure study in South Africa in 2019, led by The Australian National University.  
<https://www.individualdeprivationmeasure.org>



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