

**WEDNESDAY, 20 MAY 2020**

**MEDIA RELEASE: Civil society is concerned about readiness of schools for reopening**

The Community Constituency Covid-19 Front is in support of the principle of re-opening the schools albeit in a more structured method to avoid a surge of new Covid-19 infections.

The prevailing circumstances are not favourable for a normal return to class for both learners and teachers as well as other related components.

More than 1500 schools buildings around the country were vandalised during lockdown, damaged and burnt and as a result, this means learning and teaching in these areas will be seriously compromised.

For all learning to resume, a number of factors must be addressed to create a safe learning environment and experience for all stakeholders and social environment conducive to learning and teaching.

Equally important, parents and society as a whole must be satisfied with the conditions at schools and the welfare and health of their children are taken into consideration before the reopening of schools.

The Department of Basic Education is in the process of distributing essential sanitisers, masks, water and sanitation facilities and this exercise will need to be completed before the reopening of schools. However, the measures that are put into place must take into account the safety and welfare of the learners and teachers and must provide for implementation and sustainable planning.

Immensely so, Covid-19 has brought an abrupt change if not an ending, to what we regarded as normal. Parents are afraid to send their kids to school believing they could contract the coronavirus at school. Learners are equally scared. Teachers are increasingly and understandably so, discouraged and to an extent demotivated because they are not adequately prepared for this new norm.

"We have always believed in the importance of education and we know the impact it has on our economy. Our children must not be put in harm's way. We will ensure robust conversations on school opening processes and procedures to ensure that the Department put the lives of our children first"

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said Nhlanhla Ndlovu, Co-convenor at the Community Constituency Covid-19 Nerve Centre in Pretoria, Gauteng

The Community Constituency COVID-19 is adamant that more extensive or robust engagements are needed before the public can support reopening the schools by the Department of Basic Education.

Ends...

### **About the Community Constituency Covid-19 Front**

The Community Constituency Covid-19 Front was established (by the NEDLAC Community Constituency and the SANAC Civil Society Forum) 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 the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19). The Community Constituency Covid-19 Front promotes an inclusive, competent and responsive civil society that effectively serves the needs of communities by linking and diversifying civil society actors, expanding the sector's response and ensuring better coordination, thus improving operations, and enhancing connections between civil society organisations with government, business labour, their stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The Covid-19 Front aims to provide a hub of information and contacts for distribution and engagement through our members across the country.

### **For more information and queries, please contact:**

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