



REMOTE METHODS FOR ENGAGING ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN RESEARCH:

Lessons from
adolescent advisors in
Kenya and South Africa
during COVID-19

May 2022





Executive Summary

While extensive remote research has been conducted with adults, remote systematic engagement with adolescents and young people is still a nascent area of exploration, with little practical or theoretical knowledge and literature about how to do remote research with a population experiencing significant social, cognitive, and biological developments.

(Sheilds et al., 2021).

The focus of this toolkit is to highlight the “tips and tricks” that we learned over 18 months of engaging with adolescents and young people (AYP) through remote research methods in South Africa and Kenya (April 2020-October 2021). This toolkit aims to share recent insights, from research during COVID-19, with other research projects, teams, policy makers, and implementing organisations that are currently undertaking or who would like to undertake remote research with young people.

Participatory arts-based research can be broadly defined as any research approach in which participants collaborate with researchers in “art making as a way of knowing” (Leavy, 2018). Arts-based methods are well-placed within participatory research approaches to conduct research with AYP, and have gained increasing prominence in health and development-related research in low- and

middle-income countries (LMICs). These methods seek to empower and actively engage AYP in the research process, as opposed to historical approaches that view youth as vulnerable, incompetent and/or objects of research (Clark, 2010).

Participatory, art-based methodologies in health and development-related research, including with children and adolescents, have been documented as having transformative potential that can be used to catalyse social change. They can engage AYP and communities by eliciting evidence about their own health, while also acting as modes of representation and production in knowledge co-creation and mobilisation (Mitchell & Sommer, 2016).

This toolkit includes tips and tricks for researchers working with AYP, and covers the following topics:

1. [Asking questions and keeping AYP engaged](#)
2. [Using participatory and arts-based methods](#)
3. [Creating a safe space in contexts of constraint](#)
4. [Navigating ethical considerations](#)
5. [Navigating access to technology](#)
6. [Managing referrals](#)
7. [Researcher self-care](#)

We have also included open-source, arts-based research tools that were co-developed with AYP and artists, and that provide an accessible and engaging medium for participating in remote research activities.

Enjoy!

Background on Teen Advisory Groups (TAG)

The first Teen Advisory Group (TAG) started in the Western Cape province of South Africa in 2008 with the aim to engage with adolescents and young people (AYP) as co-creators of social science research, and to develop AYP-informed policy and programming recommendations.

In 2018, the Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents Hub conceived of and planned the establishment of TAG groups in Kenema, Sierra Leone and Entebbe, Uganda.



In 2019 these expanded to the Eastern Cape, and in 2020 to Kisumu, Kenya. Each of these TAGs aim to (1) co-generate empirical data; (2) build methods "co-laboratories", where participatory and arts-based methods are developed and tested in partnership with AYP; and, most importantly, (3) shift power during the research process.

The first TAG weekend, held in the Western Cape in 2008, gained adolescent input into the Young Carers Study (2009-2012). The group was a mix of prior research participants, AYP at schools, and those recruited through word of mouth. It provided two important foundations for the work of TAG:

- AYP stressed the importance of meeting with other AYP with similar highly stigmatized life experiences, away from their homes.
- They also requested follow-up meetings each year.

In 2019, the Eastern Cape TAG was created by recruiting AYP from two observational cohorts in the Eastern Cape, which had started in 2014, a cohort of adolescents living with and without HIV (Toska et al., 2017), and a cohort of adolescent mothers and their children (Toska, 2020).

From 2019-2020, TAG groups of 15-25 AYP have met annually in weekend, activity-based workshops. The groups have become multi-generational due to older AYP having children, with some of the initial participants taking on leadership roles as camp leaders. Due to COVID-19 these meetings were not possible - we therefore started **remote engagement** in 2020 (Gittings et al., 2021).

Ongoing engagement strategies for remote methods required the team to invest in existing relationships, identify researchers and partners in the TAG's community, anticipate and develop back-up plans, be creative and flexible, and make use of communication platforms suggested by TAG members to stay in touch.



Eastern Cape, South Africa
(n=18, ages 17-23)
Recruited from Mzantsi Wakho and HEY BABY



Western Cape, South Africa
(n=16, ages 10-15)
Recruited from Young Carers



Kisumu, Kenya
(n=23, ages 15-27)
Recruited in partnership with Centre for the Study of Adolescence

Participatory and art-based approaches

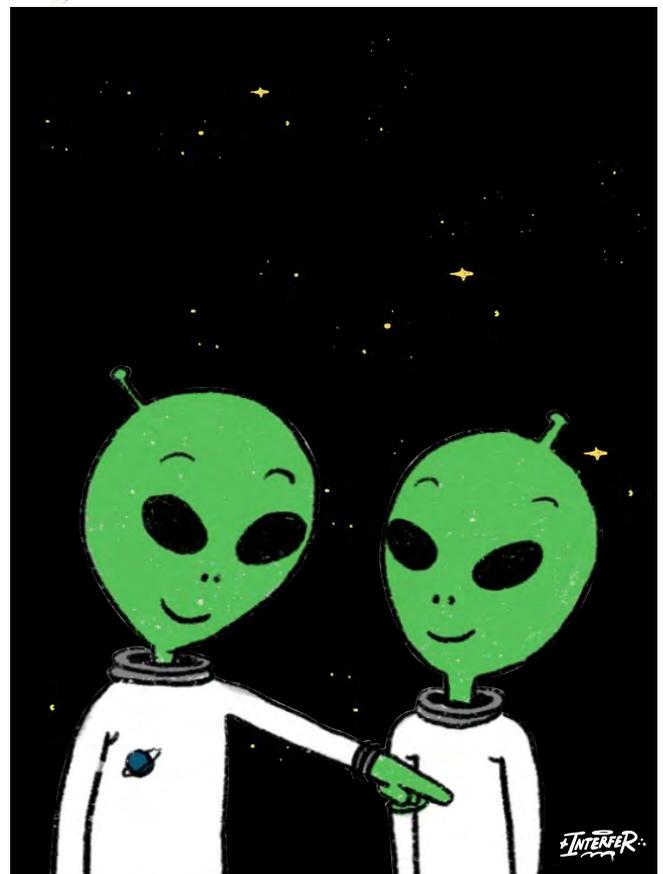
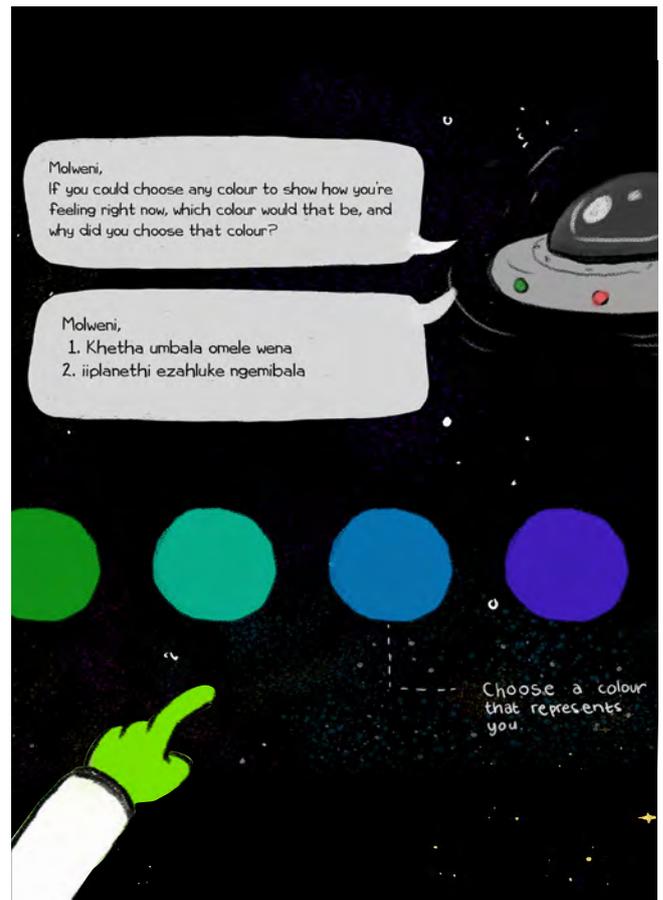
TAG engages with qualitative, arts-based and participatory methods to gather context-specific information and to explore the subjective experiences and stories of participants. This approach is premised on the belief that **when young people are meaningfully engaged in research, the research and resulting policy and programming are more responsive to their priorities and needs** (Campbell et al., 2009; Skovdal & Cornish, 2015).

Youth participation is increasingly seen as part of the solution to health, social and economic problems in LMICs. It is also often framed as an issue of social justice, a vehicle for active citizenship, a nation-building strategy, and a human right (Cahill & Dadvand 2018).

The location of power is central in participatory approaches, and participants are engaged as knowledge holders and critical inquirers about the social and political issues and inequities that affect them. (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). Participants document and analyse their experiences, identify solutions to local problems, and critically assess development initiatives; this leads to the **co-production of actionable knowledge** (Burns et al., 2021).

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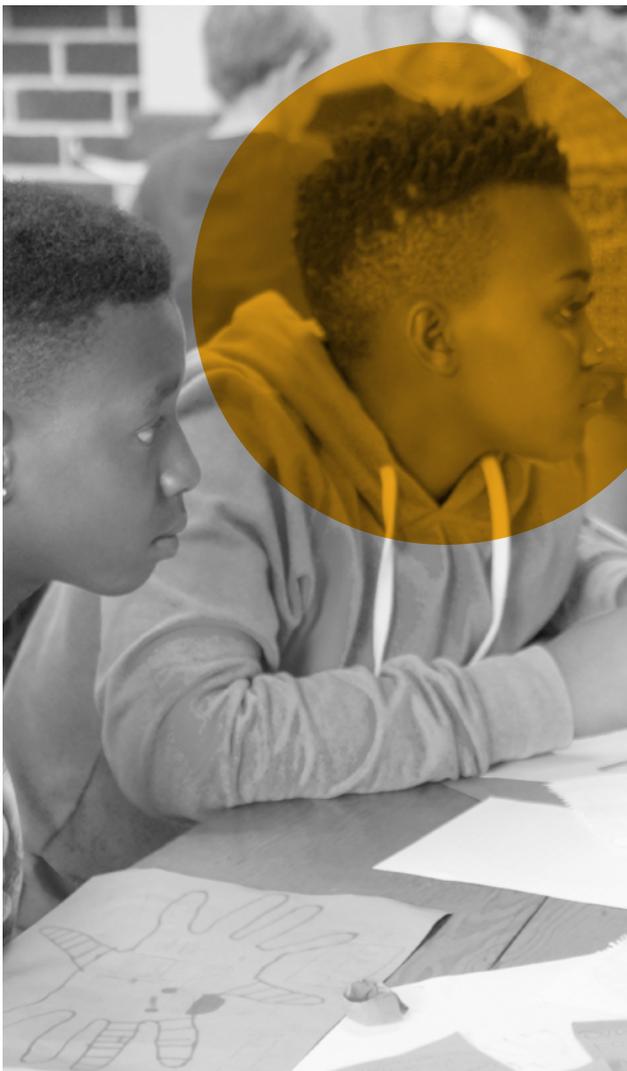
Participatory, art-based methodologies in health and development-related research, including with children and adolescents, have been documented as having **transformative potential that can be used to catalyse social change**. These methodologies can engage AYP and communities by eliciting evidence about their own health, while also acting as modes of representation and production in knowledge co-creation and mobilisation (Mitchell & Sommer, 2016).



Check-in activity with adolescent advisors over social media

Brief overview of our approach before and during COVID-19

In 2019 and early 2020, TAG activities were primarily about relationship building and participation with AYP in three contexts: (1) the Western Cape Province of South Africa, (2) the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa and (3) Kisumu County, Kenya. TAG members included AYP aged 10-27 from a variety of socio-economic and geographic (urban/rural) contexts. Each group participated in a minimum of one weekend-long induction session, where relationships were forged and where they engaged with concepts of research, power and participation. AYP co-generated research and engagement themes, as well as language mediums and articulated their preferred models of engagement.



'Want to learn more about the history of TAG and participatory methods pre-COVID-19?'

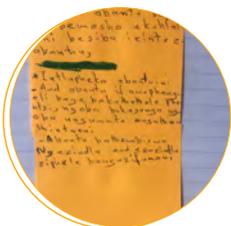
Please read:

[Cluver et al. \(2020\) Power to participants: methodological and ethical reflections from a decade of adolescent advisory groups in South Africa. AIDS Care. 33\(7\): 858-866.](#)

[Gittings et al \(2022\) Art-based reflections from 12 years of adolescent health and development-related research in South Africa. Journal of Health Promotion International: Participatory health promotion research for sustainable change.](#)

From mid-2020 until present, the onset and continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge: AYP living in contexts of poverty and precarity may be additionally vulnerable due to significant disruptions to educational, health and social services, and to routines, weakening their protective potential (Gittings et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2021; OECD, 2021; Parbhoo, 2021). At the same time, they may also be resilient and well-equipped to generate creative inputs, ideas and solutions based on their expertise in their own lives and contexts. Many young people's contexts and needs changed as a result of COVID-19. There is emerging evidence about what young people's needs and challenges are in different African contexts due to the pandemic.

In-person participatory research methods before the onset of COVID-19:



Story telling



Drawing



Singing



Word Association



Theatre

Before undertaking remote research, we first wanted to hear from AYP how they felt the research could be conducted. In a series of exploratory, semi-structured phone conversations (n=8), AYP aged 19-23 advised on topics, methods and platforms for remote research with their groups in two South African provinces.

Teen Advisors suggested:

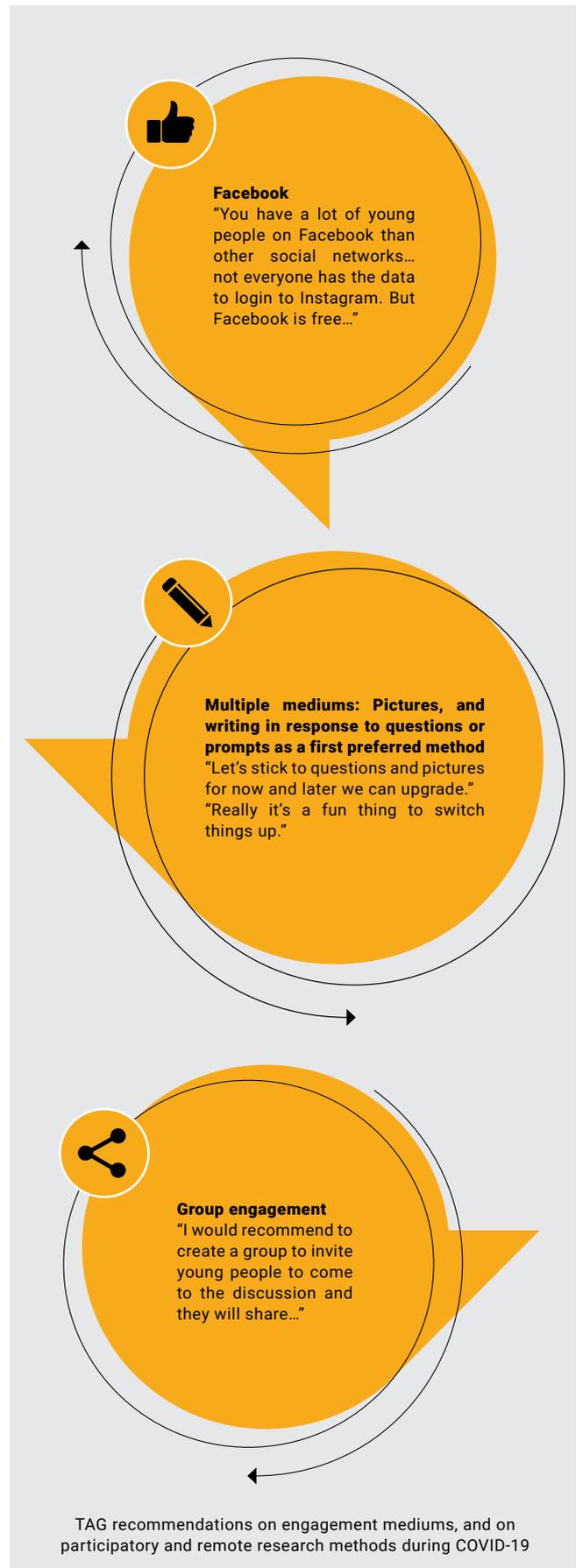
1. Focusing on COVID-19-related experiences, challenges and coping strategies using participatory and arts-based methods including writing, pictures, audio and video.
2. Using Facebook as a platform for data collection as it can be used data-free, at no cost, in South Africa, as well as many other African countries (Nothias, 2020).

Facebook use also enables access and a degree of safety for AYP that do not have personal phones, and are using multiple devices.

3. Using phone calls to check in, conduct individual interviews, and follow-up on emerging themes from the initial semi-structured phone conversations.

Following on from these suggestions, data collection was undertaken through two main methods: phone calls and Facebook groups.

In South Africa, each TAG group (Eastern Cape and Western Cape) had a closed Facebook Group including only TAG members and facilitators. Facilitators with whom TAG members were already familiar acted as moderators.



1

Asking questions and keeping adolescents and young people engaged

“Facilitating engaging activities in both closed Facebook Groups and via participants’ private [Facebook] Messenger Inboxes requires balance: be careful not to push too much with prompts and Messenger Inbox facilitation; pay close attention to participants losing interest - check in with them about how they want to engage in the space and whether they would prefer a different medium; be cautious and do not intrude in participants’ virtual personal space.”

- Lead Facilitator



“If participants are not engaging well in the medium you are using, change your platform to meet them where they are. For example, if participants are not participating in a social media group, use their private Facebook Inbox or use 1:1 telephone calls.” – Lead Facilitator



→ Telephone calls

- Plan intentional and open-ended questions.
- Use follow up questions where needed – some participants are shy, and some are talkative.
- Actively listen by giving the participant your undivided attention, acknowledging what they are saying and responding where appropriate.
- Be aware of spoken and unspoken language - body language over the phone can be expressed through long pauses, silence, sense of discomfort, or hesitation in responses.
- Pay attention to the environment of the participant - someone may walk into the room in the middle of the conversation and that may cause discomfort and the participant won't be able to say they can't talk anymore.
- Be consistent: don't make promises you can't keep, follow up on tasks like referrals which may have come after the call. Do informal check-ins if the call was intense.

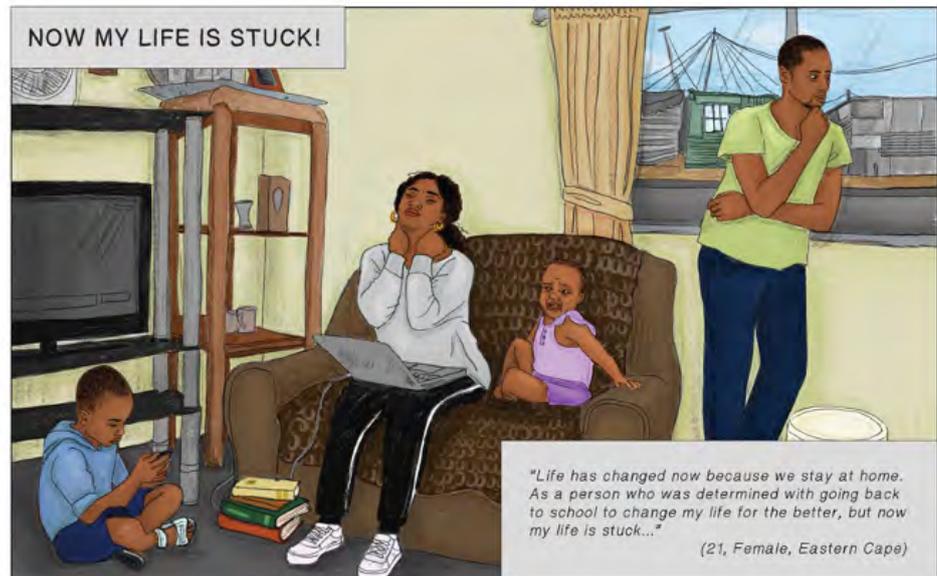
→ Social media

- Use languages and mediums that participants feel comfortable with.
- Use an iterative approach for Facebook activities – plan them beforehand but refine or change them when needed.
- Use simple and short phrases for Facebook posts.
- Post prompts on a regular basis on the Facebook group to ensure consistent communication. Ensure that these prompts are not always extractive, but also focused on building relational trust.
- Facebook Messenger Inbox (“private Inbox”) facilitation is a critical contributor to effective remote engagement and an important complementary tool to closed Facebook group discussions and activities. It can serve 3 purposes:
 1. Clarifying activity instructions: Contact participants via private Inbox when they don't seem to understand the activity or are not responding. Young people are different, as are their contexts, so there is no one-size-fits-all approach;
 2. Re-connecting, and supporting participants to interact with the group after observing limited activity or prolonged absence: encourage participants gently to ask the facilitator to post for them when they write their responses via private Inbox if they don't feel comfortable sharing the post themselves; and
 3. Receiving and recommending onward referrals.

3

Creating a safe space in contexts of constraint

When engaging with AYP it is important to create safe spaces that encourage and maximise adolescent participation. Also bear in mind that some young people may be living in contexts of constraint such as a crowded home environment, tension in the home, and not having access to a personal phone. It is therefore important to be flexible and use different methods of engagement. For example, by using the Time Capsule on Facebook, participants could engage with activities by either commenting, posting, or private Inbox messaging in a closed confidential group or 1:1 privately with the facilitator.



For more information or to cite this work, please see:

Lesley Gittings, Ebona Toska, Sally Medley, Lucie Claver, Carmen H. Logie, Nokuzonga Ralayo, Jenny Chen & Jane Mthi-Dagole (2020). 'Now my life is stuck!': Experiences of adolescents and young people during COVID-19 lockdown in South Africa, *Global Public Health*, DOI: 10.1080/17441682.2021.1930262 / Link: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441682.2021.1930262>

Visual depiction of findings from TAG COVID-19 research with young people

AYP post and reply on their time when they have access to a phone; they may also view and read the posted activity and choose not to engage in it. In reaction to our activities, participants used a wide variety of media to engage with Facebook research activities and in doing so, were able to motivate other group members to participate; this included creative writing, songs, drawings, posters, as well as live videos.

→ Telephone calls

- Facilitators should check in with participants and ask if they have a space where they feel comfortable, and what time is best to call them.
- In order to ensure adolescent-centred engagement, participants should set the time and space for phone calls; this is more likely to result in stronger, more authentic data.
- Participants should be made aware that they can opt out and end calls at any time, and facilitators can then call them back when it is convenient for them.
- Sometimes participants may say they are ready to participate in an interview, but the facilitator may hear background noise or identify that the participant is not comfortable (for example, if there are long pauses). It is important that facilitators are trained to listen actively and respond to spoken and unspoken cues by offering to reschedule to another time.

→ Social media

- Researchers should use private groups on Facebook so that only participants and facilitators have access. Private groups create a sense of safety for young people to continue to care for each other and stay connected remotely.
- Facilitators should co-create ground rules (with adolescent participants) for Facebook engagement [see Appendix A for more detail] and build trust by establishing a new type of online relationship where they observe and mirror the language and style of communicating that is unique to social media.
- Facilitators should track posts and look for alarming phrases or engagement - such as "I wish I could be far away or run far away", "I wish I could die, I could drink something to end the pain" or "I feel angry or upset". The facilitator should shift conversation from a group setting to 1:1 into private Inbox, follow up promptly, and determine which onwards referral(s) is(are) needed. Facebook also allows for setting 'alarm' words that will flag notifications to facilitators.
- Facilitators should monitor the content that is posted and will need to remove content that is not appropriate for the group, such as alarming or offensive words and bullying.

4

Navigating ethical considerations

A key guiding principle of the TAG's work, situated within the P7 framework of participation (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018) is "protection". When shifting to remote methods, the TAG research team undertook the following actions to ensure the safety of AYP:

1. Created safe spaces online that encouraged and maximise participation (abovementioned tip)
2. Facilitated informed consent/assent, clearly communicated opt-out procedures, and confidentiality
3. Implemented safeguarding procedures and referral systems, in the case of disclosures (abuse, risk behaviours, etc.)
4. Built a competent team, that are conscious about both local context and vigilant for potential harm to participants
5. Encouraged AYP to take an active role in ensuring the safety of their peers

In the case of remote engagement, consent can be done telephonically: the consent form can be read to participants and they verbally consent to participate; this is audio-recorded. This consent can also be captured by the researcher on the form. Participants can request an electronic copy of the consent form. For participants under 18, caregivers also need to give their consent over the phone.

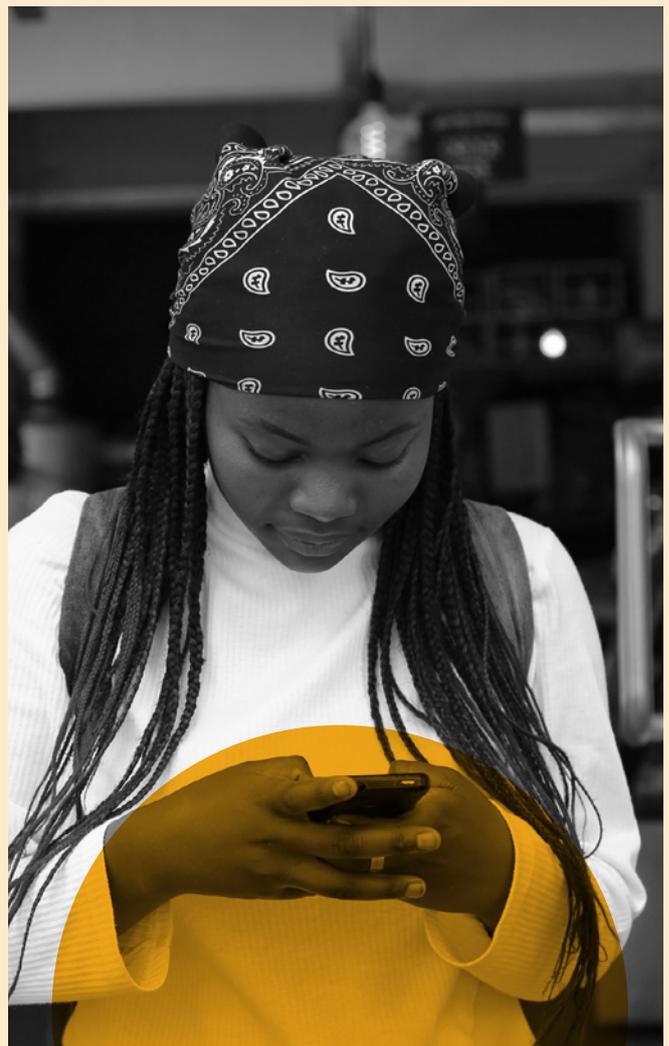
To ensure participant confidentiality and digital safeguarding, all TAG remote research activities were guided by a study protocol and ethical approvals from University of Cape Town HREC, Oxford University SSH IDREC, Amref and MUERC in Kenya, and University of Toronto REB. Planned research activities were systematically evaluated through a Data Protection Impact Assessment, followed a strict Data Management Plan, and complied with the Data Protection Act in Kenya and POPIA in South Africa, which requires data to be pseudonymised as soon as it is practical to do so.

→ Telephone calls

- Recordings of telephone calls and transcriptions should be kept confidential and anonymized, and only the immediate research team should have access to them via a secure, password protected system.

→ Social media

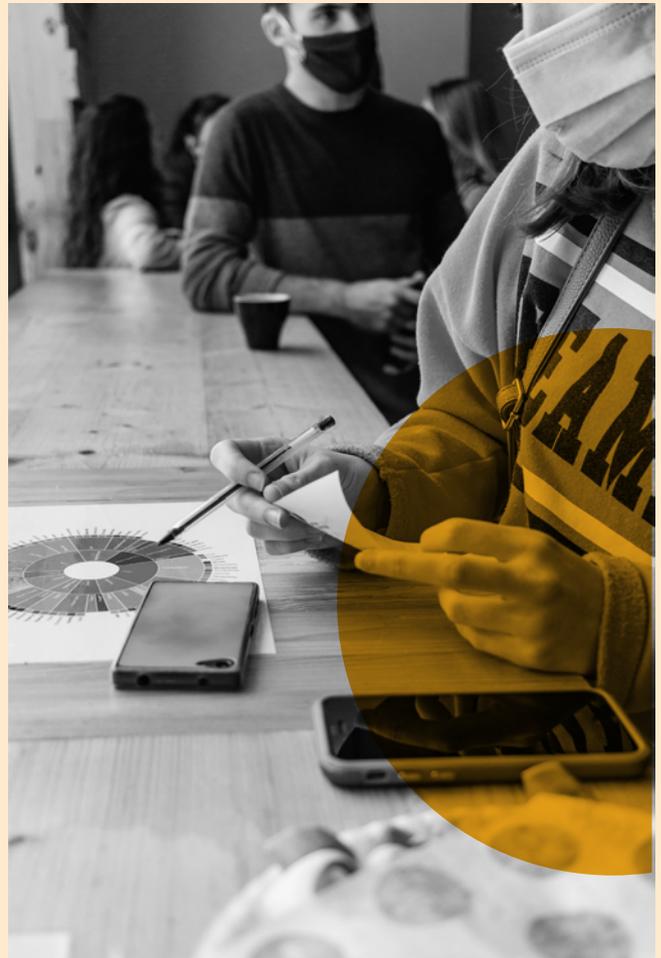
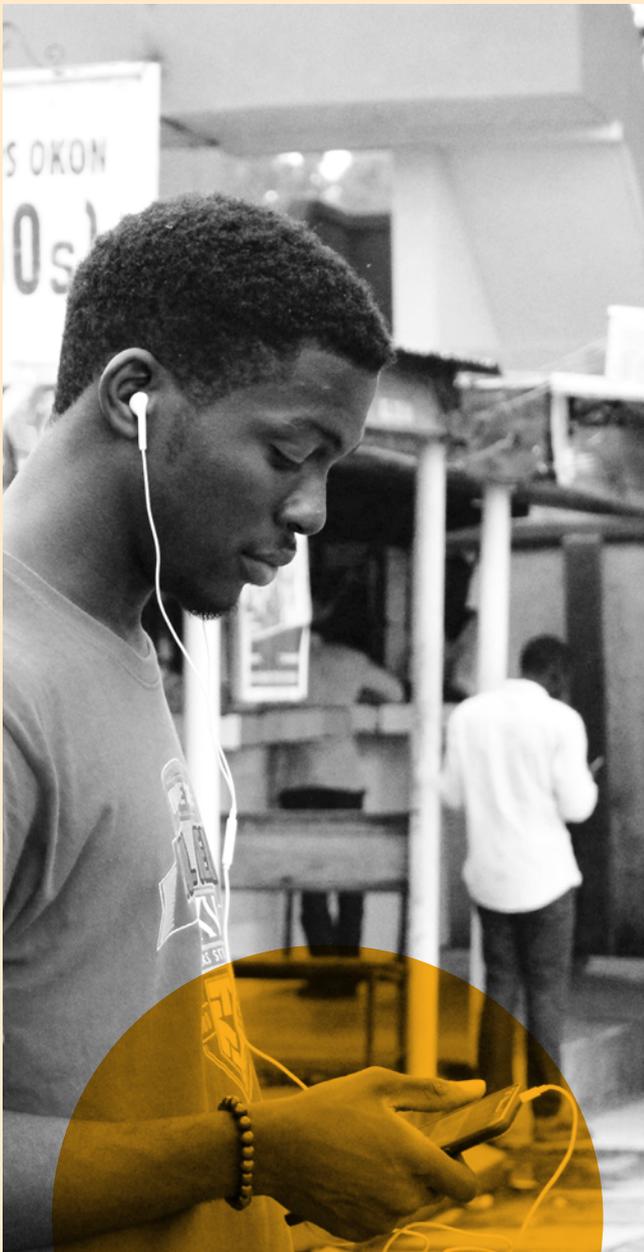
- Keep Facebook groups closed and private – only participants and the research team should have access to the group.
- Make sure participants are aware that they need to log out of Facebook when they use another person's phone to keep access to the group private.
- Communicate that once things are posted online, researchers cannot ensure that they will not be shared by other participants.
- Transcriptions need to be anonymized and kept confidential.



5

Navigating access to technology

While AYP recommended communication through technology that they already use, most AYP do not have access to WiFi at home. It is important for research projects and teams to assess technology capacity at the outset of the study and build in time for extensive planning and preparation related to data purchase and usage. Considerations should include: how to buy data and for which networks, frequency, unit costs, who will coordinate buying and deploying data, and how changing of SIM cards (phone numbers) for data purchasing will be monitored, especially for those who do not own smartphones.



→ Telephone calls

- Call participants when you see little to no engagement on Facebook or WhatsApp, for further facilitation, and to check that they are well.
- In our experience, AYP participants change numbers and phones very frequently, especially when they do not own a phone themselves (typically they use friends or family members' phones). It is important to request AYP's most recent number frequently.

→ Social media

- With the consent of participants, facilitators should use WhatsApp and Facebook as they require little to no data usage.
- Facebook has a call-back feature: facilitators can leave their contact number in the participants' private Inbox and they can call via Facebook at no cost.
- The facilitator should be aware of Facebook account activity, as some participants may have multiple accounts.

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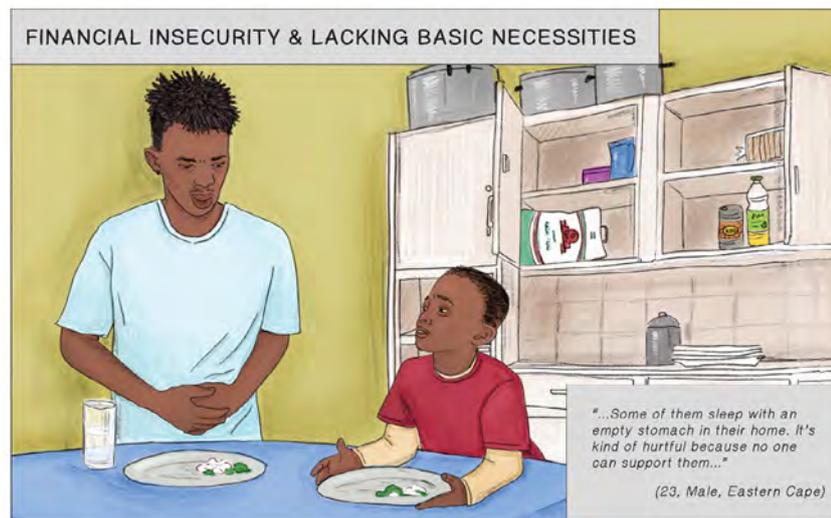
Managing referrals

When working with AYP living in contexts of precarity and constraint, it is important to plan rigorously and systematically for requests for referrals to health and social services, and for how to respond appropriately to young people whose basic needs are not being met. This is especially important in the context of a pandemic. In the TAG research project, levels of referrals were high: 14% of our participants requested counselling and 36% needed food vouchers.

- Expect and plan for referrals: have a protocol, include the cost of referrals in your budget, and have a list of social services available and accessible to AYP.
- Ensure enough time for training your research team and facilitator(s) in managing referrals.
- Manage participants' expectations: facilitators should be clear at the beginning and throughout the research process about what they are able to provide and how, and what is outside the scope of services.
- Some participants do not feel comfortable to ask for help even when they are in need. In these cases, if facilitators identify participants are in need through unspoken cues, they should remind them of available resources and services.
- Grocery store vouchers are acceptable for AYP, and relatively easy to implement, and can be used for urgent food referrals.
- Use local phone-based counselling when needed, and assist participants with setting up appointments and providing airtime for the calls [see Appendix B for more detail].
- Create boundaries and revisit them at all times. While it is critical that research teams and facilitators build trust and help participants where it is within the scope of services available, it is important to identify when their needs exceed what is offered and support them with suggestions for onward care.
- Research teams and facilitators should approach referrals with care: remember self-care and self-awareness (see final tip for more detail).

→ Telephone calls

- Take notes at all times when dealing with referrals.
- Plan, monitor and track referrals with a system so as not to make promises that one can't deliver on. This is important for trust.
- When the counselling appointment is done, check up on the participant and find out how it went.
- Debrief with colleagues and supervisors.



For more information or to cite this work, please see:

Lesley Gitting, Elena Toska, Sally Medley, Lucie Clover, Carmen H. Loge, Nokuwonga Rakayo, Jenny Chen & Jane Mithi-Digole (2021). 'Now my life is stuck': Experiences of adolescents and young people during COVID-19 lockdown in South Africa. *Global Public Health*, DOI: 10.1080/17445019.2021.1999052 / Link: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17445019.2021.1999052>

Visual depiction of findings from TAG COVID-19 research with young people

→ Social media

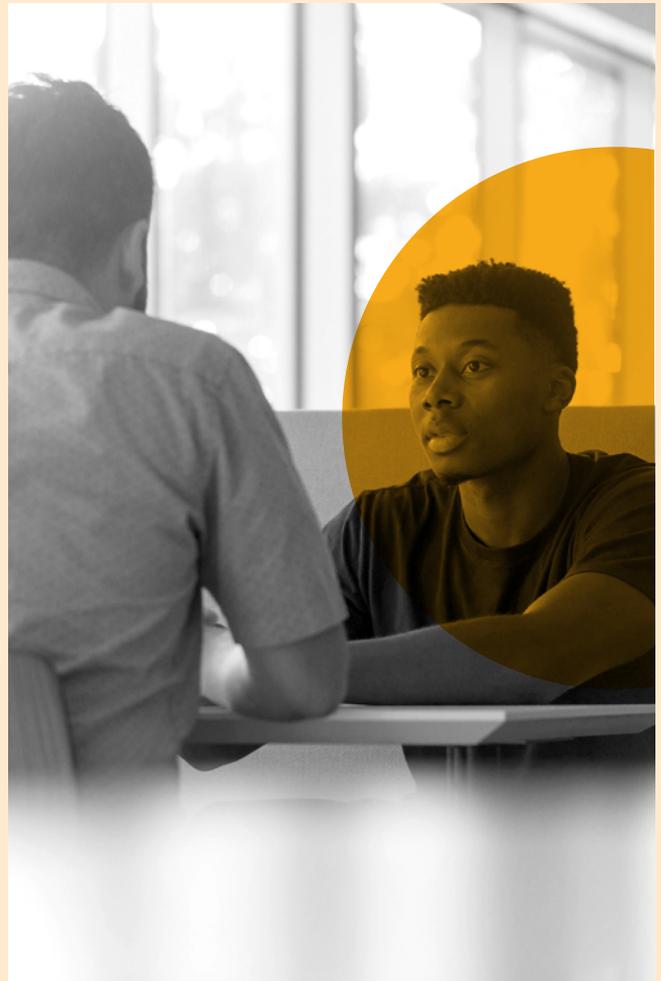
- If you sense something might be wrong (e.g. if a participant posts on the group something personal that they are going through), ask the participant to chat privately via Inbox, and arrange a time to call that suits them. During the call you can establish whether they are in need of a referral.
- Always acknowledge and thank them for sharing their story.
- If they are chatting with someone else's phone, always ask them to delete the conversation and make sure they have logged out of their Facebook account.
- If participants have requested services outside of what is available, the facilitator should use private Inbox communication to politely explain what it is that can be offered in terms of referrals, and direct them to other resources if possible.

7

Researcher self-care

Self-care is very important when you are engaging with participants. This includes practicing self-awareness.

- Researchers and facilitators should communicate and debrief frequently, supported by adequate mentorship and supervision.
- Unless it is a serious emergency, facilitators should not respond to participant requests on their non-working days or hours.
- Participants can become emotionally attached to facilitators and other members of the research team actively engaging with AYP; it is important to find balance in building trust while distancing the research team from participants' personal lives and any ongoing referrals to social or clinical services.
- Expect the unexpected: when the unexpected comes, researchers and facilitators must remain calm and practice containment strategies.



→ Telephone calls

- The comfortable and trusting setting of 1:1 discussion may cause participants to raise topics which may press the boundaries of the mutually agreed-upon research topic. Facilitators should be supported with clear guidance and adequate professional resources for referrals (both for study participants and themselves).

→ Social media

- Avoid responding to Facebook at night or over the weekend unless there is an emergency which requires a referral. Posting at the beginning of the week and having prompts is helpful in achieving this.
- When the conversation or questions asked by participants are outside the scope of research, facilitators should use direct language and clarify what they can and cannot do. Refer participants back to the co-created ground rules.

Concluding thoughts

Using remote methods with our TAGs provided valuable insights into the challenges that AYP have faced during COVID-19, and their resilience in managing these challenges. It was also a great way to stay connected with the participants with COVID-19 restrictions in place. In summary,

- Remote methods can pose significant challenges, necessitating dedicated time and financial resources. Despite this, responsive and adolescent-friendly research is possible remotely.
- Engaging AYP as knowledge-holders is a powerful way to inform context-specific research during COVID-19.
- Designing remote research based on participant contexts, needs and interests can:
 - Generate rich context-specific evidence
 - Shift power in the researcher-participant relationship
 - Leverage the expertise of AYP in HIV and health-related research



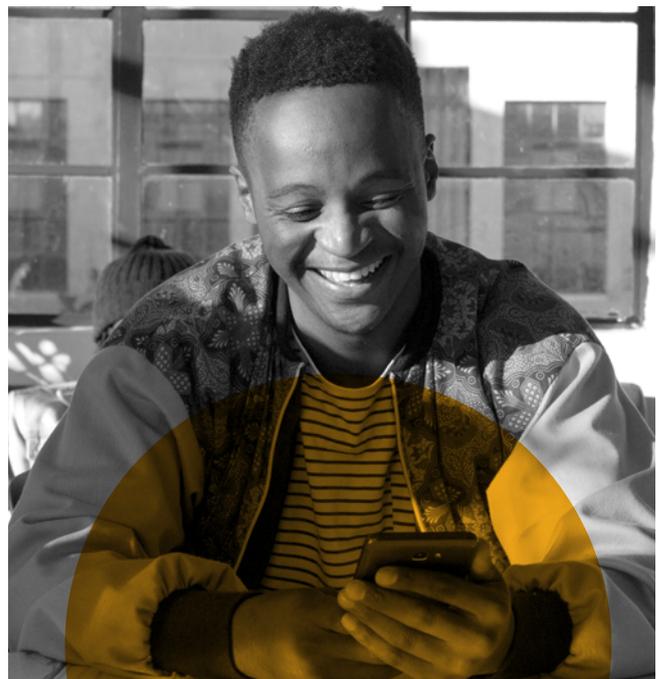
The TAG members and supporting researchers developed a set of values and an approach to meaningful engagement of adolescents and young people in the research process. This mural was developed with the input of young people, to depict their desires and hopes for their involvement in research.

Visual mural developed by TAG Western Cape, INTERFER and researchers at the Universities of Toronto and Cape Town depicting how young people see their participation in research. To learn more, see:

Gittings, L., Medley, S., Logie, C., Ralalyo, N., Toska, E., Peterson, N., Cluver, L., Chen, J., Art-based reflections from 12 years of adolescent health and development-related research in South Africa. (In press). *Journal of Health Promotion International: Participatory health promotion research for sustainable change*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daac020>

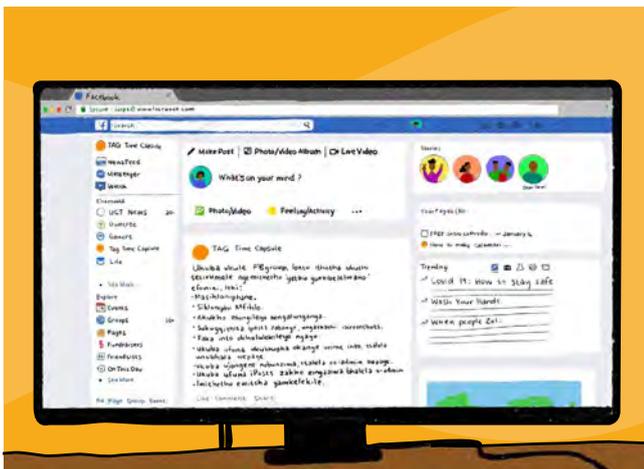
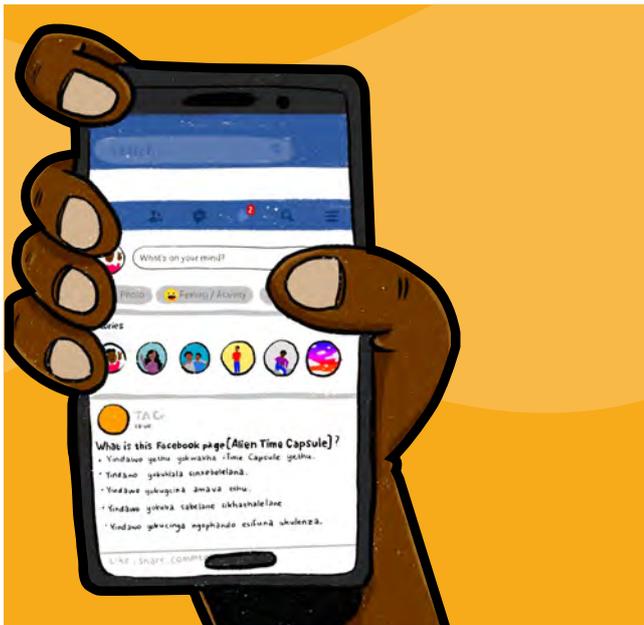
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What is this FB Page (Alien Time Capsule)?

- This is a space for us as TAG (insert TAG name - Western Cape/Eastern Cape/Kisumu) to stay in touch with each other now that we can't be together.
- It is a space to create our Time Capsule of experiences and it is for sharing our experiences and caring for one another in this period.
- Let's share our stories and experiences so that we can all understand the experiences and challenges of young South Africans in this very important time.
- COVID-19 (Corona virus) has affected the entire world, and the voices of young people are needed.
- YOUR voices are needed.
- This is a space where we can do research together. Nothing about us without us.
- A space for us to create our Time Capsule.
- A space to stay in touch with each other.
- A space to record our experiences.
- A space of caring for and sharing with each other.
- A space to think about the research we want to do.



Time Capsule Rules

Let's Respect each other like we do in person. Let's respect confidentiality and do not share anything spoken about in this group with anyone else. This includes talking or writing about other people's posts in public or online, or sharing screenshots.

There is no right or wrong answers. And there is no pressure to participate in the activities. Only share what you are comfortable with sharing and posting. Always remember that when you post something on Facebook, others will see it and we can't know if people share it. We hope and trust no-one will share things.

Contact any of the Group Admins if you want to remove something from the group. Remember, if you post it someone could have seen it.

Please do not take or share screenshots. We need to protect and care for each other.

If you are using someone else's device to login to Facebook, don't forget to make sure you are logged out when you are done using it. You must make sure that other people cannot use your account to access the page to see your posts and the posts of other Taggers. Privacy is important.

If you do not want to share your work on FB or maybe you don't want to share certain stories on the FB page, you can send your work to the Admins on FB, WhatsApp or through phone calls.

Please contact the Admins if you are feeling emotional or if you are facing a challenge. We can't promise we'll be able to help, but we will do our best to find someone who can.

Other or new rules are welcome! You can message the admins privately, or message this page, if you want to suggest another rule to make you feel safe to participate.

We at the Accelerate Hub will be using this Facebook Time Capsule as a way to learn from you about Young People's experiences and challenges during COVID-19. We will never use this information to identify you personally, but we might share what we learn with people who are making decisions in the COVID-19 response, like governments and NGOs. Your names will never be mentioned. You can always ask us about this if you have any questions.

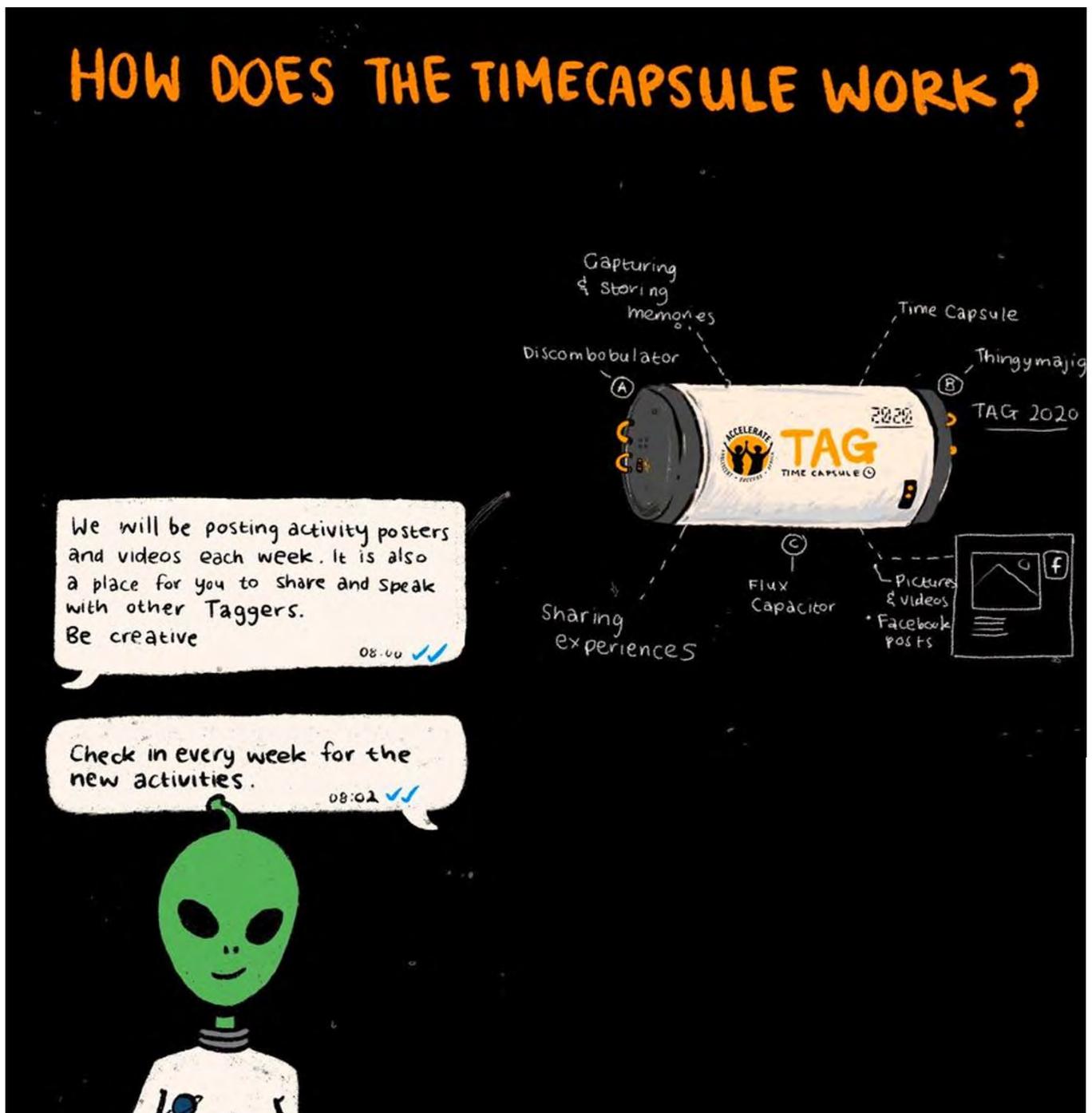
Based on your thoughts and experiences with working on this Time Capsule, we may start other Time Capsules with young people in different parts of Africa, or the World. This means you are also providing advice for other future research with young people.

How does this Time Capsule work?

This page is our Time Capsule. It is a way for us to record our experiences and thoughts now that we can't be in the same place. We will be posting videos and posters that explain different activities every week.

You can participate as much as you want. You can post every week. You can post every day. And you can go as deep as you wish. It really is up to you. We encourage you to be as creative as you want to be. You can also message your responses or experiences, if you do not want your work to be anonymous. Let's fill this Time Capsule with stories of our own lives.

At TAG Western Cape we speak Xho-English! We will have every poster and video in isiXhosa and English. Feel free to ask any questions on the FB Page, or to message any of the admins if you need more information.



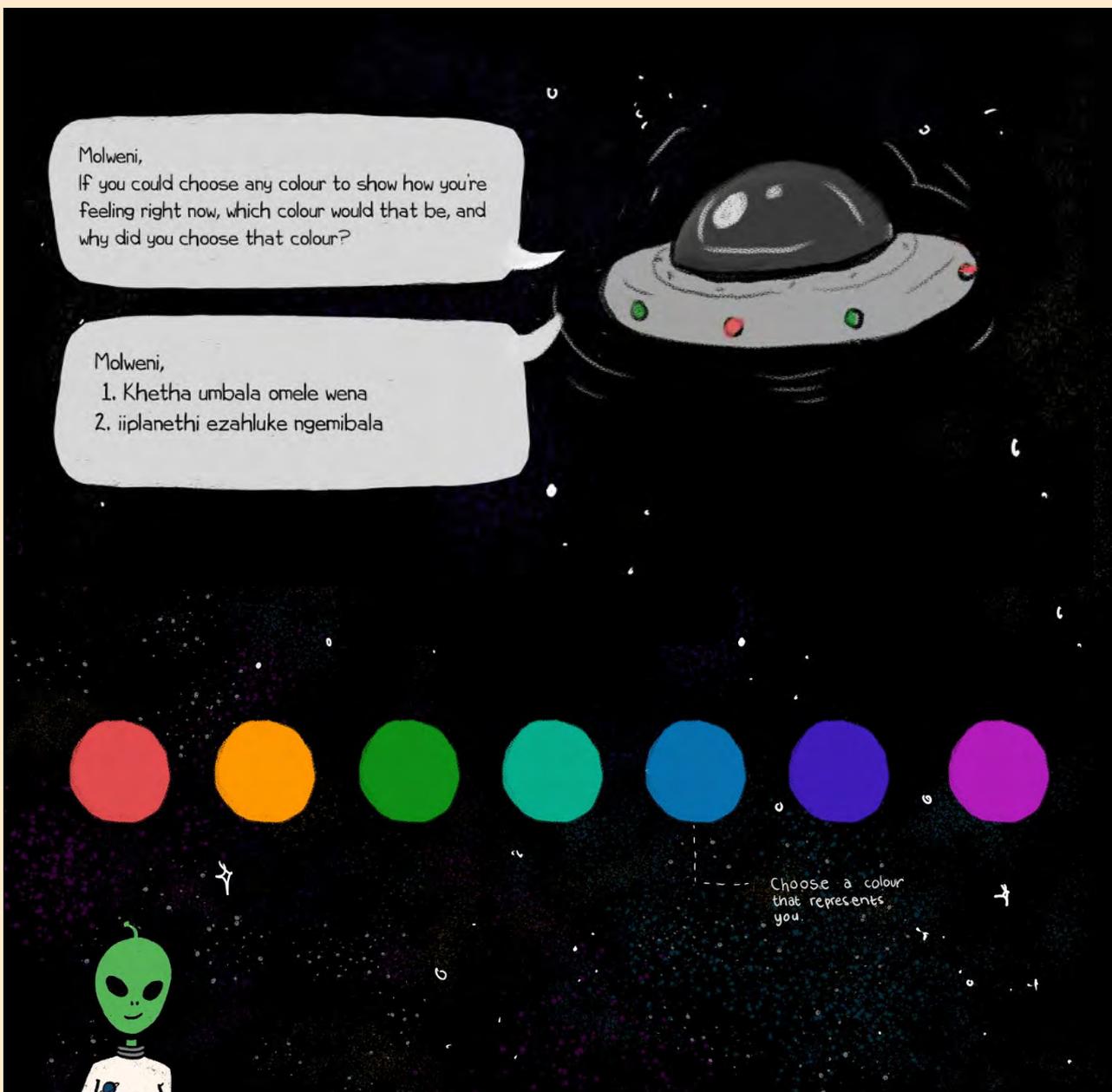
Activitiies

Virtual Colour Check-in

We've been missing each other and we've absolutely been missing spending time with you! Well, in person! Usually when we meet in person it is a chance to catch-up and hear what has happened in each other's lives, and what's new! So let's check-in our Time-Capsule. You know how THIS goes. Don't be SHY!

So! If you could choose any colour that explains how you feel RIGHT THIS MOMENT, what colour would you be and tell us WHY you're feeling that colour!

Remember the way you feel can change from day to day, or even minute to minute. Holler at us if your colour changes too. So, don't just sit there, let's get started! Tell us your colour! And remember you can do this in any way you choose: writing, photos, videos, or anything you can use to express yourself on FB.



Highlights & Lowlights of COVID-19

Molweni

Last week you told us how you were feeling using colours. And you can continue to tell us which colour you're feeling. This week we want to hear more about the best and worst parts of what has happened since we last saw you. And the last time we were able to see you was quite a bit of time before Lockdown.

This week, we want you to share your highlights (best parts) and lowlights (worst parts) since COVID-19 and the South African Lockdown started.

Remember, you can share your thoughts in any form you can express yourself on FB. You can tell us in writing, with pictures, audio, videos, poems or short stories. Be as creative as you want!



What is COVID-19? Show us! Tell us about it! I don't have a human body so I don't understand.

These aliens don't have human bodies and don't understand how this COVID-19-thing works! Let's explain to them what COVID-19 is!

When you think about COVID-19 as a virus, what images first come to your mind? Tell us in any way – draw, write, make a tik tok video! There is no right or wrong way to explain COVID-19.

COVID-19 and objects

You've explained what COVID-19 is, thank you! Now the aliens want to understand how COVID-19 has affected you personally. This activity is about using objects in your house to tell your story. Select an object that has been with you during this time of COVID-19. Imagine that object has watched you and knows your story. What is the object, and what would it say about your life in COVID-19?



COVID-19 and your world

How has COVID-19 affected the world around you? How have things changed?

This is like the brainstorm activity we do with sticky notes in person. Write the first words that come to mind when thinking about how COVID-19 has affected the world around you. There is no right or wrong. We want you to put as many comments as you can! Only one comment box for each idea. Even if your friend wrote the same thing as what you thought, you can write the same thing too!



Prompts

You told us that the main issues affecting the world around you are: school, work/unemployment, violence, death, social grants, interruptions to contraception and other health services, emotional/mental health, social distancing, boredom, crime. Please vote for the top three issues that you think are most important.

The results are in!

Last week you told us that the top issues for how COVID-19 has affected the world around you are:

- Work/Unemployment
- School
- Violence

This week we want to hear more from you about these issues.

Please pick one of these issues and tell us more about it. You can tell us any way you want: in writing, with a video or a picture or a story.

We want you to tell us:

- What has changed?
- Please describe the problem.
- Why do you think this is important?

Activity continued on next page

Activity continued from previous page

Prompt

Last week you talked about the effects of COVID-19. You have voted that the most important ones are: Work/ Unemployment, School and Violence. We would now like you to explain how things have changed or affected school, unemployment and violence. Explain what has changed with this problem, why you chose it, and explain in detail.

This week we want to know your ideas about solving these problems! For the challenge you spoke about last week, please tell us:

1. What is the challenge?
2. What do you think should be done to solve it?
3. Who is responsible for addressing this challenge?
4. Imagine that they invited you to a phone or video chat to hear your advice. What would you tell them and why?

As always, you can express yourself in any way you want, but this week we would love to hear your voice or see a video if possible! You can do the video like you were speaking to the president or someone else who can fix the challenges that COVID-19 has caused in the world around you.

Prompt

This week's activity talks about problems you shared last week that have changed because of COVID-19, what do you think needs to be done to fix it? Who needs to fix it? What can he say or do to correct it? Describe which problem or thing you would change first.

Hello TAG here are the closing questions for this week that we would like to hear your views about:

1. What do you think of the time capsule (our group)?
2. Are there activities you liked and did not like? Tell us about them.
3. Are there any things you would like us to talk about or do together in our group?



New year

How was your holiday break/vacation and new year 2021? How have you been since we last spoke to each other?

What are your hopes, goals and dreams for 2021?

- A hope is something you hope to happen or hope to achieve in 2021.
- A goal is something you are planning or working toward to achieve in 2021.
- A dream is something that can be really big that you dream about happening for you in 2021.

Reflecting on Resilience

We all experience times that are good and times that are difficult. Each of us has strength to get through hard times. These next three activities are about the things that make us strong to get through the hard times.

Let's imagine that these different parts of our lives that give us strength are like a body. We have:

1. Head: Our thoughts and beliefs
2. Our heart: The people we love and care about
3. Our hands and feet: the things around us in our lives and communities that help us.



Activity continued on next page

Activity continued from previous page



Let's start with our HEADS

Inside you there are thoughts and beliefs that have helped give you strength during difficult times. For example, these could be religious beliefs, affirmations, positive thoughts or what we believe about ourselves.

What thoughts/beliefs have helped you when finding strength during COVID-19? How do you use them? Write or make a video showing how you motivate yourself when times are hard. There is no right or wrong answer. You can say as many as you would like.



Our heart: The people we love and care about

Last week we spoke about how our beliefs and thoughts can help give us strength during difficult times. This week we are going to our HEARTS and finding the people around us that help us to cope and persevere in difficulty. Tell us about the top 3 people that have supported you during the COVID-19 pandemic (they can be family, friends, or anyone close to you). For each person, tell us (1) who they are; and (2) how they have supported you in this difficult time in your life?

- Hello to TAG home. This week we are talking about our hearts and the people who care about us and we care about them.
- Please describe the 3 people who supported and strengthened you during COVID-19. How did they do it?



Our hands and feet: the things around us in our lives and communities that help us

Last week we spoke about the people in our hearts that help us in difficult times. This week we are going to our HANDS and FEET to all the places that have meaning and have supported us during COVID-19. In your community there are places that you go to when things are difficult, for example, you may go to church/mosque when you are feeling low, or perhaps school or a local sports club.

Tell us about three places that have given you strength/helped you cope during the COVID-19 pandemic? For each one, tell us (1) What is the place? (2) When would you go to them? (3) How have they helped you? Send us a picture of one or more of your places, or a drawing of one of your places.

Intergenerational Interviewing

This week we want you to be researchers! We'd like you to choose an adult that you would like to talk to and interview. They can be anyone who is older who you respect and trust! They can be a caregiver, family, a grandparent, an aunt, your pastor or a family friend. If you do not live with them, make sure that you don't come too close to them because of COVID-19. If you want to call them on the phone we can transfer you airtime to call them. You'll also need a pen and paper to take notes. In this activity we want you to ask them some questions, and also tell them a little bit about your experience of COVID-19 pandemic.

- Question 1: Tell us what has COVID-19 been like for you?
Question 2: What has helped you to survive/cope with the difficult parts of COVID-19?
Question 3: Have you ever gone through any other difficult experience? How did you get through it?
Question 4: Were the things that you did to get through COVID-19 the same as or different from this other experience? Please explain.

Please tell us in writing:

1. Who did you speak to (without telling their name - e.g. aunt, neighbour, grandmother, etc.)?
2. What did they say for those answers?

You can also message privately and the Facilitator can call you if you'd rather discuss on the phone. Please keep the names of the people you interviewed private and confidential (we do not want to know their names).



Activity continued on next page

Activity continued from previous page

Reflections from Intergenerational Interviewing

Last week you spoke to an adult about how they coped with COVID-19 and other difficult challenges. This week we want to hear from you about how it went. Please tell us, in any way that you want:

1. What was the activity last week like for you? How did it make you feel?
2. What did you learn about the person you interviewed?
3. What has helped you to survive/cope with COVID-19?
4. Are the things you do to cope the same as or different from them? Is there anything that they do to cope that you would also like to do? OR anything that you would NEVER do that they do? Please explain.



Fun show

Hello everyone! This week we do YOUR FUN SHOW!!!! We want to find something that one can do and love: It can be dance, dance, mandi music here we have artists and DJs, poets and writers, everything. If you can do a garden or a ball or a sport and whatever you are good at - show us!! If your data is not enough when you need to put your entertainment and hobbies into it tell us - we will make a plan!!!

There is a reward for participants!! Let's go Washaaaaa !!!!

Hello everyone!

Let us take a break together over the next two weeks and have a little fun! We would like to invite everyone to share their various talents, small enjoyments and skills with this group.

A GIF of you dancing, a song, poem, written story, drawing, photography. Maybe you are skilled in something that we could learn from - like gardening, looking after animals or drawing pictures. The choices are endless and totally up to you!

You can upload your piece anytime between now and next week Friday (26th March 2021). Everyone is encouraged to comment and cheer one another on.

The reward for participation is 1GB DATA.

P.S if what you choose to upload requires more data then please reach out to us.

We look forward to seeing your creative sides once again!



Molweni bethuna!!

Masike sithathe ibreak sonke kweziveki zimbini zizayo, sonwabeni kancinci!

Singathanda ukumema wonke umntu apha egropini asibonise italente ezahlukeneyo zakhe, ukuzonwabisa okuncinci kwakhe, nezakhono zakhe.

Usibonise udanisa okanye ujavva, umculo wakho okanye ucula, umbongo, ibali elibhaliweyo, umzobo, ifoto. Mhlawumbe unesakhono kwinto esingafunda kuyo- njenge gadi, okanye ukuhoya izilwanyana okanye ukuzoba imifanekiso. Ininzi nje into esinozenza nesinokhetha konke kuxhomekeke kuwe!!

Ungalifaka iqhekeza lakho nanini na phakathi kwangoku uyoma kwi(26 March 2021) kuleveki zayo. Wonkumntu kuvumelekile ukhuthazana nopavelana.

Umvuzo wokuthathi nxaxheba ngu... 1GB DATA

Gqophela ukuba inde into oyifakayo kwaye ifuna idata eninzi sicela usichazele.

Sijonge kakuhle kukhulu ukubona amacala enu acreative kwakhona!



What did you think: TAG Facebook group evaluation



HELLO EVERYONE! / MOLWENI NONKE

This Facebook group has been active for about a year now! As part of delivering a platform to do research we want to make sure to adapt activities to **YOU!** Below is a link to a set of questions that we'd like you to answer to evaluate what has worked and what has not worked for you! We need your honest opinion to make this a space to speak to issues and topics that are important to you. So get your voice heard by completing the survey here.

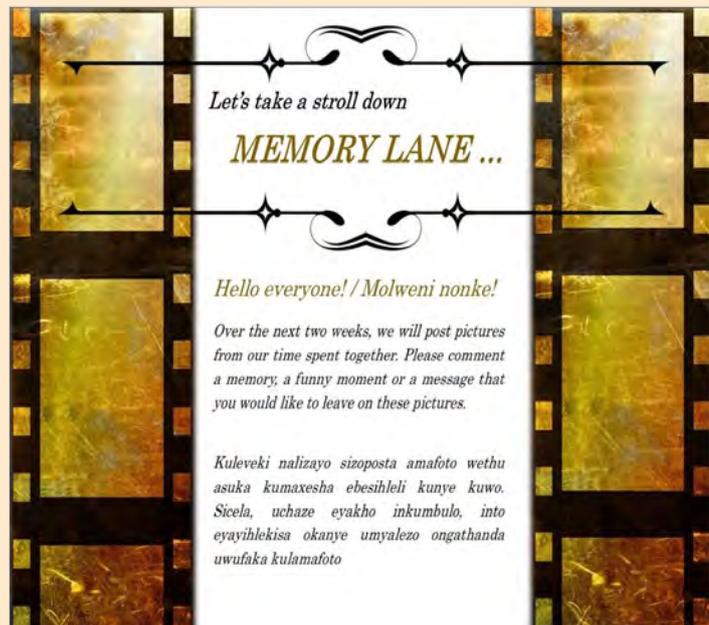
Legroup kaFacebook oko ikhona into engangonyaka ngoku! Njenge ndlela yokwenza uphando sifuna ukuqinisekisa sisebenzisa activities ezilungele WENA! Ngezantsi kukho ilink ekusa kwimibuzo esingathanda uyiphendule ukuvavanya izinto eziku sebenzeleyo nezingaku sebenzalanga! Sidinga uluvo lwakho olunyanisekileyo ukuze senze lendawo ibeyindawo yokuthetha ngemi-ba nezihloko ezibalulekileyo kuwe. Ngakoke yenza ilizwi lakho lizovakala ngogqibezela le survey lipha.

Memory Lane

Prompt:

TAG, don't forget to tell us about the funny memories and messages we want to leave in these photos.

We took a stroll down a memory lane and find ourselves back in the present. We really want to know how everyone is doing! Feel free to post more than once.



Selfie Catch-up

Prompt:

Hello TAG we are still here for selfie! How are you doing? How are things? What's new? Please don't be afraid.

**LET'S ALL
CATCH UP
WITH A SELFIE**

In the last two weeks we went through our memories of the times we spent together.

Over the next two weeks let us share how we are doing with the group. Please upload a selfie with a short message or just the message if you are not up for a selfie.

Tell us, how you are doing and what you have been up to. Share some news if you have!

We look forward to see how everyone is

Kwiveki ezimbini ezidlulileyo sithathe uhambo kwimbulo zamaxesha esiwachithileyo kunye.

Kweziveki zimbini zizayo masabelane ngendlela esiqhuba ngayo egroupini. Faka iselfie nomyalezo omncinci usichazele ukuba unjani, ungabhala nje umyalezo wodwa ukuba awufuni ufaka iselfie.

Sixelele, unjani kwaye yintoni ophezukwayo nendaba onazo ukuba zikhona!

Sijonge ngogqozo ukuba wonke umntu unjani :)

Create a Movie or a Book Cover

Hello TAG, here is this week's activity. You haven't received any data yet. If 2020 or 2021 were a movie or a book, tell us about its cover, what would you say its name is and what would it look like? (We will share, take a picture, video, or write). Winner will receive a gift of R150 mobile data.

Prompt:

Say something to those who haven't done it yet: If 2020 or 2021 were a movie or a book, tell us about its cover, what would you say its name is and what would it look like? (draw, make a picture, video, or write) ...

CREATE A MOVIE OR BOOK COVER FOR 2020/2021 & WIN!

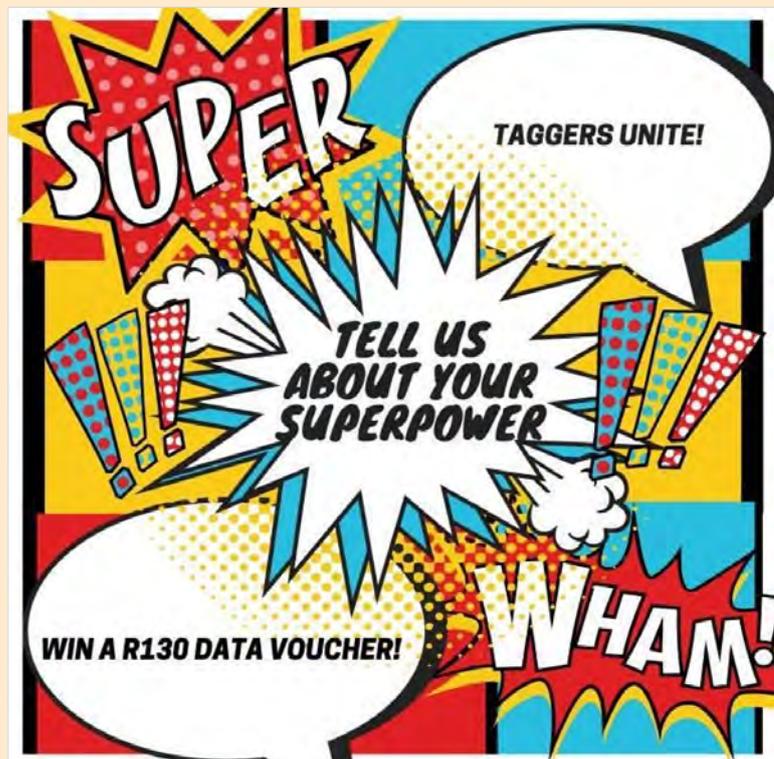


Imagine that 2020/2021 was a movie or book. What would the name be? What would the cover of the book or movie look like?

One lucky participant will win a R150 data voucher!

Tell us about your superPOWER

This week tell us about your special power! What would your special power be? What does it help you do? How would it help your family or community? If you have your notebook, draw it in there and take a picture to show your special power, or tell us about it in words. Everyone who participates in the competition will be awarded a R20 data voucher and 1 lucky winner will walk away with a R130 data voucher!

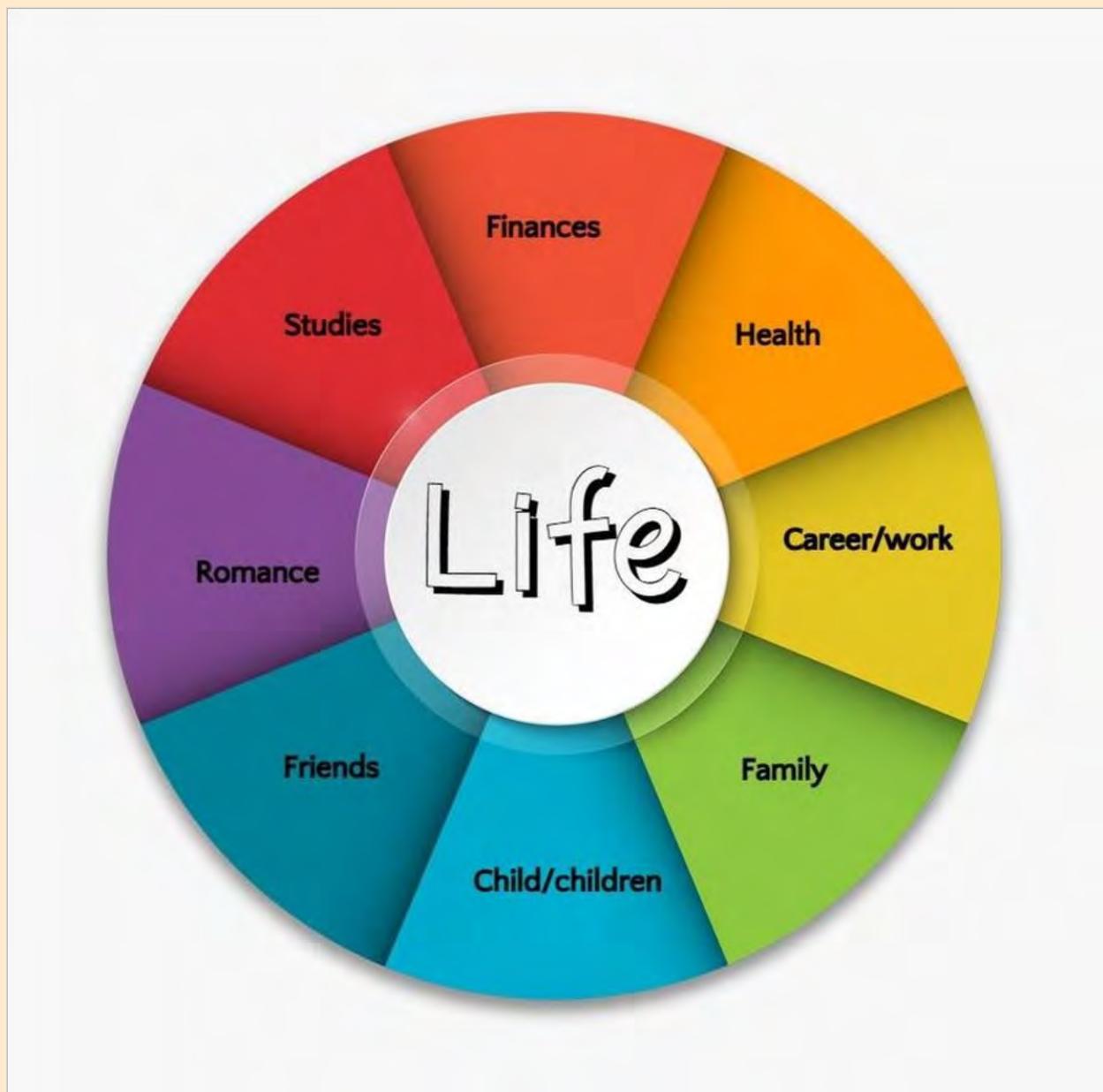


The Wheel of Life

We have talked about many different areas of our lives such as: work, love, family, friends and studies. What is the area you most want to get better in 2021 and how you will do it? One lucky response will win a R130 data voucher!

Prompt

We are still working on what areas do you want to improve in by the year 2021? How can you do better? Choose which one would you like to improve. In life, in love, in a friend, in family, in school, at work. What do you dislike the most, to want to improve it in your life?



Verification of Findings and Visual Feedback

Hi everyone!

Thank you for sharing your experience of the Facebook time capsule – we have learnt so much from one another about our experiences and challenges during COVID-19 over this time! What will you always carry with you from this experience? What did you like and what did you not like?

Let's face it - most of us have a laid-back attitude when it comes to painting a picture about ourselves. We will describe it as a post and let you know when it receives its prize on the day, we identify it.

This week's question is: What do you like and dislike about our FB site, the lessons and experiences you will take here and use?

If we could rewind to last year: What would you do again? What would you do differently?

This is the journey we have spent together and what you shared in the space. Tell us how you feel about it; does it reflect your experience with us since we last met and in the time capsule?



Reflecting on our TAG Mural

1. This is the visual we designed together last year (2020) in our camp before lockdown. We could not spray paint it together due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions, but we would like to share it in other different ways. We would like to hear your thoughts and input before finalising it and sharing it!

Does it show what you suggested during the weekend? What do you think about the research truck? The tree?

2. During that weekend you told us how you want to participate in research, and the challenges and things you like. You told us about unity, empowerment, and research for social change for other young people in Africa. Are these captured in here? What are your thoughts?



Visual mural developed by TAG Western Cape, INTERFER and researchers at the Universities of Toronto and Cape Town, depicting how young people see their participation in research. To learn more, see:

Gittings, L., Medley, S., Logie, C., Ralalyo, N., Toska, E., Peterson, N., Cluver, L., Chen, J., Art-based reflections from 12 years of adolescent health and development-related research in South Africa. (In press). *Journal of Health Promotion International: Participatory health promotion research for sustainable change.*

Appendix B

Common COVID-19 Remote Referrals: Psychosocial Counselling, Airtime and Food Referrals

Counselling referrals

Within the course of contacting participants and conducting research, it is possible that participants might disclose that they are facing challenges and could benefit from psychosocial support. In such cases, you can ask participants if they would like a referral to a counselling service.

- For psychosocial counselling referrals, we recommend using established organisations that have experience working with AYP, such as Lifeline or Masithethe in South Africa, one2one in Kenya, Friendship Bench in Zimbabwe, Strong Minds in Zambia and Uganda, amongst others in the East and Southern Africa Region.
 - We used Masithethe for Eastern Cape, South Africa TAG. They have two Xhosa-speaking counsellors available. They work from home and use their personal phones. They only have one English-speaking counsellor available on their toll-free number.
- If you are making direct connection with a trained counsellor, it is important to ask the counsellor about their plan for contacting the participants when they are working from home. If they say they can't, you can ask them if they would be comfortable with you buying them airtime to call the participant. In our experience, some organisations say that they are not allowed to accept airtime from clients. In this instance, we recommend that you provide an airtime referral for the participant instead (see below).
- Provide participants with toll-free numbers or direct lines to local psychosocial counsellors (if they provide permission) for emergency calls.

Airtime referrals for participants to access counselling services

- Before purchasing airtime, estimate how long the call will last. It does not usually take more than 30min. This is important in determining how much airtime you need to purchase.
- Find out what network the participant uses, and how much it would cost to make the call for the session on that network.

Food Referrals

- If the participant has raised that they are having challenges with basic essentials such as food, ask more details in a caring manner and not with an

investigative tone. Find out how many people there are at home, and how they usually get by, prior to the call. Ask if it is okay with them to ask your colleagues or manager if and how we can help them.

- When you have determined from the conversation they need a food referral, put in a request for it. First update the team and then organise it with the person who deals with food referrals if you are not the person responsible. Also, do not forget to get approval from either your manager or HR.
- The TAG team in South Africa used Shoprite Vouchers to do food referrals, as these provide access to a large network and range of food outlets across the provinces where TAG participants live. Households with less than five people will get a voucher which amounts to a R500 (~\$30 US). If there are more people, they will get a R750 (~\$50 US) voucher.
- Be direct about whether food vouchers are a one-time referral or if repeat vouchers are possible based on need.
- When you have bought the voucher, confirm with the participant if they have received it. When they have confirmed they have received it, ask them to please use it ASAP and try to do so during the day on weekdays because there may be issues with the voucher and they would want you to help.

Appendix C

Recommended Facilitator Profile

Social Media Facilitation support for TAG was provided by a trained Research Assistant (RA). The success of facilitation was strengthened by pre-existing participant-researcher relationships. We recommend that your remote participatory research facilitator have the following characteristics:

- Aged 25-35
- Experience working with AYP, either in a social work or research setting
- Strong written and verbal communication skills in local language(s)
- Demonstrated ability to build trust and a safe space for AYP remotely
- Knowledge of disclosure procedures, including containment approaches and appropriate referral pathways
- Knowledge of services available in their catchment area

The facilitator should be supervised by a Research Officer or Manager and/or Principal Investigator, and have existing relationships with and/or be provided access to clinical resources (for research subjects or themselves, as needed).



Authors

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Thank you to TAG members in South Africa and Kenya, and teams at the Universities of Cape Town and Oxford. We thank Dr Hodes, Ms Thabeng, Dr Doubt, Dr Wessels and Dr Asnong for their long-term involvement in TAG. Foremost thanks to Professor Lucie Cluver’s commitment to meaningful engagement of adolescents in the research process, as the founder of TAG, and, as Hub PI, providing funding for TAG activities before and during COVID-19. We also thank the artistic teams at INTERFER for co-developing arts-based activities and illustrations. Teen advisors were recruited from the Young Carers, Mzantsi Wakho and HEY BABY studies, and we are grateful to the research teams from these research studies.

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For more information, please visit www.acceleratehub.org or contact info@acceleratehub.org or acceleratehub@uct.ac.za

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