

BN Press appreciates Google support

BN Press, publishers of The Village Voice, that covers Vhembe and Mopani districts in Limpopo appreciates a grant from Google News Initiative's Journalism Emergency Relief Fund (JERF).

We are happy to announce that our application for funding from JERf has been approved and we are one of the recipients of USD \$5000 in the recent wave of announcements.

According to Google News Initiative team, the response to the programme was overwhelming.

"We have received over 12 000 applications from more than 100 eligible countries," said Google, and added, "It has been humbling and gratifying to assist news organisation like you."

This assistance has come at a time when possible advertisers have collapsed due to the lockdown in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic that has ravaged the whole world.

At the same time The Village Voice is committed to servicing rural community's news wise.

At the moment the print sales have almost collapsed because of the lockdown but the paper is running digitally on a daily basis and is up and running.

An initiative of seasoned journalist Benson Ntlemo, the paper is also helping upcoming journalists who are learning the ropes.

Most importantly, it is providing news to communities in the midst of the pandemic and many people have given The Village Voice thumbs up.

We appreciate the fact that Google has made sure that we as a publication based in rural villages in South Africa count as much as others.

Although it is tough to operate in the midst of the pandemic, we shall strive to make sure that we service the communities.

Lastly none should thank to young fellow journalists Lucas Styles Ledwaba and Charles Molele. When one wanted the twilight world of the elderly frustrated with the way things are in this field at the moment the two urged me to carry on.

"A good story will always be a good story," said Ledwaba. He said we should keep on writing and there will always be a room for good stories. As if they had talked to each other, Molele also echoed the same words. Although The Village Voice was in existence, I had the feeling to discontinue.

But despite the challenges facing the media at the moment, we are still in existence. And Google has urged us to carry on.

AS I said before, we are also a platform for young people who want to learn.

One of our achievements is our graphic designer Raphy Maluleke who out of the blue is designing a publication for the first time. He is from the rural village of Homu 14B in Giyani. This shows that The Village Voice truly represent rural communities.

Benson Ntlema- EDITOR (THE VILLAGE VOICE)

BN PRESS