

Growing hope and unity through art

South Africa is facing unprecedented job losses, extended health crisis, political flare-ups and food insecurity that affects up to 2.5 million people everyday, and this has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, an "inspired collective of purpose-pioneers" has founded a social impact initiative, Grow Hope, to bring about a positive contribution.



Source: Supplied

"We had to do something to dissolve despair and make hope our emotional fuel for a brighter tomorrow. We can rebuild South Africa together if we believe it in our heads and feel it in our hearts," says entrepreneur Tom Fels who is one of the founders of Grow Hope.

Designed as a shared-value platform, Grow Hope leverages the power of creativity to improve national sentiment by uniting artists and brand sponsors to seed city artworks with messages of hope and togetherness, showcased on large-scale billboards as part of a national, synchronised outdoor media campaign.

Post use, the material from these hope-billboards are recycled into vegetable grow-bags by Growbag Upcycled and are distributed to food security NGOs that administer community agriculture training in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg along with financial support for their work.



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According to Fels, Grow Hope offers corporate sponsors the benefit of branded exposure on artworks created by South African artists such as, street artist Keith Vlahakis, Mandela Rhodes Foundation designer Vumile Mavumengwana and young fashion design maven Ishaarah Arnold.

Initiative poised to reach millions of South Africans

With access to a national network of billboard sites through initiative partner Tractor Outdoor, Grow Hope hopes to reach up to 10 million South Africans, which Fels describes as giving everyone involved a great sense of motivation.

According to Grow Hope, contributions from corporate partners help activate the for-good ecosystem and Fels says he is keen to build a growing network of nation-building brands to sustain and fuel the movement.

"If we can disrupt everyday monotony with flashes of hope and unity that register a response, then we can inspire people to own their role in building a brighter future. That's a South Africa we all want to be a part of," Fels concludes.

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