

Q&A: Mmusi Maimane talks 'One South Africa' digital platform



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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Mmusi Maimane, the chief activist of 'One South Africa' Movement (OSA), recently launched its digital platform to connect and engage with South Africans through these unprecedented times.



Mmusi Maimane, the chief activist of 'One South Africa' Movement

Maimane shares the story of the app that features live news and manifesto updates, team and volunteer management, sponsorship, contributions and crowdfunding capabilities, powered with a social connection.

■ Can you tell us a bit about the One South Africa Movement?

Currently, South Africa is a nation split into two halves - the haves and the have nots. One South Africa is an activist movement founded in 2020 with the intention of creating a platform for activists around the country to come together to build One South Africa that is truly just and fair.

“ OSA has built a network across the continent with parties endorsing the movement firstly from IDU, which is a global association of parties such as the CDU in Germany, the Conservatives in London and MDC in Zimbabwe. We are building a pan African view that will seek to make Africa the biggest success story of the next decade. ”

■ How did the idea come about?

Politics, as usual, has failed South Africa. South Africa is more divided than ever. Having served as the leader of opposition in Parliament and the leader of the Democratic Alliance, I realised that there had to be another way of doing civic engagement, of democracy-building - a more consultative and engaged way. Politics is broken and its time we fixed. I brought together a few like-minded people and that's how the journey began.

■ **What is the core purpose of the One South Africa movement?**

The idea behind the movement is to close the divide in South Africa through coordinated activism, advocacy and accountability. We recognise and have experienced that the political system is broken and offers no real voice to South Africans - especially the poor and vulnerable. We seek to change that and put the power back in the hands of the people.

“ The launch of this digital platform comes at a critical time when all South Africans, beyond different racial, social and religious backgrounds, should be uniting in our effort to defeat Covid-19 and its devastating socio-economic effects. ”

The digital platform will first and foremost be utilized to bring individuals, companies and communities together in finding solutions to the effects of Covid-19, including the Movement's #TogetherWeCanWin campaign to source and distribute food packages and hand sanitizer to our most vulnerable communities.

The [@OneSA_Movement](#) is working hard in the fight against #Covid_19. We are coordinating our interventions on the <https://t.co/Wjs26c8L9S> website which is going live today, along with an accompanying app available on Android and iOS. pic.twitter.com/Fsa0ZmnMt— Mmusi Maimane (@MmusiMaimane) April 17, 2020 ”

■ **What sort of challenges have you encountered since starting out?**

The lockdown has certainly been a hurdle in everyone's lives, including ours at OSA. We would have liked to be in communities organising people, identifying any challenges and targeting them in real-time.

A non-Covid-19 related challenge is getting people to understand this new idea and accept it. The movement concept is not common in the South African landscape and we have a lot of work to do in selling the concept to the people.

“ We see ourselves as a startup in the social movement space. ”

■ **What advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs?**

Take the time to listen and consult with potential customers to make sure that your idea is valuable and make sure that you build something that has value to the market. If you build a great product (be it physical or digital) the people and funding will come.

Look at all avenues when pursuing your dreams and collaborate with the right partners. Our partnership with community app development agency, Peppacomm, for example, has brought my dream of having a One South Africa Movement app to fruition.

■ **What is a challenge that you are facing as a result of Covid-19?**

As mentioned before, the lockdown has been a hurdle in our lives as we would like to have been in communities and

targeting challenges in real-time - most activism is done on the ground by interacting with communities.

“ We have had to accelerate our digital brand building and rely heavily on our internet infrastructure. However, that has forced me to increase my interaction on social media, to listen to young people and understand how to be relevant on these platforms. ”

What will the next six months be like for small businesses?

It is going to be an uphill climb for many small businesses that are in sectors directly affected by the lockdown. Those who invested in businesses, like Airbnb for example, have been hard-hit and it's going to be a slow rebuilding process.

“ This is going to be a time which many will have to pivot and consider new business models for this new economy. ”

If indeed we will have this virus in our societies for over one-year, small businesses will have to get ultra-lean, they will also have to be more involved in political advocacy for support from the state.



[View this post on Instagram](#)





Our Chief Activist @mmusimaimane is throwing a party for his 40th birthday. • • Get involved!

A post shared by One South Africa Movement (@onesamovement) on May 20, 2020 at 5:30am PDT

📌 **What's your biggest lesson from all this?**

I have learnt to be adaptable on the go, learning how to master digital platforms, learning how to coordinate and manage digitally.

“ We as humans are more resilient than we often realise. I have learnt that there is a lot of kindness and goodwill amongst the people of South Africa, many came together to help provide sanitizers for poor communities, to provide food and to make sure that PPE was available to many who fell on the sidelines. ”

📌 **Where would you like to see One South Africa movement in the future?**

I would like One South Africa to be a lasting brand and a disruptive force in South Africa. To genuinely make an impact in people's everyday lives, to be an entity that has mass support in South Africa and that has a lifespan of decades.

There are so many abandoned dreams and hopes in our country. I would like for the One South Africa movement to restore those dreams, to realize them. To be credited for having made South Africa better, more united.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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