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## **UCT alumnus creates new app to connect vetted suppliers and buyers of PPE in South Africa**

University of Cape Town (UCT) alumnus and co-founder of [Coronapp](#), Tamir Shklaz, has yet again responded to the challenges of the pandemic – this time by facilitating the buying and selling of much-needed personal protective equipment (PPE) in South Africa.

Less than a month after the launch of Coronapp, which he co-founded with UCT mechanical engineering graduate Wisani Shilumani, Shklaz has built [InSupply](#), a centralised marketplace that connects those who have PPE to those who need it most.

The platform was created at the beginning of May and has already registered more than 500 suppliers, 50 million PPE items, and over 200 organisations wanting to purchase PPE. When Shklaz came up with the idea of InSupply, it was in response to [OfferZen's Unlockdown challenge](#). The challenge, which is supported by the South African government, calls on the nation's technology industry to mobilise and assist in combating the impact of COVID-19.

It didn't take long for a group of investors to see the potential of the project, and it has since evolved into its current iteration: to connect trusted, verified sellers of PPE to trusted, verified buyers who are on the frontline of the nation's response to the pandemic.

Investors include [WeThinkCode's](#) co-founder and tech entrepreneur, Yossi Hasson, and Justin Drennan, the founder of [ParcelNinja](#). InSupply already has its first employees: five young people, including UCT student Sama Naraghi. These young innovators are helping to grow the company into one that will operate beyond the pandemic.

Shklaz identified four distinct problems with PPE supply and getting it to the frontline. The first is the existing supply chain. Before COVID-19, hospitals would typically use one or two suppliers who would source PPE as and when needed. With the pandemic, suppliers are running out of stock and are unable to replenish it in time. Companies who would ordinarily not need PPE are also adding to the demand, applying further pressure on the supply chain.

There is also the lack of trust that comes with buyers needing to find new suppliers. They often have limited resources, such as time and people who conduct the vetting process. The third problem is price gouging, which means many healthcare workers are unable to afford

PPE. Lastly, faulty goods are being sold that lack certification and rarely meet the required specifications.

With InSupply, the UCT graduate is providing solutions. Suppliers undergo a strict vetting process to ensure their legitimacy. Buyers are also vetted to ensure they are legitimate users of PPE and are in genuine need of the products. InSupply provides transparency by enabling buyers to view and compare the prices of PPE, which helps negate price gouging and encourages suppliers to offer competitive rates. Finally, InSupply is connecting frontline workers directly to the supplier, thereby cutting out the “middleman”.

Since launching InSupply less than a month ago, Shklaz is already able to list the most in-demand PPE from the 50 million items registered on the site. With the global shortage of active filtration masks, masks such as the 3M N95, KN95 and FFP2 are the most requested items, followed by booties, scrub gowns and other masks.

The greatest demand comes from major urban areas like Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. But through his work with the [Southern African HIV Clinicians Society \(SAHCS\)](#), Shklaz has been alerted to the needs of doctors in rural parts of the country who also lack the required PPE and fall out of the ambit of public hospitals that are sufficiently covered by the government.

To stay abreast of how best to apply his skills and respond to the critical need for PPE, Shklaz is currently in conversation with numerous organisations and projects, locally and abroad.

To help InSupply operate on a nationwide basis, he is also working with SAHCS, [Business for SA](#) and the [South African Health Products Regulatory Authority](#). To learn from peers, Shklaz is in contact with [ProjectN95](#), a United States-based organisation that inspired InSupply, and another US-based project, [#GetUsPPE](#).

Going forward, the goal of InSupply is to revolutionise the way supply chain works in South Africa. Included in the plans are support for escrow payments and large-scale logistics and transportation of equipment across the country. Shklaz is also interested in creating a platform to facilitate the distribution of PPE donations to those who cannot afford it and are in need. To do so, he will continue to engage with SAHCS and other relevant parties.

The UCT alum is also looking to assist manufacturers who are repurposing their production lines to produce PPE equipment. He aims to provide these manufacturers “with an ecosystem of support to ensure their PPE equipment meets South African standards and connect them with buyers across the country”.

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***Issued by the Communication and Marketing Department***

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