



## **Western Cape NGO-Government Food Relief Coordination Meeting**

**7 May 2020**

### **Introduction**

A Zoom call, convened by the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP), was held on 5 May 2020 to discuss the coordination of food relief efforts between Government and NGOs in Cape Town and the Western Cape, and to find a common approach to the strategic challenges emerging in this area.

This was the third such call. Detailed reports on the previous two calls, on 23 April and 30 April, were produced and circulated to all participants. Copies of these reports are available on request.

### **Agenda**

The agenda for the call included the following:

1. Update on special COVID grant process
2. Food relief databases and mapping systems
3. Specific challenges and issues
4. Information shared

### **Introduction and welcome**

The chairperson welcomed new participants to the forum. He said that many additional local feeding schemes and networks had been added to the NGO food database, which now showed that civil society – multiple networks of NGOs, NPOs, CBOs, FBOs, supported by corporate and individual donors, has played a major role in the provision of food relief, through parcels, vouchers, kitchens and other schemes.

#### **1. Update on special COVID-19 grant process.**

Jacqui Boule of the Western Cape Government provided an update on the special COVID-19 grant process. The main points of the update are included in the attached presentation: *Covid-19 Grant Info*.

- In terms of timing, there has been a soft launch of the programme, and some calls and applications are already being processed. It will not be fully launched, however, until some of the outstanding technical issues are sorted out and the regulations are signed by the National Minister.
- The scheme is scheduled to be launched by Friday, 15 May 2020, with the first grants paid out shortly thereafter.

- The WCG is gearing up to provide support to the application process through the Western Cape DSD Call Centre (all numbers are currently national and SASSA numbers).
- Once the USSD and Volunteer app are launched, the requirement for a unique cellphone number for each grant will no longer apply.
- One address can be used for multiple grant applications.
- Grants will be paid for three months initially, with an option for an additional 3 months.

In terms of prioritising support, the following points were made:

- Top priority must remain people who are getting no form of support.
- The second priority for support efforts should be people who are getting the COVID special grant, as the R350 is insufficient for a food parcel for one individual for a month.

*It was noted that a flow diagram for who can get what from whom would be useful for communicating to communities. It was suggested that feedback from this forum be used to generate this diagram.*

## **2. Food relief databases and mapping systems**

Andrew Borraine noted that there is a programme under way to collate information on NGOs and their efforts, and to feed this to WCG for purposes of planning and coordination. The focus is on a) numbers of food parcels delivered in a month, b) average number of persons receiving at least one meal per day, per area. He thanked participants for submitting their data on request. There are a number of NGO food schemes that still needed to be contacted to share their data, and this will be followed up.

The issue of merging NGO databases with government data, if they are cleaned and verified, was discussed. It emerged that merging such bottom-up data with government data is not easy or likely to occur soon. A commitment, however, was given by the WCG to share data, if merging is not possible.

A number of issues associated with such merging were also discussed, such as the need for a unique identification mechanism to match profiles (ID numbers were suggested), mechanisms to ensure the lack of duplication, etc.

*Elizabeth Drevlow ([drevlow@gmail.com](mailto:drevlow@gmail.com)) offered to assist others working on databased, to avoid duplication of efforts in this area.*

*Bart Hend ([bart.hend@gmail.com](mailto:bart.hend@gmail.com)) also offered assistance in fraud management. He noted that fraud in this context requires the same protocols and touch points to filter duplicates as standard supply chain management fraud avoidance. He offered to help with data mining analysis, etc.*

Elizabeth Drevlow briefed participants on LinkedTo, a multi-sector, multi-user platform currently being developed. The key elements of this platform are:

- It is more than a month old
- It is a relief coordination management tool – aimed at food relief and beyond. The idea is to continue to adapt the platform to be useful for future crises.
- Intended to address shared concerns, transparency and accountability, duplication of efforts, etc.
- It helps identify where institutions are responding to need, and where they are not, where need is and also aims to provide interactive tracking of food parcels all the way to the end user.
- It is open source, and not owned by any one group.
- It is rolling out on Tuesday in a pilot with select users
- After feedback, it will be launched with super users and rolled out more broadly
- It is currently funded to operate for 3 months at least.

- Currently it includes data from a variety of sources, cleaned and uploaded, with the aim of showing the national response to need.
- Currently only organisations providing relief are being loaded, not individuals.
- The intention is to have API feeds for large institutions' information. Currently the approach is that smaller organisations will upload and clean their own data.

*There is a template available for uploading data, and this will be supplied to participants.*

### **3. Specific challenges and issues**

- The point was raised that biometrics have been ruled out as an identification system because of COVID-19. It was suggested that this stance should be challenged: this is a unique way to ID people, and ways to use it safely should be explored.
- The issue of collaboration with ward councillors in relief efforts was raised again. Participants were reminded that the WCG has confirmed that ward councillors should assist with on-the-ground information for food relief efforts, but should explicitly not be involved in beneficiary identification or food distribution.
- Access to masks, and compliant masks, is an issue. WCG is looking at linking mask distribution to its food distribution programmes; it was suggested that NGOs should consider doing something similar.

*Richard Lundie ([richard.lundie@commongood.org.za](mailto:richard.lundie@commongood.org.za)) has a volunteer-driven cloth mask-making initiative, with the goal of making quality face masks to be distributed to people who would ordinarily not be able to afford them. While they are unable to take this programme to a large scale, he can share his learnings with anyone who wishes to initiate this in their sphere of influence.*

*John Thomas ([john@livinghope.co.za](mailto:john@livinghope.co.za)) can also help with providing access to 3-ply surgical masks for those wishing to purchase them.*

- The question of whether National Government is considering central food distribution was raised. It was clarified that this is not envisaged in the Western Cape: while centralisation of data and intelligence, to allow for clarity and transparency, is planned, food distribution is always done in a decentralised manner through NGOs on the ground. It was also noted that the WCG is not being prescriptive on the nature of food in food parcels.
- Permits required for NGOs and volunteers under Lockdown Level 4 were discussed. The revised form is included as an attachment: *Form 2 permit*. The permit needs to be issued by relief organisations to their staff, not by government.
- The issue of how best to utilise offers of help from restaurant operators, to help with food delivery, was raised. There are concerns that these offers may be a front to allow restaurants to start cooking and selling food, against lockdown regulations.

*Two suggestions were made, primarily aimed at linking restaurants to existing food relief efforts.*

- *The Community Chest is facilitating such an initiative with Eat Out.*
- *Similarly, in Stellenbosch, restaurants and chefs are coming together to create a soup facility.*
- *There are a number of breweries that are supporting feeding schemes.*

*In general, a call was made to participants to share details of any such schemes with the group.*

#### 4. Information shared

- The WCG Department of Health Ubuntu masks initiative was discussed. A video on how to produce compliant masks, how to package them, and how they should be worn, is being produced. This initiative is with a local NGO, with the help of local seamstresses, and a portion of the price is going back to providing masks for vulnerable members.
- The Service Dining Rooms are producing a Standard Operating Practice document on how to run feeding schemes in a compliant way. This document should be ready by Friday; the proposal is that it can be downloaded, and recipients can receive updates by supplying their email addresses. The document included entry-level standards for soup kitchens, as well as guidelines for more-resourced operations.

*Sam Vos ([sam@homeless.org.za](mailto:sam@homeless.org.za)) can supply details by Friday.*

- The WCG is doing high-level maps of distribution of who is doing what in terms of food relief, by municipal area. They will share those as soon as they are available.
- Information was sought regarding current national or provincial food assistance. In summary, food relief is being channelled via WC Education Department school feeding schemes, via Department of Social Development food parcels (currently all allocated but no yet all delivered), via SASSA food parcels until the Special Covid grant is launched, and via District Councils, that have been funded by WCG.
- The National Lottery has launched a COVID-19 Relief Fund. A call for applications by 15 May 2020 has been made. [www.nlcsa.org.za](http://www.nlcsa.org.za).
- WCG is producing a hard copy family resource for primary school learners, with games, info, etc., available in Available in Xhosa/ English and Afrikaans/ English. NGOs can contact Printed Whole Child Resource: [bridget.hannah@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:bridget.hannah@westerncape.gov.za).
- WCG is also producing a resource for young people in high school : Slam for your life. Details of this resource are attached as an attachment: #Slam brochure.

This group will reconvene on **Thursday, 14 May 2020 at 2:00 p.m.** Invitations will be sent out; participants are encouraged to nominate other role-players in this area who would benefit from, or contribute to, the discussion.

For further information or questions about this report, contact Andrew Boraine of the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) at [Andrew@wcedp.co.za](mailto:Andrew@wcedp.co.za).

#### Attachments:

- **Presentation: Covid-19 grant info**
- **Form: Form 2 Permit**
- **#Slam brochure**

#### 7 May 2020: Attendees

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|-----------------|--|
| Alastair Moodie | <a href="mailto:Alastair.Moodie@fruitways.co.za">Alastair.Moodie@fruitways.co.za</a> |
| Andrew Boraine  | <a href="mailto:andrew@wcedp.co.za">andrew@wcedp.co.za</a>                           |

|                        |                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Andy du Plessis        | andy@foodforwardsa.org               |
| Bart Hend              | bart.hend@gmail.com                  |
| Brent Walters          | apologies                            |
| Bridget Hannah         | Bridget.Hannah@westerncape.gov.za    |
| Carin Malan            | Carin.Malan@fruitways.co.za          |
| Caroline Peters        | carolinepeters1964@gmail.com         |
| Crystal West           | crystal@dag.org.za                   |
| Delene Mark            | delene@hopeafrica.org.za             |
| Erica Inches           | zerica1968@gmail.com                 |
| Elizabeth Drevlow      | drevlow@gmail.com                    |
| Gill Cullinan          | gill@wcedp.co.za                     |
| Ghairunisa Johnstone   | ghairunisa@mustadafin.org.za         |
| Gray Maguire           | Gray.Maguire@westerncape.gov.za      |
| Hildegarde Fast        | apologies                            |
| Inge Cunningham        | Inge.Cunningham@westerncape.gov.za   |
| Jacqui Boule           | Jacqueline.Boule@westerncape.gov.za  |
| Joanna Dibden          | JoannaDi@twk.org.za                  |
| John Thomas            | john@livinghope.co.za                |
| Karen Cain             | karen.work.sdr@gmail.com             |
| Kayleen Simpson        | Kayleen.Simpson@capetown.gov.za      |
| Liesel Kruger-Fortuin  | Liesel.KrugerFortuin@capetown.gov.za |
| Lisa Kropman           | lisa@hibridge.co.za                  |
| Leslie Downie          | leslie@downieconsult.co.za           |
| Marais Greyling        | info@ce-g.co.za                      |
| Marcela Guerrero Casas | marcela.guerrero.casas@gmail.com     |
| Manu Wegmers           | manuw@saharvest.org                  |
| Marli Goussard         | marli@ranyaka.co.za                  |
| Michael Krause         | Michael.Krause@vpuu.org.za           |
| Minah Koela            | minahk@beautifulgate.org             |
| Moutie Abrahams        | moutie.abrahams@gtras.co.za          |
| Nadine Coetzee         | nadine@corc.co.za                    |
| Paul Cluver            | dr@cluver.com                        |
| Pearl Nel              | PNel2@fnb.co.za                      |
| Petrina Pakoe          | petrina@psfa.org.za                  |
| Richard Lundie         | richard.lundie@commongood.org.za     |
| Sam Vos                | sam@homeless.org.za                  |
| Tamsin Faragher        | Tamsin.Faragher@capetown.gov.za      |
| Thomas Swana           | tlswana@pedi.org.za                  |
| Wendy Lewin            | wendy@warehouse.org.za               |