



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

**21 May 2020**

### **Introduction**

The Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) convened a Zoom call on 21 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 one of a series of such weekly calls. Detailed reports on the previous calls were produced and circulated to all participants, and copies of these reports are available on request.

### **Agenda**

The agenda for the call included the following:

1. A restatement of the purpose of the weekly forum
2. Focus on coordinated action in emerging 'hot spot' areas in Cape Town
3. NGO food data reporting platform
4. Update on national regulations governing food relief

#### **1. Restatement of the purpose of the forum**

Given the large number of new participants on the call, the purpose of this forum was clarified.

- The forum is a **Whole of Society Approach** (WOSA) to food relief and food security. Food relief is not just provided by government on its own - civil society and private donors, big and small, have provided at least 50% of all food relief in the past 8 weeks, if not more.
- It aims to **strengthen relationships between all role players** in the food relief and distribution system to ensure collective impact and mutual accountability: large and small NGOs, grassroots movements and community action networks, faith-based organisations, not-for-profit organisations, large and small retailers, donors (financial and in kind), municipalities, and various government departments grouped under the WCG Humanitarian Cluster.
- It helps collect **NGO and grassroots community data**: i.e. who is doing what and where, in terms of food parcels and hampers, digital vouchers, or food kitchens. This helps to identify gaps, avoid duplication, and promote transparency and fairness. Currently, much of the NGO and grassroots community effort is largely unreported,

un-measured and unacknowledged. A **food data platform** has been launched to try and change that, and participation from the forum is needed.

- The forum discusses **issues affecting the delivery of food relief** under conditions of COVID-19 and lockdown, such as permitting, issues of violence and disruption in some areas, health and safety standards, the impact of national regulations on the role of NGOs and food kitchens, etc.
- The forum encourages greater **connection and communication** between people and organisations during times of crisis. The forum looks for opportunities to **join the dots** and **share information and knowledge** in ways that are helpful to participants' initiatives, networks, and communities.
- The forum aims to pay more attention to the **factors that may impact negatively on food security** in vulnerable areas and groups over the next 3-6 months, such as shrinking government finances, donor and volunteer fatigue, rising rates of community infections in hotspots, winter flooding in informal settlements, disruptions to basic food supplies due to hotspots in agriculture, agri-processing, manufacturing, transport and logistics chains, disruptions to municipal services, safety and security issues, etc.
- Finally, the forum is aware of the value of linking short-term food relief programmes, and participants' work as local food practitioners and community networkers, to ideas and campaigns around **future food security** as part of 'building back better', for example:
  - SA Food Sovereignty Campaign
  - WC Declaration on a Good Food Future (Florian Kroll, Plaas, UWC)
  - Smart Agri – WC Agriculture Climate Change Sector Plan
  - Resilient Food System Governance in Cape Town (Paul Currie, ICLEI)
  - City of Cape Town Resilience Strategy Food Security Initiative (Tamsin Faragher, CoCT Resilience Unit)
  - Cape Town Together Food Growers Initiative (Erica Inches)  
[https://m.facebook.com/groups/207954483642332?view=permalink&id=243969386707508&fs=2&focus\\_composer=0&ref=m\\_notif&notif\\_t=feedback\\_reaction\\_generic](https://m.facebook.com/groups/207954483642332?view=permalink&id=243969386707508&fs=2&focus_composer=0&ref=m_notif&notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic)

## 2. Coordinated action in 'hot spot' areas in Cape Town

The Western Cape Government (WCG) strategy is to focus on COVID-19 hot spots in terms of testing, tracking and tracing. Increasingly, however, WCG is also focusing on these areas in terms of a humanitarian and food response, as non-health-related issues (such as access to food) cause people to move around more, which in turn exacerbates the health issues, as the drive to satisfy hunger overrides the concern for the spread of the virus.

This humanitarian response includes, for example:

- Food relief
- Raising awareness of COVID-19
- Exploring the behaviour changes that are needed, and how to ensure citizen buy-in for these changes, given the harsh constraints in poor and vulnerable areas
- Providing support to the health system – for example, for individuals who have tested positive but who are not sick enough to go to hospital. These individuals, and frequently their families, require support of various kinds.
- Psycho-social and emotional support for anxiety, bereavement, wellbeing, etc. This is an area where support will increasingly be needed.

A number of hot spots have currently been identified, although this may change as health and other conditions around the Western Cape evolve. Their identification is based on an overlay of a number of factors, such as poverty, extreme vulnerability, population density, and the movement of people, which have led to a significant increase in COVID-19

infections in these areas. The current Covid-19 hot spot areas are (note that this list is slightly updated from the one presented at the meeting):

1. The Tygerberg cluster (Belhar, Bellville, Bellville-South, Bishop Lavis, Delft, Elsies River, Goodwood and Ravensmead)
2. Khayelitsha, including Site B, Harare and Lingeletu West
3. Du Noon
4. The Klipfontein corridor, including Langa, Athlone, Manenberg, Gugulethu and Nyanga

The WCG intends developing a model for broad-based, whole-of-society support for these hot spots in **Tygerberg** first. The learnings from this model will then be applied to the other areas identified.

There is a need to focus on coordinated action in each of the hot spot areas. It was noted that there may need to be NGO-Government food relief meetings convened specifically for each of the hot spot areas.

It was noted that emerging non-metro hot spots include Drakenstein, Stellenbosch and the Breede Valley in the Cape Winelands District, Swartland in the West Coast District, and Theewaterskloof and Swellendam in the Overberg District. Learnings from the metro hot spot response can be shared with these areas.

*In order to assist with this coordination, participants who have not already received this request are asked to respond to Rhonda Snyders at [info@wcedp.co.za](mailto:info@wcedp.co.za) on the following questions **for the Tygerberg area specifically**:*

1. *Are you currently working in any of the following areas: Belhar, Bellville, Bellville-South, Bishop Lavis, Delft, Elsies River, Goodwood and Ravensmead?*
2. *Could you expand your work into these areas?*
3. *Do you have HR capacity to expand your work in these areas?*
4. *Do you have financial resources to expand your work in any of these areas?*
5. *Specifically, could you:*
  - *Provide masks for residents in these areas? (If so, how many masks?)*
  - *Provide food parcels to families in need? (If so, what number of monthly parcels for a family of 4?)*
  - *Provide hot food to people in need? (If so, number of meals a day)*
  - *Provide quarantine facilities which would be used for COVID-positive people to self-isolate in for 14 – 21 days (If so, number of beds)*
  - *Provide emotional wellbeing support to affected families? (Community workers on the ground who can work with families)*

It was noted by Adi Kumar from DAG that the Asiveikelane campaign is tracking the delivery of water and sanitation services in informal settlements. This information could very usefully be tied into the hot spot reporting and updating.

### **Delft Action Network: information sharing**

To illustrate one of the areas of effort in the Tygerberg hot spot, Fadly Isaacs provided some information on the Delft Action Network (DAN).

DAN was set up relatively recently, at the end of April. It includes 27 kitchens, all of which were already established (i.e. DAN does not focus on setting up kitchens). DAN aims to help specifically vulnerable youth and the elderly, i.e. not families. It provides about 6 000

meals per day; given the varying frequency of meals being provided, this adds up to +/- 15 000 meals per week.

In terms of **support structures**, DAN has grouped its kitchens into 9 groups of 3, to ensure each kitchen benefits from reciprocal support, advice, and increased efficiency. DAN has a WhatsApp group which includes local councillors. They also have a Facebook page for the larger community of CANs and the public.

They rely heavily on partnerships, such as:

- a Trust which handles donations and record-keeping
- local businesses who supply food at cost, and in large volumes
- a gas refill supplier who provides gas at cost
- outside business support for contributions in kind, such as soup
- local networks allied to the kitchens themselves.

Other support structures include the coordination of donation appeals, and weekly reports to the donation community. There are also daily reports within DAN itself. DAN also maintains a database of its operations to facilitate logistics.

DAN operates according to a number of **key principles**:

- compassion, solidarity, care, and concern (in terms of language as well as action)
- Equity (not leaving anyone behind)
- Relationship-building
- Learning by doing
- Consolidating small steps
- Commitment
- Accountability.

*Participants who wish to learn more about DAN can contact Fadly Isaacs at [fadly.isaacs@uct.ac.za](mailto:fadly.isaacs@uct.ac.za).*

### **3. NGO food data reporting platform**

Sam Vos of U-Turn Homeless Ministries demonstrated the platform that has been developed, and which is now live, to capture NGO food relief activities.

This platform is at [www.fooddistribution.co.za](http://www.fooddistribution.co.za). It allows the capturing of data for food parcels, meals, and vouchers, and will be able to accommodate both intermediary organisations who donate food for others to distribute, as well as organisations distributing food directly to recipients. Critically, it should assist with efforts to avoid duplication, and could help verification of food reaching its intended recipients (a key concern at the moment).

It was noted that while the data platform will not in and of itself identify gaps, the data collected on where distribution is taking place, will assist with a needs analysis, which is currently not being carried out by any organisation or sphere of government.

It was clarified that the data collected will not be owned by any one sector or organisation, or be commercialised, but will be open and accessible as a common good.

As more data is collated on this website, it will allow for the convening of smaller, more geographically-focused groups to coordinate activities and increase their impact.

*Participants were urged to register their organisations on this website, and – crucially – then to update their data in terms of their efforts as often as possible. Participants were also asked to revert either to Sam Vos ([sam@homeless.org.za](mailto:sam@homeless.org.za)) or to the forum ([info@wcedp.co.za](mailto:info@wcedp.co.za)) with suggestions for improvement.*

It was also noted on the Chat that FNB have developed a distribution app which could be used in association with this platform.

(Note: Further information on the development of a national multi-user, multi-sector LinkedTo humanitarian platform, discussed in previous meetings, will be provided at a future forum.)

#### **4. Update on national regulations governing food relief**

Gavin Miller of the WCG Department of Social Development (DSD) provided an update on the amendments to the draft regulations governing the provision of food relief. While these have not yet been gazetted, the indications are that:

- Food distribution and delivery by NGOs will be allowed
- A letter of authorisation for NGOs serving more than 250 people is proposed
- These NGOs may need to be registered
- SAPS should be advised of deliveries in advance.

He committed to DSD making any registration process that maybe required in terms of the final regulations as streamlined as possible, and, for example, using the [www.fooddistribution.co.za](http://www.fooddistribution.co.za) website if at all possible to avoid double registration.

He also committed to communicating the final version of the regulations to the forum as soon as they are available.

This group will reconvene on **Thursday, 28 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).

#### **Attachment 1: Food Relief Forum attendees 21 May 2020**