



Report: Western Cape NGO-Government Food Relief Coordination Meeting

11 June 2020

Introduction

The Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) convened a Zoom call on 11 June 2020, to discuss the evolution of the role of the WCG-NGO coordination forum which was initially set up to address COVID-19 food relief issues.

On the call on 4 June, a number of potential future roles for the forum were suggested. These were circulated to attendees for consideration, and additional ideas or concepts were forwarded to the convenors of the forum in the interim.

The future role of the forum

Based on the feedback subsequent to the 4 June meeting, a three-phase proposal for the future of the forum was presented:

1. To continue at this stage with the Government-NGO food coordination forum (despite the changing context and government strategy that was noted in the 4 June meeting).
2. To focus on both emergency food aid (for the short-term crisis) and food security/food sovereignty (working on a long-term recovery - building back better).
3. To shift the meeting from once a week to twice a month.

The rationale for this proposal, including the reasons for immediate food relief remaining a priority, is summarised in the attached presentation: *Attachment 1 – Food coordination forum 11 June*.

The presentation also includes details of the Western Cape Government's Covid-19 hotspot strategy, which explicitly recognises that "a whole-of-society approach to hotspot management is a key driver to curb community transmission of the virus". The importance of the role of NGOs, NPOs, and other civil society institutions is therefore clearly recognised and acknowledged.

More specifically, it was also proposed that, in collaboration with this strategy, the forum focus on a number of thematic intervention areas, i.e.

- Assisting with NPO / NGO business continuity plans (in the event of COVID-19 illness or close contact)
- Making connections between the provision of food relief and:
 - helping to slow the spread: e.g. distribution of masks
 - communications on behaviour change: e.g. public education at food schemes
 - stimulating economic recovery: e.g. food gardens, urban agriculture, digital vouchers to spaza shops, etc.
- Creating channels to communicate food relief issues to and engage with appropriate hotspot team convenors.

A number of additional elements to this proposal were made:

- That the list of WCG and municipal contact people for metro and non-metro areas, as identified in the presentation, be made available to the forum.
- That channels to allow referrals between NGOs and NPOs operating in hotspot areas should also be opened up.
- That meetings similar to this one should be set up, in association with WCG efforts, for each of the hotspot areas.

The proposal, with the additional elements above, was approved by the forum.

Update on mapping food relief data

Food data mapping work has progressed, and two parallel food data efforts have been brought together, i.e. www.fooddistribution.co.za (previously discussed in this forum) and www.foodhelp.co.za. This integration is aimed at avoiding dual messaging or the necessity for repeat registration by organisations providing food relief.

To assist with this integration process, bulk uploads of food distribution data from 12 of the largest intermediary food relief organisations is being coordinated, i.e.:

- Afrika Tikkun
- CAN Kitchens
- Community Chest
- Extreem Supathon
- Gift of the Givers
- Ladles of Love
- Mustafadin Foundation
- PEDI Philippi
- Service Dining Rooms
- Stellenbosch Unite
- VPUU
- Warehouse

The following participants on the call will also be included in this effort:

- Pick n Pay
- Rotary
- Ikamva Labantu.

The key aim of this food relief mapping initiative is both to help the public sector understand the scope and the role of civil society in food relief efforts, as well as to assist with an inter-NGO referral system for relief requests and offers.

Any other such intermediary organisations, who play a role in food relief by supplying front-line food relief entities, should contact Andrew Borraine to ensure that their details are similarly captured.

School food schemes

There is an apparent lack of clarity on which learners are eligible for school food relief. Jacqui Boule of the WCG confirmed that, as of 7 June, all schools are now funded to provide food, in the first instance, for **all** their learners (i.e. not just Grade 7 and Grade 12 learners). Should there be extra food, schools have been asked to make it available to learners in their communities who live close to the school.

NGOs are encouraged to communicate this clarified message throughout their networks.

Food Governance Community of Practice Meeting

Camilla Adelle, from the Centre of Excellence for Food Security, extended an invitation to all call participants to join a meeting at 10am on 23 June aimed at connecting civil society with this community of practice, and specifically at hearing NGO contributions to the discussion on lessons learned in food relief during this crisis.

Participants can register for this meeting on this link:

<https://foodsecurity.ac.za/events/civil-society-organisations-and-emergency-food-aid-learning-lessons-for-an-ongoing-crisis/>.

Further details on the purpose of the meeting are also included on the link.

Western Cape Government update

Jacqui Boule re-emphasised that the most pressing imperative at the moment is to stop the spread of the virus. To that end, there is a range of communication material available to assist with all such efforts. One example of this material is attached as *Attachment 2: PACK Home Volume 1 Be Coronavirus Safe (English)*. Further material is available on the WCG website, or by contacting Jacqui Boule at Jacqueline.Boule@westerncape.gov.za for assistance.

The Provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism has also been running a 'maskathon' with private sector organisations. The maskathon calls on businesses in South Africa to help donate fabric face-masks to those who need them most. By supporting this, these businesses not only help fund fabric face-masks for those in need, but also help stimulate local manufacturing across small and large scale producers. More details can be found here: <https://maskathon.co.za/>.

The WCG is also looking specifically to establish links with more civil society organisations providing any sort of relief in areas where there is exponential growth in the COVID-19 infection rates. These organisations should link with the coordinators for each of the hotspots, as outlined in the presentation earlier.

Similarly, with respect to hotspots outside the metro area, there is considerably less coordination and visibility of who is working where. A request was made that any organisations on the call who work in those areas, or who are connected with those who work there, should connect those entities with the relevant area coordinators.

City of Cape Town update

Details of the City of Cape Town Mayor's Relief Fund will be provided before, or at, the next meeting of this forum.

General suggestions

A number of general suggestions were raised in the Zoom chat function.

- The value of utilising this forum to assist with efforts of bulk buying was raised again. There is no denying that the size of the challenge in providing relief is growing, and any assistance in increasing the efficiency of spending through bulk buying is critical.
- A number of participants felt that linking food relief to the provision of non-food requirements should be emphasised. This would have applicability in many areas, of which two were mentioned:
 - Providing non-food items for people in isolation sites or intermediate hospitals.
 - Assisting with the preparation required to ensure ECDs are able to open with sufficient hygiene and PPE material.

Next steps

As noted in the proposal regarding the revised role of this forum, the next meeting will be in two weeks' time, on **25 June 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 Borraine of the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) at Andrew@wcedp.co.za.

Attachment 1: Food coordination forum 11 June

Attachment 2: PACK Home Volume 1 Be Coronavirus Safe (English)

Attachment 3: Attendees 11 June 2020