

Report: Western Cape NGO-Government Food Relief Coordination Meeting

25 June 2020

Introduction

The Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) convened a Zoom call on 25 June 2020, to discuss the ongoing work being done by NGOs and the Western Cape Government (WCG) to provide Covid-19 food relief and humanitarian support.



The agenda for this meeting included:

1. Feedback on food distribution data
2. Discussion on ongoing food needs versus resources
3. Feedback on sourcing PPE for NGO food efforts
4. Feedback from the Centre of Excellence for Food Governance webinar on civil society organisations and emergency food aid
5. Update from Western Cape Government
6. Next steps

1. Feedback on food distribution data

A summary of the data on food relief supplied via this forum reveals the following:

Total People Days	3 080 998
Average Number of people fed per day	41 635
Number of meals served	3 131 742
Meal Size (assumption)	0,33
Number of food parcels distributed	77 469
Average food parcel size	4
Average food parcel days	6
Total Voucher Value (ZAR)	85 4700

Thanks to the NGOs that supplied their data, the team that helped to collect the data (Sam Vos, U-turn Homeless Ministries, Tamsin Faragher and Megan Williams, City of Cape Town, Gavin Miller and Jacques du Plessis, Western Cape Government, Gill Cullinan and Rhonda Snyders, EDP), and Jan Schenk, ikapadata.com for compiling the data

Civil society food relief effort in the Western Cape from 25 March to 5 June 2020 (74 days).

Note: This is not the total food relief effort in the Western Cape during the Covid-19 crisis. For example, the data excludes 31 579 food parcels distributed on behalf of the Solidarity Fund, 45 000 food parcels distributed on behalf of Provincial DSD, the WCED school feeding scheme, non-metro municipalities (total R84m), the CoCT Mayors Relief Fund (R12m) and the SASSA Social Distress Relief grant of R350/ month (118 500 recipients to date)

This data showing the overall contribution of civil society organisations (CSOs) to food relief is drawn from reports from the +/- 15 largest NGO food distributors. It should be noted that there is a potentially higher overall CSO contribution if one takes into consideration the work of 100s of smaller NGOs, CBOs, FBOs and private citizens. This amounts to at least 50% of the overall food relief effort.

The efforts of multiple donors were also acknowledged, e.g.: companies and businesses, restaurants and chefs, philanthropy organisations, solidarity across traditional divides, i.e. CANs partnerships, congregations, farmers and markets.

It was noted that in addition to food, donations have also consisted of pots and cooking utensils, energy costs, freezers, plastic containers, airtime (for communications), transport and logistics, to sustain the food relief efforts.

Jan Schenk of ikapadata.com provided some background on the process behind the data collection.

- He noted that NGO data is provided in a large number of ways, e.g. in terms of weight of the food, size of food parcels, value of the food, number of people fed, etc., and that this, obviously, complicates the process.
- Some verification of the data is also required, to ensure that the calorie content of food parcels equates to the stated number of people receiving food.
- A series of assumptions are also required, i.e. that one meal provides one third of a person's daily requirements, or that sandwiches provide one sixth of daily requirements.

There are a number of ideas under way to improve the process:

- In general, a move to measuring the calories provided is preferred, and is being developed. This will, for example, give the nutritional yield of food parcels.
- There are also plans to work one-on-one with the record-keepers of NGOs providing food relief, to begin to standardise the way food is being captured and measured –

with the explicit aim of not making this process overly burdensome on existing food relief organisations and individuals.

Andrew Borraine suggested a four-fold impact of civil society organisations to date:

1. Sustaining health and lives in poor and vulnerable areas during a dire humanitarian crisis
2. Building networks and relationships of trust: within neighbourhoods and communities, between communities, between NGOs, between CSOs and government, and between farmers, agri-producers, formal and informal retailers, NGOs and communities
3. Generated innovations and learnings in humanitarian aid efforts – production, transportation, logistics, costs, etc
4. Raised awareness on the need for a more equitable and just food system, and the need to address food poverty that existed before the Covid-19 crisis

The next steps for CSO food relief data, as indicated below, were proposed, and accepted by the forum:

1. Continue data partnership between CSOs and government as a sub-group of this forum
2. Continue monthly food distribution data mapping process with the larger food supply NGOs
3. Conversation with the record keepers on operational definitions, measuring nutritional value and setting up simple common system, with some capacity building
4. Continue to map locations of grassroots food distribution points, as well as food gardens and supporting infrastructure

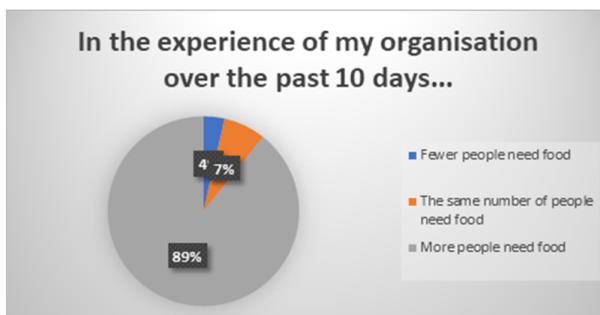
2. Discussion on ongoing food needs versus resources

A survey of the members of the forum revealed conclusively that food needs and requirements, with one or two exceptions, have generally increased, and that resources available to organisations within this forum have generally decreased.

Member survey: Food needs vs. resources

In the experience of my organisation over the past 10 days:

Fewer people need food	1
The same number of people need food	2
More people need food	25
Total	28



Over the past 10 days, the resources available to my organisation to provide food has:

Decreased	19
Stayed the same	2
Increased	6
Total	27



This is a potential crisis, given declining public sector revenues and resources.

In the subsequent discussion, a number of possible solutions to part of this crisis – of increased need and declining resources – were suggested.

- As before, the concept of **enabling local food growing** received broad-based support. A good example was provided from the George area.
 - As ever, collaboration (in this case between Lions Club International, other service organisations and faith-based networks) has proven key to their efforts to establish permaculture in communities.
 - They have relied on local experts for input on what is required, and have included local farmers where possible.
 - They have started a training module for those who are interested.
 - The use of technology - social media for publicising their intentions and efforts, and WhatsApp - has proven especially useful.
 - They are also starting a seed bank.
 - Once harvesting has begun, they envisage establishing a barter system, potentially setting up a food bank, and are also considering the sale of the produce grown.

Another example of successful food gardening is Manenberg, where backyards and open plots are being used at a very localised level for food gardening. The challenge remains, however, in moving this to a sustainable programme of food gardens with large-scale support.

- It was also suggested that providers of food relief consider re-looking at their **prioritisation of who needs assistance** the most. As infections increase, for example, different people are likely to need food relief, and it was suggested that infected people should be the highest priority.
- There is a clear need to **connect NGOs better with agriculture**. A number of examples were given of where this is happening, but there was also a call for government to assist with connecting CSOs better, and more broadly, with farmers, or agricultural suppliers elsewhere in the food chain, to minimise waste and maximise potential donations.
- Feedback from the Tableview/Blouberg CAN with the Dunoon CAN also explored the possibilities suggested by the approach taken by Boost Africa. A two-fold solution is being developed:
 - **Grant funding** for child-focused programmes, is being channelled, where appropriate, into food programmes.
 - Specifically, however, this funding is then being utilised to **work through ECD centres** – in this case through 40 unregistered ECDs which would otherwise fall through the cracks in the system.

This programme aims specifically to support and sustain institutions where they already exist. They are also partnering with local farmers who donate whatever is possible.

The longer-term strategy is to enable the ECDs to have their own food gardens.

- The concept of **maximising the use of existing community institutions** was echoed elsewhere. In Delft, for example, the community kitchens were quoted as such as example. If there is a recognition that these kitchens are likely to exist, for example, for the next three years, there is a clear need to determine how best to use them as part of the community infrastructure, and to establish what resourcing, investment and support they need as social institutions.

This concept requires linking these grassroots institutions both with the City of Cape Town and with the WCG.

- A number of participants reflected on the **need for energy sources** as an issue in providing food relief. It was suggested that the possibility of local municipalities assisting with 'donating' electricity to community kitchens and schools and ECDs providing meals through their kitchens, for example, should be explored.
- The difficulty of **distinguishing between 'want' versus genuine 'need'** was raised as a concern, particularly as the economy begins to reopen and the situations of those in need changes. Participants on the call were very clear that the only reliable solution to this issue is through on-the-ground community work, and consistent, community-level re-evaluation of the need for food relief on a regular basis. 'Street heroes', for example, are performing this role for the Tableview/Blouberg CAN's efforts.
- It was also suggested, given that **school feeding schemes** are currently feeding far fewer learners than are allocated for, that ways of re-allocating these resources more widely are actively explored. The Peninsula School Feeding Scheme, for example, is only providing 50% of their food to the schools that they support, and are sending the balance of the food to community kitchens surrounding the schools to ensure that learners who do not attend school still have access to a breakfast and a lunch.

3. Feedback on sourcing PPE for NGO food efforts

A summary of sourcing PPE for NGO food efforts was provided:

- Eight responses on behalf of 6 CANs and 4 NPOs
- Sourced 6500 masks to date (1500 from Woolworths via Sea Point CAN and 5000 from Maskathon campaign)
- No offers of hand sanitiser

Forum participants who can either contribute PPE or hand sanitiser, or who need either, should contact Andrew Boraine at Andrew@wcedp.co.za.

4. Feedback from the Centre of Excellence for Food Governance webinar on civil society organisations and emergency food aid

Camilla Adelle from the Centre of Excellence for Food Governance thanked forum participants who had attended the webinar, as well as those who had been on the panel. Overall reflections on the webinar were that the high attendance showed the extent of interest in this area, as well as the range of institutions working on these issues. In particular, the inclusion of CSOs in the debate on food policy was felt to be particularly useful. It was also noted that the webinar highlighted the extent of the efforts of CSOs in food relief to actors in the wider policy arena who may have been unaware of this work.

Camilla stressed that further interaction between this community of practice and the Food Relief Forum would be immensely helpful, and encouraged participants to contact her at cadelleup@gmail.com with any thoughts or contributions.

A report from the webinar will be made available to Forum members.

5. Update from Western Cape Government

Jacqui Boulle of WCG provided an update on a number of Provincial initiatives.

- She commended the food data efforts, and confirmed that it will be extremely useful in arguing for the partnering model in food relief that is clearly required.
- She noted that WCG is aware of increasing need coupled with declining resources, and that this has been exacerbated by the slow release of the SASSA Covid-19 Special Relief payments. WCG is committed to motivating for faster solutions to this issue in particular.
- WCG is also working on how to mobilise food relief efforts for the next phase of recovery, given that Covid-19 and related issues are likely to persist for at least another 12 months. Forum participants who have insights or ideas should contact her at Jacqueline.Boulle@westerncape.gov.za.

6. Next steps

It was proposed, over and above the immediate next steps, that the Forum explore ways of harnessing the energy and relationships beyond the crisis.

Andrew Boraine suggested that there is a need to build on partnerships and networks within communities (bonding networks), social solidarity across race and class (bridging networks), and partnerships between farmers, food producers, formal and informal retailers, NGOs and communities (strategic food system networks) to:

1. Advocate for a food systems approach to become central to WCG recovery plan. Build on a new-found public sector appreciation for role of civil society. Shift from 'participation' to 'partnering'
2. Harness the energy of new networks, e.g. Cape Town Together Food Growers Initiative. Connect the 'top-down' authorising environment with the 'bottom-up' mobilising environment
3. Connect the process of digitalisation of social grants and food relief, and circulation of mobile money, to community economic recovery (e.g. WCG Community Economic Recovery project proposal)

The ongoing overall food relief agenda was confirmed as:

- Increasing food needs versus declining food resources
- Humanitarian needs being exacerbated by the onset of Cape winter weather and infections and fatalities in Covid hot spots
- The ongoing need for safety packs to protect NGO food efforts - masks and hand sanitisers
- Continued mapping of NGO food relief data
- Continuing to make the case for the WCG to focus on food and humanitarian relief as part of its recovery planning.

The next meeting will be in two weeks' time, on **9 July 2020 at 2:00 p.m.** In addition to continuing the forum focus on food relief, this session will also focus on ways for this forum, and others, to provide input into the WCG recovery plan with a food systems view.

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.

Attachment 1: Presentation - WC Food Coordination Forum
Attachment 2: Food Relief Forum attendance 25 June 2020