



Report: Western Cape Food Forum

22 October 2020

Introduction

The Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) convened a Zoom call on 22 October 2020, to discuss a proposal for the future role and approach of the Forum in building a common agenda and joint action between government and civil society (and other sectors) in the food and nutrition system ('chapter two' of the Forum).

Agenda

1. Process of engagement with organisations in the Western Cape food and nutrition system
2. Western Cape Government Nourish to Flourish Programme - presentation
3. City of Cape Town Food System Programme - presentation
4. Gaps and challenges in the Western Cape food and nutrition system
5. Proposition for role of Western Cape Food Forum
6. Announcements
7. Date for the next meeting

1. Process of engagement with organisations in the Western Cape food and nutrition system

Andrew Boraine reported on progress since the last Food forum meeting on 17 September.

From the start of the lockdown, the Western Cape NGO-Government Food Relief Coordination Forum served the purpose of building relationships within civil society and between civil society and government to better coordinate food humanitarian efforts in vulnerable populations.

The impact of the Forum included foregrounding the role of civil society during the pandemic, and highlighting the vulnerability of the food system in the Western Cape prior to Covid.

The disruptions caused by the Covid-19 crisis forced changes in assumptions, attitudes, behaviours and relationships in both civil society and government, leading to new ways of doing things. How do we sustain 'doing development differently' beyond the crisis?

At the previous Forum meeting, members agreed that there was a need to continue to build on the relationships generated during the crisis to work together to ensure a more sustainable food system with higher levels of food and nutrition security.

The Forum mandated the EDP to engage with different stakeholders in the food and nutrition system to identify gaps and needs that the Food Forum could potentially fulfil.

During the past month, the EDP conducted a rapid assessment of the Cape Town food and nutrition system through a desktop review, survey with the Forum members, and engagements with various stakeholders including the Western Cape Government and the City of Cape Town. The aim of the assessment was to:

- Understand who is doing what in the food and nutrition system,
- What the existing gaps and needs are, and
- Beyond coordinating food relief efforts, how best can the Forum bridge the gap and address the needs of the actors without duplicating efforts.

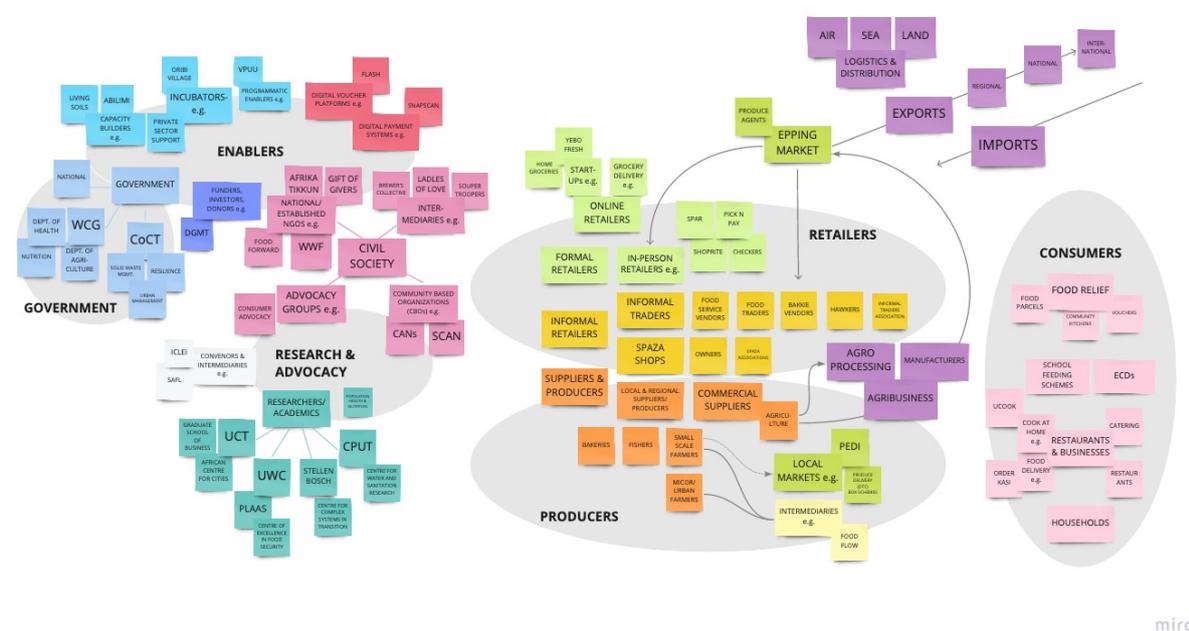


Figure 1: Western Cape Food System Actor Map

The assessment revealed six categories of actors in the food system: producers and processors (formal & informal), retailers (formal and informal), research and advocacy, enablers, government, and consumers.

In the short time available, the EDP was not able to engage with all the actors in each of the categories, and concentrated on engaging with stakeholders in the research and advocacy, enabler and government categories.

In the 'enabler category', for example, the EDP noted the degree of mobilisation, organisation, education, ideas, actions, experiments and innovations led by CSOs taking place in communities, e.g. Gugulethu Urban Farming Initiative, Stellenbosch Food Security Platform, FoodFlow, PEDI Agri Hub, VPUU, CTT Food Growers Initiative, etc, characterized as people learning as they go, and not necessarily waiting for government.

The EDP also considered the insights generated by a number of pertinent webinars and reports, for example:

- [Cape Town Food Dialogues 2020 Report: Food systems challenges for Covid-19 and beyond](#)
- [Southern Africa Food Lab webinar: What will it take to transform the food system](#)
- [Urban Festival 2020: Partnering during the pandemic: Lessons for building better together](#)
- [Centre of Excellence in Food Security: Food system transformation to end hunger](#)
- [Engagement with C40 Food Systems Network](#)
- [Community Chest publication on World Hunger Day](#)

The EDP also engaged with the Western Cape Government (WCG) and the City of Cape Town (CoCT) and noted that both spheres of government are taking food and nutrition systems issues seriously in their recovery plans, and want to continue to engage with civil society (and other sectors) in a structured and meaningful way.

2. Western Cape Government: Nourish to Flourish Programme – Presentation attached

Tristan Görgens, from the Department of the Premier, informed Forum members that the WCG is in the process of revising its thinking on food and nutrition systems based on the recent developments. The draft 'Nourish to Flourish' Programme is still propositional and will need to go through various internal process before it goes to Cabinet for approval.

The programme intends to achieve nutritional food security post in the Western Cape Province. The foundation of the programme is informed by previous modelling work highlighting the double burden of malnutrition, stunting and obesity. These malnutrition challenges have deep systematic injustices. They also pose huge risks to future economic productivity and the viability of the health system.

In addressing these injustices and risks, the Nourish to Flourish Programme therefore is built on four pillars:

- Food and nutrition assistance,
- Improved access to nutritious through formal and informal markets,
- Foster a resilient food system (environmental impact especially), and
- Promote food governance and democracy.

Tristan emphasised the importance of not reinventing the wheel and rather aim at maximizing and leveraging what already exists through a more collaborative whole

of government and whole of society approach, especially in the light of shrinking public sector budgets.

Together with the EDP, a WCG team is exploring the capabilities required to ensure a collaborative approach in the Nourish to Flourish Programme, especially with non-government actors.

3. City of Cape Town Food Systems Pilot Programme – presentation attached

Tamsin Faragher from the Resilience Department presented the City's Food Systems Pilot Programme approved by the City's Mayoral Committee in October 2020. The pilot programme stems from the City's Resilience Strategy, which identifies the need for a food systems programme to address food insecurity - a significant stress for Capetonians.

While the City lacks a direct mandate to address food security, it does play significant indirect roles across the Cape Town food system. The Food Systems Programme aims at strategically leveraging the indirect roles played by the City to build a resilient food system. According to the City, a resilient food system can be defined as *"an inclusive system that has the capacity over time to provide sufficient healthy, sustainably and ethically produced food to all in the face of chronic stresses and sudden shocks, including unforeseen circumstances"*.

Tamsin reported that the City's Programme takes a food systems lens in identifying challenges and opportunities for change. This comes with the recognition of the complex nature of Cape Town's food system with characteristics such as:

- A dynamic system, driven by supply & demand,
- 80% of production inputs are imported, making the system extremely vulnerable to externalities,
- 66% of fresh produce produced in Western Cape Province is exported,
- While there is food and nutrition challenge, food waste remains high, and
- Access to healthy food for all and optimisation of waste remains the biggest challenge.

Given the complex nature of the Cape Town's food system, Tamsin argued that change is only possible through a systematic approach.

The CoCT Food Systems Programme is structured around six themes:

- Food governance: provides an opportunity for the City to coordinate and leverage roles of different food actors
- Food resilience: speaks to building resilient food system that provide nutrition and sustainable, affordable food despite shocks
- Food production: promotes sustainable production
- Food environments: brings the crucial role of spatial and economic access
- Food and health: promote healthy food for healthy people
- Food economy: building and advancing competitive food enterprises

The Resilience Department will implement some of the actions under the above-mentioned themes. However, bulk of the actions will be coordinated by the City's Urban Management Directorate.

Food and nutrition programmes: Convergence of provincial and city government focus areas

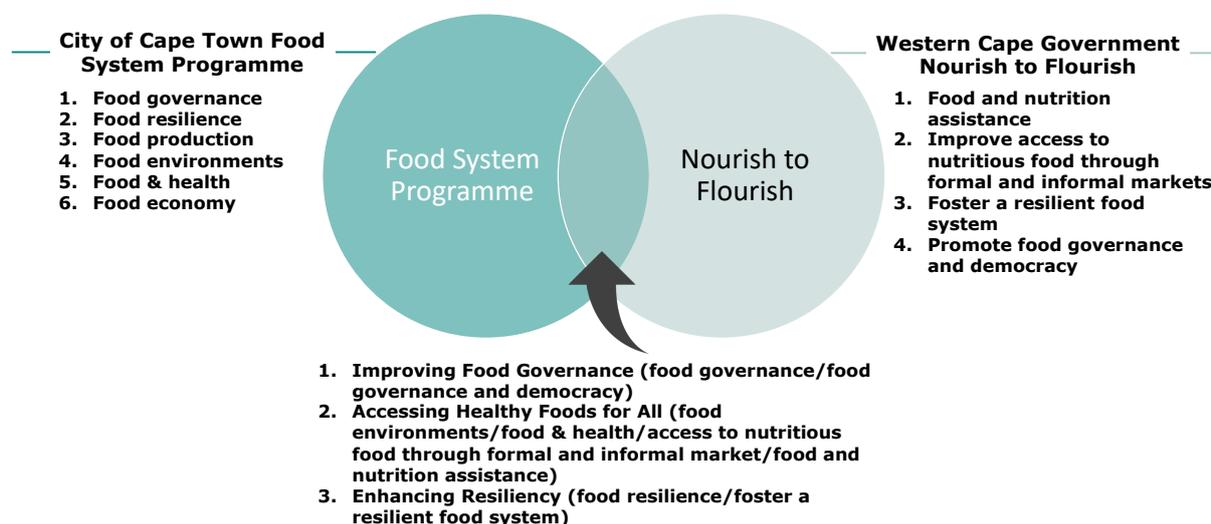


Figure 2: Potential convergence between WCG and CoCT food and nutrition programmes

A Forum member asked to whether the City will make use of unused land to support urban farmers. Another Forum member enquired about the processes for citizens to engage the City over access urban agriculture land. Tamsin indicated that urban land is one of the key areas the programme will explore under the review of the City's Urban Agriculture Policy of 2007. She added that the Department of Urban Agriculture will start with an urban agriculture project in November 2020 which will support 720 farmers across the city. Lessons emerging from the Urban Agriculture project will be useful in informing the City's approach with land management.

A member queried whether the Cape Town Food System Programme will address the core issue of food affordability. In her response, Tamsin reported that the City is looking into how they can better support the informal sector. A number of initiatives are in motion such as training urban farmers, exploring how to localise markets, and creating markets with the aim to address the core issue of purchasing power.

4. Gaps and needs in the food and nutrition system

Andrew Boraine reported on the five gaps and needs identified by the EDP through rapid assessment of the food system as well the survey of Forum members:

1. Non-state actors need to connect to and work with government in a structured way, especially, to better understand how the public sector 'authorizing environment' works in practice, and how to influence public policy, decision making and allocation of resources
2. Research, advocacy and dialogue initiatives need to connect to and influence actions and implementation

3. Short-term interventions, projects and activities need to be connected to long-term systems change, by helping stakeholders in the system 'see' and understand the system as a whole
4. Holistic view of food security: not just production (economic) or food relief (social), there needs to be a connection between food systems and jobs/livelihoods
5. Doing things differently: disrupting the system through public innovation and improving relationships between government & civil society, for example, through:
 - a. Shift from passive participation to active partnering, enabling and supporting community-led ideas
 - b. Engaging and contracting with informality to allow community efforts to flourish (e.g. CoCT Humanitarian Relief application, where only 14 NGO applications out of 129 were 'compliant')
 - c. Role of intermediary people/organizations between government structures and grassroots efforts
 - d. Need to bridge the digital divide in order to engage the community, especially during times of physical distancing and the use of remote technology

5. Proposition for role of the Western Cape Food Forum

Based on the identified gaps and needs, Andrew Boraine made a proposition for role of the Western Cape Food Forum in the next phase:

1. Focus on promoting **joint action and implementation** between sectors by enhancing interaction, problem-framing, and solutions finding
2. **Bridge the gap between diverse stakeholders** operating in different parts of the food and nutrition system
3. **Prioritize relationships with government departments** around policies, projects, and budgets
4. **Continue with food relief coordination role** aimed at vulnerable populations as the needs will remain. While continuing with food relief coordination, the forum should aim to transform beyond humanitarian efforts and adopt a systems view.

The proposed WC Food Forum approach includes:

- Avoiding overlap and competition with existing activities and networks
- Avoiding becoming a centralised 'gatekeeper' but rather promote a 'network of networks' concept of coordination
- Continued commitment to learning, adaptation, and knowledge sharing
- Continued commitment to data sharing

Andrew Boraine recommended that the WC Food Forum continue its work based around the core slogan of the Covid-19 phase, namely, **Connect, Communicate, Collaborate**.

There were general indications of commitment amongst members to the proposed new role of the Forum. **Members were requested to further consider the proposition over the next three weeks and provide feedback at the next meeting.**

Members were also asked to consider:

- **Which other organisations should be invited to attend the Forum?**
- **Which other networks should the Forum seek to partner with?**
- **Which issues specifically require joint action between government, civil society (and other sectors), that should be put on future Forum agendas?**

In responding to the proposition, a number of Forum members highlighted that the massive gap between the needs of informal sector stakeholders and government programmes which simply fail to translate into ground level actions because of the over-regulated and inflexible public sector operating environment. They argued that what is needed is a more realistic integration of the two. The plans need to be translated into practical actions aligned to citizen initiatives.

Andrew Boraine noted that there will be more opportunities in the future to discuss in detail in different pillars informing the CoCT and the WCG's programmes.

Before closing the session, Andrew Boraine provided Luzuko Mdunyelwa with an opportunity to provide feedback on the City's Food Relief Programme. Luzuko Mdunyelwa informed the Forum that an inception report was prepared and submitted, however, that there has been queries over the processes of getting the report to Council. He indicated that the report should be presented to Council by the 27 of November. The project team is still planning to disburse the funding by the 1st of November.

6. Forthcoming food meetings and webinars:

- The Centre of Excellence in Food Security Community of Practice will be meeting next week on Food Retail Price Dynamics during COVID <http://foodsecurity.ac.za/events/food-retail-price-dynamics-during-covid-19-lockdown/>
- This Sunday, Andrea Couvert and network will host lunch and a discussion on how to transform soup kitchens in collaborative business ventures. Interested Forum members to email Andrea Couvert for more information.

7. Next steps

The next meeting of the WC Food Forum is in three weeks' time, on **12 November 2020 at 2:00 p.m.**

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: WC Food Forum attendance 22 October 2020

Attachment 2: Presentation: City of Cape Town Food Systems Programme

Attachment 3: Presentation: Western Cape Government draft 'Nourish to Flourish' Programme