



Report: Western Cape Food Forum

3 December 2020

Introduction

The Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) convened a Zoom call on 3 December 2020, to look back on the past year, and to discuss current funding opportunities for food relief as well as areas for joint action in 2021 between government and civil society (and other sectors) in the food and nutrition system.

Agenda

1. Reflections on the year that was
2. Feedback on government food relief support
3. Local food systems
4. Update on food sector initiatives
5. Selection of themes/ working groups for joint action in 2021
6. Knowledge sharing and learning
7. Next steps

1. Reflections on the year that was

It is, in general, not easy to look back at an emotionally difficult year, especially when a second virus surge is under way, and poor and vulnerable communities are facing increased hunger over the festive season. There is a realisation therefore that we are not ending the year on a high note (as we may have thought was possible).

One real highlight, however, has been the incredible effort by CSOs, private citizens, donors, firms, farmers, and government officials – as seen in this Forum. In addition, this Forum provided a (possibly unique) opportunity for civil society to engage with government and have its voice heard on an ongoing basis.

The ground-breaking data collection that was driven by the Forum was another highlight: for the first time a combined view of the efforts of civil society in terms of food relief in the Western Cape was produced.

It has, however, become clear that the energy and momentum around food relief is very difficult to sustain. This is particularly evident in efforts to move the focus from food relief to sustainable food gardens, for example, as seen by Living Hope. The regulatory processes associated with this programme, in this instance from the Department of Agriculture, has been found to be a considerable obstacle: local communities have been completely unable to comply with the requirements for DoA help with these gardens. Similarly, in the case of the majority of NGOs not being able to meet the City of Cape Town's grant in aid requirements to access food aid.

This theme – of government regulatory processes and systems not working for communities, and indeed, for government itself – has been constant, throughout the time that the Forum has been active, and will continue to be a area of focus in 2021.

It was noted that the membership of the Forum has continued to grow, and that this only happens when people see value in being part of a group. In addition, the Forum has helped drive acceptance by government that civil society plays a huge role, and this role has been acknowledged repeatedly. The Forum also created, in some cases for the first time, an open door to government, and helped foster a listening approach from government.

The pandemic clearly caused great hardship, but it was noted that it also brought people together in a time of crisis. What can be done as a collective was proven, and pointed to previously-unknown levels of kindness, empathy, and compassion. It was felt that CSOs need to find a way of encouraging contributions to become a way of life. It was also noted that some mechanism for rewarding the core community volunteers, or champions, needs to be found.

An article by Professor Ralph Hamann and colleagues points to many of the observations made. It addresses the issue of turning short-term crisis relief into longer-term social Innovation, and includes the following insights:

- A shift from volunteering to social entrepreneurship
- A solidarity economy built on local food value chains
- Developing and using local knowledge and partnerships
- An evolving ecosystem of social innovation networks
- Engaging the state in diverse ways – resisting the return to pre-crisis 'normal'

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/turning_short_term_crisis_relief_into_longer_term_social_innovation

The Western Cape Food Forum approach was also commended elsewhere. A critique of national government's history of treatment of the non-profit and civil society sector, by Colleen du Toit, published in the Daily Maverick, commended the approach of the WC Food Forum as a welcome alternative: "The success of this forum, and the ongoing food relief efforts of the multiplicity of community-based members, rests on a new conception of multi-sectoral cooperation, especially in regard to the working relationships between institutions of government and civil society organisations."

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-11-26-how-to-fix-the-mismanagement-nepotism-and-corruption-that-is-the-national-lotteries-commission/>

2. Feedback on government food relief support:

Robert MacDonald and Mzwandile Hewu from the Western Cape Government Department of Social Development provided an update on Provincial food relief support

- To date, the WCG has funded NGOs via food parcels (50 000 parcels), and via funding larger NGOs to distribute food to smaller community food relief organisations.
- In the Adjustment Budget on 2 December, WCG was given R51 million by National Government. This funding is for food relief, and needs to be allocated before the end of March 2021. The approach is likely to include food parcels, vouchers, and working via larger NGOs for food distribution to grassroots organisations and feeding schemes. WCG is therefore working as rapidly as possible on agreements with larger NGOs to access bulk food for them to distribute, aiming to have these agreements in place before the end of December 2020.
- It was noted that it is important to coordinate these efforts with those of the City of Cape Town in order to avoid duplication. It was also clarified that this funding will be

applied to all of the Western Cape, with due attention being paid to rural areas where access to distributed food aid may be more difficult.

- Where possible, this aid will be extended beyond the end of this financial year (March 2021), to mitigate potential budget cuts to the Department of Social Development in the new financial year.
- The model previously facilitated through the Forum, i.e. of using 14 – 18 larger intermediary organisations to support informal community kitchens and grassroots NGOs, was suggested as one mechanism to assist in the allocation of this funding.
- While DSD has identified two intermediary organisations to assist with the allocation of this relief, other intermediary CSOs in the area of food relief who wish to work with WCG in relation to this funding should notify Andrew Boraine at Andrew@wcedp.co.za.
- Further information on the progress of this funding will also be communicated to the Forum as soon as possible.

In terms of the City of Cape Town R25 million food relief programme, the latest update from Luzuko Mdunyelwa is that the proposal was intended for the Council meeting of 3rd December 2020, pending final compliance issues for the proposal.

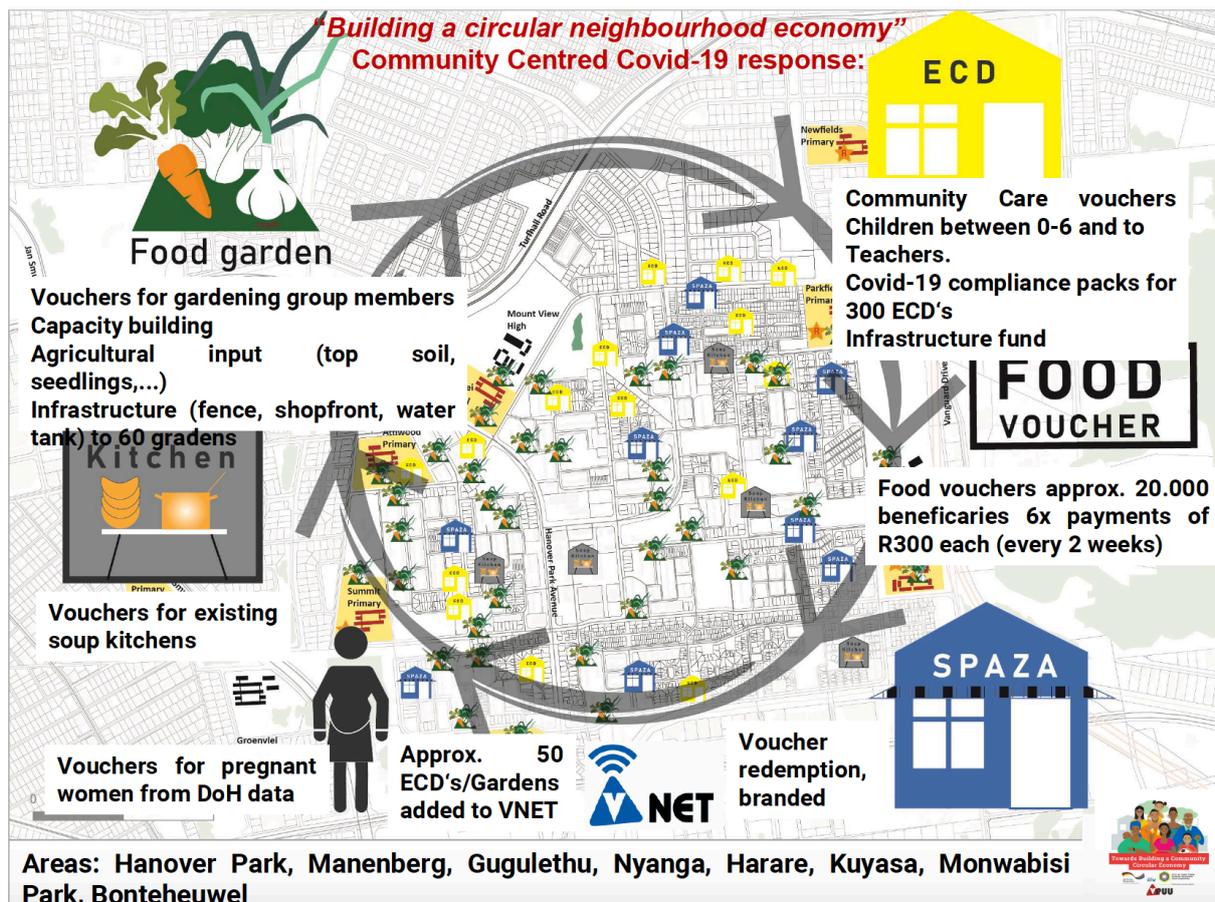
3. Local food systems

Michael Krause of VPUU (Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrade) presented an overview of their recent work on a collaborative social relief initiative aimed at preventing hunger, but also supporting local businesses. Highlights of the programme include:

- Six cycles of R300 digital vouchers across eight neighbourhoods: Hanover Park, Bonteheuwel, Manenberg, Gugulethu, Nyanga, Harare, Monwabisi Park and Kuyasa in Khayelitsha
- 25 000 food vouchers per month for three month period, including to staff and learners at 250 ECD centres and their families, residents involved in community food gardens, support community kitchens
- Development of local food gardens, and stimulating the informal economy through the provision of food vouchers redeemable at local spaza shops

The programme has funding of €5 million, funded by the German Government and KfW Bank.

There was a great deal of interest amongst Forum members in the VPUU model, and further feedback will be provided at the next Forum meeting.



For the full presentation, including VPUU's insights on behaviour changes required, refer to *Attachment 1: VPUU presentation to WC Food Forum 3 December 2020*. (Password: 1379)

In feedback from other local food partnerships, Carl van Blerk of the Eden Lions organisation reported good news from the Garden Route region. Their proposal for the establishment of the Garden Route Food Pantry has been passed by Council, opening in December. It will focus on sourcing and manufacturing and distribution of fortified products in partnership with CPUT, including a community gardens programme.

Other local food partnerships are encouraged to present their models, stories and lessons to the Forum.

4. Update on food sector initiatives

As reported in the previous Food Forum meeting, the EDP is working on an EU call on Enhancing Accountability in South Africa, and will be submitting a Concept Note by 8 December. If successful, there will be an invitation to submit a full proposal by April 2021. Food Forum members will be invited to give input to the Full Proposal.

The EDP is the lead applicant; the Centre of Excellence for Food Security (Universities of Pretoria and Western Cape), Southern Africa Food Lab (University of Stellenbosch) and the African Centre for Cities (UCT) are co-applicants.

The key objective of the call is to enhance accountability, democratic engagement, transparency and improved relationships of trust between the public sector, civil society organisations (CSOs), business, researchers and academics, and other stakeholders in the

food and nutrition system in the Western Cape Province, and to document and share these food system governance lessons more broadly in South and Southern Africa.

The Concept Note proposes four areas of action:

Activity One: Convene and manage the activities and programmes of the multi-stakeholder Western Cape Food Forum to:

- Facilitate joint action and implementation between stakeholders on the basis of a common approach to problem-framing and solution-finding.
- Facilitate a common agenda and promote collaborative attitudes and behaviours to bridge the gaps between diverse stakeholders operating in different parts of the food and nutrition system.
- Strengthen relationships between CSOs, business, advocacy and research, and the public sector to influence food and nutrition policies, projects, and budgets.
- Promote the creation of an enabling and responsive public sector environment for community-led initiatives and mutual accountability.

Activity Two: Manage and support the activities and programmes of the recently established Western Cape Government (WCG) Food Security Working Group to:

- Facilitate greater levels of accountability between siloed government departments, between spheres of government, and across administrative and political boundaries.
- Promote collaborative attitudes and behaviours, and adaptive leadership and management, through a public sector institutional culture change programme.
- Promote an enabling and responsive approach within the public sector 'authorising environments', particularly with regard to dealing with informality.

Activity Three: Co-design and implement a joint adaptive leadership and governance action learning programme between CSO staff and public sector staff involved in the Western Cape food and nutrition system.

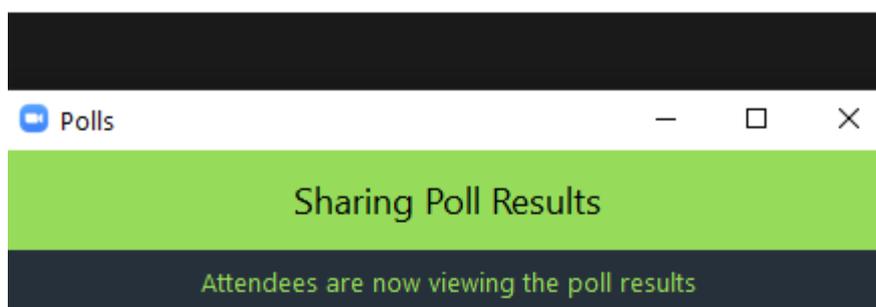
Activity Four: Share emerging adaptive governance lessons more widely in South Africa and Southern Africa in partnership with relevant research, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing networks in both the food and nutrition governance sector, as well as the governance, state reform and capacity-building sector.

The Food Forum endorsed the process in principle. Progress updates will be provided by the EDP.

5. Selection of themes/ working groups for joint action in 2021

A snap poll of meeting participants was taken to assess interest in previously-suggested themes for working groups in 2021.

The result of the poll is as follows is indicated below. The themes with the most support, and their exploration through working groups, will form part of the focus of the Forum in 2021. Forum members who are interested in championing any of these areas of interest should contact Andrew Boraine of the EDP at Andrew@wcedp.co.za.



1. Please select the top three themes/ working groups you would like the Forum to focus on in 2021 (Multiple choice)



6. Knowledge sharing and learning

- Feedback was provided on the Policy Briefs on C19 Food Governance Innovation on 1 December (including civil society, urban agriculture and informal food economy). The Policy and Governance Programme of the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security is finalising a series of policy briefs commissioned by the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC). The policy briefs will outline key food system domains that were affected by the C19 lockdown, documenting important innovations that emerged to deal with these challenges and make recommendations for policy and governance.

Members are welcome to provide comment and make input:

- Urban Agriculture: https://uwc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYsd--oqDkoHtf38QGcCIL_3KBFnmggJkbD
- CSOs: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M7wTSyeP9NIRJR5yQfBUr5xPo25hfEomByckspMXN7Q/edit?usp=sharing>
- Informal food economy: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BLkWs9uK8SCzLpLcfTyYwZ-ZmJawb22V0z0rjJMIlPk/edit?usp=sharing>
- There is a Food Governance Community of Practice Meeting focused on Child Nutrition during Covid-19, 9 December 2020, 10:00 - 12.30. *Presenters:* Chantell Witten (University of the Free State) and Jeremy Seekings (University of Cape Town),

Panelists: Hilary Goeiman (Western Cape Government); Daphne Erosi (Parent Organiser for Equal Education); Julian May (UWC); Lori Lake (UCT).

The meeting focuses on the following key questions:

- *What are the implications of a life-course perspective on child nutrition?*
- *How do food environments affect child nutrition?*
- *How has COVID-19 lockdown exacerbated child malnutrition?*
- *How has the state and civil society responded to the child nutrition challenge during lockdown?*
- *What are the implications for policy and governance?*

All Forum members are welcome to join this Zoom meeting via this link:

https://uwc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYsd--oqDkoHtf38QGcCIL_3KBFnmqgJkbD

7. Next steps

The next meeting of this forum will take place on **28 January 2021 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.

Attachment 1: VPUU presentation to WC Food Forum 3 December 2020

Attachment 2: WC Food Forum attendance 3 December 2020