

Western Cape Food Forum

Thursday, 2:00 - 3.30pm, 22 July 2021

Report

Welcome and apologies Attendance list can be found [here](#)¹

Reflection on recent events in KZN and Gauteng, as well as taxi violence in Cape Town, and implications for food security

- CANs respond to recent weeks: after looting in KZN, Gugulethu community came together and patrollers came and guarded the mall. One of the kitchens started cooking for the patrollers. Gugulethu CAN raised R5000 worth of food to look after the people protecting the malls and shops. In addition to feeding patrollers, they have been going to each household with senior citizens that couldn't come to the kitchens.



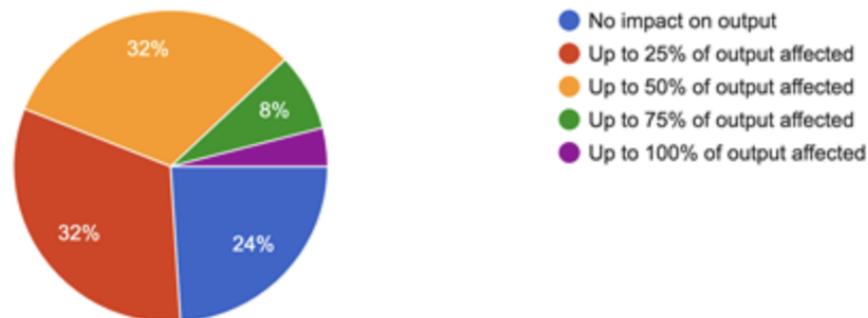
Figure 1: Gugulethu CAN in action

¹ The WC Food Forum has since its inception distributed an attendance register with the minutes of the meeting. The register has always included the email addresses of attendees, for the purpose of encouraging connecting, communicating and collaborating amongst Forum members between meetings. If you wish for your email address to not be included, please let us know by emailing rhonda@wcedp.co.za

- Cape Town Together also wrote an [open letter](#) on taxi violence to Mayor and Premier.
- Adapted WCG DEDAT survey: 25 responses from Civil Society Organisations, over 92% of orgs are affected. The main themes in the survey responses included: Project funding is threatened and there is cancellation of projects; organisations' reputations are damaged as they can't deliver on their commitments; increased food insecurity; loss of livelihoods due to inability to get to work is increasing the need for food relief; there is a call for strategic leadership; rising costs of food as a result of the violence; there is a shift to digital vouchers to avoid the safety threats; there is an even bigger need for food relief and community support at this time.

To what extent have your activities (e.g. food distribution) been disrupted?

25 responses



Feedback from forum participants:

- Local food is less open to disruption, community and food gardens are critical to stop reliance on large suppliers, increase consistency and variety, shorten supply chain and to buy locally/seasonally.
- One of the challenges to urban agriculture is the poor soil quality in the Cape Flats and limited inputs; however, there are ways to improve the quality and with more investment and land made available, the potential is great.
- Important to ensure communities want gardens and have the capacity to maintain and grow them.
- Government will need to work with communities to strengthen resilience. Community development is crucial to protect assets and ensure we can work together to avert bigger crisis in the future.
- Taxi violence is not new in CT. Recent events highlight structural inequality that exists in Cape Town and further exacerbates the issues. E.g. contrast between responses to UCT fires vis-à-vis people stranded from taxi violence. Where's law enforcement and government leadership?
- Louise van Rhyn - Partners for Possibility - has set up an informative WhatsApp group this week called ACT4SA (Active Citizens Together 4 South Africa). Anyone wishing to share their feelings, thoughts, suggestions re what's happened in KZN & Gauteng & offering services of any kind to assist, may do so via the group. Contact Pearl Nel for more info.

- One week of crisis showed vulnerability of food system, and dependence from other provinces; this was exacerbated by panic buying, taxi violence, and food wastage (e.g. milk in KZN), interrupting other things like vaccination process.
- There is a clear need to engage City planning from transport and public works around food. Integrated transport plans right now don't have food security lenses. Also important to look at the way in which malls are extractive in townships. Opportunity to engage with WC Property Association, SAPOA, etc. about integrating into communities and applying shared-value principles. V&A interested in partaking in conversations.

The survey findings have been shared with the Western Cape Government.

WC Food Forum strategy session to be held on 9-11.30 on 19 August

The strategic session with working groups on 13 July concluded the forum should pool resources and integrate work to have greater impact rather than continue with separate work groups. A survey will be distributed for input in the strategy session's agenda; and support can be made available to those who require data to join in. The idea is to hold a session that builds on ongoing relevant processes; namely:

- Feedback from provincial consultation of South Africa's National Food System Dialogue, held on 6 July, and Synthesis Meeting, held 22 July:
 - We are seemingly not all on the same page. There are many different interpretations of what is meant by 'food security' and different starting points for food system change: e.g.
 1. Primary production: Boost commercial agricultural and subsistence farmers (food availability)
 2. Rural poverty and the inclusion of small-scale rural producers and farming communities (rural development)
 3. Food aid and other social relief grants during crises (social development)
 4. Impact of climate change and the need for more resilient food systems (sustainability and the true cost of food)
 5. Urban food systems - systemic failure in terms of food access and affordability (role of cities and towns)
 6. Local production for local consumption (shorter food supply chains)
 7. Maternal and child nutrition, focusing on family food security and food safety (health and wellbeing)
 - Food policy discussions tend to be dominated by the economic cluster (government and food industry): focus on value-adding investments and job creation, and the privileging of large-scale production, processing, distribution and retail vs. health policy emphasis on fresh, unprocessed (healthier) foods. Focus on calories rather than high nutrition quality.
 - Very little focus on end-to-end value chain approach. The focus tends to be on only one of six pillars of food security, namely 'availability'. The **Six Pillars of Food Security** are:
 1. **Availability** – Having a quantity and quality of food sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substances and acceptable within a given culture, supplied through domestic production or imports

2. **Access (economic, social, and physical)** – Having personal or household financial means to acquire food for an adequate diet at a level to ensure that satisfaction of other basic needs are not threatened or compromised; and that adequate food is accessible to everyone, including vulnerable individuals and groups
3. **Utilisation** – Having an adequate diet, clean water, sanitation, and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met
4. **Stability** – Having the ability to ensure good security in the events of sudden shocks (e.g., an economic, health, conflict, or climate crisis) or cyclical events (e.g., seasonal food insecurity)
5. **Agency** – Individuals or groups having the capacity to act independently to make choices about what they eat, the foods they produce, how that food is produced, processed, and distributed and to engage in policy processes that shape food systems. The protection of agency requires socio-political systems that uphold governance structures that enable the achievement of FSN for all.
6. **Sustainability** – Food system practices that contribute to long-term regeneration of natural, social, and economic systems, ensuring the food needs of the present generations are met without compromising the food needs of future generations.

(Adapted from: HLPE. 2020. Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.
<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9731en/ca9731en.pdf>

- There is little emphasis on inclusive food governance in the discussions.
 - All of the above results in: food policy incoherence, tensions and competing agendas within government and society, e.g.: rural vs. urban; formal/ large vs. informal/ small scale; food as economic commodity vs. social good
 - Food systems change requires 'solution coalitions' and partnerships across different sectors and interests. Given different world views, it may be difficult to agree on a shared vision. However, we need to aim to agree on a minimum programme of action, to build a common agenda for joint action. How can we reframe the concept of food security to include more perspectives and approaches, to make it a 'both/ and' rather than an 'either/ or situation'?
 - Challenge: Can we achieve both food security/ nutritional outcomes and economic objectives?
- o Update on Western Cape Government food programme (Nourish to Flourish): Good progress on developing a place-based model for mapping and engaging local food and nutrition systems. Basis for developing support for shortening the food chain between producers and consumers
 - o Update on City of Cape Town food programme:
 - Internal launch to mobilise departmental functions, mandates and staff to support an integrated food systems programme

- Positive developments around the future role of the CT Fresh Produce Market, which plays a critical role in providing nutrient-rich fresh fruit and vegetables at on average 30% less than mainstream supermarkets (access to better nutrition), mainly via a network of informal and small businesses (inclusive food system)
- Overall observations:
 - Despite being recognised for doing excellent work in providing food relief during the pandemic, CSOs remain relatively marginalised in food policy debates, confined to a small 'social welfare' category. How can CSOs get more involved in other parts of the food system, for example, job creation and livelihoods, and working with small businesses and informal traders?
 - Inclusive food governance: how do we increase formal avenues for engagement with civil society?
 - How do we help each other to understand the food system as a complex whole, made up of multiple drivers that influence the food system (e.g. biophysical and environmental, infrastructure and technology, political, socio-economic, demographic, governance) and different parts of the food chain (e.g. production, transport, aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management?) We need to be able to 'see' the whole system, with all the moving and connected parts, while at the same time remain focused on local action where we can make a difference.
 - We all have different perspectives depending on our different roles, interests and world visions) and often struggle to hold the whole picture with its interrelated parts. We need to do more work on educating ourselves about how the food system works, and who it works for, using simple language and practical examples.

Feedback

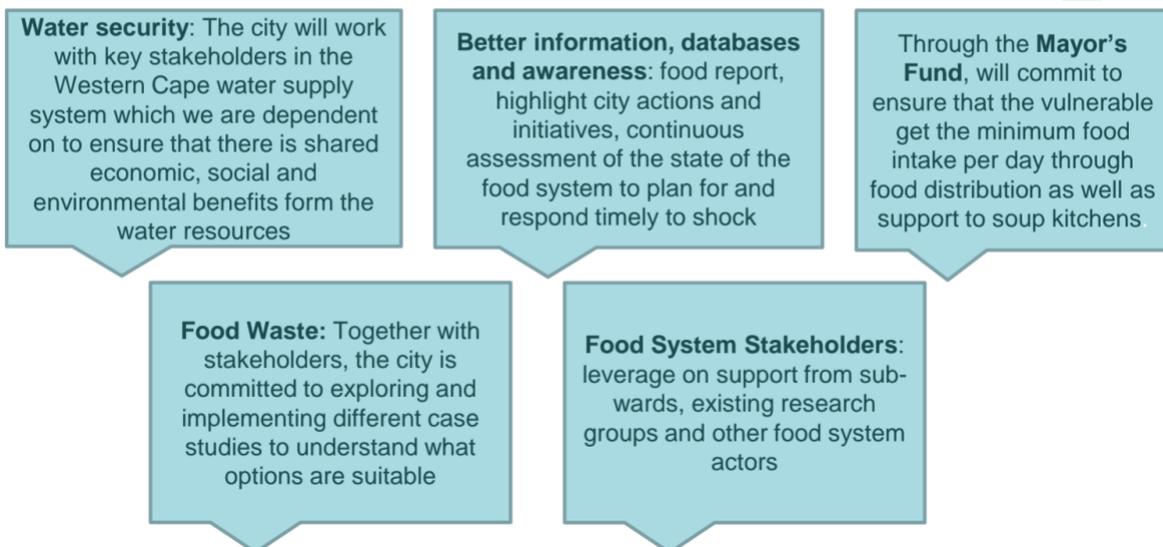
- The Food Forum strategy should be focused on what is possible in the Western Cape primarily; nevertheless, it is important to be aware of the food system globally, nationally; and understand the inter-dependences.
- Helpful to map and understand bigger picture in order to partner and take action - this includes understanding what government is doing and avoid seeing 'only part of the system'.
- A vision of a sustainable resilient localized food system that feeds everybody can help us shape actions.
- This strategy must be brought together with government plans; namely, Nourish to Flourish at the Western Cape and the City's Food System Programme. There is a clear opportunity to broaden the view and bring together everyone around a common agenda around where to intervene, what civil society can do well, what government can do well, what to do together.
- Important to build on what already exists and the energy civil society has galvanised in an unprecedented way in the past 12-18 months. This also entails encouraging entrepreneurship starting at the grassroots level.
- The strategy must also address how civil society can get more involved in the 'economic' part of the food system and not just the 'social' part of the system.

- Government does not have monopoly on knowledge and what works and wants to learn more what civil society knows and the practical experience developed. N2F is focused on three sites (Langa, Worcester, and Knysna) to understand what works and what isn't working in terms of local food eco-systems.
- Suggestion for an update on Western Cape Governments' N2F and City's food plan to be presented at this Forum; and explore formal avenues for engagement between government and civil society; and other voices (e.g. private sector).

ICLEI's July's Africa Food Month, reflections from Cape Town and other African cities

By Solophina Nekesa. Professional Officer, Urban Systems. ICLEI Africa. 2021 African City Food Exchange, dialogues with local governments around food system challenge. Presentation can be found [here](#).

Some steps forward



Feedback:

- WCG and COCT can build on work by local entrepreneurs. e.g. CTT Food Growers initiative (FGI) [Youtube channel](#)
- For the Mayoral Fund, can we look at ways to develop pathways to food access for existing initiatives? (e.g. new avenues for informal community kitchens to get funding).
- One of the key goals must be to create an enabling environment e.g. N2F mapping what's happening in three areas and trying to improve relationships between relative departments and civil society etc.
- It can help to look at the steps and areas identified in more depth to connect the dots.

Information updates and knowledge sharing:

- The one year anniversary of the Cape Town Food Dialogues 2020 was this week. Have a look at fooddialogues.info.
- Ralph Hamann has developed a short guide on food system thinking (in cities), for WWF. It is in draft form - if anyone is interested to take a look, he'd love to hear any feedback; please reach out at ralph.hamann@uct.ac.za.
- Kurt Ackerman is looking to connect with anyone who has knowledge or experience in establishing cooperatives and collectives in urban food space (for profit or not for profit), looking for someone who has facilitated that or been part of the legal/bureaucratic processes - please contact Kurt@fairfood.org.za.
- 'Good Hood' Stories: On Thursday 8 July, the SA Cities Network (SACN) launched a series of videos. One of them tells the story of a partnership for urban rooftop gardens in Johannesburg CBD. You can watch it [here](#). You can watch all the videos, which deal with achieving collective impact through local partnerships, [here](#).
- More from CTT Food Growers Initiative:
 - <https://youtu.be/qGYpmue1YTA>
 - <https://youtu.be/WBMn417TO6E>
 - <https://youtu.be/ljP4dVTN64o>
 - <https://youtu.be/OLElf76JY-8>
 - https://youtu.be/_1E3l8xaxZc
 - <https://youtu.be/44qB4KtVrvc>
- [African Centre for Cities Podcast Series](#): Planning for Food Secure African Cities: Podcast One – What have you eaten today? Podcast Two – History of How Urban Planning has Shaped our Urban Food system. Also contains list of excellent food system resources.
- [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021](#) (FAO). "The high cost of healthy diets coupled with persistent high levels of income inequality put healthy diets out of reach for around 3 billion people, especially the poor, in every region of the world in 2019".
- Voices from CANs: [Pam's story and experience with the Gugulethu CAN](#). "I wish that government could [understand] that we actually don't want to do their job, but we do it because they're not doing it. And when we want to collaborate with them, they should bring something to the table. The CANs are working [for] no salary. They do the work because it's needed to be done, and government is not doing that work but actually has the resources to do it. The government [has so much] red tape...why offer something that you know that someone is really not going to get."
- Processing of nutrient-dense food by the Inani Startwell Foundation: Read about a new non-profit food factory up and running [here](#). "The term 'Silent Hunger' or Chronic Malnutrition is used when children have access to food but NOT to nutrients. Some would say their food is energy-rich and nutrient-

poor.”

- [Working Toward Food Equity: Connecting Local Farms with Underserved Communities in the USA](#). “Meet Red Tomato. This mission-driven non-profit organization is dedicated to working with local growers and communities across the North-eastern United States to improve the long-term viability of small and mid-sized farms. Recently, the organization realized a missing link in serving its mission: While Red Tomato helped growers distribute and sell their product to retailers, underserved communities in the area were being left out, with little to no options to obtain fresh, local produce. Thus began the Bypass Project.”
- [Food insecurity in South Africa – Evidence from NIDS-CRAM](#). “We conclude that given the protracted nature of the pandemic, slow recovery and its continuing social and economic impact, and the stabilisation of household and child hunger at higher levels, support for vulnerable households remains crucial, especially support targeted at households with children, given the tragic consequences of enduring hunger for stunting and children's long-term development.”
- [New hunger report spotlights controversial UN Food Systems Summit](#). “Hunger and malnourishment increased dramatically during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a sobering United Nations report released Monday. The report is the first comprehensive assessment of hunger since the pandemic struck, and estimates a 25% increase in the number of severely undernourished people across the globe. While no region of the world was spared, Africa was the hardest-hit.”
- [Why Food Should be a Commons Not a Commodity](#). “If we were to treat food as a commons, it could be better produced and distributed by hybrid tri-centric governance systems implemented at the local level and compounded by market rules, public regulations, and collective actions.”
- [Zumite sedition and the emerging 'politics of the mall'](#) An article in the Daily Maverick by Prof Mark Swilling on how consumerisation and financialisation have driven economic growth since 1994, and how the proliferation of malls has negatively affected local communities. See also Prof Jane Battersby: [Food System transformation in the Absence of Food System Planning: The Case of Supermarket and Shopping Mall Retail Expansion in Cape Town, South Africa](#) and [The Food Desert as a Concept and Policy Tool in African Cities: An Opportunity and a Risk](#).

Upcoming events

Please remember you can access and input into a full calendar of events [here](#):

CTT FGI is hosting their second workshop on living soils series on 18th August starting at 10am, covering nematodes and going through results of soil tests. [Register here](#)

Community Action Networks (CAN) are hosting an experimental action- oriented Systems Lab. Dates & times: 24 July 09:00 - 13:00; 31 July 09:00 - 13:00; 1 August 09:00 - 13:00. You can register [here](#).

ICLEI-Africa: Where Chemistry, Storytelling and Policy Collide: Lessons from the Inclusive Metabolism Project. 27 July 2021 | 2pm [Registration Link](#)

ICLEI-Africa: Multiplicities (Menu) of entry points into urban food governance through the lenses of "Food Sensitive Urban Planning" and the "City Region Food System" 29 July 2021 | 2pm [Registration Link](#)

Africa responds to UN Food Security Summit. "Let's reclaim our food sovereignty and transform the industrial food system". Tuesday 27 July 13:30–15:00. [Registration link](#)

Date of Food Forum online Strategy workshop: 9-11.30, Thursday, 19 August 2021

Date of next Food Forum meeting: 14-15.30, Thursday, 26 August 2021

NB: if we missed you in the attendance register, or are missing contact details for you, please let us know.