

C-19 Gauteng Community Organising and Food Security, emergency funding request

Introduction

C-19 People's Coalition is a collective of civic organisations, trade unions, organisations of informal workers, faith-based organisations, community structures and individuals in South Africa. This collective is mobilising all people, every stakeholder and sector, to contain the infection, reduce transmission and mitigate the social, economic and political impacts of the Covid-19 virus. The C-19 People's Coalition members are fuelled with the mission to serve their local communities and actively contribute the fight against COVID-19. The Coalition has several initiatives and solidarity actions to better respond to the needs of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The C-19 Gauteng Food and Community Organising Working Groups were established out of this collective to lead organising and food security work in the Gauteng province.

Community Organising

The Community Organising Work Group consists of a coordination team, community team leaders and teams of volunteers. Work has started in 18 communities with a short term objective of teams in 50 communities over 4 weeks.

The teams are tasked with:

- Popular education and information on COVID- 19, regulations and hotlines, using pamphlets and discussions with residents.
- Assist with marshalling of queues at clinics, grocery stores and pension pay-points, hygiene around public taps and toilets, basic dispute resolution, referral to medical facilities and testing, gender-based violence practitioners, etc.
- Identify vulnerable households/individuals and food and other critical support requirements not being met through government or other initiatives. The teams have already identified thousands of individuals in the first 18 communities.
- Linking with the Food Work Group to discuss contents of food packages, and to receive and distribute packages from household-to-household to avoid crowding.

Teams are given training in appropriate safety procedures and guidelines, and are supplied with necessary personal protective equipment.

Food procurement and distribution

The mission of the Food team is to facilitate delivery of food and essential goods to communities in need. This includes working with others to fundraise, connecting producers, distribution networks and communities in need, and ensuring that small scale producers, informal traders and spaza shops (informal traders) are included in any initiatives, are treated as essential services and are protected in their work.

The team has assembled a database of small scale farmers and distribution agents who can procure, assemble packages and deliver food to community contact points. These are clustered geographically (district/metro) to facilitate short supply lines and localised food systems.

Core activities are:

Assistance in emergency relief efforts through the provision of food parcels (fresh produce and/or dry goods) to vulnerable households and individuals

The challenges facing communities are systemic and chronic and will persist. The pandemic will give way to a deep economic recession in which resources in vulnerable communities will be scarce. Therefore the response should have a medium and longer term component to it, to strengthen and enhance local food systems of healthy produce. In this light, we are looking at using the immediate relief efforts to facilitate restructuring of food systems towards more localised systems and short supply chains which will be required in conditions of prolonged restrictions on movement, as well as a response to the wider climate crisis.

Demand

We have four current channels for identifying need for food and other essential goods:

- Primarily organised through our community organising teams, with a target of 50 communities over 4 weeks. Our initial target is 20,000 packages (based on Department of Social Development packages for 2 people valued at R700 for one month, but which should be kept flexible and adapted to available products, resources and household needs) delivered over 4 weeks, but this is only indicative until we are able to activate further.
- Other pre-existing networks of supply and demand e.g. farmer-community networks in Sedibeng, and others. Thousands of individual packages or bulk supplies could be delivered depending on resources.
- We have been receiving many *ad hoc* requests for assistance. We are currently unable to respond to these needs due to lack of resources. We are gathering these and trying to match with those who can supply in our existing network. If resources were available we would be in a position to activate networks in geographical clusters to supply to them on request.
- The Gauteng Community Action Network (<http://www.gautengtogether.org/>) has been launched. These are localised networks to mobilise local resources and support to those in need nearby. We are working to coordinate with them in geographical clusters.

Management

Seriti Institute is the fiscal host and fund manager (<https://seriti.org.za/>) with full auditing and accountability mechanisms in place. Disbursements based on decisions made by a team consisting of reps from C19 Gauteng Task Team, and the Food and Community Organising teams.

Indicative budget for initial 4 weeks

Community organising (PPE, pamphlets, food for volunteers, transport, airtime) R2,670,000
Food procurement and distribution (target 20,000 individuals plus 4,000 fresh produce) R14,950,000
Fund management and admin fee R1,145,000
Total R18,765,000

A full proposal and budget is available on request.

Contact:

Juanita Pardesi, Seriti Institute, juanita@seriti.org.za, 082 907 5997