KAGISO TRUST COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE SURVEY FINDINGS

COVID-19
COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE
INITIATIVE

KAGISO
TRUST
Overcoming poverty

GUIDE TO THE COMPENDIUM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

Dear Stakeholders and Partners

It is with great anticipation that Kagiso Trust present here a compendium of research, case studies and outcomes of various consultations with civil society in the initial period of COVID-19. As this compendium details serious systemic and structural fissures in society – economic, social, political, and technological – were exacerbated for many of our citizens and people under COVID-19.

We detail the fragility and vulnerability of communities and explore the underlying systemic challenges in this compendium which also highlights the actions and strategies of communities in building community-based resilience in response to the pandemic and its multiple impacts on lives and livelihoods.

As Kagiso Trust, our vision remains a society free of poverty and inequality, where the rights of all are equally guaranteed and realised. Our vision and commitment to a just and fair society reinforced our commitment to not only record and document communities' experiences, but also informs the evidence-based policy solutions which this process has generated.

While we draw the lessons of the ongoing effects of COVID-19, we must remain committed to catalysing meaningful societal change and leveraging the energies of our people to remove the barriers to equality and harness our collective strength to undo the legacy of injustice and inequalities which plague our country.

Together we can make a positive difference and turn adversity into opportunity.

Sincerely

Boichoko Ditlhake
Civil Society Support Programme Manager

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE SURVEY

LEARNING FROM CSO & COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO COVID-19

HAVE YOU BEEN ACTIVE IN ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY?

TYPES OF FOOD INITIATIVES

Soup Kitchens

Food Parcels

Food Gardens

ORGANISATIONS

72%

INDIVIDUALS & SMALL GROUPS

62%

Other areas of activity:
- **Two thirds of organisational respondents had participated in some** <u>health</u> **aspect during lockdown**
- **Just over a third had participated in providing** <u>water and sanitation</u>
- **A quarter had assisted with providing** <u>shelter</u>

Other areas of involvement:
- **60% of small group respondents had been involved in the** <u>health</u> **response**
- **40% had been involved with** <u>water and sanitation</u> **initiatives**
- **15% had assisted with** <u>shelter</u>

HAVE YOU ACCESSED ANY FUNDING FOR YOUR C-19 INITIATIVES?

1/2
organisations had accessed funding

1/4
individuals or small groups had accessed funding

Individual donors & local businesses were a prime source of funds for both organisations and individuals & small groups.

Local foundations were also vital funding sources for organisations

In many instances, friends & family rallied to suppport individuals and small groups.

Organisational respondents mainly got funds from local foundations, individual donors/local businesses and international foundations. 32% received C-19 support from international foundations, while 45% received funds from SA foundations.

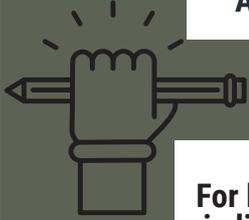Although 60% of respondents got money from local business, it is noteworthy that 40% used ''own money' and a whopping 50% received funds from friends & family.

Some respondents had applied for government funding, but in most cases hadn't received responses or were refused.

AMID PAIN & HARDSHIP, OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD & MOVE FORWARD

For both organisations and individuals, C-19 (and the lockdown) brought an opportunity to strengthen social cohesion. Many seized the moment to learn new skills.

ORGANISATIONS

C-19 presented a chance to mobilise social cohesion.

This was closely followed by opportunities to learn new skills: helping parents help children on schoolwork, healthy lifestyle and good health behaviours, and ways of giving psychosocial support skills

INDIVIDUALS & SMALL GROUPS

Similar to CSOs, most small group respondents saw Covid-19 as an opportunity to develop self-sustaining and relevant skills: entrepreneurship, agriculture, psychosocial.

This was closely followed by social cohesion. They were seeing, first hand, the rekindling of ubuntu and co-operation.

FUTURE ISSUES

Virtually all respondents saw heightened poverty and unemployment as the big issues on the horizon. In other words – the deepening of inequality. In comparison 'food security' ranked much lower.

Respondents also highlighted struggles around provision of basic services (health & water).

ORGANISATIONS

Job losses, poverty & demands for economic stimulus, data access for all & assistance for co-ops; small producers & h/h food growing.
l
The trauma issue: vulnerable groups becoming more vulnerable e.g. GBV, youth and OVCs.

Another important area for organisations was being able to adapt to the new normal – working smart, leveraging tech opportunities, adapting entrepreneurial skills and developing pro-poor solutions.

Lack of accountability w.r.t. corruption and basic services.

INDIVIDUALS & SMALL GROUPS

The rise in poverty levels and loss of income means a consequent focus on job creation and innovative ways to become more self-sufficient.

Not surprisingly, food security featured more strongly amongst small group respondents (second highest mention), as did dealing with deficits in school infrastructure.

How should Civil Society organise itself in order to amplify its voice?

- "Network, network, network," one respondent commented. A massive 63% of organisational respondents mentioned collaboration and coordination. Some noted that formalised network bodies could better lobby and respond to community needs.
- Adding the 8% which punted sector-based clusters, that figure jumps to 71%.
- In other comments, respondents stressed the importance of community mobilisation, utilising the benefits of technology and more effective fundraising.

Policy considerations for government, as identfied by respondents

- C-19 has highlighted priority areas and priority beneficiaries (the imperative to invest in youth, the health system, food security and combating GBV).
- Secondly, organisations would like to see government engage them more in order to use their expertise to focus and refine needs and fast-track services.
- Thirdly, they would like to see a more proactive, dynamic approach to disaster management – proactive & dynamic planning; fair resource-distribution, fast-tracked funding channels.

COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE SURVEY FINDINGS

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CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND

- The survey ran from 18 August - 7 September 2020
- Email invitations were sent out to 1335 organizations and small groups
- Invitations were also posted on Facebook and WhatsApp, inviting people to take the survey
- Total of 519 respondents - 328 organizations - 191 individuals and small groups
- Respondents refer to organizations or small groups who responded to a particular question

Key:

Organizations	Individuals and small groups	Multiple answers allowed
		This means that answers to these questions typically add up to more than 100%.

2. THE CONTEXT OF THE SURVEY

- Kagiso Trust (KT) is committed to assisting the national COVID-19 response and beyond, in the process adding value to civil society (CS) organizations.

- In the light of KT's Mission to eradicate poverty and its ongoing service to communities, this project engages with the question of how to move forward post-Covid.

- It uses knowledge and engagement as a platform.

- It examines issues such as new roles and new ways of working , including ideas around partnerships, shared learning and effective "voice" going forward.

- It probes new entry and leverage points to advance as we continue to tackle poverty, inequality and other social justice issues.

- Most importantly, it seeks – arising from our responses to COVID-19 – a deeper understanding of Community Resilience.

- Seeks to help CS stakeholders enter the new phase with boldness and vision.

- The knowledge and insights gained will enable or empower Kagiso Trust in:

    - responding to both the immediacy of the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting the rebuilding of communities' socio-economic livelihoods going forward, even beyond the pandemic

    - helping to reconfigure social partnerships as well as re-assert policy responses to address social inequalities and fault lines

    - framing a comprehensive civil society programme for the next 3-5 years.

3. WHAT ORGANIZATIONS AND SMALL GROUPS DID IN TERMS OF FOOD, HEALTH, SANITATION & WATER AND SHELTER

The majority of organizations were involved in food security during this period, with distribution of food parcels and running soup kitchens taking priority. Organizations supported the health response to a lesser degree. Food gardens showed an increasing focus. A small number of respondents made use of food vouchers. Some organizations mentioned supporting communities to monitor and facilitate government and Solidarity Fund food parcel distribution.

Some of the other responses to food security included:

• providing seed, seedlings and fertilizer to communities;

• providing transport for food donations;

• working with school nutrition programmes,

• connecting small producers with households, creating food buyers' cooperatives and disseminating information.
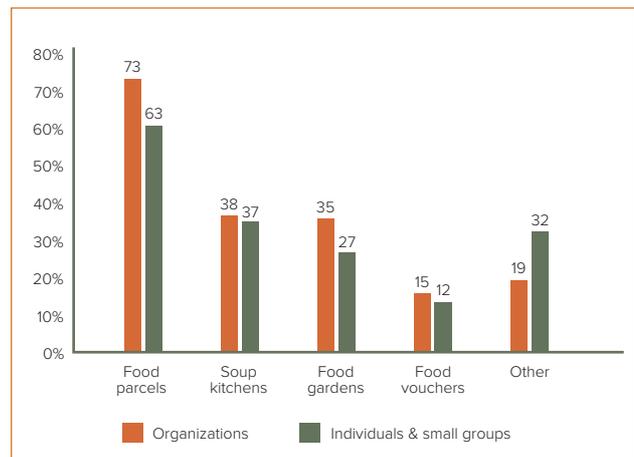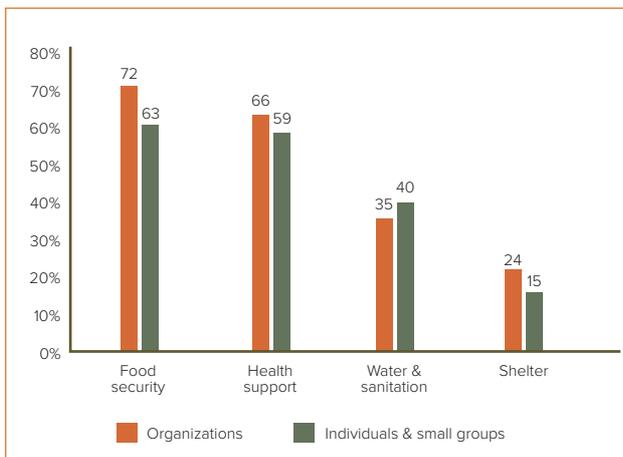
4. WHERE DID ORGANIZATIONS AND SMALL GROUPS GET MONEY FROM...?

Just under half of the organizations sourced funding, compared to only a quarter of the small groups. organizations mainly sourced funds from local foundations, individual donors, local businesses and international foundations. organizations mentioned that often donors would allow them to repurpose funding to meet different needs during the pandemic.

As expected, small groups (including individuals) sourced a significant amount from individual donors and local businesses. But more importantly, they used their own money and raised money from family and friends. Some respondents applied for government funding, but most were unsuccessful.

2019 national general elections:
Total voting age population =
±37.8 million people

- Not registered
- Registered but not voted
- Voted ANC
- Voted DA
- Voted EFF
- Voted 10 other parties
- Other parties and spoil

29%
25%
27%
9%
5%
4%
1%

2014 general elections:
Based on total voting age population of =
±32.7 million people

20%
22%
35%
13%
4%
5%
2%

Issues cited by CSO and community representatives in the KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

5. ON WHAT TOPICS DID RESPONDENTS COLLABORATE?

Most organizations and groups collaborated or partnered around providing services to communities in need and gathering and sharing information. Just over half provided capacity building, either through online training and webinars, or workshops. Some organizations also provided training to community representatives to run organizational courses in their areas. Training also happened via social media and virtual platforms. One group enlisted youth and women's structures to help ensure COVID-19 regulations were followed and adhered to.

Bar chart comparing Organizations and Individuals & small groups:

Topic	Organizations	Individuals & small groups
Providing services to communities in need	68	61
Information gathering and information sharing	68	50
Advocating/lobbying for the sector	50	16
Door-to-door work	30	24
Capacity-building / webinars / online training	55	44
Not applicable	9	8
Other	4	18
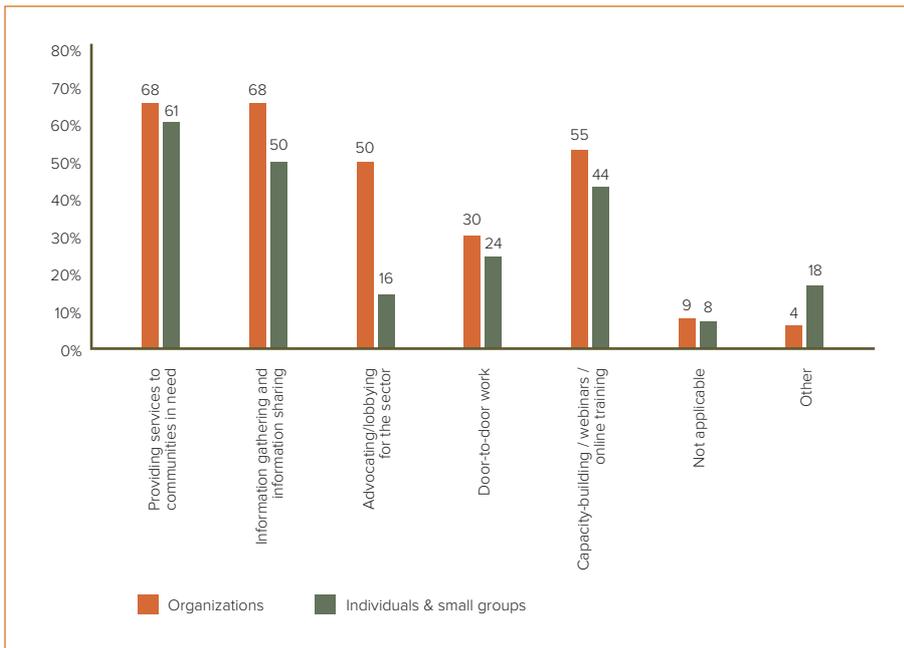
6. WORKING WITH ANY CSOs IN OTHER PARTS OF AFRICA OR INTERNATIONALLY?

26% of respondents worked with CSOs in other parts of Africa or internationally. Of these, 74% collaborated on advocacy around COVID-19 and related issues and 68% shared learnings from the COVID-19 experience. Sector-specific organizations mentioned participating in research on the impact of COVID on migrants and migration, and one highlighting the vulnerability of permanent and seasonal workers in the agricultural value chain.

Bar chart:

Topic	%
Collaborative advocacy around COVID-19 and related issues	74
Shared learning from the COVID-19 experience	68
Discussing CSO's current and future role	55
Shaping and influencing the 'new normal'	49
Other (please specify)	19
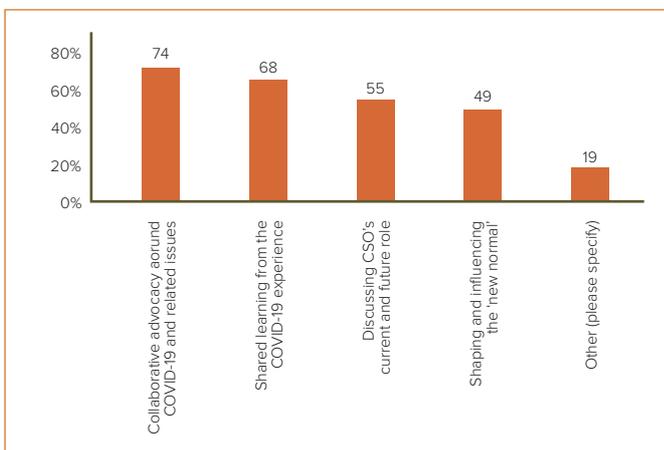
7. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES IF FUNDS WERE AVAILABLE

If funds were no object, respondents indicate they would have increased food distribution as well as provision of COVID-19 PPEs and awareness. organizations would also have assisted in areas such as monitoring and legal. Both organizations and individuals/small groups would have given attention to livelihood interventions and psycho-social support. Importantly, respondents working as small groups would have used more funds to address needs of children and youth.
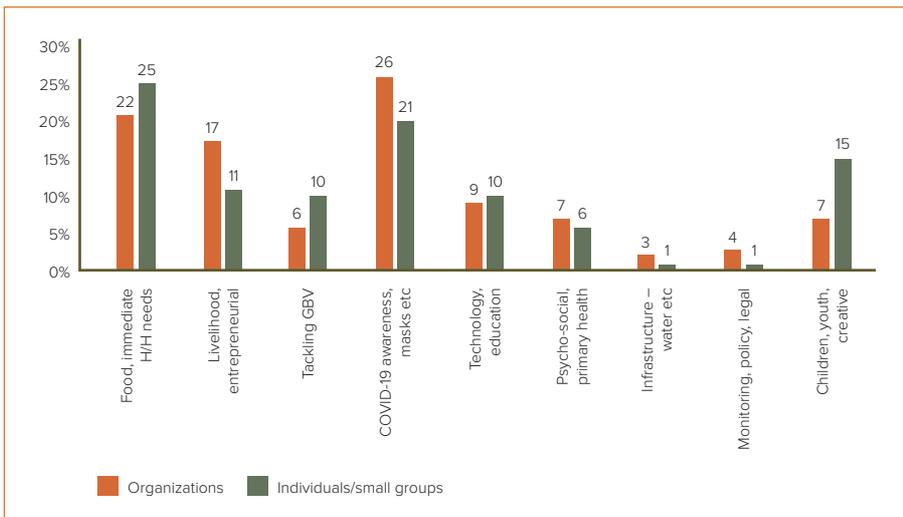
8. HOW SHOULD GOVERNMENT DRAW ON CSO EXPERTISE IN A CRISIS?

Respondents emphasize that government should provide them with funds so they can get on with the work. They emphasize an approach that prioritizes reaching "the ground" with messages and resources, and their central role in it. CSOs want forums for communication exchange, where govt can hear about experiences and ideas from those who work in and closely with communities. Some organizations called for a partnership approach, rather than an antagonistic or hypercritical approach (which some have experienced).
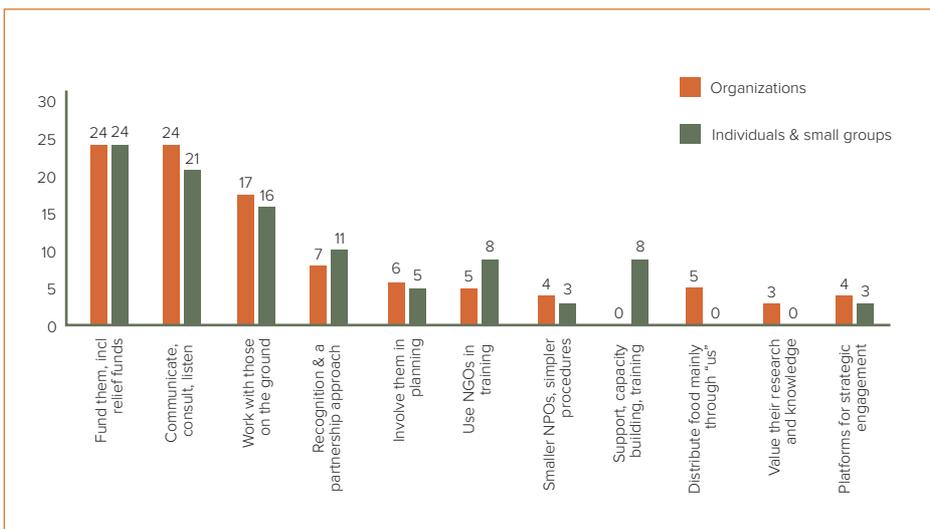
9. EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNICATION WITH GOVERNMENT

Close to 15% of CSO respondents had a good experience and 36% were partially satisfied – the situation is not hopeless as far as communication goes. At the same time bad experiences were prominent: 49% had a negative experience. A significant number felt that government became inaccessible behind a wall of 'closed offices and the more 'remote'/work-from-home realities of Covid.
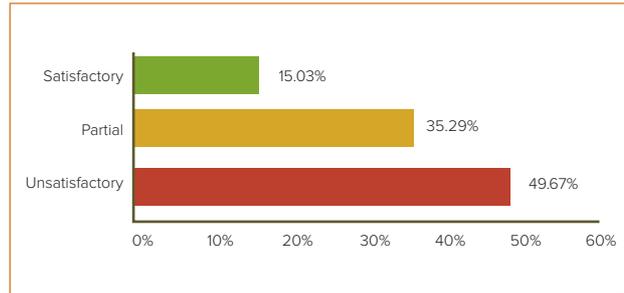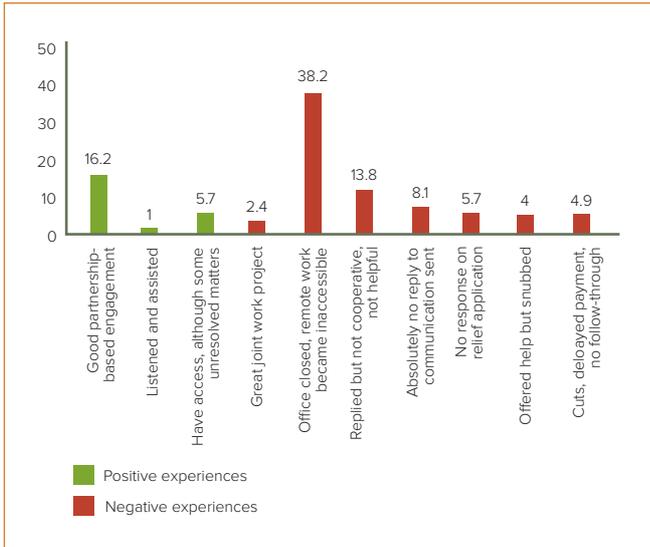
9% of small group respondents had a good experience and 35% were partially satisfied. At the same time, most respondents – 57%, had a negative experience. Individuals and small groups also found government inaccessible during the period.
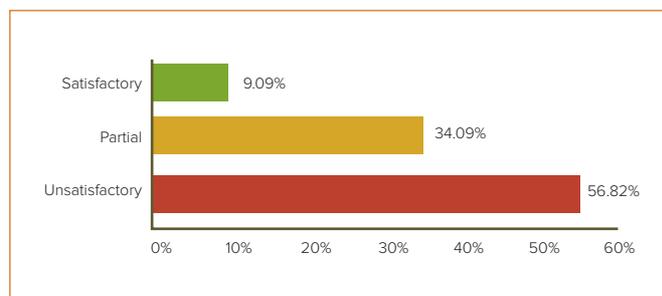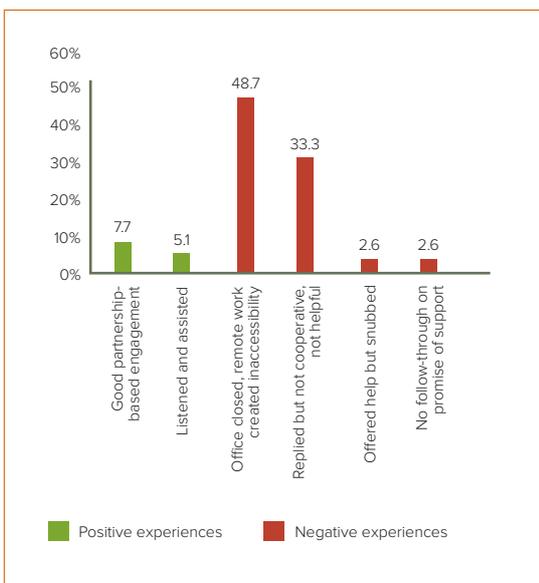
10. HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED ON YOUR RESOURCES?

The majority of organizations had an increased demand for their services, coupled with a loss of funding and major struggles around data and access. Respondents could not implement programmes, had challenges transitioning to virtual platforms, staff mental health issues and constraints on mobility.

Individuals and small groups' biggest issue mentioned in the Other category, were very little or no financial support. Groups used their own money or approached friends and family. Groups who had some donor support saw a decline in funds as well.
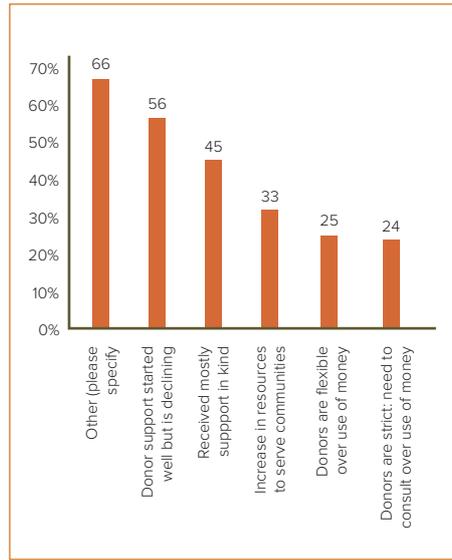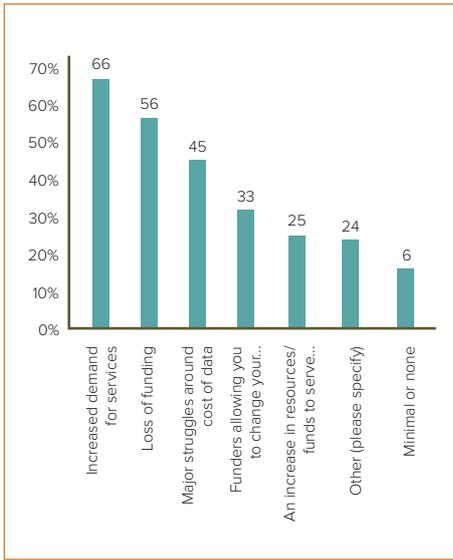
11. HOW WILL WORK CHANGE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

Most organizations will increase their advocacy work related to COVID-19 issues, focus on new priorities and community mobilization. Small groups will continue with the work they have focused on during this period, work together with other NGOs and CBOs (increased collaboration), as well as mobilize community support.
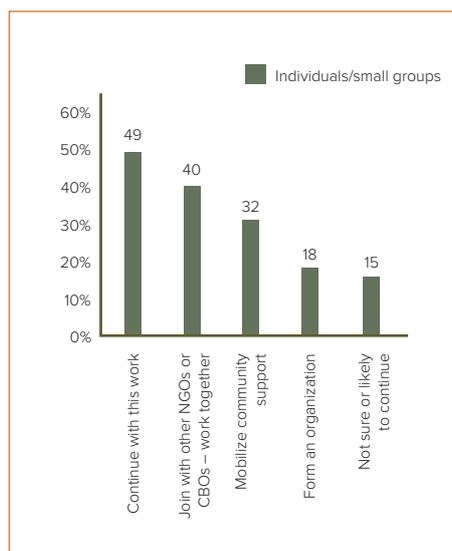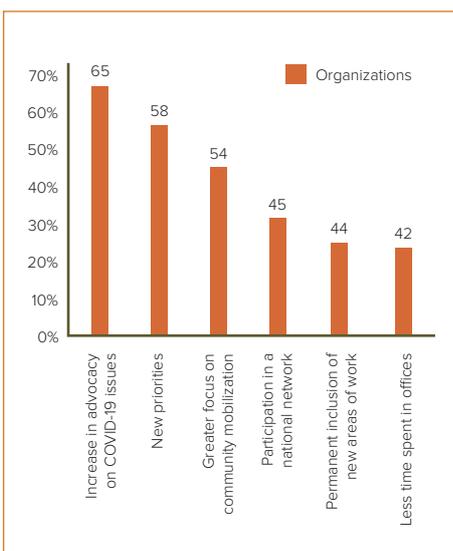
12. DOCUMENTING YOUR WORK FOR LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Most organizations documented their work through social media as well as taking photos. Small groups have documented through writing, social media and taking photographs. Other comments included producing newsletters, annual reports, podcasts, story telling and writing stories. Some organizations brought TV reporters in, used community radio, and wrote articles for websites, and others surveyed the communities they work with.
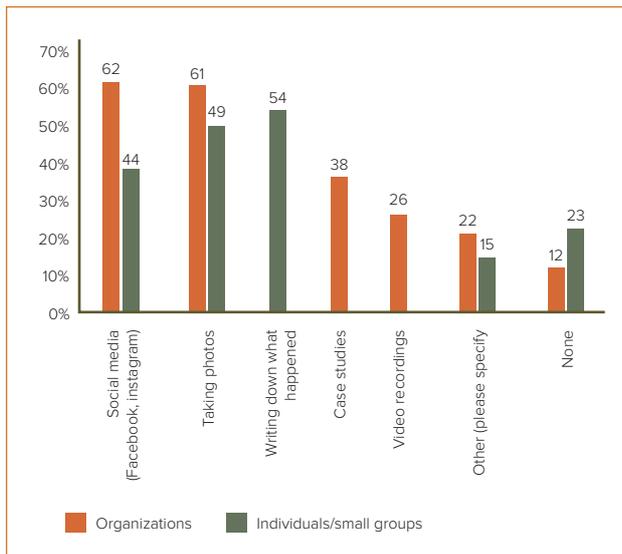
13. STATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Most organizations agree or strongly agree that CBOs are playing a critical role in the national response to COVID-19, that they were not prepared to cope with the disruption caused by COVID-19 and that it was having a devastating impact on sustainablilty. 50% agreed that CBOs would emerge stronger after the COVID-19 crisis.
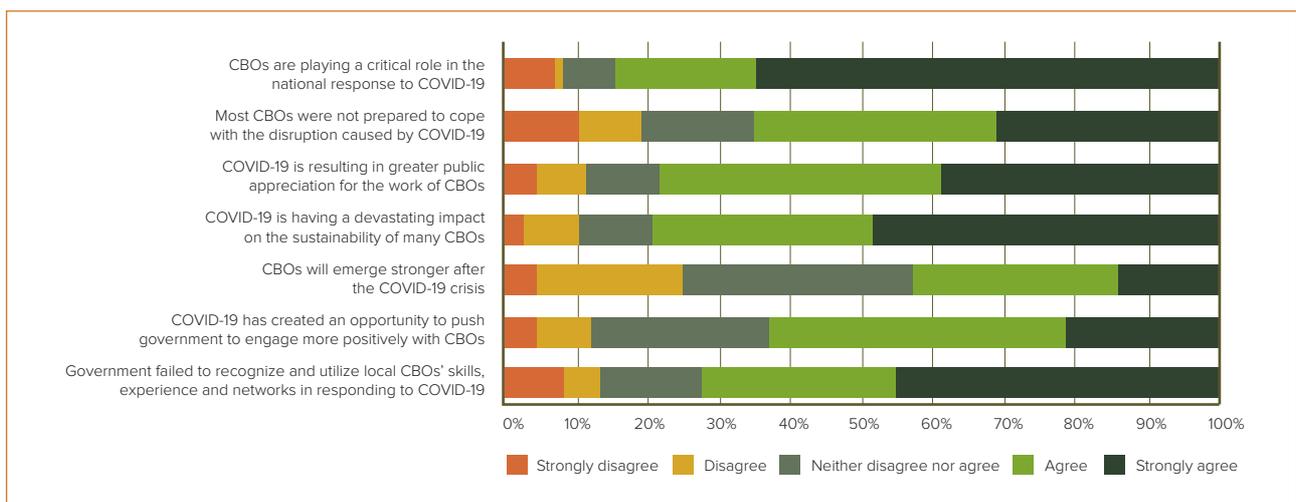
Most small groups agree or strongly agree that CBOs are playing a critical role in the national response to COVID-19, that they were not prepared to cope with the disruption caused by COVID-19 and that it was having a devastating impact on sustainablilty. 52% agreed that CBOs would emerge stronger after the COVID-19 crisis.
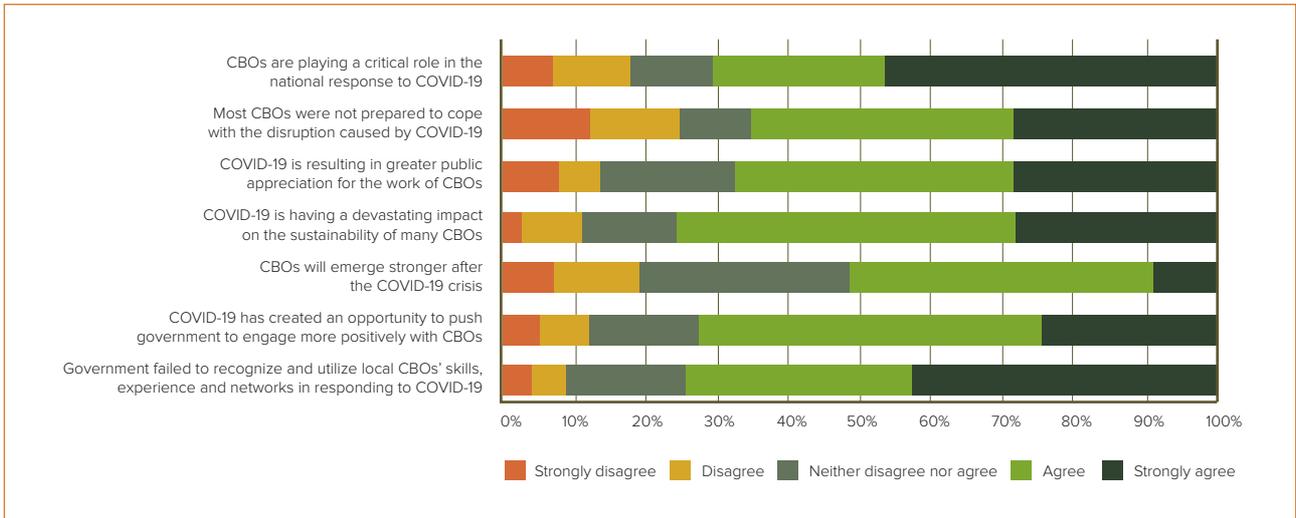
14. EXAMPLES OF RESILIENCE

Three-quarters of organizations witnessed one or more examples of resilience.Collaboration was the most frequently mentioned, followed by the ability to adapt to circumstances. Community involvement in food initiatives and PPE resources were other examples of resilience. Finally the spirit of Ubuntu prevailed, be it in sharing a meal or offering child-care services. Some of these issues are unpacked on the following page.

Adaptability unpacked

Category	Value
Entrepreneur flexibility	38
New org focus	22
Resourceful	22
Embracing technology	19

Community collaboration unpacked

Category	Value
Feeding schemes	48
CANs	30
Youth focus	15
Hygiene & PPE	7

Ubuntu unpacked

Category	Value
Sharing resources	54
Soup kitchens	29
Volunteering	17

Food initiatives unpacked

Category	Value
Parcels/voucher	53
Soup kitchen	27
Gardens	13
School nutrition	7

Like organizations, about three-quarters of individuals & small groups witnessed one or more resilience examples. By far the most mentioned centred around examples of Ubuntu: from volunteering, to sharing food, clothes, and multi levelled psycho-social support (emotional, childcare, transport etc).

Other examples were food initiatives and PPE provisions. On another more formal level, some respondents mentioned networking examples (CANs). Despite adverse circumstances, there were some examples of adaptability in the form of refocusing informal trading offerings, stokvel payouts and alternative sources of funding.

Category	Value
Ubuntu (support, resources, volunteers	35
PPE	22
Food	22
Collaboration (networking CANs	14
Adaptability	8
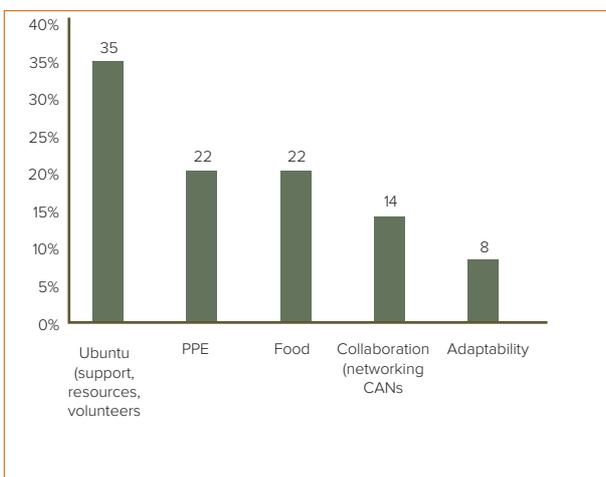
15. DESPITE CHALLENGES, COVID-19 BROUGHT OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE TRANSFORMATION

Facilitating and supporting social cohesion, skills & education, and building on CSO networks were most often seen as ways to take social change forward. Skills included supporting children's education, health promotion, mental health and the GBV response. Technology was a powerful vehicle in driving opportunities, but access to data and tools is a challenge. The pandemic has also sharpened the capacity to adapt and refocus.
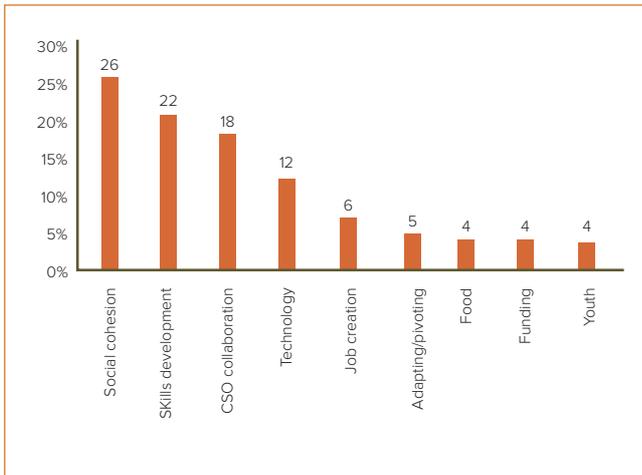
Similar to CSOs, most small groups see COVID-19 as an opportunity to develop self-sustaining and relevant skills: entrepreneurship, agriculture, psycho-social. This allows them to build resilience in dealing with adversity. Similarly, social cohesion and its positive spin offs, are being enhanced and will hopefully continue to grow. Some felt this was a time for Government to seriously engage with, and be more accountable to, communities. For others, COVID-19 has foregrounded food initiatives and lobbying for water, and this awareness should continue to be sustained.
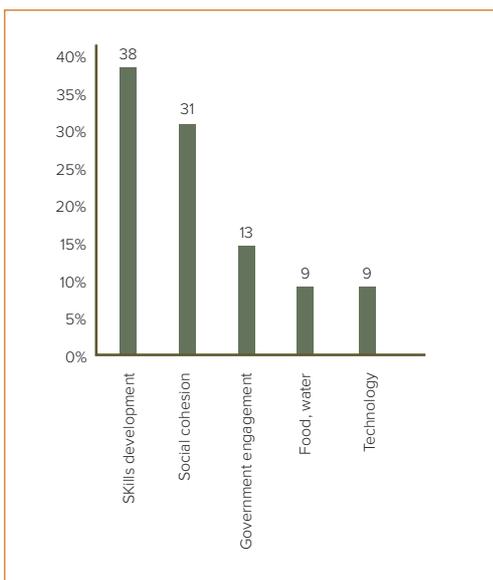
16. ISSUES LOOMING LARGE IN THE PERIOD AHEAD

COVID has made the lives of disadvantaged communities even harder and the gaps wider. High unemployment levels and poverty were most frequently reported. This was followed by a lack of basic services (health, water). Vulnerable groups were seen as facing an even harder time now. Another focus area is being able to adapt to the new normal (working smart, leveraging tech opportunities, adapting entrepreneurial skills and developing pro-poor solutions).
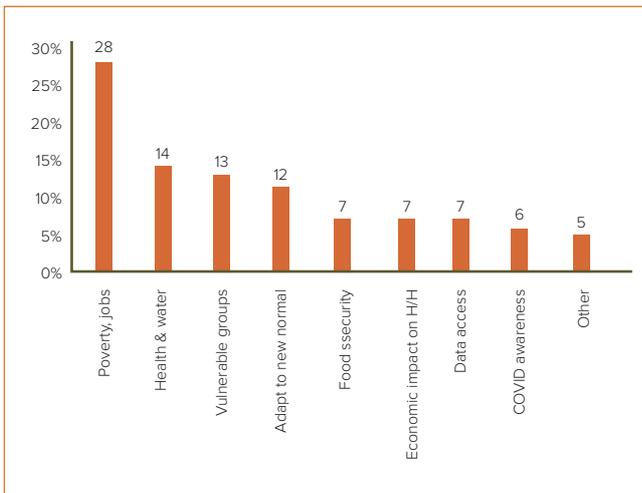
Like organizations, small groups felt that the fallout from COVID and lockdown has led to extreme job losses and poverty. This means focusing on job creation, building resilience and being innovative in how people can become more self-sufficient. Food security features more strongly, as compared with the organizational response. For small groups, struggles around food and health provision (esp. hygiene and mental health) are set to be key focus areas. Also school development i.t.o infrastructure and education facilities also featured strongly. This makes sense, bearing in mind that many respondents have a strong education focus.
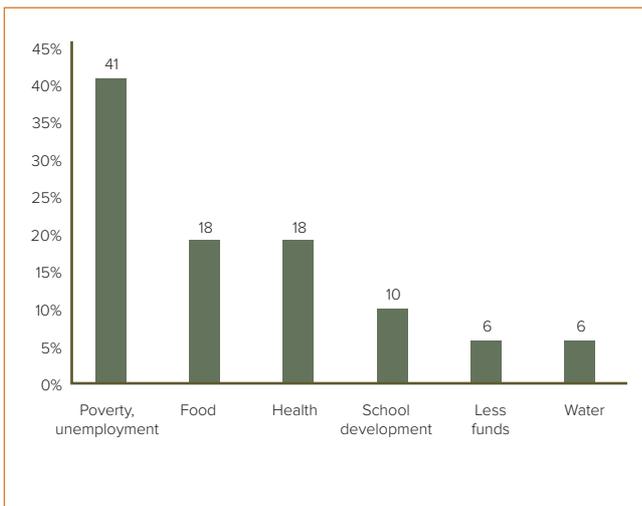
17. HOW SHOULD CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZE ITSELF IF IT WANTS A STRONGER VOICE?

Collaboration and coordination featured strongly in the responses. This shows a belief in strength in unity – through, for example, forums, networks and joint workshops. There was a sense that formalized bodies can better lobby and respond to community needs. Linked to this, many participants felt that CSO representation on govt platforms, task groups and committees could help in engaging govt. Some respondents felt that collaboration should be issue-focused (GBV, youth, disability, homeless etc) rather than broad-based.
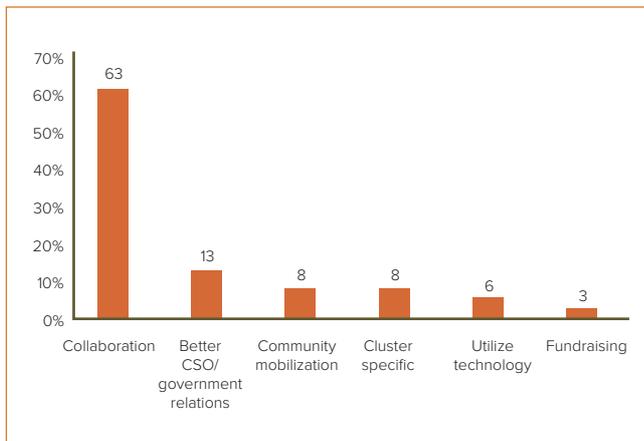
18. OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAKING GOVERNMENT MORE ACCOUNTABLE?

Organizations felt there was now greater collaboration and solidarity and that this strengthened their ability to lobby and hold government to account. The last 6 months have also highlighted the (lack of) accountability with regard to corruption and basic services. They also felt that the recent stronger 'community voice' (both from indivs and CSOs) was an important area to leverage off of. Some of these issues are unpacked in the following slide.

Collaboration unpacked

Stronger voices unpacked
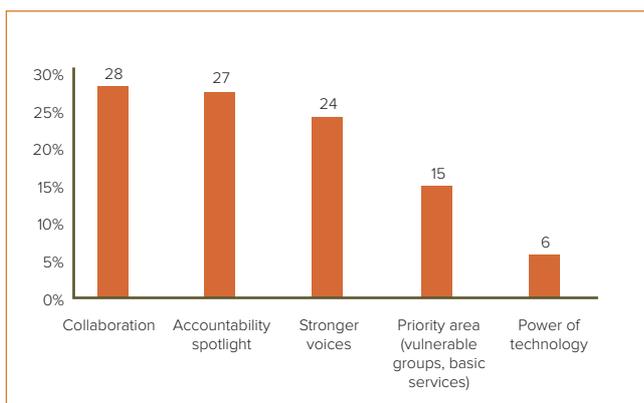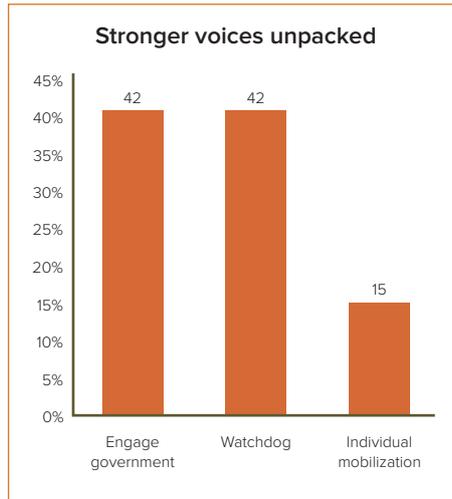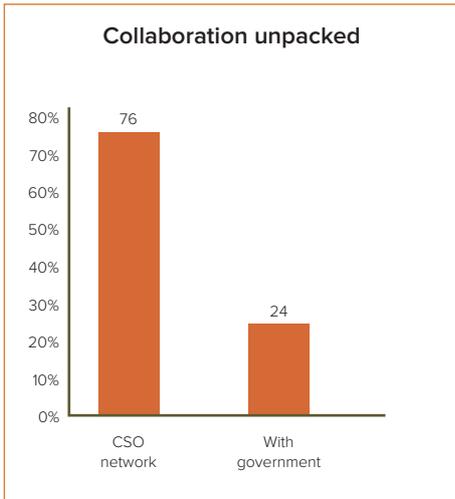
Collaboration was two-fold, there was an opportunity now to encourage continued CSO networking amongst themselves as well as advocating for better collaboration with Government.

In particular, organizations felt they had a stronger voice in engaging govt now and playing a watchdog role – with regard to corruption and basic services in particular – from monitoring funds, to public pressure ensuring govt honours their commitments and delivers on their promises.

19. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT?

Organizations felt that first and foremost, Covid has highlighted priority areas and priority audiences. Orgs would also like to see Govt engage them more as well as be more accountable in terms of delivering on promises and dealing with corruption. These issues are unpacked in the following slide.

Many respondents would like to see a more proactive, dynamic approach to Disaster Management in order to better deal with crises – in terms of proactive and dynamic planning; fair distribution of resources, beneficiary-specific and fast-tracked funding channels.

Priority areas unpacked

30%	28	28	
25%			25
20%			
15%			19
10%			
5%			
0%			
	Health, environment, water	Invest in youth education	Food security	Vulnerable groups

Stronger voices unpacked

45%			
40%	41		
35%			
30%		29	29
25%			
20%			
15%			
10%			
5%			
0%			
	Prioritizing needs/ resources	Efficient service provision	Policy formulation
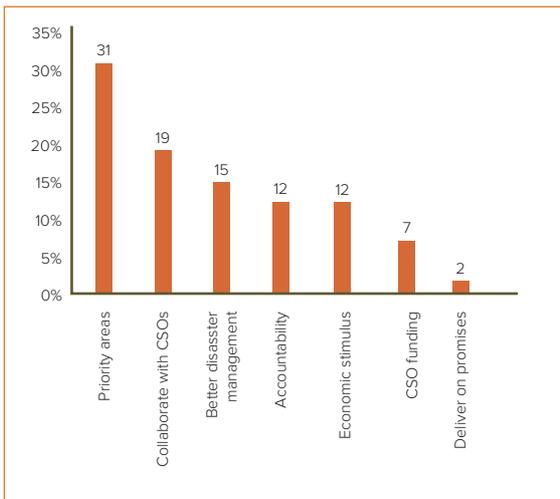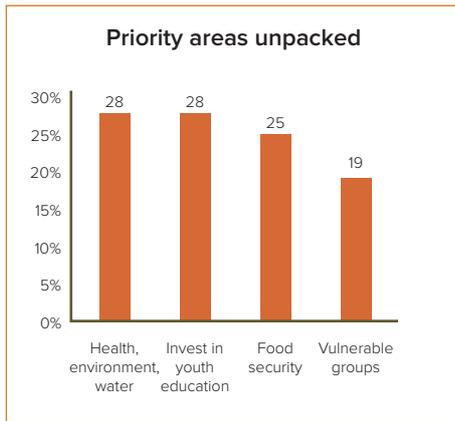
Priority areas included:
- health promotion, importance of a clean env, water and sanitation access, - educational dev, in particular in ECD sector
- food security
- assist vulnerable groups such as children, homeless, foreigners, and victims of GBV.
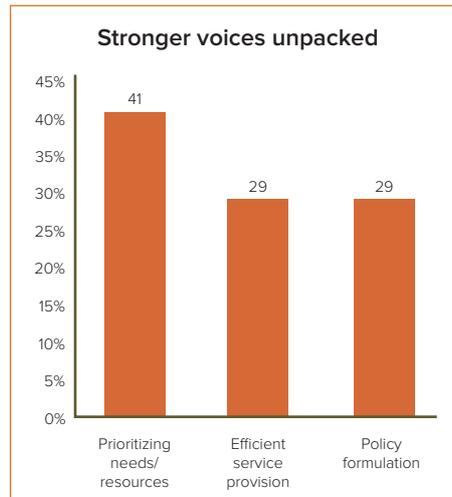
Organizations would also like to see Govt engage them more, not only with regard to policy formulation, but more to use their grassroots knowledge and expertise to help focus needs, and fast track services.

20. CONCLUDING POINTS

- Communities across South Africa — already vulnerable — have been extremely hard-hit by COVID-19 and the lockdown.

- "Stronger Together" - There has been a commendable response to COVID-19 from both organizations and small groups. The past six months have brought social cohesion and Ubuntu (community-level mutual assistance) to the fore.

- Government response has been important, but with shortcomings such as lack of co-ordination, corruption and poor communication.

- In most, where Local Government should have played a prominent role, they were ineffective.

- Overall, there is a deep concern about engagement between Government on the one side and communities and organizations on the other (related to 'lockdown' period).

- To tackle the huge challenges ahead (and to reverse the developmental setbacks) this lack of co-ordination and fragmentation needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

- Burning issues which need to be addressed in the immediate future are food insecurity, higher joblessness, health and water issues (which together constitute deepened inequality), education gap and rampant GBV. Other issues emerging as demands to address the above issues are: more equitable data access and a basic income grant for all.

21. WHAT RESPONDENTS SAID...

Still we continue regardless. Our 27 community kitchens feed 300+ people daily. More than government has done since lockdown started............ We look after our own, that is how resilient our communities are.

The crisis has highlighted that we can share, communicate, learn and exist digitally. South Africa has embraced digital well, however data access, inconsistent zero-rating for NGOs and awareness of ITC and how to integrate it still are hurdles.

Water scarcity is the main issue in communities that we work with. ....Encouraging entrepreneurship to develop own income and not be reliant on external income - but this is a tall order.

Many who lost jobs used their savings groups' loans to start a small informal business, members extremely supportive of each other.

Name and shame and claim. People must be held accountable. Policies and procedures need to be put in place to prevent the rich from exploiting and stealing from the poor. Government officials need to have the correct ethical demeanor to root out poverty.

More willingness to work together/partner rather than to work in isolation. NPO's, especially in the rural areas, need to meet to discuss, share and brainstorm solutions. Network, network, network.

While some in government have been amazing, and while initially there was willingness to engage and work together as time has gone on we are finding the same institutional blockages – like asking for an agreed document ... and 9 weeks later still not having received it.

Capitalizing on members realisation that social capital and mutual support are more important than they realized.

...is a deep concern about not further creating dependency but rather strengthening local people to be equipped to help themselves as much as possible.

Emerging CSO and networking responses offer new opportunities to connect local issues to larger networks. Local food security groups ie CAN in Western Cape mobilized many new individuals who may be keen to remain actively engaged in a post-COVID context.

COVID-19 has starkly exposed the serious socio economic challenges the country faces. It is more obvious than ever that evading, avoiding or tinkering with solutions is not an option. Social transformation is now a priority.

COVID has certainly brought to light how devastating poverty, inequality, and violence (GVB and sexual assault on children) really is, to many who were oblivious or who turned a blind eye.

Communities have been basically forgotten, the only opportunity they have will be the one they make for themselves here. We can help them to try to develop food security for example with gardens.

Flexibility and adapting to this new normal.

We can be able to train communities on food gardens. This will help them harvest fresh vegetables. They will not have to visit supermarkets so often.... This may help those who have lost their jobs harvest and to sell the produce from their gardens.

(We) cannot get through to local authorities except those distributing food.

The effects of COVID-19 is going to be long-lasting as many families primary caretakers lost their jobs and are not able to find new jobs. This is creating a massive gap in income.

Consult with CSOs and CAOs (Advice Offices) before implementing policies, using CSOs and CAOs as key components of implementing programmes (e.g. food parcel distribution).

22. IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Localizing production and distribution, Build/Strengthen people's institutions and agency to do more for themselves and be accountable to their local communities, ... Claim spaces to make their voices heard.

Improved tax relief for NGOs and their employees, funding opportunities as a sector.

That CSOs, PBOs, NPOs, NGOs should be first line-line for any benefits, financial support, product support, – and whilst the economy very definitely needs to turn it is these organizations that take the hardest knocks because of the services they offer.

COVID-19 has presented an opportunity for NGOs and CBOs to think differently about how we respond; to adapt our working practices – remote and blended approaches; to recognize how communities use relationships to mobilize resources in order to deal with crises, especially when formal systems fail.

Community brought closer together in face of government incompetence and corruption.

Assessing children's skills instead of their academic competency and focusing on their skills. Basically creating opportunities to access development and employment via Social Entrepreneurship.

COVID-19 brought opportunities in a time when every thing felt hopeless.

Listen to the voices closest to the ground, those that have lived through the reality but who looked to their skills, talents and abilities to come up with solutions and not wait for someone external to 'rescue' them.

The Community is known for not standing together, but through COVID-19 pandemic, it took one person to highlight the plight of the lack of food security. The result was that more than 30 individuals, started home-based kitchens, besides the churches and organizations already serving the needs of hunger.

Women sewing cooperatives changing from school uniforms to mask making, selling to govt and private sector, while donating to old age homes and creches.

Umthathi Training Project Trust has been to promote independence and we have seen communities being empowered and being drivers of their own change.

Move people out of poverty should be worked out. We should be able to teach people to become self sufficient and support them through the process.

Many who lost jobs used their savings groups' loans to start a small informal business, members extremely supportive of each other.

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23. DEMOGRAPHICS – PROVINCES

Most organizations and small groups are based in Gauteng, Western Cape and Eastern Cape. Limpopo had a high number of small group respondents due to a specific push in the area.
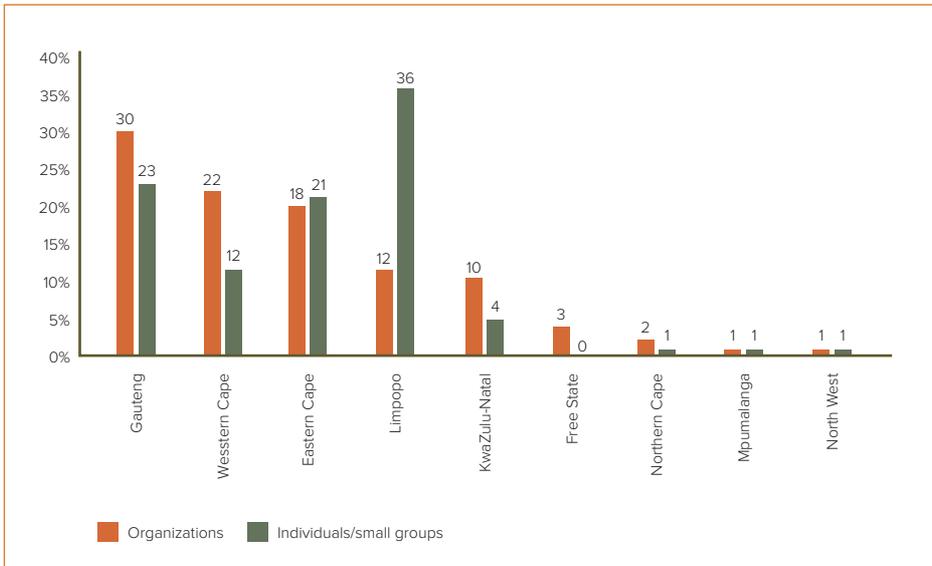
24. DEMOGRAPHICS – SIZE

Most organizations have a staff size of between 1 and 10 people. 8% have 51 or more people on their staff. As expected, 39% of small groups have between 1-5 people in their group. Surprisingly, 34% have more than 20 people belonging to their small groups.
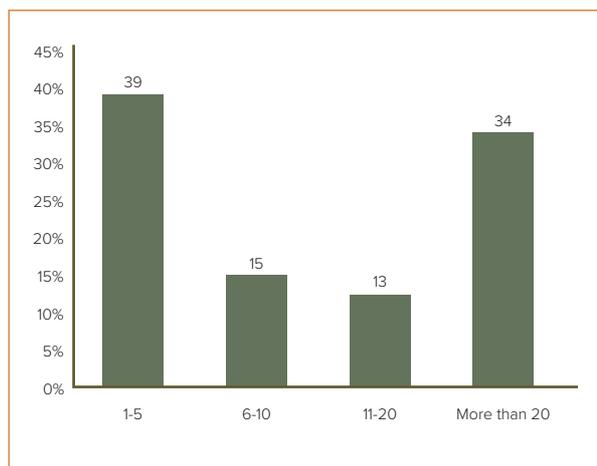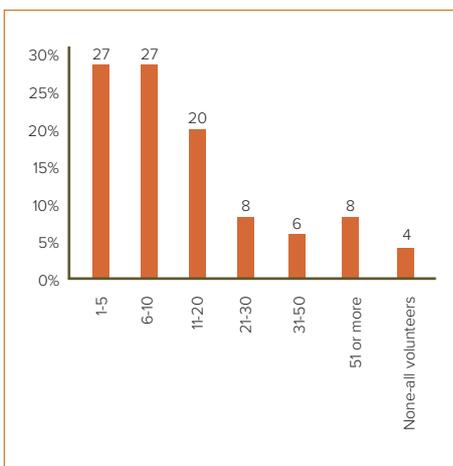
25. DEMOGRAPHICS – BUDGET

Most organizations (43%) have an annual budget of under R500 000. In comparison, the majority of small groups (65%) have an annual budget of under R120 000. It is interesting to note that 12% of organizations have a budget of over R11 million.

Annual budget

Category	Value
Under R100 000	23
From R101 000 to R500 000	20
From R501 000 to R1.2m	16
From R1.3m to R3m	16
From R3.1m to R6m	6
From R6.1m to R11m	7
From R11.1m to R20m	5
From R20.1m to R30m	3
From R30.1m to R50m	1
R50m and over	3

Monthly budget

Category	Value
Under R5 000	45
From R5 001 to R10 000	20
From R10 001 to R20 000	5
Over R20 000	28
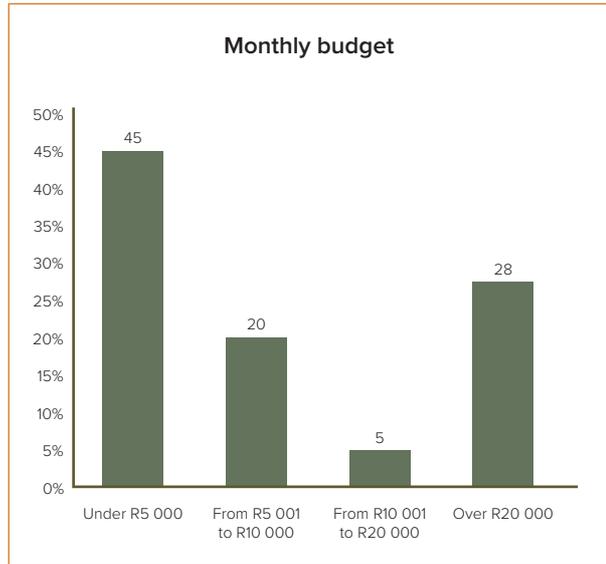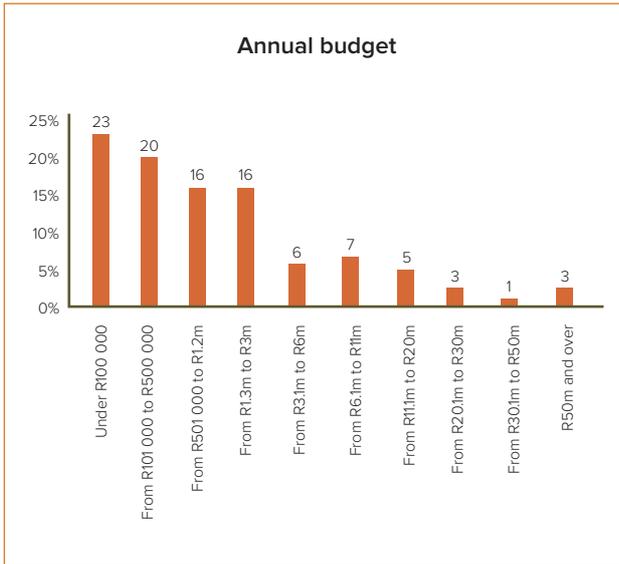
26. DEMOGRAPHICS – MAIN AREA OF FOCUS

There was a very diverse range of main areas of focus. For organizations, the majority worked in Education, Children and Human Rights and Justice areas.

Conflict resolution
Emergency response
Water & sanitation
Disability
Environment
Food security
Poverty eradication
Strengthening civil society
Economic development
Democracy & government
Gender
Youth
Land & housing

Education
Children
Human rights and justice issues (incl. access to justice, litigation)
Health
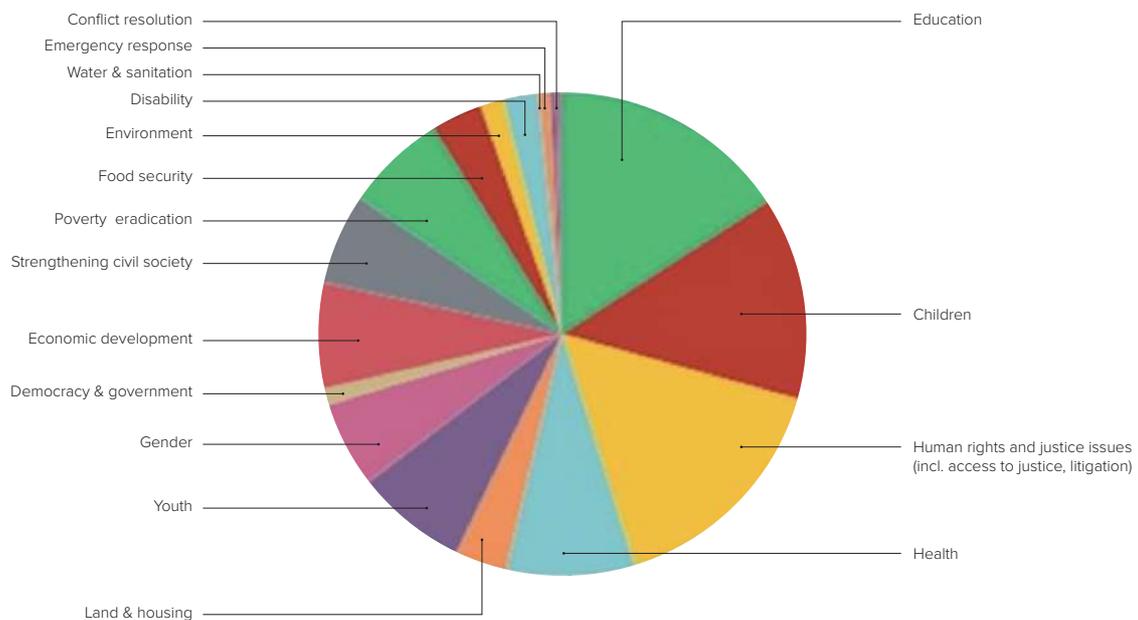
The majority of individuals and small groups worked in Education and Poverty Eradication.
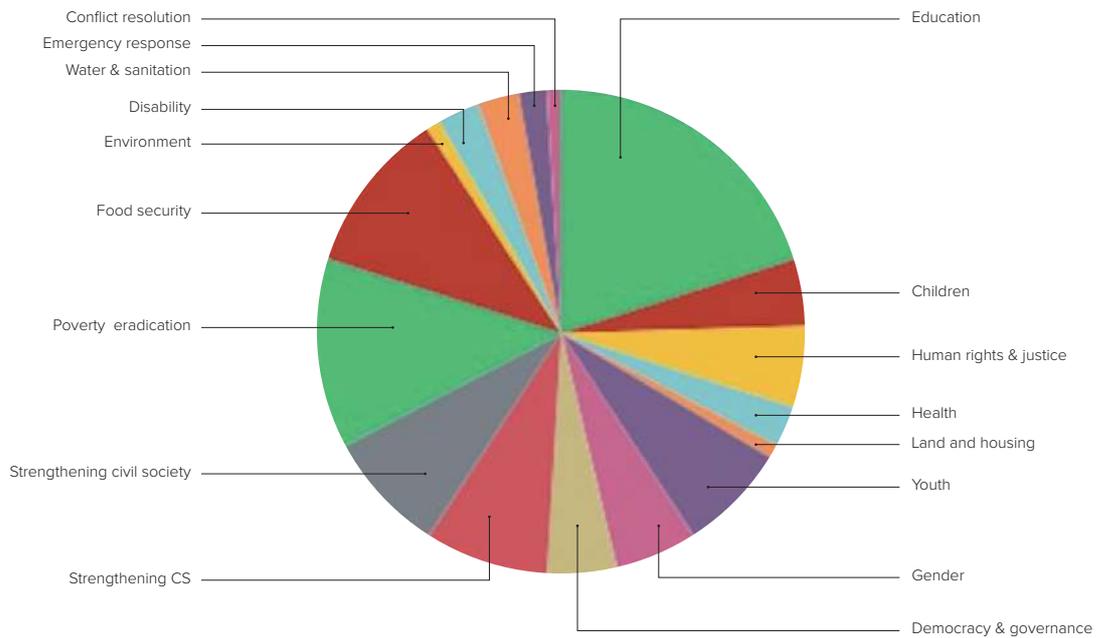
27. WHAT TERM DO YOU MOST ASSOCIATE WITH?

Most organizations have a staff size of between 1 and 10 people. 8% have 51 or more people on their staff. As expected, 39% of small groups have between 1-5 people in their group. Surprisingly, 34% have more than 20 people belonging to their small groups.
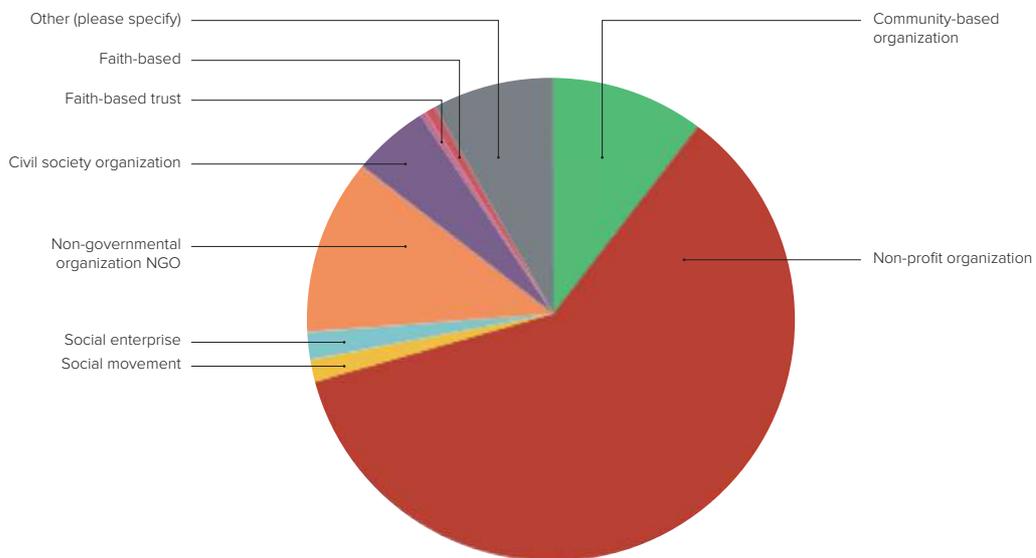
28. AT WHAT LEVEL DO YOU WORK?

Most organizations work at local community level. Up to a third worked at provincial and national level as well. Not many organizations, only 11%, worked at an international level.
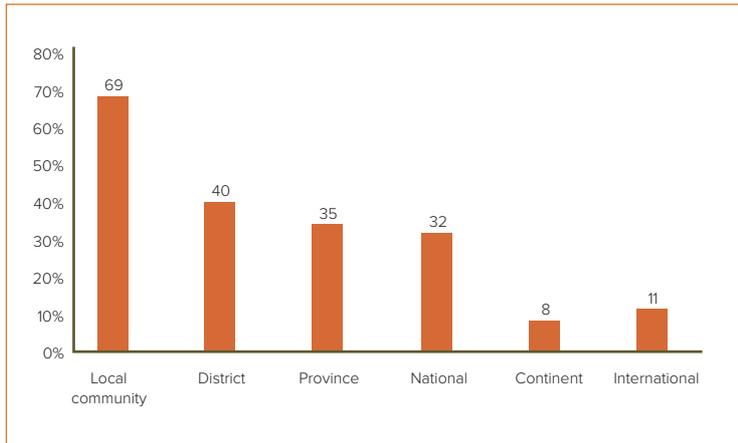
ISSUES PAPER: FROM COVID-19 RELIEF TO REASSERTION OF THE TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

KAGISO TRUST | Institutional Capacity Building

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper covers a range of issues which emerge from COVID-19 and have to do with the change agenda that is broadly linked to the realization of socio-economic rights and social justice for all.

COVID-19 has, if anything, concentrated the mind and sharpened our focus on a range of socio-economic issues about the kind of society South Africa is for millions of people as compared to the kind of society widely aspired to, in the darker days of apartheid and colonialism.

Much has improved since 1994; in fact, in the early years of democratic rule with the first administration rolling out programmes aimed at redress and pushing ahead with the adoption of progressive and inclusive policy frameworks, optimism reigned. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fact that socio-economic transformation in South Africa is limping along, moving forward at a pace well below its full potential. Some things have improved – for example, a national social grants system and a clear system of rights are in place, demonstrating that we did break with the apartheid stranglehold and that we have collectively risen from that extremely low base. At the same time, inequality has deepened, unemployment has increased exponentially, millions of people rely on state-sponsored social grants and a deeply structured racial divide remains intact.

Free-market economists would express a similar concern — the country has not moved forward to attain the advancement which would be a dividend of liberation – but would give it an economic spin. Their focus will be on economic growth, the benefits of which, according to the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR macro-economic policy), would 'trickle down'[1] to the working class. Civil society organisations, on the other hand, make the assessment from the standpoint of redistribution and prosperity for all. In other words, the understanding is that even when we did have more lively economic growth at points during the last three decades, it has been inadequate in addressing our social and economic challenges and resulting in prosperity for all. A key challenge is that government redress is dependent on growth of the formal economy, structured very much as it is[2] and dependant on retrogressive sources of energy, all of which rests on understanding that the private sector plays the lead role and that, in the words of the Department of Finance when announcing GEAR, "Employment creation provides a powerful vehicle for redistribution." The deal in which captains of industry and government would, by and large, leave each other to operate independently[3], as masters of their own domains, although working broadly in support of and in cooperation with each other. The broad approach is to have "social dialogue" between sectors. Thus, the President, in a critical policy statement in June 2019[4] , framed his expectations of the private sector as a request: "We would like business to consider the country's national and strategic objectives and social considerations in their decisions and actions." This is the bind: on the one hand, summarizing GEAR, government looks to the private sector to lift people out of poverty, provide jobs and wages[5] which would allow them to buy or make contributions to quality education, good health care, shelter, land and all other fundamentals required to achieve equitable socio-economic justice; at the same time, it's approach entails avoidance of strong state intervention and forceful change of economic structures.[6]

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[1] See www.freemarketfoundation.com. In an analytical article, Streak argues that "(a)lthough Gear performed dismally in delivering better development outcomes, it was very successful in improving macroeconomic outcomes." See Streak, J.C., The Gear Legacy: Did Gear fail or move South Africa forward?, Development Southern Africa, Vol. 21, No. 2, June 2004

[2] This view was most cogently expressed through government's 'GEAR' strategy. Mosala, Venter and Bain note that: "GEAR was introduced as a strategy to rebuild and reshape the economy in keeping with the goals set in the RDP; in other words, it was based on free market principles with a strong focus on economic growth. The GEAR document emphasised that, according to the Department of Finance, the accelerated economic growth associated with stronger employment creation was the key to arriving at an equitable distribution of income and improved standards of living for all."

[3] In the State of the Nation Address of 2019, the president, spelling out the responsibilities of each partner, indicated that the role of business was as follows: Business needs to keep the country's national strategic objectives in mind when taking decisions. He also in the same context stated that "government must create an enabling environment and use public resources wisely." See https://www.golegal.co.za/ramaphosa-social-compact-sona/. See the address here: https://www.news24.com/news24/Columnists/GuestColumn/full-text-we-are-committed-to-building-an-ethical-state-says-president-cyril-ramaphosa-in-2019-sona-speech-20190620

[4] https://www.daff.gov.za/docs/speeches/SONA%20JUNE%202019.pdf

[5] Streak argues, following dismal results from yet another major government overarching economic strategy, that its major flaw was "too much reliance on the 'benign system of global capitalism' and too great a reliance on private sector investment to reduce poverty and inequality via employment creation. See Streak, J.C., The Gear Legacy: Did Gear fail or move South Africa forward? Development Southern Africa, Vol. 21, No. 2, June 2004

[6] See Streak, J.C., The Gear Legacy: Did Gear fail or move South Africa forward? Development Southern Africa, Vol. 21, No. 2, June 2004. See also Mosala, S.J., Venter, J.C. M. and Bain, E.G., South Africa's Economic Transformation Since 1994: What Influence has the National Democratic Revolution (NDR)? (at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12114-017-9260-2) where they refer to minimum state intervention

The big emergent question at this point is whether the COVID-19 crisis is forcing a pause and rethink[7]; whether the sectors (business, labour, government and social sector) are ready to have a courageous conversation about the continuing societal fault lines and whether we as stakeholders are prepared to place the Constitution and its objective "to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights", at the centre of a process of recovery and rebuilding.

As major stakeholders muddle about how they plan to work together and against the background of the Constitution's call for key sectors to find solutions together, the social sector is still the Cinderella in inter-sectoral forums. The sector has – almost in defiance of such marginalization – contributed immensely to community resilience and made massive contributions to stop Covid from causing a famine and general social breakdown.

The social sector has been more consistently closer to communities, especially if one takes into account that Government has been working remotely during Levels 5, 4 and 3 and when one considers that movement of people across space and into townships was restricted. Looking ahead: the social sector, possibly invested less in the status quo or in stabilizing matters,[8] and with scope to go beyond the 'lives versus livelihood' dilemma[9] that Government and business appear to be caught in, can be a rudder pointing the society in a new direction. That role is an enormous possibility, yet it is also not a 'given' and comes with a range of challenges.

2. PART ONE: BACKGROUND AND CURRENT CONTEXT

In the six months since March 2020, we have seen millions affected by COVID-19 across the world. In South Africa 708 359 have contracted the corona virus and 18 751 have died.[10] By the second quarter of 2020, South Africa shed 2.2 million jobs[11] and the economy contracted by 16.4% when compared to the preceding quarter. In a survey in May and June 2020, two out of every five adults interviewed reported that their household had lost its main source of income since the lockdown started. This has had devastating consequences for household food security and hunger. Nearly half of all households ran out of money to buy food at some point in April and 15% reported that children went hungry.[12]

Government-led responses

By mid-March 2020, the South African government reorganized itself to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. On 15 March 2020, the government utilized the Disaster Management Act (2002) to declare a State of National Disaster. As Government announced its details of the hard lockdown, it received global recognition for its tough steps to flatten the curve. Government set up a National Command Council (NCC) and declared a State of Disaster in terms of the law, which gave certain powers to the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and pulled together government departments around a plan to deal with the crisis. This plan evolved from a focus on saving lives (through enforcement of the lockdown regulations) to relief and humanitarian support and then to economic recovery.

At one level, the plan aimed to control the spread of the pandemic and to "flatten the curve". These were the control measures, which involved a combination of restrictions imposed by government gazette and the issuing of educational information. The government also put in place a range of support measures, with varying degrees of intensity. These interventions included "escalation of food parcels, mass social relief through cash transfers of old and new existing grants, homeless shelters, expanded psycho-social support services, GBV services as essential services, safety plans, referrals and volunteers to identify poor households."[13]

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[7] See https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2020/mar/28/weeks-lockdown-italy-coronavirus-perspective?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other&fbclid=IwAR1JFhXSSIU-uxiZ4af19RZjPtSZPxGxGqLBYtHlhVMfIeqIPMENcL-n5nE. In this article, the author raises the idea that, with the advent of the pandemic, the reset button has been pushed

[8] The private sector is immersed in dealing with (and reversing) the fact that, in the words of Dr Tshepo Motsepe "our growth, revenue and employment prospects are bleak", See https://www.cyrilramaphosafoundation.org/impact-through-partnership-webinar-dr-tshepo-motsepe-keynote-address/

[9] In this article, https://www.biznews.com/premium/2020/05/12/martin-kingston-covid-19-lockdown-dilemma, the editor of BizNews posed the question: "Covid-19 still has to peak, but there are calls to end the lockdown for the sake of the economy. Has Covid become Lives versus Livelihood argument?". Columnist Khusela Diko takes up this matter in May 2020 when she noted that: "Some have asked whether the right to life should outweigh the right to a liveloood." (See https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-05-04-government-will-do-whatever-it-takes-to-save-lives-and-protect-the-south-african-people/)

[10] 23 October 2020 figures, https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/za

[11] See http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=13633

[12] https://theconversation.com/south-africa-faces-mass-hunger-if-efforts-to-offset-impact-of-covid-19-are-eased-143143

[13] See comments by Chief Director of the Department of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities in the Presidency, Ranji Reddy at a meeting on 28 August 2020. See https://genderlinks.org.za/news/ngos-call-on-govt-to-intensifygender-responses-to-covid/

The Government also announced a package of R500 bn worth of relief measures. As with many other countries,[14] this was not all additional funding for COVID-19, but more like a budget reprioritization. Government's resources were bolstered by an IMF loan. The money was intended to be used for:

- The support of health and frontline services
- Solving the balance of payments problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
- The protection of the vulnerable
- Support for economic reform and job creation
- Stabilizing the public debt was also listed as a priority[15]

The financial relief to individuals would be distributed via government's SASSA programme,[16] the Temporary Employment Relief (TERS) would be distributed via employers, and government food parcels would be distributed by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Solidarity Fund[17]. The COVID-19 grant of R350 per month was available for those who were unemployed, were not receiving an income, not already receiving a social grant, and not receiving another form of government relief. Potential beneficiaries reacted positively to this and 4.9 million people applied. In reality, these steps would take many weeks to implement, and in many instances longer to flow through to them resulting in many hopefuls not receiving the grant, ultimately causing frustration among millions of people.

Government, the media, and various agencies recognized the devastating livelihood impact the lockdown would have. Everyone in South Africa was affected but some were more affected than others, as the widely used saying went. Low-income earners, informal workers, domestic workers, and persons in the gig economy would immediately be plunged into extreme poverty. Those retrenched from formal employment, severance pay notwithstanding, would also face severe hardship. The Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu, expressed that she "never expected that the economic impact of COVID-19 would be so crippling for the poor" and that " COVID-19 had exposed the deeper challenge the country was still facing, having to take better care of the poor".[19]

On 19 April 2020, government announced further relief measures. At the same time, community-based organizations, individuals, and small groups responded to the crisis by providing food parcels and, later when restrictions were eased slightly, cooked food for collection as well. Government food parcel provision, through the Department of Social Development, but also through provincial and local government, was extensive, but also not widespread enough. NGOs and small groups reached out to hundreds of thousands of households and assisted the Solidarity Fund[20] to distribute 280 097 food parcels,[21] in some cases, using their own knowledge of communities and networks (which sometimes government was not aware of) to target those most in need.

The health response by government included setting up systems for regular and accurate information supply, engaging the media and also finding channels to reach the public directly (which involved a predominance of information provision in English).Complementing this generalized programme several NGO bodies mobilized to provide information and education on COVID-19 to communities (sometimes in the local vernacular), together with the distribution of materials such as sanitizers, masks and soap.

A wider range of issues began to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis. Most notable were the challenges posed by increasing violence against women (VAW) or gender-based violence (GBV), and the lack of provision of quality education. In the case of the former, organizations began to report a rise in reported instances of violence against women. They began to rally to find ways to provide day-to-day assistance to women affected, and to urge the President to urgently address the ways in which lockdown conditions were fuelling VAW. Adding to the pressure on women, households in resource-poor communities were struggling with the enforced 'home schooling'. As a result of the high costs of data needed for online learning, the digital divide was rapidly

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[14] For example in India, the government's special budget to address the pandemic was not all additional funding. In fact, in the view of some analysts it was mostly a reallocation or reiteration of existing budgets. See https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/commentisfree/2020/may/05/where-indias-government-has-failed-in-the-pandemic-its-people-have-stepped-in-coronavirus

[15] https://www.msn.com/en-za/news/national/imf-loan-could-pay-anc-salaries-mboweni-makes-alarming-admission/ar-BB1akcxx?ocid=msedgntp

[16] See https://www.gov.za/covid-19/individuals-and-households/social-grants-coronavirus-covid-19

[17] www.solidarityfund.co.za

[18] In KT Community Resilience Survey respondents reported that they had submitted applications but had not received any replies. According to this report (https://www.techfinancials.co.za/2020/05/29/how-to-check-status-of-your-application-for-r350-covid-19-grant/), The SASSA started taking nationwide applications for the grant on 11 May 2020 and promised to make the first payment on 15 May 2020. On 29 May the agency announced that it would make payment that week to 100 000 persons (of more than 4.9 m people applied for the grant)

[19] https://ewn.co.za/2020/06/15/minister-zulu-admits-she-never-expected-covid-19-s-crippling-impact-on-poor

[20] It should be noted that the Solidarity Fund did not prioritise food distribution. Only 20 percent of its budget was allocated for food security assistance, it told parliament. See https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/30339/

[21] See https://solidarityfund.co.za/media/2020/06/SF_-_Food_Relief_Programme_Summary_Report_-_June_2020.pdf

exacerbated. Organizations and small groups took action, assisting and supporting with the provision of learner-support material and on-the-ground-assistance to parents and caregivers who now had to assume the roles of educator. Ultimately, the triple burden of responsibility of production, reproduction and community support which fell primarily on the shoulders of women, increased during periods of lockdown.[22]

Alongside the wider issues – the ones initially not properly addressed in the plan – were the problems and challenges of the plan rollout itself. As can be expected in a society riven with fault lines, there was a multitude of community complaints. These included concerns around gaps in communication, huge gaps in government food provision, broken promises to particular communities or community segments, instances of bureaucratic callousness as well as an outcry about delays in government assistance. This came through in surveys, for example the Community Resilience Survey and the FHR survey,[23] as well as newspaper reports that prompted the President to concede that government had made a mistakes[24] in its handling of the pandemic and to condemn corruption[25].

The lockdown has had a devastating impact on households. Polls and surveys showed that many more households slipped into hardship and distress. According to government, in April 2020, about 2.2 million workers were made redundant.[26] Significant numbers of people in low-paid, contractual labour or informal work (those subjected to the 'no work-no pay' principle, such as waiters, Uber drivers, street vendors, hairdressers etc.) were impacted directly and immediately, plunging their respective households into an income crisis. Some turned to moneylenders/loan sharks to survive[27]. Millions looked to government for assistance. In many instances' areas such as Alexandra, the Cape Flats and several other flashpoints which still remain geo-spatially untransformed, frustration turned to anger, and community members marched in protest.

Aside from food security issues, households struggled with the following challenges:[28]

a. Education from early childhood to tertiary levels, at school levels manifesting in high numbers of dropouts. Some government officials point to demotivation caused by disruption to the academic year. Others expressed concern about the intersections of inequality and COVID-19. An expert, Mary Metcalf, stated that "functioning schools with an existing culture of support were better able to deal with COVID-19 complexities while lower quintile schools struggled with material and system readiness to combat the virus."[29] The realities added to the COVID-19 stresses faced by households in disadvantaged communities.

b. Problems with access to health services and medicines (affecting those requiring treatment for non-COVID-19 related illnesses, chronic illnesses and co-morbidities) due to imposition of lockdown. Democracy Works reported that, during the lockdown, "key populations with chronic illnesses and/or disabilities struggled to gain access to vital medications, assistive devices, counselling and other services.[30]

c. Unequal quality of health services, increasing the risk on the safety of both those contracting COVID-19 as well as on health workers.

d. A rise in violence against women and girls (with lockdown obstructing reporting to police stations). Democracy Works states that its partner organizations "reported a particular need for services address at people living in abusive relationships, unable to access any safety nets that may have existed prior to the lock down."[31] In South Africa, as soon as the lockdown began, GBV soared with 87 000 reported GBV cases in the first week of lockdown. This prompted a COVID-19 forum of Southern African organisations convened by the Southern Africa Trust to call, in early April, for mitigation strategies to deal with threats and realities of violence against women in southern Africa.[32]

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[22] https://phys.org/news/2020-07-women-burden-covid-era

[23] In the Foundation for Human Rights Survey (Community Advice Offices and COVID-19) of 177 community advice offices around the country, one of 5 advice offices reported that there were no food deliveries in their lockdown

[24] In a speech on 13 May the President conceded that "(W)e must acknowledge that as we have confronted this unprecedented challenge, there may have been times when we have fallen short of your expectations. Some of the actions we have taken have been unclear, some have been contradictory and some have been poorly explained." https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/some-lockdown-regulations-have-been-contradictory-and-poorly-explained-ramaphosa-47909996

[25] See the President Cyril Ramaphosa's comment regarding corruption in this speech to South Africans generally: https://www.gov.za/speeches/president-cyril-ramaphosa-additional-coronavirus- COVID-19-economic-and-social-relief

[26] See http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=13633

[27] See https://www.news24.com/citypress/Business/business-booms-for-loan-sharks-20200531. See also https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-05-27-poor-families-are-spending-more-on-food-since- COVID-19-lockdown-heres-why/

[28] This was as a result of the underlying fault lines but worsened by confinement imposed in terms of the State of Disaster declared in South Africa in March 2020

[29] See https://tinyurl.com/y4ujtwkz

[30] https://democracyworks.org.za/assessing- COVID-19-response-measures-at-country-level-south-africa/

[31] https://democracyworks.org.za/assessing- COVID-19-response-measures-at-country-level-south-africa/ See https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/saps-received-87-000-gender-based-violence-calls-during-first-week-of-lockdown-cele-46024648

[32] See https://www.southernafricatrust.org/newsroom/sadc-regional-cso-consultation-on-the- COVID-19-crisis

e.   The rough and ready conditions in informal settlements which meant households could not consistently comply with government-advised health protection measures such as social distancing and handwashing. Those living in informal settlements were perhaps the hardest hit, especially in developing world contexts where lack of collective provision by municipalities goes together with lack of household income and limited opportunities faced by persons who live there. In Kenya, for example, CSOs have provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) such as face masks, soap, medical supplies, sanitizers and food and water rations in informal settlements in Kilifi, Mombasa, Nairobi and Kisumu.[33] In South Africa CSOs rallied to assist communities in informal settlements, getting involved on two levels. For example, the Development Action Group (DAG) stepped up to assist communities in 21 informal settlements in Mossel Bay, six informal settlements in Sedgefield and four settlements in Tulbagh.[34] DAG also formed a joint initiative with other NGOs, including Planact, Afesis-corplan and Social Justice Initiative to monitor the situation in informal settlements and engage government[35] on the matter during the COVID-19 crisis.[36]

Community-led responses

Inevitably, social sector organizations, initially themselves confined by the hard lockdown, stepped in to deal with these new realities. In the KT Survey on Resilience, huge numbers of NPOs as well as small groups and individuals became involved directly in the distribution of food parcels, in health-related support and to a lesser degree, in assisting parents with home-schooling of children and tackling human settlement issues such as shelter and de-densification. In addition, NGOs began to mobilize around GBV.

The KT Community Resilience Survey brought to light the community's own responses to COVID-19. This was undertaken through voluntary action and through the work of individuals and small community groups. Already battered by circumstance such as chronic unemployment, low household income, general service delivery challenges, sometimes squalid living conditions, communities nevertheless rallied in large numbers to support the call to help flatten the curve. Once the first 21 days of hard lockdown had passed, initiatives to support those who became infected and provide humanitarian relief took root in the community. Young people in communities were seen assisting with door-to-door food parcel distribution in rural areas;[37] women and men were seen assisting in community kitchens, and; community members stepped forward to assist the elderly and those with co-morbidities to obtain medicines and pensions.[38]

Individuals, working with neighbours, friends, or associates, stepped up to take organized action. The main focus of such action was addressing the immediate food security emergency. Secondary responses by such groups have been assistance with the health services provision (for example, sharing information, assisting with basic PPE equipment, and distribution of dignity packs, etc.). Other support provided was in the form of households with education: supporting parents to cope with the challenges of home education, including as per examples obtained via the KT Community Resilience Study, delivering learning materials to homes, helping households with data, and providing materials that could be shared via smart phones

The KT Community Resilience Study unearthed many details about the involvement of these role players. Some of these volunteer groups swelled to as many as 20 members. Most had monthly budgets of less than R5 000, although a quarter of small groups/individuals worked with a monthly budget of about R20,000. Many of these community-based responders used money from their own pockets. Other sources of contributions were from friends and family. Even in rare instances where they were given access to donated goods, these local-level change-makers used their own airtime and transport in the process of delivering.

Community-based organizations (CBOs), some of them facing huge constraints with funding and data, also swung into action. They worked alongside NGOs and the individuals and small groups. In the KT survey, out of all organizational respondents 23% had budgets of less than R100 000; that is an average monthly budget of less than R10 000. This would characterize them as being on the lower end of the scale of NPOs. 27% of organizations preferred to define themselves as CBOs. CBOs also feature in the reports of the government-endorsed Solidarity Fund. In its report, the fund cites under its third delivery stream, 'pillar 3', that CBOs were among the 17 organizations

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[33] See https://sdgkenyaforum.org/content/uploads/documents/c1780e4b011f8cb9.pdf

[34] See https://www.dag.org.za/2020/05/25/ COVID-19-response-informal-settlements-food-relief-initiative/

[35] In the KT study, a responded stated that: "We initiated a joint CSO submission to the Department of Human Settlements in April to mobilize against de-densification (of informal settlements). This led to a national virtual platform, a Partnership Framework Agreement between CSOs and NDHS … and a planned engagement plan …."

[36] See https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/asivikelane-number-12-metro.pdf

[37] In a case study conducted in Sekhukhune as part of the KT Community Resilience survey, young people connected to Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA) were involved in door-to-door distribution

[38] During a Round Table panel discussion held on the 19th of October 2020, a representative of the Bosmont Community Patrol described how volunteers travelled to pharmacies on behalf of the elderly to obtain prescription medicines so that they would not have to stand in queues

that delivered 69 000 food parcels. It also notes under 'pillar 2' that four large national food distribution non-profit organizations which were selected to assist in the distribution effort – and who channelled 151 276 food parcels to those who needed them – did so via "a network of over 400 community-based organizations (including churches, ECD centres and feeding programmes, among others) within their networks."[39]

Confronting fissures in government's response

Although South Africa's government, through the President and the National COVID-19 Command Council (NCCC), were effective in designing and implementing the strategy to flatten the curve, it is too early to assess their performance in relation to handling the COVID-19 crisis.[40] In addition, government should not be regarded as monolithic: apart from differences at the horizontal level (between departments), note must also be taken of variations in government approach and capabilities at different levels.

Despite the exclusion of the social sector voice,[41] but drawing on private sector and trade union partnerships it had nurtured in NEDLAC in preceding months, government managed to provide a high level of cohesion and focus in addressing the pandemic from a health point of view. With reference to the manner in which it provided direction during the first 21 days of lockdown, there were high levels of citizen satisfaction with respect to President Cyril Ramaphosa and the Health Minister, Zweli Mkhize. Even in the period beyond, despite some lapses in provinces such as the eastern Cape at certain hospitals, as well as justified health worker concerns about inadequate protection,[42] the health response was marked by sustained high levels of state coordination which included attention to information provision, systematic monitoring, providing support to weak provinces and the importation of doctors from Cuba to boost national capacity.

However, following the first 21 days of lockdown, the fracturing of cohesion began, with initially few but progressively more public and community expressions of frustrations with government responses. This should not be surprising. Indeed, it would be illogical to expect that the arrival of a pandemic would miraculously erase the shortcomings of the public sector or for that matter, the deficiencies of the police service.[43]

In the KT Community Resilience Survey, CSOs as well as individuals and small groups which engaged in relief efforts reported on their experience of government action. Less than 22% of CSOs and 13% of individuals/groups stated that they had a good experience. The majority of respondents, drawing on their negative experiences, reported the following regarding their experiences with government:

•   Lack of coordination between government departments

•   Closed offices and inaccessibility to public officials

•   Communication issues (no replies to communication sent or no response to application)

•   delays in payment or no follow- through on agreements made

•   Shunning of offers by CSOs to government to assist with relief

Overall, government's assistance and support in terms of relief measures to communities have been important, but it was only a fraction of what it could have been. Government could have been easier to communicate with. Its systems for implementation could have worked better – observations made by a substantive number of respondents in the Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Survey. More broadly, the vulnerable on so many fronts could have been prioritized more appropriately. The substantial number of persons who have not received the R35O COVID-19 relief grant, even after successfully applying, detracts from the achievement of the numbers who did receive the grant.

By government's own admission there was a lack of capacity and its efforts in all provinces were sometimes derailed by corruption. The Solidarity Fund, speaking of lessons learnt, stated in its June 2020 report:

> Coordination with government at district level could have been undertaken sooner than it was. While many of our partners worked with the DSD to ensure that many of the beneficiaries on their lists were served, this process could have been more consistently streamlined across all provinces.[44]

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[39] See https://solidarityfund.co.za/media/2020/06/SF_-_Food_Relief_Programme_Summary_Report_-_June_2020.pdf

[40] In this article we see how countries which thought they had navigated the worst, find themselves on a second wave: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/02/europe-coronavirus-pandemic-lockdowns-infection-rates

[41] In Kenya, civil society organisations had greater access. They were able to make inputs into their government's National Emergency Response Committee on COVID19, focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable. https://sdgkenyaforum.org/content/uploads/documents/c1780e4b011f8cb9.pdf

[42] https://www.capetownetc.com/news/more-healthcare-workers-die-from- COVID-19-in-sa/

[43] The South African National Planning Commission, in its diagnostic report described the public sector as bedevilled by "the erosion of accountability and authority structures, poor organisational design, inappropriate staffing and low staff morale". See National Planning Commission, Diagnostic Overview, June 2011, Pretoria. See https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/npcdiagnosticoverview1.pdf

[44] See https://solidarityfund.co.za/media/2020/06/SF_-_Food_Relief_Programme_Summary_Report_-_June_2020.pdf

3. PART TWO: ADDRESSING IMMEDIATE HUNGER — NPOS INVOLVEMENT IN FOOD RELIEF

By all accounts, CSO-NPOs were extensively involved in the distribution of food parcels. In the Kagiso Trust (KT) Community Resilience Survey, more than 70 % of organizational respondents indicated that they were involved in distributing food parcels. It could be that 50% of all food parcels were distributed by NGOs. *Ask Africa* concluded that 50% of food parcels were from government. The rest came from NGOs or businesses.

In an example of the work done, the Makhanda Circle of Unity Food Group packed and distributed grocery parcels for the vulnerable people of Makhanda/Grahamstown. Since 11 April 2020, the Food Group have distributed 5 138 weekly grocery parcels and a further 2 200 boxes of pre-packed groceries were donated by corporate donors. In another example, the #Hope4Alex Project kicked off on 30 March 2020 with 320 food parcels. On 17 April 2020, the organization reported that it had delivered 750 parcels that week and that thanks to a partnership with a private company, had also provided fruit and vegetables in the food pack.[45]

Indications are that Community based organizations, faith-based organizations and NGOs also displayed 'incredible agility' in reaching out to their constituencies.[46]

Significantly, a substantial number of NGOs and small groups which participated in the KT Resilience Survey reported that their capacity to distribute food parcels was under-utilized. If more resources were available, some signalled they would have provided other services, but all indicated they would have increased the scope and scale of food distribution.

There are similarities in the extent of delivery with India. Of the 8.4 million people who have been provided meals across the country during the lockdown, nearly 37% people were fed by NGOs. In the state of Gujarat, NGOs fed 93% of the people who were provided with meals, while in Andhra Pradesh the figure was 92%. In Kenya, the focus of CSO involvement was different. Although 95.65% of the respondents are participating in COVID-19 related responses, the involvement in food security was not as prominent. The Kenya SDG forum, based on a survey, reports that respondents were involved in three main ways: information sharing, policy drafting and advocacy, and then thirdly the frontline response against COVID-19, with food security forming part of the 'frontline response'.[47]

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

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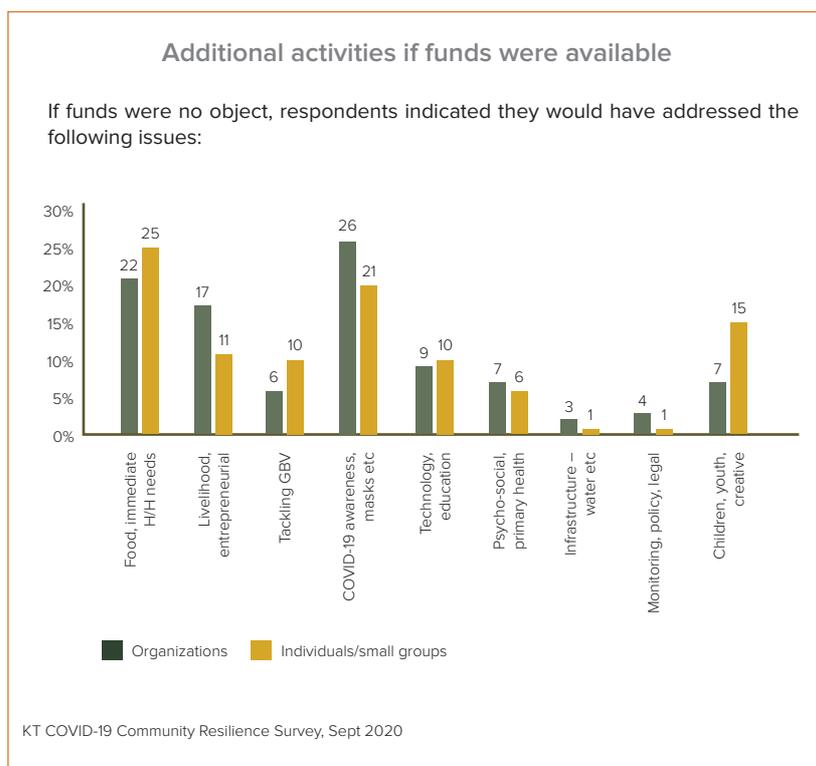
[45] See https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3312044208852963&id=152601988130550

[46] See https://theconversation.com/south-africa-faces-mass-hunger-if-efforts-to-offset-impact-of- COVID-19-are-eased-143143

[47] See https://sdgkenyaforum.org/content/uploads/documents/c1780e4b011f8cb9.pdf.

4. PART THREE: PRIORITY ISSUES FOR ADVANCING A SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA

In the KT Trust Resilience Survey, CSOs emphasized a range of areas which they saw as priorities. Many of these focus areas represent issues or stubborn challenges that have been part of reality in SA for decades. However, for stakeholders, what is important is how they stack up; which priorities come to the fore post- COVID-19 and how these priorities interlink with worsening of conditions for marginalized communities, under-resourced households and those who are excluded. As seen through the eyes of civil society, the following challenges emerge:

Priority issues emerging in the current period and highlighted by communities and CSOs

| Jobs-poverty-livelihoods | Social security | Access to data connectivity | Addressing the GBV pandemic | Relations between those who govern and those who are governed | Combating corruption | Youth issues |

Issues cited by CSO and community representatives in the KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

Economy-Jobs-Poverty-Community Entrepreneurship

Given the high rates of unemployment in South Africa, this issue necessarily features centrally in discussion of South Africa's development plans, including critical government policy statements setting out high-level and urgent objectives for the country.

Employment is a central or primary focus in development plans. The National Development Plan (NDP), in the first few lines of the Introduction states: "The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. South Africa can realize these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy..."[48]

In the KT Community Resilience Survey, respondents were extremely concerned about unemployment in the months and years following the worst of the pandemic in South Africa. This was the primary concern, according to respondents. In many instances, respondents linked their concern about growing employment with a worry about specific consequences. One said, for example: "High rate of unemployment, more orphans and vulnerable children." Another stated: "Poverty, food scarcity, abuse of children due to socio-economic decline". A third flagged the following: "Increased poverty, possibly a depression, increased unemployment and a likely cut in social services as the capitalist crisis deepens under COVID." Other respondents agreed with how the sharp economic downturn would worsen food security, but underlined consequences such as 'mental health' and 'education', with concerns that struggling households will effectively withdraw children, especially girls, from schools.

Central to a discussion about jobs and economic development is the formal economy and questions about its revitalization and transformation. In the current situation, debate revolves around the economic stimulus and government intervention in terms of, for example, industrial development strategy, Government's usual "go-to" programme of infrastructure development to stimulate the economy, target certain key industrial and service sectors and addressing core underlying issues such as education.

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[48] See https://tinyurl.com/y2554x44

So far, the major official strategies for large-scale employment creation through national economic development strategic frameworks have not yielded the desired results.[49] Government has reported that:

> "Although the economy grew by 2.8% on average during 1994 to 2018, it has not been able to absorb the number of people needing employment. Youth and women bear the brunt of unemployment. Youth unemployment, in particular, rose sharply over the past 10 years (2008 to 2018), the unemployment rate for young people increased from 44.9% to 54.7%. By the end of 2018, the number of people employed had almost doubled to 16.5 million people, representing 28.5% of the population."[50]

Government has acknowledged that "over the past 25 years, the government has implemented various policies and plans to remedy the high rate of unemployment" and added, "however, these and other interventions have not had the envisaged impact; hence, the high levels of unemployment persist, which reached 27.1% in Q4 of 2018."

The latest lack of success related to the last job summit. After this summit in October 2018, government indicated that initiatives and agreements coming out of the summit would lead to 275 000 jobs a year. As the Coronavirus hit South Africa two years later, few of the commitments made by business or the government had even been implemented, and then the COVID-19 pandemic brought the economy to a halt.[51]

Labour argues that many of the agreements should have been implemented in the period between that 2018 summit and the day the State of Disaster was declared:

"Government and business have failed to honour the majority of their Jobs Summit Agreement obligations. Examples are, the government on rolling out digital spectrum [for television], on implementing a tax on scrap metal exports to support local beneficiation, or establishing a Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Council.

Business [has failed] on releasing R100 billion for establishing new businesses, engaging 500 companies on buying local and linking to Proudly SA. It's simply a lack of political will, discipline and capacity on government's side. A lack of patriotism and willingness to sacrifice on the side of business, and just expecting government to do everything."[52]

Civil society groups often propose diametrically different solutions to what liberal economists and mainstream private sector leaders would propose. For example, the latter interest group proposes tax cuts and liberalization which may include changes to labour laws,[53] while the former interest group argues for labour-based approaches to addressing social challenges, a shift to the green economy, greater support of small producers, community-based production as well as import substitution and increased beneficiation of raw materials.

Many civil society groups place emphasis on the so-called 'second economy' – on measures that would allow for community production and would create a more enabling environment for particular sectors involved in small-scale farming, waste reclaimers, women street vendors and schemes for engaging youth in the provision of critical social services. As indicated by several of the respondents to the KT Survey, government should prioritize: "Co-operatives' involvement during economic recovery." Government should also pay serious attention to: "Growth of informal economy, transitions from informal to formal economy in line with ILO Recommendation 204." It should also hear the call for: "Approval of organic agriculture in a policy framework which stimulates the economy."

One respondent expressed anxiety about, and opposition to – a drive for all-out production, and its impact on the economy: "Economic recovery at all costs, without checks and balances around pollution etc." This view had an echo in calls by respondents who endorsed the revitalization of manufacturing and production, but argued that such a restart should be framed and shaped by a concern for the environment. These respondents stated:

• "Green stimulus for economic recovery – it's the only way we can move forward."

• "Green stimulus to stand any chance of a recovery: government has to abandon its outdated and destructive attachment to fossil fuels, especially the coal industry."

• "To work toward an economy that generates healthier (community food production, eco-friendly) advancing 4th Industrial Revolution livelihoods (Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Drone piloting) especially for Youth."

[49] https://www.news24.com/citypress/business/south-africa-needs-a-new-social-compact-20181130

[50] https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201911/towards25yearreview.pdf

[51] https://www.newframe.com/government-and-labour-clash-over-economic-policy/

[52] https://www.newframe.com/government-and-labour-clash-over-economic-policy/

[53] See https://www.freemarketfoundation.com/

The National Economic Development and Labour Council has played a role in the past in attempting to find solutions, for example through initiatives such as The Presidential Jobs Summit of 1998, the Growth and Development Summit in 2003, 200 Social Partner Accord and the Social Cohesion Summit 2012.[54] In recent times,[55] calling for a new social compact in South Africa in his 2019 State of the Nation address,[56] President Ramaphosa has affirmed this use of NEDLAC as the central platform.

On the one hand, NEDLAC has been widely criticized, with Rob Davies on record as saying that it takes too long and it achieves little, a Chamber of Mines representative blaming it for the events at Marikana[57] and a government official stating that, "it is portrayed as a failure because it has not led to the big social pact that will reduce workplace and social conflict while ensuring more rapid growth and employment creation."[58] On the other hand this platform is, for the present, likely to remain a focal point for dialogue and engagement between organized business, organized labour, government, and civil society actors.

In September, government and its partners in business and labour agreed on an economic development plan. The "agreement was formalized at a meeting of the NEDLAC Forum for Economic Recovery, chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa".[59] The plan was to put SA on a path of investment and growth – but fundamentally, it was also about recovery following the economic slump caused by COVID-19. Actually, it was less of a single plan than a lining up or alignment of the priorities of different sector stakeholders,[60] which confirms again, the approach of each to their own.

According to reports, the country's economic recovery action plan focuses on mass public jobs scheme, a broadband, spectrum auction by March 2021 and big competition for Eskom. A presidential working committee chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa would oversee the plan and leaders from the sectoral stakeholders – with five representatives each – would meet monthly.

Solutions related to the Eskom fiscal crisis were proposed, especially since electricity supply is a major economic constraint. Although all parties agreed on mass employment programmes, COSATU pushed for major fiscal relief, an amount of R1 trillion[61], and business sought pledges related to easing regulations related to new mining developments and more SMME support. More local manufacturing plus attention to the proactively embracing digital economy, agro-processing and green jobs also feature in the suggestions which emerged from the NEDLAC meeting.[62]

At the presentation of the interim budget in October 2020, government opted for tightening the belt, cutting budgets to various government departments to steer resources to the COVID-19 response and recovery initiatives, to the extent that such initiatives were not already catered for in government's expenditure framework. Forced to allocate huge amounts to state-owned enterprises requiring bailouts or facing fiscal crisis such as the national airline or Eskom, government announced it had begun cutting back on relief grants, phasing out top-up amount for those receiving social grants and announcing September 2020 as a cut-off date on a special employee relief scheme.[63] The Finance Minister, Tito Mboweni, indicated that one of his key objectives was to rein in debt. "We cannot allow our recent fiscal weakness and the pandemic to turn into a sovereign debt crisis. Therefore, today government sets out active measures to avoid this risk," he stated. Organized business welcomed the budget; however, trade union federations deplored what they termed an austerity budget.[64]

On the one hand, government and trade unions will look to boosting manufacturing and infrastructure investment as the means to create jobs, (amid ongoing tussles over the public sector wage bill) while the private sector will seek further deregulation and the rapid opening-up for mining exploration, privatized electricity generation and the use of the spectrum. The position of civil society groups mobilized around ideas of an alternative economic system is more aligned to the UN call that countries "maintain an emphasis on protecting and restoring jobs safely and at the same time, creating jobs in emerging, more resilient and sustainable economic sectors and ... preparing the workforce or needed skills."

[54] https://www.news24.com/citypress/business/south-africa-needs-a-new-social-compact-20181130

[55] https://www.news24.com/citypress/business/south-africa-needs-a-new-social-compact-20181130

[56] https://www.golegal.co.za/ramaphosa-social-compact-sona/

[57] See Dentlinger, 2017, The Role and Effectiveness of Nedlac as a Social Dialogue Forum: The Marikana Crisis, University of Pretoria.

[58] https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/000203971505000205

[59] https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/nedlac-social-partners-agree-economic-recovery-action-plan

[60] https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-09-16-breaking-nedlac-economic-recovery-plan-pivots-on-public-jobs-broadband-and-big-competition-for-eskom/

[61] In the UN's discussion of economic responses to Covid-19, it calls for expanding fiscal space, warns about extra liquidity that just goes on to balance sheets and advises: "Fiscal measures that boost immediate consumption spending are therefore necessary and more effective." See https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-84-achieving-sdgs-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-scenarios-for-policymakers/

[62] See https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-09-16-breaking-nedlac-economic-recovery-plan-pivots-on-public-jobs-broadband-and-big-competition-for-eskom/

[63] See https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-tito-mboweni-medium-term-budget-policy-statement-28-oct-2020-0000.

[64] See https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/budget-cuts-an-onslaught-on-workers-says-nehawu-e2759623-9885-4112-b594-a4757d5673ec. In this article, a public sector union argues "that the fiscal policy framework proposed an austerity package disguised as fiscal consolidation which was never agreed upon by social partners in the National Economic Development and Labour Council."

Social security

An adequate social security system is a pivotal element of a shared growth path. South Africa has a fairly extensive social security net, constituting one of the biggest expenditure items in the national budget. Against the backdrop of low wages and income insecurity and the related pressures facing many households through the implementation flaws of a means-tested system from the point of view of many CSOs and trade unions, a more useful system would be the introduction of a universal basic income grant.[65] Rather than a drain on the country, South African proponents, including the Black Sash and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in SA argue that such a monthly universal payment would lead to an increase in the spending power of South Africans on the lowest economic rungs, the results of which would act as a stimulus to the economy.

Recognizing the existence of other grants and the time it would take to restructure the current social grant system, some proponents are pushing for an interim step – the Basic Income Grant (BIG). They are demanding that government provide a basic income support to all persons aged from 18 to 59, including caregivers who receive the child support grant.[66]

The Black Sash has examined implementation of Basic Income Grant in countries which have adopted it, namely India, Namibia, Finland, and Kenya. In a report, Black Sash notes that in Namibia, for example, "Before the BIG, 76% of residents fell below the poverty line; this was reduced to 36% within one year of introducing the pilot".

They also examined the emergency income relief during COVID-19 and concluded that:

"Whilst these countries have taken initiative to scale up or introduce new social protection initiatives for their most vulnerable citizens in response to the Coronavirus, it has also highlighted the need for a more permanent solution, one that would ensure people at the margins of society are taken care of. A good social protection programme is one which allows individuals to build resilience overtime and ensures that they eventually migrate out of poverty."[67]

In a campaign entitled the "Basic Income Support for people aged 18 to 59 NOW!" the advocacy organization, amandla.mobi has collected 43 901 signatures. Sixty-three organizations support the campaign, including the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, COPAC, the Women on Farms Project, the South African Domestic Services and Allied Workers Union and Botshabelo Unemployment Movement.[68]

The idea of income support is only one element of a system of social security or what has been termed a national social protection floor through which no one should fall. The ILO's guidance to member states in building comprehensive social security systems argues that such a social protection floor should comprise at least the following basic social security guarantees:

- Access to a nationally defined set of goods and services, constituting essential health care, including maternity care, that meets the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality;

- Basic income security for children, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;

- Basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability; and

- Basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for older persons."[69]

South Africa has not yet achieved a national social protection floor, although the country has made important strides. The challenges lie in sustaining and enhancing what has been achieved as well as addressing major challenges such as the lack of a basic income support as well as a divided and very unequal health care system. The country also lacks a rigorous approach (included a rights-based framework and evidence-based setting of targets) to a social protection floor.

Noting that South Africa's Constitution provides for rights that are consistent with the ILO recommendation, van den Heever argues that what is required is greater clarity of minimum standards, enforceable legal instruments, the identification of gaps, and plans – framed in a rights-based framework – for closing those gaps.[70]

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[65] https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2020-09-13-why-all-south-africans-should-back-a-basic-income-grant/

[66] See https://amandla.mobi/a-case-for-basic-income-support/

[67] See https://www.blacksash.org.za/images/campaigns/basicincomesupport/BasicIncomeSupport2020.pdf or Engenas Senona, Basic income Support: A Case for South Africa, July 2020, Black Sash, and p22

[68] https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/basic-income-support-for-aged-18-to-59-now

[69] https://www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/legal-advice/WCMS_205341/lang--en/index.htm#:~:text=The%20Social%20Protection%20Floors%20Recommendation,accessible%20to%20all%20in%20need.

[70] See Van den Heever, Alex, 2012, Social Protection Floor for South Africa Concept, Note, Developed for the International Labour or https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334971031_SOCIAL_PROTECTION_FLOOR_FOR_SOUTH_AFRICA_CONCEPT_NOTE_Developed_for_the_International_Labour_Office

For the present, the focus of a critical mass is on a Basic Income Grant (BIG). The Basic Income Grant has surfaced repeatedly in discussion of relief measures as well as in discussions of specific topics such as food security, combating poverty and an economic stimulus mechanism. The demands for a standard unconditional monthly income support have re-surfaced because millions more people have been plunged into hunger, many more have joined the ranks of the unemployed and because it will take a variety of measures to reignite South Africa's economy. Indications are that despite resistance to the Basic Income Grant from some quarters, more and more South Africans accept that the basic income grant has a critical role to play in addressing the immediate humanitarian crisis, longer term developmental goals and stimulating the economy. The Basic Income Grant features prominently in the change agenda of numerous civil society organizations, working in coordination with trade unions (such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the Federation of Unions of South Africa and the National Council of Trade Unions and key social movements. However, it is possible that human rights groups and other civil society role players will, in time, expand their focus to include other elements of a social protection floor as critical issues.

The struggle for a Basic Income Grant has, interestingly, also made rapid strides in Brazil (also one of the countries with the highest levels of income inequality). The COVID-19 crisis gave CSOs the space to push anew for a BIG and make gains. Working together, 160 organizations launched The Basic Income We Want campaign and achieved some rapid wins. Following mobilization and specific proposals, a bill was passed by 30 March and signed off by the President a few days later. By 9 April 2020, the first grants of R660 were being paid – the start of rolling out to 59 million Brazilians. The benefit was initially for three months, but has been extended for another five months. The CSOs are bullish about making the grant permanent. According to Leandro Ferreira of the Brazilian Basic Income Network stated: "By directly and unconditionally helping those who need it the most, basic income has entered the landscape. It has begun as a policy option to address the current crisis, but it must remain in place for whatever comes after."

Access to data and connectivity

It is well known that data is crucial for economic development in South Africa. Equitable data access, aside from connectivity required to support the economy in the COVID-19 and post COVID-19 era, is also vital for development, including education, community development, livelihoods, and democratic practices. The international organization Civicus has noted that "there should be reliable, cheap and widespread access to communications platforms and technologies, and civil society personnel should have numerous opportunities to put their views across,"[71] at the same time data costs in South Africa have emerged as a serious impediment to the work of NGOs and CBOs.[72]

 COVID-19 has brought about rapid changes on almost every front of information and communication technology, with greater use of online technology in business, retail, education, and many other spheres. Communications specialists are telling us that "while the full impact of the pandemic on the global economy, on our way of life and on our psyches will only become clear in the months, years and even decades ahead, it is essential to start strategically preparing for a world in which more and more happens online."[73]

Despite some concessions by the major cellular networks (such as allowing zero-rated access[74] to select educational and information sites)[75], we have witnessed the deepening of the digital divide and insufficient corrective action by both regulators and the giant network providers. During the COVID-19, we have observed citizens cut off from access to government services, the education of learners and students impeded as well as proper debates, consultations, and critical engagement across a wider front undermined. The issue of access to data (in campaigns that are variously termed 'Data Must Fall' or 'Data for All') has become more important.

Addressing the gender-based violence (GBV) pandemic

The connections between COVID-19 and violence against women and girls has surfaced in the media but arguably has not been sufficiently highlighted. Over and above the health and economic impacts of Covid (much of which affects women disproportionately), COVID-19 has had additional impacts for women and girls.

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[71] http://www.ngopulse.org/article/state-civil-society-creating-enabling-environment-civil-society

[72] In the Kagiso Trust Community resilience survey, 46% of organisations cited the following as an issue for them: "major struggles around cost of data" which was negatively affecting their work

[73] See Shuane Jordan writing in The Media Online (https://themediaonline.co.za/2020/05/feel-good-campaigns-fine-for-now-but-deploying-data-to-reset-your-business-post-pandemic-is-vital/)

[74] As at 18 June, close to 1000 were zero-rated or were in the process of being approved. See https://www.itweb.co.za/content/wbrpOqgYEXn7DLZn. The process and criteria for zero-rating, which prioritises the education and health sectors, was gazetted by the SA Government. See https://www.itweb.co.za/content/mYZRXv9aLQnvOgA8

[75] This was not without a struggle. See the DG Murray Trust's efforts to try to compel MTN to zero-rate the local educational websites of public benefit organisations (PBOs). See https://www.techfinancials.co.za/2020/07/17/mtn-to-oppose-dg-murray-trusts-court-bid/

With regard to the core issues of the health and economic impacts on women and the management of these, government planning and policy remained gender blind. "Apart from those relating to GBV, most of the regulations and interventions have been largely gender blind and / or gender neutral," the National Department of Women (NDW) has said. They noted that, despite the evidence that women are worst affected, the work conducted by the National COVID-19 Command Council (NCCC) was essentially gender blind.

The NDW, noting that the pandemic has threatened the lives "of all human beings," added:

- Evidence shows that the pandemic and the responses to it exacerbate existing developmental fault lines, i.e. inequality based on gender, race and geographical location.

- Worst impacts are often felt by the most vulnerable, particularly women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and deprivation.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened the inequality and deprivation experienced by women and girls, increased poverty and unemployment in South Africa.[76]

A departmental survey found that most respondents were supportive of government's interventions – the 90% in support was constituted by 37% who rate it as fair, 32% as good and 21% as excellent. At the same time, it found that respondents' biggest concerns were women's poverty. The results included apprehension about reduced incomes (77.8%); women's safety and security, including gender-based violence and femicide (71.6%); deterioration in women's economic inclusion (61.7%): women's increased burden of care work in the household (61.7%); and women's health (60.5%).[77]

A group of organizations involved in gender work which met in Johannesburg on 10 September 2020 clearly articulated their experiences of GBV under COVID-19:

- "Women were forced to stay under confined conditions with abusive partners due to lockdown restrictions.

- Access to protection orders and police services was limited as these services were closed in certain areas or depending on the infections at a particular service point.

- The increased rate of unemployment amongst women and informal traders made the provision for basic needs difficult and almost impossible for women who are the bread winners in their homes as trade restrictions were put in place.

- Increased risking infection where women went out despite the lockdown restrictions in order to ensure that their children were fed and supported.

- Inability to access some basic health services such as contraceptives, HIV medication etc.

- Women with special needs unable to access certain services.

- People living with LGBTIQ+ persons needed to be educated on how to treat LGBTIQ+ persons instead of rejecting them.

- Corruption and 'sextortion' in the distribution of food parcels, PPE materials and social grants.

- The increased burden of unpaid care work of women who are at home looking after the infected and affected as well as their children whilst schools and Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres remained closed with children now attending school on an ad-hoc basis.

- Widening of the economic inequality between men and women.

- Increased rate of mental health patients who have had difficulty being in lockdown, losing their employment and various other issues."[78]

Relations between the governed and those who govern

South Africa has a good democracy, rooted in a Constitution which has been widely applauded by South Africans and by experts beyond South Africa. It is robust and has so far been able to act as a beacon through moments of tension and conflict. At the same time, this same constitutional democracy has not led to the realisation of socio-economic rights contained in the constitution for millions of people;[79] the Constitution is necessary. How can our democracy be strengthened and deepened? Such deepening is one of the key paths towards the realization, for all, of the rights enshrined in the Constitution.

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[76] http://www.wvlsa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Department-of-Women-Youth-and-Persons-with-Disabilities.pptx.

[77] http://www.wvlsa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Department-of-Women-Youth-and-Persons-with-Disabilities.pptx

[78] https://genderlinks.org.za/news/ngos-call-on-govt-to-intensifygender-responses-to-covid/.

[79] See the work of the Foundations for Human Rights on this.

The imperative to strengthening democracy arises in the context of COVID-19 from the following pertinent factors:

- *A sporadic breakdown of trust between communities (geographic communities or communities of interest) and government that resulted in wilful non-compliance of the Disaster and Risk Management Act led by the Department of Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)*: The KT Resilience Project found that in Alexandra township, a substantial part of the Alex community went into defiance mode and refused to comply with regulations after members of the army shot a resident, Collins Khoza. Similarly, taxi associations decided to break lockdown rules and unilaterally exceeded the restriction on the permitted numbers of passengers.

- *A more general sense of the fraying of the compact between communities and government during the management of COVID-19*: On the one hand, this arose from communication missed-steps on the part of government, something that the President conceded to when he said in May 2020: "Some of the actions we have taken have been unclear, some have been contradictory and some have been poorly explained."[80] On the other hand, it may be linked to a broader approach as argued by Steven Friedman who noted that, even as government was consulting with certain influential groups, the poor experience government's instructions inordinately top-down and authoritarian. The President appeared to concur when he told citizens in his 13 May 2020 speech that "enforcement has sometimes been inconsistent and too harsh."[81] Friedman wrote: "The problem here is the government's lack of political capacity, its inability to form a relationship with voters which would enable them to work together against a common threat."

- *Even in the pre-pandemic period, the huge number of monthly service delivery protests, many of them continuing in the current time*.[83] In a research report, those who participate in such protests argued that such protests were a desperate means for local governments to take note of and respond to grievances.[84] Although there are other issues at play, the most commonly cited reason for the protests is a lack of service delivery on the part of municipalities.[85] In many studies there is reference, for example, to an acute housing shortage, poor service delivery and a neglect of infrastructure. In addition, a key underlying factor is the breakdown in channels of communication between people and community. According to Christmas, "The frequency of the protests and the violent incidents that mark them clearly demonstrate the extent to which channels of communication between government and communities have broken down."[86]

- *High levels of frustration over the lack of accountability over corruption*: In a 2019 survey, 81% of South Africans believed that corruption was getting worse. On the one hand, democracy should mean corruption will have consequences such as prosecution of or jail time for perpetrators. This is the root of public frustration over corruption: after many years since the "state capture was uncovered" and the State Capture report was released in November 2016, there are almost no completed court cases which have ended in convictions. In the SA context, we have also seen political figures associated with corruption, according to Corruption Watch, undermine "key pillars of democracy that are responsible for holding those in power to account" such as Parliament and the criminal justice system.[87]

- *The gulf between organized civil society organizations and government as illustrated during the emergency response to COVID-19*: Civil society did not have a seat, even on an ad-hoc basis, at the table where the national responses were being planned and co-ordinated. In addition, a majority of civil society organizations – as reported in the Community Resilience Survey – had negative communication experiences with government, including a lack of replies and sometimes low levels of co-operation. Government engaged much better with business and trade unions and maintained an open door with specific sectors. Representatives of sectors were consulted as part of the management of the pandemic. This was not the same for civil society organizations.

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80 See https://www.gov.za/speeches/president-cyril-ramaphosa-south-africas-response-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-13-may-2020

81 See https://www.gov.za/speeches/president-cyril-ramaphosa-south-africas-response-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-13-may-2020.

82 https://theconversation.com/south-africa-is-failing-on-covid-19-because-its-leaders-want-to-emulate-the-first-world-142732.

83 See an example of such protests here: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/plettenberg-bay-n2-protests-stop-after-weeks/.

84 See https://www.csvr.org.za/docs/thesmokethatcalls.pdf

85 See https://dullahomarinstitute.org.za/multilevel-govt/local-government-bulletin/volume-9-issue-4-september-october-2007/vol-9-no-4-service-delivery-protests-failure-to-deliver.pdf.

86 https://dullahomarinstitute.org.za/multilevel-govt/local-government-bulletin/volume-9-issue-4-september-october-2007/vol-9-no-4-service-delivery-protests-failure-to-deliver.pdf. See also https://www.polity.org.za/article/the-reasons-behind-service-delivery-protests-in-south-africa-2009-08-05.

87 See https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/81-of-sa-citizens-say-corruption-is-here-to-stay-19407783

- *There is an ongoing increase in the numbers of voters who simply stay away from the polls and thus refrain from voting*: Many analysts argue that this is a sign that people are losing faith in elections as a means of effecting positive change.[88] This diagram,[89] reveals the shifts as well as the huge number of people either not registering or abstaining from voting. This decline in percentage of voters who participate in the national elections clearly affect the political mandate.[90]

2019 national general elections: Total voting age population = ±37.8 million people

2014 general elections: Based on total voting age population of = ±32.7 million people

Legend:
- Not registered
- Registered but not voted
- Voted ANC
- Voted DA
- Voted EFF
- Voted 10 other parties
- Other parties and spoil

Issues cited by CSO and community representatives in the KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

If South Africa is to harness the contributions of all sectors in overcoming poverty and inequality and to mobilize community enthusiasm for local, provincial and national programmes, change-makers will need to pay attention to reducing the social distance between elected leaders and the people and between the governed and those who govern. Government and civil society need to find platforms, forums, and better channels for engagement and, through such engagement, restore relationships of trust, accountability and, to a greater degree, the sense of working in unison towards shared national objectives. This should involve better listening on the part of government officials and respecting the President's call to civil society when he said: "Civil society needs to continue to play its role in holding government to account …." It should also entail reinvigorating structures for participation, ensuring consequences such as dismissal and/or prosecution for corruption, meaningful and timely responses on grievances raised by communities and open engagement with constituencies about the conduct they expect from public representatives.

Combating corruption

Possibly beginning with the arms deal, South Africans have become more aware of corruption as a major issue, negatively impacting their lives and the future prospects of the country. Since then, the public has become aware of a string of high-profile cases of corruption, culminating in extensive corruption within the COVID-19 Relief Programmes.

Over the last decade, corruption has been highlighted as a serious problem by:

- The Public Protector's office and specifically during the term of Advocate Thuli Madonsela

- The Annual Auditor General's report

- The Zondo Commission

- Various parliamentary hearings, for example into various state-owned enterprises.

Turning to the activities and agitation within civil society, corruption has been highlighted through:

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[88] https://www.news24.com/news24/elections/voices/the-20-million-that-got-away-the-mourning-after-the-elections-20190519

[89] This diagram was prepared by Stephen Marais (presented as two diagrams) and delivered as part of a presentation called the Think Piece at the Left Dialogue Forum: 27-28 November 2020 convened by COPAC

[90] See https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/features/2019-05-16-whats-behind-sas-18m-missing-votes/

- The work of organizations like Corruption Watch.[91]

- Media outlets and particularly through investigative journalism, including the work of units such as Amabungane and media projects such as Ground Up.

- The mobilization in 2016, including street protests and events such as the People's Assembly Against State Capture which included "labour and business leaders, struggle stalwarts and a wide array of faith-based groups."[92]

- Whistle-blowers who interact with agencies such as the media and commissions in order to provide relevant and insider information on corruption in institutions

Although civil society is an important repository of democratic ideals, including values such as transparency and proper stewardship of resources in the public interest, it is also infected by the plague of corruption. While major cases involve companies siphoning money from the state,[93] civil society organizations are being used in corrupt practices geared to self-enrichment as well. In the work done by the organization Ground Up,[94] we have seen the emergence of pseudo-NGOs formed to draw funding from the National Lotteries Commission for community development projects, but which divert funds for individual enrichment.

The effects of corruption include negative economic impact, tarnishing the country's image, hampering of service delivery and deepening inequality (by concentrating wealth in hands of the few).[95] It also undermines democracy — when corruption takes hold and runs wild, it negates the principles of human rights, rule of law, and economic freedom.[96]

The respondents to the KT Community Resilience Survey are deeply concerned about corruption. Asked how government could better work with NPOs and better manage a response to a pandemic, respondents answered as follows:

- "Stop wasting precious resources. Work with community-based organizations. Act on corruption."

- "Work with NGOs to ensure no corruption takes place."

- "A priority is to address corruption at all levels of state intervention."

- "To support and make sure that funding reaches its destinations to help organizations as there are too many instances of corruption."

- "Use CSOs for distribution of services and eliminate the tender system which is open to corruption."

- "Make funding available for holistic support. And stop corruption."

- "Government should listen to and collaborate with organizations working with communities on issues related to corruption."

- "Less corruption and ensuring funds reach the individual community member."

- "It is now the time where government includes CSO's in their budgets whenever they are facing pandemics like COVID-19 to make use of skills in the CSO and to make sure that there will be minimized corruption."

- "Government should refrain from corruption and instead provide the needed services to the needy communities."

The pandemic has again exposed the high levels of corruption in South Africa. The state's Special Investigations Unit has uncovered the theft of billions of Rands in PPE procurement processes of Gauteng Province.[97] The Gauteng Province was spurred to action and the Minister of Health remains suspended as a result of COVID-19 procurement processes which resulted in large-scale corruption.[98] Corruption Watch stated that COVID-19 has exposed greed, also referred to corruption on a grand scale. The state's agency, the Hawks, as part of an urgent

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[91] See https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/CW-Annual-Report-2018-Upholding-Democracy-Single-Pages-Agent-Orange-Design-10042019.pdf

[92] See https://www.biznews.com/undictated/2016/11/03/watch-sipho-pityana-fills-leadership-void-urges-citizens-to-reclaim-sa-from-zuma-mafia-style-crooks

[93] See https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/download-the-full-state-of-capture-pdf-20161102

[94] See a range of stories by the Lotto: https://www.groundup.org.za/topic/lotto/

[95] See Adetiba, O.F. The Challenges of Curbing Corruption in a Democracy: The Case of the Public Protector and Nkandla, March 2016, Thesis, University of Stellenbosch

[96] See Adetiba, O.F. The Challenges of Curbing Corruption in a Democracy: The Case of The Public Protector and Nkandla, March 2016, Thesis, University of Stellenbosch

[97] https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/419769/billions-of-rands-looted-by-south-africas-covidpreneurs-report/

[98] https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/top-gauteng-health-official-placed-on-suspension-over-ppe-scandal-while-anc-dithers-on-ppe-corruption-6134a3d8-2213-475a-a4d3-73ea4c5196fa

clampdown linked to allegations of corruption linked to COVID-19 procurement, made numerous arrests in Gauteng and Eastern Cape.[99] Corruption is not new. However, COVID-19 has highlighted again how billions of Rands are diverted annually through corruption and how SA cannot reach its development goals unless it acts more vigorously to combat corruption.

Youth

The question of youth has not emerged as a prominent single issue. However, the situation of youth in the country and how they have been impacted by COVID-19 emerges as an aspect of other issues. Youth have been impacted through the economic aspect (including the dearth of relief), the mental health aspect and, for many, through disruption and stalling of their education programmes.

Youth have played a role alongside other community members in relief to communities, inter alia assisting with delivery of food parcels, awareness drives and support for family members who have become ill from the virus. In addition, Southern African youth have participated in continental projects which called on youth to step forward to assist with innovation in response to COVID-19. Some of the innovations which emerged were "the use of solar panels for sustainable water supply systems in communities without safe water access; digital applications that enable children to continue learning; and online marketplaces to enable continued income generation during the COVID-19 pandemic."[100]

On the one hand, millions of young people are unemployed;[101] on the other hand, those who have a job, are engaged in informal work, working as waiters and a wide range of piece jobs. They thus fall squarely into the category of workers who were most vulnerable when the lockdown struck. The organization PLAAS was one of those calling on government to come up with a youth specific-strategy to address the needs of youth in the pandemic.[102]

The vast majority of youth are part of households in communities. Apart from the loss of income (their own or loss of income faced by others in the house), they have also faced the food security issues (worsened for learners by being cut off from school feeding schemes), as well as the challenges of observing hand-washing and social distancing guidelines in cramped settlements. On the education front, many poor parents – the same as middle class parents -- struggled with playing the teacher role and with giving home-schooling support. While some young people thrived on not being at school, many young people who lacked data, smart phones and other ways of accessing learning material fell behind. This increased the mental health pressures in households, and many survey respondents indicated that, had they had more resources, they would have rolled out more counsellors to deal with these kinds of pressures facing households. In all this, child-headed households were, according to survey respondents, worst affected. The educational challenges are resulting in possibly high dropout rates with high numbers already recorded in the Eastern Cape where "3 515 boys and 2 820 girl pupils between grades R and 12 are expected to have dropped out".[104]

Respondents in the KT Community Resilience Survey expressed their concern about youth joblessness and proposed some prospects for addressing this in the reconstruction period, namely:

• "Parent training, teach budgeting skills, trauma support, discussion forum at town level to share and support, mentorship support (existing business expertise shared through mentorship), youth leadership development."

• "Support small business owners and empower the youth to become possibility thinkers. They must be taught perseverance and self-belief and given mentors to support them. We should learn to take responsibility within our communities and take an interest in each other. Resilience should be taught in schools, places of worship, sports and homes."

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[99] https://mg.co.za/news/2020-10-22-hawks-swoop-down-with-more-arrests-in-r1-4-billion-corruption-blitz/

[100] https://reliefweb.int/report/world/african-youth-offer-solutions-covid-19-challenges-their-communities

[101] This is according to the figures released by Statistics SA in the Quarterly Labour Force Survey on 12 February, 2020. South Africa's 20.4 million young people aged 15 to 34 were not employed

[102] https://www.plaas.org.za/the-effects-of-covid-19-on-youth-in-south-africa-mr-president-what-is-your-plan/

[103] See https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/basic-education-anticipating-increase-in-dropout-rates/

[104] See https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2020-10-22-pandemic-fans-existing-school-dropout-crisis/

- "Support youth development and promote farming practice internships, but they are not for everyone, people have different skills and talents – they just need to be directed on the right paths."

- "We are a seasonal rural area and need something like needlework, woodworking, upholstery and money, as we have the machinery to train people, especially youth."

- "Train youth to do things in the community to do minor fixing of infrastructure e.g. leakages, potholes and opening up of blocked storm water drains and sewage."

A large number of respondents link the issues of youth unemployment to their visions of building community-based production and community-based or social entrepreneurship. The content of such community-centred entrepreneurship with youth could involve IT, agro-ecology and food security, waste-recycling as well as wear-able products related to youth culture. On the production side, one of the respondents, from an organisation called CONEKT, reported that they have assisted CSOs to develop projects with youth, assisting with product development and marketing. CONEKT is a company and raises the possibility of NPO-company partnership in youth development. Speaking at a Kagiso Trust Round Table on innovation during COVID-19, it explained their rationale for linking up with NPOs in relation to such NPOs work with youth and women: "The organizations are not trained in business – they need assistance with this. Corporate skills, especially tech skills, can be taken into charity. This can be done in a way that is affordable and relatable. We want to connect with communities with what they already have and build on this to support them."

In his speech on the revitalizing of the South African economy after the most restrictive lockdown phases, President Cyril Ramaphosa[105] did mentioned young people twice. However, several of the other initiatives cited could be viewed as attempts to absorb youth into employment. The relevant programmes and initiatives he cited are:

- "In the next six months, we will expand the national rural and municipal road rehabilitation and maintenance programme using labour intensive methods."

- "We are going to expand our natural resource management programmes such as *Working on Fire and Working for Water.*"

- "More than 60 000 jobs will be created for labour-intensive maintenance and construction of municipal infrastructure and rural roads."

- "To support our healthcare system an additional 6 000 community health workers and nursing assistants will be deployed as we proceed with the implementation of National Health Insurance."

- "We are going to create 300 000 opportunities for young people to be engaged as education and school assistants at schools throughout the country, to help teachers with basic and routine work so that more time is spent on teaching and enabling learners to catch up from time lost because of COVID-19."

The President indicated that government would be launching the national Pathway Management Network which was a platform for recruitment and other support to youth. He also announced that grant-making programmes in the creative, cultural and sports sector would be expanded – which opens the opportunity for youth entrepreneurs in the creative and sports sectors.

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[105] https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/economic-recovery-plan-read-president-cyril-ramaphosas-full-speech-4d3e6c7b-fff3-479a-bf89-d312650c6690

5. PART FOUR: CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING — AN URGENT PRIORITY

The importance of Civil Society Organisations

Social sector organizations have demonstrated their capacities to intervene during a humanitarian crisis under COVID-19. These interventions included the capability to respond rapidly, flexibility to adjust, increase their outreach and do all of these with limited or low intermediary costs. They are also a resource, able to assist other sector bodies in terms of knowledge, planning and implementation. These organizations became key cogs in the 'official' Solidarity COVID-19 food distribution programme and drove the social sector's unofficial humanitarian effort.

At the same time, the issue of sector strengthening remains on the table and given the issues of long-term viability, in some respects is even more urgent. The issue of social sector strengthening has re-emerged during COVID-19 in several ways:

a.   A range of studies have highlighted the ways in which COVID-19 has battered social sector organizations. They have faced loss of funding, increased demands for services, unforeseen changes in functioning which have destabilized organizations, adversely affected links with the core constituencies and severely tested the change management capabilities of organizations. Some organizations have bounced back and shown themselves to be resilient. But many have not – and will take a long time to overcome the setbacks experienced. Some organizations have closed down. The Tshikululu Social Initiative (TSI) survey, entitled *The Impact of COVID-19 on Non-profit Organisations*,[106] found that 2% of CSO respondents were thriving and that 4% were threatened. The Foundation for Human Rights reports that 45% of community-based advice offices have closed down. The Charities Aid Foundation has noted that "With reduced income but increased demand many organizations are in survival mode."[107]

b.   Community resilience has been restrained and needs to be rebuilt. Households have faced loss of income and local organisations and individuals have tapped into local assets to assist in initiatives such as food parcels and community kitchens. After several months of humanitarian action, questions of sustainability arise, borne out by the resolve of many CBOs and CSOs to start encouraging community members to grow their own food. Civil society organizations have a critical role to play in strategies to build and enhance community resilience.

c.   Inabilities and capacities in relation to effective engagement with government. This view is held by Swilling and Russel when they note stated that "the capacity problem is reinforced when the unit of analysis becomes the relationship between NPOs and the state." The KT Community Resilience Survey demonstrated the extent that NGOs and CBOs found government inaccessible, could not, despite efforts, access relief funds and did not attempt to seek relief funding from government. The TSI survey also noted that 60% of respondents did not apply for relief funding. In addition, the KT Community Resilience Survey pointed to blocked communication and a lack of platforms to engage with government both at sectoral level, but also on key national initiatives relevant to addressing poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

d.   These issues continue to impede and bedevil small NPOs. Such organizations face challenges on three levels: the first relates to internal issues, effective governance and (since they are emerging) administration; the second relates to the capacity to speak up and demand a greater proportion of resources especially in under-supported provinces;[108] the third is the challenges they face as a sector in certain provinces; in terms of this, the TSI Survey Results refers to under-supported provinces and underfunded provinces, namely Limpopo, Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape and North West.

The above-mentioned challenges emerge in any case against a backdrop of long-term concerns around strengthening of the sector. Many pre- COVID-19 studies raised issues around the state of civil society organizations in SA, including funding challenges.[109] In an early study, Swilling and Russel (2002) highlighted "Lack of a sustainable funding base" and "Lack of organizational and managerial capacity" as issues facing organizations in the social sector. A research report by the Coalition on Civil Society Resource Mobilization,

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[106] See https://tshikululu.org.za/impact-of-covid-19-on-the-npo-sector/

[107] See https://www.cafonline.org/about-us/blog-home/giving-thought/podcasts-from-giving-thought/cassie-robinson-on-tech-civil-society-and-philanthropy/the-history-of-philanthropy-and-civil-society-in-times-of-crisis

[108] See the TSI Survey Results which expresses concern about under-supported provinces. See also the KT Community Resilience Project which found that civil society is weakened by unequal access to donor resources

[109] It is always important to note that any assertion CSOs face challenges, including funding challenges, does not mean that the sector is declining or that civil society as a whole is weak

released in 2012, noted that South African civil society faced a funding challenge and added that, "This has resulted in a multiplicity of sustainability and institutional development challenges. Reasons for these circumstances include declining international funding, leadership and identity changes and the apparent unwillingness of government to meet its responsibilities to the sector."[110]

During the KT Community Resilience Survey, respondents were asked about what they foresaw their work changing in the months of recovery and rebuilding. In this order, they are foreseeing a greater focus on community mobilization (57%); secondly, greater advocacy on issues that surfaced during the COVID-19 (67%) and thirdly, participation in a national network (46%). The needs which emerged from the survey, based on a question as to how the social sector might amplify its voice, included the following areas of strengthening:

The issues listed above are:

- Greater coordination, which includes networking and coalitions

- Improved CSO-government relations include communication and partnerships, but also broad state-social sector engagement on critical national issues

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How should civil society organize itself if it wants a stronger voice?

Collaboration and coordination featured strongly in the responses. This shows a belief in strength in unity – through, for example, forums, networks and joint workshops. There was a sense that formalized bodies can better lobby and respond to community needs. Linked to this, many participants felt that CSO representation on government platforms, task groups and committees could help in engaging government.

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

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- Cluster specific coordination – similar to greater coordination, but with a focus on sectors and issues

- More effective use of technology

- Better resourcing to NPOs

In addition, the Kagiso Trust (KT) Typologies Study noted that through coordination CSOs can have a greater influence on policy development. The report argues that, "for many CSO which had historically focused on service delivery, coordinated efforts help bring about broader policy initiatives and reforms to address the very conditions which they were attempting to ameliorate in their communities."[111]

The final report acknowledges that coordination is difficult and, just as there have been past successes, there have also been failures, with factors of communication, leadership and trust coming into play. It emphasizes that donors have a core role to play in supporting and strengthening coordination.

The KT Community Resilience Survey also raised suggestions related to the strengthening of smaller NPOs. Some respondents (4 % of organizational respondents and 3% of individuals and small groups respectively) called for simpler procedures for small NPOs. A slightly larger number (8% of small group and individual respondents) underscored the need for capacity building and training.

These suggestions relate to the idea of an enabling environment as well as a supportive environment. The former related to the legal framework, the work of the NPO Office in the Department of Social Development and training for compliance. The latter relates to proper communication with the sector in a crisis, better and more substantial funding flows to the sector, recognizing civil society organization inputs in planning and from all departments, demonstrated commitment to partnerships with civil society organizations.

The South African Non-Profit Act asserts (in a clause that is observed in the breach by most government departments) that: "Every government department must determine and coordinate the implementation of its policies and

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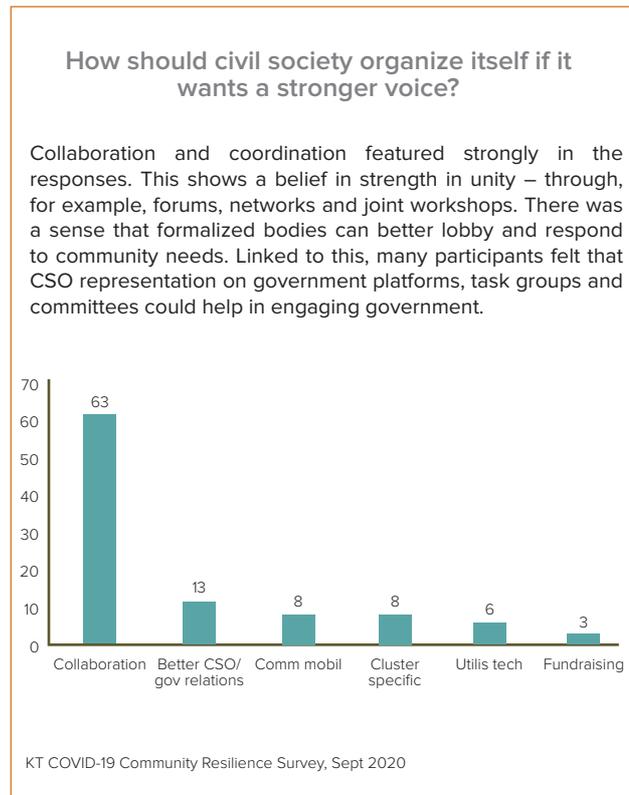
[110] See Coalition on Civil Society Resource Mobilisation, Critical Perspectives on the Sustainability of the South African Civil Sector, 2012, Jacana, Johannesburg
(Accessible here: http://www.ngopulse.org/sites/default/files/coalition_report.pdf)
[111] This is in line with a view expressed by Martin Luther King in the book, King, M.L., Jr., 1963, Strength to Love, Harper & Row, New York: "Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary"
[112] See chapter 2 of The Non-Profit Organisations Act, No 17 of 1997

measures in a manner designed to promote, support and enhance the capacity of non-profit organisations to perform their functions."[112]

Platforms for engagement and dialogue

Although coordination has been raised within the KT 'Typologies' Study and emerged organically as an issue in the KT Community Resilience Survey, the question can be posed: what would be the importance of co-ordination, whether at district, provincial and national levels? Swilling and Russel (2002),[113] in discussing the capabilities of non-profit organisations argue that capacity of the whole is much greater than the sum of the capacity of the parts. The network arrangements involve the mobilization of social capital (which includes financial resources, human resources, and values).

At one level, most social sector organizations ordinarily act as a web of networks with organizations operating in awareness, interaction, and complementarity with each other, leading to a mobilization of social capital and contribution to institutional thickening. Much of this may be organic, spontaneous, and even ad hoc and cyclical. These forms of interaction may be characterized as much by coordination as by a lack of coordination.

The relevance of greater civil society coordination comes to the fore in the context of the following:

a)   Government, from time-to-time, requests that organizations wishing to engage with it find ways of acting in concert. This was raised in the earliest days of democratic government by then RDP Minister Jay Naidoo who famously told NGOs "there has to be some coordination and we are asking NGOs to create this mechanism" . In recent times, it was Minister Nathi Mthethwa who called on arts, culture, and heritage o rganisations to "speak with one voice."[115]

b)   There are leading figures and voices in all sectors (labour, public, private and social sectors) who argue that addressing the stubborn development challenges and enrolling the contributions of all sectors in addressing the development challenges requires inter-sectoral engagement. In this context, engagement could entail discussion (exchange of ideas where each implement their plans and intentions as they see fit), voluntary alignment of plans as well as bargaining and negotiation with respect to national plans.

c)   Organizations in South African have in the past and from time-to-time in the present, taken the view that they are not heard as individual organizations or disparate groups of organizations on issues such as the enabling environment.

d)   The sector can be better responsive to the needs of small NPOs, especially those in so-called under-funded provinces. These NPOs would be able to do their work better if, in the words of a percentage of respondents to the KT Community Resilience survey, received support capacity building and training.

e)   Social sector organizations arguably want combined strength as they seek to push transformation agenda demands such as eradication of poverty, inequality, gender-based violence, although it appears that CSO clusters appear to be happy with sector or cluster-based organizing, occasionally complemented by linkages with social movements, trade unions/labour federations and grassroots groups.

At another level, coordination may be asserted in its own right as a more conscious and consistent endeavour, drawing on this social capital. It links into the idea of collective action, where collective action refers to action taken together by a group of people whose goal is to enhance their condition and achieve a common objective. At its best, organizations seeking to deploy it should have the objective and some structural means to mobilize change through joint 'voice' or protest action; they should also hold a shared belief that unified effort (collective action) is a viable option for achieving group-based goals.

During the COVID-19 crisis, we have seen CSO coordination built through the COVID-19 People's Coalition. This was a great initiative taken early, with a catalytic role played by the Tshisimani Centre of Activist Education.[116]

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[113] Swilling and Russell, 2002, Size and Scope of the Non-Profit Sector in South Africa. See also http://repository.hsrc.ac.za/handle/20.500.11910/8499

[114] https://mg.co.za/article/1994-08-19-the-rdp-minister-who-would-like-to-be-redundant/

[115] https://www.msn.com/en-za/news/national/speak-with-one-voice-mthethwa-pleads-with-entertainment-industry/ar-AAIEeyR

[116] Tshisimani called a meeting of activist CSO on 19 March (before lockdown); numerous organisations attended. (http://tshisimani.org.za/event/cape-town-meeting-on-progressive-mobilisation-against-coronavirus-pandemic/). This meeting and those present for the basis for the formation of the COVID-19 People's Coalition

[117] This issue also came to the fore in other countries. For example, in Nigeria, Centre for Sustainable Development and Education in Africa, announced that it engage in advocacy activities towards the Nigerian government to demand the participation of civil society into national programmes to respond to the pandemic. See https://www.cspps.org/Outreach-Strategy-to-Combat-COVID19-Nigeria. In Kenya, civil society organisations seemed better placed to make inputs into the national emergency response plans. According to the SDG Kenya Forum, Alongside the private sector, CSOs have also contributed to policy frameworks such as the proposed Public Health (Prevention, Control and Suppression of COVID19) Rules, 2020; and have provided critical views (focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable) that have been shared with the National Emergency Response Committee on COVID19

Against a backdrop of the exclusion of the social sector from the forums in which labour and the private sector could engage with the President and his top team on the emergency response,[117] this initiative provided a platform for engaging with the Solidarity Fund and voicing critical concerns about state-led approaches. We also witnessed the emergence of implementation networks such as the Community Action Networks. In terms of policy analysis and information-sharing on underlying issues, the South Africa Agro-ecology Network which helped partner organizations deepen understanding of the immense food security challenges within the neoliberal framework being adopted in South Africa. Coordinated by, inter alia, COPAC and Food Sovereignty South Africa, a significant drawing-together of social sector organzsations also occurred around the Climate Justice Process. Admittedly some of the mobilization occurred in the months before the COVID-19 crisis hit South Africa, but this initiative became important – not least to ensure a sustained focus on environmental justice as the country starts to rebuild the economy and (arguably) shape the new normal.

Outside of this, government has forged links to networks of CSOs in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) and in forums run by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA). These platforms and those participating in them allow for engagement, yet at the same time, they appear to be inadequate; the networks involved are not effective in giving these platforms a legitimacy; the networks that participate have constituencies, but not so broad that it enables them to canvass views (and report back to) the vast majority of NPOs in South Africa.

With poverty set to deepen, unemployment on the rise, household incomes among the poor in South Africa on the decline, the key question which arises then is, 'will the social sector make its voice heard when critical national issues are discussed?'If it does seek to amplify its voice, organisatons will need to return to the issue of whether they have the appetite, mechanisms, and methodologies for inclusive national and broad-based coordination. In addition, it is crucial to clarify what types of platforms are optimal for CSO-government engagement at the national level.

6. PART FIVE: NEW LENSES, TRANSFORMATION AND RENEGING ON THE ADVANCE TO THE NEW NORMAL

It almost goes without saying that COVID-19 has exposed the cracks in South African society and deepened inequality. The COVID-19 job losses came on top of women's unemployment of 30.9%[118] and youth unemployment of 55.97%.[119] Conditions of hard shutdown means that additional millions of low paid or informal workers received no wages for several months. Hundreds of thousands of households were shifted from precariously surviving into hunger and destitution, with only government and CSO food parcels and community kitchens standing between them and starvation.

As the pandemic took root, many saw it as the trigger that would usher in a fundamental change in society which would spur rulers towards for example, socialized health care, and perhaps more decisive steps towards a greater egalitarian society. "We are all in this together," was a common refrain. Minister Lindiwe Zulu was taken aback at the impact of the pandemic on the poor when she stated, " COVID-19 has exposed the deeper challenge the country was still facing to take better care of the poor."[120] whilst President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on 21 April 2020 that: "We are resolved not merely to return our economy to where it was before the Coronavirus, but to forge a new economy in a new global reality. Our economic strategy going forward will require a new social compact among all role players – business, labour, community and government, in order to restructure the economy and achieve inclusive growth. We will forge a compact for radical economic transformation which ensures that it advances the economic position of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, and that it makes our cities, towns, villages and rural areas vibrant centres of economic activity. Our new economy must be founded on fairness, empowerment, justice and equality."[121]

In the broader scheme of things, innovative thinkers and visionaries have raised the possibility of:

- Greater cooperation between nations.[122]

- A growing recognition that health care should be socialized or at least defined by universal quality access.

[118] See news report https://tinyurl.com/y5zcsz5zand Stats SA data http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2019.pdf

[119] See https://www.statista.com/statistics/813010/youth-unemployment-rate-in-south-africa/

[120] https://ewn.co.za/2020/06/15/minister-zulu-admits-she-never-expected- COVID-19-s-crippling-impact-on-poor

[121] https://www.gov.za/speeches/president-cyril-ramaphosa-additional-coronavirus- COVID-19-economic-and-social-relief

[122] See https://news.un.org/en story/2020/03/1059752?fbclid=IwAR34BmzymcHIu6hqxJbjeeemP45niiVqECFdMQERC5pWwj4qGnOKEioacVQ. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Gutierrez states: "Global solidarity is not only a moral imperative, it is in everyone's interests; we are only as strong as the weakest health system"

- Greater understanding of the requirements of nature, and the need to live in harmony with nature.[123]

- Less consumption as we turn to focus on the simpler things or the things that the pandemic has taught us matter most.[124]

- Entering the phase of reconstruction and recovery, how can these promises be kept if the focus of recovery is only on getting business activity out of the slump and back on the path they were on.[125]

The government has launched measures that it believes will help SA bounce back, for example programmes to absorb youth, to upgrade the ports and other infrastructure and to encourage local buying. However, these "recovery" ideas are deficient in relation to core demands that have been raised e.g. access to data, public concerns about escalation of electricity costs, demands for the continuation of the top-up grants, and calls for a decisive movement towards a BIG.

Millions of people continue to build on small victories where in SA and the world, political leaders made dramatic shifts away from old orthodoxies, for example when they accepted notions of a social security system, when they called for solidarity between nations, when they acknowledged the role of street vendors in the food system, when they expressed disgust that millions live in squalid conditions, when they acknowledged that true food security entails assisting small producers find channels to the markets.

Frankly, millions of people are inspired by ideas of a better world. Prior to the pandemic, we seemed to be stuck in a straight-jacket, an unchangeable pathway in a world defined by rising inequality, stubborn challenges of poverty and inequality, a shift to conservative ideas in which people retreated into laagers and by an apparent lack of solutions for conflict zones. In South Africa, the unfinished business continued, with millions of people unable to enjoy the rights enshrined in its highly-lauded Constitution.

But with COVID-19, visionaries felt reignited, wondering if this was the moment to assert again the call to reimagine society. From here and across the world, these were some of the comments we heard:

- *But it does feel as if the world's reset button has been pushed, as if we are defragging society's hard drive. Once we boot up again, we might find ourselves in a better place* – **Author, Tobias Jones**.[126]

- *[The pandemic] ... is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers, and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.* – **Author, Arundhati Roy**.[127]

- ' COVID-19 has been likened to an X-ray, revealing fractures in the fragile skeleton of the societies we have built. It is exposing fallacies and falsehoods everywhere: the lie that free markets can deliver healthcare for all; the fiction that unpaid care work is not work; the delusion that we live in a post-racist world... Let's face facts. The global political and economic systems are not delivering on critical global public goods: public health, climate action, sustainable development, peace. To close these gaps, and to make the New Social Contract possible, we need a Global New Deal: a redistribution of power, wealth and opportunities.' – **United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres**.[128]

- COVID-19 crisis offers South Africans opportunities to tackle the unfinished agenda of transforming our society into a more equitable, resilient and prosperous democracy that promotes the wellbeing of all people and our planet. ... We need to re-imagine and rebuild governance systems from the local, provincial and national levels and to strengthen critical citizenship to ensure that we, the people, relentlessly demand accountability in a responsible manner. – **Political leader and academic, Mamphela Ramphele**.[129]

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[123] The UN warns against responses that are ad hoc, underfunded and without a view to long term goals. It states that it is "committed to facilitating a global response that ... turns this moment in history into an inflection point for humanity to overcome hardship and transform together toward a more sustainable future." It sets out three strategic priorities to be foregrounded during recovery, namely maintaining progress made towards eliminating basic deprivations, accelerating the universal provision of quality essential services and reversing the degradation of nature. See: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-78-achieving-the-sdgs-through-the- COVID-19-response-and-recovery/

[124] The Climate Justice Charter formulated by SA environment organisations including COPAC and the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign raises the issue of simple living. It adds: "Together with simple living, we can live with minimal resource and carbon footprints," See https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Final-Climate-Justice-Charter_EN_August2020.pdf

[125] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mk0o5GULfc8&feature=youtu.be&t=785&fbclid=IwAR0JAnprQGNuwKT-dhQe9XCetx2QyxM_rw4FSBr4stQ76_Z-3q5G_NHkBe0

[126] See https://primo-europe.eu/three-weeks-of-lockdown-in-italy-has-given-us-vital-perspective-and-small-comforts/

[127] See https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca

[128] See https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/mandela-lecture- COVID-19-has-exposed-the-fractures-in-our-societies-guterres-says-51162137

[129] See https://businesstech.co.za/news/business-opinion/440385/we-need-to-move-away-from-gdp-as-a-measure-of-progress-dr-mamphela-ramphele/

- If white people can stop acting as if they are individually and personally being attacked, and understand the shared nature of both unhappiness and anger, there is real potential for some (much delayed) healing… As the global economy tanks, whites with retirement policies and shares and businesses are being hit in the pocket… Society and the economy, they are told, are never going back to normal – they have to reset in different, as yet unknown ways. Can they?' – **Academic and Former anti-apartheid activist, David Everatt**.[130]

- In these challenging, difficult times, we are discovering a wisdom that we needed all along, and that wisdom is that we are all connected. We are not separate. We used to think that we caught diseases as individuals: "I'm sick; you're not." But now we realize, no, we catch diseases as individuals who are part of families, and families who are part of cities, and cities that are part of states and nations. We realize now that our whole species can become infected, and that our whole globe can be changed because of our interconnectedness. – **Brian McClaren, Centre for Action and Contemplation**.[131]

Will we be able to imagine COVID-19 as a pivotal moment in history? All indications are that we are not doing a complete reset of how we think about society and how it is organized. For one, there is urgency to restore rather than transform; government seems focused on "saving livelihoods," assisting business sectors in processes of re-opening and getting the economic recovery going, where recovery means dealing with the challenge that "it will take a number of years to recover to even the not-so-great position we occupied before the pandemic."[132] This pushes ideas of "reimagining society," – relaunching society in a manner that alters existing patterns so as to fundamentally address society's economic, ecological and the accountability crises – and pausing to "reboot" to the back burner. Ideas of a national convention or a congress of the people or a new Codesa-type gathering to discuss what a new SA should be like, for example, is the furthest from government's mind.

For their part, participants from the social sector canvassed through the KT Community Resilience Study are strongly advancing a range of measures which have great potential for fundamentally shifting the boundaries. They are calling for a massive stimulus which will allow not just stimulating the economy, but also rapidly phasing in a new energy regime and a transformed economy in a process that will entail the re-skilling of workers for a new world. Some are calling for acceptance of a society that gives up on the search for old-style jobs but acknowledges other forms of work. They propose a greater reliance on community-based and small-scale farmer production. Even though there are no blueprints at this stage but, given that climate change demands immediately commencement of such shifts, they demand that barriers be immediately removed. As an enabler for the broad change, some of the more vocal networks are calling for (a) transitioning from the current grant system to a universal income grant (b) access to data and connectivity in way that roll back the digital divide which would allow individuals and households to empower themselves through using the Internet and other information technology. Many of these ideas have not yet gelled into a clear call – a clear and widely supported definition of what the reimagined society would look like; nor has enough been done to hold deep discussions and build wider support in the social sector. However, these ideas and propositions that envisage an alternative to "same-old, same-old", have traction and meaning on the basis that old models have not stopped the persistence or deepening of society's fault lines.

The social change ideas articulated during the crisis period, are wide ranging. In some instances, they have been not been wide-ranging enough. For example, the mobilization around the climate justice charter does not include substantive recommendation on themes such as education and health. Some of the networks have shown strength in mobilizing, but this has often remained with like-minded CSOs, ones who knew of and engaged with each other for a considerable time. They have not, under conditions of the crisis and in the face of wider national concern about the fault lines, been able to significantly expand their base. Key social sector networks have not been able to catalyse a broad front to amplify the call for a new social contract between citizens and government and, for example, for a radical shift in timelines for reaching formally stated goals on poverty eradication, reduction of inequality, environmental justice, land transformation and ending systemic inequity in key focus areas (education, health, and digital divide.)

[130] See https://theconversation.com/lockdown-is-riling-black-and-white-south-africans-could-this-be-a-reset-moment-138044
[131] See https://cac.org/themes/wisdom-in-times-of-crisis/
[132] See https://www.cyrilramaphosafoundation.org/impact-through-partnership-webinar-dr-tshepo-motsepe-keynote-address/

7. PART SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Survey, the various references and UN advice on recovering from COVID-19 and pushing ahead with achieving sustainable development goals, we put forward the following recommendations:

General context

Political	• Ensure that all plans for reconstruction and recovery are intertwined with the Preamble of the Constitution, in particular this clause: "To heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights."
	
	• Recognize that governance is characterized by interdependence, policy networks and accountability relationships between different sectors and; recommitting to strengthening governance (in the sense of accountability between social sectors) as a central pillar in building a resilient, just and prosperous society for all.
	
	• With a view towards a revitalized compact with sectoral partners (labour, social, and business), government should establish a commission to transform the National Economic Development and Labour Council, examining aspects such as lack of leverage, constituency gaps e.g. and questions about is its relevance and effectiveness as a social dialogue forum.
	
	• Recognizing the immense positive involvement of social sector organizations in addressing food security issues and boosting community resilience, greater official acknowledgement and affirmation of the social sector and civil society organisations within that as well as:
	
	   - Heeding the call from civil society organization (CSOs) that during national emergencies and when designing critical programmes impacting communities, government departments communicate, consult and listen to such organizations; and, inversely, open space for meaningful and timely engagement with communities or CSOs engaged in active citizenship around grievances or deeply felt advocacy issues.
	
	   - Greater empowerment for participation and voice for the social sector in forums and engagement spaces where government engages with its social partners.
	
	   - Greater allocation of funds to NPOs – directly for NPOs who are engaged in sectors relevant to specific government departments as well as via agencies such as the National Lotteries and the National Development Agency.
	
	   - More determined implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Clause 2 of the NPO Act[133] which states: Within the limits prescribed by law, every organ of state must determine and co-ordinate the implementation of its policies and measures in a manner designed to promote, support and enhance the capacity of non-profit organisations to perform their functions.
	
	   - More consistent acknowledgement within the executive and in the legislature of the approach articulated by President Cyril Ramaphosa when he stated in the June 2019 State of the Nation address that: "Civil society needs to continue to play its role in holding government to account but must also join us in practical actions to attain our common goals".

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[133] https://www.gov.za/documents/nonprofit-organisations-act

Economic	• Take measures to expand rather than restrict the fiscal space through a stimulus injection appropriate to the scale of the crisis, and, in the words of the UN, to ensure that this feeds into immediate consumption and immediate project implementation so as to stimulate the economy. • In the short-term, income and employment protection must be accompanied by facilitating a safe return, with proper observance of health protocols in all sectors. • In the longer term, as the country continues to address the call for access to quality services for all, generate stable jobs in healthcare, education and community services and community-based food provision. • Alongside the stimulation of key industrial and service sectors in the formal economy, provision of support for livelihood activities and community-based production and extensive provision of support, resourcing, and enablement for small producers. • Give priority attention to green sectors as an avenue for employment, including scaled-up development of skills as the society makes the transition.
Social	• Maintain the sense of urgency in addressing hunger; keep a focus on the needs of those least able to cope and those at immediate risk of poverty, hunger, or disease, and particularly the needs of children. • Recognize that even low-income countries must tackle the establishment of robust universal healthcare and social protection systems as immediate goals, building on the emergency measures taken during the COVID-19 crisis to achieve them. • Strengthen the drive towards guaranteed universal access to quality healthcare, education and basic income security; as well as to water, sanitation, clean energy and the Internet must therefore become an integral part of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. • Scale up resourcing for measures to deal with Violence Against Women, including for court services and litigation work, for shelters, towards provincial-based victim support programmes and for psycho-social services to victims of VAW.
Environmental	• Given the ravages of climate change and the dangers to resilience and recognizing the climate change crisis, use the present to urgently scale up action to reverse the degradation of nature. • Adopt the Climate Justice Charter as a beacon and guide for urgent actions to address the crises of climate change and loss of biodiversity. • Working with trade unions, civil society organisations and committed role players in the private sector, finalize, fund and implements plans for a just transition from dependency on fossil fuels.

Technological	• Urgently remove barriers to increased quality broadband services, implement efficient spectrum use services.
	• Expand our high-tech industry by ensuring that the legal and regulatory framework promotes innovation, scaling up skills development for young people in new technologies, and reducing data costs.
	• Make the internet a central part of strategies to recover from COVID-19, taking care to ensure the barriers to access faced by communities and marginalized socio-economic groups are overcome or minimized.
	• Roll out clear strategies for wider quality internet access (and relevant communication services such as WhatsApp) for learners and students, for small producers, as a tool to fight gender-based violence and for monitoring of and feedback on implementation of development programmes by citizens.

Civil Society Context

Civil Society	• CSO organizations formulate a national development forum, to be funded by government, in which all civil society organizations (coupled with relevant academic institutes involved in anti-poverty research) formulate a vision and recommendations to government. Government departments such DSD and CoGTA should partake in sections of such a conference.
	• A "Think" conference on the "way forward" which focuses on the intersection between technology, economy, green issues and the preamble of the constitution be arranged by the Presidency, operating in conjunction with one of the Chapter 9 institutions or any of the 'legacy' institutions (Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, Constitution Hill, Nelson Mandela Foundation, Kagiso Trust). Although speakers should be carefully curated, attendance at such a conference should be open for all provided that attendance costs (registration fees, etc) for NPOs is be subsidized.[134]
	• Donors should coordinate a joint workshop or conference to examine and consider broad strategies with a focus on topics such as the following: (a) the unevenness of funding and to develop broad strategies for reducing such unevenness; (b) approaches used in the pandemic to disseminate funding (e.g. issues such as flexibility trust) and whether and how such approaches could be incorporated into longer-term changes in approaches to grant making, and (c) against a backdrop of past withdrawal of funding for networks, ways in which donors might support CSOs desire for more coordination to amplify their voice
	• More established and bigger NPOs should consider, and commit to, ways in which they could contribute to assist smaller NPOs with capacity building and training, especially with a focus on South Africa's four poorest provinces.
	• CSOs should collectively reflect insights gained and lessons learnt from their work and intervention in enhancing community resilience from the COVID-19; they should explore which strategies and approaches used should be mainstreamed into regular CSO practices.

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[134] The Uganda National NGO Forum has written to their national government to indicate their actions for the post- COVID-19 Development Challenge and indicated the following actions: (i) We shall conduct studies now to determine the likely economic and social changes that the country will face and make specific recommendation on way forward (ii). We shall convene experts and generate think-pieces and policy options on the impact and future actions that Uganda will be undertaking in the context of a post- COVID-19 society. These all form part of an impulse to generate new ideas regarding the way forward for society. See ttps://gcap.global/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Civil-Society-Contributions-to-the-Uganda- COVID-19-Response.pdf

	• CSOs and CSO networks should reflect on the online engagements and consultations held during the period of lockdown, including the nature of such engagements, the levels of participation and the extent of shared learning that has taken place within the social sector; they should further develop strategies for more effective critical engagement, popular education and campaign-related consultative processes going forward.

6. CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on households, communities, enterprises, and civil society organizations – and has harshly exposed South Africa's fault lines such as poverty, inequality, gender-based violence and economic exclusion. At the same time, it has brought about resilience and remarkable instance of cohesion and again foregrounded the importance of government and social partners working together, guided by needs for transformation, redress, and inclusive national prosperity. This paper has examined the variety of responses from different sectors, as well as the positions of different sectors about how to move forward. It has taken guidelines from the United Nations which calls on countries to use the crisis to help turn the tide on inequality which is providing leadership on sustaining the development agenda under the slogans "Build Back Better" and "Recovering Better." Centring social compacting and joint action, President Cyril Ramaphosa in mid-October 2020 launched the national recovery plan, with a primary focus on the economy. The plan emphasizes reigniting the economy as well as protecting and generating employment, albeit while the country faces immediate constraints, continuing food security issues at community and household levels and tensions between labour and the Minister of Finance on how to move forward. This is a moment to support the push for protecting and regenerating jobs. It is a moment to prioritize alternative strategies, especially given that past strategies have not yielded planned results and have fallen far short of economic growth and employment creation targets. It is also a moment, this paper argues, to fundamentally fully embrace possibilities for more egalitarian and inclusive social arrangements, and to build on resilience to accelerate movement to achieving goals such as overcoming poverty, eradication of inequality and achieving social justice.

CASE STUDY: SEKHUKHUNE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE SURVEY

Sekhukhune, Limpopo Province

COVID-19
COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE
INITIATIVE

KAGISO TRUST | Institutional Capacity Building

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Kagiso Trust supported the conducting of a survey to understand community responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Sekhukhune district municipality in the province of Limpopo. This was with a view to drawing upon the lessons learnt and the insights gained from the survey. The findings of the case study could serve to inform the strengthening and shaping of future community-based responses and interventions.

The case study derives from on an online survey link which was circulated within the district municipality of Sekhukhune and also comprised 20 telephonic and face to face interviews.

The online survey was distributed to more than 200 respondents. A total of 80 surveys was completed by individual community members, Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community-based Organisations (CBOs).

2. DEMOGRAPHICS

Sekhukhune district municipality is comprised of four local municipalities namely: Fetakgomo Tubatse, Makhuduthamaga, Ephraim Mogale and Elias Motsoaledi.

The population of the Sekhukhune district municipality has been growing at an average of 1,1% per annum from 1996 to 2016. According to Statistics South Africa (STATSSA) 2016 Survey, the population of the district was 1 169 762 persons.

Local municipality	Number of villages	Villages in %
Fetakgomo Tubatse	335	44%
Makhuduthamaga	192	25%
Elias Motsoaledi	159	21%
Ephraim Mogale	78	10%

3. SERVICE DELIVERY

The water crisis is a key issue which was flagged by community members of Sekhukhune during a public consultation held in April 2019. Water constituted 47% of the total service delivery needs which were raised. This was followed by sanitation at 14%, whilst roads and transport ranked third at 13%. (SDM IDP 2019/2020)[1].

Sekhukhune district municipality

Sekhukhune district municipality is a Water Services Authority (WSA) and Water Services Provider (WSP) for local municipalities. Water being one of the most basic needs of local communities suggests that the Sekhukhune district municipality's response to addressing the backlog in water supply is inadequate. Water shortage problems are rooted in the lack of municipal water supply, intermittent water supply, dried-up boreholes, defective water pumping machines, unskilled and/ or insufficient numbers of pump operators and the inconsistent dispatching of water tankers to water-scarce villages. This all points to a lack of public sector capacity, given the number of years in which the Sekhukhune district municipality has been mandated to deliver this service.

Household storage of river water

Fetakgomo Tubatse local municipality

In this case study, special attention is drawn to the water crisis in Sekutlong Village, Moroke at Fetakgomo Tubatse municipality, where most villages are located.

In April 2020, the State President announced that R20

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[1] The IDP community needs analysis for 2019/2020

billion would be allocated to municipalities as part of COVID-19 relief measures to alleviate water shortages and to improve the supply of clean drinking water to communities. However, Sekutlong residents say they have not seen any changes despite the President's announcement.

The village of Sekutlong is in close proximity to the platinum mines of Hackney and Twickenham which are owned by Anglo American. Members of the community do not know whether to fear the Corona Virus or Cholera as nearby water sources are contaminated by industry.

Residents are forced to make use of mine-contaminated water because the municipal taps which were fitted on their properties have not yielded water since their installation more than two years ago. Instead, municipal water tankers were dispatched to deliver water, which is once a month, at the most

The chronic water shortage forces families to fork out R300 of their hard-earned income to fill tanks of 2500 litres which is insufficient for their daily household needs. Entrepreneurs have capitalized on this gap such that the private sale of water has become a lucrative business, further impoverishing the people.

Repeated appeals to the local municipality of Fetakgomo Tubatse to address the water shortage, especially during lockdown, have been met with acknowledgements of the problem and with promises to alleviate the plight of the residents, but the issue remains unresolved.

Municipal workers have informally told community activists that the re-opening of schools has meant a reprioritization of water delivery which further compounds the ability to deliver water to households.

To aggravate matters, the local municipality of Fetakgomo Tubatse lost revenue due to an irregular investment of municipal funds (R245 million) in the VBS Mutual Bank. The bank has since been placed under liquidation. Seven municipal mayors were discharged of their duties as a result. The loss of revenue directly affects the capacity to render municipal services.

4. HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL

Kagiso Trust supported the conducting of a survey to understand community responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Sekhukhune district municipality in the province of Limpopo. This was with a view to drawing upon the lessons learnt and the insights gained from the survey. The findings of the case study could serve to inform the strengthening and shaping of future community-based responses and interventions.

The case study derives from on an online survey link which was circulated within the district municipality of Sekhukhune and also comprised 20 telephonic and face to face interviews.

A villager, having collected a food parcel

The online survey was distributed to more than 200 respondents. A total of 80 surveys was completed by individual community members, Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community-based Organisations (CBOs).

5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Unemployment

The Sekhukhune district municipality, like the rest of the country, experienced a decline in employment. Joblessness is on the increase, particularly amongst the economically active population of 18 years and older. The rate of unemployment has fuelled the fast-paced growth in the informal sector in the district.

Livelihoods

Rural communities are learning, through the lockdown, to develop resilience in the face of adversity. Given the threat of access to food, the impetus to grow their own food, make use of traditional herbs as a form of medicine, brew their own beer, cultivate their own tobacco and rear their own animals (chickens, goats, sheep, cattle) are all encouraged as more sustainable solutions, which will also lessen their dependence upon the state for welfare. This was borne out by a community activist who said, "*Our communities have all the traditional knowledge, skills, cultural capabilities and resources to survive without assistance from anybody for money*".

6. CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY

Poor service delivery from the district and local municipalities heightens the vulnerability of communities to COVID-19 in that access to water and sanitation is a key preventative measure against COVID-19.

A noticeable community change during lockdown was the suspension of cultural, traditional events and practices as people living in the Sekhukhune district adhered to and complied with the government regulations under the Disaster Management Act.

While statistics on infection have been very low in the district, more than half of the first COVID-19 cases emanated from the mining industry and also from people outside the district and the province travelling to Sekhukhune. Confirmed COVID-19 cases from the mining industry were a source of tension between members of the community and mineworkers, partly due to pre-existing reservations which are held by the communities about the impact of mining pollution on the environment.

As at September 2020, 29 deaths were reported in the district. Whilst it is minimal in comparison to the national mortality, it is one of the factors contributing to the positive responses to the campaign to prevent COVID-19 infection.

The ban on the sale of tobacco and alcohol products and the closure of liquor outlets led community members to resort to producing and consuming home-brewed alcohol and smoking locally grown cannabis (dagga). The demand drove illegal sales up, with some households experiencing a business boom.

7. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Religious and faith-based organizations

The prohibition of public gatherings impacted on the pastoral role played by religious institutions and the support services of faith-based organizations. Instead, local government officials assumed responsibility for monitoring compliance by the private and public sectors and they managed the procurement and distribution of food parcels, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) and related supplies. State leadership (mayors, MECs, the premier and executive members of the provincial legislature) took prominence.

Community-based organizations

Community home-based carers and community-based organizations were co-opted to assist clinics in the screening of community members for COVID-19 symptoms and to assist with the distribution of food parcels and PPE. State funding was directed to support the work of some NPOs and CBOs.

Given the allegations of corrupt practices by some ward councillors, during food parcel and PPE distribution, CBOs were identified by community leaders to be more trustworthy and were subsequently engaged to help with supply distribution.

Volunteers distributing food parcels during COVID-19 lockdown to indigent households in the communities of Sekhukhune

Non-profit organizations

Kagiso Trust supported and facilitated the provision of PPE to approximately 15 000 learners, through the supply of reusable face masks, sanitizers and awareness-raising material in Sekhukhune East's district of education.

The private sector

With the incremental opening of schools, stakeholders in the private and mining sector contributed PPE supplies – for example, Anglo American augmented government's support in the Moroke circuit of education.

8. CONFLICT/COHESION

Contrary to reports of an increase in gender-based violence at a national level (exacerbated by the lockdown), a rise in violence in the home was not observed in Sekhukhune communities.

In rural communities, an ethic of care, support and inter-dependence is more evident than in urban areas, and so an increase in the incidence of domestic violence was not noted.

Social cohesion improved as awareness on morbidity and mortality attributed to COVID-19 grew. Members of the communities engaged in discussion and information exchange about the messaging they had received from social platforms and the mainstream media. Individual and community awareness peaked on prevention measures such as the wearing of masks, physical distancing and sanitation.

9. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary sources of information include television, radio and social media (WhatsApp and Facebook). During the pandemic people subscribed to news. It was also evident that they tuned into Presidential addresses and state media releases on the measures taken by government to contain the spread of infection. A testament to this is that common phrases used by the State President were trending, such as "*My fellow South Africans" or "God bless South Africa and its people*".

10. CONCLUSION

The Community Resilience Survey provided an opportunity to document the views of respondents regarding the challenges faced with service delivery, corruption and the impact of local industries on the environment. Undoubtedly the lack of access to safe, drinking water in village areas carries the potential to exacerbate people's vulnerability, especially their health.

The contamination of scarce water sources is affecting social cohesion. People residing in villages are dependent upon nearby water sources and negative attitudes are being harboured against people employed in the mining industry.

Social cohesion was also affected by information that COVID-19 infections were being recorded in the mining industry. The mines are seen as a source/risk of infection spread.

The cessation of trade during lockdown impacted negatively on their livelihoods especially as people are more dependent on informal trade for survival, in a context of limited opportunities in the formal employment sector.

The further exploitation of the poor by those who have identified the gaps in goods and services provision was an expressed concern.

In spite of this context, resilience emerged as community members want to utilize their own resources (historical knowledge, skills, access to land) towards more independent, sustainable ways of living. This would require an investment into agricultural and animal farming. The restrictive lockdown also gave rise to a spirit of entrepreneurship to meet the demand for food, water, tobacco and alcohol.

The preference for CBOs to take over the distribution of food parcels (due to corrupt practices by local councillors) was a confidence booster and a viable alternative to the traditional reliance on state players for welfare and development. The targeted contributions by NPOs and industry boded well for improved community cohesion.

Social media platforms proved to be a good source of information dissemination and awareness-raising and should be leveraged in future.

RESPONSE TO THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MAKANA

COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

KAGISO TRUST | Institutional Capacity Building

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides information on the location and demographics of the Makana local municipality and its engagement with a range of stakeholders such as the local business community, academic institutions, community-based organisations and other key players which joined together to develop an organized response to manage the impact of COVID-19 in Makana (also referred to in this report as Makhanda). The case study work was undertaken as part of Kagiso Trust COVID-19 Community Resilience Project. It was intended to generate more in-depth information about the ways in which role players in that locality responded to the pandemic and to draw any lessons about resilience

2. THE MAKANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The Makana local municipality is located in the Eastern Cape Province on the south eastern seaboard of South Africa and is in the western part of the Eastern Cape Province. The Makana local municipality falls under the Sarah Baartman district municipality and consists of 14 wards of which three are in the rural areas of the municipality.

With the cities of Port Elizabeth, 120 kilometres to the west and East London, 180 kilometres to the east, Makana local municipality is strategically situated between two of the province's largest industrial centres. Both coastal cities are served by well-equipped container ports and have major airports linking them to Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.

Apart from its natural, historical and cultural attractions, Makana is home to some of South Africa's premier secondary and tertiary educational institutions. These are situated around the area and include famous establishments such as Rhodes University, Kingswood College, Diocesan School for Girls, St Andrews College, Victoria Girls High School and Graeme College. Rhodes University, which was founded in 1904, was an offshoot of St Andrews College. The campus is the most attractive in South Africa and has a very sound academic reputation. It is also well known for its important research projects in many different fields.

Makhanda, formerly known as Grahamstown, together with the nearby towns of Alicedale, Riebeeck East and the quaint villages of Fort Brown, Salem, Seven Fountains and Sidbury make up the Makana local municipality in the Eastern Cape.

Makhanda is the home of the National Arts Festival and is the seat of Rhodes University and other prominent and internationally acclaimed primary and high schools

3. DEMOGRAPHICS

With a population of 86 600 people, the Makana local municipality housed 0.2% of South Africa's total population in 2016. Between 2006 and 2016 the population growth averaged 1.23% per annum, which is slightly lower than the growth rate of South Africa as a whole (1.54%). Compared to the district municipality of Sarah Baartman's average annual growth rate (1.65%), the growth rate in Makana's population at 1.23% was slightly lower.

In 2016, there was a total number of 9 100 people unemployed in Makana, which is an increase of 826 from 8 270 in 2006.

4. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Seven clusters were created and remain functional in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The clusters are Governance, Communication, Local Economic Development, Education, Health, Food Security and Security.

A draft constitution of the Makhanda Circle of Unity (MCU) was adopted by these clusters, whose efforts are focused on the COVID-19 crisis.

GOVERNANCE

The governance cluster is chaired by Prof. Owen Skae and Rev. Vicentia Kgabe. Under the Makana Circle of Unity and with the support of the Grahamstown Business Forum and Rhodes University, the appointment of a suitably qualified MCU programme manager is under way to serve the Makana Circle of Unity over a 3-year dedicated contract period.

COMMUNICATION

The communication cluster is a critical component of the Municipal Joint Operation Committee (JOC), advising and assisting the municipality with their local communication efforts. The MCU website and other local media outlets are used to report on the work of clusters and to raise awareness on COVID-19.

The communication cluster has been instrumental in the submission of an expression of interest (signed by both the municipality and the MCU) for the local Makana municipality to be admitted as a partner of the Open Government Partnership programme[1]. Makana's application, if accepted, is a first for South African municipalities.

Stakeholder cluster strenthening local governance for community-led development

Governance

Communication

Local Economic Development

Education

Health

Food Security

Security

Makhanda Circle of UNITY

MCU Cluster Output

1. Governance Cluster
- Support clusters and promoting MCU
- MCU constitution
- Annual
- Cluster integration
- Appointment of Program Director
- Strategic guidance – process, endorsement, consequence management, prioritize issues, advocacy

3. Health Cluster
The COVID-19 pandemic is not over, and the risks remain real for the vulnerable. The Health Cluster will support the vulnerable.

5. Education Cluster
- Protecting and growing the education economy – education prospectus
- Connectivity – access to the IOT and 4IR opportunity (reponse to C-19)
- IT shared services – LED
- Psycho-social support in the education sector
- Education Equality and alternative learning approaches

7. LED Cluster
- Special projevcts: Makana a place of choice
- Litter – (CWP/EPWP)
- Streets – (Potholes, lines, street names & car guards)
- Precinct Development Plan Makana East
- Agri projects
- Incubator/Entrepreneur

01   02   03   04   05   06   07
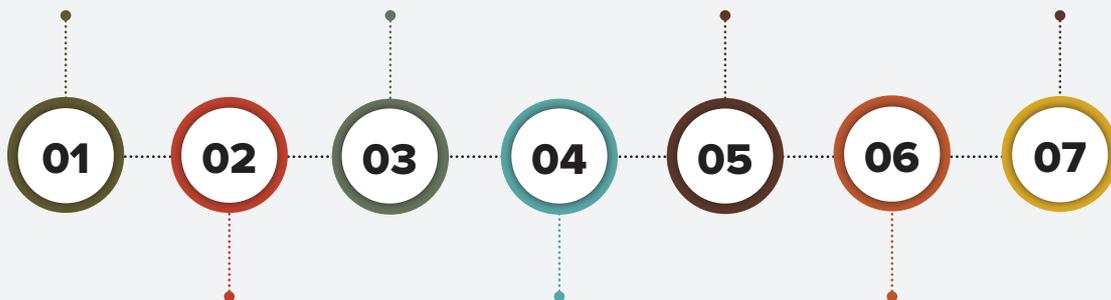
2. Food Security
- Sustainable food security – Community Kitchen support
- Food garden support and development

4. Security Cluster
Bylaws implementation, CPF coordination, crime prevention & community education

6. Communication Cluster
- MCU Communication
- Collaborate with Grocotts Mail
- Drive fundraising campaigns
- Promote Makana
- Assist the mulicipality with communication strategies
- Community engagement strategies

[1] The Open Government Partnership is an international organization focusing on community-centric governance and is uniquely made up of governmental and civil society leadership. https://www.opengovpartnership.org/

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED)

The Local Economic Development cluster (as per the LED strategy) is focusing on developing work opportunities in Makana East. It works to ensure that the conditions in the Makhanda Central Business District (CBD) are conducive to post COVID-19 business recovery, which requires collaboration with the municipality.

The Makana East Precinct Development Plan's co-funding has been approved by Kagiso Trust's executive committee. This plan will decentralize the Makana CBD economy by creating a business development hub in Makana East. This initiative was identified by the municipality. A priority of the LED cluster is to create work opportunities in response to the growing poverty in the region. The business incubation feasibility project planning with Rhodes University Tec Transfer, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and Centre for Local Economic Development has started.

The LED cluster also collaborates with the Food Security cluster to establish commercially viable food gardens to identify and to formalize local take-off agreements.

EDUCATION

The education cluster is driving several key initiatives:

- Psycho-social support, initially for educators and learners
- Zero rated education sites to facilitate online learning
- IT support for school's initiative is a shared service to drive costs down through the development of interns and job creation
- Education Prospectus, a Kagiso Trust funded initiative, to raise funds for regional education initiatives

However, the education fraternity is still very focused on how to move forward under COVID-19 regulations.

HEALTH

A new health cluster had to be established due to the psycho-social impact of COVID-19 on the communities and specifically in the education sector. The health cluster will assist the municipality and the Department of Health in dealing with local health-related issues.

A current focus is the training of frontline voluntary social workers to assist frontline health workers, teachers and learners cope with the anxiety and mental health associated COVID-19. The cluster is working closely with Rhodes University and the education cluster in supporting local Early Childhood Development (ECD)centres to be 'COVID - 19 compliant' when reopening, which includes communication to schools and parents.

FOOD SECURITY

The food security cluster supports 28 community kitchens and continues to distribute food parcels to vulnerable communities from various donors like The Kholisi Foundation.

The food security cluster is in the process of formalizing its arrangements, to better deal with local food security in a strategic and sustainable manner. The focus is on the development of food gardens for self-consumption and to supply community kitchens and school feeding schemes on a commercial basis, to ensure that the opportunity provides both food security and alleviates poverty.

The relationship with SPAR and Southern Africa Food Lab is under discussion and is also an opportunity to leverage off Kagiso Enterprises Rural Private Equity Fund's relationship with the SPAR Group and to promote Kagiso Trust's pillar integration.

Member of the community receiving a food parcel

Food parcels, to last for a week, were packed and were being distributed weekly

Food distribution centre

5. HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL

The Makhanda Circle of Unity Food Group packed and distributed grocery parcels for the vulnerable people of Makhanda. Since 11 April, the Food Group has distributed 5 138 weekly grocery parcels and a further 2 200 boxes of groceries pre-packed by donors (HCI and Corona Care). In total 7 338 weekly parcels have been distributed.

A larger food security cluster has been formed under the umbrella of the Makhanda Circle of Unity (with Tim Bull as the interim head). It has been mandated to look into food security in Makhanda as a broader issue and to co-ordinate the various food initiatives.

Additional community kitchens are being established in many parts of Makhanda, with 24 distribution points to date. School feeding schemes will hopefully resume for grades 7 and 12 as a start. With the rollout of government grocery parcels in the near future, the gap in food availability which we helped fill in April and May should be narrowed by these and other initiatives in June and July.

Funds in the Centre for Social Development (CSD) account were generously donated by the citizens and businesses of Makhanda, also from many parts of South Africa and overseas. The remaining funds will be used to fund a cell phone food voucher scheme through Checkers which will be administered by the Makhanda Circle of Unity Food Group. The relaxation of lockdown measures means that people can move around more easily and vouchers enable people to buy food with more dignity and choice as opposed to receiving a pre-selected grocery pack.

Children and adults queued for cooked meals. Children were hard-hit especially as they were dependent upon the nutritional programme at schools and when schools were shut, it was very difficult for them to receive something to eat

6. SUPPORT FROM ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Support was received from:

- African Musical Instruments
- Ambuvent Pty Ltd
- Aquatic Ecosystem Services
- Assurity Consultants
- Big Canary Pty Ltd
- Business Sense
- Cathedral of St Michael & St George – Anglican church
- College of the Transfiguration
- Community members
- Corona Care
- Ethiopian local Spaza owners
- GTN Judges

- Kagiso Trust
- Karara
- Makana Brick
- Makana Tourism
- Marry Bird
- NG Kerk Albany
- NISC
- Rotary Grahamstown
- Rotary UK
- St Bartholomew's Church
- The HCI Foundation
- The Siya Kolisi Foundation

7. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Key stakeholders convened to establish a Joint Operations Committee to strengthen the local response to COVID-19.

- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Social Development
- Department of Water and Sanitation
- Kagiso Trust
- Makana Local Municipality
- Non-Governmental Organisations
- Rhodes University
- South African National Defence Force
- South African Police Service

COVID-19 Response: Joint Operation Committee

8. CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the municipality together with different government sectors established a Joint Operations Committee that is chaired by the executive mayor.

The committee is further supported by a team made up of health practitioners, members of the National Defence Force, the South African Police Service, Rhodes University and the Sarah Baartman Disaster Management team. This team is based at the office of the District Department of Health and their meeting reports are submitted by the mayor to the District Municipality Joint Operations Committee.

Meetings of the JOC are convened to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic within the Makana area of jurisdiction and to report on progress to various government platforms and structures. Each department is required to give reports and weekly plans. The reports for the first week of lockdown were as follows:

The Department of Health

• The Department of Health receives numerous directives on a daily basis about COVID-19.

• Health promotion teams are currently conducting education and awareness in Hooggenoeg, Sun City and Joza.

• A tracing team has been established which is comprised of health care workers and health professionals to trace all suspected cases.

• Suspected cases will be confirmed once all information is verified.

• During grants payment week, the department would conduct awareness campaigns at all pay points in Makana.

Rhodes University

• All students have been released and the University is under lockdown.

• Only Health, Security and IT are working during this period.

• A total of 38 postgraduate students are continuing with their research programmes.

• Rhodes Pharmacy Department is manufacturing hand sanitizers.

• A total of 50 litres of hand sanitizer was donated by Rhodes Pharmacy to the Department of Health.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

• No major incidents were reported. In serious cases, Kirkwood EMS station has a specialised ambulance to assist with transportation.

The Makana Municipality

• Water and sanitation section staff is on duty.

• Electricity section staff is on standby for cases of emergency.

• Refuse removals are working for a few hours each day. The cleansing team will start in the morning and go home once the collection round is completed. The normal daily removal collection schedule will be adhered to.

• Fire department is operating 24/7 during lockdown and the 24-hour customer care line is operational. In addition, the municipal manager and four of his directors' cell phone numbers were made available in case of emergency.

• Traffic law enforcement officers/traffic officers are working throughout to assist SAPS and SANDF in roadblocks and traffic control daily.

Community kitchens were established by one cluster and they were given water tanks to store water.

• The municipality will receive 90 Jojo tanks and two tankers from the Department of Water and Sanitation. 21 tankers have been received so far.

• Due to the water shortage, Alicedale and Riebeeck East are still being rationed water supply (two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening).

• Health inspectors have issued some notices in Spaza shops and provided updated funeral regulations to all funeral parlours in the Makana jurisdiction.

• Media through the office of the executive mayor developed summarized pamphlets on COVID-19 in English, IsiXhosa and Afrikaans for distribution to the communities. More is needed for education and awareness.

South African National Defence Force (SANDF)

• The army has been deployed in all areas in the Eastern Cape, including Makhanda.

• The base is experiencing water and electricity challenges and the municipality will attend to the problem.

• Screening of members of the SANDF will commence this week. All deployed members will be given a screening questionnaire to detect any possible COVID-19 suspected cases.

South African Police Service (SAPS)

• The police have had their hands full since lockdown began. The main challenge is that communities do not adhere to the lockdown regulations and children are roaming the streets. People claim to be going to the Spaza shops. A request to investigate the regulation was made to the meeting, to check if there is any regulation in place to manage Spaza shops.

• Traditional ceremonies were also a challenge: communities were continuing with these.

• Alicedale is understaffed with only two SAPS members available for the entire community.

• Six people in Makhanda had been arrested and fined in terms of the lockdown regulations.

SAPS undertaking permit checking

Sarah Baartman District Municipality (SBDM) Disaster Management

The Satellite Senior Disaster Officer is servicing both the JOC in Makana and Ndlambe local municipalities:

• Alicedale communities were visited by the disaster management team and the executive mayor is to conduct awareness raising on COVID-19.

• The challenge is the use of alcohol which results in people not adhering to lockdown regulations.

A shelter hosting 20 individuals who were supplied with mattresses, blankets and clothing

Settlers Hospital

• No major incidents reported except for an incident in which one person outside the hospital was taking a video regarding COVID-19.

• The Department of Health is in the process of sorting out an Isolation/Quarantine area in case the need for isolation arises.

9. CONFLICT, DISTRESS AND FINANCIAL IMPACT

Community/households conflict increased significantly as many people lost their jobs. Individuals who have been playing big roles in their homes by putting bread on the table are now jobless – there is no income for the house, which leads to family frustrations and to conflicts and bad habits.

It is very disturbing for one to lose income especially if they were the sole provider of the household/family. Breadwinners have to stay home and cannot support their dependents.

Annual Festivals cancelled due to COVID-19

Along with its beauty, diversity, nature and history, Makana is also one of the premier cultural centres in southern Africa. Throughout the year a series of events attract thousands of people from around South Africa and abroad. The local economy of Makana was negatively affected by the cancellation of events.

The SASOL SCIFEST

- The Sasol Festival of Science, Engineering and Technology is designed to make science accessible and in a fun way.

The National Arts Festival

- Every July the National Arts Festival transforms the tranquil city of Makhanda into a boisterous, bubbling platform for the performing and visual arts. Dancers, singers, musicians, actors, writers and poets and thousands of festival-goers converge to celebrate the arts.

The Standard Bank National Schools Festival

- Is an artistic celebration for grade twelve learners and their teachers, who come together for five days to participate, within a non-competitive and professionally supervised environment, in dynamic hands-on workshops, and to share in and enjoy a variety of challenging and thought-provoking lectures and shows, all presented by people who have the ability to motivate and inspire young people.

10. INFORMATION SOURCES

Information to communities is generated and distributed by the following platforms:

- GHR community radio station and all social media related

- Rhodes University radio station and all social media related

- Grocotts Mail and all social media related

- Department of Health loud hailing

- Makana Local Municipality and SAPS loud hailing

- Makana Circle of Unity communication cluster and related social media platforms

11. NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND COHESION

The Creative City concept is a bold idea, embracing a range of initiatives and projects which collectively help make Makhanda one of the most creative towns in the country. It pulls together a major alliance of institutions in Makhanda such as Festivals, Tourism Bodies, Art NGOs, Educational and Government entities, to harness their collective passion for creativity and for the benefit of the town.

Support for dealing with the impact of COVID-19 was funded by the GBS Mutual Bank and Kagiso Trust by means of scenario planning by the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) for the Makhanda Circle of Unity. Elements that would affect the post COVID-19 economic recovery period were identified during the Scenario Planning facilitated by GIBS and four scenarios were discussed so that the delegates reach agreement on what action key stakeholders should take, to best prepare for these scenarios.

Six factors that would shape the future of Makana were confirmed. Of these, the top two factors were political factors (Municipal Governance) and social factors (stakeholder collaboration – inclusive of the social-economic context).

12. CONCLUSION

This case study reflected upon the processes which were instituted and the interventions which were strengthened, in partnership with a variety of local stakeholders and with the support of state and non-state actors, to better respond and to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the community, in all its diversity, within the locality of Makana.

CASE STUDY: ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY RESILIENCE SURVEY

Alexandra, Gauteng Province

COVID-19
COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE
INITIATIVE

KAGISO TRUST | Institutional Capacity Building

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1. INTRODUCTION

Alexandra township is a crowded settlement adjoining Sandton. On the one hand, persons who live there and work in the city have lower transport costs. On the other hand, the residents face numerous challenges, including housing, sanitation, low-household incomes and the threat of disasters such as fire or flooding. Kagiso Trust engaged the South African Council of Churches to assist with more intensive work in the area in support of its Covid-19 Community Resilience Survey. Like many places, the Alex community was extremely hard-hit in the first 21 days of lockdown and beyond; the huge numbers of people who earned their money through informal trade and other informal activities suffered loss of income and faced other cuts in salary. Throughout the period, official relief remained patchy and sometimes inaccessible; at the same time organizations such as Community Action Network (CAN) and Rays of Hope mobilized to provide food parcels.

Although many Alex residents may have started off being positive to the government response (like most communities around South Africa), the general mood turned negative following the widely-publicized killing of Collins Khosa by police. The killing fuelled anger and triggered general community resistance to the lockdown, including non-compliance with the regulations. This mood also brought the focus back to the lack of service delivery in the township. Overall, members of this community struggled to survive through the pandemic, and as the lockdown is eased, community members and households will slowly have to rebuild their livelihoods and continue their struggle for improvement to the township's infrastructure. In terms of social organization, Alex has a fair share of organization, structures and leadership in the area; at the same time, anyone in Alex must content with political manoeuvring, fragmentation and instances of gatekeeping among role players. However, the potential remains for NGOs and CBOs to coordinate future activities to build resilience, address the many challenges and engage government on issues such as service delivery.

2. BACKGROUND

Township of Alexandra (Alex) was established in 1912 and is close to the centre of Johannesburg. It covers an area of over 800 hectares including the East Bank. Its infrastructure was originally designed for a population of approximately 70,000.

Current population estimates vary widely, at figures ranging from 180,000 to 750,000. The original stand size of 500-600 square metres is characterized by sizeable houses which were fairly well built. It is now common practice to find that between 3 – 6 additional separate rooms have been built on the original stands, each usually housing another family, who rent from the main home owner. The renting of these units provides a significant income to the main householder. They are termed 'backyard shacks', although many are constructed with brick/block and mortar, of reasonable quality.

Of the estimated 20 000 shacks in Alex, approximately 7 000 are located in 'backyards'.

The significant, unplanned population overloads the initial infrastructure. Challenges of low water pressure and blocked sewers which frequently overflow. Maintenance of the infrastructure is very difficult due to the congested nature of the backyard shack development. Access to properties for infrastructural maintenance is difficult, if not almost impossible.

In addition to the backyard shack development, since the repealing of the apartheid laws, which restricted the movement of black people, there has been a considerable population increase in Alexandra – people from within South Africa and from neighbouring countries converging to seek employment opportunities. This has resulted in overcrowding in the hostels and also in the informal settlements which are built on the banks of the Jukskei. The river and its three tributaries (natural streams) flow through Alex. There are an estimated 7 500 households living in high densification with poor services and in very poor environmental conditions. Over the past nine years thousands of shacks and one-room dwellings have sprung up along and next to the three tributaries of the Jukskei River.

3. ACCESS TO SERVICES

These areas are lined with tortuous, narrow access points with few communal water points. Rows of chemical toilets line the peripheries of the settlements.

Some have access to electricity supplies which have been illegally connected. Narrow (less than 1 metre wide) footpaths wind haphazardly through the shacks and provide the only access and water drainage. Occasional

storm drainage grates and standpipes are the only remnants of the original sewer infrastructure. Population density is likely to exceed 1 000 persons per hectare in these settlements.

The tributaries are substantially blocked and polluted. In places they have been piped and a number of concrete aprons and gullies have been constructed over them, into which the communal water points drain. The gullies are choked with garbage. Maintenance is difficult and capacity constrained by the built-upon drains. A current project is afoot in Alex is to renew the piping to assist with blockages and ease the constrained drains. Whilst refuse removal services are available, they are inconsistent and dumping is a main cause of the gullies chocking up with garbage.

Several government projects for the renewal of Alex have not succeeded and many residents have resigned themselves to the unchanging situation. The renewal project was estimated to take a period of seven years to its completion and this has not yet happened. They have come to accept their living conditions as a way of life.

Within these conditions, residents could not adhere to the COVID-19 regulations especially as it pertained to sanitation and social distancing. There is no space for privacy or for physical distancing.

4. LIVELIHOODS

The unemployment rate is estimated to be around 70% – this despite Alex being in close proximity to one of Africa's richest square miles, Sandton.

People lent money from the 'mashonisas' (loan sharks) to stave off hunger without knowing how they were to repay the loans.

Child support and old age grants were the only source of income for those who were receiving grants.

Some tavern owners operated illegally to make ends meet, as alcohol was banned during the first three months of lockdown. Some resorted to selling cigarettes (illegally) on street corners at exorbitant prices as tobacco products were banned and this made way for a rampant illicit tobacco market.

The R350.00 (per month COVID-19 relief, for three months) could not provide the expected relief. Many people could not access the grant as they struggled with the online application which required data for connectivity. The late payment of the relief money, for approved applications, placed more people in debt and they resorted to loan sharks. When the R350.00 COVID relief was eventually received, debt recovery by the loan sharks was prioritized.

5. ACCESS TO FOOD

Many people earn their living through the informal economy. With the halting of all trade, household incomes were strained. People's ability to put food on the table was reduced and sanitation was difficult.

The demand for food and other forms of support exceeded the supply. The normal daily household consumption of food increased as people stayed home. School going children who would receive a meal through the school feeding scheme were not fed as schools were closed. Many households were running out of food, resulting in panic, anxiety and duress.

Faith-based organizations which had previously prepared hot meals for the destitute could not do this, for example the Catholic Church which operates a warm food kitchen in Alex had to close its doors.

An organization, Rays of Hope, mobilized a few non-governmental organizations and through a Solidarity Fund they managed to source COVID-19 relief money, which assisted with the provision of food parcels and vouchers.

The Thandanani Meals on Wheels efforts to provide meals stopped especially during levels 5 and 4; however, their ability to operate improved as restrictions were relaxed over time.

Other local structures, which some respondents deemed to be partisan, also provided social relief to households. The Parliament Constituency Office (PCO), whose role it is to service all citizens in a time of need, was said to be biased as COVID-19 relief would only be provided to sections of the community known to be aligned to the dominant ANC political party. The government, through the local ward councillors and ward committees, though visible with food parcel distribution, was said to be handing these to community members who were politically aligned and which is why only some residents stood to benefit.

During a meeting of pastors (religious leaders) at the San-Kopano Community Centre, they attested to how their parish income streams were hard-hit as public gatherings were banned. The loss of income from the congregational collection affected their ability to render support and make provisions.

6. CONFLICT OR COHESION

The harsh restrictions which accompanied the lockdown, coupled with the infrastructural development challenges in Alexandra, proved to be a fertile ground for tensions to brew among the community.

Members of the South African National Defence Force were deployed to Alex to enforce compliance with the regulations. The brutal killing of Mr Collins Khoza at the start of lockdown angered the local community, and the nation as a whole.

In the absence and lack of community leadership, it is a norm for communities to self-organize, outside formal structures, to respond to issues and events. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) visibly provided support for the family of Collins Khoza.

The media coverage of the state-driven violence provided a platform to expose the challenges faced by the community of Alex (which was profiled nationally) and brought the community together. It strengthened and gave voice to community members' resistance to the lockdown. The residents attributed their non-compliance to the regulations, to the lack of (and poor) service delivery in the township.

The community of Alexandra did not face any load shedding during levels 5 and level 4. The continuous supply of electricity averted the usual tensions which arise around the illegal connections of electricity. When electricity is cut-off (due to illegal connections) tensions between the households which pay for electricity and those who do not pay for electricity consumption, are fuelled.

With regards to gender-based violence, the survey did not explore this issue or make detailed enquires about an increase in violence as the focus was mostly on unemployment, poverty and starvation.

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Alexandra FM, a community radio station, was a good source of local information. Alex FM aired the State's announcements to the nation on the levels of lockdown and accompanying regulations. The radio station manager confirmed that their platform was well utilized by formations in Alex. Messaging on the provision of food parcels, community announcements and awareness-raising through radio dramas on how to prevent infection were broadcast. Listeners would call in to share their experiences and challenges, especially during levels 5 and 4, when life was particularly tough.

People also learnt about available services through the mainstream media. The South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) television and radio broadcasts were also a source of information. The 'pay-to-view' channels are for the few individuals who could afford to pay the monthly subscription.

Alex News is a local newspaper, but during lockdown sales declined as people had limited buying power.

Despite the risk of 'fake news', social media platforms were also a source that people relied upon for information.

8. SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES WITH DATA COLLECTION

The identification of the key role players, organizations and individuals in the community was a starting point for the survey on community resilience. We discovered that most organizations, businesses and political leaders were somehow connected. Many of whom had developed and shared a common database and knew about the same local structures and individuals who were operational.

The process to gain access to this information proved to be bureaucratic. Affidavits were a prerequisite for the contacts to be shared. We had to place in writing our commitment to use the information only for the purposes for which it was sought. Verification of the contact lists we were given proved time consuming as they were not always correct. In the end we succeeded in creating an independent database of key stakeholders in the community.

We attended the local sector meetings and addressed the 'leadership' to garner their support and obtain their buy-in. We met with decision makers who have influence in the community and we persuaded other organizations to take part in the survey.

Some community leaders were suspicious about our enquiry and assumed we were undertaking the survey to garner political support for the upcoming local government elections (LG2021). Others assumed that the survey was going to assist with direct funding, social relief and employment, for those who had lost their jobs during the lockdown. One organization declined to participate in the survey citing that they could see no direct beneficiation, similar to previous community surveys and studies conducted in Alex. There was mistrust as we were not from the local community and we were not known to their organizations.

The Greater Alex Development Forum and Alex Civic Association declined to share their database. Information from the Parliamentary Constituency Office was received late.

Based on these experiences we could not reach the numbers we had planned to. Furthermore time constraints on implementing a tight schedule of interviews, meant that our output was compromised.

9. LESSONS LEARNT

The experience of the lockdown brought together local NGOs to collaborate in strengthening COVID-19 food parcel distribution processes and a database of 'super' organizations emerged from this process.

There is need to improve coordination and to make processes inclusive of other organiszations, especially those who are not well resourced.

Service delivery is highly politicized and community members who are not politically aligned are overlooked and are not catered for.

Local politicians wield significant power and influence within local civic organizations.

The religious sector is divided. Many of the churches are not rooted in the communities and are not aware of the difficulties facing their congregants and the residents of Alex.

Organizations which were found not to be aligned to political parties are Community Action Network (CAN) and the Local Ecumenical Action Network (LEAN)

9. CONCLUSION

Under the banner of the South African Council of Churches (Gauteng), access was provided to the community of Alex. We were able to make inroads by creating relationships with key organizations and structures, and through these connections, we got to know of the issues affecting the community.

The information gleaned could be used to re-establish and strengthen a forum for NGOs and CBOs to coordinate their future activities. The information must also be shared with those who contributed to the survey. The findings of which could support their on-going work around advocacy.

FOOD SECURITY DURING THE PANDEMIC: FROM EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE

COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

KAGISO TRUST | Institutional Capacity Building

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1. INTRODUCTION

Food security has emerged as a key challenge during COVID-19. The levels of hunger increased as millions of employees were sent home on reduced or no pay in the first 21 days (of lockdown) and thousands of staff were laid off. The lockdown has had a negative effect on the capacity of communities, especially the vulnerable to buy food, pushing many households into hunger crisis. Millions of people were confronted with severe hardship.

Children have been particularly hard hit. South Africa provides a child support grant and 12 million are registered to receive it, but it is insufficient.[1] With many households impacted by a sharp drop in income and with children not getting school meals at the time as schools were closed following the March declaration of the State of Disaster, COVID-19 worsened the food shortages faced by children.

This new explosion of hunger comes on top of existing problems of hunger and insufficient food in South Africa. Millions of people live precariously. According to Stats-SA, 257 municipalities registered 3.51 million indigent households. "If South Africa were a suburb of 100 households, 22 would be beneficiaries of government's indigent programme," states Stats-SA. In addition, millions face the prospect of going to bed hungry. Although the country has enough food for everyone, millions fall through the cracks. "Almost 20% of South African households had inadequate or severely inadequate access to food in 2017."[2] Although the percentage of people who faced hunger had declined significantly from 2002 to 2018 (from 29% to 11%), by 2018 11.3 million people still faced challenges of going hungry.

2. DEPTH AND LEVELS OF FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER

Decline in household income

Workers who faced the greatest hardship during the lockdown were informal and low paid workers who are often incorrectly regarded as 'not employed'. These workers had to stay home under conditions of "no work- no pay." According to Deverough, they include:

- Domestic workers: about one million, mostly women, whose employers should pay them, but where many did not.

- Farm workers: estimated at 650 000, the majority of whom are women. There is the Unemployment Insurance Fund, but accessing this may be stalled for so many reasons.

- Service sector workers: such as waiters who get paid by the shift and supplement their income with tips, cleaners, and Uber drivers.

- Self-employed workers: car guards, hawkers, and beggars whose livelihood depends on daily interactions with the public. About three million people (20% of total employment) work in these and other informal sector activities.

COVID-19 conditions also led to massive job losses. According to Stats-SA, the South African economy shed 2.2 million jobs in the second quarter of 2020.[3]

Taking the above realities and the continuing decline in economic activity[4] into account, levels of hunger have escalated.

According to information from one of our case studies (in Alexandra),[5] many families resorted to loans from *mashonisas* to try to survive. This is backed up by a study conducted in Postmasburg, where it was recorded that 44% of households borrowed money to buy food after lockdown started.[6] In this latter study, about 30% of households reported that one or more adults skipped a meal once lockdown began because there was not enough money to buy food.

In an article on 15 June, *The Star* reported[7] that *Ask Africa* in its survey found that "one in four adults had already lost weight because of food shortages." It added that nearly 60% of people remain concerned about the amount of food in their homes and that 20% of children went to bed hungry due to lack of food in the home.

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[1] Even before COVID-19, SA faces high child malnutrition. See the UNICEF report on https://tinyurl.com/y2yvuvtc. See also this UNICEF report which classifies South Africa's child malnutrition rates as "high": file:///C:/Users/Master/Downloads/JME-2020-UNICEF-regions-new.pdf

[2] http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=12135

[3] See (http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=13633)

[4] See https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-09-30-post-covid-economy-resembles-a-post-war-landscape-as-joblessness-climbs-to-highest-ever/?fbclid=IwAR2HDt0J8468xamg9R2fOlEwBbhTLAVwGE7NTYRxXCPGmQCcGUYGfYOjBec

[5] Case Study: Alex Township, C19 KT Community Resilience Project, October 2020

[6] The study is entitled Food Security in a Mining-Dependent Town and was conducted by Mining Dialogues 360

[7] See https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/lockdown-trust-in-ramaphosa-down-by-almost-10-while-63-say-no-to-booze-sales-survey-20200615

Food price increases – an exacerbating factor

Alongside their drop in income, individuals and households had to deal with increases in the price of foodstuffs. In an *Ipsos* survey undertaken in May-June 2020, 80% noted that food prices (food groceries and household supplies) have increased, while 60% expressed concern about it.[8]

The Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity Group (PMBEJD), which constantly measures the costs of a basket of food, revealed in June that food prices had seen an increase of as much as 30% throughout the lockdown period.[9] The increases were seen in essential staple foods such as rice, cake flour, cooking oil, white sugar, sugar beans, onions, eggs and cabbage.

Such increases would have eaten into social grants (already under pressure with cuts in income for several million households) and, at the tills, swallowed up much of government's R350 emergency grant. In its report for May 2020, PMBEJD reported that the price for a basket of basic food items increased by an average of 30%, with a family having paid approximately R3 470.92 for a basket of items which had cost R3 221.00 before lockdown. That amounted to an increase of R249.92 (7.8% more) per month.

Along with shortages or lack of income, such swinging increases drove large numbers of people to food queues in a bid to fend off starvation. This situation sparked calls that in a just society, food should not be seen as simply a commodity. Thus Greenberg, from the African Centre for Biodiversity remarked that: "A market-based food system creates a situation where those who can afford to buy food can do so. We need a different understanding around food – it is not a commodity but a reality, and these food prices reveal stark inequities in the system."[10]

3. RESPONSES TO THE FOOD CRISIS UNDER COVID-19

The State's response

In his address to the nation on 21 April 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa remarked that food insecurity had deepened dramatically in the course of just a few weeks. He said that "the Department of Social Development has partnered with the Solidarity Fund, NGOs and community-based organizations to distribute 250 000 food parcels across the country over the next two weeks."[11]

On 19 April 2020, government announced that 250 food parcels had already been distributed. Government departments, taken together allocated R20 million towards the distribution of food parcels, "while an additional sum of R23 million was received from the Solidarity Fund."

Like governments across the world, these food parcels were signs of a responsive government and a signal of the government concerns that people would starve. At the same time, the distribution of these food parcels was, by all accounts, below scale. In the national address of 21 April 2020, the President conceded that "the food distribution capacity of government is not adequate to meet the huge need that has arisen since the start of the epidemic", and expressed concern about corruption in the distribution of food.

Many NPOs were willing to assist government with distribution of food parcels, but found that the distribution channels were confusing. In an article by an NGO in Kwazulu-Natal,[12] it explained how it approached the National Solidarity Fund for funding to distribute food parcels in KZN. But, to their surprise, all food distribution was handled by an organization it had not heard of. In the end, to its knowledge, food that could or should have been distributed to informal settlements remained entangled in the system. Newspaper reports also referred to confusion around food parcels. There was no simple system that required whoever was distributing it to operate with a list approved by a government agency or local social workers or credible CSOs. Such lists would have provided some feedback that needy people or groups of people or particular settlements had indeed received food parcels.

Some were completely cut off from being able to supply food. A good example is the experience of Opret Advice Office. "Opret Advice Office contacted the supervisor of the Department of Social Development for assistance with food parcel distribution after identifying several community members in need. (A representative) explained that the CAO submitted the requisite paperwork, but the 5,000 community members who were listed as food parcel recipients have still received no assistance."[13]

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[8] https://citizen.co.za/lifestyle/your-life-home-life/2314556/south-africans-worried-about-food-price-increases-during-COVID-19-pandemic-survey/

[9] https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/local-news/2303526/food-prices-up-by-as-much-as-30-and-things-are-only-getting-worse/

[10] https://www.iol.co.za/weekend-argus/news/COVID-19-hits-south-africa-in-the-pockets-48426035

[11] https://www.gov.za/speeches/president-cyril-ramaphosa-addresses-south-africa-additional-economic-and-social-relief

[12] The article was written by the director of the Built Environment Support Group based in Pietermaritzburg. https://thoughtleader.co.za/admin-2/2020/10/04/surviving-COVID-19-in-a-shack/?fbclid=IwAR1u9M_F7j5VLslwEyvsHQ3tzz7BfRTFvXwtu9eqTPZj23Ry3Vin5tqkRdw

[13] FHR, Report from the Webinar

In the Kagiso Trust Resilience Survey 38% of respondents indicated that they found government inaccessible during this period. A further 14% had either absolutely no reply to communications sent or no response to relief applications. Small group respondents reported similar levels of government inaccessibility. In addition, 30% of respondents received replies to inquiries, but found the responses completely unhelpful.

NPOs involvement in food relief

By all accounts, CSO-NPOs were extensively involved in the distribution of food parcels. In the Kagiso Trust (KT) Community Resilience Survey, more than 70% of organizational respondents indicated that they were involved in distributing food parcels. It could be that 50% of all food parcels were distributed by NGOs. *Ask Africa* concluded that 50% of food parcels were from government. The rest came from NGOs or business.

In an example of the work done, the Makhanda Circle of Unity Food Group packed and distributed grocery parcels for the vulnerable people of Makhanda.

Since 11 April 2020, the Food Group has distributed 5 138 weekly grocery parcels and a further 2 200 boxes of groceries pre-packed by corporate donors. In another example, the #Hope4Alex Project kicked off on 30 March with 320 food parcels. On 17 April 2020, the organization reported that it had delivered 750 parcels that week and that thanks to a partnership with a company providing produce was including more fruit and vegetables in the pack.[14]

Significantly, most NGOs and small groups that participated in the KT Resilience Survey reported that their capacity to distribute food parcels was under-utilized. If more resources were available, they would have provided other services, but all indicate they would have increased their distribution of food.

CSO involvement in addressing the SA COVID-19 food crisis

The majority of organizations were involved in food security during this period, with distribution of food parcels and running soup kitchens taking priority. Food gardens showed an increasing focus.

Breakdown: the food security responses included:

• Food parcels provision

• Distribution of cooked food at soup kitchenss

• Work on food gardens

• Provision of food voucher

• Other: This included connecting small producers with households, information dissemination and working on school nutrition programmes

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

[14] https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3312044208852963&id=152601988130550

CSO's capabilities and value in food distribution

In general, organizations which define themselves as NPOs appear to have been well suited to assist during an emergency. In the Kagiso Trust survey, organizations answered the questions, "How should government draw on CSOs during a crisis?" 24% of organizations called on government to fund them so they could assist communities with food and immediate needs such as masks.

24% emphasized that government should recognize that such NPOs are close to the community and, in this sense, can advise on how food should be distributed and could assist with distribution. Community based organisations are rooted in the community and would be expected to know the community, the socio-economic conditions they face, the networks in the local community and its assets. In addition, many organisations who do not define themselves as community-based (but as NGOs in a more general sense) have knowledge of community contexts. In the KT survey, 69% of organizations reported that they had a footprint in communities.

Organizations working at local level have a greater capacity (compared with government and the private sector) to mobilize others to assist in the distribution of food parcels. 4% of organizations used only volunteers and many others drew in volunteer support. For example, the Bonteheuwel Development Forum mobilized kitchen assemblies as well as street and block committees for its extensive programme to address food security in the community. The CAN Tafelsig-Mitchells Plain, utilizing volunteers, was able to sustain a system of 80 feeding stations in that locality.

In the Kasgiso Trust survey, respondents' primary motivation in demanding a bigger role for CSOs in emergency food distribution was that NPOs reach the community more effectively. However, respondents made a range of other points about the value of using CSOs, namely:

• Lower costs: CSOs use less money in carrying out their work. A respondent noted: "CSOs are geared to deliver services at a much cheaper cost than that which governments spends on hiring big business."

• Less corruption: Given the scale of corruption in the public sector. "It is unlikely to find CSO's misusing the funds from the donor," one respondent said.

• Local 'advocacy' and social mobilization on an issue. "The local NPO's are the best suited to be the way to raise awareness and to help in dealing with the problem first-hand. "

knowledge: They have relevant knowledge that can be used in the co-creation of solutions. "Government should partner with CSOs to get a more realistic picture of the needs and areas of need". Another argued, probably referring to CBOs: "In the case of emergency, the CSO would be more accessible than the government since they are located within their communities."

CSOs feedback on how government should draw on CSO expertise during a major crisis

Repondents emphasized that government should provide them with funds so they can get on with the work. They emphasized an approach that prioritises reaching "the ground" with messages and resources, and their central role in it. CSOs want forums for communication exchange, where government can hear about experiences and ideas from those who work in and closely with communities. Some organizations called for a partnership approach, rather than an antagonistic or hypercritical approach (which some have experienced).
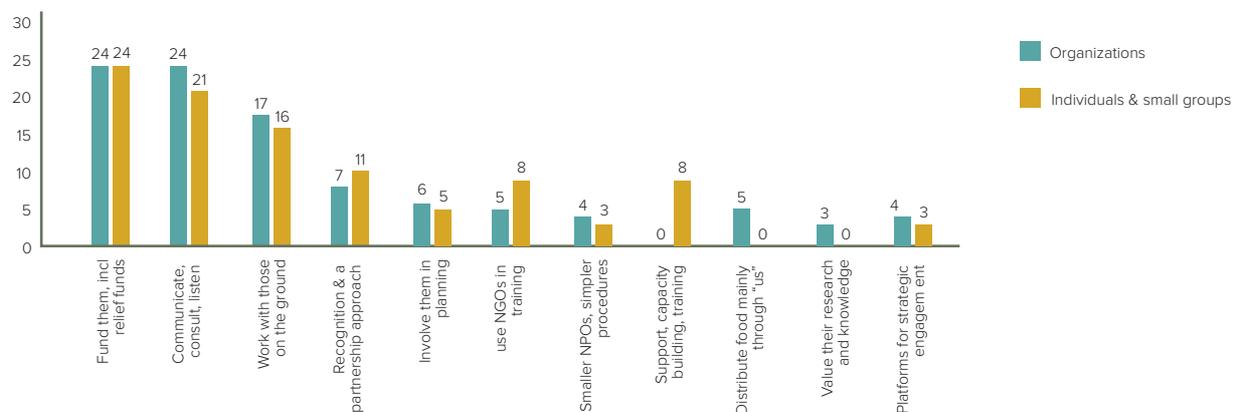
Other role-players and local food distribution

Overall faith-based groups can play a much bigger role in food distribution.

Indications are that Muslim faith-based organisations were active in distributing food parcels. According to one source, the following organizations were active "in distributing essential medical equipment and food parcels": the Gift of the Givers, the Muslim Association of South Africa, the South African National Zakah Fund (SANZAF) in collaboration with Jamiatul Ulama KZN, Project HELP and the Natal Memon Jamaat (NMJ) and the SA Muslim COVID-19 Response Task Team[xxviii] have been at the forefront distributing essential medical equipment and food parcels.[15]

With other groups, two trends emerge. The one is that many faith-based groups, themselves struggling with lockdown and many lacking resources, were slow out of the starting blocks and initially focused on the food needs of their own members. According to findings in the Alex case study, the churches were largely incapacitated by lockdown conditions and, later, they approached a key distribution NGO for food parcels to pass on to members. The other trend is that faith-based groups later made connections with Community Action Network – these groups facilitated resource mobilization and access to supermarket collection points and became more involved in community-wide distribution. For example, some faith-based groups joined up with the Norwood, Orange Grove and Houghton (NOAH) CAN which undertook collections at Spar Norwood, Pick and Pay (PnP) Norwood Mall and PnP Orange Grove.

However, these faith-based organizations have latent capacity to greatly increase food distribution, provided that attention is paid to coordination, resourcing and support to enable them to play a significant role in food distribution.

Another potential role player is spaza shops (informal convenience stores based in townships or the inner city. Judge Navi Pillay has argued that, "consultation and the use of a human rights approach would have seen government focusing on assisting spaza shops to provide food and other basic necessities to South Africans." There was no elaboration as to how such distribution via spaza shops might have taken place. However, this suggestion has merit, especially if the idea is linked to the concept of vouchers or if it refers to the process used in an area such as Makers Valley in Johannesburg. In this area, home to about 40 000 people, a local initiative by the Makers Valley Growing Community made use of spaza shops as collection points. After door-to-door work in the project's catchment area, those supported by the project received an SMS requesting that they collect a food parcel at a participating store.[16]

Critiques of food parcels (contents, collection and provision)

Although the food parcels were welcomed by those who received them, several shortcomings were observed, including the following:

- In some instances, there was a lack of a dignified process for distributing the parcels. Striking examples were seen in Pretoria, Midrand and Johannesburg[17] where huge numbers of people flocked in closely packed queues which meant hours of waiting. In Alexandra Township, police fired rubber bullets on 14 April 2020, to disperse residents of Setjwetla section who had gathered near the Marlboro Gardens Secondary School. The group of about 300 people, who were complaining about the distribution of food parcels, had been told to return on three different days and in the end were told to "go back home as there were no food parcels to give them".[18]

- The food parcels often lacked a nutritional balance. Although the parcels contained all the food categories, in many instances, the different food groups were not properly balanced. Generally, the parcels should have contained less starch and more fruit and vegetables – the latter being critical in helping to supply the much needed recommended dietary amounts of zinc, iron, vitamin A and, critically, vitamin C. There was also often a complete lack of dairy products[19].

[15] See https://religiousmatters.nl/vulnerabilities-and-interventions-in-times-of-corona-bodies-food-and-religion-in-south-africa/.

[16] See https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2020/sep/30/how-covid-sowed-the-seeds-of-food-security-in-johannesburg?fbclid=IwAR1GqAnKtXdaxIfO10Uw3lhc9OvD4PYxUFie35xRJX8PmN2d9fKlMcyq78E.

[17] See various stories including https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/watch-lockdown-queues-for-kilometres-as-11-000-food-parcels-distributed-in-pretoria-20200521, https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-04-30-the-need-is-massive-say-donors-as-3km-centurion-food-queue-shocks-sa/. https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/alexandra-residents-food-parcels-lockdown/

[18] See https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-04-14-police-disperse-crowd-seeking-food-parcels-with-rubber-bullets-in-alex/?fbclid=IwAR1NRlBL-sEoDxjS490pd3daaYIWnxPE6BHtX-EDr2CwCa5wDLl9zELwQZg

[19] See https://theconversation.com/food-aid-parcels-in-south-africa-could-do-with-a-better-nutritional-balance-136417

- There were widespread concerns about corruption, especially in cases where political party office bearers were involved. Such concerns emerged in the media[20] and in the Sekhukhune Case Study linked to the KT Resilience Survey. Contralesa noted that "there was a reverberating outcry of corruption over the distribution of food parcels meant to sustain the neediest of our people" and said "many of our municipalities should hang their heads in shame".[21] The Public Protector was also investigating complaints about malfeasance related to the distribution of food parcels.[22] In his address on 21 April 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated: "We are deeply disturbed by reports of unscrupulous people abusing the distribution of food and other assistance for corrupt ends".[23]

By comparison, there was almost no criticism of soup kitchens or the provision of hot food and certainly no criticism around the wholesomeness of the food provided.[24] It may be a coincidence, but it is important to note that, in many cases, provision of cooked food was under the control of the local community.

Other criticisms arise out of the tension between the short and long term – and worries about sustainability of such intervention. In terms of this, some activists are putting emphasis on the idea of ongoing community kitchens – ones which are linked to local supply chains. Such kitchens, if they can be properly and permanently resourced, will help to stimulate local socio-economic development.[25]

This link into a desire to move away from food parcels towards self-reliance and more community control over local food security, or as others put it "empowerment of the community in relation to the creation of secure local food systems". In relation to this, we have witnessed a renewed push towards promoting and supporting household-level food gardens, a move that involves giving the community agency and placing an emphasis on using community-driven initiatives as part of longer term food insecurity solutions. Gavin Andersson notes[26] that "a new phase of organizing began around the middle of the year, to start food gardens in communities. A network called Agro-ecology South Africa has emerged."[27] The call is growing for building strong local food systems as a way of combating hunger and famine.

4. CIVIL SOCIETY FOOD SECURITY PLATFORMS

The COVID-19 lock-down experienced a resurgence of activist organizations focused on food security. Although addressing food security means addressing the entire food system in South Africa, at a micro level it includes encouraging people to start and maintain their own food gardens. In this regard, the activists distributed vegetables grown via local projects as well as seedlings and gardening materials to poor households.[28] In some instances, organizers have forged a link between community kitchens and food gardens. The fresh produce harvested from the food gardens was used in the production of food in the soup /community kitchen. In some cases, the food gardens are particularly targeted to addressing the needs of vulnerable groups in the community, for example, children at risk and the elderly in the community. The Abanebhongo Persons with Disabilities, due to dwindling donations, has initiated eight community vegetable gardens so that it can continue to provide soup kitchens for community children.

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[20] See https://www.news24.com/citypress/News/councillors-accused-of-looting-food-parcels-meant-for-the-poor-20200419.

[21] See https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/politics/2020-09-07-COVID-19-corruption-is-tantamount-to-treason-contralesa/

[22] See https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2020-08-03-public-protector-investigates-slew-of-complaints-related-to-COVID-19/

[23] See http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/speeches/statement-president-cyril-ramaphosa-further-economic-and-social-measures-response-COVID-19.

[24] In a radio comment (on the morning current affairs programme of radio station RSG) on 10 August 2020, Equal Education's Rene McFarlane, although critical of certain aspects of the programme, expressed satisfaction with the nutritional content of food being supplied to learners in the school feeding scheme.

[25] https://theconversation.com/civil-society-groups-that-mobilised-around-COVID-19-face-important-choices-140989?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=bylinetwitterbutton

[26] In an unpublished paper entitled Agro-ecology and Food Sovereignty?

[27] Agroecology South Africa is coordinated by Stephen Greenberg who was formerly with the African Centre for Biodiversity ACB, but who now operates under the umbrella of the Southern African Food Laboratory (which has been looking at food systems across the sub-continent over the last six years)

[28] See https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2020/sep/30/how-covid-sowed-the-seeds-of-food-security-in-johannesburg?fbclid=IwAR1GqAnKtXdaxIfO10Uw3lhc9OvD4PYxUFie35xRJX8PmN2d9fKlMcyq78E

In another example, *Food & Trees for Africa* launched the *Grow Your Own Vegetable Seedlings* initiative "to support food security, food resilience, and the fight against hunger in South Africa". It urged community-based organizations to apply for food gardening and farming support. By mid-September 2020, the organisation distributed 500 000 seedlings.[29]

The CAN Network emerged in the Western Cape and expanded to the Gauteng province. It operates as a bridge between concerned people in the more affluent suburbs and affected and interested persons in under-resourced communities. However, in some localities such as Mitchells Plain and Ocean View, it has taken on a strong grassroots/community-based flavour. CAN began with a focus on food distribution, broadened to community kitchens and, at the time of writing, many are branching into food security activities such as food gardens.

In areas such as Mitchells Plain, the local Tafelsig-Mitchells Plain (TMP) CAN chapter has adopted a more activist approach, sometimes using the slogan "We the people are turning to each other to self-organize".[30] It recently launched the *What About The People* Trust Fund which "will endeavour to reach out country wide to assist other organizations and individuals who are facing the same hunger issues as we are particularly concerned about the many soup kitchens run by moms and pops who are not able to get funds for their incredible work".[31] On 6 October 2020, TMP CAN handed over 40 garden-in-the-box kits and 10 vertical farming sets to the organization's beneficiaries, signalling its intention to begin paying attention to long-term, sustainable food security for ordinary households in the community of Tafelsig-Mitchells Plain area, while still running 80 food stations in the area[32].

Numerous new alliances or multi-stakeholder initiatives focusing on advocacy, dialogue and sharing of information on food security were born out of the COVID crisis. These initiatives have been described as efforts to move from the 'sprint' of the immediate response to COVID to the 'marathon' of responding to its devastation and to a focus on building-block efforts towards "a more just and resilient food system."[33]

Some of the organizations active in this space include ones which have long been campaigning around the right to food and for transformation of the food system, e.g. the South Africa Food Sovereignty Campaign and COPAC. Multi-organization initiatives such as the *C19 People's Coalition* Working Group on Food, and *Agro-ecology South Africa*, emerged during the lockdown period. The *C19 People's Coalition* brings scores of community organizations and hundreds of individuals together in a loose sharing network, which also drew in established NGOs and agricultural organizations, notably the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign. In its turn *Agro-ecology South Africa* involves a combination of organizations and activists and provides a space for analysis, information sharing and discussion of strategies.

In the Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Survey, there was support for such coordinating initiatives. One respondent, asked how the social sector could be strengthened, answered: "Network and social platform facilitation". Another said: "The platforms that are arising should be continued and strengthened, but with more diverse, representative leadership."

Indications are that there could be tensions between government and civil society organizations mobilized in these multi-organization formations in the period ahead. Academic and activist Gavin Andersson notes that tension is likely to come from two main sources. The first is linked to organizations becoming more strident in their opposition against industrial agriculture.[34] The second has to do with what is seen as sluggish and lacklustre government support for small producers and the lack of urgency and political will to removing the barriers faced by small producers.

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[29] See https://www.facebook.com/FoodandTreesforAfrica/posts/10158717524981788. Also see the organization's application form, which also lists support to co-operatives, here: https://trees.org.za/apply/?fbclid=IwAR2q50LCaBUHV8wHROk_SL3rU68TMsT6j1MXx-BQSRahv8lp52wsXTjLmJo

[30] https://www.facebook.com/groups/411728495853545/permalink/1247079835651736/

[31] See the story of the Tafelsig-Mitchell's Plain CAN https://www.futuregrowth.co.za/newsroom/COVID-19-risks-to-vulnerable-communities-are-real-but-one-activist-steps-up-and-makes-a-vital-difference/?fbclid=IwAR09NKvNss5i8FUVdj8MDYgSua1WLPsnG_hjYwRk6yhf438fVsDW2Q4Kod8. The article notes that Joanie Fredericks started the Tafelsig Mitchells Plain CAN (Community Action Network) "to galvanise the community to work together to take care of each other."

[32] https://www.facebook.com/groups/411728495853545/permalink/1247079835651736/

[33] https://www.facebook.com/groups/411728495853545/permalink/1227027080990345/

[34] These strategies include a renewed emphasis on increasing yield, greater use of technology as well as an emphasis on export to increase GDP and currency earnings and increased trade. They also include "policy consistency", which, when articulated by elites, is often at odds with the requirements of transformation. See https://www.farmersweekly.co.za/opinion/by-invitation/what-COVID-19-has-taught-us-about-food-security/

Many of the critical issues were raised by 51 organizations and several academics on a 23 July, 2020 in a statement on government's supplementary budget.[35] In this mid-crisis budget, government had cut the budget of Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) by R2.4 billion and made similar cuts which included cuts to Food Security of R939 million, Land Redistribution and Tenure Reform by R544 million and Land Restitution by R403 million. The statement conveys a sense of impatience and frustration with government. It notes that: "The pandemic offers an opportunity for the mobilization of the whole society to respond to the crisis and to reorient the economy towards one that responds first and foremost to the basic needs of everyone in the society. But this is apparently not on the agenda of the government, with its preference for top down, remote and (not very effective) technocratic planning and decision-making, and its ceding of food systems to corporations to run and profit from."

The statement expresses shock at the austerity budget, expresses criticism of "platitudes about a new society and a 'new dawn" and deplores government's "remote and out of touch approach".

Opportunities and challenges for litigation as a strategy

Organizations working in the area of food security have discussed the issue of the Right to Food on various platforms, including the C19 People's Coalition. The right to food is cited in the South African Constitution[36] but, given the huge numbers who do not enjoy this right, CSOs are demanding more operational mechanisms such as framework legislation and a link to concrete policy measures. The United Nations Sustainable Development goals also have reference here, both on ending extreme poverty and on ending hunger – all by 2030 – also have reference here. These goals are not actionable via litigation. However, the SDGs do call on nation states to, "implement national social protection systems or measures, including (social protection) floors."[37]

Flowing from such discussions, Equal Education successfully brought a legal challenge against the Department of Education, demanding that government continues with the school feeding scheme during lockdown and closure of schools. At the end of the case, the Judge ruled: "It is declared that all qualifying learners, regardless of whether or not they have resumed classes at their respective schools, are entitled to receive a daily meal as provided for under the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)."[38] Discussion continues about more general litigation (class action) around the Right to Food, especially with a view to framework legislation and social protection measures such as, for example, a basic income grant.

Of course, participants looking at litigation will need to take into account that the right to food intersects with other rights and that litigation yields more effective results if it is not approached as a stand-alone issue. As illustrated by the precedent-setting Grootboom case (a case involving challenging the Department of Human Settlement on the right to housing and which was settled in favour of Grootboom), it is difficult to achieve substantive results in implementation of a court ruling if it is not part of a broader campaign with public awareness.

Against a backdrop of awakening brought about by COVID-19 on the level and depth of food insecurity in South Africa, there is a growing sense that wider transformation is needed.

The head of the WHO pointed to this need for fundamental change when he noted at the Mandela Lecture on 18 July, 2020 tha, "COVID-19 has been likened to an x-ray, revealing fractures in the fragile skeleton of the societies we have built." He added that, "The vision and promise of the United Nations is that food, healthcare, water and sanitation, education, decent work and social security are not commodities for sale to those who can afford them, but basic human rights to which we are all entitled."

Others have also commented that COVID-19 presents an opportunity to transition to a new way of organizing society. For example, the Indian author Arundhati Roy has argued the pandemic presents a portal of opportunity. "Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine the world anew. This one is no different," she wrote.[39]

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[35] See https://www.southernafricafoodlab.org/civil-society-response-to-the-supplementary-budget-and-the-implications-for-food-security-and-land-reform/

[36] Sec 27 of the Constitution read as follows "Everyone has the right to have access to (b) sufficient food and water"

[37] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11803Official-List-of-Proposed-SDG-Indicators.pdf

[38] See https://section27.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Judgment-Equal-Education-and-others-v-Minister-of-Basic-Education-and-others-22588-2020-2.pdf

[39] See https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa took a similar line on 21 April 2020 when he said, "Our country and the world we live in will never be the same. We are resolved not merely to return our economy to where it was before the coronavirus, but to forge a new economy in a new global reality".[40]

However, with the lockdowns being eased in some places, there is a temptation to slip back to the old ways of doing things. For some, there is no scope in the present of making even minor concessions towards socializing health care and the right to food; for example, role players in business are far too busy scrambling to restore business profitability and ease the panic of shareholders, and key political office bearers are preoccupied with the COVID-19 crisis, plotting for the next election and, in South Africa's case, fighting corruption. In this situation, civil society organizations, as a sector, has a responsibility to keep the call for fundamental transformation alive and the realization of basic human rights in place.

The food issue is such a fundamental human need, yet it is embroiled in complex systems that are inimical to acknowledging it as a right. This makes it an ideal gateway issue for raising the broader discussion of fundamental transformation needed in our society. In this connection it is important to note:

a.   that a nexus between a vibrant civil society and heightened demands for food security, if sustained and strengthened, will be a positive contribution towards the renewal of society.

b.   that the vast majority of South Africans are already keenly engaged (albeit from different entry points) in the conversation about the food security and the right to food.

c.   that given the pressures, vested interests and preoccupations of other stakeholders, civil society organizations and visionaries in the public sector are arguably called on to play a catalytic role if we are ever to achieve food security and food justice for the majority of South Africans.

5. CONCLUSION

There has been an explosion of focus on food security during COVID-19. It has highlighted that, while the country produced enough food to feed everyone, even before COVID-19 millions of South Africans lived precariously and it "has exposed the lie that full supermarket shelves equate to individual, household and local food security."[41]

Alongside government emergency response, we have witnessed numerous examples of resilience on the part of communities and civil society organizations. While millions were assisted through government provision, millions of people fell through the cracks and survived by adopting the slogan: "We the people are turning to each other to self-organize". Beyond the immediate response, attention must turn to longer-term and more fundamental concerns about food security in South Africa.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To civil society

1.   CSOs require better coordination, communication, and conversation between the multi-stakeholder national platforms on the one hand, and grassroots food security activities on the other.

2.   CSOs and academic institutions should work together to provide tailored learning opportunities for animators, activists, facilitators who are or intend to work with communities on the development of local food systems; such courses should combine practical skills with deeper knowledge of sustainable, just and community-centred food systems.

3.   As part of movement building, better resourced civil society organizations should increase and extend consultative processes with, and support for, locally based organizations involved in food security.

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[40] See http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/speeches/statement-president-cyril-ramaphosa-further-economic-and-social-measures-response-COVID-19

[41] See https://www.southernafricafoodlab.org/civil-society-response-to-the-supplementary-budget-and-the-implications-for-food-security-and-land-reform/

To government

4. Government should take steps to develop a legislative framework and certain measures to give effect to the constitutional injunction that "Everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food....". In addition, such a legislative framework should be linked to clearly identified social protection measures which could include the universal basic income grant, price control for certain basic foods and a commitment to sustain the school nutrition programme.

5. Government should investigate food price increases with a view to taking measures to control pricing of essential food items at supermarkets.

6. Government should make greater use of civil society organizations for the actual distribution of food relief or for the monitoring of such distribution, whilst properly acknowledging and supporting their work.

7. Local governments should commit to make land available for edible gardens, particularly where the produce of such gardens is used for feeding vulnerable groups within the community.

8. Government should put in place an enabling dispensation for NPOs involved in food distribution at community level, assisting with registering while continuing to recognize their work and their worth.

9. Government should establish a platform for dialogue, engagement, policy discussion and feedback on government programmes related to food security; this platform should involve relevant government departments (such as Dept. of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Dept. of Social Development and Dept. of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries) and coordinating civil society bodies.

10. Through the Human Rights Commission, government should hold public hearings on the issues, challenges and barriers faced by small-scale producers (small-scale farmers and fishers) and community-based food producers.

11. Government should increase financing, extension services and other support to small-scale farmers and take policy measures to curb practices which exclude producers from playing a fuller role in food production and distribution.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, COVID-19 IMPACT AND REBUILDING RESILIENCE

COVID-19
COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE
INITIATIVE

KAGISO
T R U S T

Institutional Capacity
Building

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on civil society organizations/non-profit organizations (CSOs-NPOs) – in the areas of programme work, on their operations and, of course, on funding. In the Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Survey, 56% of respondents indicated they experienced a loss of funding; at the same time, a majority (66%) experienced an increase in demands for their services.

When COVID-19 crisis struck, the CSO sector was in any event not in the best of health. Although they had a vibrant role and adopted an optimistic outlook immediately post 1994, CSOs-NPOs have arguably been on the back foot for most of the last 26 years.

Now, during SA's State of Disaster, they have risen to the occasion, playing a critical role in complementing and strengthening community resilience, assisting with food security, the health response as well as in addressing issues such as shelter, water supply, hygiene and education.

However, CSO-NPOs have been stricken by COVID-19, with most agreeing the impact on them and their operations has been devastating. While they have focused on activities on the ground and on making a positive contribution in the context of the emergency, they now must examine their own institutional resilience. Are they strong enough to go forward under new conditions, and to help address the deepened fault lines of poverty and inequality, burning issues such as violence against women and critical national development concerns such as "data for all" and a Universal Basic Income Grant?

CSOs will need to collaborate more and do better at sustaining collaborative platforms; they will need to foreground strengthening even as they continue addressing priority issues. At the same time, it is imperative that other stakeholders and allies from other sectors such as the state and the donor community seriously commit to creating a supportive environment for CSO-NPOs.

NPOs have immense capacity to assist in development and, if the South African experience is anything to go by, make substantial contributions to development. Although the roles of CSO-NPOs go beyond the remit of this briefing document, it is worth noting that the Kagiso Trust Typology Study argues that "CSOs have and continue to play in contributing to development in three distinct ways", namely, Service Delivery,[1] Advocacy[2] and the Watchdog role.[3]

In the case of Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Survey (which included a random number of CSOs-NPOs), the overwhelming majority of respondents reported that they were involved in the emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis. For example, 72 %

COVID-19 impacts on South African CSO resources

The majority of organizations faces an increase i demand for their services, coupled with a loss of funding and maor struggles around data and access. Some respondents indicated an increase in funds available to serve communities.

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

CSO involvement in SA COVID-19 emergency response

The majority of organizations responding to the survey were involoved in addressing food security issues during this period (from March 2020). A substantial percentage of respondents were also involved in the health response.

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

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[1] While in South Africa this has been largely in respect of welfare services, this has increasingly changed. CSOs' role in service delivery often arises in response to gaps in the State's capacity to deliver services to marginalized communities

[2] The study notes by way of elaboration of the advocacy role: "CSOs and civil society in general are important role players in advocating for the State to deliver on rights and obligations. They serve as the voice for the voiceless and for representing the legitimate needs of stakeholders"

[3] Elaborating on this term, the Typology study notes that: "CSOs play a critical role in ensuring good governance and in rooting out corruption. The role in creating awareness of corruption and poor governance practices is one of the main functions it can serve."

of organizations were involved with food security, 66% were involved in the health response, 35% in water and sanitation and 24% on shelter.

Organizations collectively served hundreds of thousands of people per week. There are estimates that CSO-NPOs distributed 50% of all food parcels delivered in South Africa. In addition, most respondents to the KT Community Resilience Survey noted that they could have provided additional and more extensive services to communities if funds were no object. According to them, they could have made added contributions in focus areas such as food provision, entrepreneurial and livelihood services, been far more active in responding to GBV and provided greater support in terms of PPEs and awareness.

2. STATE OF THE SECTOR: A CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

Size of the sector

There will never be certainty about the size and shape of the sector of civil society organizations.[4] This is because civil society is always a shifting space, impacted by funding flows, economic downturns as well as political factors. In SA's case, since 1994 the number of NPOs has been constantly growing, but at different rates in different periods.[5] The numbers will always be estimates. Similarly, there will be ongoing change in how organizations define themselves: in South Africa, we have seen terms like NGO and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) rise and recede and, recently, the dominance of the term NPOs, even as a relatively very small number of formations continue to define themselves as movements, co-operatives, and community-based.

It is useful to have a working definition of a civil society organization – non-governmental organization (CSO-NGO). With this term, we refer to an entity that is organized, self-governing, private (excludes government), has a public interest and is voluntary (people not compelled to join). This definition excludes professional bodies and organizations that engage with the state but do not seek to take it over.[6]

It is quite another matter how organizations define themselves. In the Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Study, most respondents identified themselves as Non-Profit Organizations. Over 60% regarded themselves as NPOs, 10% as CBOs and 12% as NGOs, 5% as CSOs, 1.5% as movements and 8% as other. In others, some terms used by respondents indicated they preferred to define themselves as NPC (Not for Profit Company), labour support group or a co-operative.

There is a dearth of accurate and dependable information on the number of NGOs. Many people still refer to a study undertaken in 2002 by Russel and Swilling[7], numbers so out of date now that they only serve as a baseline or historical marker. The KT Typology Study reports that the number of NPOs on the database National Department of Social Development (NDSD) is 214,518 (this month it's 233 511)[8]. The same study, however, taking into account that the register only includes organizations which have chosen to register, concludes that the true figure could be 30% higher (so 303,564 as at 15 October 2020)[9].

Unequal geographical spread of CSOs

Most CSO-NPOs are located in several major centres – the Western Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape.

With respect to the Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Survey, provinces such as northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Free State, North West, and Limpopo featured very low on the databases accessed. In the end, the responses from four of the five provinces mentioned were under 5% each, of the total. Limpopo, at 12%, benefitted from a more deliberate strategy to have capacity on the ground to reach out to organizations in that province. In the Tshikululu Social Investment (TSI) survey, 43% who responded had operations in Gauteng, 35% in KZN, 28% in WC and 29% in eastern Cape, all much higher than these provinces' share of the population (24%, 20%, 11% and 13% respectively).

The NPO Directory also shows unevenness with respect to numbers of registered organizations. There are two provinces with the most NPOs, namely Gauteng - 32% and KZN - 18%; four with a number close to 10% (Western

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[5] See http://www.kagiso.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Kagiso-Report-CSO-Web.pdf The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) was commissioned by Kagiso Trust to undertake a study with the aim of providing a report on the status of the Non-Profit Sector in South Africa, including a comprehensive profile of the Civil Society Sector. Ngudu, S and Motala, S, Typologies of Civil Society In South Africa: A Critical Review and Analysis of the Characteristics of the Non-Profit Sector, 2020, HSRC

[6] This is in line with a definition coined by the Centre for Policy Studies, namely, "Associations that are independent of the state, engage with it but do not seek to take over"

[7] In 1998/9, the NPO sector was estimated to be a R9.3 billion industry, employing 645 315 persons, and consisting of 98 920 NPOs (See Swilling and Russell, 2002, Size and Scope of the Non-Profit Sector in South Africa; also accessible at http://repository.hsrc.ac.za/handle/20.500.11910/8499)

[8] See http://www.npo.gov.za/

[9] This number of registered NPOs was accessed on the site http://www.npo.gov.za/

Cape - 10%; Eastern Cape - 9% and Limpopo - 9%) and three with 6% and less of NPOs, namely Free State - 5%, North West - 6% and Northern Cape - 2%.
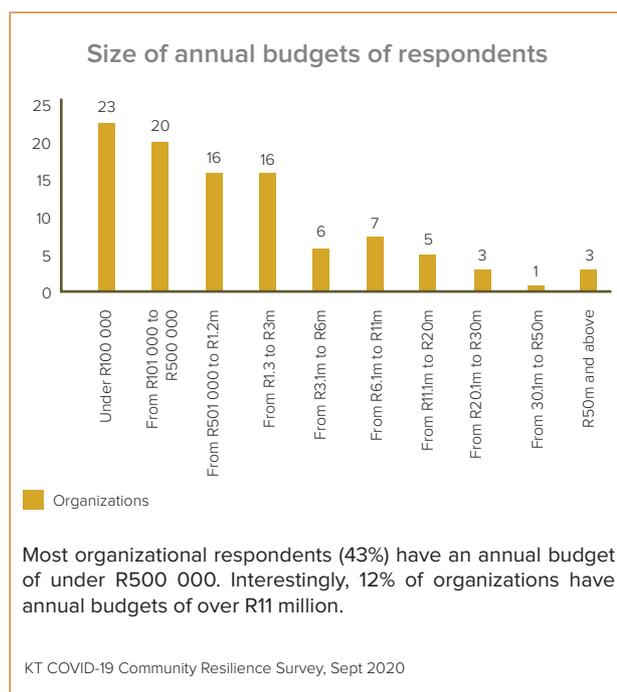
According to other research, the traditionally poorer provinces, including the Eastern Cape, North West and Mpumalanga, have a lower share of NPOs (< 1 per 1 000 residents) than elsewhere in the country (average of 2 to 3 NPOs per 1 000 residents).[10]

The 2019 Trialogue Business in Society Handbook found that funding to NPOs was mostly distributed in the economic hubs of the country (Gauteng, Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal), accounting for 73% of social investments in 2019. North West, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Northern Cape collectively accounted for some 19% of NPO resources. The TSI Survey also notes that a greater proportion of respondent organizations with operations in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape reported having received more COVID-19-specific funding than respondents with operations in the Free State, Northern Cape and North West provinces.

The immense inequality in the sector is also evident in the amount of resources available to smaller organizations as compared to larger ones.

In the KT Resilience Survey, the nine organizations with budgets over R50m (collectively at R450m per annum or less) command more than the combined annual budgets of 218 respondent organizations that have smaller budgets (all with budgets in the range between <R100 000 to <R11m).

This seems to be in line with a study that found that 10% of NPOs receive 80% of the funds. The authors examined the NPO data (registered NPOs that submitted financial statements to government's NPO Directorate over the time period 2007 – 2014) and report that "analysis of the NPO register data show that overall, the largest 10% of NPOs receive 80% of total funding."[11]

Size of annual budgets of respondents

Under R100 000: 23
From R101 000 to R500 000: 20
From R501 000 to R1.2m: 16
From R1.3 to R3m: 16
From R3.1m to R6m: 6
From R6.1m to R11m: 7
From R11.1m to R20m: 5
From R20.1m to R30m: 3
From 30.1m to R50m: 1
R50m and above: 3

Organizations

Most organizational respondents (43%) have an annual budget of under R500 000. Interestingly, 12% of organizations have annual budgets of over R11 million.

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

Issues internal to organizations and the sector

Even before the arrival of COVID-19, CSO-NPOs as a sector faced a range of challenges. Many of these challenges and issues are set out in the KT Typology Study. The set of issues include questions of leadership[12], fragmentation (lack of co-ordination and competitiveness and sometimes insufficient co-operation between CBOs and NGOs) and funding challenges.

In the apartheid area, CSOs benefitted from substantive donor contributions to South Africa. Since1994, there has been a massive decline in funding[13] and even though this funding in no way led to a decline in the size of the sector,[14] it did affect its resilience, capability and consistency in engaging on critical issues.

Many organizations turned to Government to stay afloat. There has been increased competition (for example, among NPOs based in provinces such as KZN, Eastern Cape and smaller provinces) all tapping into, for example, the Victim Support Programmes or funds allocated via Premiers' Offices. In addition, depending on shifts in funds available and changes in what the major donors have prioritized, many organizations constantly change their designated sector.[15]

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[10] See http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/NPO-reportV3.pdf

[11] Donors such as the Mott Foundation, Kellogg Foundation and DANIDA have drastically cut their funding, some by as much as 30% (USAID, 2012). The 2008 global economic downturn has exacerbated the situation because it has led to the reduction of the size of the international funding available for development aid

[12] According to Weidemann: "There is consensus in the literature and among interviewees that the CSO sector lost many of its key leaders, thinkers and skilled managers to the public sector in the period following the transition to democracy. "See Weidemann M, The Changing status of Civil Society Organisations in South Africa, 1994 to 2014 - A Report Commissioned and funded by the Hanns Seidel Foundation

[13] See https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/opinion/supporting-ngos-is-key-to-future-1900441. See also http://www.ngopulse.org/article/emerging-funding-crisis-south-african-civil-society, an article which mentions inadequate funding by the South African government, economic downturns globally and the new South Africa being declared a middle-income country

[14] See the annual increase in numbers of NPOs registered with the Department of Social Development's NPO Office. See also: https://www.nelsonmandela.org/uploads/files/The_changing_status_of_Civil_Society_Organisations_in_SA_M_Weideman.pdf

[15] https://www.kagiso.co.za/2020/01/22/typologies-of-civil-society-in-south-africa/

On the one hand, civil society organizations (placing an emphasis here on NGOs rather than CBOs[16]) should be more adaptive. They need to take a longer-term view and be much more prepared for waves of change in funding. For example, many donors or international development bodies had long been indicating that since South Africa is classified as a middle-income country, certain pots of funding would shrink or dry up[17]. When such changes came, they still had devastating effects on network bodies, NGOs operating as intermediary grant-makers and groups of CSO-NPOs.[18] They did not adapt enough in order to, for example, raise funds from former leaders who had been lost to the public sector[19] nor push against the inadequate funding from the South African government.[20]

At the same time, it is imperative for the funding sector to review their relationship and interaction with the CSOs. According to information gleaned in the KT Community Resilience Survey, nine organizations (or 3.32% of respondents) collectively command a budget of R450million while 195 organizations (87.83% of respondents) make do with a collective budget of less than R402m. There are many reasons for this kind of breakdown including the fact that some donors prefer working with large bureaucratic structures, but donors looking at such figures should feel themselves challenged by such imbalance and unevenness. Donors should ask themselves – what are the ways they can contribute to diversity of the sector as well as resilience at all levels of the sector? Donors often prefer larger organizations due to their increased ability to comply with funding requirements. According to O'Riordan,[21] thanks to the skills shortage plaguing small CBOs, donor funding tends to be awarded to larger, better resourced NPOs. However, instead of taking that approach and in order to contribute to a less disjointed sector, could contribute to capacity building. Respondents to the KT Community Resilience Study highlighted the need. Some organizations and small groups raised the issues of "simpler procedures" for smaller NPOs and 8% of small group respondents stressed the importance of "support, capacity building and training" for community-based organizations.

In the two decades leading up to 2020, there has been a range of governance and leadership issues in the sector. On the one hand, especially in the mid-nineties, there was the outflow of leaders from the sector to the public sector[22]. The demand from donors for increased accountability has led to more stringent requirement processes, heightened corporatization and over-professionalization in many organizations.[23] This has frequently led to bureaucrats being in the forefront rather than the background.[24]

The KT Typology Study[25] found that the sector has also experienced a change in values and an erosion of ethos that, far more regularly than in the past, saw a cohesive and coordinated civil society acting as an agent of change. The sector has endured a shortfall in effective leaders, ones with enough insights, ones who were flexible and able to adapt to change and ones who could operate beyond the boundaries of a single organization's mission statement. Any strengthening intervention should pay greater attention to the fact that the present time requires NGOs that are ethical, sustainable, participatory, demonstrate impact, activist spirited, "able to use new technologies and (are) open and accepting to youth-energy in a youth-orientated world".

Coordination and inter-sectoral engagement

The sector faces challenges in terms of coordination and inter-sectoral engagement. In the period since 1994 we have seen a decline in co-ordination capacities in civil society. It has a limited capacity to engage government with one voice, when such engagement is needed. In COVID-19, the greatest weakness is lack of capacity to push CSO and community interest in planning and resource allocation.

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[16] For a definition of CBOs, see https://conclusive.co.za/comparing-npo-types/. According to this reference, CBOs "are usually informal structures, but in South Africa may decide to take on a legal structure and register as a voluntary association." The site also tries to define them in terms of this quality: "Instead of 'experts' from outside of the community coming into the community and deciding what the community should have to solve their problems, in a CBO, the community sets its own objectives and works toward those objectives with or without outside help."

[17] A 2017 Stellenbosch University study cites for example that Mott Foundation, Kellogg Foundation and Danida have drastically cut their funding. In addition, it noted that the "2008 global economic downturn has exacerbated the situation because it has led to the reduction of the size of the international funding available for development aid." http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/NPO-reportV3.pdf

[18] Examples of groups of NPOs severely impacted by such changes are the community-based advice offices and NPOs operating in the water and sanitization sector

[19] This idea is mentioned in the KT Typology Study (http://www.kagiso.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Kagiso-Report-CSO-Web.pdf)

[20] http://www.ngopulse.org/article/emerging-funding-crisis-south-african-civil-society

[21] O'Riordan, A. (2013) Funding Civil Society in South Africa: Where Does the Money Go? Available from: http://sacsis.org.za/site/article/1623

[22] See https://www.nelsonmandela.org/uploads/files/The_changing_status_of_Civil_Society_Organisations_in_SA_M_Weideman.pdf.

[23] See http://www.kagiso.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Kagiso-Report-CSO-Web.pdf

[24] In this report it was argued that, in the post-1994 period, "(g)reater emphasis was placed on ensuring accountability to donors and government, rather than the communities and beneficiaries who legitimize the existence of NPOs." Such changes led to a situation where staff members who assist with compliance became more important as against staff members driven by responsiveness to beneficiaries or key constituencies

[25] These issues are highlighted in the KT Typology Study (http://www.kagiso.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Kagiso-Report-CSO-Web.pdf)

Fragmentation has also meant the inability to strengthen NPOs and to help small organizations become stronger and more resilient. Many CSOs have shut down as have key coordinative bodies. Some of the national coordinative networks that have disappeared from the scene include SANGOCO, Rural Development Services Network, the Urban Sector Network, the National Land Committee and so on. In addition, iconic bodies, and important bodies such as Community Agency for Social Inquiry and the South African Civil Society Information Service as well as support organizations such as Community Development Resource Agency have permanently closed their doors.

Thousands of NPOs listed on the Department of Social Development's database remain weak and underfunded and consequently lacking in maintaining consistency of programme work. In the past, organizations such as Interfund, SCAPE and on a smaller scale, institutions such as CBDP, CDRA, Sedibeng and the Ubuntu Social Development Institute provided training and capacity building support to strengthen CBOs and NGOs that spread into all provinces. In addition to the work of such capacity building organizations and networks provided training in areas of content including human rights knowledge and campaigning skills. Support and technical assistance to the mass of CBOs can be better organized and planned if organizations cooperated more and if strong sector bodies were in place.

This COVID-19 crisis period tells us much about civil society in the broader landscape. On the one hand, businesses are pivoting, thinking about what they want in the period after and often turning things back to the old normal. Trade unions, through federations such as COSATU, NACTU and SAFTU, are lobbying hard for an extensive stimulus package and for a universal basic income grant.[26] In terms of their members, trade union federations are agitating for above-inflation wage increases for their members. At times they combined their protests to include job losses, wage curbs and corruption cases.[27] In their turn, CSOs are active in the relief effort, demonstrating their resilience and capacity. At the same time, the sector has no seat in key war rooms/councils dealing with the pandemic. Yet the communities will be faced with new challenges; burning issues stacked up in different ways and including deepened inequality and poverty.[28]

At CSO-wide level, the new strategic thinking is not taking place, although some of this is taking place in specific sub sectors, with specific reference to campaigns around specific issues.

In its turn, government has announced plans to roll out a new infrastructure programme and the President has made commendable statements against corruption and dealing with the fault lines in society. However, it is likely to continue in much the same way as before, held back by weakened public sector capacity, problems of corruption and other persistent impediments to implementation. Government has been talking about a recovery plan and expressed openness about a basic income grant, but observers such as the trade unions have expressed concern about a push back from Treasury against significant stimulus and the lack of a timeline regarding moves towards the universal grant.

Generally, government is not working with civil society in shaping the 'new' economic approach that the President referred to in his 21 April 2020 address to the nation. With local government elections looming, the stage is set for increased tension between civil society organizations and government. At the same time, it is very likely that South Africa will see a widening of the gap between communities and government and further mistrust of elections alongside a deepening of household economic distress and a displaced aggression.

3. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON CSOs

The pandemic has struck CSO-NPOs, as captured for example in the Africa-CSO survey, the Tshikululu Social Investment (TSI) Survey and the FHR Survey of CAOs. The evidence suggests that, by and large, organizations will need to build their resilience.

The Africa-CSO survey and the Kagiso Trust found that organizations were unprepared to deal with COVID-19. In the Africa-CSO survey (which Included South African organizations), 84.48% of respondents indicated that they were not prepared to cope with adverse COVID-19 effects on their organizations. In the KT Resilience Survey, 66% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that most CSOs were not prepared to deal with the disruptions caused by COVID-19 on their operations.

In most cases, organizations' finances have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. TSI reported that two thirds (66%) of respondent organizations reported that their income had declined since the lockdown. In addition, 40% reported that they had experienced difficulty raising funds to carry out their operations throughout lockdown.

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[26] See https://www.newframe.com/government-and-labour-clash-over-economic-policy/

[27] https://www.reuters.com/article/safrica-politics-strike/update-2-south-africas-cosatu-leads-union-protests-over-coronavirus-impact-idUSL8N2GY2DY

[28] This is contained in the KT Community Resilience Survey

TSI's report notes that 23.2% of respondents report having lost donors and not having gained any new ones since the start of the lockdown. In the KT Community Resilience Survey, 56% of respondents reported a loss of funding.

The situation was compounded in that most organizations experienced an increase in demand for services. In the KT Resilience Survey, 56% of respondents reported a loss of funding while 66 %reported a growth in demand for services.

NGOs will have to hone back also in terms of better planning and having sufficient funds related to data, even as some agitate for equitable access to data access to advance development and for educational purposes. The data issue has cropped as well, both for beneficiaries (generally and in particular for households with learners and students) as well as for CSO-NPOs. In the Kagiso Trust survey, 45% experienced "major struggles around data, negatively affecting their work. The drafters of the TSI survey observed: "Informed by the qualitative data collected by this survey, it is clear that there is an increased need for data and data connectivity – for and by NPOs''.

CSOs and the transition to the new normal

In societies beset by past injustice or by current injustice and inequities, transformation struggles come up or lurk beneath the surface. In fact, some would say there is a duty or a call to either initiate such struggles or support them.

South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world[29] . It also has the highest levels of violence against women globally. At a more detailed level, the country is afflicted by a huge gap between rights enshrined in the Constitution and the experience of millions who have not experienced the realizations of these rights[30] .

President Ramaphosa has noted: "There can be no greater anguish than that of a parent whose children cry out to them for food, but they have none to give. There can be no greater injustice than a society where some live in comfort and plenty, while others struggle at the margins to survive with little or nothing at all. Yes, these are the residual effects of a fractured and unequal past. But they are also a symptom of a fundamental failing in our post-apartheid society. The nationwide lockdown in response to the Coronavirus has gravely exacerbated a long-standing problem."

Apart from the sudden loss of income, deepening poverty and increasing hunger, has again highlighted how millions of people lack decent shelter and live with daily water shortages. Millions of South Africans live precariously and were hard hit by the pandemic, particularly those in informal work and low paid work[31]. Although vast numbers were impacted by the corona-related deepening of poverty and hunger, some communities faced more severe impacts. A 45% of residents in informal settlements contracted Coronavirus.[32]

On the one hand, CSOs have played a sterling role, providing emergency relief, and supporting communities as they deal with the health challenges of COVID-19. In the KT resilience survey, it emerged that – in addition to food – organizations have assisted with shelter, with the health responses and assisting vulnerable members in communities with counseling and other support. 66% of CSO-NPOs were involved in the health response, 35% were involved in water and sanitation issues and 24 % were involved in addressing urgent issues of shelter.

On the hand, many CSOs are considering how they will assume their role in the urgent transformation issues facing the country. The Community Resilience Survey signaled the following as the burning issues in the period after the ending of the State of Disaster:

- Organizations: Poverty and unemployment 35%; Health and water 14%; Focusing on vulnerable groups 13%; Adapting to the new normal 12%; Food Security 7%; Data Access 7%.
- Individuals and small groups: Poverty and unemployment 45%; Food Security 18% and Health 18%.

In addition, 54% of organizational respondents will adopt a greater focus on community. Another 65%, when asked about how their work will change going forward, placed emphasis on an increase in advocacy work.

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[29] See http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=12930

[30] See https://www.fhr.org.za/files/8015/1247/0285/Socio_Economic_Rights.pdf

[31] See https://theconversation.com/social-protection-responses-to-the-COVID-19-lockdown-in-south-africa-134817

[32] See https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/asivikelane-number-11-metro.pdf

Some roles of CSOs in the current context

Over and above the generic roles indicated in research as well as the roles NGOs define for themselves, this brief explores some roles that come to the fore in the context of COVID-19 and in relation to fundamental questions that the pandemic has raised about the way society is organized, about the fault lines in society and about the deep inequality in relation to health, food security, shelter, water provision, education, etc.

The brief argues that, in terms of looking ahead and seeking more effective measures at building inclusive and sustainable societies, we can place emphasis on CSO-NPOs role in terms of preventing the narrowing of democratic space, contributing to redistribution and sustainability, seeking out alternatives and continuing to advocate for the full realization of human rights.

COVID-19 has required centralized state control, and there are indications that such an approach is relevant in an emergency. However, if such centralization is to take place within checks and balances and to ensure that additional state controls don't become permanent, civil society organisations should be valued as part of democratic space and work to ensure that spaces for engagement, dialogue and even dissent remains open. Democratic space in this regard includes freedom of speech, space for multiple voices (and ensuring marginalized voices are heard). It also includes using "voice" to ensure major decision makers in society are held accountable. In terms of redistribution, this role includes the on-the-ground resilience strengthening work organizations undertook during COVID-19. It also includes, more fundamentally, working to address the fault lines of poverty, inequality and strengthening the GBV response; and to ensure any proposed solutions to poverty and inequality do not undermine the interests of future generations.

In terms of human rights, it needs to be acknowledged that, especially in unequal societies, it is difficult for individuals on their own to assert their rights. Issues of cost, bureaucracy and an imbalance in power relations are often fatal impediments. Using a range of methods, including litigation, CSO-NPOs are thus key for the assertion of human rights in South Africa. Overall, CSO-NPOs have an important role to play in the quest for social justice and in bringing about transformation and addressing the fault lines highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis.

A call to coordination and strengthening at the base

Emerging from the KT Community Resilience Studies, one of the greatest imperatives emerging for organizations is the "call to coordination".

As one of the respondents put it: "*More willingness to work together/partner rather than to work in isolation. NPO's, especially in the rural areas, need to meet to discuss, share and brainstorm solutions. Network, network, network*".

Asked how should civil society organize itself if it wants to amplify its voice, organizations answered as follows:

- Collaboration: 63 %
- Better CSO-government relations: 13%
- Community mobilization: 8%
- Cluster specific coordination (issue focused): 8%

The call to enhance collaboration and coordination

Collaboration and coordination featured strongly in the response to the question: How can the CSO sector better organize itself to amplify its voice? this shows a belief in strengthin unity – through, for example, forums, networks and joint workshops. There was a sense that formalized bodies can better lobby and respond to community needs.

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

Co-ordination and mutually supportive interaction, as seen by respondents, operates at different levels. In the group of respondents that highlighted the importance of collaboration, some cited the value of forums, networks and joint workshops. Several respondents believed that formalized bodies can better lobby and respond to community needs. Also, among those who called for better CSO-government relations, many participants felt that CSO representation on government platforms, task groups and committees would assist in bringing about effective engagement with government.

However, other information suggests that – although CSOs certainly need to co-operate for shared learning or to coordinate delivery to communities – most believe collaboration is needed in order to engage more effectively with government.
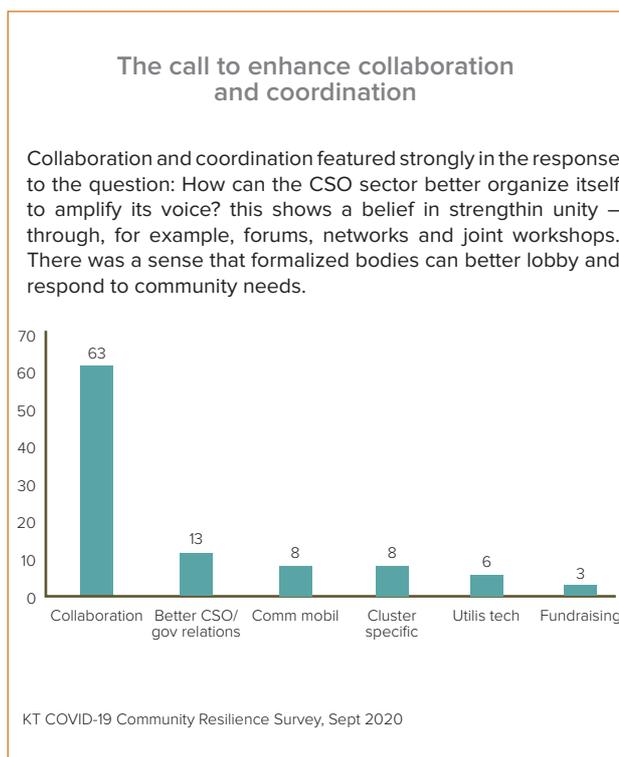
The KT Resilience Survey showed that most respondents felt that:

- Government failed to recognize and utilize CSOs skills and experience in responding to COVID-19.

- CSOs had a negative experience with government or alternately communicated well, but found government agencies not to be helpful or co-operative (although 15% had a good partnership experience and 36% were partially satisfied with communication).

- Government (to more effectively use CSOs during a crisis) should communicate with (consult with and listen to) them and acknowledge their knowledge of dynamics, networks, perspectives and needs within communities.

- One of the ways their work will change is that they will become more involved in "advocacy on issues that came up during the time of COVID-19 [such as health, data and food security] (66%).

- Another of the ways work will change is that they will participate in a national network responding to COVID-19. (45%).

Among those who supported collaboration, one respondent said: "Together, our voice is louder, and our message is clearer." Another said: "Select a few 'One Voice' projects a year".

Among those who specifically called for improved CSO-relations with government:

- "Civil society can be more integrated into government responses to crises, such as being on the steering committees, etc"

- "They should have open accessible platforms to dialogue with government."

- "Establish formal structures that work through the coordinating Ministry of Social Development to spell out expectations."

Still on the issue of strengthening organisations in civil society, the issue of support, capacity building and training emerged, especially from individuals and small groups. 8% felt that government can more effectively draw on CBOs during a crisis if government paid attention to capacity building and support. A small number of both organizational and small group respondents (under 5%) also government should put in place simpler procedures for smaller NPOs.

Interestingly, some of the 66% of organizations' respondents who argued in favour of collaboration (as a way to strengthen civil society voice) linked this very directly to ways of strengthening CBOs or civil society based in outlying areas. One respondent said there should be: "More willingness to work together/partner rather than to work in isolation. NPO's, especially in the rural areas, need to meet to discuss, share and brainstorm solutions. Another said: "It (civil society) should become more visible and pronounced in the far-flung areas of South Africa."

4. FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY: IMMEDIATE CONCERNS AND RAYS OF OPTIMISM

COVID-19 has had far reaching and severe negative impacts on the financial sustainability of CSO-NPOs. On the one hand, many civil society organizations have in recent years faced a funding crunch. On the one hand, the retreat of donors from what has now become a middle-income country was not met with growth and increased vibrancy of local donors. On the other hand, there is still a great deal of funding available. But in a stagnating economy, the pot is not growing. At the same time, the needs are huge when measured in line with the demand for services across the nine provinces – huge chunks of corporate funding goes to educational purposes, and significant numbers of small NPOs survive month to month, sometimes on budgets as low as R15000 per month.

While, the broader question of funding of NPOs goes beyond the remit of this paper, several surveys (including the Africa-CSO survey, the TSI survey and the KT Resilience Survey point to an overall drop in funding and fears about the sustainability of the sector in the immediate future.

While there was the upside – and increase of funds to CSO-NPOs to serve communities or deal with COVID-19– the overall effect was a nett loss of funds to organizations receiving the funds and, almost universally, an increase in demand for services.

In the KT Community Resilience Study, 56% of respondents cited loss of funding as a key impact on their organizations, with 25% reporting "an increase in funding to service communities".

Overall, the three surveys confirmed the conclusion of a nett loss of funding. In some cases, this was so bad that organizations have closed. The FHR-CAO study reported that 45% of community Advice Offices has "shut down entirely".[33] There is also the expectation in both the CSO-Africa and TSI survey results that organisations fear that, going forward, available funding will decline as the global economic downturn affects donors and their source of funding.

Significant numbers of the respondents see silver linings. According to the KT Resilience Survey results, most organizations believe that COVID-19 is sparking greater appreciation for the work of CSOs (78% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "COVID-19 is resulting in greater appreciation for the work of CSOs").

Some (43%) believe CSOs will emerge stronger after the COVID-19 crisis, while only 24% took the opposite view. In the TSI survey, 38% of organisations believe their funding will increase in 3 years' time (and equal number to the percentage that expect to see a decline).

Views on CSOs – how they are viewed and their prospects in the wake of COVID-19

Most organizational respondents indicated agreement with the statement: 'COVID-19 is resulting i greater public appreciation of the work of CSOs'.

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

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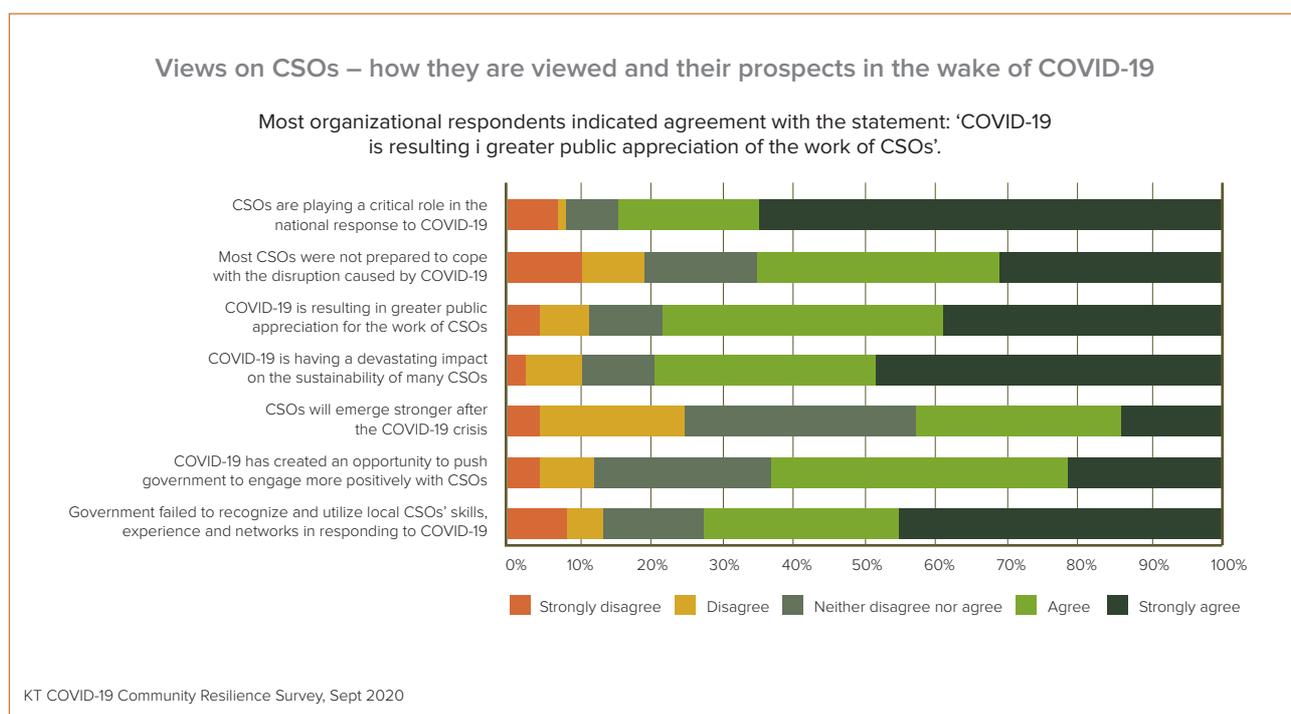
[33] See Foundation for Human Rights, Snapshot, Human Rights Diagnosis: Community Advice Offices and COVID-19, August 2020

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

For government

Government needs to create a supportive environment for CSO-NPOs. This should include better channels of communication, publicly affirming their role and contribution and setting up internal mechanisms across government to monitor whether government departments engage with CSOs in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect.

During emergencies and with a view to combating corruption and mismanagement, government needs to create properly resourced mechanisms for monitoring of relief implementation to communities, with community-based organizations, NPOs and academic institutions playing a role in this.

Government departments should, in their allocation of financial and other resources, more effectively recognize CSOs-NPOs as an important channel for "meeting the diverse needs of the population" and should further uphold Chapter 2 of the NPO Act which asserts the State's responsibility to NPOs is to ensure that: "within the limits prescribed by law, every organ of state must determine and co-ordinate the implementation of its policies and measures in a manner designed to promote, support and enhance the capacity of non-profit organizations to perform their functions".

For both CSOs and government

CSO-NPOs and government should work to establish spaces for strategic-level engagement and, where they exist, to strengthen them so as to ensure the voice of CSO-NPOs is heard on critical national policy matters, including in forums that include business and labour as key stakeholders.

For CSO-NPOs

Organizations should increase the levels of coordination and collaboration so as to strengthen the voice of CSOs-NPOs. They should recognise this coordination will allow them to more effectively play their roles of delivery of service, accountability and being the watchdogs on human rights, especially where such roles involve engagement with government.

CSO-NPOs should increase spaces for sustained engagement and coordination on pertinent issues, with an emphasis on broad-based inclusion organisations, a prominent role for women leadership in such spaces, and proper inclusion of small NPOs alongside NGOs.

CSO-NPOs making use of human rights litigation should take measures, in co-operation with other organizations, to ensure that such actions are accompanied by broader actions designed to encourage grassroots involvement in the issue as well as active citizenship and citizen-based follow-up and monitoring of the human rights issues involved[34].

For donors

Donors need to become more transparent about their allocations. They should support measures to understand the overall patterns of donor assistance and to find ways of collectively or sectorally accounting to the broader community about the way they use their funds.

Donors need to consciously commit to ensuring that a much fairer proportion of their budgets is channelled towards community-based organizations.

In the coming years, and as organizations increase their focus on communities, donors must be amenable to greater flexibility in the use of grants.

Donors should realize that while NPOs have contributed to resilience, many are themselves not resilient and some may not be strong enough to go forward under new conditions. Donors should allocate resources for civil society strengthening as part of the process of transitioning out of the crisis period.

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[34] See https://www.fhr.org.za/files/8015/1247/0285/Socio_Economic_Rights.pdf. In this document, Yasmin Sooka raises "questions about the possible limitations of a solely legalistic approach"

PRIORITY ISSUES FOR A JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

KAGISO TRUST | Institutional Capacity Building

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Kagiso Trust (KT) Community Resilience Survey sought, inter alia, to capture how civil society organizations understood the emerging issues and challenges. In the survey, organizations and small informal groups foregrounded the issues they believed communities would face in the period immediately ahead. They also flagged the pertinent issues which will need to be addressed if South Africa is to continue to move towards eradication of inequality, overcoming poverty and bringing about a prosperous and inclusive society based on social justice. Many of these are old issues, but what is critical is how, in the light of Covid-19, the issues stack up and what connections CSOs make between them.

2. KEY PRIORITY FINDINGS EMERGING FROM THE SURVEY

A significant number of comments from respondents, close to 30%, identified joblessness, poverty and hunger as the critical issues which will impact on communities. For organizational respondents, health, and water issues (we combined these in the analysis as respondents often made the linkage between both) emerged as the second highest priority, with 14% of organizations citing this as a key issue. Similarly, 13% of organizations cited vulnerable groups as a burning issue, expressing their concern that amidst the general hardship, people facing trauma would face even more difficult times. Only 7% of comments emphasized food security. This is interesting, given how many people faced hunger during Covid-19. It may well be that many organizational respondents saw other solutions (such as looking to an economic stimulus, entrepreneur support and more effective small producer support) as the means to address household food insecurity.

Among individual respondents, a significant number cited unemployment and poverty as the biggest priority. Food security featured as the second highest priority, with 18% of respondents highlighting this as the major area of concern for change-makers in the coming months. Health, and especially health issues affecting the marginalized, also at 18%, took joint second place.

Throughout the Kagiso Trust Community Resilience survey, participants engaged with a range of other issues affecting the community at different levels and in different ways. Building on these insights from the survey and the three complementary case studies, the many interrelated issues can be grouped into four focal areas plus three crosscutting threads.

Priority issues

Access data — Enabler

Climate change & related ecological issues — Transformation lens

| Jobs, economic stimulus, inclusive economy and local production | Social security and safety nets and a basic income grant | Relations between those who govern and those who are governed | GBV and deepening of women's oppression | Food security and food systems | Housing and related facilities |

The priority issues may be organized into five themes, namely:

(a)   Economic development and job creation to tackle poverty, economic exclusion and inequality in ways that are sustainable

(b)   Social security and safety nets

(c)   Relations between those who govern and the governed

(d)   GBV and the deepening of women's oppression

(e)   Food and food systems in order to deal with hunger, and

(f)   Shelter and water to address conditions of squalor in which millions of people live

Crosscutting issues are Access to Data and People-Centred Climate Change and Ecological transformation. In the sections below, each of the issues is discussed with an emphasis on views and perspectives from below.

Jobs, economic stimulus, inclusive economy, local production

South Africa has been caught in the grip of high unemployment. Prior to lockdown, 10 million people were unemployed. In the period since the State of Disaster was declared 2 million lost their jobs. Almost all stakeholders agree that the highest imperative is to create jobs.

Previous interventions have not achieved the results promised. There have been various reasons advanced for this. The World Bank cites education and skills as the biggest challenge. Government has sometimes criticized the conduct of the private sector, saying many local businesses are 'disinvesting' – not using the cash on their balance sheet to invest in manufacturing and other new productive enterprises. Lately, the inadequate supply of electricity has become a major constraint to economic growth.

One of the enduring weaknesses of government plans has been the failure to recognize that aggregate growth does not necessarily address unemployment and poverty. In many instances while households have increased incomes, it has most often been the case that rich households gain more than poor households, according to Prof Haroon Bhorat, "resulting in a growth that is not pro-poor."[1]

In the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), key stakeholders have engaged with the government around economic policy. This process was overtaken by the advent of COVID-19 and its economic impact. On 15 October 2020, President Ramaphosa presented a reconstruction and recovery plan in which he emphasized infrastructure investment and a ''buy local'' campaign as some of the measures the government planned to take.[2] While some aspects of this speech are positive and inspiring, and the extension of the COVID-19 grant received praise, there was also scepticism in many quarters.

Government's past economic development plans have not been a roaring success. Plans such as ASGISA and the National Growth Plans replaced previous national plans without the predecessor plans having achieved their goals. All the plans are built on the core tenets of Gear (the pivotal economic development plan, adopted in 1996) with its assertion that "the accelerated economic growth associated with stronger employment creation was the key to arriving at an equitable distribution of income and improved standards of living for all". Although government infrastructure investments gave an immense boost, job creation targets proved elusive and the benefits of economic growth "never trickled down."[3] There are also questions about whether government departments were properly aligned behind these plans– and why legislation related to BBEEE, land, mineral resources and employment equity, for example, were not vigorously implemented alongside such plans.

From the perspective of CSOs, the following issues emerge as priority areas within the thematic area of economic development and job creation:

1)   Civil society groups are calling for greater government support for small producers as well as for more decisive steps to remove the barriers they are faced with. They denounce what they refer to as government bias in favour of Big Agriculture. Small producers, including beneficiaries of land restitution, struggle with inadequate resources (including access to finance), the absence of extension services and the presence of monopolies which block access to markets.

2)   Many civil society groups express concern about high levels of youth unemployment. One of the government measures to support youth entrepreneurship is the Umsobomvu Youth Fund. Another is the incentive scheme called Youth Employment Scheme. Firstly, such measures are inadequate

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[1] See https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/47366456/monograph-6-reprop65-isandla-institute

[2] See https://www.gov.za/speeches/president-cyril-ramaphosa-south-africa%E2%80%99s-economic-reconstruction-and-recovery-plan-15-oct

[3] See Mosala and Venter at https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12114-017-9260-2

given the scale of the youth unemployment challenge and evidenced by the sustained high rates of youth unemployment. Secondly, a critical issue is that government usually announces new youth initiatives without adequate mechanisms for finding and bridging or connecting the eligible young people to the different initiatives.

3) For many civil society groups, there is a tension between the idea of economic growth (which most stakeholders see as key to creating employment) and environmental impacts. Environmental groups have been known to oppose new projects in, for example, the extractive industries. These groups often simultaneously express frustration that government is moving too slowly on investing in renewables and creating "green jobs," it fails to sufficiently support small producers. Although departments such as the Department of Environmental Affairs, Forestry and Fisheries have created tens of thousands of jobs in projects such as *Working for Water* and *Working on Fire*,[4] government as a whole can do more. Line departments and government at other tiers can do so much more to enrol youth into paid work involving environmental protection and restoration, community safety, community food growing and maintenance of community-level amenities.

4) Together with trade unions, CSOs demand a much more expansive stimulus package. Many CSOs support the trade unions in their demand for a R1-trillion stimulus to assist with economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19.

Social security and safety nets

An adequate social security system is a pivotal element of a shared growth path. South Africa has a fairly extensive social security net – one of the biggest expenditure items in the national budget. However, from the point of view of many CSOs and trade unions – against the backdrop of low wages, the pressures facing many households and the implementation flaws of a means-tested system – a much better system would be a universal basic income grant.[5] Rather than a drain on the country, proponents argue that such a monthly universal payment, increasing the spending power of South Africans on the lowest economic rungs, would act as a stimulus to the economy.

Recognizing the existence of other grants and the time it would take to restructure the current social grant system, some proponents are pushing for an interim step, the Basic Income Grant (BIG). They are demanding that government provide a basic income support to all persons aged from 18 to 59, including caregivers who receive the child support grant.[6]

The Black Sash has examined the implementation of a Basic Income Grant in countries which have adopted it, namely India, Namibia, Finland, and Kenya. In a report, Black Sash notes that in Namibia for example: "Before the BIG, 76% of residents fell below the poverty line; this was reduced to 36% within one year of introducing the pilot."

They also examined the emergency income relief during COVID-19 and concluded that:

"Whilst these countries have taken the initiative to scale up or introduce new social protection initiatives for their most vulnerable citizens in response to the Coronavirus, it has also highlighted the need for a more permanent solution, one that would ensure people on the margins of society are taken care of. A good social protection programme is one that allows individuals to build resilience overtime and ensures that they eventually migrate out of poverty."[7]

In a campaign entitled the "Basic Income Support for people aged 18 to 59 NOW!" the advocacy organization, amandla.mobi has collected 43901 signatures. Sixty-three organizations support the campaign, including the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, COPAC, the Women on Farms Project, South African Domestic Services and Allied Workers Union and Botshabelo Unemployment Movement.[8]

The idea of income support is only one element of a system of comprehensive social security or what has been termed a national social protection floor through which no one should fall. The ILO's guidance to member states in building comprehensive social security systems argues that such a social protection floor should comprise at least the following basic social security guarantees:

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[4] https://www.environment.gov.za/strategicissues/jobcreation

[5] https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2020-09-13-why-all-south-africans-should-back-a-basic-income-grant/

[6] See https://amandla.mobi/a-case-for-basic-income-support/

[7] See https://www.blacksash.org.za/images/campaigns/basicincomesupport/BasicIncomeSupport2020.pdf or Engenas Senona, Basic income Support: A Case for South Africa, July 2020, Black Sash, p22

[8] https://awethu.amandla.mobi/petitions/basic-income-support-for-aged-18-to-59-now

(i)   Access to a nationally defined set of goods and services, constituting essential health care, including maternity care, which meets the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality;

(ii)   Basic income security for children, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;

(iii)   Basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability; and

(iv)   Basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for older persons."[9]

South Africa has not yet achieved a national social protection floor, although the country has made important strides. The challenges lie in sustaining and enhancing what has been achieved as well as addressing major challenges such as the lack of a basic income support and widespread barriers to affordable quality health care services.

On social protection, the country has some way to go to a rights-based framework as well as evidence-based setting of targets. Noting that South Africa's constitution provides for rights consistent with the ILO guidelines, van den Heever notes that what is required, is greater clarity of minimum standards, enforceable legal instruments, the identification of gaps, and plans – framed in a rights-based framework – for closing those gaps.[10]

For the present, the focus of a critical mass of organizations is on a Basic Income Grant (BIG). The Basic Income Grant has surfaced repeatedly in discussion of relief measures as well as in discussions of specific topics such as food security, combating poverty and economic stimulus mechanisms. The demands for a standard unconditional monthly income support has re-surfaced because millions more people have been plunged into hunger, many more have joined the ranks of the unemployed and because it will take a variety of measures to reignite South Africa's economy. Indications are that resistance to the Basic Income Grant in some quarters notwithstanding, more and more South Africans accept that the basic income grant has a critical role to play in addressing the immediate humanitarian crisis, longer term developmental goals and stimulating the economy. The Basic Income Grant features prominently in the change agenda of numerous civil society organizations, working in coordination with trade unions and key social movements such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the Federation of Unions of South Africa and the National Council of Trade Unions.[11]

However, it is possible that human rights groups and other civil society role players will, in time, expand their focus to more forcefully include other elements of a social protection floor.

Relations between those who govern and the governed

South Africa has a good democracy, rooted in a Constitution that has been widely applauded by South Africans and by experts beyond South Africa. It is robust and has so far been able to act as a beacon through moments of tension and conflict. At the same time, this same constitutional democracy has not led to the realization of socio-economic rights contained in the constitution for millions of people;[12] the Constitution is necessary. How can our democracy be strengthened and deepened? Such deepening is one of the key paths towards the realization, for all, of the rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The imperative to strengthening democracy arises in the context of COVID-19 of the following pertinent factors:

• *A sporadic breakdown of trust between communities (geographic communities or communities of interest) and government that resulted in wilful non-compliance of the Disaster and Risk Management Act led by the Department of Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA)*: The KT Resilience Project found that in Alexandra township a substantial part of the Alex community refused to comply with regulations after members of the army shot a resident, Collins Khoza. Similarly, taxi associations decided to break lockdown rules and unilaterally exceeded the restriction on the permitted numbers of passengers.

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[9] https://www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/legal-advice/WCMS_205341/lang--en/index.htm#:~:text=The%20Social%20Protection%20Floors%20Recommendation,accessible%20to%20all%20in%20need

[10] See Van den Heever, Alex, 2012, SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOOR FOR SOUTH AFRICA CONCEPT NOTE Developed for the International Labour or https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334971031_SOCIAL_PROTECTION_FLOOR_FOR_SOUTH_AFRICA_CONCEPT_NOTE_Developed_for_the_International_Labour_Office

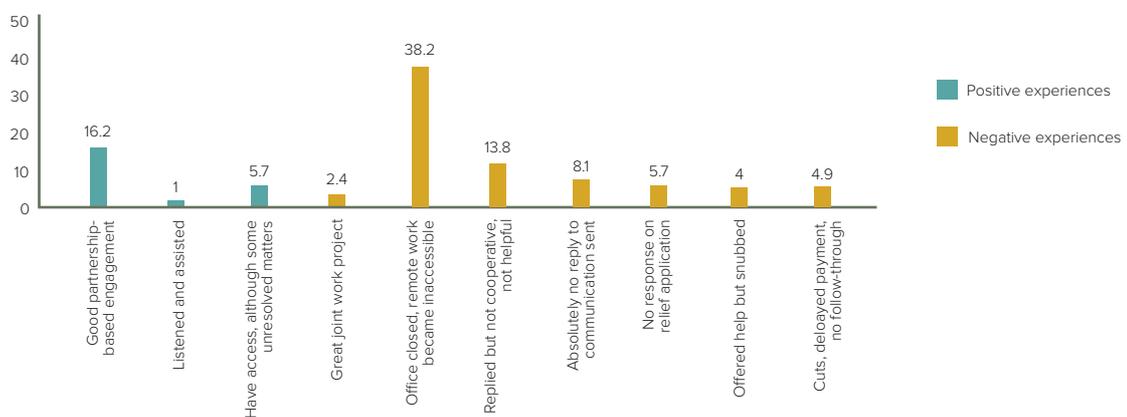[11] These trade unions strongly recommend that government adopt a basic income grant: the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the Federation of Unions of South Africa, the National Council of Trade Unions and the South African Federation of Trade Unions. See https://www.newframe.com/government-and-labour-clash-over-economic-policy/

[12] See the work of the Foundations for Human Rights on this

- *A more general sense of the fraying of the compact between communities and government during the management of COVID-19:* On the one hand, this arose from communication missed-steps on the part of government, something that the president conceded to when he said in May 2020: "Some of the actions we have taken have been unclear, some have been contradictory and some have been poorly explained.[13]" On the other hand, it may be linked to a broader approach as argued by Steven Friedman who noted that, even as government was consulting with certain influential groups, the poor experience government's instructions inordinately top-down and authoritarian. The President appeared to concur when he told citizens in his 13 May 2020 speech that "enforcement has sometimes been inconsistent and too harsh."[14] Friedman wrote: "The problem here is the government's lack of political capacity, its inability to form a relationship with voters which would enable them to work together against a common threat."[15]

- *Even in the pre-pandemic period, the huge number of monthly service delivery protests, many of them continuing in the current time.[16]* In a research report, those who participate in such protests argued that such protests were a desperate means for local governments to take note of and respond to grievances.[17] Although there are other issues at play, the most commonly cited reason for the protests is a lack of service delivery on the part of municipalities.[18] In many studies there is reference, for example, to an acute housing shortage, poor service delivery and a neglect of infrastructure. In addition, a key underlying factor is the breakdown in channels of communication between people and community. According to Christmas, "The frequency of the protests and the violent incidents that mark them clearly demonstrate the extent to which channels of communication between government and communities have broken down."[19]

- *High levels of frustration over the lack of accountability over corruption*: In a 2019 survey, 81% of South Africans believed that corruption was getting worse. On the one hand, democracy should mean corruption will have consequences such as prosecution of or jail time for perpetrators. This is the root of public frustration over corruption – after many years since the 'state capture was uncovered' and

CSO experiences of communication with government

Close to 15% of CSO respondents had a good experience and 36% were partially satisfied. As far as communication goes, there are positive dimensions. At the same time, negative experiences were prominent: 49% had a negative experience. A significant number felt that government became inaccessible behind a wall of "closed offices: and the more 'remote' communication/work-from-home realities of COVID-19.

[15] https://theconversation.com/south-africa-is-failing-on-COVID-19-because-its-leaders-want-to-emulate-the-first-world-142732

[16] See an example of such protests here: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/plettenberg-bay-n2-protests-stop-after-weeks/

[17] See https://www.csvr.org.za/docs/thesmokethatcalls.pdf

[18] See https://dullahomarinstitute.org.za/multilevel-govt/local-government-bulletin/volume-9-issue-4-september-october-2007/vol-9-no-4-service-delivery-protests-failure-to-deliver.pdf

[19] https://dullahomarinstitute.org.za/multilevel-govt/local-government-bulletin/volume-9-issue-4-september-october-2007/vol-9-no-4-service-delivery-protests-failure-to-deliver.pdf. See also https://www.polity.org.za/article/the-reasons-behind-service-delivery-protests-in-south-africa-2009-08-05

the State of Capture report was released in November 2016, there are almost no completed court cases which have ended in convictions. In the SA context, we have also seen political figures associated with corruption, according to Corruption Watch, undermine "key pillars of democracy which are responsible for holding those in power to account" such as Parliament and the criminal justice system.[20]

• *The gulf between organized civil society organizations and government as illustrated during the emergency response to COVID-19*: Civil society did not have a seat, even on an ad-hoc basis, at the table where the national responses were being planned and co-ordinated. In addition, a majority of civil society organizations – as reported in the Community Resilience Survey – had negative communication experiences with government, including a lack of replies and sometimes low levels of co-operation. Government engaged much better with business and trade unions and maintained an open door with specific sectors. Representatives of (selected/hand-picked?) sectors were consulted as part of the management of the pandemic. This was not the same for civil society organizations.

• *There is an ongoing increase in the numbers of voters who gradually simply stay away from the polls and thus refrain from voting*: Many analysts argue that this is a sign that people are losing faith in elections as a means of effecting positive change.[21]

If South Africa is to harness the contributions of all sectors in overcoming poverty and inequality and to mobilize community enthusiasm for local, provincial and national programmes, change-makers will need to pay attention to reducing the social distance between elected leaders and the people and between the governed and those who govern. Government and civil society need to find platforms, forums, and better channels for engagement and, through such engagement, restore relationships of trust, accountability and, to a greater degree, the sense of working in unison towards shared national objectives. This should involve better listening on the part of government officials and respecting the President's call to civil society when he said: "Civil society needs to continue to play its role in holding government to account …."[22] It should also entail reinvigorating structures for participation, ensuring consequences such as dismissal and/or prosecution for corruption, meaningful and timely responses on grievances raised by communities and open engagement with constituencies about the conduct they expect from public representatives.

GBV and deepening of women's oppression

The stringent lockdown period has witnessed an increase in cases of gender-based violence. At the same time, COVID-19 deepens the marginalization of women and girls in society.

The connections between COVID-19 and violence against women and girls has surfaced in the media but, arguably, all the impacts have not been sufficiently highlighted. Covid has had differential impacts on women and girls. Over and above the health impacts (danger to health and the measures that all citizens have been required to take), COVID-19 has had additional impacts for women and girls.

With regard to the core issues – the health and economic impacts and the management thereof – government planning has often been gender blind. "Apart from those relating to GBV, most of the regulations and interventions have been largely gender blind and / or gender neutral," the Department of Women has said. It noted that despite the evidence that women are worst affected, the deliberations by the workstream in the National Command Council was generally gender-blind.

The National Department of Women, Youth and people with Disabilities (hereafter referred to as DoW) noted that the pandemic has threatened the lives "of all human beings" but added:

Evidence shows that the pandemic and the responses to it exacerbate existing developmental fault lines, i.e. inequality based on gender, race and geographical location.

• Worst impacts are often felt by the most vulnerable, particularly women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and deprivation.

• The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened the inequality and deprivation experienced by women and girls, increased poverty and unemployment in South Africa.[23]

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[20] See https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/81-of-sa-citizens-say-corruption-is-here-to-stay-19407783

[21] https://www.news24.com/news24/elections/voices/the-20-million-that-got-away-the-mourning-after-the-elections-20190519

[22] See https://www.daff.gov.za/docs/speeches/SONA%20JUNE%202019.pdf

[23] http://www.wvlsa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Department-of-Women-Youth-and-Persons-with-Disabilities.pptx

A DoW survey conducted during the early period of the State of Disaster found that most respondents were supportive of government's interventions (90% made up of about 37% as fair, 32% as good and 21% as excellent. At the same time it found that respondents' biggest concerns were women's poverty. The results included worries about: reduced incomes (77.8%); women's safety and security, including gender-based violence and femicide (71.6%); a deterioration in women's economic inclusion (61.7%), women's increased burden of care work in the household (61.7%) and women's health (60.5%).[24]

The police force's gender-based violence hotline received 2 300 calls in the first five days of lockdown — nearly three times the gender-based violence, particularly intimate partner violence calls than received previously. In a statement on 12 June, they condemned the murders of women, including pregnant Tshegofatso Pule found hanging from a tree, Naledi Phangindawo who was stabbed, and Sanele Mfaba who was dumped by a tree in a Soweto township.[25] The President linked rate prior to lockdown.[26] President, Cyril Ramaphosa railed against the upsurge during the easing of lockdown restrictions as the country entered Coronavirus alert Level 3, while Minister Bheki Cele linked rising crime to the easing of the 9-week ban on alcohol sales on 1 June.[27]

Although there were not many protests on GBV, organizations in many sectors, including embassies, arts organizations and organizations formed to combat GBV hosted webinars to draw attention to sexual violence against women and gender oppression. Also, the organization Change.org (which announced that four million people worldwide had signed up to support causes linked to sexual violence in the context of Covid) reported that South Africans featured prominently among those using digital means for this kind of activism.[28]

A group of organizations involved in gender work which met in Johannesburg on 10 September articulated these concerns:

• "Women were forced to stay under confined conditions with abusive partners due to lockdown restrictions.

• Access to protection orders and police services was limited as these services were closed in certain areas or depending on the infections at a particular service point.

• The increased rate of unemployment amongst women and informal traders made the provision for basic needs difficult and almost impossible for women who are the bread winners in their homes as trade restrictions were put in place.

• Increased risk infection where women went out despite the lockdown restrictions in order to ensure that their children were fed and supported.

• Inability to access some basic health services such as contraceptives, HIV medication etc.

• Women with special needs unable to access certain services.

• People living with LGBTIQ+ persons needed to be educated on how to treat the LGBTIQ+ persons instead of rejecting them

• Corruption and 'sextortion' in the distribution of food parcels, PPE materials and social grants.

• The increased burden of unpaid care work of women who are at home looking after the infected and affected as well as their children whilst schools and Early Childhood Development centres remained closed with children now attending school on an ad-hoc basis.

• Widening of the economic inequality between men and women economic justice

• Increased rate of mental health patients who have had difficulty being in lockdown, losing their employment and various other issues."

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[24] See http://www.wvlsa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Department-of-Women-Youth-and-Persons-with-Disabilities.pptx

[25] See http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/press-statements/president-cyril-ramaphosa-condemns-surge-murders-women-and-children

[26] https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/gender-violence-COVID-19-lockdown-south-africa/

Food security and food systems

Following a survey in May, *All Africa* found that South Africa food security at a household level was low, and that one in three adults went to bed hungry as they did not have enough food to eat in their homes. A fifth of respondents lost weight during the COVID-19 lockdown period because of a lack of food.[29]

Another survey, involving two local universities, found that: "Of the adults we interviewed, 47% reported that their home ran out of money to buy food in April. Between May and June, 21% reported that someone in their household went hungry in the last seven days. And 15% reported that a child went hungry in the same period."

This is against a wider and longer-term problem of hunger in SA. Food security is thus a burning issue: it has been lying under the surface, stalking low-income communities throughout South Africa. Now it's been foregrounded as never before, with COVID-19 shining a light on it. It was previously less prominent as an urgent advocacy not because CSOs don't care about it. Rather, most view themselves as tackling the challenge of inadequate food availability in households through their work on poverty eradication.

In the broader sense, the issue of food security and hunger comes up in one of two ways: (a) either as a response in relation to urgent humanitarian crisis work (and a huge chunk of the World Food Programme's work is in war zones), or (b) in terms of a fierce concern about the underlying issues (and this work attracts persons involved in the former as well as a broader range of change of agents and activists(for example those striving for environmental justice). In terms of the latter, the underlying focus can be shallow, for example, empowering communities in terms of food security or a deeper critique of the food system.

In South Africa, a range of organizations (many of them with words like "hunger" and "food" in their title) have been concerned with emergency relief, undertaking sterling work each week and in each month in actual supply of food to people. Many of these entities are huge, well-organized and often acting as a bridge between the affluent and supportive stakeholders in business on the one hand, and communities on the other.

At the same time, the Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Survey showed the extent of work by non-profit organisations (NPOs) and ordinary people working who became involved in addressing the food security issues. This was the primary emergency response, with 72% of organizational respondents to the survey focusing on it.

CSO involvement in addressing the SA COVID-19 food crisis
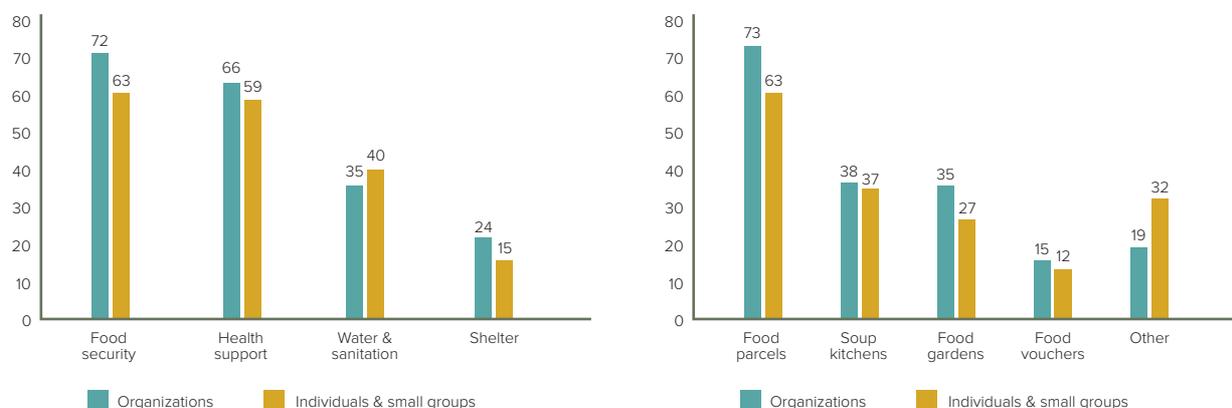
The majority of organizations were involved in food security during this period, with distribution of food parcels and running soup kitchens taking priority. Food gardens showed an increasing focus.

Breakdown: the food security responses included:

• Food parcels provision

• Distribution of cooked food at soup kitchenss

• Work on food gardens

• Provision of food voucher

• Other: This included connecting small producers with households, information dissemination and working on school nutrition programmes

KT COVID-19 Community Resilience Survey, Sept 2020

[29] https://allafrica.com/stories/202005200332.html

During the era of COVID-19 we have seen a cluster of organizations emerge who are focusing in a targeted way on the deeper patterns of a food system which denies food sovereignty. They are rallying together under the banner of agro-ecology. They raise fundamental questions about Big Agriculture, a key role player in the industrial system which controls much of the food that is branded and packaged for consumption and that has mastered producing food at scale, but all too often at the expense of public health. They are part of a larger cluster of organizations (environmental/climate change organizations) whose overarching focus is climate change, but who also raise food and livelihoods as a prominent issue, criticizing the way food production and consumption is organized under global capitalism and the way it damages the ecosystem and undermines the interests of future generations. Almost all the groups, to a greater or lesser degree, assert that in a different people-centred world people would have equitable access to food, food would be a right and food production would shift to the favouring of small-scale agriculture whilst food retail will be dominated by near-sourcing.

A small group of organizations cutting across these clusters are considering ways of using the courts to force government to give greater substance and meaning to the Right to Food. The SA Constitution under Section 27 states that everyone has the right to access food. Many of these CSOs argue that it's not enough to have it as a principle or ideal in the constitution — what is needed is a framework law and mechanisms to operationalize that principle. Acting under the umbrella of the C-19 People's Coalition, a cluster of CSOs are considering litigation to compel government to take these next steps.

The following is contained in the Climate Justice Charter which was launched and handed over to Parliament on 16 November 2019, with the demand that Parliament adopt it:

"The current industrial food system produces hunger, uses water inefficiently, destroys nature, releases carbon and is generally unhealthy. Commercial fishing has destroyed marine ecosystems and undermined the rights of subsistence fishers. Every community must prioritize small scale, agro-ecological farming to meet local needs."[30]

For the mass of civil society organisations, aside from continuing with soup kitchens and food parcel delivery, the starting point in the coming months will be:

a.   The promotion of seed and food gardens, as well as co-ordinated struggles around land access for community food gardens.

b.   Demands for continuation, and proper roll-out, of the school nutrition scheme.

c.   Demands that the top up of COVID-19 grants for those in the SASSA system and that government social grant payments to cover individuals from 18 to 59 years old – this as a precursor to the introduction of universal basic income grant.

d.   Government sustaining its efforts, spearheaded by the Competition Commission,[31] to monitor and rein-in unreasonable food price escalation in the wake of COVID-19.[32]

In the President's speech to launch the economic recovery plan, the President noted that extreme poverty and food insecurity is set to continue. In this context government would extend the Special COVID-19 grant for another three months. The stimulus would also include support to "75 000 small-scale farmers whose production was disrupted by the pandemic".[33]

Housing and related facilities

South Africa faces a huge housing challenge. Although most households reside in informal dwellings, by 2018, 13% were still living in informal dwellings. In many cases, these places are defined by immense need, lack of basic infrastructure as well as lack of a good supply of potable water. According to the Department of Human Settlements, the 'illegal' status informal settlements lack access to basic infrastructure services as well as social and economic amenities[34] and, in the words of the United Nations" usually lack, or are cut-off from, basic services and city infrastructure".[35]

South Africa has 2 700 informal settlements[36] with Gauteng, North West and Western Cape provinces having the highest number of households in informal settlements.

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[30] See https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Final-Climate-Justice-Charter_EN_August2020.pdf

[31] See https://businesstech.co.za/news/finance/435933/the-lockdown-saw-a-hike-in-food-prices-across-south-africa-and-some-groceries-are-still-more-expensive-than-before/

[32] See https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/south-africa-needs-better-food-price-controls-to-shield-poor-people-from-COVID-19-fallout/

[33] See https://www.gov.za/speeches/president-cyril-ramaphosa-south-africa%E2%80%99s-economic-reconstruction-and-recovery-plan-15-oct

[34] See a presentation entitled National Upgrading Support Programme Capacity Building Programme dated 3 Aug 2020

[35] http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-22_Informal-Settlements-2.0.pdf

[36] https://www.seri-sa.org/images/NGO_Submission_re_de-densification_and_COVID-19.pdf

There have been significant government efforts and accomplishments in building homes. According to the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, "due to government's massive national housing programme implemented since 1994, about a third of the total residential property market are estimated to have been fully-subsidized by the government.[37]

At the same time, government estimates a national shortfall of 2 million homes. However, in the last four years or so the government had built less than 600 000 homes with just under 580,000 homes having been delivered during the first four years of the ANC's current administration's term (2015-18)[38] . The delivery rate of approximately 185 homes a year is far too low[39] . In fact, according to Stats-SA, housing projects are not reducing the percentage of households in informal dwellings."[40]

In South Africa, the housing shortage is also proxy for lack of community development and, to the millions directly impacted by this shortage, denial of the dignity that is enshrined in SA's constitution and which they should enjoy in a democracy founded on human rights.

During COVID-19, the chickens have come home to roost. Government and South African citizens realized how far and wide this lack of dignity extended, and how this situation imperilled the lives of inhabitants of informal settlements during the pandemic.

As COVID-19 hit, the call went out from the UN for measures to be "taken to protect groups at higher risk of marginalization, such as the homeless, women, children and those living in informal settlements and safety in their respective places of habitation."[41]

The situation of people living in informal settlements underscores the notion that while all people are affected by the pandemic, not all people are impacted equally. The challenges faced by people in dense settlements included close proximity (and thus an inability to social distance) and lack of hygiene facilities, including the lack of water. This is quite apart from the enormous challenges faced as a consequence of their reliance, by and large, on informal and low paid work.

While many informal settlements now have access to emergency water tanks, the majority still access irregular water supply a few times a week and do not have access to adequate hand sanitizers or soap.

During the pandemic, a COVID-19 Informal Settlement Sector Task Team and Engagement Platform was established as an engagement platform between government and CSOs.[42] The stakeholders agreed to partner, but the compact took many weeks to sign. A respondent to the KT Community Resilience survey noted that, "*We initiated a joint CSO submission to NDHS in April to mobilize against de-densification. This led to a national virtual platform, a Partnership Framework Agreement between CSOs and NDHS (which took over two months) and a planned engagement plan (which has taken another two months and is not yet done*)."

These 14 organizations identified the key actions that government needed to take. They opposed the de-densification strategies which were being taken forward in a way, which SERI described as a form of eviction. They described such strategies as disruptive, complex and can "equate to eviction and forced removals". Their demands included the following:

a)   Cover all informal settlements

b)   Prioritize some settlements for particular interventions based on their profile e.g. water needs

c)   Address water, sanitation, and hygiene issues on an urgent basis

d)   Draw in DSD support for vulnerable groups such as children and older people.

As far as longer-term strategies go, the organizations called on government to accelerate in situ upgrading and remove obstacles to progress on this. They also demanded incremental services provision and blocking the moving of the position of some dwellings to free space, for example for emergency vehicles to access areas or for the provision of services[43].

[37] http://housingfinanceafrica.org/app/uploads/V21-SOUTH-AFRICA.pdf

[38] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48093711

[39] https://etd.cput.ac.za/bitstream/handle/20.500.11838/2819/200647024-Mayongo-Nwabisa-MTech-Business-Administration-Project-Management-BUS-2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[40] http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182018.pdf

[41] Cited in a submission by the Social Economic Rights Institute: SocioEconomicRightsInstituteSouthAfrica_Submission.docx (live.com)

[42] https://www.seri-sa.org/images/NGO_Submission_re_de-densification_and_COVID-19.pdf

[43] https://www.seri-sa.org/images/NGO_Submission_re_de-densification_and_COVID-19.pdf

On water specifically, COVID-19 put the spotlight on the severe water shortage in water-deprived hotspots in urban areas, as well as the huge tracts of the country impacted by drought, including areas such as the central Karoo and eastern Cape.The eastern Cape provincial government announced on 13 May 2020 that, "5 284 rainwater tanks had been delivered and 3 972 installed at sites across the province". A further seven boreholes had been drilled.[44]

Government, as part of its response to COVID-19, ordered municipalities to ensure water is provided to people in overcrowded settlements. This could be through water tankers, boreholes, or storage facilities. In response, the National Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation (DWS) planned for 41,500 emergency water tanks to be dispatched to settlements identified by municipalities with inadequate water services. By July, 20,000 have been delivered. This meant, according to SERI: "While many informal settlements now have access to emergency water tanks, the majority still access irregular water supply few times a week ...."

Other communities across South Africa have also been affected by severe water shortages. In a case study conducted as part of the KT Community Resilience Study, it was reported that communities in Sekhukhune were dependent on a tanker which initially arrived once a week and then once a month.[45] In this case study, which was completed in September 2020, the authors report that, "residents are forced to make use of mine-contaminated water because the municipal taps which were fitted on their properties have not yielded water since their installation more than two years ago. Instead, municipal water tankers were dispatched to deliver water, which is once a month at the most. This situation compels households "to fork out R300 of their hard-earned income to fill tanks of 2 500 litres."

There were similar reports of desperation in other localities. In uMgwalana, a two-hour drive inland from Mthatha in the Eastern Cape, residents have over a period that stretched back to November 2019, have been scooping water out of a muddy hole that used to be a river."[46] Community members indicated that government had provided them with empty water tanks, but since no rain had come, these stood empty.

Thanks to the devastating combination of climate change and failing municipalities, the water issue is set to escalate in South Africa. With global warming impacting harshly on South Africa, bringing with it extreme and unpredictable changing weather patterns, South Africa is likely to see alarming levels of 'dryness' in the period moving towards 2030, according to Scholes, Engelbrech and Vogel. They warned: "Southern Africa is a generally warm and dry region, even without climate change. .... therefore, becoming drastically warmer and drier poses grave risks to the environment and society."[47]

In this context government planning for water and longer-term improvement in water supply will have to be greatly enhanced and budgeted for as a matter of urgency.[48] Furthermore, serious attention should be given to improving the capacity of municipalities to manage and maintain water supply and to jack up water treatment systems in their areas of jurisdiction.

Government support these concerns and has issued a dire warning. According to a statement issued by government in 2019, South Africa faces a country-wide crisis – a deficit of 3 000 billion litres of water annually unless we rehabilitate rivers, fix crumbling infrastructure, and ensure proper water re-use.[49]

Cross-cutting issues

There are three underlying issues which thread their way through the other priority issues, but are also taking prominence in their own right. During the survey they were not foregrounded as prominently as the other issues. However, the first two were mentioned from time to time as solutions to address other issues. The third issue, climate change and related ecological issues, was not cited by many respondents, focused as they are on the immediate crisis. It is raised here because it is critically connected to the other priority issues. Concerned as it is with the sustainability of the base (land, water, air) as well as the relationship between the earth, people and productive systems, the environment emerges as the critical matrix.

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[44] https://allafrica.com/stories/202005150700.html

[46] See Phasha, D and Fenyane P, Community Resilience Case Study: Sekhukhune District, Limpopo Province, September 2020. In this case study the authors noted: "Water shortages range from the lack of municipal water supply, intermittent water supply, dried up boreholes, defective water pumping machines, unskilled and/or insufficient numbers of pump operators or the inconsistent dispatching of water tankers to water-scarce villages."

[47] https://allafrica.com/stories/202005150700.html

[48] In fact, SERI has expressed concern that the steps taken to provide emergency water services will have a negative fiscal impact. "Emergency water provision, while essential, will impact negatively on long term sustainable services delivery, including reducing two thirds of the budget for maintenance and refurbishment of wastewater treatment

[49] https://www.groundup.org.za/article/wastewater-audit-missing-amidst-warning-national-water-shortage/

i. Data access

It is well known that data is crucial for economic development in South Africa. Equitable data access, aside from connectivity required to support the economy in the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 era, is also vital for development, including education, community development, livelihoods, and democratic practice. For CSOs specifically, the organization Civicus has noted that, "there should be reliable, cheap and widespread access to communications platforms and technologies, and civil society personnel should have numerous opportunities to put their views across,"[50] at the same time data costs in South Africa has emerged as a serious impediment to the work of NGOs and CBOs.[51]

COVID-19 has brought about rapid change on almost every front, with greater use of online in business, retail, education, and many other spheres. Communications specialists are telling us that "while the full impact of the pandemic on the global economy, on our way of life and on our psyches will only become clear in the months, years and even decades ahead, it is essential to start strategically preparing for a world in which more and more happens online."[52]

Despite some concessions by the major cellular networks (such as allowing zero-rated access[53] to selected educational and information sites),[54] we have seen the deepening of the digital divide and insufficient corrective action by both regulators and the giant network providers. We have witnessed citizens cut off from access to services, the education of learners and students impeded, proper debates, consultations, and critical engagement across a wider front undermined. The issue of access to data (in campaigns that are variously termed 'Data Must Fall' or 'Data for All') has become more important.

ii. Climate change and related ecological issues

The issue of climate change has been on government's agenda for a significant period and constantly features in state of the nation addresses, even though actual implementation of measures to move

to renewable energy, to build the green economy and to create a culture of reduce, reuse and recycle have been slow. However, during COVID-19 crisis, the risk is that the challenges of addressing climate change and the environment will be side-lined or shunted down the agenda of critical issues to be addressed. Many interest groups in business and even ordinary members of the public – those not making the connection between climate change and food security, for example, may lose sight of the importance and urgency of the climate change issue.

However, a range of civil society groups are likely to keep up the pressure for action to deal with climate change. On 16 October 2020, activists under the banner of the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign presented the Speaker of Parliament with the Climate Justice Charter and called on Parliament to adopt by 16 October 2021, one year later. The charter was drafted by over 150 organizations and emphasizes that stubborn problems (hunger, poverty, economic exclusion, lack of a reliable energy supply for residential use and production, and water shortages) be prioritized, understood and acted on in order to deal with environmental justice issues facing South Africa and the world.

3. CONCLUSION

The Kagiso Trust Community Resilience Project, through its survey, has begun a process of engagement with civil society. This was to understand the ways in which organizations are adapting so they can continue their work in areas such as poverty eradication, combating gender-based violence and working for social justice. It is also to begin a discussion about Priority Issues. Teasing out such priority issues paves the way for coordinated engagement beyond the State of Disaster. It also lays the ground for possible collaborative social partnerships, co-ordinated work to bolster community resilience and joint efforts in the continuing quest to end poverty, inequality, and social injustice. The issues defined in this paper are not new, but they part of a continuing discussion about strategies, focus areas and priority entry points in the struggle for a new social compact for sustained growth and development in South Africa.

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[50] http://www.ngopulse.org/article/state-civil-society-creating-enabling-environment-civil-society

[51] In the Kagiso Trust Community resilience survey, 46% of organisations cited the following as an issue for them: "major struggles around cost of data" which was negatively affecting their work

[52] See Shuane Jordan writing in The Media Online (https://themediaonline.co.za/2020/05/feel-good-campaigns-fine-for-now-but-deploying-data-to-reset-your-business-post-pandemic-is-vital/)

[53] As at 18 June, close to 1000 were zero-rated or were in the process of being approved. See https://www.itweb.co.za/content/wbrpOqgYEXn7DLZn. The process and criteria for zero-rating, which prioritises the education and health sectors, was gazetted by the SA Government. https://www.itweb.co.za/content/mYZRXv9aLQnvOgA8

[54] This was not without a struggle. See the DG Murray Trust's efforts to try to compel MTN to zero-rate the local educational websites of public benefit organizations (PBOs). See https://www.techfinancials.co.za/2020/07/17/mtn-to-oppose-dg-murray-trusts-court-bid/

LOCAL NETWORKING AS PART OF COVID-19 RESPONSE

Monograph: Round Table/ Dialogue 1

COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

KAGISO TRUST | Institutional Capacity Building

ABOUT THE DIALOGUES

The Kagiso Trust Dialogue/Round Table is one of a series of events that have been designed to continue in the process of supporting and strengthening civil society in South Africa. The Trust acknowledges the innovative and creative ways in which people (households, small groups and local organizations) have worked co-operatively in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Kagiso Trust is interested in strengthening community responses under the COVID-19 crisis, as well as, in rebuilding of communities' socio-economic livelihoods going forward, even beyond the pandemic. The key questions around which the dialogues have been designed are:

• How was this creativity/innovation and collaboration developed and sustained?

• How can we carry the lessons learnt into the next phase as we continue to work for a more just, equal, and inclusive society?

The dialogue is linked to Community Resilience Survey[1], and is intended to draw out crucial lessons from the ground on community innovation, creativity and co-ordination at local levels across South Africa. Speakers from various sectors and geographical locations were selected to share their experiences and provide an in-depth analysis in relation to their respective community and organization's resilience and identify potential priorities emerging out of the crisis.

The dialogues are also a means of initiating discussion, debate and awareness about different organizations' dynamic responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and paving the way for further discourse once the knowledge products from the Kagiso Trust Covid-19 are released.

The first two dialogues are about:

(a)   Community-level networking in response to Covid-19 and

(b)   Innovations in working at local level during Covid-19.

ABOUT THE PANELLISTS

| **Sihle Mooi**
Rays of Hope, and the #Hope4Alex initiative (Alexandra, Johannesburg) | **Zelda Hotlzman**
Activist Centre (Cape Town) | **Tokelo Mahlakoane**
Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA) and Women and Mining Affected Communities (WAMUA) (Sekhukhune) | **Faried Domingo**
Bosmont Community Patrol (Bosmont, Johannesburg) |

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[1] 'The Impact of COVID-19 on African Civil Society Organisations. Challenges, Responses and Opportunities' Report. Epic Africa and @ AfricanNGOS. June, 2020

Reflections from key speakers on local networking as part of resilience during the COVID-19 crisis

Tokelo Mahlakoane gave input into the actions taken by the Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA) and Women and Mining Affected Communities (WAMUA). Her perspectives were based on the experiences of the organization in Limpopo under COVID.

MACUA and WAMUA were formed in response to the need to protect the integrity and interests of the people impacted by mining in South Africa. They work with people living in poverty, especially women in mining affected communities, to strengthen their determination, self- confidence, and resistance skills in order to hold mining companies and the government to account for their actions. In addition to this, MACUA and WAMUA are instrumental in monitoring a regulatory mechanism called Social & Labour Plans (SLPs). This is a community-led process of reviewing of crucial documents to determine whether mining company expenditure accurately reflects expenditure on service delivery plans and outcomes for mining affected communities as promised by mining companies.

In terms of the direct, negative impact of COVID-19 on mining affected communities, the pandemic was first and foremost addressed as a health crisis, resulting in countries automatically increasing their health spending budgets. With respect to mining, many governments have established strict rules and employee health and wellness protocols as a condition for workers returning to work; however, they have not extended those same protocols for safety, health and wellness to communities affected by mining.

In small mining affected communities in FetakgomoTubatse local municipality, Limpopo Province, the unknown effect of Covid-19 has left many community members with unanswered questions and concerns regarding the capability of mining companies to manage the requirements regarding employee health including screening, testing and quarantine facilities. These same companies claim to have extended the same support services to communities affected by their operations. However, mining affected communities are yet to see and/ or receive any assistance from the company in terms of screening, testing and contact tracing processes.

Despite this confusion in understanding the role of the mining companies in mitigating the risks of COVD in communities by residents, there are those who believe that as a regulatory process the mine must and should ensure that not only the safety and well-being of their employees, but also the welfare of the communities in the geographical areas in which mines operate. They believe that they're part of the mining sector and therefore they should receive the same treatment as mining employees.

Under the COVID crisis MACUA and WAMUA played a strong role in initiating the provision of food parcels to six vulnerable communities, areas where government failed to provide any support to households and individuals. Prior to the COVID crisis, MACUA and WAMUA activists and volunteers had conducted a social mapping exercise with the assistance of ward committees. This exercise helped the organization to collect data on the most vulnerable households. It was recognized that the provision of social grants by the government was not sufficient to sustain people, hence the decision to assist with food parcels. MACUA and WAMUA distributed food parcels which would have lasted a family of four for a week to 20 households. They focused on Orphan & Vulnerable Children (OVC), People living with Disabilities (PLWD) and less privileged people. The food which was packaged for distribution was sourced from local, small producers, not large-scale commercial suppliers such as Shoprite.

In addition to food parcels, the organization provided dignity packs which were made up of bleach, Dettol, sanitary pads, and toilet tissue to 300 women in the six villages.

Sihle Mooi spoke about how their organization, Rays of Hope in Alexandra Township, working in coordination with partners and other local groups and partners, mounted the #Hope4Alex in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the primary focus of the organization is on community development, education mentoring from early childhood to tertiary levels and work readiness support, the COVID crisis forced them to shift focus to providing humanitarian relief to over 700 households per week in the township.

When the lockdown by President Ramaphosa was announced in March 2020 the media was heavily focused on Alexandra as a place where people were moving freely and not complying with the enforced restrictions. There is a context behind this situation – people's immediate reaction to the COVID crisis was one of fear, confusion, and denial of the existence of the virus. Their non- compliance with the regulations was a reflection of the already existing hopelessness which people were experiencing. Alexandra Township previously faced deep social and

economic crises of its own on a daily basis. Access to decent housing, water, sanitation, food, nutrition, medical and other services were problematic even before COVID become an issue to deal with. In other words, the community had worse issues to worry about than what COVID presented, such as sustaining livelihoods and survival. This condition explains their perceived laisse-faire response to the sudden state-imposed instructions under lockdown.

Despite this context, the COVID crisis could not be ignored. Alexandra Township is a high-density area with massive overcrowding, making social distancing almost impossible to comply with. Rays of Hope recognized that containing the spread of the virus, and the need to reduce the already pre-existing high levels of vulnerability, was urgent. This led to the initiation of the #HopeforAlex project.

The #HopeforAlex project geared itself towards packaging and distributing food parcels to 700 vulnerable households per week (reaching a total of 73 000 people over the lockdown period), providing education on safety and sanitation, and supplying hygiene products and medicines (mainly flu medication and immune-boosters). Once the initiative was underway, Rays of Hope realized that providing immediate relief to households was not sufficient. As the demands for assistance grew, they became aware of other issues, such as the growing rate of gender-based violence, mental trauma and domestic violence during the lockdown period. The need for counselling services became more pronounced and was subsequently offered by the organization.

Several challenges were faced:

- Co-ordination between several organizations working under urgent circumstances meant that there is limited time for planning and reflection.

- The vetting processes which are required by social workers to determine the level and type of need were time-consuming.

- Mobilizing financial resources to enable a quick response was urgent. This was addressed by approaching the private sector and especially businesses operating in neighbouring Sandton for financial assistance. The media was used to raise awareness of the initiative, and this enabled further donations to be sourced from individuals and businesses.

- Organizational staff themselves experienced high levels of trauma in having to deal with an urgent humanitarian crisis (almost equivalent to a war situation). They still faced the risk of exposure to the virus by operating on a daily basis on the front-lines, even though PPE was provided.

Zelda Hotlzman shared how local level organizing, similar to the anti-apartheid strategies used by the UDF in the 1980's, helped in their response to the COVID crisis. The centre works with various stakeholders in townships of Cape Town (NGOs, CBOs, social movements) to strengthen their community activism.

In response to the COVID crisis, almost 400 organizations united in solidarity to participate in addressing the crisis in anticipation of a slow, sometimes even non-response by government to support communities of vulnerable people in the Western Cape. They mapped out vulnerable working class and poor communities and focused on a pro-poor, just response to the pandemic. Through the Bonteheuwel Development Forum (BDF) and other local community-based organizations, they embarked on a door-to-door campaign to assess the level of need, collect relevant data speedily, and move forward with a rapid relief response which was relevant and applicable to the immediate needs of the communities. The outcome of this localised strategy was more beneficial to communities than that which government structures (local, provincial, and national) were able to do.

They provided education on the virus, facilitated critical engagement on who is most affected by the virus and provided information on where to access food. Through the formation of 'kitchen assemblies' on every street/block in townships and on the Cape Flats, greater community solidarity emerged. This formation was similar to the street committees that existed under the banner of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the fight against apartheid.

Understanding the context within which this response was designed is critically important. Prior to COVID, these same communities already faced a contagion of their own, namely deep rooted, structural inequality,

poverty, underemployment, and unemployment and socio-economic injustices. COVID merely amplified these conditions and revealed a state that was not capable or responsive to the realities of poor and working-class communities. The state expected people to social distance, maintain hygiene standards, have access to water, food and nutrition, but these were already pre- COVID challenges for poor communities.

Over and above, the COVID crisis exposed the level of brutality which the state exerted during the time when poor people were evicted from their communities and placed on the peripheries of the city. This happened during lockdown and while it was winter. Corollaries with this situation can be made with the treatment of the poor during the Spanish flu outbreak and Bubonic plague in 18th and 19th century Europe, where people were ruthlessly moved en mass away from their places of occupation and 'hidden' from the rest of society. In the case of Cape Town under COVID, these forced removals were not camouflaged or hidden, showing the capacity of the state to exercise force against the poor even during a humanitarian crisis.

Tshisimani Centre's response to the pandemic was based on the building of people's power to challenge a non-responsive, non-caring state, to develop alternative models for action, and place emphasis on an approach where communities themselves embed their own path rather than expect direction from the state or NGOs.

The notion of 'who stirs the pot holds the power' reflects the prominence of the role which women played under the COVID response. From initially providing relief packages to households, the momentum of action grew into a direction of food security and eventually food sovereignty (e.g. seed-sharing, food gardens, sustainable communities which can fend for themselves).

Women began to realize that self-organising is a form of building people's power. Under COVID, women organizing and responding was considered one of the most powerful forces to emerge. The COVID crisis showed that engendered community power leads to higher community resilience.

Faried Domingo chairperson of the Bosmont Community Patrol Forum (CPF) shared how an organization which was originally established to focus on community policing, broadened its mandate towards providing critical humanitarian relief under the COVID crisis in areas such as Claremont, Newlands, Bosmont and other adjoining areas to the west of Johannesburg city centre.

As soon as the lockdown was announced the organization decided that food provision was an immediate necessity in the area. Despite not having the financial resources to undertake this task, they embarked on a local fundraising drive which involved going from house to house and approaching local businesses to make donations towards their COVID relief strategy. The intention was to collect, package and distribute food parcels to households which would last for one day. As the demand grew it emerged that the level and depth of food hunger and need was far greater than that which had been anticipated and so the food parcels were packaged to last for three days.

In addition to the food parcels, the CPF targeted pensioners as the most vulnerable as they were in an age group which was high risk for COVID fatalities. Support to them entailed transporting them to collect their medicines and grants, so that they would not have to queue and be exposed to the virus.

Further to these activities, the CPF partnered with a local doctor to conduct COVID tests at a household level. Testing and tracing was encouraged so that households with COVID-positive individuals could be supported with delivery of food, medication, and other necessities in order that they could properly self-isolate.

Between lockdown levels 5 and 3 a total of 2 300 food parcels were distributed in the area. This activity is still continuing under level 1, but mainly to the most vulnerable households and individuals.

Over time, other CPFs began to embark on a similar strategy of assisting their communities. Even though the South African Police Service (SAPS) curtailed community policing during the lockdown curfew restrictions, the CPF instead assisted the SAPS to ensure that community safely protocols were followed, and with calming situations where there was conflict over food parcel distributions from a central point.

KEY ISSUES AND RESPONSES

1. For MACUA: How can mining affected communities communicate and mobilize other communities beyond one local geographical locality?

The social mapping exercise the MACUA and WAMUA activists and volunteers conduct showed the challenges faced by communities as a result of the mines. Under COVID, mining affected communities expected government and mining companies to provide support, but the reality was that they did not receive anything. MACUA and WAMUA are not even acknowledged by government even though what they were doing under COVID to support people was what government was supposed to be doing.

2. For Activist Centre: How can the street committees which were created under the COVID response be sustained and even be replicated as a community development model beyond Cape Town?

The Bonteheuwel Development Forum (BDF) is a networked organization of 16 other community structures across Gugulethu, Khayalitsha and the Cape Flats. As a network we aim to build the sustainability of local structures in preparation for the upcoming local government elections (which are often a site for conflict), share experiences and lessons with each other, and redress apartheid-era spatial planning issues. This is an opportunity for solidifying the mobilization and solidarity efforts that emerged under COVID.

3. For Rays of Hope: How can desperate communities such as Alexandra Township still maintain cohesion going forward beyond COVID-19?

Alexandra Township has a long and tragic history of dislocation and inequality which has not been resolved to date. The community sits both physically and economically side-by-side with growing prosperity and enrichment, whilst it simultaneously spirals into worsening vulnerability. The Alex/ Sandton divide is a reflection of the rest of South Africa. It is important to raise awareness that their respective prosperity is inter-connected and inter-linked. Reaching out to businesses in Sandton was one way of raising this awareness. It is important for us to build on this opportunity which COVID presented where businesses contributed to support Alexandra township during the pandemic.

Alex itself is a diverse community. Civil society organizations should seek to model the collaboration strategy that was experienced under the COVID response. People in the community should be made aware that they are all facing the same vulnerability despite their country of origin. It is an ongoing challenge for us to build this understanding, but it is possible if people are willing to work together and leverage opportunities which are available.

4. For Bosmont Community Patrolling Forum: Do the solidarity experiences and strategies from the apartheid-era resonate with the CPF under COVID, and how can these be used to strengthen local level/community resilience going forward?

Our experience from both the anti-apartheid struggles and now COVID has shown that one person with a good group can make a difference. However, it is important to recognize that people can and do suffer from burnout, especially when the people and financial resources dwindle, and a few people are left to do a lot of work. Consistency is required to start small and grow gradually. When resources run low, then local structures should look towards targeting local, new, and emerging businesses to support their efforts.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

There is a wide recognition that the COVID crisis presented opportunities for galvanizing, sensitizing and conscientizing people and communities which will probably not be experienced again for a long while. Therefore, it's important to keep the incredible momentum going from now. One of the ways of doing this is to maintain co-ordination, contact and consistency in raising awareness, mobilizing and organizing in communities.

There is a need to capitalize on new funding sources and mobilize local support for civil society organisations from local to national levels. External donor funding will present challenges; therefore, it is important to diversify and reach out to a range of donors and not rely on one funding source or mechanism. Social media is a powerful tool in raising awareness of the role that civil society played under COVID, thereby attracting a variety of funding streams.

This is an unprecedented moment in history. The future will show up our struggles under COVID and trace its impact to ways in which it was addressed at this moment in time.

Self-care is crucial, and we must become more conscious of this. The sector does not give enough attention to this part. Historically, in the anti-apartheid struggle, burnout was seen as sign of weakness and there was no space to address it. The after-effects of these traumas are now being felt, many years later. We need to break this kind of 'masculine' narrative and employ a more feminist-orientated approach which advocates that solidarity within oneself is just as important as solidarity in the struggle. Civil society organizations should ensure that not just communities receive psycho-social support, but so too do activists, volunteers, and staff members.

CSOs must be reflective of their practice and guard against falling into the trap of imposing their own ideas and narratives onto the communities within which they work. Instead, CSOs should co- create and co-design the process of communities in action. They should facilitate the freedom of communities to engage in struggles using various strategies, depending on their level of strength, resilience, and sense of urgency.

LOCAL INNOVATION AS PART OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

Monograph: Round Table/ Dialogue 2

COVID-19
COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE
INITIATIVE

KAGISO TRUST | Institutional Capacity Building

ABOUT THE DIALOGUES

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Kagiso Trust is interested in strengthening community responses under the COVID-19 crisis, as well as, in rebuilding of communities' socio-economic livelihoods going forward, even beyond the pandemic. The key questions around which the dialogues have been designed are:

- How was this creativity/innovation and collaboration developed and sustained?
- How can we carry the lessons learnt into the next phase as we continue to work for a more just, equal, and inclusive society?

The dialogue is linked to Community Resilience Survey[1], and is intended to draw out crucial lessons from the ground on community innovation, creativity and co-ordination at local levels across South Africa. Speakers from various sectors and geographical locations were selected to share their experiences and provide an in-depth analysis in relation to their respective community and organization's resilience and identify potential priorities emerging out of the crisis.

The dialogues are also a means of initiating discussion, debate and awareness about different organizations' dynamic responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and paving the way for further discourse once the knowledge products from the Kagiso Trust Covid-19 are released.

The first two dialogues are about:

(a)   Community-level networking in response to Covid-19 and

(b)   Innovations in working at local level during Covid-19.

The innovations in working at local level during the Pandemic Dialogue/Round Table will illustrate not only the creative ideas which are emerging, but how these have been put into practice. The inputs and discussion will examine how an idea emerges and how it shared with a wider group (participating team, supporters and broader community). Every new idea meets resistance and scepticism initially, but eventually, a core team or a strong coalition emerges to take the new idea forward. Only once the idea has been further developed by a core team can the idea be taken wider for assessment, consultation and adoption.

Covid-19 has sparked instances of creativity and innovation on many fronts. Some of these have been in the way we organize, some have been focused on particular problems related to the health, food security or education challenge. What key stories are out there and what can we learn from them? In the dialogue, participants will recount their steps, speak about the outcomes and draw out learnings that we can carry with us as we tackle poverty, inequality and the quest for inclusive social justice.

ABOUT THE PANELLISTS

Galeo Constance Mogale
Rural Democracy Trust
(National)

Nicci Hayes
Makhanda Circle of Unity
(Makhanda, Eastern Cape)

Naomi Schauer
Connekt (Johannesburg)

Emily Tjale
Land Access Movement
of South Africa (National)

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[1] 'The Impact of COVID-19 on African Civil Society Organisations. Challenges, Responses and Opportunities' Report. Epic Africa and @ AfricanNGOS. June, 2020

Reflections from key speakers on innovations in working at local levels during the pandemic

Galeo Constance Mogale from Rural Democracy Trust shared the innovations which rural communities came up with to address the immediate challenges of food security, health and hygiene. From their experience, we learnt how local communities used indigenous herbs and natural products to boost immunity and to purify water for washing hands. Locally grown food produce was planted, harvested and sold in order to subsidize household consumption.

The core business of RDT is to mobilize and organize rural communities. They are part of the Alliance for Rural Democracy, a cross section of CSOs in the land sector, academic research institutions, as well as litigations NGOs. Rural Democracy Trust was formed to take care of ARD's Governance, Resource Mobilization and Contracting and compliance.

During Covid-19 interventions, Raith Foundation and the Solidarity Fund assisted with funding and food parcels. Rural based CBOs assisted in forming food distribution teams and deploying cadres to areas in which they already had a presence.

Who were food parcels delivered to? In the main, the focus was on households in rural areas as they are typically more vulnerable. Most interventions are targeted toward cities and peri-urban areas. Furthermore, some of these areas fall under the governance of traditional authorities. Land is communal and is under-resourced by the state because of the extended powers awarded to traditional leaders.

Many challenges were faced in responding to the COVID crisis:

- Health and Safety Risks: there was no PPE available for sale in the areas, and rural hospitals such as Matibidi, Acornhoek, Danilton etc. were working without any protective clothing
- Security Risks: there were security threats in terms of food parcel storage, and a possible uprising by angry residents who had waited for food for a long time
- Political interference by government agencies and other local politicians: food distribution is always likely to bring out power dynamics. Certain government agencies who did not want the 'competition' in food distribution tried to stop RDT's work in distribution of food parcels as they felt politically threatened
- Risk of double-dipping and duplication of RDT's people-driven distribution and the government central data system: when RDT approached the local government they realized that there was no integrated data system
- Lack of basic services: limited access to water impacted on maintaining hygiene, and poor road Infrastructure affected the transporting of food and PPE into rural areas

Ultimately the work of RDT involves social contact and having a physical presence in communities. This was disrupted under COVID. RDT conducted a social mapping exercise and developed a COVID-19 communications strategy concept note. It involved mapping of local institutions for COVID-19 relief coming into the area. They also worked with schools, churches and community centres for storage and neutral venues as they had no control over procurement. They connected with local communities and individuals to provide Covid-19 health literacy and safety measures, using local and social media. They established contacts with other organizations doing the same work on the ground, e.g. SCAT, AFRA and MEJCON. House to house and street to street delivery was done to avoid queuing.

In the absence of sanitizers and immune boosters, communities made their own home remedies for COVID-19. They blended and mixed local aloe, methylated spirit and vinegar to use as sanitizers; mixed baby drops with honey and lemon for drinking; steaming with lemon, eucalyptus oil or blue gum tree leaves and onion and boiled lemon water to fumigate the room; and used old clothes to sew their own masks.

This local indigenous knowledge innovation, mainly initiated by women, was shared on Facebook and WhatsApp. Communities could not wait for protective clothing to come in from Durban, so they created their own. Also, the use of locally grown products reduced the risk of security break- ins.

RDT recognizes that these were short-term responses to the COVID crisis and that a long term strategy is required to build resilient communities. Food distribution and delivery is not enough. There is a need to supply seedlings for production, buy from local producers, show evidence of how much is produced and distributed by small scale farmers, build local entrepreneurship, pool small grants from diverse funders to support local production. The COVID crisis is an opportunity for us to learn from the lessons of how we dealt with HIV/ AIDS.

Nicci Hayes from Makhanda Circle of Unity shared their innovation around providing education and education resources at a time when many households struggled with this. Many of us in the country were worried about how learners in under-resourced communities will perform in this school year. Makhanda Circle of Unity stepped in to assist with this crisis.

Makhanda Circle of Unity's core business is based on education (esp. ECD), food security and community resilience. Their immediate response to COVID was crisis management by getting resources into the homes of people living in Makhanda e.g. First Aid, treating symptoms and nurturing health (sustainable solutions).

They provided 4 000 weekly grocery packs (food parcels) and went beyond this to supply vouchers to households. They initiated community kitchens, which grew from four to 26 and some are still ongoing.

In terms of food security, they supported 13 individual groups to start community gardens. This project is underway. Food Security also involves 'heritage' seed sharing, especially for local resilient produce which cannot be found in supermarkets. They view food production as part of a broader ecosystem, which connects growers with small markets and even supplies the School Nutrition Programme.

In addition to these responses, Makhanda Circle of Unity was active in getting education back into the hands of parents. They realized that with school closures, parents needed to teach and needed access to educational material, resources, and data. Through partnerships with local media (radio and newspapers) they generated a series of educational supplements in English, Xhosa and Afrikaans, especially for the Foundation Phase of education. They were responsible for the publication and distribution of story and wordless books and distributed 2000 packs of Lego blocks. Local sponsors were drawn in for assistance, as well as the services of an occupational therapist who sent out information daily via WhatsApp. Further on they assisted local schools with re-opening, and continued to strengthen partnerships between parents and educational organizations.

They faced several challenges such as limited PPE and high insecurity, including fear of the unknown. They had to learn how to deal with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

Through this experience, however, Makhanda Circle of Unity realized that parents have felt disempowered in the educational space. They found that a child being at home is not a deficit, but an asset, in that they were learning in a nurturing environment. COVID provided an opportunity for parents and caregivers to take on the power of 'educators'. There was a greater sense of appreciation for educators in schools and ECD centres.

This provided the foundation for building stronger relationships between parents and educators. As schools were used as distribution points for food, a more positive attitude towards schools developed.

Ultimately, greater unity means greater food security, local economic development and educational partnerships.

Naomi Schauer from Connekt, partnered with the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and showed how they navigate the area of social entrepreneurship. They focus on creatively assisting other organizations specifically with youth entrepreneurship. One such example is training youth to create products from waste and then assisting them in the marketing and retailing of these products.

Connekt is a social enterprise, in other words it is a business that has specific social objectives which serve its primary purpose. Social enterprises apply commercial strategies to maximize improvement in financial, social and environmental well-being. Their profits are used to fund social programmes as it seeks to maximize profits, at the same maximizing benefits to society and the environment. We share what we learn, what we think and who we know, to maximise opportunities for the sector.

Under COVID they realized the rapid pace at which society and technology evolved. As a social enterprise company (not an NGO) they aim is to make a profit in order to fund social projects. They have shown that it is possible to change charity into a business.

By tapping into the resources of local networks (for knowledge, skills, finance) they are able to provide opportunities for training, support, building connections between retailers and micro- traders. Through the Community Action Network (CAN) they provide innovative support for recycling waste into production of educational and other material.

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Emily Tjale from the Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA), showed how the movement of landless communities assisted rural and vulnerable communities and through the support of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), facilitated the distribution of vouchers worth R2000 to food gardeners/ small scale producers.

LAMOSA is a federation of land-dispossessed communities who advocate for land and agrarian reform by mobilizing land claimants to claim their ancestral land. Under the Covid crisis they provided assistance primarily to small producers. Their aim was to ensure that rural communities experience lasting change and sustainable livelihoods.

In response to the crisis, they worked with the Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD) to deepen democracy in rural communities nationally. The Covid pandemic paralyzed their mobilization and organizing work. Together with the Rural Development Trust (RDT) they assisted with food parcel distribution.

The small-scale farmers from these communities could not get an income under lockdown because they could not move around to distribute and sell their produce. As a result of this, rural communities ended up supporting the big retail supermarkets in the malls for food, sanitizers and hygiene products. Commercial farmers then benefitted from the situation, not small-scale farmers.

Due to the lack of information on Covid, LAMOSA had to conduct information sharing exercises on the virus in rural communities. This included information on the restrictions and regulations. For example, women were beaten up by police for moving around to collect firewood, home- made beer using pineapples was stopped by police, and local police did not want to issue cross- border permits to local farmers to sell across the provinces.

Community health workers and caregivers from LAMOSA provided house-to-house services without PPE. LAMOSA had to negotiate with local hospitals and shops to supply them with PPE. Local government data on the names of people and numbers of households did not sync with the data collected from LAMOSA caregivers.

With the closure of schools, parents and gogos were encouraged to listen to the radio and TV for teaching; a hotline and WhatsApp group was created on where to find things.

The rise in GBV: families did not understand the circumstances around the loss of income to the household. Income-earning men returned to rural areas, extending the number of members in the household. With the rise in cost of food, the higher number of people living in one household, and the loss of income the burden of responsibility to provide and take care fell on women in the home. Conflicts between men and women grew, and in some instances traditional village councils were called in to mediate domestic issues.

Covid is not just a health issue – it is a hunger issue! Through sharing of resources, the unity of communities, collaboration of networks (ARD/ RDT/ RWM), sourcing of local produce and distribution of seedlings for community gardens, LAMOSA was able to contribute to addressing the crisis in rural areas.

The water situation was severe. Access to clean water was limited. A mobilization strategy was co-ordinated via WhatsApp where organized communities demanded that Minister Sisulu attend a town hall meeting to hear their concerns. After this meeting, water trucks were provided and Jojo tanks were installed at each block, servicing 8-10 households per block. Women, being the most affected group by the lack of access to water, initiated a stokvel system for the construction of boreholes.

Handmade soap, sanitizers and masks were produced, and going forward LAMOSA will be conducting training on this in the five poorest provinces, targeting 200 households per province.

LAMOSA views the Covid crisis as a see-saw: on the one hand, it opened up opportunity for a raise in social grants/UIF and to learn how to use technology; on the other hand it led to a loss of employment and livelihood.

If we think collectively it will help to reduce the stress which causes the paralysis in our work; we should support responsive relations for long term sustainability such as building local markets.

KEY ISSUES AND RESPONSES

1. For Rural Development Trust: How did RDT make rural people more accepting of new areas of work, such as honey production?

The honey project was historically conducted in partnership with ARC (Agricultural Research Centre) which held a workshop on honey-making. As an advocacy organization, issues such as production and value-chain development are undermined by donors. If we look at the amount of money spent on transport of food parcels and operational expenses, then we could see that this could have been used to build people's own capacity. Advocacy is limited – what happens after the advocacy strategy and tactics are achieved? We need basic production, entrepreneurial, marketing, and business management skills and access to data.

2. For Makhanda Circle of Unity: What are the ways in which you can introduce a new idea into the organization while there are diverse opinions and multiple players?

Our organization works in clusters of interest. We do not demand a consensus on everything; rather we focus on the common good. The organization allows for a multiplicity of options to be put forward. With the food distribution effort, there was an organic relay of leadership that emerged. At different points there was a handover and rotation of leadership, such that different ideas and innovation were able to come about. We allow people and the organization to take a different track, but with a common aim.

3. For Connekt: From your experience and understanding of NGOs and entrepreneurship, what do you have to overcome to get NGOs (especially youth organizations) to understand entrepreneurial opportunities?

NGOs are not trained in business – they need assistance with this. Corporate skills can be taken into charity especially tech skills. This can be done in a way that is affordable and relatable. Connekt wants to connect with communities with what they already have, and build on this to support them.

4. For LAMOSA: Can you explain how the use of mobile data vouchers system worked?

With the assistance of FAO (a UN agency) we managed to collect data vouchers to the value of R2000 to distribute to small scale subsistence producers/ food gardeners. The criteria for selection of who would receive them are in place. AFRA (an established NGO) was the fiscal agent on behalf of LAMOSA. Young, honest people from rural, semi-urban and peri-urban areas were needed for the distribution.

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27 Scott Street, Waverly, Johannesburg 2029
Gauteng, South Africa

Tel: +27 11 566 1900 • **Fax:** +27 11 566 1934
www.kagiso.co.za • **Email:** info@kagiso.co.za