



# Cape Town Together, Community Action Networks (CANs) & sharing resources and learning

Acknowledgements of slides:

Co-learning CAN, various  
Khayelitsha CANs, Salt river  
CAN, Kenilworth CAN, CBD  
CAN and others

GCRO, Social Surveys Africa and HSRC  
Seminar on "Collecting social data: adapting to the  
COVID-19 pandemic - Community-based research"  
27 August 2020



## WHAT

Cape Town Together started in March 2020 as a rapidly evolving community-based response to COVID-19, and is growing every day!



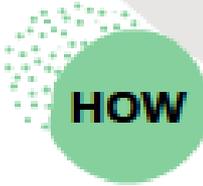
## WHO

The network is made up of thousands of volunteers, some for the first time, others through existing community associations. Anybody can join a CAN or help start a new CAN if one doesn't exist in your area.



## WHY

Existing spatial and social divides were starkly exposed by the pandemic and we aim to bridge that. COVID-19 reminds us that we are all interconnected and we feel called to rebuild our communities and our society more just and equal than before.



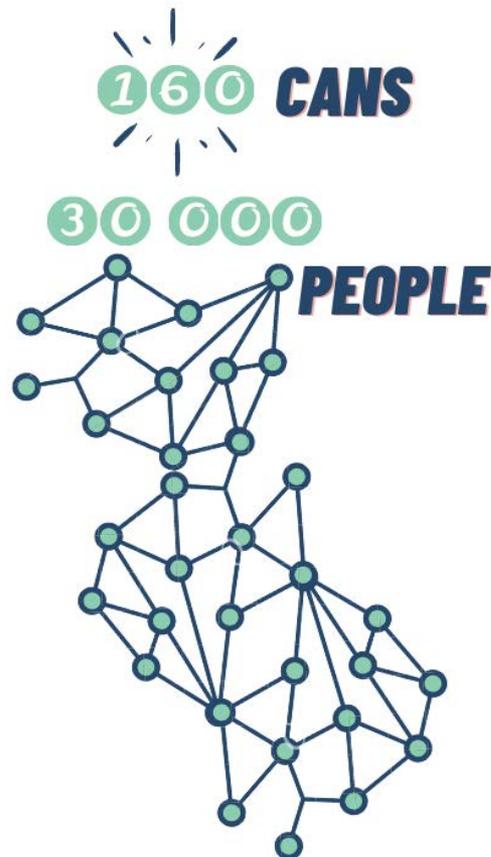
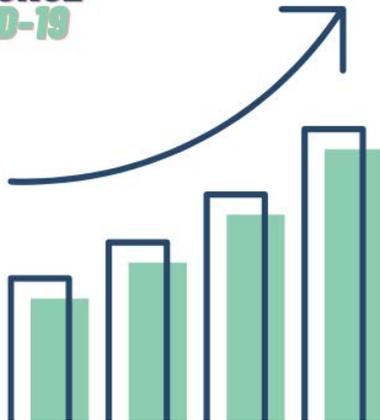
## HOW

By building relationships of solidarity within our communities and across our city  
As a collective, to inspire, promote and support ordinary people in every community to organise around local challenges while sharing ideas, experiences, skills and resources. Volunteers are working together on everything from food relief and mask making to homelessness and evictions.

# Background: What are the CANs?

**SELF-ORGANISING  
NETWORK**

**RAPID COMMUNITY-  
LED RESPONSE  
TO COVID-19**



- 10 days before lockdown a group of community organisers, social activists and public health professionals came together to kick-start a rapid community led response to Covid-19
- Catalyzed a **network** of self-organizing neighborhood based groups (or CANs) all responding to Covid-19 in their neighborhoods, and connecting across the city drawing on collective energy, and collective wisdom

# Gathering Social Data

# Outline

## *Part 1: The Coronavirus epidemic*

- The Coronavirus epidemic in South Africa
- Why is SA not on the expected trajectory?
- How much community transmission in SA?
- Some future epidemic scenarios

Extract

## *Part 2: South Africa's Covid-19 response*

- Stages of the SA Covid-19 response
- **Next steps: Stopping small flames to reduce the risk of raging fires**
- Conclusion



SA's Covid-19 epidemic:  
Trends & Next steps

Prepared on 13th April 2020 by Salim S. Abdool Karim, FRS

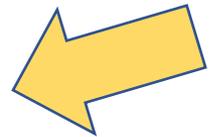
Extract



# Stage 8: Vigilance / surveillance



- Need to stay one step ahead of viral spread and not wait for patients to arrive in hospitals to act
- 3 components to surveillance:
  - Ongoing CHW house-to-house screening and testing especially in vulnerable communities
  - One day each month – health worker surveillance
  - One day each month - National surveillance day for schools, mines, prisons & big companies
  - For now self-taken swabs (later change to fingerprick) from a small sample of people in each setting



Extract

CORONAVIRUS OP-ED

## Sparks, flames and blazes: Epidemiological and social firefighting for Covid-19

By Eleanor Whyte, Manya van Ryneveld, Leanne Brady & Kentse Radebe • 24 April 2020



“However, even these teams of highly trained, well-equipped professionals can only respond to the needs of confirmed cases and their known contacts. Community-based screening and testing might help us find the epidemiological flames before they spread, **but it cannot identify the sparks of unrest and injustice, of fear and anxiety, and poverty and despair, that turn neighbours into strangers and communities into bubbling cauldrons waiting to boil over.**

Finding and extinguishing the sparks of stigma, xenophobia, hunger and poverty cannot be achieved through the collection of epidemiological data at all. **Rather this requires social data, collected and reported by professors of the street, based on real-world experience.**

CORONAVIRUS OP-ED  
Sparks, flames and blazes: Epidemiological and social firefighting for Covid-19

By Eleanor Whyte, Manya van Rynveld, Leanne Brady & Kentse Radebe • 24 April 2020



“Community Action Networks (CANs) like Cape Town Together, Eastern Cape Together, and more recently Gauteng Together are some of the community-based groups organising at the local neighbourhood level, and are **generating this much-needed social data or community-level intelligence.**

[...]

We can learn so much just by listening to people’s experiences. For example, that right now **hunger** is a much bigger problem than Covid-19 for most people. Or that **stigma** is bubbling beneath the surface and is about to boil over. The government could address these issues if it just paid a bit more attention to the **community-level intelligence being generated by those organising at the neighbourhood level.**”

CORONAVIRUS OP-ED

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# Bottom-up responses of CANs



## Adaptive network

(not a structured and bureaucratised organisation)

that enables the dynamic, bottom-up ways of working to respond to hyper-local needs



# CAN key issues of focus

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- Mapping communities to plot where needs and vulnerabilities are, and where possible resources lie
  - Street Champions
- Covid-19 awareness and education
- Addressing fear and stigma
- Mask-making and distribution
- Access to water in informal settlements
- Addressing food insecurity through community kitchen and food gardens
- Neighbourhood based models of care
- Building solidarity across the city



# Some examples....



- Covid-19 awareness and education
- Addressing fear and stigma
- Distributing flyers safely
- Keeping spaza/corner shops COVID-free (safe distancing lines and sanitizer)
- Safe distancing lines outside clinics
- Mask-making and distribution



# Food insecurity – towards sustainable food systems

- Food parcels
- Community kitchens
- Food gardens
- Local farmers





## Cape Town Together



Marc Fehr

24 March · 🌐

Good morning everyone 🌞 My little community mapping tool is now open source and available on Gitlab. If you're keen to set it up for you local community, check out my Medium post — it's easy to do and free to run:

<https://link.medium.com/dVHUhb7Z54>

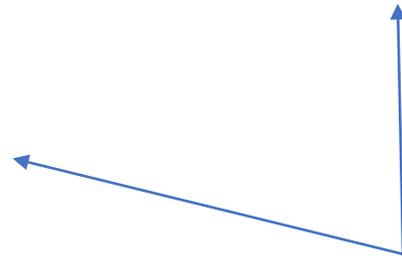
🌂 Feel free to spread this! Let me know if you have any questions or feedback.

Check out the interactive map and stay in touch with the community during the coronavirus isolation. [Add more information to the map](#) to help keeping everyone healthy.

Filter by categories



## Communication



## Mapping

Source:

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/CapeTownTogether/?post\\_id=211856813252099](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CapeTownTogether/?post_id=211856813252099)



# Or not Mapping

“In the early days of lockdown there was a flurry of activity to try and collect information about people who may need help with groceries, or were living on their own etc. in Kenilworth we never really managed any accurate "mapping" of the Neighbourhood

But I have realized that over time with our food delivery program the CAN team has definitely learned a huge amount of information, a lot of it not yet written down, about where the most vulnerable families are, where the church networks or neighbourhood groups are already stepping in and where the gaps are. **Our main thing has been that most of this information is just in our heads.** But if we sat down as a group we could probably generate a huge amount of social data of this kind for our specific area- **definitely something to do in the CAN when we have a bit of time!**”

- Manya Kenilworth CAN

Generating  
and  
disseminating  
knowledge  
through  
Co-learning



## Evolution of the CAN Co- Learning Sessions

1. Origins
2. Purpose
3. Approach

## How did the Co-Learnings Session start?

March 2020

- New CAN admins were connecting and asking questions
- Several CAN members loved storytelling, bringing people together, facilitating collaborative space
- It was the first step in building foundations and reaching across the network

*“It started out as a storytelling space that involved sharing not only what CANs are doing, but how they are doing it, and what they are learning, loving, and battling with in the process”*

## We work COLLABORATIVELY...

Collective action is powerful! Everyone has something to contribute in our community. Some of us are weavers and builders, others are storytellers, caregivers or healers. Some of us are disruptors and warriors, whilst others are experimenters and guides. We all have gifts and experiences that we can contribute. In many communities there are structures and organisations we can collaborate with without duplicating efforts.



## We are a NETWORK...

We draw on our collective energy and collective wisdom. We are a decentralised and non-hierarchical network. We work against the tendency to centralise planning, decision-making and management and we avoid hierarchies of knowledge, resources and power that so often accompany these ways of working. We do not identify as an organisation, and this gives us the flexibility to work in dynamic and creative ways. We are, primarily, a web of personal connections and human relationships – taking initiative and solving problems independently and collaboratively, without the need to pass decisions by a central group.



## What is the purpose of the Co-Learning Sessions?

**This is a space to share our experiences and stories and to learn together bridging space between practical learning and deepening our personal/political/social consciousness.**

**We encourage CANs to bring ideas and co-host on a topic that they are passionate about.**

***“A space that tries to make as much of the learning that happens while in the moment”***

***“Brings us a little closer to each other”***

## The Co-Learning Sessions approach

Each of our CANs are unique and each co-learning sessions is unique as well

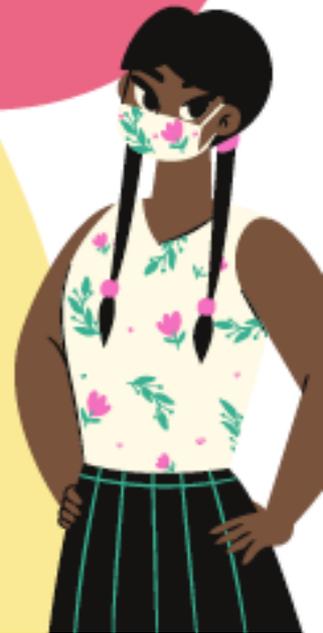
### Guiding questions:

- ❑ What is the purpose of the session?
- ❑ Who needs to be involved? Whose voices need to be heard? Who is missing?
- ❑ What ways do they have of accessing/contributing information? (zoom, written info, audio recordings answering key questions etc.)

We have facilitators to help create a conscious container for each session - for conversation and process (tech etc)

## We build SOLIDARITY...

This is a time for radical generosity. Social solidarity is the foundation of our work – it is how we build our network. We value relationships of solidarity between and across all forms of difference and privilege, including class, race, gender, sexuality, ability, religion and nationality. While the CANs are driven by the needs of those living in the community, solidarity across CANs is an important way to share resources, practice radical generosity and learn what is going on across the network. We aim to build a response that can help to transform the unjust economic, social and environmental challenges in our society.



## 5. We work INCLUSIVELY and try to flatten hierarchies...

We need to build a culture of “calling in” not “calling out”  
We value a diversity of experiences and points of view and we strive to be inclusive of everyone. We are mindful of the many reasons people do not or are not able to participate in initiatives and conversations – whether it be because of a lack of data or technology, language, or because a voice is not valued. We strive to be conscious at all times of the power inequalities that exist within our groups, and to be aware of whose voices are being heard and whose voices are missed or excluded. We do not tolerate any form of domination or discrimination and we are generous and courageous in how we address these issues, knowing that we are all learning how to respond to this new and difficult moment.

**When tensions or contradictions come up, it might be important to flag them. How is this tension part of the process? What might we learn from it?**

**Don't be afraid to name what's coming up (e.g. this seems to be a result of trying to connect from very different class positions) and signal that this is what we are trying to learn about. Doing so can help de-centre the potential destructive discomfort we feel confronting tensions and re-centre that we are people trying to work together in difficult circumstances with a lot of necessary learning as we go.**

# CAN Ways Of Working

VERSION 2, Aug 2020 [Click to visit website](#) [Click to Facebook Group](#)

A quick **WHAT, WHO, WHY and HOW** we work



## COVID-19 Response

Community Action Network (CAN) Starter Pack

This is a working document. Last updated 27th April 2020. Please check the website at: [www.capetowntogether.net](http://www.capetowntogether.net) for the latest version.



## Safe cross-CAN Solidarity during lockdown

### PHYSICAL MOVEMENT ACROSS THE CITY SPREADS COVID-19

Lockdown means that we cannot see our families, unless it is absolutely essential. During lockdown, we know that many people have no income and children are not receiving meals at school. A lot of people are wanting to help with this problem by making food donations. The solidarity being built between our CANs is AMAZING. BUT, we must first work to do this while observing the lockdown regulations, staying safe, and preventing the spread of the virus.

**REMEMBER:** despite our best intentions, movement of people and supplies across the city can do more harm than good. We need to stand together, though, right? So let's figure out how to do this within lockdown regulations.

If possible, use approved delivery services. There are services offered by Checkers, Pick n Pay, Woolworths, Doodem, Clicks and other larger stores, that can deliver goods directly to most neighbourhoods.

If you cannot avoid transporting donations yourself during lockdown, take these precautions:

1. Communicate with community leaders or CAN members in the recipient neighbourhood. They'll tell you what is most needed, and plan for families to receive the donations safely.
2. If you are donating clothes, wash them before donating - a hot wash with detergent will do.
3. If you are preparing food parcels for delivery:

- **PREPARE YOURSELF:** Wash your hands and sanitize the surface you're working on with diluted bleach solution (see below). Wear a mask and sport your face until you are done.
- **PREPARE YOUR CONTAINERS:** Sanitize plastic shopping bags with a diluted bleach solution. Wipe them dry with a dispozon - make sure it's a clean dispozon!
- **PREPARE YOUR GOODS:** Only include non-perishable food items in waterproof packaging (this includes tins, jars, tins, sealed plastic packets) that you can sanitize with a diluted bleach solution (see below).
- **PREPARE YOUR PARCELS:** Place the items in a double layer of plastic shopping bags. Only handle the outer one - your recipients can then safely take the inside one into their own bag for each family or household.

4. Only touch the **OUTER** shopping bag when transporting food or other parcels.
5. For neighbourhoods receiving donations, **distribute goods SAFELY:**
  - One person per family should come to collect donations
  - People should stand 2 meters apart while waiting.
  - Recipients should pick up the **INSIDE** plastic packet only, and leave the **OUTER** plastic packet.

### MAKING SURE DONATIONS ARE VIRUS-FREE

Either clean the surface of the food item with Handy Handi or another household cleaning product then rinse thoroughly, OR use a diluted bleach solution (see below).

If you use Bleach:

1. Working in a well-ventilated room: Mix a teaspoon of bleach with 1 litre of water.
2. DO NOT mix bleach with any other cleaning product.
3. Apply the diluted bleach solution to the item. Let it sit for 2 minutes. Then rinse off with water.



—SOCIAL-PHYSICAL DISTANCING. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY.—

## INTSOLONGWANE YEKHORONA - MASIPHHELISE UKUNWENWA Ukuhlamba Izandla

Ukuhlamba izandla engekho ephuhlakileyo kunye namandi kusenzeka kakhulu. Ukwenza oku kusenzeka ngokona kuzo-sanitiser yezandla njengoko kubandakanya intsholongwane kuzizizwe basezandleni.



### Kubantu abangenawo amanzi afikelekayo.

Ukuba ukufikelela kwi tap ENKANTYENI NGAKO kuyawonakala, landla izandla linye lookanyo yezandla.

1. Yenza umgaganyo hawoloko emandleni ngomantso (shoona ng oku n.c.)
2. Gcoba ukhulisa linye ngomantso
3. Vula ibhokisi ngokukhulu ukomnganya
4. Manisa izandla ngomantso lweve amantso
5. Faka izandla ezandleni uze ubhaleke kubakho upapula, bhaleke intswanana eyi 20
6. Sebenza amantso abukhulu ukhulisa ngomgaganyo wakho ubandakanya izandla.

### Sanitiser yezandla (enezinga lotywala olungaphesha kwe 60%)

- Ukuba sanitiser yezandla ayinalo izinga lotywala elingaba ku 60% ayikusekwenzi.
- Ukuba izandla zintshaka, KUYANTYENZILELA ukuba zikhanywe phambi kokuba utshale sanitiser yezandla ukungaphesha.

### Yakha i "Tippy Tap"

Ngqo eyakho ngaphakathi efane amantso, utshale kunye nokhanyisa ezandla eyakho. Uku kuncinane ngokufikelela kwezandla ezandla ubandakanya ukhanyisa izandla linye.



EMS COVID-19 RESPONSE  
National hotline: 0800 029 999  
Provincial hotline: 021 728 4102  
Email: [info@capetowntogether.org.za](mailto:info@capetowntogether.org.za)  
WhatsApp: [06 946 912 3456](https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/00299123456)  
All times are approximate (EAT)

☺ Accessible Resources ☺

# Some (written) References

- FaceBook “Cape Town Together”
- [www.Capetowntogether.net](http://www.Capetowntogether.net)
- For a compendium of the Co-Learning sessions, see [https://www.facebook.com/groups/CapeTownTogether/learning\\_content/?filter=3336261696387378#](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CapeTownTogether/learning_content/?filter=3336261696387378#) =
- Writers' Community Action Network "Cape Town Together: organizing in a city of islands" *ROAR* 5 June 2020,
- Cape Town Together Food Growers Initiative, available: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/670655126826113/>
- Eleanor Whyte, Manya van Ryneveld, Leanne Brady & Kentse Radebe "Sparks, flames and blazes: Epidemiological and social firefighting for Covid-19" *Daily Maverick*, 24 April 2020
- Liezl Human "How a Cape Town group is helping neighbourhoods fight Covid-19" *Groundup* 23 March 2020
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- Gesine Meyer-Rath, Francois Venter, Nicola Spurr, Tom Boyles, Kristin Dunkle & Marlise Richter, Anso Thom "Safeguarding social justice in a time of social distance" *Mail&Guardian*, 22 March 2020
- Vincent Cruywagen "Community pulls together to convert crèche in Ocean View into a Covid-19 isolation centre" *Daily Maverick* 9 July 2020
- Writers CAN, Cape Town Together "Cape Town Together, a neighbourhood-based network of 170 organisations" *Daily Maverick* 26 August 2020

