WHAT IS A CAN?

COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

Cape Town Together
Community Action Networks
1. QUICK INTRO
2. WAYS WE WORK
3. TO KEEP IN MIND
4. MOVING FORWARD

Note: there are active links to our web resources in this booklet
1. QUICK INTRO

CAN stands for Community Action Network. It is:

- volunteer-based
- grassroots
- neighbourhood-level
- community response
- to Covid-19 and beyond.

It is not an NPO/NGO and there is no central authority, or ideology.

We are diverse, self-initiating, and self-responsible.
WE COLLABORATE
amongst ourselves
with other individuals
organizations institutions
businesses
and other CANs
both near and far
to achieve our varied goals.

We loosely come together under the umbrella of Cape Town Together, where we share the emerging collective wisdom of our experience and skills, and support and cheer each other on.
We acknowledge, hope for, and invite more voices and perspectives not yet represented, to join and enrich us as a whole.
2. **WAYS WE WORK**

- We focus on solidarity, instead of charity.

- We work from the starting point that local communities are best placed to know what we need.

- In collaboration, we strive to complement and enhance existing support efforts, and infrastructure.
We encourage initiative, and take action on our ideas realizing that this is a learning process.

We move at the speed of trust and allow ourselves to sit with complexity, even if it means sometimes slowing down.

We can work together, or in alignment with each other, without having to agree on every detail.
We see this as a marathon, not a sprint, which means we take the necessary care not to burn out (ourselves, and as a collective)

We work safely, to avoid spreading the virus in our communities, and we adapt to new information.

We take care to empower ourselves with accurate, verified information from official sources in order to be effective, courageous agents in our communities
WE MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST
3. TO KEEP IN MIND

YOU CAN'T HELP EVERYONE, AND DO EVERYTHING

There is only so much you can do, with the time, resources, and energy you have. When you know your own limitations, you open the door to collaboration. It is not a CAN’s responsibility to meet every need. If you are able to work together to just help some people, that is better than if the CAN didn’t exist.
Joining or starting a CAN does not mean you will get resources from outside your area. The key principle of CANs is self-organising, being empowered to work together within your neighbourhood to find solutions and help each other where possible. If you wait for someone else to fix the problem you will miss out on the innovation and ideas that could come from your own group working together.
WE ALL NEED TO PACE OURSELVES

We can’t continue to work in crisis mode over a long period. Many of the problems are likely to persist over time. So to be able to continue you need to take some time to rest and replenish your energy so you can continue. Taking care of yourself is not selfish, it is the opposite, it means that you can continue to help others in the long run.
ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS

You may be feeling many different things at any moment including fear, anger, confusion, and sadness.

It’s important to acknowledge our feelings and share them with trusted friends, to be able to use them as fuel for positive action and allow hope, inspiration and connection to rise up.
As you look at the needs around you, you may feel called to respond. That’s wonderful! You might wonder what the options are available to you, and what next steps you can take.

GET INVOLVED & GET CONNECTED
1. Register to join

2. Find a can in your area

3. Or start your own

4. Browse more resources

5. Read more about us
PLEASE REMEMBER

Navigating a decentralised network can be a challenging (but rewarding) new experience. Be kind with yourself and others while finding your way.

we look forward to meeting you