

Crisis as opportunity?
**Emergent groups, crisis relief, and social
innovation in response to Covid-19**

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This work is dedicated to the thousands of everyday individuals who came together amidst the Covid-19 pandemic crisis to spark a movement and a reimagining of the way things are and the way things can be.

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From the bottom of my heart, thank you all.

It was a world of waste and wonder, of poverty and plenty
Back before we understood, why hindsight's 2020

You see the people came up with companies to trade across all lands
But they swelled and got much bigger than we ever could have planned
We'd always had our wants, but now it got so quick
You could have anything you dreamed of, in a day, and with a click

We noticed families had stopped talking, that's not to say they never spoke
But the meaning must have melted, when the work-life balance broke
And the children's eyes grew squarer, and every toddler had a phone
They filtered out the imperfections but amidst the noise, they felt alone

And every day the skies grew thicker, until you couldn't see the stars
So we flew in planes to find them, while down below we filled our cars
We'd drive around all day in circles, we'd forgotten how to run
We swapped the grass for tarmac, shrunk the parks, till there were none

We filled the sea with plastic because our waste was never capped
Until each day when you went fishing, you'd pull them out already wrapped
And while we drank and smoked and gambled, our leaders taught us why
It's best to not upset the lobbies, more convenient to die

But then in 2020, a new virus came our way
The governments reacted, and told us all to hide away
But while we all were hidden, amidst the fear and all the while
The people dusted off their instincts, they remembered how to smile
They started clapping to say thank you, and calling up their mums
And while the car keys gathered dust, they would look forward to their runs

And with the skies less full of voyagers, the earth began to breathe
And the beaches bore new wildlife that scuttled off into the seas
Some people started dancing, some were singing, some were baking
We'd grown so used to bad news, but some good news was in the making

And so when we found the cure and were allowed to go outside
We all preferred the world we'd found to the one we'd left behind
Old habits became extinct and they made way for the new
And every simple act of kindness was now given its due

"But why did it take a virus to bring the people back together?
Well, sometimes, you've got to get sick my boy, before you start feeling better
Now lie down, and dream of tomorrow and all the things that we can do
And who knows, if you dream hard enough, maybe some of them will come true

We now call it the Great Realisation
And yes, since then there have been many
But that's the story of how it started
And why hindsight's 2020.

- The Great Realisation, a post-pandemic bedtime tale by Tomos Roberts

Crisis as opportunity? Emergent groups, crisis relief, and social innovation in response to Covid-19

Abstract:

The Covid-19 pandemic brought the world to a halt in early 2020. In South Africa, as in many places around the world, the government instituted a strict national lockdown beginning at the end of March 2020 which catalyzed interconnected social and economic crises. However, the lockdown also catalyzed a proliferation of emergent crisis response groups and initiatives aimed at alleviating suffering. This qualitative case study follows the emergence and progression of eight such emergent response groups located in the Western Cape to explore the relationship between crisis response and social innovation. Over the course of one year, crisis responses are detailed across three temporal brackets: Emergence (initial crisis response), Plateau (sustained crisis response), and Evolution (differing response paths). These temporal brackets contain key themes within them, as well as enablers and barriers for transitioning between short-term crisis response and longer-term systemic change ambitions. The findings show that emergent response groups do persist in efforts well past the initial onset of a crisis and that they make intentional decisions around how to transition from crisis response towards longer-term change ambitions. Taking an institutional work lens to social innovation, this study shows that emergent response groups engage with and challenge multiple performative institutional dimensions in their work and that they have the ability, and often the desire, to affect more systemic change over time. This work aims to bring the academic conversations of crisis response and social innovation closer together, with a focus on individual and informal group agency, while also providing practical implications for supporting emergent response groups and social innovation in the face of future disruptions and crises.

Key words: Covid-19, crisis response, emergent response groups, social innovation

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	2
List of Figures, Tables, and Appendices.....	7
List of Figures.....	7
List of Tables.....	7
List of Appendices.....	7
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	8
Overview of the South African Covid-19 crisis and emergent responses.....	9
Overview of relevant literature and literature gaps.....	10
Overview of research method, planning, design, and data collection and analysis	15
Overview of study findings and discussion	17
Chapter 2: Literature review	20
Covid-19: a catalyst of interconnected crises.....	22
Disasters, crises, and emergent response groups	24
Social innovation and institutional work.....	29
Crisis as opportunity? Crisis-driven innovation and game changers	36
Literature Gaps.....	39
Chapter 3: Methods	42
Research planning.....	42
Research design and preparation	43
Data collection.....	46
Data analysis	56
Chapter 4: Findings.....	62
Details of temporal bracketing of findings	62
Emergence findings: rapid organizing, an emphasis on relationships and trust, and a nascent focus on long-term ambitions.....	65
Plateau findings: a drop in resources, an experience of intense fatigue, increased disillusionment with government responses, and increased reflection.....	80
Evolution findings: differing response paths	97
Enablers and barriers of short-term emergent crisis response & systemic change	117
Conclusion of findings chapter.....	138
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	139

Contribution to literature gaps	139
Limitations and boundaries of the study and opportunities for future research	143
Practical implications	144
<i>Appendix</i>	<i>147</i>
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>168</i>

List of Figures, Tables, and Appendices

List of Figures

Figure 1. Quote from Cape Town Together Cookbook (Together, 2020d)	8
Figure 2. Institutional work lens for social innovation	32
Figure 3. Doing case study research: a linear but iterative process	43
Figure 4. A visual depiction first-hand data collection across cases from March 2020 – April 2021	54
Figure 5. Sankey depiction of all codes in all interviews and key documents	57
Figure 6. Sankey depictions of codes across crisis phases	60
Figure 7. Posters describing national lockdown measures for March	65
Figure 8. A visual depiction of pre-existing and new relationships across response groups	71
Figure 9. Cape Town Together Ways of Working	86
Figure 10. Social media posts from a government visit to digital voucher project sites	105
Figure 11. Build Back Better responses from the CAN Inspired Futures Dialogues	106
Figure 12. New Social Employment Programme description	108
Figure 13. Pre-existing relationships across cases	126
Figure 14. Pre-existing and new relationships across cases	127


List of Tables

Table 1. Case descriptions*	46
Table 2. Sources of evidence table	47
Table 3. Documentation details table	49
Table 4. Interview detail table*	53
Table 5. Participant observation detail table	55
Table 6. Most frequent codes by crisis phase	59
Table 7. Emergence quotes	76
Table 8. Plateau quotes	92
Table 9. Evolution quotes	112
Table 10. Short-term crisis relief enablers and barriers quotes	121
Table 11. Systemic change enablers and barriers quotes	133

List of Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview protocols	147
Appendix 2. Preliminary case theme tables by temporal bracketing	150

Chapter 1: Introduction



Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It 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.

- Arundhati Roy



Figure 1. Quote from Cape Town Together Cookbook (Together, 2020d)

Overview of the South African Covid-19 crisis and emergent responses

Covid-19 first reached South Africa on March 5th 2020; by late March the entire country was under a national lockdown that completely prohibited the movement of people and goods (Together, 2020d). For many, the announcement of the lockdown immediately brought to mind the unequal ways in which people across the country would experience the impacts of this policy. Given the high levels of inequality that persist across South Africa post-apartheid, there was a huge amount of concern about the economic and social ramifications that the lockdown would have, particularly for low-income communities with preexisting high rates of unemployment and a lack of physical space and utilities to comfortably endure the lockdown.

In spite of personal uncertainty and anxiety about the widespread loss of jobs and the potential spread of the virus, thousands (if not millions) of people were still compelled to do something to help their fellow South Africans during this time. The national lockdown catalyzed a proliferation of community-based volunteer efforts aimed at providing food relief, securing PPE and sanitization materials like soapy water and sanitizer, supplying education materials for children who were now unable to attend schools, and enabling access to resources like counseling and legal services for refugees or victims of gender-based violence. Experienced activists called this proliferation of crisis responses “possibly the biggest revival of civic activism in South Africa since the 1980s” (Boraine, 2020).

Two of these emergent response efforts blossomed as networks of response groups in the Western Cape: Cape Town Together, a network of “Community Action Networks” (CANs), and the Western Cape NGO-Government Food Relief Coordination Forum (Food Relief Coordination Forum) convened by the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (EDP) to enhance connection, communication, and collaboration between civil society and government crisis responses. Both of these efforts contained over 100 groups within them and were catalyzed within the first month of the crisis, as described below:

“Cape Town Together started in March 2020 as a rapidly evolving community-based response to COVID-19...[there are] thousands of people from across the city who work together with their neighbors to support their communities. These neighbourhood hubs

are called Community Action Networks (CANs)... Each CAN is organized at the neighbourhood level and is also connected to the broader CTT network. This means that we act locally, while also drawing on our collective experience and energy to share lessons and resources across the city.” (Together, 2020b, p. 6)

“The inaugural Food Relief Coordination Forum meeting was held via Zoom on 23 April... [it included] larger food NGOs, mainly involved with the delivery of food parcels, together with officials from the Western Cape Government and the City of Cape Town. Over time, civil society membership diversified to include grassroots organisations...as well as intermediary organisations and networks involved in sourcing donations of food, money and resources.” (Partnership, 2020a)

This proliferation of emergent response groups within the Western Cape provided the strategic setting for my thesis research, focused on the research question: what is the relationship between short-term crisis response and social innovation? The relevant literature and existing literature gaps are highlighted in the paragraphs below, along with a brief overview of the research method and design, data collection and analysis, and key findings. The discussion of this study is briefly summarized as well, with more a comprehensive reflection on the limitations of the study, future directions for research, and practical implications detailed in the Discussion chapter.

Overview of relevant literature and literature gaps

While Covid-19 and the national lockdown catalyzed interconnected crises, they also catalyzed emergent crisis relief initiatives and groups to spring into action (Activists, 2020; Hamann, Surmeier, Delichte, & Drimie, 2020; Nkonyeni, Scheepers, Radebe, & Kentse, 2021; Partnership, 2020a; Silwana, 2020). In this way, Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown crisis displayed many similarities to other disasters and emergent response groups that have been given attention in crisis and resiliency scholarship. Scholars like Williams & Shepherd have focused extensive attention on resilience and emergent responses in the aftermath of crises

such as the Black Saturday bushfires in Australia (Shepherd & Williams, 2014; Williams & Shepherd, 2016b, 2018) and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti (Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, 2021). Others have focused on emergent response to well-known disasters such as Hurricane Katrina (Majchrzak, Jarvenpaa, & Hollingshead, 2007) or the San Diego fire of 1970 (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985).

The focus on emergent responses in the wake of disasters is based on the premise that disasters often have such wide-spread, devastating effects, that they motivate members of society to alleviate suffering (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Majchrzak, Jarvenpaa, & Hollingshead, 2007; Wickramasinghe, 2005; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). The complexity of the crisis frequently prompts a response from emergent response groups, or collections of individuals that did not have pre-crisis relations (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985b; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). Emergent response groups are a hallmark of crises (Twigg & Mosel, 2017) and are characterized by a great sense of urgency, fluid boundaries, fleeting or unclear membership, dispersed leadership, and geographic dispersion (Majchrzak et al., 2007; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). They can also be characterized by newness, lack of formalization, and lack of tradition – i.e. groups with new structures and new functions (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985a). Emergent response groups are frequently non-hierarchical with fluid membership and a lack of clearly designated leaders, which makes them nimble in responding to a constantly changing environment but can make it difficult for organizations or people outside the group to develop relationships with them (Majchrzak et al., 2007; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985a). The structure of the group is primarily driven by the work that it undertakes, which results in groups most often lacking a formal structure and roles (e.g. organization charts or job specifications) and placing a focus on “ad hoc decision making rather than long-range planning” (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985a, p. 95). The informal nature of emergent response groups also means that groups tend to have a smaller active core membership with nonmember participants who dip in and out of the work as they have the resources or capacity to help (Majchrzak et al., 2007; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985a).

While emergent response groups are primarily aimed at short-term action, scholars such as Williams and Shepherd (2016a) have noted the presence of groups that persist beyond the

initial onset of a crisis which are characterized as “transforming ventures”. These transforming ventures seek to build resilience within the community through transforming peoples’ livelihoods and focus on shifting individuals out of survival (reactive) mindsets towards a path of self-reliance. In the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, this included finding housing, securing employment and education, and providing long-term medical services like psychological care. This focus on “pathways to autonomy” (Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, p. 2079) meant that ventures evolved with the needs of those that they were serving, offering both short- and long-term projects to aid in recovery, with a long-term orientation to alleviating suffering.

The desire to affect long-term, more systemic change in the wake of a crisis aligns with the resiliency thinking view that crises can act as exogenous shocks that provide an opportunity for ideas and processes to take hold and scale to affect institutional change (Novalia & Malekpour, 2020; van Wijk, Stam, Elfring, Zietsma, & Den Hond, 2019; Westley & Antadze, 2010; Westley, McGowan, Antadze, Blacklock, & Tjornbo, 2016). This notion is echoed in social innovation and institutional work practice. Social innovations aim to “challenge and change the very institutions that created the social problem which they address” (Westley & Antadze, 2010, p. 2) while institutional work focuses on disrupting institutions through deinstitutionalization and institutional change (Maguire & Hardy, 2009; Symon, Buehring, Johnson, & Cassell, 2008; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Both scholarly conversations concern themselves with the efforts “of individuals and collective actors to cope with, keep up with, shore up, tear down, tinker with, transform, or create anew the institutional structures within which they live, work, and play, and which give them their roles, relationships, resources, and routines.” (Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2011, p. 53). Scholars like Nilsson (2019) have recently drawn explicit connections between social innovation and institutional work by using an institutional work lens to examine social innovation efforts through five performative institutional dimensions: roles, social identities, resource flows, authority processes, and meanings. This provides a practical lens for examining the intersection of social innovation and institutional work.

Social innovation scholars have also recently begun to pay more attention to how crises may create space for ideas and processes to take hold and scale to create transformative social innovation (Avelino, Wittmayer, Kemp, & Haxeltine, 2017; van Wijk, Zietsma, Dorado, de Bakker,

& Martí, 2019; Westley, McGowan, Antadze, Blacklock, & Tjornbo, 2016), which aligns with the resilience thinking notions mentioned above. This conversation has been propelled by a focus on crisis-driven innovation, or innovations characterized by extreme conditions that force a radical rethinking of traditional solutions, participation in co-creating solutions, rapid prototyping and learning, rapid diffusion, and recombination (Dahlke et al., 2021). Crisis-driven innovation emerges when widespread demands (e.g. healthcare, education, energy, food, sanitation) cannot be met by conventional routes (Dahlke et al., 2021), though this research has focused mostly at the organizational level than at the level of individuals or informal groups and crisis responses.

The intersections of crisis and resiliency, social innovation, and crisis-driven innovation lay at the heart of my research question: what is the relationship between crisis response and social innovation? While emergent response groups have been documented and explored as a hallmark of crises (Twigg & Mosel, 2017), management scholars are calling for more research to contribute to a better understanding of the unique context of emergent response groups who face extremely high levels of “unpredictability, urgency, and reconfigurability” while typically lacking formal organization, defined roles, set memberships, hierarchies, and long-term planning and decision-making (Majchrzak et al., 2007, p. 149). Management research has focused extensively on organizations and individuals’ roles within organizations through topics such as strategy, leadership, and organizational crisis response but the field has not focused as much on informal groups and the ways in which these groups might navigate similar topics.

Additionally, while crisis and resiliency research has focused on how emergent response groups form and respond in the direct aftermath of a crisis, little attention has been paid to how these responses may continue in the longer-term and their potential ambitions for prosocial change. Williams and Shepherd (2016a) began to explore this in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, but more attention could be paid to whether and how emergent response groups shape and act on long-term change ambitions and the impacts of this. Given the immediacy of a crisis and its associated impacts, how do groups form, act on, and prioritize long-term change ambitions amidst crisis response? This becomes especially relevant when looking at the intersection of the fields of crisis and resiliency research and the fields of social innovation and

institutional work. Do emergent response groups look to challenge the “defining routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the broader social system” (Westley et al., 2016, p. 2), and how do they shape those ambitions and act on them while also responding to a crisis?

While the topics of crises and resiliency, emergent crisis response, social innovation, and crisis driven innovation have been researched and documented in academia they are not often explicitly connected to each other. As stated above, the relationship between emergent crisis response groups and their activities and social innovation is not very clear in the literature. There has not been much work to date that explicitly explores the connection between emergent response groups operating in response to a crisis and their potential long-term change ambitions and impacts. Crisis driven innovation typically focuses at a more macro-level, without much emphasis on how individuals and informal groups like emergent response groups grapple with longer-term change ambitions while responding to a crisis (Archibugi, Filippetti, & Frenz, 2013; Bessant, Rush, & Trifilova, 2012, 2015; Dahlke et al., 2021; Hausman & Johnston, 2014). This places little attention on individual agency and the intersections of agency and systems change that are important to both social innovation and institutional work scholars (Nilsson, 2019; Westley & Antadze, 2010). Whether and how emergent response groups are able, or unable, to seize the “window of opportunity” created by a game changer like the Covid-19 pandemic to create change and build social and systems resilience is not well documented. Williams and Shepherd (2016a) began to connect emergent response groups to short- and long-term orientations through research on sustaining and transforming ventures, but did not explicitly connect these response group paths to social innovation ambitions or long-term change. The characteristics of the Covid-19 pandemic mark it as a potential game changer, or “punctuation mark”, in creating opportunities for social change (Avelino et al., 2017; van Wijk, Zietsma, et al., 2019; Westley et al., 2016). As such, it may create opportunities for social innovation to emerge, take hold, and scale such as the examples of crisis driven innovation mentioned previously in this paper (Bessant et al., 2012; Dahlke et al., 2021; Westley et al., 2016). This focus on crisis as an opportunity for change becomes even more important in the light of the increasing frequency and intensity of the crises we are experiencing; there is much more work that can be done to

understand the opportunities that crises and game changers allow for transformative changes to take hold and scale.

Overview of research method, planning, design, and data collection and analysis

I began my research design and initial data collection amidst the first government lockdown in the South African pandemic crisis. I observed, and later became involved in, multiple examples of emergent response groups forming at a local and Provincial level and determined that I would take a qualitative research approach to research these groups and the relationship between short-term crisis response and social innovation. I chose a qualitative approach to be able to take an in-depth and holistic approach to a contextually sensitive research question (Patton, 2015) and observe what unfolded in the real world (K. Eisenhardt, Graebner, & Sonenshein, 2016).

Based on my research question and observations during the lockdown, I determined that my unit of analysis would focus on emergent response groups. In looking at others' units of analysis for case studies, Williams and Shepherd (2016) criteria stood out to me. The case selection for organizations in that body of research was based on the following criteria:

- the groups emerged immediately (within the first hours or days) after the disasters in response to alleviating suffering;
- as organizations that had roles and transactions;
- that were created in and operated in the disaster geographic area

I adapted these criteria to guide my case selection and to bound my cases based on their emergence in response to pressing needs created by Covid-19 and the lockdown in South Africa. I loosened the immediacy of the timeframe of emergence to include responses that emerged during the initial period of coronavirus response in South Africa, which spanned from the beginning of lockdown on March 27, 2020, until the transition to lockdown "Level 3" on June 1, 2020, at which point the movement of people was loosened and several industries reopened. I also chose to focus on emergent response groups rather than "organizations" given the informal nature of many emergent response groups. I determined that I would follow these emergent response groups for at least 12 months from the onset of the crisis in March 2020 in order to

take a temporal lens to how the crisis responses unfolded over time. This was also important to begin to observe the relationship between short-term crisis response and social innovation. This temporal and spatial bounding helped to define my cases and clarify the data I would collect on the subject of my case study as well as the data external to my cases (Yin, 2014).

In response to my research question, and my desire to conduct an inductive, comparative case study analysis (K. Eisenhardt, 1989; Gehman et al., 2018; Yin, 2014), I selected eight cases that developed as emergent responses during the initial lockdown period in the Western Cape. Two of these cases were networks of emergent response groups (Cape Town Together and the Western Cape NGO-Government Food Relief Coordination Forum), while six were emergent response groups (CANs) from different areas of Cape Town that chose to partner with each other to create a “pairing” in an attempt to bridge spatial and social boundaries and connect privileged and historically marginalized communities. The eight cases and the subsequent data collection for each case are detailed in the Methods chapter.

I engaged in data collection across all eight response groups over the course of one year, including three rounds of interviews with at least two representatives of each emergent response group. I also served as an embedded researcher within Case #1 and Case #3. This has been described as the “insider-outsider” approach documented by Gioia et al. (2017) where the researcher takes on the role of both an “actor” and an “observer” of processes as they occur. This embeddedness provided me with access to information that otherwise would be difficult to gather or not publicly accessible, greatly strengthened my relationships with participants and informants, and enhanced my overall understanding of the context of my research. The implications and considerations of this embeddedness are also further detailed in the Methods chapter. Over the course of the year, I engaged in several rounds of analysis. I drafted case reports after each round of interviews to identify preliminary in-case and cross-case themes. I also took a more rigorous, bottom-up approach to coding my data in Atlas.ti at the end of the data gathering process which led me to use a temporal bracketing for my data analysis (Langley, 1999). I was subsequently able to view and analyze my data within and across each of the three time periods detailed in the overview of study findings below.

Overview of study findings and discussion

Over the course of a year, crisis responses evolved across three distinct time periods which I call Emergence, Plateau, and Evolution. **Emergence** describes the initial crisis response that was catalyzed by the announcement of a national Covid-19 lockdown to take effect on March 27, 2020. The Emergence phase spans from the end of March 2020 (onset of the crisis) until June 2020, dates that also correspond with the most stringent national lockdown measures. This phase is broadly characterized by **rapid organizing** to identify and address immediate needs, an emphasis on **the role of relationships**, and a **nascent focus on the long-term**. While some individuals were thinking about long-term planning horizons and ambitions, the overwhelming majority of responses were focused more narrowly on day-to-day activities to alleviate suffering such as the provisioning of food relief or PPE and access to water and sanitation.

Plateau describes the sustained crisis response from June through October 2020. The lessening of lockdown regulations at the beginning of June 2020 brought a return to “normal” for much of the population that had been locked indoors and unable to work or attend school since late March. The changes in lockdown measures loosened restrictions on freedom of movement and corresponded with a dissipation of the “emergency feeling” that had energized response groups until this time. This was coupled with contextual difficulties such as a transition to winter weather and flooding in vulnerable areas, rising rates of Covid-19 infection and hotspots, shrinking government finances, and continued disruptions to municipal service delivery (Food Forum Report, 2021). This changing context translated to strains for emergent response groups in terms of three key areas: a **drop in resources** (including physical donations, monetary funding, and volunteer time), an **experience of intense fatigue**, and a **disillusionment with the government crisis response**. However, this period also led to **increased reflection and visioning for long-term ambitions** that shaped whether and how emergent response groups continued and progressed during the subsequent time period.

Evolution describes October 2020 onwards, which marked a transition – e.g. the beginning of “Chapter 2” of the EDP Food Forum – and the beginning of differing response paths. Prior to this phase, responses had been on a remarkably similar trajectory in terms of the experiences of each response group in my sample. In the Evolution phase, responses began to

differ as a result of the changing context and constraints experienced during the Plateau phase as well as the increased attention to reflection and introspection. There are four main themes that came up in differing response paths including **dropping off and/or scaling back, partnering for sustainability, envisioning innovative futures, and engaging in systemic change ambitions.**

Across cases, there were also important themes that arose in terms of enablers and barriers to enabling short-term crisis response (during Emergence and Plateau) and engaging longer-term change ambitions (from Plateau and Evolution onwards). These were important for examining the relationship between short-term crisis response and social innovation. They are also worth noting because they are sometimes at odds with each other e.g. the flexibility and fluidity desired during crisis response is also a barrier in terms of access to resources to engage in long-term change. **Short-term crisis response enablers** include the **power of self-organizing, the need for flexibility and fluidity, and a push for decentralized ways of working and decision-making.** These enabled a rapid and impactful response during the Emergence and Plateau phases. The main **short-term crisis response barrier** is the **limit of the state** and its inability to adopt short-term crisis response enablers due to its institutional structures and processes. Individuals within government who wanted to engage in timely and collaborative crisis response efforts found it difficult to do so within the boundaries of their official roles. This led to immense frustration from civil society actors who felt the burden of the crisis response lay on the shoulders of emergent response groups and NGOs.

In the transition from crisis relief to long-term change ambitions which occurred between the Plateau and Evolution phases, there were also several themes that emerged around enablers and barriers to evolving efforts. These **systemic change enablers** included **the power of relationships, the importance of unlocking access to a variety of resources, and the unique boundary-spanning roles** that can be played in pursuit of systemic change. **Barriers that hindered efforts from engaging in systemic change efforts** included the **necessity of structure and formalization of response groups to access resources** as well as the **inability of government to interact and transact with informality.** The two concepts were closely linked in the experiences of emergent response groups over the course of the year.

Much of what is detailed above and in the Findings chapter of this study supports what the literature says about emergent response groups and short-term crisis relief in the wake of disasters and crises. The flexibility and fluidity of these groups played a particularly important role during the initial crisis response (Emergence) as detailed in the enablers of short-term crisis response section. However, as discussed in the literature, the lack of formal roles and membership made it difficult for external organizations and actors (especially government) to engage with emergent response groups (Majchrzak et al., 2007; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). This proved especially important in the Plateau period as groups experienced a decline in donations and intense fatigue, and subsequently shaped response paths in the Evolution time period. This study begins to document themes like this that proved pivotal to emergent response groups and the relationship between short-term crisis response and longer-term change ambitions. More attention could be paid to the unique context of these informal groups as they balance decisions and trade-offs – like whether to register as a formal entity and how to engage with external actors – while simultaneously responding to a crisis.

This study takes a closer look at the role and impact of informal response groups and the relationship between crisis-relief activities and social innovation, adding to conversations around crisis-driven social innovation outside the lens of formal organizations (Bessant et al., 2012; Dahlke et al., 2021). While organizational crisis-driven innovation has been documented in previous literature (Archibugi et al., 2013; Bessant et al., 2012, 2015; Dahlke et al., 2021; Hausman & Johnston, 2014), this study contributes to that academic conversation at a more micro level through focusing on the activities and impacts *informal* groups often present in the aftermath of a crisis. In looking at how individuals and informal groups can affect change through social innovation, the study findings can be viewed through the previously mentioned five performative dimensions of Nilsson's (2019) institutional work lens. The emergent response groups in this study engaged with all five of these dimensions, and made meaningful changes/challenges to at least three (if not more) of these dimensions. This leads me to assert that emergent response groups do have the ability and often the desire to affect more systemic change and over time, or the potential to change the "routines, resource and authority flows, or

beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced” (Westley, McGowan, Antadze, Blacklock, & Tjornbo, 2016, p. 2) – the very definition of social innovation

This study aims to bring the work and social innovation of emergent response groups to light, in order to better value and support efforts like these ahead of crises to come. There are also practical implications detailed at the end of this paper around unlocking resources to support this type of work, as well as encouraging ongoing interrogations of power imbalances, systemic inequalities and privileges, and the norms and values which we uphold within our own institutions every day.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This section reviews the literature relevant to emergent groups, crisis relief, and social innovation in response to Covid-19 in further detail. While Covid-19 is a relatively nascent research topic, new papers and journals are published seemingly every day on the impacts of the pandemic across a range of academic fields. The pandemic certainly fits the definition of a grand challenge (Ferraro, Etzion, & Gehman, 2015; Howard-Grenville, 2021), a topic which scholars have given increased attention to in the 21st century in the wake of our many global, complex, and seemingly intractable challenges (Ferraro et al., 2015). Amongst management scholars, some are calling for Covid-19 to reignite the conversation on how grand challenges are incorporated into and addressed by management research (George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016; Howard-Grenville, 2021). In the words of Howard-Grenville (2021): “Could there be a more pressing and urgent grand challenge than this? And, what might its lessons be for how organisational scholars engage in work that seeks to understand and tackle societal grand challenges?” (Howard-Grenville, 2021, p. 254). The concept of Covid-19 as a grand challenge frames the first section of this literature review titled “Covid-19: a catalyst of interconnected crises”.

While Covid-19 is a new phenomenon, the interconnected crises catalyzed by the pandemic and national lockdown in South Africa displayed many similarities to other crises and disasters that have been given attention in crisis and resiliency scholarship. This field has a rich history spanning from disasters like the 1970 San Diego fire (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985) to

more recent well-known disasters such as Hurricane Katrina (Majchrzak et al., 2007) and the 2010 Haiti earthquake (Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, 2021). The frequent focus on responses in the wake of disasters is based on the premise that disasters often have such wide-spread, devastating effects, that they motivate members of society to alleviate suffering (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Majchrzak, Jarvenpaa, & Hollingshead, 2007; Wickramasinghe, 2005; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). This often includes emergent response groups, or collections of individuals that did not have pre-crisis relations (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985b; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). These emergent response groups form as a response to peoples' need to "do something" and are a "hallmark" of crisis response that has been documented in the literature (Twigg & Mosel, 2017). The literature on crises and emergent response groups is covered more thoroughly in the second section of this literature review titled "Disasters, crises, and emergent response groups".

While emergent response groups are primarily aimed at short-term action in the aftermath of a crisis, scholars such as Williams and Shepherd (2016a) have noted the presence of groups which they characterize as "transforming" ventures. These ventures seek to build resilience within the community through transforming peoples' livelihoods and focus on shifting individuals out of survival mindsets towards a path of self-reliance. The desire of these groups to affect more long-term prosocial change in the aftermath of a crisis aligns with the notion of "building back better" (Mannakkara & Wilkinson, 2013; Mannakkara, Wilkinson, & Potangaroa, 2014; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, 2021) and the view that crises can provide an opportunity for ideas and processes to take hold and scale to affect change (Novalia & Malekpour, 2020; van Wijk, Stam, Elfring, Zietsma, & Den Hond, 2019; Westley & Antadze, 2010; Westley et al., 2016). These concepts are also covered in the second section of the literature review and tie to the concepts of social innovation and institutional work in the subsequent third section of the literature review, titled "Social innovation and institutional work".

The desire to affect long-term, more systemic change is often addressed in social innovation and institutional work practice and literature. Social innovations aim to "challenge and change the very institutions that created the social problem which they address" (Westley & Antadze, 2010, p. 2) while institutional work focuses on disrupting institutions through

deinstitutionalization and institutional change (Maguire & Hardy, 2009; Symon, Buehring, Johnson, & Cassell, 2008; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Both scholarly conversations concern themselves with the efforts “of individuals and collective actors to cope with, keep up with, shore up, tear down, tinker with, transform, or create anew the institutional structures within which they live, work, and play, and which give them their roles, relationships, resources, and routines” (Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2011, p. 53). Given this focus, there is an interesting intersection emerging between crises and social innovation – i.e. crisis-driven social innovation (Bessant et al., 2012; Dahlke et al., 2021). Scholars have recently begun to pay more attention to how crises may create space for ideas and processes to take hold and scale to create transformative social innovation (Avelino et al., 2017; van Wijk, Zietsma, et al., 2019; Westley et al., 2016). This is the topic of the last section of the literature review, titled “Crisis as opportunity? Crisis-driven innovation and game changers”. Gaps in the existing literature are subsequently discussed in the “Literature Gaps” section.

Covid-19: a catalyst of interconnected crises

Climate change, inequality, food security, access to healthcare and education; the list of complex, systems-level challenges that we faced before Covid-19 appeared to be never-ending, or at the very least number no fewer than 17, the number of Sustainable Development Goals developed by the United Nations to create a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all” by 2030 (“The 17 Goals | Department of Economic and Social Affairs,” n.d.). Unfortunately, 2020 was the first year in recent history that the Goalkeepers Report could not celebrate improvement or progress towards the SDG goal indicators. In fact, the year was marked by regression on the SDGs due to Covid-19 (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2020) – a pandemic that was described by the World Health Organization as the “defining health crisis of our time” (Meade, 2020, p. 379).

“Existing fragilities in systems of all kinds – be they those that assure health and wellbeing, food, sustainable livelihoods, resilient ecologies, resource access, employment, trade, finance, inclusive governance, citizen rights and more – have been highlighted, and

sometimes intensified, by COVID- 19. At the time of writing, impacts are still unfolding fast and remain uncertain. It is already clear, however, that they are being felt unevenly, exposing differences of vulnerability across geographies and social groups.” (Leach, Macgregor, Scoones, & Wilkinson, 2020, p. 3)

On paper, Covid-19 is a public and global health crisis. In reality, the prevention of and response to Covid-19 revealed, exacerbated, and created multiple interconnected health, social, and economic crises (Dahlke et al., 2021; Egger et al., 2021; Gupta et al., 2020; Leach et al., 2020; Spaul, Oyenubi, et al., 2020). Many people have described the pandemic as a “mirror” that revealed and highlighted the highly unequal societies that we live in, characterized by complex interdependence, vulnerabilities, and marginalization (Keller et al., 2021; Leach et al., 2020). The complexity, radical uncertainty, and boundary-spanning nature of Covid-19 has also led researchers to characterize it as a grand challenge (Ferraro et al., 2015).

“...by this definition, the Covid-19 pandemic certainly registers as a grand challenge. It is a type of problem scientists have been warning about for decades... the pandemic’s global reach has no bounds; its economic, social, and health consequences affect us all... could there be a more pressing and urgent grand challenge than this?” (Howard-Grenville, 2021, p. 254)

While grand challenges are fundamentally global issues, their effects are often felt at the local level (Berrone, Gelabert, Massa-Saluzzo, & Rousseau, 2016; Brenner, 1998). Within local contexts, grand challenges inherently affect large populations, meaning that they span across boundaries of any one single organization or community (Ferraro et al., 2015). No single individual or organization can address a grand challenge on its own- instead, grand challenges must be addressed through coordinated actions that span across sectors and levels, from individual behavior to international efforts (K. Eisenhardt et al., 2016; George et al., 2016; George, Mcgahan, & Prabhu, 2012; Waddell et al., 2015; Waddock, Meszoely, Waddell, & Dentoni, 2015). Given the complexity, nonlinearity, and uncertainty of grand challenges, as well

as their boundary-spanning nature, they require going beyond traditional responses towards new ways of thinking, acting, and collaborating (van Wijk, Zietsma, et al., 2019; Westley & Antadze, 2010).

As a grand challenge, the Covid-19 pandemic “generated a wide range of responses by countries, companies, and individuals, of course, informed by different understandings of the sources and consequences of the crisis” (Bapuji et al., 2020, p. 1071). At a country level, these responses frequently included government-imposed country-wide lockdowns which, particularly for developing countries, created and exacerbated problems for individuals and organizations (Bapuji et al., 2020). Though these measures were aimed at alleviating Covid-19 as a health crisis, they created economic and social crises whose impact may last longer than the effects of the virus itself (Bapuji et al., 2020). In South Africa, the lockdown measures came at a moment of record high unemployment (Belling, 2020), fragile government safety nets, atrociously high rates of gender based violence, precarious housing and sanitation conditions, unstable access to electricity, and steadily rising food costs. The result was the swift onset of widely spread, interconnected crises encompassing unemployment, hunger, access to education, early childhood development, health, safety, and sanitation – all of which were captured in the ongoing national NIDS CRAM surveys (Spaull, Ardington, et al., 2020; Spaull, Daniels, Ardington, Bassier, et al., 2021; Spaull, Daniels, Ardington, Benhura, et al., 2021; Spaull, Oyenubi, et al., 2020). As summarized by Spaull in an interview after the release of the first wave of the NIDS CRAM study: “The impact is colossal and it shocked us...All of us were numbed. It is devastating and upsetting.” (Haffajee, 2020). Employment declined substantially, exacerbating inequalities along traditional lines of race, gender, occupation, earnings, location and education. The study declared that “*An already unequal national situation has been made much worse*” (Haffajee, 2020).

Disasters, crises, and emergent response groups

While the Covid-19 pandemic catalyzed interconnected crises, it also catalyzed emergent crisis responses to spring into action in South Africa and around the world (Activists, 2020; Hamann et al., 2020; Howard, 2020; Mao, Fernandes-Jesus, Ntontis, & Drury, 2021; Nkonyeni et al., 2021; Partnership, 2020a; Silwana, 2020; Sitrin, Sembrar, & Solnit, 2020; van Ryneveld,

Whyte, & Brady, 2020). In South Africa, as in many other parts of the world, these responses took the form of large NGOs pivoting their operations towards crisis relief efforts, civil society actors such as religious networks and community-based organizations stepping in to identify and communicate needs on the ground, and mutual aid networks and citizen-driven movements working in solidarity to support neighbors and community members. The national government in South Africa also announced a more traditional (and centralized) approach to crisis relief in the form of a Solidarity Fund that private businesses and individuals could donate to in order to provide resources towards Covid-19 relief (Activists, 2020). There was a public outpouring of concern and a unity amongst society that is characteristic of many disasters and crises (Twigg & Mosel, 2017).

In this way, the Covid-19 pandemic displayed many similarities to other disasters and emergent crisis responses that have been given attention in crisis and resiliency scholarship (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Kornberger, Leixnering, & Meyer, 2019; Majchrzak et al., 2007; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Twigg & Mosel, 2017). Scholars like Williams and Shepherd have focused extensive attention on emergent responses and resilience in the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires in Australia (Shepherd & Williams, 2014; Williams & Shepherd, 2016b, 2018) and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti (Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, 2021). Others have focused on emergent response to well-known disasters such as the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami (Telford & Cosgrave, 2007; Twigg & Mosel, 2017), Hurricane Katrina (Majchrzak et al., 2007) and the 1970 San Diego fires (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985).

Within this body of literature, the frequent focus on emergent responses in the wake of disasters and crises is based on the premise that disasters often have such wide-spread, devastating effects that they motivate members of society to alleviate suffering (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Majchrzak et al., 2007; van Ryneveld et al., 2020; Wickramasinghe, 2005; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). This is especially relevant when the complexity of the crisis means that traditional actors cannot meet all of the needs that occur. In this case, communities are not passive bystanders; disasters and crises typically prompt a response from voluntary emergent response groups, or collections of individuals that did not have pre-crisis relations (Carlton, Nissen, & Wong, 2021; Majchrzak et al., 2007; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Scanlon, 1999;

Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Twigg & Mosel, 2017; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). Contrary to what may be depicted in the media in terms of panic and looting in response to a disaster or crisis, research shows that most people consistently demonstrate a need to create positive impact (Twigg & Mosel, 2017).

“Groups and individuals typically become more unified, cohesive and altruistic [in crises]... The desire to help in a crisis is very strong: it is often “a compelling need to do something”. This outpouring of individual and collective efforts by members of affected and unaffected communities on behalf of disaster victims is a feature of disasters.” (Twigg & Mosel, 2017, p. 444)

Voluntary emergent response groups are an important and prevalent feature in the wake of disasters and crises. Emergent response groups are characterized by a great sense of urgency, fluid boundaries, fleeting or unclear membership, and dispersed leadership (Majchrzak et al., 2007; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). They can also be characterized by newness, lack of formalization, and lack of tradition – i.e. groups with new structures and new functions (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). They are frequently non-hierarchical with fluid membership and a lack of clearly designated leaders, which makes them nimble in responding to a constantly changing environment but can make it difficult for organizations or people outside the group to develop relationships with them (Majchrzak et al., 2007; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). The informal nature of emergent response groups also means that groups tend to have a smaller active core membership with nonmember participants who dip in and out of the work as they have the resources or capacity to help (Majchrzak et al., 2007; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). A supplement to this view of emergent response groups lays in more recent work by Williams & Shepherd (2018) who posit that while emergent responses can be *de novo* (entirely new organizations/groups), they can also be *de alio* (stemming from an existing organization) (Williams & Shepherd, 2018).

The structure of a response group is primarily driven by the work that it undertakes which results in groups most often lacking a formal organizational structure and roles (e.g. organization

charts or job specifications), though this may vary in de alio responses given the explicit ties to pre-existing organizations (Williams & Shepherd, 2018). Most response groups place a focus on “ad hoc decision making rather than long-range planning” (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985, p. 95) to undertake different activities and projects. Examples of emergent group activities include conducting damage assessments to provide information on the extent and location of disaster damage (e.g. search and rescue), coordinating operations to collect and distribute supplies like food and clothing to those affected or to undertake a community cleanup, providing shelter, providing rudimentary medical care, mental health treatment, counseling, and legal services to disaster victims, and coordinating to set direction or assume responsibility for community-wide challenges (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, 2018).

While emergent response groups are primarily aimed at short-term action, scholars such as Williams and Shepherd (2016a) have noted the continued persistence of groups past the onset of the crisis, and distinguished between short-term and long-term oriented response groups. In the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake, Williams and Shepherd (2016a) spent two years researching a set of six different local response groups – termed “ventures” in the research – that emerged in response to the crisis. While all groups were engaged in similar actions in the immediate hours and days after the earthquake, Williams and Shepherd (2016a) found over time that the groups were split across two different paths: providing sustenance and building resilience. Those focused on providing sustenance were characterized as “sustaining” ventures with an ongoing focus on providing basic needs and a “one day at a time” approach that addressed symptoms of issues instead of underlying causes (Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). These responses were exclusively focused on providing basic/physical survival needs through relief-oriented activities (e.g. providing temporary tent housing, searching for resources daily), as opposed to “transforming” ventures which sought to build resilience within the community through transforming peoples’ livelihoods.

Transforming ventures focused on shifting individuals out of survival (reactive) mindsets, towards a path of self-reliance. This included finding more permanent housing solutions, securing employment and education, and providing long-term medical services like psychological care. This focus on “pathways to autonomy” (Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, p. 2079) meant that

ventures evolved with the needs of those that they were serving, offering both short- and long-term projects to aid in recovery, with a long-term orientation to alleviating suffering. The orientation of the resilience-building, transforming ventures aligned with international hopes that “Haiti could experience a ‘re-imagination’ in the aftermath of the earthquake” (Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, p. 2081). This is an argument echoed by those who push for “building back better” in the wake of a crisis (Mannakkara & Wilkinson, 2013; Mannakkara et al., 2014; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a, 2021), a term that has become almost ubiquitous with the current Covid-19 pandemic (Hamann, 2020).

“Build back better” emerged as a concept in the early 2000s, specifically following the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 (Kennedy, Ashmore, Babister, & Kelman, 2008). It described the ability to use post-disaster reconstruction as an opportunity to improve a community’s resiliency through improving it’s physical, social, environmental, and economic conditions (Mannakkara et al., 2014). While originally focused on the physical reconstruction of infrastructure (e.g. structural design, land-use planning) to enhance resiliency, the term “build back better” has now also become synonymous with ways of thinking that see Covid-19 as an opportunity or portal to building a better world (Roy, 2020). This shift towards embracing “build back better” as a way to metaphorically rebuild a more just society aligns well with social change ethos but does risk conflating a term that was originally used primarily for a more tangible and specific aim of physical reconstruction (Hamann, 2020). However, when viewed alongside concepts of “bouncing forward” and “bounce back and transform” used by resiliency advocates (Hynes, Trump, Love, & Linkov, 2020; L. Olsson, Jerneck, Thoren, Persson, & Byrne, 2015), it is clear that there is a notion that crisis can be used as an opportunity to reconstruct more than physical damage.

“Resilience thinking suggests that such events [crises] may open up opportunities for reevaluating the current situation, trigger social mobilization, recombine sources of experience and knowledge for learning, and spark novelty and innovation. It may lead to new kinds of adaptability or possibly to transformational change.” (Folke et al., 2010, p. 5)

While the sustaining venture is focused primarily on addressing symptoms of the crisis, the second type of venture – building resilience, transforming, building back better – holds the potential to address underlying causes and provide or create more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just solutions to benefit a community (Phills Jr., Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008) to enhance resiliency (Westley & Antadze, 2010).

Social innovation and institutional work

The desire to affect more systemic change in response to a crisis is echoed in social innovation and institutional change practice and literature. Activists, practitioners, and scholars of social innovation often concern themselves with creating lasting change that challenges systemic issues and the institutions that create and uphold them – i.e. engaging in institutional work. While institutional work and institutional change have a rich history in academia, social innovation is a relatively new academic field that has seen a more recent rise in research. Early references to social innovation in academic literature can be traced back to the late 1990s, with a marked increase in interest and scholarly publications post-2008 (Phillips et al., 2015). Since then, there has been an increase in documenting and understanding the concepts of social innovation and social entrepreneurship and enterprises, driven partly by the failure of traditional for-profit models to address and alleviate societal challenges in the wake of the profound, prolonged 2008 global recession (Phillips et al., 2015). The number of articles that include the keyword “social innovation” more than doubled between 2004 and 2012 (Westley, McGowan, Antadze, Blacklock, & Tjornbo, 2016).

The most frequently cited definition of social innovation is set forth by the Stanford Social Innovation Review and defines social innovation as “a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals” (Phills Jr. et al., 2008, p. 36). According to Phills et al. (2008), in addition to being more effective or efficient as an innovation, social innovation must also be more *sustainable or just* than preexisting options. The intended benefit of the innovation must also focus on *society at large* rather than a single organization, person, or group of shareholders (Chalmers, 2013; Phills Jr. et al., 2008). These

definitions are similar to ones set forth by Mulgan, Tucker, Ali, & Sanders (2007) and Tracey and Stott (2017) who echo the idea that social innovation is differentiated from business innovation based on the motivation for social change rather than maximization of profit or creation of value in the context of market needs. Prominent social innovation scholars such as Westley et al. (2016) have recently broadened the definition of social innovation to include “any project, product, process, program, platform, or policy that challenges and, over time, changes the defining routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced.” (Westley et al., 2016, p. 2).

This definition of social innovation links to concepts of institutional work, a field that was developed from institutional theory to create a scholarly focus on “the efforts of individuals and collective actors to cope with, keep up with, shore up, tear down, tinker with, transform, or create anew the institutional structures within which they live, work, and play, and which give them their roles, relationships, resources, and routines.” (Lawrence et al., 2011, p. 53). The concept of institutional work helpfully connected previously disparate research fields around creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions and brought a focus to what goes on within an institution (Quinn Trank & Washington, 2009). Institutional work brings the role of individuals in connection to institutions to the forefront, including the intentionality and effort of individuals, and argues for the notion that “individuals actively engage in processes of institutional creation, maintenance, disruption, and change” (Lawrence et al., 2011, p. 53).

The “how” of institutional work (creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions) provides a helpful lens to social innovation research focused on how social innovation occurs, diffuses, and scales. Institutional work explores how individual agency occurs at the micro level and the ongoing interactions between this agency and the creation, disruption, and maintenance of institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011; Nilsson, 2019). This focus on the interplay of micro agency and institutions has revealed an insight that is key to social innovation and institutional change ambitions: institutions are performative (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007), i.e. “institutions don’t maintain themselves; we maintain them” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 286). While our experiences with and within institutions may lead us to believe otherwise, if institutions are maintained by people

there is hope for social innovation and institutional change actors that institutions can also be disrupted, changed, and dismantled by people.

For Westley & Antadze (2010), this link between institutional work and social innovation is explicit: in addition to diffusion and scale, social innovation involves challenging and disrupting institutions creating the social challenge i.e. institutional work.

“Social invention abounds... More rarely, such inventions succeed in having a lasting or revolutionary impact: they challenge and change the very institutions that created the social problem which they address. When this happens it can be argued that social innovation has occurred.” (Westley & Antadze, 2010, p. 2)

According to Westley & Antadze (2010), social innovation is explicitly focused on transcending sectors and singular institutions to produce a lasting impact. This is especially relevant because social innovations aim to address issues like grand challenges which are inherently complex, non-linear, and often require institutional change. Others such as Nilsson (2019) have also begun to connect social innovation and social change to institutional work based on the role of the individual in creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions. Nilsson (2019) argues that newer studies of the social innovation movement should concern themselves less with a discrete problem and solution, and more with “the remarkable everydayness of the who, what, and where of ongoing social change... the consistent expansion of everyone’s capacity to reimagine the world...”(Nilsson, 2019, p. 284). This includes the role that individuals have in interacting with, shaping, and changing institutions to create and scale social innovation.

“Put crudely, the raw material for system transformation is right there before us all of the time. We are swimming in it. We are (re)creating it. Becoming more conscious of this gift – this peril – can help social innovation actors see their systems more clearly and work with them more creatively, enhancing overall agency and potentially accelerating impact.” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 286)

Nilsson (2019) offers an institutional work lens to examining social innovation through five performative institutional dimensions that are similar to how social innovation is now defined by Westley et al. (2016): roles, social identities, resource flows, authority processes, and meanings. Each of these five performative institutional dimensions “involves a mode of structural enactment critical to holding a given institution together” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 288) and the five dimensions are not mutually exclusive of each other. As depicted in Figure 2 below, each dimension can be explored through two broad institutional work lenses: value inclusion and structural experimentalism. Value inclusion centers on expanding what is valued through lifting up “previously underrepresented people, resources, relationships, patterns, and/or modes of knowledge” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 288). Structural experimentalism involves “increasing structural flexibility of the field” through “making its linkages less rigid and its boundaries more plastic” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 289)

Performative Institutional Dimension	Institutional Work: Value Inclusion	Institutional Work: Structural Experimentalism
Roles <i>who does what</i>	Valorizing experiential and cultural expertise as a credential	Deconstructing roles to foster role bricolage
Social Identities <i>who belongs to what</i>	Valorizing marginalized or oppressed identities	Making social identity boundaries permeable
Resource Flows <i>who gets what</i>	Valorizing hidden and discounted resources	Decentralizing distributive infrastructure
Authority Flows <i>who decides what</i>	Valorizing local knowledge as power	Convening relational decision-making
Meanings <i>who signifies what</i>	Valorizing holistic purposes	Interrogating participatory dynamics

Figure 2. Institutional work lens for social innovation (Nilsson, 2019)

According to Nilsson (2019), *roles* focus on “who does what and how” and reimagining or disrupting them can be “one of the most powerful and potentially far-reaching forms of social innovation work” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 289). Roles stem from labor (e.g. someone doing accounting work becomes known as an accountant) and encompass the rules, norms, and beliefs that make it possible for institutions to exist. Through the institutional work lenses provided by Nilsson (2019), roles can be disrupted and reimagined through *creating new roles* by including and placing value on previously excluded forms of knowledge and *deconstructing roles*, broadening the opportunity and availability of who does what by deconstructing and simplifying roles to distribute agency across unlikely actors (Nilsson, 2019). A social innovation example of creating

new roles comes from mothers2mothers, a healthcare initiative in southern Africa that works to lower mother-to-child HIV transmission by valuing mentor mothers: HIV-positive women who have managed to overcome this challenge themselves (“Mothers2mothers,” n.d.; Nilsson, 2019). The experiences of these women are valued and they are elevated to the role of a paid professional healthcare worker through small amounts of formal training in a system that is typically highly formalized and exclusive in its path of education and work opportunities. Social innovation examples also exist for deconstructing, simplifying, and demystifying roles, including the well-known Green Belt Movement (“The Green Belt Movement,” n.d.) which turned everyday Kenyan residents into “tree cultivators and micro-entrepreneurs”(Nilsson, 2019, p. 290). Through creating new roles and deconstructing roles, social innovators aim to increase individual agency. Reimagining roles can be inherently included in challenging several of the other four performative institutional dimensions.

Social identities are “categories of identity that define and separate groups” and “structure who belongs to what” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 291). Social identities focus on the intersection between individual social-psychological experiences and groups or institutions, including “how people come to associate themselves in and with groups” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 291). Social identities can encompass things such as gender, race, religion, geography and often inadvertently become hierarchical and take on the lens of a social class or status group (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Tajfel, 1970). The line between roles and social identities can often become blurred – for example, the previously mentioned role of accountant may create in that person a feeling of belonging or association with other accountants as a social identity. A social identity may also come to be associated with a role, in the way that the identity of a “‘woman’ may become strongly associated with specific functional roles like ‘childcare’ or ‘nursing’ in certain social systems” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 291). The potential disruption to social identities through social innovation lies not in erasing them, but in *elevating previously oppressed or suppressed identities* and recognizing the value of diversity as seen in social movements around the world including South Africa’s black consciousness movement and the emergence of third wave feminism (Nilsson, 2019). Disrupting and reimagining social identities can also take the form of *intentionally bringing together cross-identity interaction* to bridge divides and share

knowledge, cultures, and experiences of different social identity groups (Nilsson, 2019). Examples of this include a group intentionally bridging generational divides between youth and seniors in the Netherlands by having university students live in nursing homes (Jansen, 2015), as well as a group in Boston spanning racial, economic, and geographical divides through bringing youth together from different neighborhoods to work at farming sites (Nilsson, 2019; “The Food Project,” n.d.). The exchanges created across the identity groups in both examples help to increase “system reflexivity by cross-pollinating the different forms of system knowledge (histories, cultures, experiences, technologies, and so on) held by individual identity groups” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 292).

The third performative institutional dimension, *resource flows*, is often the focus of social innovation efforts and encompasses “who has access to what kinds of resources” meaning “flows of money, material goods, intangible goods like intellectual property, relational (social) capital, information, and time” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 293). Resource flows are often structured and upheld through institutions, policies, practices, and “assumptions about what roles and classes of people should have access to what types of information” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 293). Challenging resources flows can take the form of *revaluing hidden and discounted resources*, a shift similar to appreciative inquiry that requires changing how people think (Bushe & Kassam, 2005) to look at the social and cultural capital of marginalized groups rather than their needs and deficits (Nilsson, 2019). It can also mean *decentralizing infrastructure* such as resource and information distribution channels to increase inclusion, distribute agency, and enable access to new resources on the micro-level. Examples of revaluing hidden and discounted resources include efforts to shed light on tangible resources like underused historical land and buildings, as well as tapping in to less tangible resources like the social networks and relationships present in informal communities (Nilsson, 2019). Decentralizing infrastructure can include providing access to computers in open, non-school locations, creating access to social finance through non-traditional financial opportunities like social impact bonds and crowdfunding platforms, or enabling open access to information that was traditionally inaccessible (Nilsson, 2019). These types of social innovations aim to create access to resources – whether existing and

undervalued, existing and inaccessible, or completely new resources – to increase agency to “act entrepreneurially, developmentally, and/or politically” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 294).

The fourth performative institutional dimension, *authority processes*, focuses on “who decides what” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 295), shifting the power of decision-making to increase autonomy or participation in the decision-making process. Institutions can both enable and constrain actors and organizations (van Wijk et al., 2019) which extends to the beliefs and norms around who gets to make choices and how those choices are made (Beckert, 1999). Social innovation can attempt to challenge these power structures by *valuing local knowledge* through inclusive participatory processes that bridge those impacted by a decision with those making the decision, as well as *convening dialogues* during decision-making processes (Nilsson, 2019). This form of innovation inherently challenges roles – who gets to make the decision – shifting away from individual decision-making roles (e.g. the CEO, the Mayor) towards distributed relationships and dialogue that drive decisions through collaboration. Examples include participatory budgeting processes where the government “shifts budget decisions into open, deliberative citizen forums” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 295) giving citizens the opportunity to propose projects and help decide with government officials which projects to fund, and creating structures to convene dialogue throughout decision-making to foster co-creation.

Lastly, according to Nilsson, *meanings* “propose explicit or implicit answer to the deep ‘why’ questions: Why are we doing this? What is it all for? Why should we do it this way rather than another?” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 295). Reimagining meanings provides an opportunity for transformative institutional work through challenging an institution’s purpose. This can be a radical form of institutional work – reevaluating and challenging the “why” of the institution itself - and can take the form of expanding an institution towards a more *holistic purpose* while also examining and challenging the *participatory dynamics* of the current system (Nilsson, 2019). Examples of more holistic purposes include the emergence of democratic schools, or schools oriented towards developing citizenship skills and personal growth of children through democratic school governance and self-directed learning (“Democratic Schools - Alternatives to School,” n.d.), the adoption of more expansive global indicators such the Human Development Index and Gross National Happiness indicators, and the rise of new business models driven by

the B-Corp sustainability movement (Wilburn & Wilburn, 2014). Interrogating participatory dynamics is often inherent in these types of social innovations which strive to expand “the dialogue around purpose” and “enhance distributed agency via the structuring implications of the values they are promoting (for example, whole personhood, democratic participation, co-responsibility for community and planetary stewardship, and co-creation of evolving institutions”(Nilsson, 2019, p. 296).

The intersection of social innovation and institutional work described above by Nilsson (2019) echoes other social innovation work that calls for renegotiating or building new institutions that challenge our routines, resource flows, authorities, and beliefs (van Wijk, Zietsma, et al., 2019; Westley & Antadze, 2010). In Nilsson’s view, the tie between social innovation and institutional work is explicit, and helping aspiring social innovators and everyday actors become more aware of that link is paramount: “all social innovations interact with multiple institutional dimensions. They may be disrupting a dimension, transforming it, or reproducing it... And if we are interested in the contributions of specific social innovations toward broader system change, this kind of interrogation might be especially important” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 298).

Crisis as opportunity? Crisis-driven innovation and game changers

“A crisis can provide a window of opportunity for small-scale initiatives and efforts across different levels of society to join forces, gain momentum and create systemic change.”
(Novalia & Malekpour, 2020, p. 362)

Social innovations frequently “arise out of a combination of widespread and often urgent needs and severe resource limitations” and “represent the preconditions for what can be termed ‘*crisis driven innovation*’” (Bessant et al., 2012, p. 222). Crisis-driven innovation is characterized by extreme conditions that force a radical rethinking of traditional solutions, participation in co-creating solutions, rapid prototyping and learning, rapid diffusion, and recombination (Dahlke et al., 2021). Crisis-driven innovation emerges when widespread demands (e.g. healthcare, education, energy, food, sanitation) cannot be met by conventional

routes (Dahlke et al., 2021). This includes contexts of crises and disasters such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, and tsunamis which create urgent and widespread needs that can catalyze high rates of innovation (Bessant et al., 2012). In this way, crisis-driven innovation is similar to emergent responses that aim to alleviate suffering in the context of crises and disasters that span the boundaries of traditional response roles.

An example of a crisis-driven innovation in the context of a social crisis includes Concern Worldwide who “pioneered the use of ‘mobile money’ to develop an emergency response programme in the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007” through a “partnership with M-PESA, a powerful and robust platform which had been developed in Kenya to enable what is effectively mobile banking amongst low income groups” (Bessant et al., 2012, p. 231). This partnership helped to distribute crisis relief amidst breakdowns in communication and information networks and enabled local recipients to solve their own challenges through transferring funds to them instead of distributing costly food and aid parcels. The mobile cash transfer assistance platform has since been replicated and used in Niger (Bessant et al., 2012). Another initiative that emerged in the same post-election violence included the Ushahidi decentralized crowdsourcing platform which enabled users to provide alerts about problems to “crowdmap” (Bessant et al., 2012). An application has now been developed which has been used widely in crisis contexts including the Australian floods, the Haiti earthquake, and the Japanese earthquake and tsunami; “within two hours of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami a version of the platform was available to help locate where people were trapped, where food and water supplies were available, where transportation links were working or had been damaged, etc.” (Bessant et al., 2012, p. 233). Yet another example of crisis-driven innovation is the widespread experimentation in cash and voucher assistance that occurred in the wake of the 2004 Tsunami crisis. The 2004 Tsunami relief efforts have been referred to as “the tipping point” in cash-based crisis relief programming based on the fact that they accelerated mainstream adoption and scaling of these approaches for subsequent crises like the Haiti earthquake (Dahlke et al., 2021).

In addition to examples like these crisis-driven innovations, social innovation scholars have recently begun exploring how “tipping points” or “game changers” create space for ideas and processes to take hold and scale to create transformative social innovation (Avelino et al.,

2017; van Wijk, Zietsma, et al., 2019; Westley et al., 2016). Game changers are “broadly conceptualized as macro-trends that are perceived to change the rules of the ‘game’ of societal interaction”(Avelino et al., 2017, p. 3). In addition, game changers are defined by Westley et al. (2016) as macro phenomena that “are perceived to change the rules of the game, i.e. to change how society is organized by today’s understandings, values, institutions, and social relationships...in addition to trends, game changers may be discrete critical moments that provide windows of opportunity...important for social innovation” (Westley et al., 2016, p. 3). While game changers can be diverse in their geographic, functional, and temporal nature, “a clear commonality is that game-changers are placed at relatively high levels of aggregation: all of them being at least at the national scale or higher, the majority being global or international in nature” (Avelino et al., 2017, p. 4). Common clusters of game changers in research have included economic crises and national policy implementations. Recent work on game changers has explored how they are perceived, interpreted, and dealt with by social innovators and those working in/around social change in topics like climate change and ecological, economic, and social crises (Campos et al., 2016; Loorbach et al., 2016; P. Olsson, Moore, Westley, & McCarthy, 2017; Swilling, 2016).

There are three types of game changers examined by Westley et al. (2016) through historical case studies: seminal ideas, exogenous disturbances, and endogenous opportunities. Exogenous disturbances are most relevant to the disaster and crisis literature and are defined by Westley et al. (2016) as global crises or “events that affect large numbers of people and create a critical transition in the development of innovations in multiple regimes/problem domains. These events act as shocks to disrupt patterns and offer opportunities for new trajectories” (Westley et al., 2016, p. 10). Exogenous game changers are also likened to “clear punctuation marks, after which we see a change in pattern” (Westley et al., 2016, p. 6). Examples include World War I which encouraged new medical practices to aid in outbreaks of military venereal disease that created institutional shifts towards legalizing contraception, as well as World War II and the Holocaust, which also acted as cultural game changers to motivate laws to be passed to end compulsory education of aboriginal children in Canada (though the practice continued well into the 1970s) and increase protection for national parks in the U.S. (Westley et al., 2016).

The concept of exogenous disturbances as “punctuation marks” and potential catalysts for social change provides a link between social innovation and institutional work and crisis and resiliency research. This is especially applicable in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, an exogenous disturbance likely to be termed a “game changer” in hindsight, whose damage requires less physical reconstruction than a reimagining of our policies, practices, mindsets, and systems (Brown & Kline, 2020; Hamann, 2020; Hynes et al., 2020). Across the discourse and nascent literature surrounding Covid-19, there is already a notion that the pandemic has provided an opportunity as a potential game changer for rethinking and reshaping systems and institutions. There has been a proliferation of academic and political messaging around “build back better” and “bouncing forward” and an expressed reluctance to return to the pre-pandemic “normal” (Hamann, 2020; Hynes et al., 2020; Roy, 2020). In the midst of immense uncertainty and existential threat, there has also been an outpouring of solidarity and compassion demonstrated through emergent response groups that are characteristic of community responses to disasters and crises (Bell, 2021; Brady & Whyle, 2020; Domínguez, García, Martínez, & Hernandez-Arriaga, 2020; EP & TP, 2020; Khudhur, 2020). For many, these emergent responses provide hope that the pandemic might serve as a “portal” or “window of opportunity” for social change (Roy, 2020).

Literature Gaps

The Covid-19 pandemic shocked the world in 2020 and has continued to unfold as a prolonged crisis for the last two years. At the time of writing, a new variant has blazed through South Africa, Europe, and the U.S., proving that the pandemic and its effects may still be with us for years to come. Amidst the complexity, radical uncertainty, and boundary-spanning nature of Covid-19, the pandemic and associated lockdown responses have also catalyzed a proliferation of emergent response groups around the world (Activists, 2020; Hamann et al., 2020; Mao et al., 2021; Nkonyeni et al., 2021; Partnership, 2020a; Silwana, 2020; Sitrin et al., 2020; van Ryneveld et al., 2020). These groups and their associated activities contain similarities to emergent response groups that have been documented and discussed as a common community response amidst previous crises and disasters (Carlton et al., 2021; Majchrzak et al., 2007; Quarantelli &

Dynes, 1977; Scanlon, 1999; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Twigg & Mosel, 2017; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). While these types of groups have been documented and explored as a hallmark of crises, management scholars are still calling for research to contribute to a better understanding of the unique context of emergent response groups who face extremely high levels of “unpredictability, urgency, and reconfigurability” while typically lacking formal organization, defined roles, set memberships, hierarchies, and long-term planning and decision-making (Majchrzak et al., 2007, p. 149). Management research has focused extensively on organizations and individuals’ roles within organizations through topics such as strategy, leadership, and crisis response but the field has not focused as much on informal groups and the ways in which these groups might navigate similar topics.

Additionally, while crisis and resiliency research has focused on how emergent response groups form and respond in the direct aftermath of a crisis, little attention has been paid to how these responses may continue in the longer-term and their potential ambitions for prosocial change. Williams and Shepherd (2016a) began to explore this in characterizing transforming and sustaining ventures in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, but more attention could be paid to whether and how emergent response groups shape and act on long-term change ambitions and the impacts of this. Given the immediacy of a crisis and its associated impacts, how do groups form, act on, and prioritize long-term change ambitions amidst crisis response? This becomes especially relevant when looking at the intersection of the fields of crisis and resiliency research and the fields of social innovation and institutional work. Do emergent response groups look to challenge the “defining routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the broader social system” (Westley et al., 2016, p. 2), and how do they shape those ambitions and act on them while also responding to a crisis?

While the topics of crisis and resiliency, emergent crisis response, social innovation, and crisis-driven innovation have been researched and documented in academia they are not often explicitly connected to each other. As stated above, the relationship between emergent crisis response groups and their activities and social innovation is not very clear in the literature. There has not been much work to date that explicitly explores the connection between emergent response groups operating in response to a crisis and their potential longer-term change

ambitions and impacts. Crisis-driven innovation typically focuses at a more macro-level, without much emphasis on how individuals and informal groups like emergent response groups grapple with longer-term change ambitions while responding to a crisis (Archibugi et al., 2013; Bessant et al., 2012, 2015; Dahlke et al., 2021; Hausman & Johnston, 2014). This places little attention on individual agency and the intersections of agency and systems change that are important to both social innovation and institutional work scholars (Nilsson, 2019; Westley & Antadze, 2010).

Whether and how emergent response groups are able, or unable, to seize the “window of opportunity” created by a game changer like the Covid-19 pandemic to create change and build social and systems resilience is not well documented. Williams and Shepherd (2016a) began to connect emergent response groups to short- and long-term orientations through research on sustaining and transforming ventures, but did not explicitly connect these response group paths to social innovation ambitions or long-term change. The characteristics of the Covid-19 pandemic mark it as a potential game changer, or “punctuation mark”, in creating opportunities for social change (Avelino et al., 2017; van Wijk, Zietsma, et al., 2019; Westley et al., 2016). As such, it may create opportunities for social innovation to emerge, take hold, and scale such as the examples of crisis-driven innovation mentioned previously in this paper (Bessant et al., 2012; Dahlke et al., 2021; Westley et al., 2016). This focus on a crisis as an opportunity for change becomes even more important in the light of the increasing frequency and intensity of the crises we are experiencing; there is much more work that can be done to understand the opportunities that crises and game changers allow for transformative changes to take hold and scale.

Given these gaps in the existing literature, there is an opportunity to document emergent responses as they unfold in the context of crises to better understand whether and how they shape and act on long-term change ambitions while also responding to crises. In light of the devastating impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the assumption that we will face more severe and frequent crises in the future, this focus on the intersection of emergent crisis response and social innovation becomes even more important. This leads me to my research question: **What is the relationship between short-term emergent crisis response and social innovation?**

Chapter 3: Methods

Research planning

I began my research design and initial data collection amidst the first government lockdown in the South African pandemic crisis which spanned from the end of March to the beginning of June 2020. The lockdown occurred right after my first module of MPhil classes where we had discussed various perspectives on social innovation. Consequently, the proliferation of innovative responses to the lockdown crisis caught my attention as a potential thesis topic. I observed, and later became involved in, multiple examples of emergent response groups forming at a local and Provincial level and determined that I would take a qualitative approach to research these groups and the relationship between short-term emergent crisis response and social innovation. I chose a qualitative approach to be able to take an in-depth and holistic approach to a contextually sensitive research question (Patton, 2015) and observe what unfolded in the real world (K. Eisenhardt et al., 2016).

I approached my research through the constructivist paradigm which posits that reality is a social construction created through “a continuous process, created afresh in each encounter of everyday life as individuals impose themselves on their world to establish a realm of meaningful definition” (Morgan & Smircich, 1996, p. 494). The constructivist paradigm recognizes the importance of human creation of meaning without totally rejecting the notion of objectivity (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This paradigm validates the experiences of individuals and groups of people and allows for those experiences to vary from each other without marking one or more of them as “right” or “true” (Patton, 2015). This paradigm aligns with the notion of a contextually sensitive research question and helps to center the narratives and voices of my informants while still providing an opportunity to collaborate closely with them (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The constructivist paradigm also served as the philosophical underpinning to both Johnson & Stake (1996) and Yin (2003) in their approaches to case study methods (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Ultimately, I chose to use the case study method based on the conditions set forth to evaluate the fit of research methods (K. Eisenhardt, 1989; Gehman et al., 2018; Yin, 2014). My research question focused on “how” a process occurs, the setting of my research is contemporary, not historical, as it is currently still unfolding, and I was not able to control for or

manipulate behaviors in the way that would be required for an experiment (Yin, 2014). The approach to case study research involves a linear but iterative process as depicted in Figure 3 below (Yin, 2014). The planning phase of the process involves determining whether a case study is the most appropriate method for the research based on the three criteria mentioned previously, as well as taking into account common concerns with case studies such as the level of effort in time and data collection (Yin, 2014). The subsequent phases are described in the following sections.

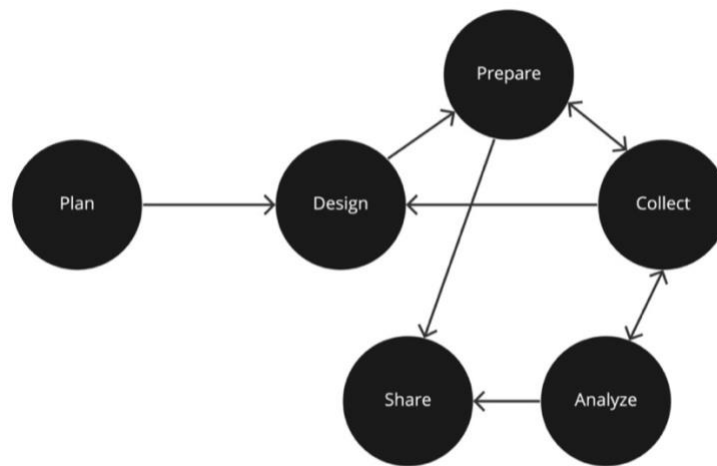


Figure 3. Doing case study research: a linear but iterative process

Research design and preparation

In line with these recommendations and the guidance of my advisors, I followed an iterative process to develop an initial broad research question before using literature to narrow the focus of my key topic areas. I used my initial literature review and proposal development to examine those key topic areas which led me to sharpen and refine my research question and revisit the literature accordingly. While I chose to forego propositions for my case study design, the proposal writing process allowed me to talk through my potential case selection with my advisors and reviewers which helped to clarify how my units of analysis would help me to answer my research question (Yin, 2014). Based on my research question, I determined that my unit of analysis would focus on emergent response groups. This aligned with my desire to conduct a comparative case study as I anticipated differences between groups in how they might deal with the relationship between crisis response and social innovation, while acknowledging there might

also be similarities across the groups that would be illustrative of the relationship between emergent crisis relief and social innovation (K. M. Eisenhardt, 2021).

In looking at others' units of analysis for crisis and emergent response group case studies, Williams and Shepherd (2016a) study stood out to me. The case selection for groups in that body of research was based on the following criteria:

- the groups emerged immediately (within the first hours or days) after the disasters in response to alleviating suffering;
- as organizations that had roles and transactions;
- that were created in and operated in the disaster geographic area

I adapted these criteria to guide my case selection and to bound my cases based on their emergence in response to pressing needs created by Covid-19 and the lockdown in South Africa. I loosened the immediacy of the timeframe of emergence to include responses that emerged during the initial period of coronavirus response in South Africa, which spanned from the beginning of lockdown on March 27, 2020, until the transition to lockdown "Level 3" on June 1, 2020. I also chose to focus on emergent response groups rather than "organizations" given the informal nature of many emergent response groups. I determined that I would follow these emergent response groups for at least 12 months from the onset of the crisis in March 2020 in order to take a temporal lens to how the crisis responses unfolded over time. This was also important to begin to observe the relationship between short-term crisis response and social innovation. This temporal and spatial bounding helped to define my cases and clarify the data I would collect on the subject of my case study as well as the data external to my cases (Yin, 2014).

In response to my research question, and my desire to conduct an inductive, comparative case study analysis (K. Eisenhardt, 1989; Gehman et al., 2018; Yin, 2014), I selected 8 cases described in Table 1 below that developed as emergent responses during the initial lockdown period in the Western Cape. This was a strategic research setting based both on the fact that I am physically located in the Western Cape and was experiencing the lockdown firsthand, as well as the fact that emergent response efforts proliferated in the Western Cape within the first few weeks of the lockdown. Case #2 was brought to my attention at the onset of the lockdown

through personal contacts and news articles that urged people to become involved in their local Community Action Network (CAN) through the network of Cape Town Together. I began to follow Case #2 as a potential subject for my thesis by joining the public group Facebook page, attending public webinars and co-learning sessions, and following news articles. Through this information, I joined my local CAN (Case #3) and soon came to realize that there would be value in including both the broader network of Cape Town Together (Case #2) as well as more hyperlocal individual CANs operating as emergent response groups in specific geographic areas. As described in Table 1 below, Cases #3-8 are hyperlocal grassroots emergent response groups associated with the network of Case #2. These groups emerged in local neighborhoods with the aid of Case #2 and chose to pair with each other (one group in a privileged neighborhood, one group in a historically marginalized neighborhood) to create links and relationships across spatial divides during the crisis response. Out of personal interest and familiarity with one of these pairings (Case #3 and #4), I decided to focus on these pairings in my hyperlocal response group case selection.

Through my work with the CANs, I subsequently became aware of an emergent initiative within the Western Cape aimed at regularly bringing together emergent response groups (including CANs) and government officials to coordinate emergency food relief across and between civil society and government. I began to join these coordination meetings and determined that the Western Cape NGO-Government Food Relief Coordination Forum (Case #1, referred to from here as the Food Relief Coordination Forum) driven by the Western Cape Economic Development Partnership (referred to from here as the Western Cape EDP or the EDP) would make an impactful addition to my case selection since it exhibited similar characteristics to the network of emergent responses in Case #2. After joining several meetings, I began to work with the EDP as an “embedded researcher”. This embeddedness, as well as my involvement in Case #3 is further detailed later in this Methods section.

As described in the table below, Cases #1 and #2 are networks that each had over 100 groups within the Western Cape associated with them. While they had similarities and overlap in membership, they also had an interesting difference documented in recent crisis response literature: Case #1 stemmed from an existing organization financially and structurally (*de alio*)

while Case #2 was a new group and consisted of entirely new groups (*de novo*) (Williams & Shepherd, 2018).

Table 1. Case descriptions*

Case #	Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	Case #2 Cape Town Together	Paired Group		Paired Group		Paired Group	
			Case # 3 CAN S	Case #4 CAN G	Case #5 CAN M	Case #6 CAN V	Case #7 CAN T	Case #8 CAN D
Case Charact eristics	Stemming from existing organization (de alio) Centrally organized Network of emergent response groups Formal organization al structure, coordinated by the Western Cape EDP	Entirely new group (de novo) Self- organized and distributed Network of emergent response groups Fluid boundaries Informal structures Non- hierarchical	Entirely new group (de novo) Self- organized Emergent response group Fluid boundaries Informal structure Non- hierarchical Paired with Case #3	Entirely new group (de novo) Self- organized Emergent response group Fluid boundaries Informal structure Non- hierarchical Paired with Case #2	Entirely new group (de novo) Self- organized Emergent response group Fluid boundaries Informal structure Non- hierarchical Paired with Case #5	Entirely new group (de novo) Self- organized Emergent response group Fluid boundaries Informal structure Non- hierarchical Paired with Case #4	Entirely new group(de novo) Self- organized Emergent response group Fluid boundaries Informal structure Non- hierarchical Paired with Case #7	Entirely new group (de novo) Self- organized Emergent response group Fluid boundaries Informal structure Non- hierarchical Paired with Case #6

*Due to the public nature of the Western Cape NGO-Government Food Relief Coordination Forum and Cape Town Together network, Case #1 and Case #2 names were difficult to anonymize and have been used with permission. Cases #3-#8 names remain abbreviated to help preserve anonymity of respondents

Data collection

The case study method places special attention on the collection of different sources of evidence as a unique strength of the method (K. Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014). While there are many types of potential data sources, Yin emphasizes six that are frequently relevant to case studies in creating confirmatory evidence and investigating potential rival explanations for findings: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2014). I have detailed the types of data collected for each

of my cases in the table below, making sure to include at least two different data sources for each case (Yin, 2014).

Table 2. Sources of evidence table

Source of Evidence	Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	Case #2 Cape Town Together	Paired Group	Paired Group	Paired Group
			Case # 3 & #4 CAN S & CAN G	Case #5 & #6 CAN M & CAN V	Case #7 & #8 CAN T & CAN D
Documentation	Meeting minutes Reports News clippings	Meeting recordings Email newsletters News clippings Social media posts	Email newsletters News clippings Social media posts	Email newsletters News clippings Social media posts	Email newsletters News clippings Social media posts
Archival records	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Interview	Case study interviews Key informants	Case study interviews Key informant	Case study interviews Key informants	Case study interviews Key informants	Case study interviews Key informants
Direct observations	Direct observation of public and private events	Direct observation of public events	Direct observation of public and some private events		
Participant observations	Participant observation	Participant observation	Participant observation	Participant observation	Participant observation
Physical artifacts		Cookbook	Cookbook	Cookbook	

In terms of data collection, the main risk that emerged was not the difficulty of retrievability of data or access to data. As everything moved online during global COVID lockdowns it created an overwhelming abundance of potential data sources. This transition to virtual work enabled my participation in countless public webinars, forums, meetings, and learning events that were relevant to my cases that might otherwise have been held behind closed doors or in inaccessible locations. I aimed to alleviate this risk over time by “triaging” my data to focus on those most relevant to my central research themes and questions (Yin, 2014). A

summary of the documentation for each of my case studies is captured in the table below, including webinars, reports and publications, newsletters, news clippings, and social media posts.

Table 3. Documentation details table

Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	Case #2 Cape Town Together	Paired Group Case #3 and #4 CAN S & CAN G	Paired Group Case #5 & #6 CAN M & CAN V	Paired Group Case #7 & #8 CAN T & CAN D
<p>Webinars: “Food Dialogues: A window of opportunity for food systems change” “Partnering during the pandemic- Lessons for building better together” “The need to address public sector institutional culture and relationships”</p> <p>Reports and publications:</p> <p>Food Relief Coordination Forum reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2020 (2 reports) • May 7, 2020 (4 reports) • June 2020 (3 reports) • July 2020 (1 report) • Aug. 2020 (2 reports) • Sept. 2020 (2 reports) <p>Food forum reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 2020 – April 2021 <p>Forum transition survey results</p> <p>“Connect, communicate, collaborate: How to mitigate a food crisis”</p> <p>“Partnering and collaborating in Covid-19: What we are learning”</p> <p>“Cities, COVID-19, and Civic and Business Leadership”</p> <p>“Hunger is growing, emergency food aid is dwindling”</p> <p>“Co-ordinating food relief during Covid-19”</p>	<p>Webinars: CAN co-learning sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Working with existing community structures” • “Co-learning session with Department of Health HOD” • “What’s next for community kitchens?” • “Support for migrants and refugees and combating xenophobia” • “What can we do to tackle the unemployment problem?” • “Alternative economies” <p>Inspired Futures Dialogue sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The inspired futures dialogue” part 1 • “The inspired futures dialogue” part 2 • “From community kitchens to a just and sustainable food system” • “Towards a universal basic income guarantee” • “Engaging with local government on food security” <p>Reports and publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAN Starter Pack April 2020 • CAN Ways of Working 	<p>Newsletters: Newsletter updates April – August 2020</p> <p>News clippings: 14 news articles</p> <p>Social media posts: 60+ saved public Facebook posts</p>	<p>Newsletters: Newsletter update December 2020</p> <p>News clippings: 14 news articles</p> <p>Social media posts: 60+ saved public Facebook posts</p>	<p>Newsletters: Newsletter update September 2020</p> <p>News clippings: 14 news articles</p> <p>Social media posts: 60+ saved public Facebook posts</p>

<p>“Rapid assessment of CT and WC Food System an Internal Report”</p> <p>“Lessons and recommendations for improving community engagement and governance report”</p> <p>“Western Cape Food Forum evolves”</p> <p>News clippings: 4 news articles</p>	<p>Aug. 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Back Better crowdsource responses <p>Aug. 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory democracy crowdsource responses <p>Aug. 2020</p> <p>Newsletters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 newsletters, March 2020 – December 2020 <p>News clippings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 news articles • SSIR article • Conversation article <p>Social media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60+ saved public Facebook posts 			
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Semi-structured, exploratory one-on-one interviews also served as a critical data source for my cases (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2019). These interviews were between 30-120 minutes long and were conducted largely as part of my participation in a broader research team documenting emergent responses and food relief during the pandemic under an ethical clearance obtained by Professor Ralph Hamann – though this thesis contains only the data that I collected and analyzed myself, not interview data from the broader team. Our research team obtained a project-specific

ethical clearance for our group research exploring implications of Covid-19 for leaders and entrepreneurs on April 25, 2020 and I received my MPhil-specific ethical clearance on October 27, 2020. Both of these clearances encompassed virtual data collection methods, specifically online artifacts (news articles, public social media posts, public forums) and interviews.

We initially identified who to interview by focusing on the “founders” of each of our cases (though many rejected this term in favor of more inclusive principles such as distributed leadership and self-organization). These interviews frequently led to a snowball technique where participants identified others who were instrumental to the group’s efforts or those who may have a contrasting opinion which helped to combat respondent biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). We developed an interview protocol for each of the three rounds of interviews focused on open-ended questions. The first round of interviews encompassed questions that focused mainly on crisis response, including questions on the origins of the response group, how groups identified and prioritized issues to response to, and the role that relationships played in crisis response:

- Tell us about your experience of how your initiative got started, what it has been doing, and how you have been working with other initiatives or organisations?
- How did you identify the problem that your initiative would try to address? How did you recognise the opportunity to address this problem?
- If we can focus on you personally for a moment, what was it about your background that motivated you to do this? How did your background give you skills or resources to do this?
- Did you have relationships within or beyond your community that helped you in this process? How did you make use of these relationship?
- How did you build new relationships in this process? How did you identify people or groups that you wanted to connect with, and how did you go about making these connections?

The second round of interviews included questions such as “How have you seen the crisis evolve? How have community needs changed in the last few months, and how have you

responded to these changing needs?” as well as questions on the impact and scale of responses. The second round also included important questions on tensions between responding to the crisis and developing longer-term strategies as well as whether and how groups were developing longer-term change ambitions. The third round of interviews focused on the continued evolution of the crisis as well as evolving personal roles and involvement, changes in access to resources, changes in relationships, and updates to long-term change ambitions. Responses to the questions in the second and third round of interviews began to shed light on the relationship between short-term crisis response and longer-term change ambitions as well as enablers and barriers to that relationship. Interview protocols for all three rounds of interviews can be found in the Appendix.

As we interviewed mostly the same people across the span of a year, several of them became involved in assisting our research team and myself in challenging our insights or giving access to people with contradictory views, serving more as informants than participants (Yin, 2014). This, along with my embeddedness as detailed in the upcoming observation paragraphs, gave me rich insight into the data and enhanced trust with participants and informants (Grinyer & Thomas, 2012). This continuity also created a risk for biases amongst the interviewees and research team. As such, having multiple sources of data to triangulate with interviewee responses became even more important to the data collection.

It is worth noting that almost all of the interviews (as well as my observations) were conducted online through platforms like Zoom due to the pandemic and multiple government lockdown(s) during the period of data collection (Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey, & Lawless, 2019; Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel, & Cook, 2020). This greatly enhanced my access to individuals and organizations, cut down on potential travel costs and time spent on interviews, and potentially contributed to participants’ willingness to engage with my research over time. However, given the nature of the cases that I selected, not all of the groups and individuals had access to formal infrastructure such as an office space or Wi-Fi or data, which meant that I sometimes needed to use more accessible forms of communication like WhatsApp phone calls and voice notes to conduct interviews. Regardless of whether I was using Zoom or WhatsApp, or conducting the interview in-person, I recorded each interview and subsequently transcribed it

with the help of otter.ai, an AI-based online transcription service. This platform transcribed each recording with an AI-based software and I then listened to each interview again while reading the transcript to correct any errors or omissions. The interviewees and interview dates across my cases are captured in Table 4 below as well as the visual depiction in Figure 4.

*Table 4. Interview detail table**

Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	Case #2 Cape Town Together	Case #3 & Case #4 CAN S & CAN G	Case #5 & Case #6 CAN M & CAN V	Case #7 & Case #8 CAN T & CAN D
<p>Adrian (AD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2020 • March 2021 • April 2021 <p>Grace (GA) & Linda (LI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug. 2020 <p>Rosa (R)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug. 2020 	<p>Alan (A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2020 • March 2021 <p>Aiden (AI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2020 <p>Emma (EM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec. 2020 <p>Layla (L)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020 • Sept. 2020 • March 2021 <p>Mariela (MA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2020 	<p>Iris (I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020 • Aug. 2020 • March 2021 <p>Gerald (G)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020 • Aug. 2020 • March 2021 <p>Pumela (P)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2020 • Sept. 2020 • March 2021 	<p>Nicole (N)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020 • Oct. 2020 • March 2021 <p>Tina (T)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020 • Oct. 2020 • March 2021 	<p>Camilla (C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020 • March 2021 <p>Michelle (M)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020 • Aug. 2020 • March 2021 <p>Ernestine (E) & Palesa (PA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2020 • March 2021

*All interviewees have been given pseudonyms to protect confidentiality, interview dates have also been generalized to protect anonymity

In addition to documentation and interviews, my data collection contained a mix of direct and participant observation as shown in Figure 4 above. This was due to my role as an “embedded researcher” within Case #1 and my membership in Case #3 where I was able to observe and participate in the efforts of Case #3 & #4 as well as Case #2. This has been described as the “insider-outsider” approach documented by Gioia et al. (2017) where the researcher takes on the role of both an “actor” and an “observer” of processes as they occur. This embeddedness provided me with access to information that otherwise would be difficult to gather or not publicly accessible, greatly strengthened my relationships with participants and informants, and enhanced my overall understanding of the context of my research. Several key informants also appreciated my active involvement in their groups as a way of challenging the traditional, more extractive role of a passive researcher.

The role of “double agent” (Gioia et al., 2010) also highlighted several ethical considerations, such as whether I would push or influence a group towards a certain outcome to obtain my research goals. As a researcher, I aimed to contribute towards knowledge and insights that might inform decisions but did not make organizational or group decisions myself. I worked to remain conscious of my own biases and used my relationships with informants and their peers to periodically check that I was fulfilling their expectations of an embedded researcher. The observation details for each of my cases are captured in the table below. While my participation with several of the cases continued beyond my analysis period of April 2021, I have included only events between March 2020 – April 2021 for the purposes of this study.

Table 5. Participant observation detail table

Case #1	Case #2	Case #3 & Case #4	Case #5 & Case #6	Case #7 & Case #8
Weekly and bi-weekly team meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug. 2020 – April 2021 Organizational stakeholder interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 2020 • Nov. 2020 Internal program strategy planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 2020 	Research group feedback meeting June 2020 Research group feedback meeting Sept. 2020	Research group feedback meeting June 2020 CAN strategy session Aug. 2020	Research group meeting June 2020	Research group meeting June 2020

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec. 2020 <p>Food Relief Coordination Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June – Sept. 2020 <p>Food Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 2020 – April 2021 <p>Food Forum working groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 2021 • March 2021 <p>CSO-Govt. Funding feedback meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ March 2021 ○ April 2021 <p>Working Group site visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ April 2021 <p>WCG meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCG Food System Work Group Workshop Feb. 2021 • WCG Food System Work Group Meeting, Feb. 2021, March 2021 • EDP and WC DoH engagement, April 2021 	<p>Artifact co-creation session</p> <p>Nov. 2020</p>	<p>Research group feedback meeting</p> <p>Sept. 2020</p> <p>Artifact co-creation session</p> <p>Nov. 2020</p> <p>CAN partnership markets</p> <p>Nov. 2020</p> <p>Feb. 2021</p>		
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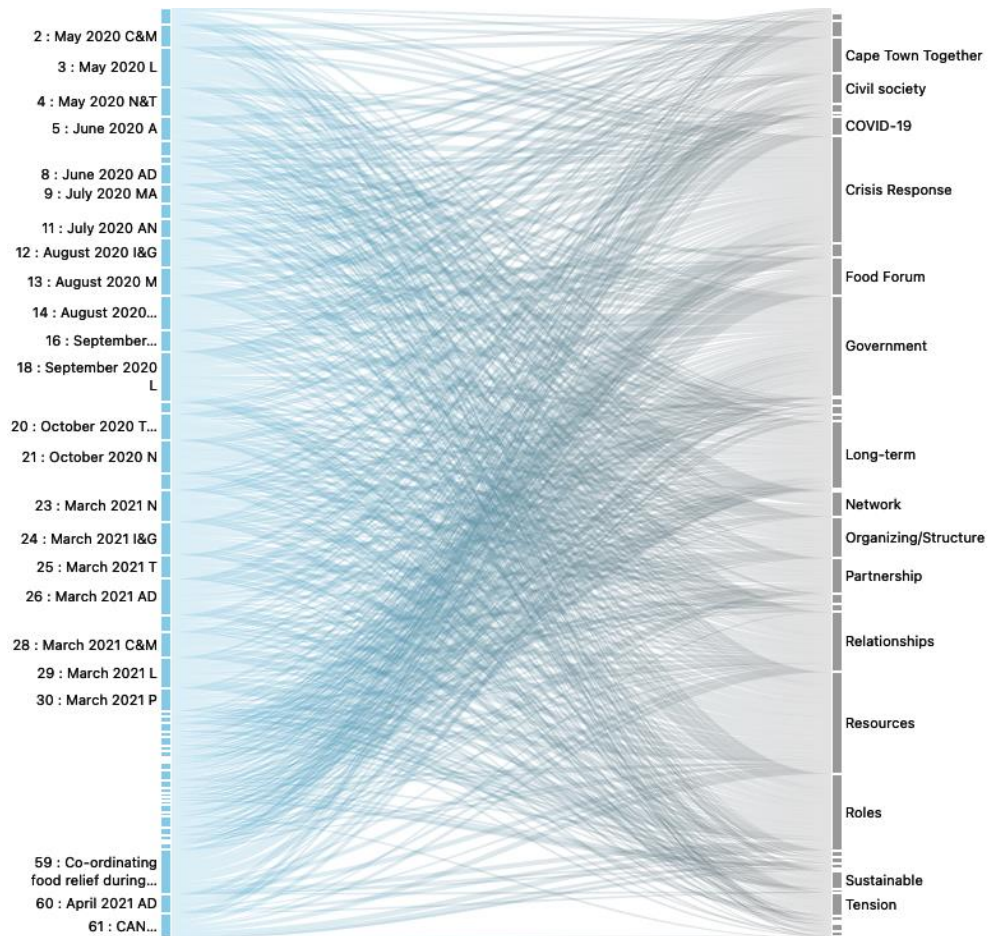
Collecting data from the multiple data sources detailed above enabled me to view my data holistically and to focus on the convergence of evidence and data triangulation. To compile my data, I created a case study database with the aid of a Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software, as is recommended in creating a rigorous case study approach (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Data analysis

As our collective research group worked to interview participants over the course of one year, we conducted multiple rounds of comparative case analysis. This included conducting rounds of coding focused on capturing informant-centric meanings, writing preliminary case reports, and creating case comparison tables to help inform the analysis and shape subsequent rounds of interviews (K. Eisenhardt, 1989; Gehman et al., 2018; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; B.G. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Yin, 2014). During this time I also built a chronological sequence

summary of the data relevant to my thesis, which aided in my subsequent personal analysis (Yin, 2014). For the purposes of my thesis research, I revisited my entire dataset after our last round of interviews in March 2021 using a Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software to code and categorize the data within and across cases (Yin, 2014). This process was helpful in reexamining the large amounts of data that I had captured over the year, including our research group interviews as well as my key participant observations and the documentation from each Food Relief Coordination Forum meeting. I undertook this analysis “from the ground up” using an inductive coding process to examine patterns within and across my cases (Barney G. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Yin, 2014). After I had coded all of my documents, I used the Code-Document Table function within ATLAS.ti to observe the prevalence of codes within and across my cases. A visual depiction of the Code-Document table is provided in the Sankey in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Sankey depiction of all codes in all interviews and key documents



Through this inductive coding process, as well as through examining the chronological sequence summary of data that I had drafted, I began to see patterns in how the year was experienced according to my interviewees. This aided in my ability to conduct a cross-case analysis, particularly between the grassroots efforts that were captured in Cases #2-8 and the coordination efforts captured in Case #1. Across both types of cases, interviewees often spoke of “phases” across the year that became important to my analysis and findings in exploring the relationship between short-term crisis response and social innovation. I applied a temporal bracketing to the data (Langley, 1999) in order to compare codes within and across cases across three time periods and focus on how and when short-term crisis response might transition towards long-term change ambitions. My initial draft case comparison tables for each temporal bracket are available in the appendix section.

The first time period was described by interviewees as the initial response or “emergency” phase and took place during the first three months of “hard lockdown”. Our initial round of interviews took place towards the end of this time period, and interviewees recalled it as being incredibly chaotic, energetic, and uncertain. This was the period of time when people formed and joined emergent response groups and the work was focused on identifying immediate needs and provisioning crisis relief. There was a sense of unity and common purpose in society and within emergent response groups that was attributed by one interviewee to an “emergency feeling” that brought people together. For the purposes of this study, I have referred to this period as “Emergence” in subsequent sections.

After the lockdown eased on June 1, interviewees perceived a shift in the context and environment of crisis response efforts. The previously described “emergency feeling” that united society and volunteers within emergent response groups began to fade, causing tensions and disagreements about how to best proceed. Large portions of society began to go back to work and school and the messaging in public discourse shifted towards “recovery” instead of focusing on “relief”. Interviewees also detailed a notable decline in available resources during this time, despite ongoing and sometimes increasing needs. All of this led emergent response groups and initiatives to reflect and engage in strategic conversations around “where do we go from here”?

This was described by one interviewee as a “spontaneous ‘what comes next’ moment”. I have referred to this period as “Plateau” in subsequent sections.

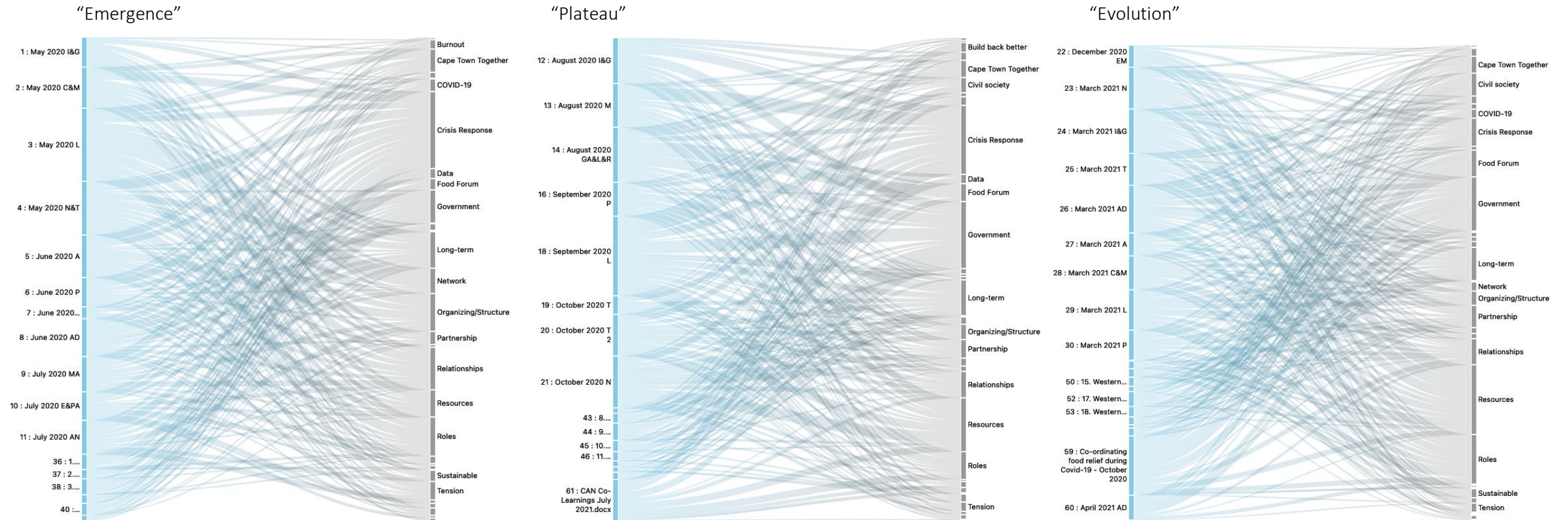
Beginning in October, responses began to evolve based on these “what next” conversations; this evolution marked the beginning of a third time period. While all of the cases in my sample experienced remarkably similar trajectories during the first two phases, they began to develop on slightly different paths during this time. For some (the minority) this meant ceasing operations. For most, this meant adopting a “both/and” approach to continuing crisis relief (albeit at scaled back levels) while transitioning towards engaging in longer-term ambitions. I have referred to this period as “Evolution” in subsequent sections.

As I looked across interviews and key documents within and across cases in these three temporal brackets, the most prominent codes differed across each time period. For example, during the Emergence time period, most responses detailed the crisis response as well as relationships and roles, with a focus on how responses were organized/structured and a nascent focus on long-term ambitions. The Plateau and Evolution time periods more prominently brought out a focus on government, resources, and long-term ambitions. These key codes are depicted in Table 6 and Figure 6 below.

Table 6. Most frequent codes by crisis phase

Emergence	Plateau	Evolution
Crisis response (98)	Crisis Response (100)	Resources (120)
Relationships (54)	Government (98)	Government (93)
Roles (49)	Resources (78)	Roles (86)
Organizing/Structure (48)	Long-term (52)	Long-term (57)
Long-term (46)	Roles (41)	Crisis response (49)

Figure 6. Sankey depictions of codes across crisis phases



Across cases, there were also important themes that arose in terms of enablers and barriers to enabling short-term crisis response (during Emergence and Plateau) and engaging longer-term change ambitions (from Plateau and Evolution onwards). These were important for examining the relationship between short-term crisis response and social innovation. Often, interviewees and groups described tensions between what had enabled a successful rapid crisis response (such as flexibility, decentralization, and lack of formal organizational roles and hierarchy) and what could enable engaging in longer-term change ambitions (such as access to more stable funding sources from government or larger donors, which required formalizing into a registered organization). Whether and how formalized emergent response groups needed to be in order to receive funding from larger donors such as NGOs and the government, as well as the government's seeming inability to interact or contract with informal entities became prominent themes across cases. The potential role of intermediaries – registered and formally “recognized” organizations with contacts and relationships with grassroots emergent response groups – also became central to the conversation around how to potentially unlock resources for informal organizations to engage in longer-term work. These important themes are detailed further in the Findings chapter as well as the Practical Implications section of the Discussion chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

As detailed in my Methods chapter, the temporal bracketing of my data allowed me to identify themes within and across cases, across distinct time periods. The cross-case themes that arose within each time period are detailed in the Emergence, Plateau, and Evolution sections of this chapter. There were also important cross-case themes that emerged around enablers and barriers to short-term crisis response and longer-term change ambitions that began to show a relationship between the short-term crisis response of the Emergence and Plateau periods and the longer-term change ambitions envisioned and adopted by cases in the Plateau and Evolution period. For example, emergent response groups who were interested in continuing crisis relief efforts while also affecting more systemic change had to grapple with salient tensions and perceived tradeoffs in the transition from the first two phases towards the Evolution phase – e.g. the flexibility and fluidity desired during crisis response time periods vs. the access to resources enabled by becoming a formal organizational entity. The enablers and barriers to both short-term crisis response and longer-term change ambitions are further detailed later in this chapter, after the three time periods are discussed.

Details of temporal bracketing of findings

As previously mentioned, the **Emergence** time period describes the initial crisis response that was catalyzed by the announcement of a national Covid-19 lockdown to take effect on March 27, 2020. For the sake of this study, Emergence spans from the end of March 2020 (the onset of the crisis) until the beginning of June 2020, dates that also correspond with the most stringent national lockdown measures. This time period is broadly characterized by rapid organizing to identify and address immediate needs, an emphasis on the role of relationships and trust, and a nascent focus on long-term ambitions.

“...last time we spoke [in May 2020], it was probably in the middle of the chaos...very much the emergency response of all systems go, everyone's just working around the clock to make things happen.” T2

While some individuals were thinking about long-term planning horizons and ambitions, the overwhelming majority of responses were focused more narrowly on day-to-day activities to alleviate suffering such as the provisioning of food relief or personal protective equipment (PPE) and access to water and sanitation.

Plateau describes the sustained crisis response from June until October 2020, a time when responses began making concerted efforts to reflect on the work that had been done and envision what might come next in light of easing of lockdown restrictions. During this time, conversations centered on the experience of “donor fatigue” and a sharp decline in resources, the sustainability of crisis responses in the face of physical/emotional/mental volunteer fatigue, and disillusionment with the perceived lack of impactful government responses. The “emergency feeling” that catalyzed efforts and unified responses under the Emergence phase had noticeably dissipated, leading to increased conflict and fractured views on how and if responses should continue, as described by T below:

“...as the logistics sorted themselves out, and the urgency and the emergency of it all kind of started fading...there was definitely a point... where the feeling of emergency stopped...everything in terms of people's time, people's energy in terms of funding... radically dropped off...it was no longer like this unified, everyone together, no time for fighting operation...” T2

However, this time also led to increased reflection, introspection, dialogue and facilitation focused on ideas for how to continue short- and long-term efforts. This reflection and introspection was experienced across all cases, as mentioned by L:

“I think the ‘what comes next’ question is on a lot of people's minds... this has been a sort of like almost spontaneous, what comes next [moment]...” L2

Evolution describes a transition towards the beginning of differing response paths that groups and individuals took to sustain – or not – crisis response efforts from October 2020 onwards. This included a transition from solely focusing on crisis relief to also focusing on long-term change ambitions and social innovation efforts. This was demonstrated in cases like Case #1, which transitioned to “Chapter 2” of the EDP Food Forum in October to take a both/and approach to food relief and food system change. At the same meeting that The Western Cape EDP announced this new focus of “Chapter 2” of the Food Forum, the Western Cape Government announced a beginning of “revising its thinking on food and nutrition systems based on recent developments” through the Nourish to Flourish Programme (Partnership, 2020e).

“How do you shift from just a short term response to linking short term action with longer term systems change?” AD2

This time period was also marked by various approaches that individual CANs took to sustain activities, such as formalizing partnerships with other organizations, registering as non-profit entities, and exploring activities like political activism. A variety of approaches are described by L below:

“... I've heard from a few people that they've registered their CANs as NPCs [non-profit companies]...we've heard other people still very resistant to this idea of registering...There are some people starting to think about local government elections... another trend I've seen more and more is linking up with existing organizations...[creating] more formal partnerships.” L2

The Evolution time period is defined from October 2020 onwards and is still ongoing at the time of writing.

Emergence findings: rapid organizing, an emphasis on relationships and trust, and a nascent focus on long-term ambitions

On March 23, 2020 President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a national Covid-19 lockdown that would take effect at midnight on March 26/27 and (initially) last for 21 days. This lockdown completely closed national and Provincial borders and banned all individual movement outside of the home except when buying groceries, seeking medical care or visiting pharmacies, accessing a bank, or collecting grants. This period of “level 5” lockdown scored 87.96 out of 100 on the Oxford Covid-19 Stringency Index, a research index that tracks government responses based on nine indicators including school closures, workplace closures, and travel bans. (“COVID-19 Government Response Tracker | Blavatnik School of Government,” n.d.).

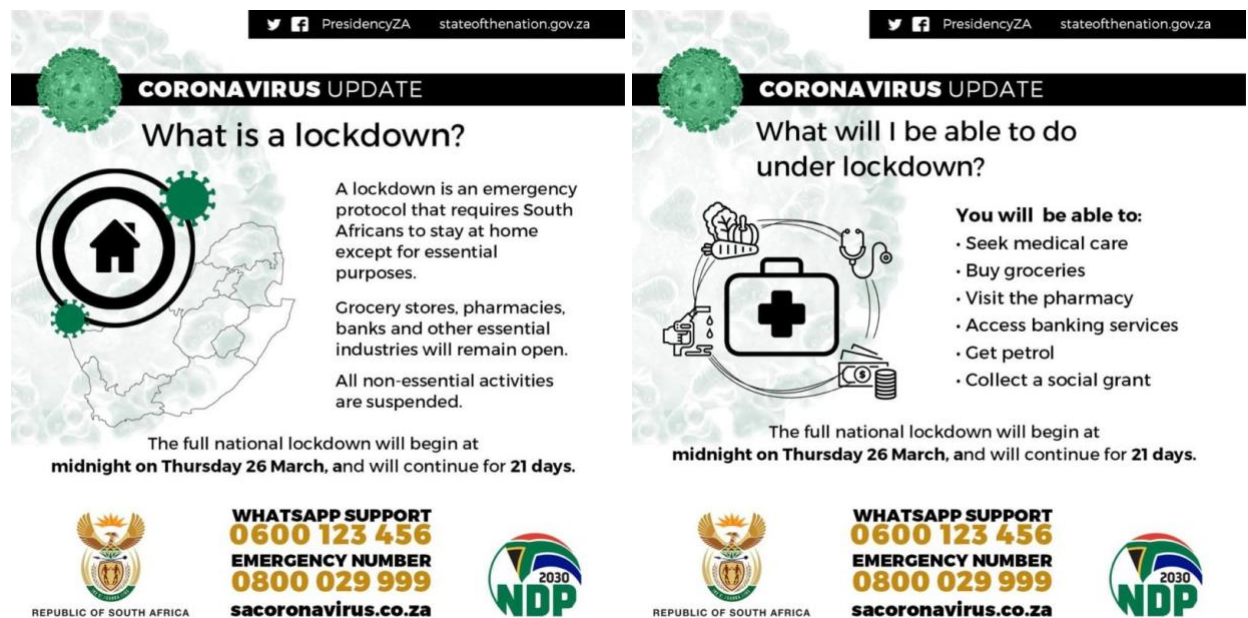


Figure 7. Posters describing national lockdown measures for March 2020

When speaking with interviewees, it quickly became clear that the lockdown – not necessarily the threat of the virus - was the primary crisis that catalyzed an emergent response to alleviate suffering. The lockdown’s impacts were specifically severe in South Africa due to the prevalence of underlying chronic challenges like unemployment, inequality, and lack of access to adequate housing and sanitation. For many respondents, personal experience with these chronic

challenges and/or experience with prior crises in the Western Cape prompted immediate concerns and a desire to become involved in response efforts, as detailed by P, I, and M below:

“Coming from the township and having lived in the township all of my life, having experienced hunger... once the lockdown was announced...we knew that food was a problem... people were going to be at home and were no longer going to be able to hustle to [get] food.” P1

“When Covid happened, my main concern was [an occupied building in my community]...my connections in there were historic. I started to worry about how those people were going to survive this, there’s no electricity or piped water.” I1

“...when this whole thing kicked off, I was worried that the kids [I tutor] weren’t at school. You work with the same two kids for six months and suddenly you’re thinking ‘oh my god have they got food? Are they ok? What are they doing?’ that’s kind of what spurred me on to get involved.” M1

The announcement of the lockdown served as a catalyst for respondents to become involved in or form their own emergent response groups. From the onset of the lockdown, there were three primary themes within the Emergence phase that are detailed in this section: **rapid organizing** to identify and provision for needs, **the role of relationships and trust**, and a **nascent focus on long-term ambitions**.

Rapid organizing

The onset of the crisis motivated diverse sets of actors to rapidly organize to address needs within and across communities. This rapid organizing was characterized by a focus on immediate, tactical, short-term actions within short time horizons, as detailed by L below:

“...[at the] very first meeting, the 14 of us got on a call. And we were like, okay, we have we literally have 10 days... what we do in the next 10 days will determine what kind of pandemic we see in Cape Town.” L1

Examples of these actions included determining compliance with lockdown measures and evolving permit regulations to distribute food relief, mitigating safety and security concerns when transporting food into communities, ensuring compliance with health and safety protocols while operating soup kitchens, gathering data to understand and map needs and vulnerability, and clarifying eligibility for the newly announced government Covid-19 relief grant which saw over three million applications in the first three days (Partnership, 2020i). Food was not the only need that responses organized around; other prominent needs included access to water, access to Covid-related PPE and sanitation, support for informal settlement fire victims, support for families facing eviction, homelessness advocacy, and educational materials for children due to school closures. However, due to the importance of food to the crisis response as noted by GA below, it is detailed most thoroughly throughout this paper.

“It didn’t take much to connect the lockdown to a lack of food. It became immediately clear that nobody was talking to anyone else, they were double counting, areas were left unfed, etc. and [we] thought there was a role to play in convening [crisis response].” GA1

This rapid organizing was characterized by a swift scaling of efforts, helped in part by digital tools and social media. The context of the lockdown created a unique setting for organizing and most individuals quickly realized that they would need to rely heavily on digital tools such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, and Zoom meetings to communicate and coordinate efforts. This also meant overcoming hurdles to inclusion such as the cost and availability of Wi-Fi/data, particularly in vulnerable communities. In a matter of weeks, thousands of citizens and public servants had mobilized across the Province and nationally to assist with crisis response efforts, as noted by L below:

“...it was mind blowing how quickly this thing spread, you know, we had like, set up a Google Form. Two hours later, there were 350 people that have signed up, the next day, 1,000...we set up a Facebook page that night...I think there's like 14,000 people on that Facebook page [now]...I think 170 CANs [Community Action Network groups] across the city.” L1

As these emergent responses formed, much of the initial work focused on identifying needs within and across communities to better direct crisis relief resources as they became available. In order to identify needs, groups like Cape Town Together (Case #2) advocated for grassroots, hyperlocal, self-organized approaches through efforts like mapping exercises driven by “street champions” to physically map vulnerable households street by street. This approach was adopted by several response groups, as detailed by P below, and was starkly contrasted to government’s attempt at top-down data-driven approaches, as noted by GA, which lacked the information and timeliness to identify needs at a hyper local level (May, Witten, & Lake, 2020).

“Because we are in the township, when it comes to organizing, we've always done it...we sat around and started mapping [our community]... and said ‘ok, identify in your own street, someone that is hungry. A family in need’...that's what the street champions did...We then took that database and we started our partnership where we started giving those families food parcels...” P1

“Data was a glaring hole in public sector response... [there is] no data at all on where the food parcels have gone...” GA1

Using community mapping to identify needs was also an important step to setting up a system to distribute resources in a way that was viewed as fair and transparent. This was intuitive to respondents who had experience navigating complex community dynamics before the crisis, such as T who noted the complexity of distributing resources in a way that minimized harm.

“We were just busy mapping... before we started ordering food, we put up a system that would enable that food to be distributed without violence and jealousy... it's very complicated. It's not an easy thing to do.” T1

This process was intricately tied to themes of trust building and learning; some responses and individuals that did not have much prior experience with community dynamics or emergency relief learned valuable lessons from community feedback and adjusted their actions during this time.

Once needs had been identified, provisioning for those needs took many shapes and forms. Some responses were recipients of larger national and provincial efforts to distribute pre-packaged food parcels through established NGOs. Others worked to physically collect food donations from trolleys set up in grocery stores where shoppers could buy extra food to donate, as detailed by M. Some set up schemes to have donors sponsor vouchers that were distributed to families to allow them to shop for their own household needs or secure things like electricity and mobile data, as discussed by I. Other responses focused on scale and worked to build networks of volunteers to cook food daily at soup kitchens (referred to as community kitchens in the rest of this paper) which served several thousands of people per day per response group, as noted by P.

“We’d go to a shop or contact them and ask them permission to put a collection trolley or collection box at the entrance of the shop with the poster explaining the kind of things we’re collecting and who we’re collecting for.” M1

“We debated a lot of things like if we do raise money for people, how do we give them choice.... [we came up with] the idea of a hybrid scheme; give people a Shoprite voucher of R400...we found a way to support [informal] fruit and vegetable sellers with another R100, so each voucher we give people is R500 total and then there’s another R50 that

goes to...the street champions who have mapped out the area, figured out the most vulnerable, and distributed the vouchers.” I1

“What we also noticed is that with the vouchers, we were not reaching as many people as we wanted... So we decided to partner up with existing soup kitchens and people who think they can start a soup kitchen... [we now] have about 25 soup kitchens that we have registered in our database that are feeding around about 4,300 individuals every day.” P1

This variety in provisioning food relief showcased a diverse set of rapid responses and capabilities across civil society response groups. These efforts culminated in *civil society providing over 50% (a conservative estimate) of all food relief in the Western Cape during this initial period* from late March to the beginning of June (Partnership, 2020), a reflection of the herculean effort by networks of civil society organizations and emergent response groups to stave off hunger in communities.

The role of relationships and trust

Relationships played a pivotal role during this time; it is difficult to overstate the way in which relationships formed and shaped emergent responses. Just within the sample of my cases, there is an intricate web of pre-existing and new relationships that were built over the course of the crisis response, as is depicted in Figure 8 below.

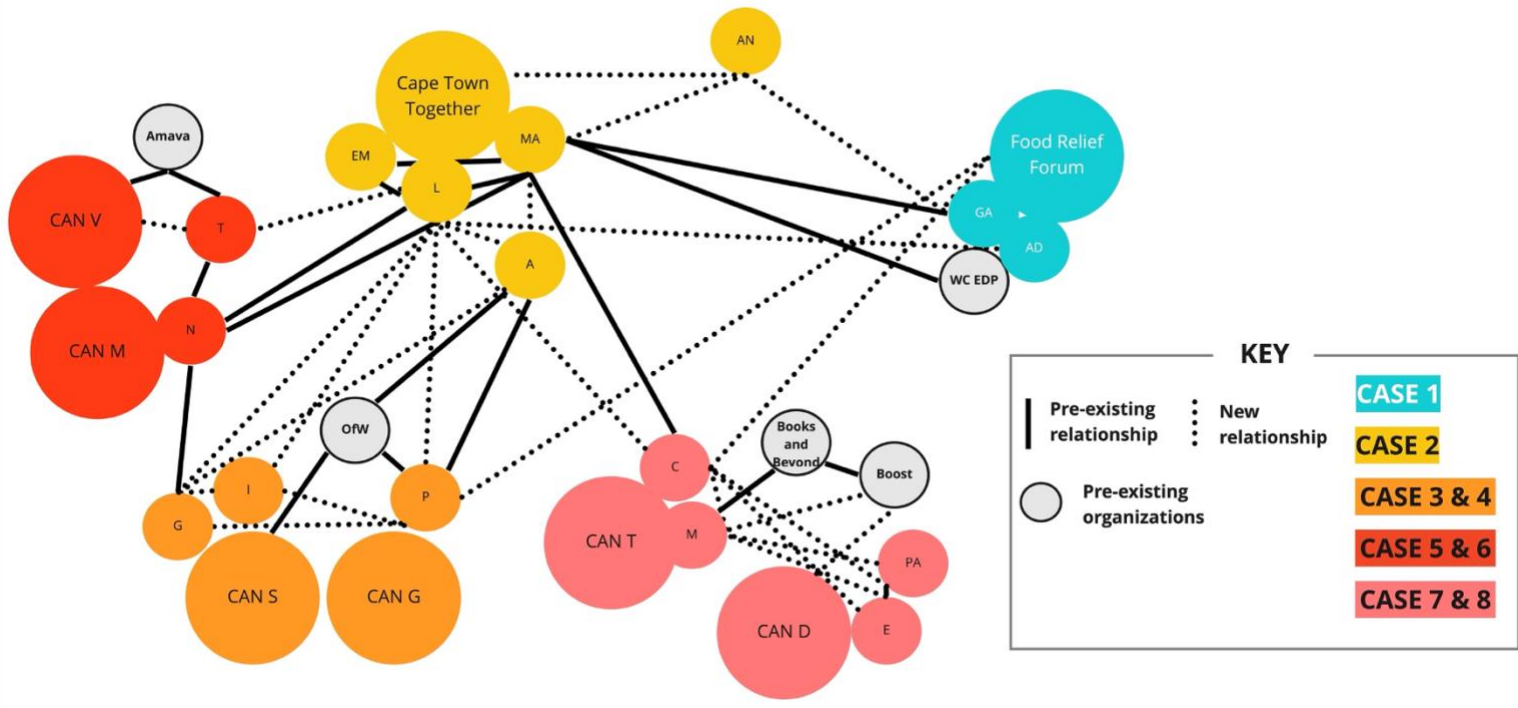


Figure 8. A visual depiction of pre-existing and new relationships across response groups

When asked to speak about how they became involved in or started a response effort, most interviewees detailed stories of personal relationships from before the onset of lockdown that influenced their involvement, such as N and L below. Others also spoke of relationships with organizations that they knew in a personal or professional capacity before the crisis that facilitated a connection to emergent crisis relief work.

“...people had worked together trusting each other, there were some kind of loose networks and structures in place. And a lot of people [in our response group] are friends.” N1

“All of these different experiences and networks of people actually all culminated in... kickstarting Cape Town Together and the Community Action Networks... there were a bunch of us who kickstarted it. It's mostly community organizers, social activists, and

public health folks... everybody was somebody I knew quite well and either worked with or who was a friend.” L1

In instances where relationships may not have existed prior to the onset of the crisis, respondents recognized the critical role of new relationships formed during crisis response in providing timely crisis relief to local communities. These new relationships were enhanced through collective coordination efforts like the Food Relief Coordination Forum which aimed to strengthen relationships within and between response efforts including “large and small NGOs, grassroots movements and community action networks, faith-based organisations, not-for-profit organisations, large and small retailers, donors...and various government departments” (Partnership, 2020j).

“Lots of relationships were formed in the Forum where people didn’t know each other...[we’ve seen] incredible collaboration, the relationships that have been formed, the desire to work together.” GA1

Trust was an element that went hand-in-hand with relationship building during rapid organizing, as detailed by L below. Pre-existing relationships facilitated trust and knowledge of who to work with in identifying needs and provisioning/distributing resources. For new relationships, trust was also central to a way of working that was adopted by many groups, described as “moving at the speed of trust” by L below. This played an especially critical role for the responses that paired separate communities that previously had very little interaction and/or collaboration, such as Cases #3-#8.

“...[We] distilled some lessons from across the network over these two months. And one of them is relationships, and how important it is to nurture those. And the phrase we use is that we move at the speed of trust. And sometimes that's really, really fast. And sometimes it's really slow. And it all it's about relationship building at its very core.” L1

New relationships that were built across communities also served to prompt some response members to rethink roles and recognize systemic issues that might not have been relevant to them prior to the crisis, setting the scene for people to potentially engage in more systemic work based on new relationships.

“There are definitely a lot of CANs who've said to me ‘we would never have spoken to a person living in [this community] before’, and even just that connection has changed the way that person and [the person in the other community] sees their own role in society. And I think that's really valuable.” L1

A nascent focus on the long-term

While most work during the Emergence phase was focused on short-term, tactical actions like provisioning food relief, some interviewees were vocal about taking a long-term view from the beginning. This was primarily discussed in two ways: taking a long-term view to the challenges being addressed as well as taking a long-term view to the longevity/sustainability of crisis relief efforts themselves. For the former, this often centered around maintaining relationships and bridging communities – as detailed above – as well as exploring innovative models and ways of working that could address pre-existing chronic challenges such as unemployment and youth disenfranchisement. These interviewees viewed the emergence of response efforts as an opportunity for potentially create longer-lasting change, as noted by T and L:

“Interestingly, the group from the beginning were very determined that this wasn't a short term kind of COVID response...this was an opportunity to address things that have needed to be addressed for a very long time, and will remain long after COVID... they were like...‘this is our chance now to actually make some real change’.” T1

“This crisis is a catalyst that can help to reshape our world. And we do that at different levels...it's kind of like a tipping point...all of us where we are, can be planting seeds and

nourishing the possibilities of change... there's very much an acknowledgement that we need to be using this moment to build a post COVID world that works for everybody.” L1

Taking a long-term view to the crisis response itself was strongly cautioned by those who had prior experience with crisis relief efforts, such as AI – a humanitarian response specialist who volunteered to consult with Cape Town Together as well as the EDP. This view recognized that while the lockdown was immediate and pressing, the effects of the lockdown would likely be felt for months if not years to come, and responses should take that into account as resources and energy ebbed and flowed, as detailed by AI below. However, most responses found it difficult to balance a long-term view with the pressing needs of the crisis, as detailed by MA.

“[I just kept] saying, keep the long view on this...a lot of my urging was in the planning and the structuring of the network and the cash assistance programs to take a long view [beyond the] initial lockdown period...I was urging them to look at, you know, the issue that the generosity and the wellspring of goodwill, be it human or financial, would be relatively short term...” AI1

“...the energy and the sense of urgency was such that it was difficult to think about six months, because people were asking for food parcels that week...one of the things [AI] said was, ‘you're going run out of goodwill, that's how it goes, people have that sense of ‘I want to help I want to help’, and then that starts to flatten and then actually to decrease so try to budget for that’...it's really hard...I'm sure that there's stuff written out there about how to budget goodwill...I think how to strike that balance is really hard.”
MA1

Based on prior experiences, AI’s comments seem to accurately foreshadow the Plateau phase, which placed a heavy emphasis on the sustainability of crisis response in the wake of dwindling resources, volunteer fatigue, and an absence of a unifying “emergency feeling”. While

this practical advice was absorbed by some respondents, it proved difficult to implement during the initial period of emergent crisis response.

Table 7. Emergence quotes

Emergence			
	Rapid organizing to identify and address immediate needs	The role of relationships	Nascent focus on long-term ambitions
Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	<p>"...we don't have a background in the food or nutrition...I think it goes back to the drought...three years ago, we came up with the slogan to organize and mobilize a response beyond government of 'connect, communicate, and collaborate'...when the Covid crisis hit, it was quite easy to spring into action, because we had already done it three years previously with the drought." AD2</p>	<p>"To my mind, the relationships that you build around short term action become the platforms for a longer term, deeper transformation...there always has to be a connection between short term action and long term systems change, otherwise, nothing changes, you can theorize about these things, and you can even campaign about them. And you can write alternative policies, but nothing's going to shift in the system." AD1</p>	<p>"The approach of winter and associated increased food requirements, allied with donor and volunteer fatigue and severe public sector funding constraints indicate that working only to solve current problems in food relief is inadequate. There needs to be strategic thinking and anticipatory planning, by the public sector as well as NGOs, CBOs, and others, about how to handle at least the next three months in terms of ensuring that food relief continues and that food needs are met." (Partnership, 2020i)</p> <p>"...a lot of the initial conversation was like, 'Wow, we've got to feed these people until the end of lockdown'. And I was like, 'No, lockdown is not going to go away now, and the way the malnutrition is manifesting itself, I recommend that your planning horizon is to the end of the year, at least'...remembering that this was sort of back in late March that we were having these conversations...chances are if people are prepared to stand in the cold for a cup of soup, it's not as if they'll come into money tomorrow...they were probably vulnerable before this tipped them over the scale. So trying to see that in a broader, longer context." AI1</p>
Case #2 Cape Town Together	<p>"[It was] quite an eclectic bunch of people...we could put our heads together. And the whole purpose was to catalyze something that could then spread and seed elsewhere in a way that was sort of set up so that it could be a network of self-organizing groups or CANs. So each CAN would then turn it into whatever made sense at they're in their own neighborhood...we just saw, like the catalytic spread of that both in Cape Town in the Western Cape, also in the Eastern Cape, and Gauteng," L1</p>	<p>"One of the things we've done is distilled some lessons from across the network over these two months. And one of them is relationships, and how important it is to nurture those. And the phrase we use is that we move at the speed of trust. And sometimes that's really, really fast. And sometimes it's really slow. And it all it's about relationship building at its very very core." L1</p>	<p>"What's interesting is, many people are talking about this in lots of different ways...many people who raise their hands and become part of a movement/network of this nature, sort of intuitively have a much bigger dream in mind...the conversations at the moment, are very much focused around how this is a crisis. This crisis is a catalyst that can help to reshape our world. And we do that at different levels...it's kind of like a tipping point. And that's a global tipping point... all of us where we are, can be planting seeds</p>

	<p>“A good way to get started is to map your community’s strengths, resources and vulnerabilities, as well as its vulnerable people...There are some ideas presented in this document, but your plan will depend on your community's needs. Remember, no one knows your community better than you do.” CAN Starter Pack p.4</p>	<p>“What comes next? A lot of it is what will be sustained by the individual relationships that have been formed. I mean, I've met hundreds of new people in these last two months. And I think that, yeah, we will have no choice but to stay connected, it will just be impossible for us not to stay connected, which is really exciting.” L1</p> <p>“In the beginning of the year, [my partner and I had] made plans to move... we had plans to be in Cape Town for a couple of months to visit family and then Covid happened...by the time we arrived here, borders were shutting down... the first thing we did was kind of connect with friends...[people that we have had a relationship with, had worked with before in some instances...And then I guess the rest is kind of history... a lot of those networks that I had built through [my prior work experiences] were part of this. And so it was just like reconnecting with old friends in many ways... of the 14 people that were on that first call... we knew [almost] all.” MA1</p>	<p>and nourishing the possibilities of change... what we need to recognize is that it's a catalyst that has allowed many people to be galvanized around this one particular thing. But what it's done is it's shone a light on and amplified the inequalities of our world, you know, so it's not like these things didn't exist before. They all did. But COVID-19 has just made them much more visible. And I think on some level, it's got many more people on the same side, recognizing the unequal world in which we live is completely unacceptable... there's very much an acknowledgement that we need to be using this moment to build a post COVID world that works for everybody...all of those groups of which I'm a part of a talking about this, they're talking about, okay, what's the long term goal... we can all push to reshape the institutions that we are part of.” L1</p>
<p>Case #3 & #4 CAN S and CAN G</p>	<p>“We sat around and started mapping [our community]. We said ok, we have street champions, we know each other - you know who's hungry in the township, you know everyone's business. If you are in this street, you know this family is in need or that family is in need. So we sat down and said ‘ok, identify in your own street, someone that is hungry. A family in need’. So that's what the street champions did. They went into their streets first and identified the people that were hungry, then to verify that information they went to the street chairpeople to say ‘ok, I have identified this family, do you agree that this family is in need?’. We then took that database and we started our [CAN] partnership where we started giving those families food parcels.” P1</p>	<p>“...my friends in [Community M] kept saying to me ‘sign up to this CAN and do something in your area’. I signed up and [I] got in touch... that’s how I got involved with the CAN locally... then the [Community G] partnership came along and [A] asked me to be the lead between the CANS which I happily accepted.” G1</p> <p>“I completely leapt on it, [G] leapt on it, and because Keren and [A] already had [P] as the connection and knew her well because of an unemployment project that [A] had set up – it became a very easy connector, it just happened very very quickly.” I1</p> <p>“...there has to be trust, and the building of strong relationships... right now, this is a one-way bridge from privileged people who have the means...we just needed money to make things happen in the beginning. My</p>	<p>“We’re looking at this as a long-term thing, not something that we see as a crisis and then bugger off once we deem it to be over...At the moment we stepped in because there was a need to feed people, but that’s certainly not how we would like to see the new networks and connections being endlessly utilized. We would like to see it be far more sustainable than that and far more creative and interesting than that.” I1</p>

		<p>feeling is that genuine bridge building can only happen if we stick our necks out and say that the way the city divisions have been entrenched since apartheid is not good enough. We need to start backing people calling for social housing in the city. When Covid is over we need to be going to restaurants in [Community G], going to...[events at] our fundraising partners, and building genuine bridges." I1</p>	
<p>Case #5 & #6 CAN M and CAN V</p>	<p>"We just took a screenshot of Google Maps and looked at the whole and then divided it up into smaller pieces. Then the group kind of designated leaders or representatives for each of the smaller areas, and then each of those small groups went on to kind of match the needs and resources in the particular area. And obviously, the focus very quickly settled on food and food security. So they mapped the kitchens [that already existed through an NGO]...four or five kitchens, each feeding a few hundred a day. But when we looked at it on the map of the whole, everyone could immediately see that this would definitely not meet the needs of the whole [community]." T1</p> <p>"...it was really trying to listen and think about where food needed to go...I can only speak for myself, but when you rush in and you want to help and it's just like, 'well just take it and then we'll sort it out later'. But actually, that would have been a total disaster... we kind of rushed into a lot of our processes, but learnt through them. And I'm sure yeah, upset some people... none of us are emergency food relief people...this was kind of unprecedented." N1</p>	<p>"I keep telling everyone that the relationship building is 97% of the work with food logistics is like 3%... [relationship building] really has been the bulk of it..." T1</p> <p>"Right up front, [the youth in Community V were like] 'why should we trust you because many white women have come out before and told us they're going to do x y, z and raised money on our behalf, never to be seen again'. And I was like, absolutely, you should not trust me. For all the reasons you mentioned, and for hundreds of years of abuse by people like me. So we just kind of made this agreement up front...they didn't have to trust me... we would just work alongside each other and everyone would decide for themselves every day..." T1</p>	<p>"...it took about six weeks to actually finish that kitchen mapping. But also in the process, we, you know, we looked at everything else as well as started thinking about 'Okay, well, what happens when we get COVID plus patients? And what about long term food security?'. And so we were asking all the questions alongside that. But up until now, the focus has been primarily on food. But interestingly, the group from the beginning were very determined that this wasn't a short term kind of COVID response, this was an opportunity to address things that have been needed to be addressed for a very long time, and will remain long after COVID. So that was very kind of encouraging to see. And it was super inspiring to see how the youths just kind of really rose to the occasion, and took ownership of it." T1</p>
<p>Case #7 & #8 CAN T and CAN D</p>	<p>"...from the beginning, information was shared on Cape Town Together - there was a link for the WhatsApp, people in need could use that contact list to shoot off requests for needs...electricity, food, water... [we had] lots of individual requests coming through. We have a database on Google Drive of individual requesters who</p>	<p>"One of the ladies from the organization that I used to volunteer with sent me this [newspaper article] about Community S CAN pairing with Community G CAN and said, 'you should run with this and have a look at it' [for your area]." M1</p>	<p>"Now we're moving into mid to long term stuff like education. You've got communities of children without access to things." C1</p> <p>"...at [our partner NPO] they're doing a mask making and sewing center. When I heard that, that's another thing that</p>

	<p>have requested support and we keep track who we've given to, how much we've given, and those who have requested support but we haven't given it to [them] yet, or someone not from our areas...to connect them to the right CAN" C1</p> <p>"We were originally collecting for food parcels, to help [our NPO partner] make more. Then somebody from the early childhood development center phoned me and told me about [E] who was cooking for children every day from her own pocket. That's when I thought to contact her, she said then she knew another lady who also wanted to cook. Then the whole thing fell into place, and most of our resources that we collected were going to the soup kitchens..." M1</p>	<p>"The whole connection with [our NPO partner] came from [the organization that I used to volunteer with]. The ladies there said to me 'if you want to get into [Community D] you must try and work with people who already have paved the roads in there and know the role players in the community, who know the community better, because otherwise you will have no idea'." – M1</p> <p>"Those [Community D] networks came together, they didn't know each other before, and through this process now we're working as quite a well-oiled machine where we have the NPO partner as an anchor...we've got people in the group providing support in the communities, and we've got [our response group] who I suppose is kind of the provider in this relationship but we're trying to change that up a bit so that it's mutual and free-flowing, so that it's not just one way..." C1</p>	<p>sparked my interest – that's a longer-term thing that has income generation potential." C1</p> <p>"I don't see the point in cutting the whole thing off when the pandemic is over because we have a good system in place and we can grow it. 3 years, 1 year, everything is so unpredictable at the moment so I don't really know." M1</p>
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Plateau findings: a drop in resources, an experience of intense fatigue, increased disillusionment with government responses, and increased reflection

As previously mentioned, the Plateau of sustained crisis response lasted from June through October 2020. The lessening of lockdown regulations at the beginning of June brought a return to “normal” for much of the population that had been locked indoors and unable to work or attend school since late March. The changes in lockdown measures loosened restrictions on freedom of movement and corresponded with a dissipation of the “emergency feeling” that interviewees describe as having energized response groups until this time. This was coupled with contextual difficulties such as a transition to winter weather and flooding in vulnerable areas, rising rates of Covid-19 infection and hotspots, shrinking government finances, and continued disruptions to municipal service delivery (Partnership, 2020j).

“[Our] changing context [includes]...a shift from total lockdown to partial lockdown... a shift from ‘crisis’ to ‘recovery’ mode. There is a focus on opening the economy, the return to schools and universities, people going back to work, the stimulation of incomes and livelihoods, and on community economic recovery. This impacts to some extent on those donating and volunteering in terms of their available time. There has been a psychological and emotional shift, beyond the initial solidarity shown during the lockdown, to getting on with the ‘new normal’.” (Partnership, 2020n)

The changing context described by the Food Relief Coordination Forum above translated to strains for emergent response groups in terms of three key areas detailed below: **a drop in resources** (including physical donations, monetary funding, and volunteer time), an **experience of intense fatigue**, and an increased **disillusionment with the government crisis response**. However, this period also led to **increased reflection and visioning** that set the scene for changes in the Evolution phase.

Drop in resources

The Plateau phase is distinguished from the Emergence phase by a notable drop in availability of and access to resources. This included not only monetary donations, but also physical donations of food and materials as well as the availability of volunteer time. Unfortunately, the “wellspring of goodwill” that was foreshadowed to dissipate in the Emergence phase decreased, and this was experienced by every response group through “donor fatigue”, a topic that was discussed repeatedly in interviews during this time.

“...over about two weeks, [shop donations] just halved or maybe even become became a third of what it was... I would probably say halfway through June was when that started happening ... the donor fatigue thing was huge... that sort of led to a massive decline.”

M2

Some felt that because large portions of the population had been without stable income from the onset of the lockdown, the need to prioritize personal livelihoods may have impacted the drop in donations during this time. This drop in resources occurred at both a grassroots level through a drop in individual donations and at a more macro level through a decrease in availability of government food relief efforts. On the ground, this was signaled through larger, registered NGOs not receiving support from government at a level that matched evolving needs, as detailed by G:

“You speak to...established guys, their resources are drying up... they're not dry, but they are definitely drying up...their supplies are declining, that's worrying.” G2

For those who were working with or within government, this drop in resources was signaled through intense competition for resources, a shift back towards compliance-driven practices, and discussions on funding tradeoffs – e.g. whether to fund social relief programs or engage in business rescue due to the economic impact on national and local industries like tourism and travel. These concerns are detailed by AD and L below.

“I don't think people are quite appreciating how dire the situation is. Everyone's kind of surprised that government has no more money for food... the competition for state resources is dire.” AD1

“...[with] all of the current allegations about various PPE corruption, people are on high alert...now there's much more of a focus on, ‘it's likely that we're going to get audited, we have to make sure that everything is above board’, which is a pity, because engaging with community groups is of course above board. And if we were to think of the role of the public service as serving the public, then what you need is all the flexible things we've seen during the crisis, but people are afraid.” L2

The resource constraints that were experienced during this time shaped the way in which people sustained crisis response efforts during the Plateau phase and how they began to conceptualize longer-term engagement in the Evolution phase. This included the beginning of a shift towards focusing on partnerships with formalized, registered NPOs who had access to larger pool of resources in the form of grants from within and outside of South Africa.

Physical/mental/emotional fatigue takes a toll

The challenges brought on by a sharp drop in resources were compounded by the physical/mental/emotional fatigue of volunteers, who up until this point had worked non-stop on crisis relief efforts amidst other responsibilities such as caregiving for close to three months. Those who coordinated response efforts, such as PA, felt the burden of fatigue for themselves but also worried about the impact on their volunteers:

“I am working with my five teachers...they are helping me to cook for my soup kitchen. And it's quite heartbreaking because for four months now, they just wake up early in the morning...by 6 o'clock [they're here] to peel and chop...by 12 o'clock, we're feeding our

community. It's quite heartbreaking to me knowing that...[they are not getting paid], we are working voluntarily to help our community.” PA1

“...the ladies that we are working with, they're also paying rent wherever they stay. And they also need...toiletries and stuff...we are really concerned about that. But on our side, we don't have any means [to pay them]. So I think that is the biggest challenge that we're facing.” PA1

The hard work of rapid organizing began to take its toll across response groups. Feelings of fatigue and burnout were also portrayed in interviews through comments around financial anxiety, physical tiredness, emotional stress, and despair about the state of the country:

“I've never felt this down about this country...I think it's a terrible kind of double edged sword of having done this work...you see it so acutely, like a severe failure [of the state]...it's very hard to have any faith...” I2

For some, the fatigue of crisis response was mixed with heartbreaking stress and trauma tied to Covid-19 such as the death of friends and family members and a worry about personal finances due to lockdown impacts as detailed by E. Those directly involved in relief efforts on the ground often bore the brunt of community trauma and became the “go-to” person for a variety of loss and heartbreak experienced by those around them. This took a strong emotional toll on many interviewees and was discussed in our participant workshop as quoted below.

“I keep on saying that COVID is personal to me... [my mom] died. Last week, my husband walked out...I still have to go on. I still have to make ends meet; I have to think about my [children]...every single day I must wake up with a smile because there's a line outside...I have to keep up appearances.” E1

“...you suddenly become this channel to a lot of trauma...I get messages from people and private phone calls, even from other parts of the country, saying ‘I've sold everything except my bed. I've got nowhere to go and no food’. Getting hundreds and hundreds of those a day and having to prioritize...and I can turn off my phone. The ladies [cooking] get knocks on their doors...people were going to their houses in the middle of the night. All of that wears you down emotionally. You're not only dealing with the stress and the actual physical labor of all of these logistics, but you're also dealing with the amount of trauma.”

Participant Workshop June 2020

The physical, mental, and emotional fatigue experienced by respondents was also heightened by the lack of emergency feeling and solidarity that was present in the Emergence phase. This lack of unity led to an increase in conflict within some groups and a rise in complex intra-community dynamics that were present before the crisis. The lack of unity was evidenced within communities by several public disputes that various CANs engaged in brought on by other community members or local politicians who were unhappy with the efforts taking place in their neighborhood (this often centered around the role of community kitchens in feeding those experiencing homelessness or vulnerable populations). Both Case #3 and #4 experienced legal challenges from community members, sometimes coupled with public disputes and slander on social media and in news outlets. Community members in Case #3 placed so much pressure on a local church that was hosting a community kitchen for CAN S that the church ceased operating the kitchen and the CAN was left seeking new partners and physical locations for its services. T also describes the rise of intra-community dynamics within Case #6 below:

“...we started seeing a lot of dynamics coming up within the community that I was accustomed to from pre-Covid... whenever you try and do something or someone starts rising or succeeding, or there's money involved, it generally does bring up a lot of infighting and politics and jealousy and all of those community dynamics... after the feeling of emergency had ended, then all of that came up. So then it actually became

quite a lot more difficult, because now you try to carry on with everything you were doing in the emergency. But also you've got to deal with all of this emotional and political kind of stresses.” T2

In the face of increased conflict, fatigue, trauma, and personal loss, continuing relief efforts sometimes served as a coping mechanism and a way to keep going in the wake of such challenges. This perseverance was discussed in our participant workshop and prompted reflections on what self- and collective care might mean in different cultural contexts and how to best care for one another amidst times of crisis. Caring for each other became a core pillar of the Cape Town Together “ways of working” as discussed by L and shown in Figure 9 below.

“To have a soup kitchen keeps us going. Because you know for a fact that tomorrow you have something to do, it keeps your mind busy....for now, keep on going and just keep on pushing.” Participant Workshop June 2020

“In all my tragedy, if I can help you, it makes me feel better. I'm a strong person and I will get over this ...you cannot always sit on a couch and talk about your feelings [in therapy]...We were raised that if something happened to you, get over it. I cannot sit still and pamper myself while people are starving.” Participant Workshop June 2020

“...we have to make sure that we support one another so that none of us burn out. So it's not about self-care...it's about collective care, and how we build the slack in the system that allows for us to continuously be agile and responsive, and care for one another at the same time.” L1

8. We sustain ENERGY. We respond rapidly while CARING for each other...



All of us need to look after our mental health, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, as we recognise the uncertainty and immense pressure of these times. When we can, we take time to breathe. We also need to check in with each other, focus on the hopeful possibilities that COVID-19 pandemic offers, and remember that we are moving through this together. Taking time to reflect allows us to listen more carefully as we respond to what is happening in the world through our local actions. We also need to make sure we support each other, and don't burn out - this is about collective care (not only self care) and how we create the slack in the system that allows us to be agile and responsive.

Figure 9. Cape Town Together Ways of Working

During this phase, the fatigue of response groups working intensely to deliver unpaid crisis relief also began to prompt reflections on how to sustain volunteer-driven movements, especially movements that lack formal structures or dedicated funding. This was especially relevant for those who had personal experience with leading prior social movements – such as AD's experience with political mobilization in the 1980s – or those who had led volunteer-driven organizations, like MA, who reflected on the similarity of these experiences.

"...when you're a volunteer, you're an activist effectively; everything is for the cause...it's not about you, it's about the movement. And I remember that in the 80s, same sort of thing. And I think now we've got the tools to realize that you cannot separate the individual from the movement. And you've got to look at emotional wellbeing. And you've got to look at the limits of humans, human beings need support to do their work..." AD2

“[my former organization] relied very heavily on volunteers... now I find myself on the other side, as a volunteer myself... I've worked with volunteers, I've had very high expectations of volunteers...and I realized that it's just not fair...and it's not sustainable...”

MA1

Unfortunately, amidst intense fatigue and conversations around the sustainability of volunteer-led responses, the support that many were hoping would come from government and larger institutional actors was still perceived to be lacking. This compounded feelings of fatigue with feelings of disillusionment and cynicism in regard to the state.

Disillusionment with government responses

By May of 2020, the Western Cape Government had developed a strategy to identify “Covid-19 hot spot areas” to coordinate Covid-19 response efforts – specifically testing, tracking, and tracing – in addition to a humanitarian response efforts (Partnership, 2020o). Within hot spot areas, the government aimed to coordinate action across a “whole of government” and “whole of society” approach. While efforts like the hot spot approach and the cross-departmental Western Cape Government Humanitarian Cluster were applauded in their attempt to coordinate actors within and outside of government, other government efforts (at a national, provincial, and local level) were struggling to coordinate across institutional boundaries to meet the time-sensitive needs of crisis response efforts. This was especially true when it came to the Social Relief Distress (SRD) Covid-19 grant, a national grant that had been designed to supplement vulnerable households during the crisis:

“ [Covid-19 grant] payments have been extremely slow to date. This has led to issues for some NGOs who have assisted people to apply, and who are now at some risk from frustrated applicants... people will only be paid from the date of their application, without the possibility of back payment; applicants in June will therefore not have access to the full potential 6 months of payment.” (Partnership, 2020m)

“630 000 applications were made from the Western Cape: 281 000 were approved, of which 199 000 have been paid out to date.” (Partnership, 2020k)

The Covid-19 relief grant example referenced above and in the Plateau quote table provides a glimpse into the bureaucratic, compliance, and process-related hurdles that became associated with the roll-out of a program that was intended to provide immediate crisis relief (albeit at the small amount of R350 a month). The introduction of the new Covid-19 grant also had unintended implications for the national government budget for food relief since it channeled funding away from food relief efforts towards the grant (Partnership, 2020m). This was coupled with a rise in infection rates and healthcare spending at a provincial and local level that also impacted local government food relief budgets (Partnership, 2020m). Unfortunately, while government budgets and resources were being shifted away from food relief, civil society was experiencing an *increase* in food needs:

“A survey of the members of the Forum revealed conclusively that food needs and requirements...[generally] increased, and that resources available to organisations within this forum have generally decreased. This is a potential crisis, given declining public sector revenues and resources.” (Partnership, 2020l)

Given the hurdles of a timely government response, the shift away from food relief resources during the Plateau period, and a slew of national corruption scandals, most interviewees began to express immense frustration at the perceived lack of government effectiveness in crisis preparedness and response.

“...the shocking thing is just where is government? Where the hell is government?... the attitude is ‘it's not our responsibility’ ... I'm feeling like the need is massive...” 12

These feelings of frustration were especially prominent with the issue of food, which many viewed as a pre-existing chronic challenge that the government should have been aware of

in light of long-term unemployment (as detailed by P below). However, disillusionment with government also expanded beyond access to monetary resources or physical food donations to frustration at the inability to access public resources such as libraries, meeting spaces and town halls, and land for urban agriculture.

“...the government should have had a plan already, they already knew that people were hungry...people have been hungry for a very long time. 10 million people were unemployed for a very long time... they should have been more prepared.” P1

Government disillusionment was a strong theme that continued past the Plateau time period and impacted response efforts as they adapted in the Evolution time period. This included scaling back relief efforts due to persistent resource constraints and creating a push towards partnering with other (formally recognized) organizations to gain access to government funding opportunities when they eventually became available.

Increased reflection and introspection

While the Plateau phase brought hardships in the form of resource constraints, intense fatigue, and disillusionment with government, it also brought an increase in reflection, introspection, and visioning across most response groups. For instance, the first June meeting of the Food Relief Coordination Forum focused explicitly on the purpose and role of the Forum to date, lessons learned, the changing context and implications, and a proposed path forward. This included an explicit call for a shift from crisis relief towards recovery and resulted in a both/and approach to food relief and food security being adopted. This timing aligned with the Western Cape Government undertaking the design of its Recovery Plan and the Forum was able to stay informed and give feedback on the plan in terms of the role of food in long-term recovery from Covid-19 and lockdown shocks (Partnership, 2020p).

“Every process, including a response to a crisis, goes through different phases...structures that are set up to respond to a particular moment of crisis need to consider repurposing

themselves, to sustain momentum and to remain relevant for participating stakeholders.” (Partnership, 2020n)

This reflection and adaptation continued throughout the Plateau phase, leading EDP to take a month-long hiatus starting in mid-September to engage with stakeholders and map the broader food system. During this time, individual response groups and volunteers were also meeting (some for the first time in-person) to discuss where responses were headed in the wake of changing contexts and resources. These conversations often included complex questions around group identity, privilege, and systemic inequality:

“[Questions came up about] who are we, who are we supposed to be serving?“ ... why is [our CAN] only made up of white people? Why are most of the people [we’re serving] foreigners?...what are we now and what do we want to be... I think some people dropped off at that stage...other people almost dug in deeper and said, ‘okay, these sounds like really important conversations’...[we had] facilitators to help us have some of these conversations....” N2

While most individuals and groups in my case selection engaged in these conversations, not everybody felt a desire to sustain efforts or attempt to affect systemic change in the face of daunting fatigue and resource constraints. For some, the end of the year marked a mental milestone which would shape their ongoing and evolving involvement in efforts.

“I’ve noticed... [in the Food Forum] meetings, there’s definitely a split...people like me, who are kind of like, ‘is this ever going to end?’ And then there’s people who see this going very long term...I think that’s great. But I can’t do this forever.” M2

While all the response groups in my sample reached this reflection point at the same point in time (June-October 2020), the desire and feasibility of continued involvement and

diversity of issues tackled within response groups seemed to hint at a more diverse set of projected paths for responses within the Evolution time period, as discussed by L below:

“...there's a lot of people saying, 'well, there's just no way we can't carry on doing work together, because we know each other now and there's just no way [we will stop working together]'...there's also lots of within CANs divisions, and people who have different ideas, some who want to register, some who want to continue experimenting with self-organizing, and some who wants to become a political party. And how do those three different positions get reconciled all in one CAN...they probably can't...we'll see.” L2

Table 8. Plateau quotes

Plateau				
	Drop in resources	Physical/mental/emotional fatigue takes a toll	Disillusionment with government responses	Increased reflection and introspection
Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	<p>“[Thanks to Forum members] for their extensive...feedback on food needs, and on their reflections on donor fatigue and declining resources and support. The report was circulated to this forum, and included 8 recommendations to the Western Cape Government (WCG). It has been tabled further at Cabinet engagements, and some follow-up has been promised.” (Partnership, 2020k)</p> <p>“WCG [Western Cape Government] is aware of increasing need coupled with declining resources, and that this has been exacerbated by the slow release of the SASSA Covid-19 Special Relief payments...WCG is also working on how to mobilise food relief efforts for the next phase of recovery, given that Covid-19 and related issues are likely to persist for at least another 12 months.” (Partnership, 2020l)</p> <p>From The Western Cape EDP report to WCG Humanitarian Cluster, titled “Hunger is growing, emergency food aid is dwindling; community kitchens crying out for help and support” :</p> <p>“Families are starving, struggling and urgently waiting for food hampers. The situation is VERY bad, we cannot feed</p>	<p>From The Western Cape EDP report to WCG Humanitarian Cluster, titled “Hunger is growing, emergency food aid is dwindling; community kitchens crying out for help and support” :</p> <p>“In assessing each of these kitchens, they had been working non-stop during the lockdown and now found themselves with volunteers getting sick, burnout but the biggest challenge being a decline in donations and financial support.”</p> <p>“[we] are oversubscribed. Sorry but today this is all I can manage. I am on the verge of burn out. 40 organisations/ areas on waiting list.”</p> <p>“Children are being fed but adults go hungry. People are unemployed and the collapse of the informal economy means there is no income. There is no opportunity for isolation and people feel helpless.”</p> <p>“CSOs provided over 3,1m meals and 77 000 food parcels in the first 74 days of lockdown. CSOs continue to feed thousands of people every day. If in the forthcoming months, for whatever reason existing CSO feeding schemes decline or cease, the ‘slow violence’ of</p>	<p>“The [SASSA] verification process is complicated. 6 million applications have been received nationwide, and more applications are expected. All applications first need to be checked against the social pension system, UIF [unemployment system], student bursary schemes and SARS [tax] systems. Successful applicants with bank accounts then need to have their bank account verified by their bank. If this is successful, payment follows. If bank account verification is not successful, the applicant will be requested to open a Post Bank account. For successful applicants without bank accounts, banks will assist to create E-wallet accounts, whereupon payment will be made. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified.” (Partnership, 2020m)</p> <p>“[update on the Covid-19 grant] over 13 million applications nationally were made, of which 6.9 million were invalid due being incomplete, duplicates, or containing inconsistent data. Of the remaining 6.5 million valid applications, 3.5 million have been processed to date. 1.5 million of these have been rejected as the applicants are already receiving some form of grant...There are two main conclusions: there is considerably more lag between application and receipt of funds than was</p>	<p>“‘Moving from relief to recovery’ was a common theme across most suggestions [for how to move forward], with a focus on local and community economic recovery wherever possible. There was a call to also continue the focus on food security and food sovereignty... the experience and knowledge of this forum should be leveraged to develop a vision for the next three months to three years, on what food programmes could look like. This could include considerations on how to best utilize decreasing funding for food programmes, and even how – where appropriate – to exit from such programmes while still ensuring that distribution can continue for the most vulnerable.” (Partnership, 2020n)</p> <p>“...a three-phase proposal for the future of the forum was presented...[we will] continue at this stage with the Government-NGO food coordination forum...focus on both emergency food aid (for the short-term crisis) and food security/food sovereignty (working on a long-term recovery - building back better)...[and] shift the meeting from once a week to twice a month” (Partnership, 2020f)</p>

	<p>our babies and our children are asking for bread, they need to eat. We are single Moms who have lost jobs.”</p> <p>“...we have seen a massive drop in donor and CAN funding as Donor Fatigue sets in. The Mayor’s fund comes to an end at the end of this month - July. From August onwards we have no idea where to get further funding and many of the kitchens and other methods of feeding will just have to end at that stage. The story is simple but complex - hunger is going to dramatically increase as these funds dry up and donors are dramatically decreasing.”</p> <p>“Our challenge is that providing the amount of food we are currently buying and producing is not sustainable going forward. The situation is no longer an immediate crisis but a long term economic disaster.”</p> <p>(Partnership, 2020c)</p>	<p>food insecurity may tip over to sudden hunger and potential anger. This is a potential risk for any local or provincial recovery plans, regardless of ‘mandates’, ‘fiscal constraints’ and ‘budget cuts’.”</p> <p>(Partnership, 2020c)</p>	<p>anticipated [and] the process will also have left large numbers of people with dashed expectations, which could have consequences in terms of civic action.”</p> <p>(Partnership, 2020n)</p>	<p>“The EDP reflection is not just ‘okay, what have we done for the Forum, with the Forum?’ But where do we take what we have learned? And what [is our role] in what I'd call a recovery period... the new COVID normal, recovery period?” AD1</p>
<p>Case #2 Cape Town Together</p>	<p>“There's a lot of people talking about donor fatigue and what then to do.” L2</p>	<p>“I'm starting to feel that without a lot of active ongoing energy, it will be hard to sustain that...at the moment, we're feeling quite tired.” L2</p> <p>“I'm so tired, to be honest...even the thought of convening a meeting to discuss it felt like too much. I'm a bit exhausted on leading any activities right now.” L2</p>	<p>“...what felt like really quite against all odds, incredible collaborations from multiple different sectors in a way you would ordinarily never experience...the willingness from both sides is waning, you know, because more and more people are frustrated at the ways in which things unfolded... people within the bureaucracy are so tired and I guess, starting to feel like to what end could we sustain such things anyway?” L2</p>	<p>“I think the ‘what comes next’ question is on a lot of people's minds...it's going to be different for each CAN...we had a session in [my] CAN about what comes next. I think a lot of a lot of CANS have done that. I heard from the Brackenfell CAN that they had a whole Saturday session, and the Woodstock CAN did one a few months ago, the Khayelitsha CAN did one, and the Langa CAN has done one. So this has been a sort of like almost spontaneous, what comes next [moment]...”L2</p>

				<p>"[the Connecting CANs] fellowship is [also] a holding space to kind of ask the 'what comes next question' for the network...one of the activities we're reflecting on this week in this group is how have individual CANs found it valuable to be part of this network?" L2</p>
<p>Case #3 & #4 CAN S & CAN G</p>	<p>"The big shift, I think, is around donor fatigue...a drying up of resources" I2</p> <p>"Especially private donations. They've definitely dwindled over time..." G2</p> <p>"I suppose the shift is the fact that we redirect our resources...having to make a choice based on what we have whether to direct our money towards vouchers, or soup kitchens, where we're going to get more bang for the buck, and how our money is going to stretch, you know... how we keep going, looking into the longer term." I2</p>	<p>"We all need to make a living...I'm finding that quite challenging actually [for myself]. I just actually can't emotionally deal with stuff." G2</p> <p>"I think last week, I just completely finally lost faith in national government... the PPE scandal in Johannesburg, and all these tenders and Eastern Cape just crumbling...no one's big enough to take on the job of managing this country, [fixing] the economy, and feeding its people. And the people that that currently are tasked with it are just far gone, they're just too far gone in self-interest. And the system that they're in is not designed to help" G2</p>	<p>"...we can never wait for government (laughs). If we would have waited, we don't know what people would have eaten." P1</p> <p>"...people just need to take to the streets, because government is just not [stepping up]...they're saying they're acknowledging the work that's being done by civil society, but maybe we're too small to see any of that messaging trickle down." G2</p>	<p>"I quite like the way we have...as far as just creating something ongoing and something more established, maybe more accountable for people to buy into or to get involved in, in the coming months or years...hopefully it's the right step to go. And also looking at sustainable models, helping businesses and helping people create businesses, feels right to me." G2</p> <p>"I want to see the kitchen thriving because I worry too much when there's not people eating and I want to focus on the social issues that are happening in [my community]. There's an opportunity in [the CAN NPO] where I could learn and study to be an auxiliary social worker, which is something that I've always wanted to do... the CAN is registering as an NPO." P2</p>
<p>Case #5 & #6 CAN M & CAN V</p>	<p>"Initially, it was very much individuals, networks, organizations, private companies, like a lot of people were just contributing and that equated to quite a lot of support. And then there was [a] turning point where those kind of plummeted." T2</p>	<p>"...it started becoming emotionally more exhausting, because then it was no longer like this unified, everyone together, no time for fighting operation, then it became more politically, personally, emotionally complicated. So actually, the first three months were emergency response. And then after that, there was a period of kind of quite turmoil... a lot of infighting and politics and jealousy and all of those</p>	<p>"...often, the people in power who have the power to say, yes, you can do this, or no, you can't do that aren't accessible or aren't cooperative. They just have their own agendas...[the youth] don't feel reliant on that support or those relationships, but they're not anti- them, they're definitely willing to engage and work together, but they just really struggled to find</p>	<p>"[the group has been] actively workshopping, creating a more solid identity. And naming it and putting a vision and a mission and values and all of the things, roles and responsibilities...they're busy forming now, but throughout the kind of more emergency state they were very fluid." T2</p>

		<p>community dynamics... now you try to carry on with everything you were doing in the emergency. But also you've got to deal with all of this emotional and political kind of stresses." T2</p> <p>"...[the youth] started coming under fire by their own community, the relationships that they thought were solid, suddenly started crumbling...a lot of gossip, a lot of undermining a lot of kind of trying to create division within the group, you know, gossiping, or spreading rumors about certain people to try and divide... much more investment in kind of emotional intelligence, like soft skills required to deal with those kinds of dynamics... it was rough, we had to get in some external help at times, and like, peacebuilding and conflict resolution experts." T2</p> <p>"...there were just so many people doing so many things on so many WhatsApp groups, that there was also a lot of confusion and also trying to be as responsive as possible to people that needed help. But I think there were a few people that took on that role and they were overwhelmed and then had to kind of pass the baton on because they were inundated with calls kind of 24-7 for people requesting help." N2</p>	<p>[government] people to engage with or operate with." T2</p> <p>"...[it's] quite frustrating when, you know, we were doing the work of that the government was supposed to do in supporting people through a crisis, especially people that didn't have access to the support, and there was little to no support at all. It was all based on like, amazing donations from people or private institutions..." N2</p>	<p>"There's definitely been a shift from that initial panic state... for us to try and you know, think about also, what are we now and what do we want to be?... all of these conversations start moving away from you know, an emergency health crisis to tackling issues that are linked to you know, structural inequality and identity politics and sense making." N2</p>
<p>Case #7 & #8 CAN T and CAN D</p>	<p>"...[resources] definitely dried up and they kind of ebbed and flowed a little bit, if I recall from June onwards, till about September, October, and then just really dwindled down... until Christmas." C2</p>	<p>"...the vibe that I'm getting is that a lot of people are really tired. I'm quite tired... it's become really constant and it has become a bit exhausting every single week" M2</p>	<p>"...I feel like this is where the government needs to...be looking at how they're going to sort this out in the long term...hunger has always been a problem. So when are we going to deal with this? When are we going to get the government to actually</p>	<p>"To be honest, I just see it carrying on, as it is. I don't, personally, from [our] CAN perspective, I don't really have a whole lot of energy to do anything wild for the rest of the year... people are tired, the donor fatigue is there, people are not donating</p>

		<p>“[it’s] been quite emotionally taxing for me...I was getting personal messages and WhatsApp and phone calls from people....that was really emotionally taxing because you like ‘I’m going to write your name down, but I can’t promise when or if we can help you’.” M2</p> <p>“To build on what [was] said about trauma, the rate of domestic abuse is high into the sky because everybody’s at home. The children are getting lost...the parents are inside and the children are running around on the street and getting lost...those types of situations also have a big impact to us as teachers...because we are not only teachers - we are social workers, we are the nurses, we are everything for these children. When they’re not at school, they’re very vulnerable...that’s really straining us because at the end of the day you’re worried about ‘what next?’. When you get the child home there’s nobody at home. So you have to take those children to sleep in your house even though it’s illegal under lockdown. Our community, the township that we are living in... they need us. You can’t sleep at night because you feel like you have the whole world [on your shoulders].” June 2020 Participant Workshop</p>	<p>deal with this issue that’s been an issue for so long? And why must civic society, you know, put up carry on...trying to meet immediate needs... we can’t fix the whole thing. It’s got to come from the top...we’ll continue to meet the immediate needs, [but those] immediate needs are not going to go away for everyone after COVID has finished... and then we can’t carry on. We can’t carry on doing this, you know what I mean?...the government is going to need to be involved.” M2</p>	<p>money anymore. They don’t want to donate food vouchers. And like, I think we’re a little bit done asking. So if we can just have a full trolley every two weeks in a couple of shops, that’s good.” M2</p>
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Evolution findings: differing response paths

October 2020 onwards marked the start of differing response paths across emergent response groups. Prior to this phase, groups had been on a remarkably similar trajectory in terms of the experiences of each case in my sample. From October onwards, responses began to differ as a result of the changing context and constraints experienced during the Plateau phase as well as the increased attention to reflection and introspection.

“... I've heard from a few people that they've registered their CANs as NPCs [non-profit companies]...we've heard other people still very resistant to this idea of registering...There are some people that are starting to think about local government elections... another trend I've seen more and more is linking up with existing organizations.” L2

October also marked the beginning of “Chapter 2” of the Food Relief Coordination Forum – now termed the “Food Forum” – which brought food systems change to the forefront of Case #1. This was the result of prior conversations and decisions to adopt a both/and approach to food relief and food security and this shift is detailed below:

“...while the need for immediate food relief may have abated, there is still a compelling case to be made for restructuring the food system to help address the inequities exposed during the pandemic. The Food Relief Coordination Forum has therefore evolved [to become] the Western Cape Food Forum.” (“Western Cape Food Forum Evolves - WCEDP,” n.d.)

These examples illustrate a few of the various paths that responses began to evolve towards. There are four main themes that came up when discussing differing response paths in interviews, including **dropping off and/or scaling back**, **partnering for sustainability**, **envisioning innovative futures**, and **engaging in systemic change**.

Dropping off and/or scaling back

Understandably, the contextual constraints of the Plateau phase coupled with intense fatigue of volunteers led some emergent response groups and individual volunteers to scale back on their involvement from October onwards. This was portrayed as both a scaling back in response efforts and activities - due to resource constraints - as well as a scaling back in personal involvement due to competing commitments and a need to prioritize personal livelihoods. Scaling back in response efforts and activities is detailed by G and PA below, while a scaling back in personal involvement is described by G and L.

“[the number of kitchens] keeps scaling down based on resources... and also just people not being able to stay in the kitchen because there's still running costs like gas and oil and whatever else that isn't supplied...less donations, but also less resources such as dry goods.” G3

“...there are no more resources coming from anybody. No donations. The only person that helps us with dry food at the moment to keep us going and cooking what we can cook is [local nonprofit] Ladles of Love.” PA3

“I basically had a psychological meltdown in December...I just realized that I'd been putting way too much time and headspace into unpaid work for like most of last year [2020]...It's quite a deep emotional well when you get on the ground...I've had to be more discerning as to where I place my energy...” G3

“... when we set this up as a rapid response, we thought this thing was going to take a couple of months, you know, we didn't think it was going to be forever...[we were] very focused and had a very strong sense of collective purpose last year [in 2020]. And actually, some of that, in a healthy way, is shifting.” L3

For some individuals, this scaling back of personal involvement in emergent response group activities was coupled with feelings of shame or guilt about stepping back from the work in the face of ongoing needs and chronic challenges. This also brought a focus on disparate abilities to step back from the work based on privileges and inequalities between individuals and different emergent response groups based on differing levels of ongoing community needs.

“...people from poor and vulnerable communities were saying, ‘well, we don't have a choice. We can't give up or stop. We literally have to keep going until it kills us’ ...it implies people from middle class areas have a choice, they can volunteer, they can step out of that...because it's not life and death in middle class communities. So it does raise issues of power relations and imbalances and equalities...” AD2

Interestingly, the persistence of emergent response groups located in historically marginalized communities ran counter to common assumptions that those with more resources would continue their efforts while those in less well-resourced responses would drop off or scale back their responses:

“I think we’re definitely seeing a difference in the more affluent CANs and the less well-resourced CANs in terms of who's continuing and who's not. And in some ways, it's the opposite of what we would expect in the literature...that higher socio economic brackets are more likely to continue...I think we're seeing more well-to-do CANs much less likely to continue...CANs where there's no other option, where your neighbors are knocking on your doors because they're still hungry, we see a lot more of that kind of continuation of it.” L3

For those individuals who did scale back or drop off from emergent response efforts, many spoke of trying to incorporate what they had learned along the way into their “day jobs” and/or directing their jobs towards efforts that aligned with the work of communities that they had engaged with over the year. In this way, they felt the work of the emergent response group

could live on and the values and ways of working could become dispersed within institutions. Such notions are discussed by L below:

“...the CAN experience feeds into our work...for many of us, we will be forever changed as a consequence of this work...now that we've seen that it is possible to build a different society, even if only in times of crisis, it's compelling, I think, to a lot of people...it inevitably sort of changes how you engage with whatever work is sort of your current focus.” L3

Partnering for sustainability

Many emergent response groups that continued their work after October saw a shift towards creating more partnerships with established organizations – this was evidenced at a grassroots level by individual CANs partnering with local organizations that aligned with their work and values and was encouraged by network organizations like the Food Forum which fostered partnerships between and across Forum members. These partnerships brought benefits such as stability, longevity, and access to larger pools of resources (including access to paid employees to support community work) as described by P below. They also brought an opportunity to eventually apply for government grants and more formal funding sources that were available only to registered organizations.

“...instead of [taking on a project ourselves], we link people up with other organizations so that we don't take the responsibility... all the organizations [in our community] also meet up and try to solve a problem [collectively]...instead of each person working on their own.” P3

Partnering became especially important for those emergent response groups (the majority of my sample) that decided to remain as unregistered and informal entities. After exploring the process for registering as an NPO, many determined that the amount of work that was required to start and maintain a formal entity was too much given the feasibility of volunteer time and energy. While these groups chose to remain informal entities, they

recognized the value that could come with being a registered and formal organization and often chose to align themselves with local organizations that shared similar programmatic work and values. An example of this is CAN M, which had been very active in supporting people experiencing homelessness in its area. Through this work it identified and began to collaborate with a local nonprofit focused on assisting the unhoused, is detailed by N below:

“U-Turn [a local nonprofit]...had been very involved in some of the work around supporting homeless communities... because they're registered and we could apply for certain grants through them... they [became] a key partner for us.” N3

Channeling funding through formal, recognized legal entities – or “intermediaries” – also became a strategy that the government piloted during this time period, as demonstrated by the City of Cape Town’s humanitarian relief program and the subsequent Provincial Department of Social Development funding. Both of these funding sources encouraged larger, registered NPOs to partner with networks of grassroots (often unregistered) groups to distribute resources. Entities like the Food Forum became important “matchmakers” that could pair formal organizations applying for funding with grassroots organizations in need. Using larger, registered organizations to unlock access to government resources for grassroots organizations was a theme that carried on past crisis response and influenced programs like the developing Social Employment Fund, launched in late 2021 and detailed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Envisioning and creating innovative futures

From October onwards, several emergent response groups sought to envision and create more innovative futures based on the foundations that had been built during crisis response. Conversations during this time period often included interviewees detailing ideas and actions aimed at addressing root causes of challenges rather than symptoms. Several emergent response groups recognized that hunger and other issues that had been thrown into sharp relief during the crisis stemmed from underlying, systemic challenges, and viewed the crisis as an opportunity to create deeper change with communities.

One theme that emerged during this time was creating community hubs – physical spaces – to address root causes of issues and facilitate systemic change. This included creating spaces for innovation, mentorship, and dialogue within communities that traditionally lacked dedicated spaces for these types of conversations and actions. This had been a dream of the youth involved with Case #6 since before the onset of Covid-19; now a grant provided by a large international NGO included resources for establishing such a youth-led space in the community. While searching for a physical space, the group also began to host youth-led dialogues on critical topics like gender-based violence and hoped to use the new space to continue those types of dialogues and interactions in the future.

“...the dream is for a kind of incubator space, a community hub space, where there's resources, there's tools, there's internet, there's access to professionals...their dream is to use [it] to enable youth to lead or to create change within their own community...I think our attention is like 80% on that now.” T2

Creating community hubs also included repurposing or using existing spaces (like the community kitchens) to enable people to access a broader range of services in a bottom-up way. This was strongly evidenced in the work of P and Case #4: at the time of writing, [P] has been partnering with the Western Cape Department of Health to bring mobile vaccination clinics – “Vaxi Taxis” – to community kitchens in order to boost vaccination rates in her community and offer healthcare services to people who otherwise might not be able to access them (Guerrero Casa, 2021). She has also been involved with a variety of local organizations working to coordinate a “kitchen summit” to bring together community kitchens from across Cape Town to envision what the future might hold for kitchens as sites of more expansive community social services (Sustainability, 2021).

“When I look at the kitchen, I see many hubs of possibilities, many things that could happen... because that's [where] everyone is... I want the people to say, ‘okay this is what we need’ ... [to create] a bottom up approach [to community services].” P3

This type of innovative work was also demonstrated through the efforts of Case #3, which raised funds to sponsor a dedicated social worker to work with those experiencing homelessness in the community to address root issues such as gaining access to the identity documents required for government assistance, public work opportunities, and admittance to shelters. Over time, this evolved into a broader partnership with local nonprofits to sponsor a “humanity hub” – a dedicated office space in downtown Cape Town where social workers could meet with people to assist with job seeking activities like crafting CVs and providing access to interview clothing.

“...we partnered with [several local smaller nonprofits starting in 2020] and we started to fund an auxiliary social worker...now she’s actually got her own assistant who is funded by [another local nonprofit] and they started something called the humanity hub...two days a week she consults people who have a need for CVs and stuff like that.” I3

Another theme that emerged during this time was a focus on creating circular economies and shortening value chains to strengthen local livelihoods. This idea began to surface during earlier stages of crisis relief, when several emergent response groups and organizations questioned the effectiveness of distributing vouchers or food parcels from large retailers while micro and small businesses were being hit hardest from lockdown measures (large chain retailers in South Africa actually earned a profit during the lockdown). This, coupled with questions around the efficiency and safety of physically delivering food parcels in bulk to communities (a food parcel worth R700 was often being distributed at a cost of R1100) caused emergent response groups to begin to think of alternative ways to address food insecurity (Partnership, 2020b).

One reimagining of food relief came through the use of digital vouchers connected to local economies. The Western Cape EDP worked with DG Murray Trust (a local foundation) and the Western Cape Government to pilot a digital voucher system where grassroots community kitchens were given digital vouchers to buy ingredients and food supplies that could be

redeemed at local spaza (corner) shops. Over the course of the pilot project, 225 community kitchens in Covid-19 hotspots were provided digital vouchers every two weeks to spend at local spaza shops, introducing much needed crisis relief money into the economies of the 130+ participating shops (Maynier, 2021). The digital voucher team produced an array of learnings on the opportunities and challenges of supporting hyperlocal economic development through technological cash assistance tools. These reflections included:

- Considerations for the design of digital voucher schemes, such as determining whether the scheme is focused solely on humanitarian aid (reliability, longevity) or also focused on local economic activity (inclusion of small businesses), as well as determining width vs. depth of assistance
- Considerations on the type of money transfer “vehicle” and the technological platform to use, as well as criteria for beneficiaries of the voucher and the transaction
- The pivotal involvement of local communities in selecting and verifying beneficiaries, as well as challenges involving sometimes manual data capture and preparation of beneficiaries in communities
- Issues stemming from the challenges of phone-based voucher delivery (theft, loss of phone, lack of data, lack of access to charging) to the constraints of administrative capacity at local spaza retailers
- Emerging opportunities for future use of vouchers and recommendations to simplify and streamline programmes and expand stakeholders involved (e.g. cellphone network companies)
- And principles to underpin a digital voucher programme such as a focus on the agency of recipients in determining how to best use the provided voucher (Partnership, 2020b).

The pilot project garnered positive press coverage as well as a visit by Western Cape Government officials (including the Premier, depicted below). The lessons learned have since been shared locally and internationally through various forums.



Figure 10. Public social media posts from a government visit to digital voucher sites

The digital voucher pilot project happened around the same time that Cape Town Together was hosting co-learning sessions to facilitate an exchange of ideas on alternative economies. This included hosting dialogues on reimagining public employment programmes to create social employment opportunities (further detailed later in this section), as well as a dedicated co-learning session on “alternative economies” that promoted resources like community currencies, community exchange systems, and digital tools such as Zlto (“Zlto - Giving Is Greater,” n.d.). The latter is a blockchain-based social innovation created and launched in Cape Town prior to Covid-19 that was subsequently used by some emergent response groups within and outside of Cape Town Together to compensate volunteers for their time and efforts through providing rewards redeemable at local vendors

“Part of the journey to #Buildbackbetter is finding ways to sustain the incredible volunteerism and mutual aid that we’ve seen flower through the CANs. One way to do so is to consider alternative forms of exchange. While the bank or SARS may not value the hours spent in a community kitchen or garden, community ‘currencies’ can.” CAN co-learning session: Alternative Economies (2020)

Following these co-learning sessions on reimagining social employment and alternative economies, networks of CANs across the nation also began to jointly host “Inspired Futures Dialogues”, conversations dedicated to gathering ideas on building back better for more inclusive, local, alternative economies. These sessions solicited ideas from local CAN activists on what building back better would mean for communities, as referenced in the responses in Figure 11 below. The outputs were shared broadly through Cape Town Together platforms and incorporated into spaces like the Food Forum to share feedback and ideas to government on how to support more inclusive, community-driven recovery.

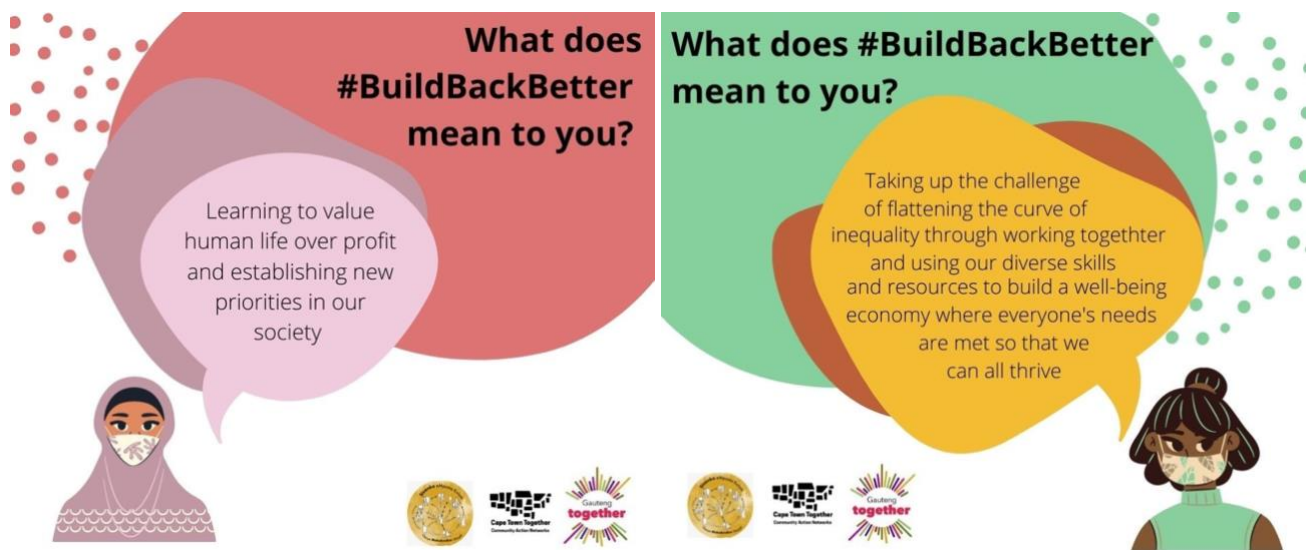


Figure 11. Build Back Better responses from the CAN Inspired Futures Dialogues

As a response to strengthening local circular economies and shortening value chains, many communities and emergent response groups also began to set up local gardens to supply fresh produce to community kitchens. This was generally viewed as a more sustainable path forward for kitchens rather than relying solely on donated supplies to cook with. This prompted conversations and ideas from interviewees on how local circular economies could be further supported by the government, e.g. through establishing subsidies or partnerships between community kitchens, community gardens, and local retailers.

“[We have a] dream, we want each and every kitchen to have their gardens, and be able to be trained to take care of their gardens, so that later on we don't want to worry about everything.” P3

Another prominent theme that carried through from the Plateau phase to the Evolution phase was the need to consider new forms of compensation for unpaid volunteers who were doing essential community work; work that was spoken of as strengthening the social fabric of society and building community resilience. The economic impact of the lockdown coupled with the effectiveness of crisis response groups and civil society organizations reignited national conversations around the concept of a Social Employment Program. As previously mentioned, Cape Town Together and CANs across the country hosted co-learning sessions on social employment, calling for ways to compensate people for the critical work that was happening in communities in spite of the fatigue and resource declines experienced in the Plateau phase.

“...there is an opportunity to reimagine public employment... Society is characterized by a lack of [employment], but there's no shortage of work to be done. How can people be supported and paid to do the work that South Africa needs...[we are] proposing to create social employment, create work for the common good... from the bottom-up, a new social compact, to unlock creativity and community agency.” (Together, 2020a)

At the time of writing, the new national Social Employment Program has launched its application window for a pilot phase of 50,000 part-time jobs that are oriented around providing impactful work to communities (*The Presidential Employment Stimulus: Supporting Social Employment*, 2021). The program is based around compensating meaningful work for the common good, as shown in Figure 12 below. The application is structured so that larger, registered organizations apply on behalf of a network or coalition of grassroots organizations, echoing earlier trials of using registered “intermediary” organizations to unlock government resources for organizations on the ground. Members of CANs across Cape Town, led in part by P, have worked to identify an NGO partner to apply to have CAN volunteers be part of the program.

The Western Cape EDP has taken on the role of supporting and convening the process, providing an interface between government and civil society to facilitate feedback and recommendations to government and help civil society organizations understand the application process, partner effectively with each other, and provide effective feedback.

PRESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT STIMULUS SUPPORTING SOCIAL EMPLOYMENT

2. What is 'work for the common good'?

'Work for the common good' refers to work that contributes to public goods and services, rather than private ones. It includes work that supports the Sustainable Development Goals and improves the quality of life in communities, with a focus on disadvantaged communities and groups. The following are indicative examples of typical theme areas:

<p>Placemaking This is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, livelihoods, happiness, well-being and safety.</p>	<p>Community safety Violence prevention and action against gender based violence</p>	<p>Health and community care</p>	<p>Food and nutrition security</p>	<p>Youth support and recreation</p>	<p>Support for digital inclusion</p>	<p>Community and public art programming</p>	<p>Informal settlement upgrading</p>	<p>Education support Early childhood development.</p>	<p>Greening Environmental action, biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation strategies.</p>
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And much more – including crosscutting and area-based approaches.

In practice, there is no shortage of organisations – national and local – already making a difference in multiple ways in all these spheres. Too often, though, such efforts are under-resourced and the hard work involved is undervalued or unrecognised. It is sometimes difficult to sustain voluntary efforts. The social employment approach aims to change that: to recognise the public value created and to expand the scale and scope of support to such initiatives. The effect on participants and on communities could be transformative. It should be designed to be so.

Figure 12. New Social Employment Programme description

Engaging in systemic change

For some individuals and emergent response groups, the work that was undertaken during the Emergence and Plateau phases deeply shaped their personal ambitions and desire to engage in more systemic change to address root causes of issues. One of those people was P:

“I'm one of the people that says CANs should never die...For me, CANs are the next future, more than government, more than organizations... imagine if the whole network can make a change, Western Cape would be different... I'm still thinking this is just the beginning.” P3

Through the partnership of CAN S and CAN G, P was funded to go to school for an auxiliary social work degree. This was something she had been interested in before the pandemic but the activities over the year reaffirmed her vision and desire to make positive change in her community in the long-term. T also shifted her work away from the creative career that she had prior to the crisis to focus more fully on youth empowerment and communications programs, in line with the work she had been supporting in Community V. What had once been a side passion for her became her new career focus.

When reflecting on systemic change ambitions, some interviewees also spoke of changing systems and institutions at different scales. This included comments on building deep relationships, replicating efforts across different geographic places, and influencing upwards to create policy shifts. EM spoke specifically of the first two types of systemic work:

“...for me, systems work is about scaling deep, which is the depth of connection, the depth of relationship, [the depth] of connectivity between those in the system. And for me that happened, which is really beautiful. And the scaling out happened, because it happened everywhere...it's in the changing of how we relate to each other, that for me is systems change, that's the beginning. That's the process.” EM1

Those who were focused on influencing upwards to affect policy change and create a shift in governmental cultures/practices included The Western Cape EDP. Engaging in long-term change as a result of the crisis was top of mind for its leaders and members of the Food Forum. While there was recognition that some of society had moved back towards “business as usual”, the EDP saw its role as being a “doorstopper” to keep opportunities for change open beyond the crisis period:

“Unfortunately, the pull towards business as usual is very strong...can we keep open 10% of the door in the post crisis arena?...before the crisis, maybe the door had close to 2%. People were cynical, people were not interested in government, people were not

interested in helping their neighbors...I think the crisis has opened the door up...keeping the door open at 10% is a lot better than where we were prior to the crisis. And every time we're hit with a crisis, we've got to keep opening that door a little bit more, a little bit more, a little bit more. And keep the dialogues and the connections and the communications and the collaborations going.” AD2

Starting as early as June 2020, the Food Relief Coordination Forum began to shift its role and focus from solely coordinating a crisis response to also influencing a food systems approach to the Western Cape Government economic recovery plan (Partnership, 2020l). Examples of this influence included compiling feedback from the Forum to report to Cabinet on evolving hunger needs and partnering with academics to engage with government entities outside the social sectors to make the case for food systems perspectives to be included in all aspects of the pending economic recovery plan. In mid-September, the Western Cape EDP stepped back temporarily from hosting the Food Relief Coordination Forum to conduct a rapid assessment of the Cape Town food and nutrition system and consult with stakeholders in the broader food system on a potential role for the Forum moving forward (Partnership, 2020e). These stakeholders included civil society organizations, government representatives, and academics; the process resulted in the EDP obtaining a “mandate” for the next chapter of the Forum focused on more systemic food systems issues.

“COVID raised the profile of food systems issues...how do we capitalize on the mobilization, education, and awareness that must lie at the heart of systems change process to stretch it towards more progressive outcomes instead of charity relief. Even with charity relief, how do we move towards solidarity and more progressive relationships between givers and recipients that are often paternalistic today.” AD3

The consultation process included engaging with multiple perspectives to map stakeholders in the food system and understand how governmental mandates and programmes aligned to production, packaging and distribution, retail, consumption, and waste management.

This process identified several gaps and needs in the food and nutrition system, such as the need to better connect non-state actors with government to foster understanding of how to influence policy, decision-making, and resource allocation and the need for short-term interventions to be connected to long-term systems change with a holistic view of the food system (Partnership, 2020e). At the time of writing, the EDP is continuing its new food program work which includes continuing to host the monthly Food Forum meeting. The Food Forum is shifting towards an explicit strategic focus on promoting “local production for local consumption” to address systemic issues within the Western Cape food system.

At the same meeting that the Western Cape EDP announced this new focus of “Chapter 2” of the Forum in October 2020, Western Cape Government announced a beginning of “revising its thinking on food and nutrition systems based on recent developments” through the Nourish to Flourish Programme (Partnership, 2020e). This programme aims to holistically focus on food and nutrition assistance, improving access to nutritious food through formal and informal markets, fostering resilience in the food system, and promoting food governance and democracy (Partnership, 2020e). A Nourish to Flourish working group has been developed and convened by the Head of the Department of Agriculture (supported by the EDP) which includes representation from the Departments of Health, Education, Cultural Affairs and Sport, Economic Development, Social Development, Environmental Affairs and Planning, Transport and Public Works, as well as the Department of the Premier and local government representatives (Partnership, 2020d). The working group engaged across late 2020 and early 2021 to establish a strategic focus for March 2021-April 2022. Through this process, it selected three locations to pilot area-based approaches to improving health and nutrition for children under 5 and strengthening local food economies. At the time of writing, the working group and close stakeholders (~30 local and Provincial government officials and academic partners) have just had a site visit to a township and informal settlement in the first of the three locations to engage in a learning journey designed to showcase perspectives on the ground and bring research on food and nutrition implications for children to life.

Table 9. Evolution quotes

Evolution				
	Dropping off/scaling back	Partnering for sustainability	Envisioning innovative futures	Engaging in systemic change
Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	<p>"[we were hearing] some of us got to go back to our day job, some of us have kids, some of us have to earn money, some of us have got to go and write a thesis...go back to university and things like that. And all were expressing guilt..." AD2</p>	<p>"We've just this week achieved an agreement between the city and province and ourselves on behalf of the Food Forum, to set up a joint data partnership around food relief and the food system in the longer term, because we're going to need data beyond food relief." AD2</p> <p>"It was proposed, over and above the immediate next steps, that the Forum explore ways of harnessing the energy and relationships beyond the crisis...that there is a need to build on partnerships and networks within communities (bonding networks), social solidarity across race and class (bridging networks), and partnerships between farmers, food producers, formal and informal retailers, NGOs and communities (strategic food system networks) to...build on a new-found public sector appreciation for role of civil society. Shift from 'participation' to 'partnering'" (Partnership, 2020I)</p> <p>"On February 24th, EDP invited 15 organisations (combination of activist, practitioner, research, policy advocacy and public sector) involved in convening food systems public events and dialogues at different levels (grassroots, local/ regional, global) in Cape Town and the Western Cape to participate in discussion about how we can collectively plan and sequence our activities in a way we create collective impact. This approach does not imply any attempt to</p>	<p>"The purpose of this [digital voucher] project is to inject money into local economies, by providing money to food kitchens to spend at local spaza shops and traders. The projects aims to demonstrate that cash injections into a local economy can have an impact. There are no restrictions on what the voucher can be spent on, as long as the money is spent locally." (Partnership, 2020g)</p> <p>"...you cannot sustain social movements just through volunteerism. People have to eat, people have to look after children... so the whole notion of a Social Employment Program, which national government through people like Kate Phillips, have been promoting...would be an interesting way [to] remunerate community volunteerism." AD2</p> <p>"The concept of 'social employment' expands the traditional definition of public employment (or public works) programmes that are run directly by the state, to recognise the role that non-state actors already play in creating forms of work that serve the common good or provide public benefit...This is part of the wider agenda of 'building back better', on terms that build meaningful partnerships and use our collective strengths and assets to create work on the scale required." (<i>The Presidential Employment Stimulus: Supporting Social Employment</i>, 2021)</p>	<p>"How do you shift from just a short term response to linking short term action with longer term systems change? And thinking about that, and I think that it's gone quite well with the Food Forum." AD2</p> <p>"...how do we sustain, connect, communicate and collaborate beyond the crisis?...people were doing it naturally in a crisis because it was the right thing to do. Now, it's back to "normal", how do we sustain that? Well, [that is] our job...we've got to try and do it, in our little way in our sector... we can sustain action around changing the food and nutrition system beyond the crisis." AD2</p>

		<p>centralize control of organisational activities, rather, by sharing information we can find ways to amplify, support and align each other's work." (Partnership, 2021a)</p>		
<p>Case #2 Cape Town Together</p>	<p>"I'm also really trying to find ways to sort of refocus on the things that I was doing before the pandemic arrived, because for all of us, those things also mattered, it's not like the CANs replaced all the other things we did that also mattered..." L3</p>	<p>"...another trend I've seen more and more is linking up with existing organizations, I think there were always collaborations with people working in their CAN and their institutions. But now there's sort of more formal partnerships. And now you see some of the fundraising initiatives are like, for another organization. And people sort of explicitly say, you know, we've partnered with [this organization] that sort of thing." L2</p> <p>"[through] UCT and UWC...we had put together a kind of a Connecting CAN fellowship. And we had sought funding from all sorts of places and hadn't found funding that was no strings attached, everybody wanted us to do something that we felt would be sort of contrary to our work. And when we spoke to them about the frustrations...[they] said... 'the work you guys have done is critical, we would be happy to fund this work'." L3</p>	<p>"Dala Kitchen is a collection of recipes and stories from CANs and CAN community kitchens across the city of Cape Town...The work has been tough – and often the temptation is to slip into the usual command-and control way of doing things. But in this network, we are fiercely decentralized and anti-hierarchical. There are no bosses, and every CAN decides for themselves how best to adapt and respond to changes and local conditions... No matter the specific course of action taken by each CAN, the work is underpinned by the shared dream of establishing city-wide networks of care, rooted in a politics of collectivism and radical generosity... The reality is that the challenges of inequality, oppression, violence and poverty that pervade our city exacerbate the health and economic consequences of Covid-19 and made the stringent lockdown period almost as deadly as the virus itself. While these are major issues, stemming from our country's colonial and apartheid history and require much bigger changes in how our society is structured, the CANs' 'politics of doing' provided a pathway to action in the present and at the hyper-local level that is deeply personal. It is about neighbors getting to know each other and working together, inspiring one another and generating collective energy to keep going, to start building a better world. We warmly invite you to partake in this journey with us...Together</p>	<p>"Far beyond the limited and linear ways in which community engagement is often understood, the CANs have demonstrated not only the valuable contribution to social goals made by ordinary people who devote their time and energy to caring for their neighbors, but also what we could achieve as a society if we center care instead of capital, put people before profit, and invested in economies of care, particularly in times of crisis...the work of the CANs is work, but it is work based on collective care, inclusivity, and the fundamental belief that we have a collective right to live in a world free from inequality and injustice, and a collective responsibility to take action against it. Far from being a political threat, this is what active citizenship in a democracy should look like. In times of crisis, the role of the state must include supporting, enabling, and listening to bottom-up social mobilization." (Together, 2020d, p. 127)</p>

			<p>these recipes, stories and images weave a sense of the possibility and magic that arises when ordinary people come together to do ordinary things in an extraordinary way.” (Together, 2020d, p. 9)</p>	
<p>Case #3 & #4 CAN S and CAN G</p>	<p>“I woke up this year going ‘I’ve got to take care of myself and my livelihood’. You know, I just have to... I think maybe we’re all in the same position...” I3</p> <p>“I realized for me it’s shame [from having stepped away], because I’ve had to distance myself... when I go to [the kitchen in Community G] the need is still great. The queue is still there at the kitchen...I just feel really really guilty.” G3</p> <p>“...my organization is environmentally focused. So I’m picking up the work from an environmental perspective within [Community G], building environmental stewardship capacity and community and I feel that that’s where I can sustain myself emotionally and it’s part of what I actually do. So it’s, it’s much easier for me to get involved in that way.” G3</p> <p>“If you could see the people that are coming here each day, it’s hard to say, ‘no we are done.’ Whose responsibility is that then, to continue the work?...how do we say, ‘no it’s done’. For us, it can’t be done.” P2</p>	<p>“...we’ve started to form a strong partnership with the Mini Meltdown, the guys whose Mini [Cooper car] was blown up... we partnered with Mini Meltdown and Souper Troopers. And we started to fund and auxiliary social worker... got a funder for six months’ salary, and then got another six months. And now she’s actually got her own assistant who is funded by Ladles of Love.” I3</p> <p>“We’ve just evolved in partnering up with other organizations such as Hope Africa and Belinda FC because we know that to remain relevant and make it for a longer term [we need to partner], because we haven’t planned to just exist for a few months. We are planning on existing for a longer term, meaning that we have to build a relationship with organizations that are around [our community].” P3</p> <p>“...[our partner] Belinda FC, they do soccer, but in the afternoon, they do after care classes...anyone can come in and do English and maths homework...so what we did was, we linked them up with Education without Borders... we can take the children that actually need after school care classes, they can go to these organizations, link them up with Education without Borders and so they get the support, they get the tutors...” P3</p>	<p>“There’s a garden linked to the kitchen. There is a shop linked to the kitchen, meaning that whatever the needs of the kitchen [are], they buy it at lesser price to feed the community, they’re able to access veggies and fruits for the community...the government must support the gardens...that is my dream to sustain us longer...” P3</p>	<p>“...I would love to touch into a proper change or impact... I know [very] few social workers...the ones that I’ve met are not from here, you know, so for me because I’m from [this community], I want to see that change... I think it’s a responsibility of the person that is here to try and help and assist and change... I wanted to study this because of the needs of my community...I want to be that person that says ‘okay, I made a change, I tried to make an impact’...I think I should be able to inspire people to actually also want to make the change....that is my big dream.” P3</p>

		<p>“We still have a relationship with Hope Africa...every month they come and give dignity packs to our girls...they are able to go to each [kitchen] location and say ‘okay, if you have girls from 15 to 24, bring them in one area, we’re able to do programs with them’...HIV classes, and all those things...we are also like a recruitment for them, when they have programs... [they’ll come to me and say] ‘I need 20 girls, I need 50 girls’because the network that we have, we’re able to [ask our kitchen volunteers] ‘do you have such people [waiting in your kitchen lines]? Okay, bring them up to this area and then they’re able to access programs that are offered by different organizations’.” P3</p>		
<p>Case #5 & #6 CAN M and CAN V</p>	<p>“...There was a big issue around vaccination and around public health literacy. That kind of divided the group, which was quite interesting, lots of people that are for and against vaccination...I’ve shifted some of my attention [and stepped back a bit].” N3</p> <p>“...my personal role definitely changed. So in the beginning, I was very active, I was going into [Community V] a lot. I was kind of driving all the logistics and fundraising and reporting. And so it was a lot of work. But over time, and probably from October, like notably our agreement with these youths is that this is theirs. It’s not ours. And our role is to support them. And the grant that came from Oxfam was particularly for them...our agreement was we’re, the fiscal host... we had to kind of really be quite involved in the beginning but now they’re becoming more comfortable with</p>	<p>“UTurn [a local nonprofit]...had been very involved in some of the work around supporting homeless communities... because they’re registered and we could apply for certain grants through them... they were a key partner.” N3</p> <p>“...[my NPO] offered that we have a website, we have a structure, we have the legal entity, we have the bank account. So that was a huge part of what we do is offer the group, so we mentor them, but we also have all the existing infrastructure that allows for those things to be easier. The accountability, the transparency, the storytelling, the fundraising, we had all of that. So it didn’t need to be created from scratch. And also, we had access to networks of people. So a web designer, a blog writer, you know, through that existing infrastructure.” T2</p>	<p>“...one of the biggest needs in communities is just spaces for people to talk and be heard and be together. So that aspect is going really well...creating spaces for community to have dialogue around whatever they want to have dialogue about.” T3</p>	<p>“...at an individual level, people have made changes. And a lot of movements have kind of come about because of this. And it does seem like they’re actually all starting to overlap and creates much bigger change...all the little things are starting to overlap and create a bigger thing, or the potential for a bigger thing... like the puzzle is slowly starting to work towards a bigger picture...it’s just a feeling. And a few people have been expressing it...you get so wrapped up in what you’re doing. And it’s exhausting, exhausting work. But every now and again, it’s like, okay, it’s not for nothing like it is actually something bigger happening here.” T3</p>

	<p>actually making decisions and actively following them through.” T3</p>			
<p>Case #7 & #8 CAN T and CAN D</p>	<p>“I started pulling away a lot more... because I hadn't worked...I needed to get my back on my feet myself...” C2</p> <p>“I feel like I've been very out of the loop, with me being away from the last two months or so. And also sort of towards the end of the year when everything started to quiet down with the CAN, there was a lot of communication lost, I personally didn't keep up to date with what was going on.” M3</p> <p>“...with CAN T, we don't know what they're doing at this moment... after we reached level one, we went back and we asked them for help and I think what they said they are back at work and they are not doing what they were doing and there's also a little less communication that has gone through... I think that some of our relationships have really faded, because if you look at life you will think that everything has gone back to normal...[we don't have any government funding but] it would be so great if we can do that, if we could focus on our long term actions.” E2</p> <p>“...the challenge is that the organizations that used to support us. They dried out, they don't have anything now that they can help us [with]. But whatever that we find then we just put together and give the people, although it cuts the days, because normally we used to cook Monday to Friday, but now we're not cooking every day a week.” PA2</p>			

Enablers and barriers of short-term emergent crisis response & systemic change

Across all of my cases, there were themes that came up in terms of what enabled or hindered short-term crisis response during the Emergence and Plateau phases as well as what enabled/hindered a transition towards engaging in partnerships, innovative futures, and systemic change ambitions in the Evolution phase. These enablers and barriers are worth noting because they were at times different from or at odds with each other across the two time horizons (Emergence/Plateau and Evolution). This led response groups who were interested in continuing crisis relief efforts while also affecting more systemic change to grapple with salient tensions and perceived tradeoffs – e.g. the flexibility and fluidity desired during crisis response vs. the access to resources enabled by becoming a formal organizational entity. Both enablers and barriers are detailed in this section in an attempt to draw out cross-case and cross-phase themes.

Short-term crisis response enablers: self-organizing, flexibility, and decentralization

In the Emergence phase, emergent response groups often spoke of the power of self-organizing, the need for flexibility and fluidity, and a push for decentralized ways of working and decision-making. These were all principles that underpinned the work of Cape Town Together and the CANs and they were often embraced by other organizations and actors during the period of initial crisis relief as well.

Self-organizing enabled communities to avoid being passive bystanders and to take action during a time of immense uncertainty and anxiety. Cape Town Together specifically pushed for self-organizing to happen at a hyperlocal level so that communities could identify and enable their own unique needs in contrast to more traditional top-down crisis responses. The practice of self-organizing was often paired with principles around solidarity, collaboration, and inclusion.

“Don’t wait for someone else to fix the problem. Joining or starting a CAN does not mean you will get resources from outside your area. The key principle of CANs is self-organizing, 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.” (Together, 2020e, p. 11)

Flexibility was another theme that emerged as enabler during rapid organizing that went hand in hand with self-organizing. This flexibility included a lack of formal organizational structure, roles, or responsibilities which allowed emergent response groups to determine immediate, evolving priorities and organize action on a continually evolving basis. While Cape Town Together was often described as a distributed network, some respondents reflected on their experience using even more fluid descriptors such as being part of a “constellation” of volunteers. The principles of flexibility within Cape Town Together are described below:

“We are a decentralized and non-hierarchical network. We work against the tendency to centralize planning, decision-making and management and we avoid hierarchies of knowledge, resources and power that so often accompany these ways of working...[we are taking] initiative and solving problems independently and collaboratively, without the need to pass decisions by a central group.” (Together, 2020c, p. 5)

De-centralized ways of working and decision-making also became a strong theme during the initial crisis response period based on the work that Cape Town Together and other emergent response groups were doing. For some, this proved to be an unusual and at times chaotic way of working. For others, it became a rallying call against the pervasive nature of hierarchies and centralization often present in work and organizations. Groups like Cape Town Together encouraged people to embrace the discomfort that could come along with new ways of thinking and working; “please remember, navigating a decentralized network can be a challenging (but rewarding) new experience. Be kind with yourself and others while finding your way” (Together, 2020e, p. 6).

Short-term crisis response barriers: limitations of the state

While self-organizing, flexibility and fluidity, and decentralized ways of working enabled a powerful civil society-driven crisis response (providing more than half of all food relief in the Western Cape during the Emergence time period), the state experienced extreme constraints to adopting these ways of working due to the structure and processes of its institutions. Individuals within government who wanted to engage in timely and collaborative crisis response efforts often found it difficult to do so within the boundaries of their official roles.

The limits of government response were evidenced in many ways, perhaps most strikingly in the example of how the City of Cape Town's humanitarian relief efforts went awry. The first round of humanitarian relief funding (R12M) that was delivered by the City of Cape Town was announced at the Food Relief Coordination Forum in early June, after the initial lockdown had been lifted and after the Emergence time period i.e. three months into an intense and widespread hunger crisis. Locally elected officials identified recipients of the funding in each Ward, though civil society organizations warned that this could result in politicians showing favoritism during a time of crisis. Subsequently, more humanitarian relief funding (R25M) was announced at the Forum in late July. This time the funding was designed for registered NGOs to apply on behalf of grassroots networks of kitchens/beneficiaries in an attempt to distribute funding to local, informal entities. Applications were launched in late August and applicants quickly ran into hurdles with the stringency of the requirements in place for organizations to contract with government and an extremely tight deadline to complete applications. Examples of these requirements included being registered on national and local databases, having proof of a physical location for the organization, showing audited finances for at least three years, and ensuring that every kitchen from the partner grassroots organizations had a Certificate of Acceptability from the local health department.

Ultimately, out of the 129 applications that were received *only 5* were deemed fully compliant with the requirements of the application. City officials went back to a few organizations who were close to being compliant and worked with them to finish their applications but the funding encountered further institutional hurdles. Within the walls of the City government, the legal department challenged the funding on the basis of humanitarian aid

being outside of the City's mandate, presumably out of a fear of audit implications. This held up the process within the City for months; as of February 2021, successful NGO applicants were still waiting for funding to be released to their organizations. This was more than six months after they had put in frenzied applications for emergency aid during the Plateau period of crisis response, a time when other sources of funding and physical donations were dwindling and needs were persisting.

Stories such as this illustrate the extreme limitations of the state in organizing rapid crisis response. Frustrated NGOs and emergent response groups became exasperated at the delays which came at a time when they were physically and emotionally exhausted and hanging on to funding sources by a thread. Flustered City government officials grew wary of interacting with NGOs and emergent response groups as they ended up bearing the brunt of applicants' frustrations and impatience at the broken process. This example provides a critical learning experience for future crises and interactions between government and civil society, and shows that even the programs and funds with good intentions can get trapped in layers of bureaucracy and implementation challenges. There is a lot of work to be done to untangle government systems and practices to free up individual actors and departments to engage meaningfully across and outside of government – particularly in times of crisis.

Table 10. Short-term crisis relief enablers and barriers quotes

Short-term crisis relief		
	Enablers: Self-organizing, flexibility, decentralization	Barriers: Limitations of the state
Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	<p>“During a crisis, things change quickly. Members were encouraged to ‘step into action’ rather than wait for the ‘perfect plan’ or ‘perfect data’, and at the same time to regularly reflect, evaluate, learn, and adapt, and adjust... participants were provided with the direct contact details for those who could assist them individual. The Forum did not try and coordinate all activities of all members but rather encouraged members to work directly in partnership with each other [in a decentralized way].” (Partnership, 2020a)</p> <p>“...when we saw how the CANs and Cape Town Together, were curating the Facebook site and making sure that they were trying to give accurate news that they sourced from reliable sources, rather than, you know, the normal inaccuracies on social media, that was a very, very important role that we had realized coming up during the drought. And then to collaborate...it's not just connect and communicate, actually, how do you get people to work together. So in a ways that for us, the CANs movement and Cape Town Together, was the embodiment of what we had suggested as a way [to act in a crisis] and we tried to specifically apply it to food relief. Connect the NGOs with each other, connect them to government, try to avoid duplication and overlap and look where the gaps are, just fairly basic stuff. Communicate, what is government doing...working together and setting up a forum with some protocols. Not too much a complex structure, something that's easy for people to join.” AD2</p> <p>“During the first four months of the crisis, civil society food relief mobilization amounted to 5,212,402 ‘people days’, a life-saving distribution of humanitarian resources to poor and vulnerable areas in the Western Cape during the Covid-19 pandemic.” (Partnership, 2020a)</p>	<p>“...the CCT [City of Cape Town] food relief programme is bound by the requirements of the City’s grant-in-aid process. This requires applications to be submitted to the Portfolio Committee, the MayCo, and the full Council. Given the monthly schedule of meetings for these bodies, the deadline of 3 September for applications cannot be extended, as this will cause the whole programme to be delayed by a month or more... Clarity was provided about the COA (Certificate of Acceptability): every kitchen that is providing food needs to have a COA. It is not sufficient for only the parent NGO in an application to have a COA, as was previously advised.” (Partnership, 2020p)</p> <p>“A number of organisations on the call reflected on significant barriers to successful application. Breadline Africa managed to apply, but it took over 100 man hours to collect the data and compile the 20 attachments, and it was a scramble to get registered on the Treasury Supplier database! Souper Troopers ultimately withdrew from the application process because the administrative burdens were too high for their current model (and could not provide for someone to handle reporting challenges moving forward, as that did not fit in the 7% operational expenses allowed). The Delft Action Network was also unable to submit an application. The community kitchens had many questions around reporting requirements that could not be managed within the limitations and complexities of the network structure. This had the unfortunate consequence of some of the community kitchens feeling excluded by the City’s application requirements. Regrettably, several NPO’s did not apply...” (Partnership, 2020p)</p> <p>“[a City official] provided an update on...the humanitarian relief aid process from the City of Cape Town. While the process went through many hurdles...including opposition from the CFO and legal department, the R10 million should be distributed to the participating organisations by the beginning of March [2021]. These organisations were asked to take on additional wards so that the funding could cover some of the 50 wards that didn’t have any applicants. The phase 2 application is currently open (closing soon) and [the City] is hopeful that the process will be smoother than phase 1. 120-140 organisations attended training to work through the application requirements together, learn about government process and evaluations, and give feedback. There is a team ready to work with organisations that are applying</p>

		for phase 2 to make sure their applications qualify. They have also asked council to include humanitarian relief as part of the grant in aid program so don't have to go to council every time there's a need for grant in aid." (Partnership, 2021a)
<p>Case #2 Cape Town Together</p>	<p>"...there's the normal kind of linear hierarchical organization, then you've kind of moved into a network; and a network is like everybody is an individual, but everybody plays a really important role. And then you've moved into [a constellation]...where it's not that everybody's is as important, it depends on the issue that the node raises and then...the node turns up... you've built this kind of constellation of humans, that is able to show up when they need to and then be in the background and be present when they are not needed." EM1</p> <p>"We are a network...we draw on our collective energy and collective wisdom. We are a decentralized and non-hierarchical network. We work against the tendency to centralize 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." (Together, 2020c)</p> <p>"We self-organize... we focus on what we CAN do in our community. Every CAN is best placed to know what Covid-19 responses make sense in their own community. The skills, knowledge. And resources already exist to tackle the challenges we face and stay safe. We prioritize local responses that work, and when we collaborate with others we do so in ways that serve to strengthen the CANs without making them dependent on external support." (Together, 2020c)</p>	<p>"I think that the state is just not able to engage with the self-organizing nature of this network, which is very unfortunate... for a time, there was the frenzy of like, anything is possible...a lot of valuable things were happening, you know, like we sort of saw discourses shift in [government], we saw very different ways of working between government officials and community based actors...[but now] it feels like it's really closing." L2</p>
<p>Case #3 & #4 CAN S and CAN G</p>	<p>"What I've found extraordinary; at the beginning we had no structure and we had to go with whoever popped up; [Greg] took on what was necessary, as soon as I saw someone had an aptitude for finance, she said she would...[another person contacted me], I said we have no one doing comms and even though she's a researcher at UCT and has no experience she found the right people to help her. We worked in a very organic way, but there is a lot of structure that has emerged. My role has become plugging holes, as opposed to a more formal role. People have been very willing to take it on, and really take it on." I1</p>	<p>"We wanted to apply for the [government] Hunger Relief Program through the City. And when we looked at it, we looked at it really carefully and put a lot of energy and time into it and wanted to partner with [a local NPO] who were a registered NPO, which we weren't. And it was just like there were just so many obstacles, so many barriers to entry, they just said we can't do it." I3</p> <p>"I guess there was this hope that for a few months, we would all come together as communities and that onus would slowly become eased by this massive relief package and national government really like getting involved with communities, or at least with</p>

	<p>"I was trying to get a way of getting soapy water to people that didn't have access to sanitizer and my friends in [Community M] kept saying to me "sign up to this CAN and do something in your area"...I loved the idea because I was in events and a project manager, I like to run with things. That's how I got involved with the CAN locally, and then started helping source food." G1</p>	<p>outreach programs, and that kind of dawning that that's not going to happen, that money is going to disappear into pockets. Yeah, it's just quite frightening... the problem is, the government's got a massive populace to look after. But it's also got a massive job to fix its own internal structures, and I just don't think it can do both at once." G2</p> <p>"I think maybe it's because Europeans and Americans, they know there'll be a solution and we know there's no solution. There's no vaccination coming to save us anytime soon. So we have to find a way to deal with it. And we can't lock down all the time... They know that they are being taken care of [by the government], but at the same time I do think that we are forced to become more community minded because there isn't government [to take care of us]. So it's kind of got it's like a positive side." I3</p>
<p>Case #5 & #6 CAN M and CAN V</p>	<p>"I think it's just such a rare once in a lifetime opportunity really. The whole world is paying attention to the same kind of things. And everyone was at home for this period and had the kind of, I mean, not everyone responded, everyone responded in very different ways. But I've been overwhelmed by how many people have just like, risen up and added whatever their particular expertise or value is. It's not like anyone has this grand plan and we're all working off of that. It's like literally all these individuals who are responding from a very personal place and adding their own kind of skill or, you know, experience. And then when you put that all together, a picture emerges." T1</p>	<p>"I think it's been phenomenal that people and citizens and neighbors have responded in the way that they have. But it is also it is also troubling, because I think, you know, the way that we got out of this was through that mobilization, and maybe that's what needs to happen. But it's also, it's shameful that, you know, the activities have been around coping. But I think with a bit of extra support, it could have been used as an opportunity to fundamentally change the way that things are happening. And I think that's, that is that troubles me, it doesn't surprise me. It's, what have they [government] been doing?... that is the one job, and they haven't been able to do things." N1</p> <p>"I was called in to support the [government]...they heard via the grapevine about some of the activities that were happening. And I was very surprised...they were working on an economic kind of recovery or response plan. And they had no clue about what was happening on the ground, or even how to respond on the ground. And so they were asking questions like, 'well, how did you do this? And how did you do that? And how did you know who to speak to?', and that really surprised me...a support structure that is supposed to be providing support to residents doesn't quite know how to do that. And some of the questions that they were asking, were similar to what we had asked throughout the journey. But were also you know, so completely off the mark. And so that surprised me and also worried me...we were supporting a lot of households to apply for all of the different grants and the packages and, you know, ended up spending a lot of time researching what those different avenues for support were. And I still don't think a single one of them have got anything. So what surprised me is that, you know, by the time a lot of the formal structures finally get into gear if it ever happens, you know, people's lives have dramatically changed." N1</p>

<p>Case #7 & #8 CAN T and CAN D</p>	<p>“...we brought that organic group together, we initiated that together, the ladies who are now in the kitchens didn’t know [the NPO] but it has a long relationship with the majority of the community.” C1</p> <p>“...once [people] started knowing what me and [PA] were doing, they were on board and they started to say, ‘we can help you, we can cut costs for you, we can make it a little bit easier for you’. And that is actually that that was a great thing to see happening in a time like this. But that's what I know about South Africans when we are put against a wall, we always have to come back out and then you will see us uniting. When things gets too strong, you will see South Africans unite.” E1</p>	<p>“The government isn't really understanding the need, because a lot of people have given up on asking for help, because they haven't received it. So the government are thinking, Oh, well, people have gone back to work, and everything's fine when meanwhile, that's not the case at all. And people are just having to look, you know, to find other avenues to get help, because the grants are not coming through.” M2</p> <p>“...from what I've heard, the government has taken, like, maybe 200 food parcels into Community D in this whole time. And like, that's it? You know, it's nowhere near enough. So they really need to pull it together and know exactly how many people need food. How many people there are like, they don't even know how many people there are in Community D. So how do you kind of judge how much food you need to get in there? When you don't even know how many people are living there?” M2</p> <p>“To be honest, I don't know how to engage with government. I think if government was a person, I would say that they don't care, because somehow somehow, they should know that there are the people that are doing the job on the ground, there are the people that are helping the community. But till today, I have no idea if government really does care about this, what we are doing, or government doesn't know, but unfortunately, I don’t know any channel that we can go to reach to government. From the beginning, there was no engagement from government.” PA2</p>
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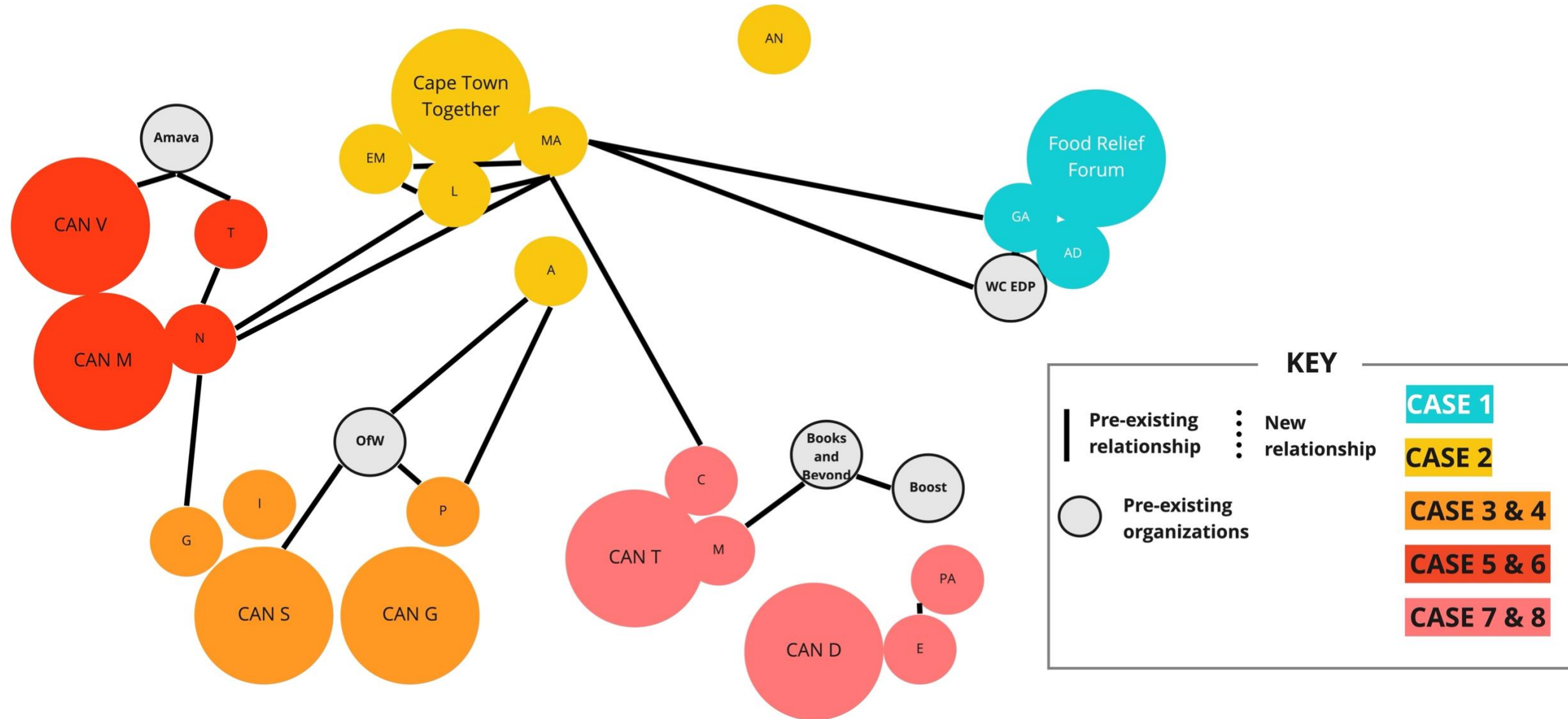
Systemic change enablers: relationships, resources, and boundary spanning roles

In the transition from crisis relief to more systemic change ambitions, there were also several themes that emerged around enablers to response groups' evolving efforts. These themes included the power of relationships at an individual and organizational level, the importance of unlocking ongoing access to a variety of resources, and the power of unique boundary-spanning roles that can be played in pursuit of systemic change.

Preexisting relationships often catalyzed response efforts as previously detailed in the Emergence section. While these relationships existed before the crisis, many interviewees spoke of them growing stronger throughout the crisis as individuals, groups, and organizations undertook crisis response work with a unity of purpose. However, pre-existing relationships still made up the minority of relationships across my cases, as shown in Figure 13. The power of these pre-existing relationships lay in them being coupled with new relationships that grew from the Emergence and Plateau phases, which often enabled access to broader networks of people and resources and facilitated an exchange of ideas between emergent response groups.

This was true for all of the CAN pairings in Cases #3-8, as the connections between individuals and emergent response groups were all new, though many stemmed from pre-existing connections with others; these relationships developed from "friend of a friend" relationships to direct relationships over the course of the crisis response. Networks like Case #1 and Case #2 helped to facilitate connections between emergent response groups and individuals through forums, dialogues, and co-learning sessions. Both cases also opened up direct relationships between emergent response groups and government officials, who may otherwise never have interacted during this time. This occurred through government officials joining local response groups or interacting with them through facilitated co-learning sessions, as well as the regular interaction and joint action promoted through the ongoing Food Relief Coordination Forum.

Figure 13. Pre-existing relationships across cases



As previously mentioned, relationships between individuals and emergent response groups were often pointed to as planting seeds for long-term engagements. Interviewees frequently spoke about the impact of maintaining and strengthening relationships between individuals as well as relationships between emergent response groups and other organizations.

“...I think the personal relationships that evolved from those connections are enduring. And that has resulted in people continuing to remain involved because they like each other a lot now, or because there's a new renewed sense of commitment to building society differently...very genuine, authentic, beautiful connections have emerged...”^{L3}

For the Food Forum, this included maintaining and strengthening relationships between civil society and the public sector as a way of shifting from participation to co-creation and partnering. In a survey conducted by the EDP during the transition from “Chapter 1” of the Food Relief Coordination Forum to “Chapter 2” of the Food Forum, 93% of Forum members indicated that they would like to continue to collaborate with organizations or government officials from the Food Relief Coordination Forum (Partnership, 2020h).

“A strong message emerged from NGO members: collaboration with civil society should not just take place during times of crisis, only to revert to type during a return to ‘normality’...there is a need to shift the traditional public sector community engagement approach from ‘participation’ – mainly commenting on government policies and plans - to ‘partnering’, which involves co-planning and co-implementation.”
(Partnership, 2020h)

Another strong theme that came through as an enabler of evolving efforts was the necessity of unlocking ongoing access to resources. While access to resources served as a constraint for most emergent response groups, especially beginning in the Plateau phase, those who were able to unlock access to resources through partner organizations or ongoing

involvement of volunteers pointed to these resources as sustaining and evolving efforts throughout the Evolution phase. Interviewees frequently spoke of resources in a monetary sense – e.g. the ability to access funding to pay people salaries to continue work – but also spoke of resources in a sense of access to physical space or materials (e.g. access to land and water for community gardens linked to community kitchens) or access to peoples’ time and energy as well as networks for mentorship and skills building. The partnerships that were formed during crisis response that enabled an exchange or flow of resources across different communities and CANs were referenced with hope that they would be maintained in the future as a way to unlock resources for emergent response groups.

“the [CAN S and CAN G] relationship...has been pretty phenomenal in terms of movement of resources...it's not a big ask, and I think that's our duty as privileged people to share what we have...it's about taking that excess and putting it somewhere else. And I think that in itself is hugely powerful... an accumulation of that has a big effect...” T3

The ability of informal or unregistered response groups to unlock access to resources through partnerships and collaborations with formal organizations – e.g. NGOs that could play the role of fiscal host or liaise with government – also emerged as a strong theme that was previously discussed in the Evolving section. This enabled access to monetary resources, such as grant funding, as well as opportunities for engaging in innovative programs such as the Social Employment Program.

The role of “intermediary” organizations in enabling access to resources was echoed in a theme of boundary spanning – or “translating” – between organizations, especially between community-based organizations and the government. The EDP played this role as an organization while L played this role as a result of her involvement in both Cape Town Together and government response efforts. There was often an acknowledgement that in an ideal world, these types of boundary spanning roles wouldn’t be needed because civil society and government could interact with each other in meaningful and collaborative ways without

translations – but also a recognition that in reality this type of role is very necessary and at times quite difficult.

“...I think the role of EDP is being able to understand what's happening in the community sector, civil society organizations, the intermediaries, the community kitchens, the informal sector, but also equally, what's happening and what's changing in the government sector...and being able to translate that for each other... I can't see how you could get systems change happening without [someone to] bridge or span or cross over the divides, because on their own governments struggle to engage with non-government sectors, and vice versa.” AD2

Systemic change barriers: formalization as a precursor for resources, inability of the state to interact with informality

While relationships, ongoing access to resources, and boundary spanning roles played key enablers in the transitions of emergent response groups towards engaging in long-term change ambitions, there were also common barriers that hindered (and continue to hinder) groups from engaging in more systemic work. These include barriers around the necessity of structure and formalization of response groups to access resources as well as the inability of government to interact and transact with informality. The two concepts were closely linked in the experiences of emergent response groups over the course of the year.

The degree to which individuals and groups wanted to formalize and structure response groups was a fiercely debated topic from the beginning. Some felt strongly that the power of the emergent response groups lay in their flexibility and fluidity as informal groups, as detailed in the short-term response enablers section. Others, especially those with more traditional humanitarian response or nonprofit experience felt that structure would give longevity to responses and enable a greater flow of resources to sustain efforts in the long-term.

"... you will need some degree of institutionalization and structuring and formalization. And that seemed like a dirty word...to the people on that call, who were highly inspired

by this wellspring of goodwill... who were like, 'no, no, no, don't touch it, don't touch it. As soon as you try and structure it, it'll die' ...I just felt so despondent that there was no sort of entertainment of, or listening to there being some kind of introduction of structure or normative processes...I think it's absolutely about striking the right balance.”

AI1

When it came to registering response groups as formalized entities, the groups who were interested in pursuing that path encountered a catch 22; registering as a formal entity would enable greater access to resources but registering also required greater resources than they currently had as volunteers. Many felt that becoming registered was a “prerequisite” for obtaining funding from more formal sources:

“...structure is helpful... for that kind of accountability and transparency, like if someone's going to invest in something, they want to know where the money's going. Often to get the money, you have to have the structure. It's like a prerequisite...” T3

At the time of writing, only one of the emergent response groups in this sample (CAN S) has decided to go through with registering as a non-profit entity and completed the process – possibly due to the skills of the multiple nonprofit leaders and accountant who are part of the core response group team. CAN S is currently supporting a farming and gardening collective that emerged during lockdown as part of CAN G to go through the registration process as well.

Accessing larger resource pools was a strong driver behind registering as a formal entity, including unlocking resources and relationships within government. Throughout all three response phases, government proved unable to engage with informal or unregistered entities across a variety of sectors – food relief, early childhood education, informal trade etc. This compounded the lockdown impacts for those who engaged in informal economic and caregiving activities; they were often unable to benefit from funding that was available for crisis response efforts and many were also unable to personally access resources like unemployment relief to support themselves.

“One of the themes that has emerged over the past six months is the gap between the formal and the informal sectors of the economy and society. The heavily-regulated public sector system means that it is almost impossible to channel public resources (funding, land and building leases, etc.) to community organisations that are not ‘formalized’ and ‘registered’. Yet the majority of community-led initiatives...are informal and unregistered, and therefore often ‘unseen’ in the eyes of the authorizing environment.” (Partnership, 2020q)

As suggested previously, some felt the role of larger, registered NGOs working as a fiscal host on behalf of a grassroots and community-based organizations could be a promising way to bridge this gap. Others felt that participatory democracy and a shift towards partnering and co-creation could perhaps bring government closer to the lived experiences of everyday citizens and result in processes designed to support rather than prohibit informal efforts. In a feedback session held with the Western Cape Government, the EDP suggested revising the criteria for recognizing community organizations and encouraging partnerships between registered NGOs and networks of informal organizations to enable access to public sector resources (Partnership, 2020h).

Table 11. Systemic change enablers and barriers quotes

	Enablers			Barriers	
	Relationships	Resources	Boundary Spanning	Registering organizations formally	Government interactions with informality
Case #1 Food Relief Coordination Forum	<p>“It is important not to squander the relationships of trust that have been built over the past six months. It is vital to build on the willingness to work together that was evidenced, to address both the post-Covid recovery as well as development challenges in new ways. A clear message emerged for public sector colleagues: that collaboration with civil society should not only take place during times of crisis, only to revert to type during a return to ‘normality’. In the spirit of ‘doing things differently’, we need to find ways to shift the public sector community engagement approach from ‘participation’ - mainly commenting on government policies and plans - to ‘partnering’, which involves co-planning and co-implementation.” (Partnership, 2020q)</p>	<p>“...we are spending resources on keeping it going...if we were trying to run the Food Forum...on purely a voluntary basis we couldn't sustain that. We couldn't keep that 10% door open. EDP is funded to do this sort of work, thank goodness. So I think to sustain action beyond a crisis, that's again, where you need funded NGOs, or NPOs, or intermediaries, whose job it is to continue to keep actions going, dialogues going, forums going, consciousness raising and education going, connecting people...” AD2</p>	<p>“...the Department of Social Development wants to give 53 million Rand through intermediaries to community kitchens, that's great. But community kitchens, none of them are geared up in terms...of the structure and the administration and the format. They're not formal structures. So they cannot receive state funding, state grants...[as an intermediary organization, we're figuring out] what is needed to bridge this divide between the over regulated state or over formalized state, and informality. If you want to get a net transfer of resources from the public sector, into the community sector or the informal sector. And I think there's lessons coming out of that, which we could learn, I mean, beyond food, you know, if you want to support informal traders, if you want to support informal food growers, you know, and urban farming, if you want to support all sorts of informality, you run into the same problem. So I'm quite excited about what is coming</p>	<p>“You cannot sustain, under crisis conditions in particular...[work] beyond six months. You've got to come up with some clever ideas about, I think a lightweight sort of hybrid structure, or platform, which can raise funds, be accountable for them, pay some people...when government wants to talk to you, they want to talk to a structure that is accountable in terms of a constitution and probably registered“ ...the formal government only deals with things that they can recognize. And they're certainly not going to give resources to people who are not accountable in terms of...formal organizational structures, a trust, a board of governors, a constitution [etc.]... So again, it goes back to that difficult conundrum between how formal do you want [to be], [whether or not] to formalize community activism and grassroots bottom up structures.” AD2</p>	<p>“The struggle experienced by a number of NGOs in applying for the CoCT Food Relief funding is partly as a result of the very formalized regulatory framework of government not being set up to deal with informality – which represents the majority of SA society.” (Partnership, 2020p)</p> <p>“...a number of Forum members highlighted that the massive gap between the needs of informal sector stakeholders and government programmes which simply fail to translate into ground level actions because of the over-regulated and inflexible public sector operating environment...what is needed is a more realistic integration of the two.” (Partnership, 2020e)</p> <p>“The theme of government regulatory processes and systems not working for communities, for civil society organisations, and indeed, for government itself – was constant, throughout the time that the Forum has been active, and will continue to be an area of focus in 2021.” (Partnership, 2021b)</p>

			out of these kind of learnings by doing." AD2		
<p>Case #2 Cape Town Together</p>	<p>"...we really see the relationships between people as kind of the infrastructure of this network. And that, for me is what will enable its long term sustainability that will outlive specific projects. And I think we've seen that kind of, we've seen the value of that at play." L3</p> <p>"...there's been lots and lots of people who've said to me, I have never been involved in work like this ever before, I never would have thought I could. Maybe a part of me is always wanted to, but I never had the guts, and I never had anyone to do it with. And now there's just no turning back, you know?...I've never known I could do it. I've never had the guts. But now I've met someone living in my street who also wants to do this. And now we're unstoppable. And we're besties. And now we're doing it." L3</p> <p>"...it's not about the name of the thing. It's about the relationships and the connections that were created, in that time, and in that space...there were some incredible connections and</p>	<p>"...[the] fellowship allowed us to have more time dedicated and more activities. And it allowed some activists who would otherwise be unemployed to sort of spend their time on connecting activities. And so we've done quite a lot of reflection... the cookbook project was sort of a series of events that will culminate in this book, which is actually going to the printers to get printed today. So hopefully, we'll have 1000 copies ready for free distribution, which will again, hopefully be another catalyst of energy, but also a couple of other events. So bike rides, and a speed dating event and a few other sort of what next for the CAN events, aimed at enabling kind of collective imaginations of what this means for all of us, and also aimed at bringing people who have only been connected virtually together in the real world..." L3</p>	<p>"...[the] boundary spanning role [I think is] quite under explored... I found myself sort of thrust into it without having realized it...it just felt right. It was just important...the pandemic called on all of us to take on new ways of...being in the crisis moment. And for me, that was the interface where I was located. And so it allowed for, at least in the nodes I'm part of [to play that role]." L2</p>	<p>"...certainly the groups that I'm part of are all recognizing the value of informal networks. But we also have to be realistic about the resource requirements, you know, so I mean, the reality is that most of the CANs are run by volunteers who are themselves and unemployed and they are very real resource demands." L1</p> <p>"I'm the person who likes structure. So when we have had conversations about registering and whatnot, I've been on the side of we should register, we should be more structured. And I think it's largely because of my [previous NPO experience], because it wouldn't have happened without becoming an NPO...and yes, it's hard work... but it allows you to raise money, it allows you to do things that, without the structure is really difficult in the current reality and context...I'm quite curious to see you know, how non structured works in the long term, because I think it works in the short term. And if we had if the pandemic had been a two month thing, I think this would have been perfect. Because it's not...the needs then become different. It's not just...fighting Covid. But it's fighting unemployment, and crime and all of these other things. And I feel like if this is going to be part of that, in my personal opinion, I think it needs to become something else. I don't think it can be organic, fluid, nonregistered forever." MA1</p>	<p>"I think that the state is just not able to engage with the self-organizing nature of this network, which is very unfortunate, I think, you know, because for a time...there was the frenzy of like, anything is possible. Like, it felt like a lot of valuable things were happening... we saw discourses shift...we saw very different ways of working between government officials and community based actors...we've seen calls for funding that are not only for registered NGOs, but for any community groups. So we have seen changes, and there's been a shift in sort of that discourse, but overall, it feels like...it's really closing." L2</p> <p>"I would argue quite strongly that you can support community mobilizations from within the state...but unless something big changes, I'm not convinced there will be a huge willingness to be creative enough to work with informality in the way that would be required [by government]." L3</p>

	<p>relationships made during that time. And whether it's the CAN that continues to do the work, or whether it's the individuals that met during that time, and they call it something else, and they do it in a differently... [people are] still doing it six months later. And if that is not a result of this work, then what is, you know? So, yeah, that's the work; keep showing up, keep doing the work, it doesn't have to be called anything to just still matter." EM1</p>				
<p>Case #3 & #4 CAN S and CAN G</p>	<p>"...we would sit in meetings, you know. And I would remind people, 'do you know what the CANs have done, you know, without anything, with just relationships, you know, just kindness, we're just thinking of a better life that we want.' I've never seen that in any organization. I've never seen that with any government, you know, I've seen communities in the CANs, coming together, wanting to change, that for me, should grow. You know, there should be a way to nurture that into growing..." P3</p>	<p>"...we need spaces where people can come together and build relationships, people that have were able to do something, share how they did it, you know, because not everything needed money, things needed connection, things needed to be connected to each other. And if other CANs are able to do what other CANs did and we're able to share, this is how we did it, you know, just imagine the impact that would be for everyone." P3</p> <p>"I'm picking up the work from an environmental perspective ...I feel that that's where I can sustain myself emotionally and it's part of what I actually do...[my NPO that I run has</p>	<p>"...to also have voices in spaces like The Western Cape EDP, I think people should know there are spaces, you know, sometimes it's a lack of knowledge. People don't know that this space is available to talk, to say, to have their own voices [heard]. The voices of the own community, you know, that is what The Western Cape EDP gives the full forum." P3</p> <p>"...the Food Forum call...didn't exist before and now it seems that that's ongoing, which is encouraging to see because that's government speaking to civil and private sector." G3</p>	<p>"...especially when it comes to the kitchens that are not registered. When the kitchen is not registered...you're not going to supply me with food that is going to be enough for the people. That is the biggest problem and organizations think that their food that they give me should be enough, which is not enough. When you give Gogo R4000 or R6000 to feed people. If you count the cost of what is needed, water, food, [gas] and then you take the food that you are getting, but if you did your business and your maths, the food that they are getting is not enough, it's far from enough." P3</p>	<p>"...government was scared of the potential of Cape Town Together, the potential of CANs... Government is scared of the unknown. You know, and the possibility of a group of people doing so much change...But the only crazy thing is that what they could have done, they could have helped. They could have helped the network...then things would have worked better for them [too]." P3</p>

		<p>funding and] works on donations and private funding. I mean we are just about two years old in May. So we're relatively new organization." G3</p>			
<p>Case #5 & #6 CAN M and CAN V</p>		<p>"I guess yeah, the mentors is a big part for me, because that's something I've always believed in, like, if everyone who had, you know, vast amounts of privilege kind of shared that more, then we could solve quite a few problems. So that's huge." T3</p> <p>"[at my NPO], we're continuously looking for grants and obviously we consider [CAN V] and their dream and vision and activities in the grants that we apply for so there is potential that money could come into to continue to support them. But we're also encouraging them to actively look for their own funding. And it'll just be a whole new learning cycle for them as to how to go about that whole process." T3</p>		<p>"...the thought is currently, which changes all the time, do we become a registered entity with a bank account and capacity to kind of move money and then support all these projects in the community that are wanting to happen? ...I do think that's a great idea. But then it also requires quite a lot of work and energy for people to maintain and manage that." T2</p> <p>"...how do you create enough structure to be functional, but like enough 'not structure' to be flexible? I think that's the big question...how do you remain flexible enough to change with very fast changing times...we don't know what the future is going to bring. We don't know what we need in order to survive whatever may come, so how do you create something that can respond to the unknown?" T3</p> <p>"...some people and it goes to their, like personality traits, they love the formal route. And so they want to work as hard as they can to, you know, be registered, and make sure all you know that we've got a constitution, and we've got all of those things in place. And the other people cannot stand hierarchy, want to work in these kind of horizontal structures that are self-evolving and emergent, depending on what's happening in the moment. Yeah, there</p>	<p>"I think, yeah, it's, it's, it's a shame that we haven't been able to unlock some of the resources that are there. And there are resources, even if they're just like a space, like it's unbelievable to see all of the empty buildings in [our community] and the empty public spaces that could be used for creating these spaces... definitely most people have given up. So they won't go to the [local government] meetings anymore." N3</p>

				are different types of people that are involved." N3	
<p>Case #7 & #8 CAN T and CAN D</p>	<p>"...the first thing for me is that the relationships are there now. You know, I've got a direct line to E in [Community D] or to PA...And so for example, when I took on this ECD campaign, my first thought is, you know, I'm going to obviously just reach out to the people that I know... I wanted to engage, you know, specifically my contacts in [Community D]." C3</p> <p>"...the networks...[have] built a resource base that I've been building for many years now. And it's just kind of added to it and connected even more dots." C3</p>				<p>"I think the COVID experience had squeezed and really just once again, showed the vulnerability of the ECD sector, the informalities, all the unregistered people couldn't access, you know, subsidies or relief funds eventually." C3</p>

Conclusion of findings chapter

In summary, bracketing my data across time periods over the course of one year allowed me to observe patterns within and across my cases that were specific to each time horizon: Emergence, Plateau, and Evolution. In Emergence, these key findings included the emphasis on rapid organizing and provisioning for needs, the critical roles of relationships in responses (pre-existing and new), and a nascent focus on the long-term, both in terms of crisis response ambitions and emergent response groups themselves. In Plateau, a change in context created difficulties for emergent response groups in the form of a notable drop in resources, an experience of intense physical/mental/emotional fatigue, and an increased disillusionment with the state in light of the government's crisis response efforts. However, this also led to an important period of increased reflection and introspection for response groups: a spontaneous 'what comes next' moment. Starting in Evolution, emergent response groups experienced different trajectories based on the combination of factors experienced in the Plateau phase. Some emergent responses scaled back (Case #8), or completed stopped their efforts (Case #7), while others continued efforts and took a both/and approach to crisis relief and long-term change ambitions. This resulted in response groups partnering for sustainability, envisioning and creating innovative futures, and engaging in systemic change ambitions.

Across all cases, there were themes that emerged in terms of what enabled or hindered short-term crisis response during the Emergence and Plateau phases as well as what enabled/hindered a transition towards engaging in partnerships, innovative futures, and systemic change ambitions in the Evolution phase. These enablers and barriers are worth noting because they were at times different from or at odds with each other across the two time horizons (Emergence/Plateau and Evolution). Short-term crisis enablers included the power of self-organizing, flexibility, and decentralization while the main barrier became the limitations of the state in engaging in such behaviors. Systemic change enablers included the power of relationships, the importance of unlocking access to ongoing resources, and the potential role of boundary-spanning in facilitating systemic change. The two main barriers to systemic change go hand-in-hand: formalization as a precursor for accessing resources and the state's inability to interact or contract with informality in South Africa.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Contribution to literature gaps

Much of what is detailed in the Findings chapter supports what the literature says about emergent response groups and short-term crisis relief in the wake of disasters and crises. That is to say, most emergent groups are characterized by new relationships and activities, non-hierarchical approaches, fluid membership, and a lack of clearly designated leaders that makes them nimble and adapt at driving community-led crisis response (Carlton et al., 2021; Majchrzak et al., 2007; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Scanlon, 1999; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Twigg & Mosel, 2017; Williams & Shepherd, 2016a). The flexibility and fluidity of these groups played a particularly important role during the initial crisis response (Emergence) as detailed in the enablers of short-term crisis response section. However, as discussed in the literature, the lack of formal roles and membership made it difficult for external organizations and actors (especially government) to engage with emergent response groups (Majchrzak et al., 2007; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). This proved especially important in the Plateau period as groups experienced a decline in donations and intense fatigue, and subsequently shaped response paths in the Evolution time period. This study begins to document themes like this that proved pivotal to emergent response groups and the relationship between short-term crisis response and longer-term change ambitions. Still more attention could be paid to the unique context of these informal groups as they balance decisions and trade-offs – like whether to register as a formal entity and how to engage with external actors – while simultaneously responding to a crisis.

As detailed in the Findings, the outpouring of solidarity and compassion demonstrated through these emergent response groups lives on in the form of new and strengthened relationships, new ideas and pilots around innovative futures, and individuals and groups purposefully engaging in systemic change. Emergent response groups in this study continued to engage in efforts well beyond the initial onset of the crisis and frequently discussed long-term change ambitions and how to affect root causes of systemic issues. The types of activities and relationships demonstrated by my cases worked towards creating more effective and sustainable communities post-crisis, and helped to build resilience in communities to address future crises (Phills Jr. et al., 2008; Westley & Antadze, 2010). This was further evidenced outside of my

research period when the country was struck by large-scale civil unrest and looting in early July 2021. Members of Cape Town Together and the CANs banded together to protect their communities and provide meals for volunteers who were ensuring the safety and security of residents. Organizations who are members of the Food Forum coordinated swift delivery of food aid to the provinces who suffered massive shocks and disruptions to food supply chains. These were tangible examples of resilience that was built during the Covid-19 crisis spilling over into subsequent crisis response efforts.

Perhaps most striking about the emergent response groups in this study is the “remarkable everydayness” of the individuals who came together with a desire to affect positive change (Nilsson, 2019), placing an emphasis on individual and informal group agency in response to a crisis. This study takes a closer look at the role and impact of informal response groups and the relationship between crisis-relief activities and social innovation, adding to conversations around crisis-driven social innovation outside the lens of formal organizations (Bessant et al., 2012; Dahlke et al., 2021). While organizational crisis-driven innovation has been documented in previous literature (Archibugi et al., 2013; Bessant et al., 2012, 2015; Dahlke et al., 2021; Hausman & Johnston, 2014), this study contributes to that academic conversation at a more micro level through focusing on the activities and impacts *informal* groups often present in the aftermath of a crisis.

In looking at how individuals and informal groups can affect change through social innovation, the study Findings can be viewed through the previously detailed five performative dimensions of Nilsson’s (2019) institutional work lens. The emergent response groups in this study reimaged roles by creating and elevating new roles such as “CAN admins” and “street champions” as well as by deconstructing the role of a crisis responder away from formalized institutional responses and crisis expertise towards a self-organized, decentralized movement of community-led responses. This placed an emphasis on valuing the knowledge of hyperlocal communities and the agency that individual and informal groups have in responding to a crisis. These roles became valued in public and visible forums like the Food Relief Coordination Forum and were advocated for by the EDP in recommendations to government to acknowledge and support the powerful civil society crisis relief response.

All of the cases in this study also challenged social identities by intentionally bringing together cross-identity interaction (Nilsson, 2019) through the form of facilitated co-learnings designed to exchange ideas, cross-sector crisis coordination meetings that brought disparate actors from across the Western Cape together, and individual CAN pairings that spanned the physical and social divides of Cape Town. As mentioned in the Findings chapter, this purposeful exchange across different social groups frequently led to new relationships and an enhanced understanding of systemic challenges that planted the seed for individuals and groups to engage in more systemic work.

In terms of resource flows, the response groups in this study reimagined the many facets of resources, including “flows of money, material goods, intangible goods like intellectual property, relational (social) capital, information, and time” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 293). The network responses (Case #1 and Case #2) particularly worked to decentralize infrastructure through disseminating information such as access to timely, accurate, and culturally relevant Covid-19 guidance as well as insights into government crisis response actions and timelines. Cape Town Together (Case #2) worked to revalue hidden and discounted resources by shifting the discourse away from institutionalized, top-down crisis responses towards valuing resources present in communities and encouraging communities to self-organize and take action at a hyperlocal level. The new flows of resources created by the exchange of relationships, skills, and monetary and physical donations across CAN pairings (Cases #3-#8) also reimagined resource flows across a spatially and economically divided city, as discussed in the systemic change enablers section of the Findings chapter.

While emergent response groups continuously struggled to engage with the state, they demonstrated plenty of examples of challenging authority processes through shifting the power of decision-making within their own groups. This was especially true within CANs, who operated on principles of distributed leadership, inclusion, decentralization, and self-organization. CANs made important decisions on where and how to focus efforts, how to distribute resources, and if/how to engage in long-term ambitions while challenging traditional hierarchies and centralized decision-making. Additionally, the Food Relief Coordination Forum and subsequent Food Forum have pressed government to value local knowledge and convene participatory processes for

decision-making, for which the impact remains to be seen. A promising example lies in the Western Cape Nourish to Flourish program and its recent engagement with and value of local voices in the food system. There is hope that the program can drive greater co-creation within government spheres and between government and civil society moving forward.

Lastly, the impact still remains to be seen in whether/how emergent response groups challenged the meanings of institutions. The response groups in this study certainly demonstrated the value and potential that could lie in more holistic institutions that are better able to engage with and support community-driven crisis response and long-term change ambitions. The dismantling and reimagining of these institutions towards more holistic purposes may take more time than was allotted to this study. Cape Town Together, CANs, and the Food Forum have all been involved with the expansion and reimagining of public work towards social employment opportunities. There are hints through programs like the nascent Social Employment Fund that institutional actors may be open to the value of more holistic institutions and interrogations of participatory dynamics (or lack thereof) within them.

Taken together, the examples above point to ample engagement of emergent response groups across multiple institutional dimensions. In the words of Nilsson (2019): “to engage in social innovation with a systemic eye is to disrupt and reimagine at least one of these modes” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 288). The examples detailed above and in the Findings chapter of this study lead me to assert that emergent response groups do have the ability and often the desire to affect more systemic change and over time, the potential to change the “routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced” (Westley, McGowan, Antadze, Blacklock, & Tjornbo, 2016, p. 2) – the very definition of social innovation. It is not an easy journey, and there are enablers that can help groups interested in shifting from crisis relief towards long-term ambitions which include the power of relationships, the importance to unlocking access to ongoing resources, and the role of boundary spanning individuals and organizations. There are also current barriers that could be reduced or removed to better support emergent response groups in leading community-driven social innovation. These include compliance and administrative barriers that require formalization as a path to resources, as well as the current inability of the state to interact or contract with informality.

More research could be given to any of these enablers and barriers in pursuit of expanding the intersection between crisis response and social innovation.

Limitations and boundaries of the study and opportunities for future research

While this study goes beyond the initial onset of the crisis and emergence of crisis responses to document emergent response groups over the course of one year, there are several limitations and boundaries to the study that could be explored as opportunities for future research. The first limitation is the boundary of its time horizon; one year only begins to scratch the surface on the potential transition from short-term crisis relief to longer-term change ambitions, social innovation work, and institutional change. There is ample room for future research to expand on studies like this for longer time horizons to document what emerges 3, 5, 10 or more years after the onset of the crisis and proliferation of emergent of response groups. The second limitation to this study lies in the boundaries of the case selection. There were hundreds, if not thousands, of examples of emergent response groups that proliferated across the Western Cape and the rest of South Africa. This study includes only 8 groups: 2 network response initiatives and 6 individual emergent response groups. Future research could expand upon the case selection to include more cases and focus more on cross-case themes and replication, or it could include cases in different areas of South Africa (or the world!). Future research could also go the other direction in case selection and include only one case – a total immersion in a single case study – to document in-depth details of emergent response group activities and decisions. There is also room to focus more on individuals as the unit of analysis rather than the groups themselves, especially given the immense amount of personal sacrifice, decision-making and trade-offs, and personal growth and learning that response group members experienced over the course of this period. Important topics like how to foster collective well-being and care in crises and social movements and how to prevent burnout in activists certainly deserve much more time and attention in research.

Practical implications

The MPhil in Inclusive Innovation program is rooted in praxis and this section outlines three practical implications from this study that may be relevant to social innovation practitioners, those looking to fund and support community-led change efforts, and government officials seeking to support such efforts from within their own institutions. This study was undertaken during a year of immense upheaval, change, and innovation across these cases and society at large, making it difficult to summarize all of the potential practical implications here. It would be nearly impossible to capture and accurately portray the immense amount of effort, experimentation, coordination, dedication, generosity, celebration, and loss that each of these groups experienced. My hope is that the three practical implications below will begin to spark a conversation for those looking to engage differently within and across their own groups and organizations, especially during times of crisis.

The first practical implication of this research lies in recognizing the incredible value of community-driven crisis responses. During a time of immense uncertainty and unease, rather than withdrawing to the relative safety and security of their own worlds, thousands (if not millions) of people reached out with the desire to help and “do something” in response to the crisis. The impact of this outpouring of individual, group, and organizational effort should not be underestimated, as demonstrated by the data gathered showing that over half of all crisis food relief distributed during the first three months of lockdown came from civil society (Partnership, 2020). This should especially be recognized by government actors, who should better embrace the fact that the state cannot fulfill all of the needs of a crisis response alone. This fact is unlikely to change given the anticipated increase in the number and severity of crisis that we face each year due to climate change, as well as continuing conversations around decreased public sector budgets and capacity. Governments within (and outside) of South Africa – especially at the provincial and local levels - should look to partner with and support the efforts of hyperlocal community groups to build resilience and strengthen communities in preparation for, during, and after a crisis. The practical implications of this were previously noted in the example of responses to the civil unrest experienced across South Africa in July of 2021.

The second practical implication lies in unlocking access to resources for informal groups and individuals that faced immense hurdles in continuing their work throughout the year of this study. Again, this is especially true for resources that sit within the public sector which are intended for the use and benefit of the population that the state serves, yet remain inaccessible to many of the groups and individuals who need them the most. However, this also extends to those outside of government who are looking to fund and support innovate grassroots-driven efforts in communities. Greater attention must be paid to the administrative hoops and red tape that informal groups and individuals are made to jump through in order to attempt to unlock access to these resources. The obvious example lies in unlocking access to funding to provide support (like stipends or salaries) to informal group members doing critical resilience-building work within communities and resources to fund programmatic activities. Less obvious examples lie in unlocking access to physical infrastructure (such as town halls, libraries, meeting spaces, and office spaces) to support ongoing work, unlocking access to physical spaces (such as parks and unused plots of land) for hosting entrepreneurial market days or supporting urban food production, and unlocking access to information and knowledge critical to building a more participatory democracy (such as demystifying convoluted processes for participating in land use and zoning conversations and influencing budgeting decisions). Currently, the threshold for accessing any of these resources is set too high for informal groups and individuals. Those who succeeded in accessing any of the resources mentioned above did so through hours of research, investigation, relationship-building, and persuasion. The physical, mental, and emotional burden of trying to navigate access to these resources needs to be examined and dismantled in order to support more systemic change efforts driven by communities.

The third implication of this study lies in continuing conversations around what it means to engage in social innovation work. The cases in this study have shown that in addition to focusing on the impact of the work itself, attention must be paid to *how* the work is done – which includes complex and ongoing interrogations of power imbalances, systemic inequalities and privileges, and the norms that are pervasive in our institutions and lives. This interrogation can be messy, and at times uncomfortable, especially for those of us who come from a place of privilege. Interviewees in this study discussed how these types of conversations sometimes

became too much for people, who withdrew from the work, while others leaned in and “dug deeper” to unpack these topics. I would encourage us all to lean in and dig deep to interrogate these dynamics for ourselves, within our social circles, within our places of work, and in partnership with the communities that we are hoping to serve. There also needs to be space within every institution to question these dynamics, not just within the social innovation realm, including in the halls of academia and research, policy and government, philanthropy and funding, and the private sector. We must all become more aware of how we simultaneously uphold the systems and institutions that we aim to change. In the words of Nilsson (2019):

“Institutions are not living in the ether somewhere. They do not exist separately from their enactment...The force of institutions – for good and bad – lies in how unthinkingly most of us go along with most rules, norms, and beliefs, most of the time...Put crudely, the raw material for system transformation is right there before us all of the time. We are swimming in it. We are (re)creating it. Becoming more conscious of this gift – this peril – can help social innovation actors see their systems more clearly and work with them more creatively, enhancing overall agency and potentially accelerating impact.” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 286)

Becoming more aware of how we embrace, reject, or reimagine the rules, norms, and beliefs within our own lives is the first step towards doing the same within our other spheres of influence. It is my hope that movements like the emergent response groups documented within this study continue to give individuals and groups the opportunity to engage in alternate conversations, work, and relationships that “resist and subvert the dictatorship of no alternatives” (Unger, 2016, p. 237).

Appendix

Appendix 1. Interview protocols

First Round Interview Protocol

The interview guide has two components: It starts with an open-ended question inviting the respondent to tell her / his story around her / his role in establishing and implementing the initiative. The second component consists of more specific questions that only become relevant if the overarching narrative doesn't cover that issue. Also, a comprehensive implementation of this protocol assumes that we may speak to respondents more than once. So, if that possibility looks unlikely, then we should prioritize questions such as 5-7, or whatever seems particularly salient in the context of the specific respondent.

Interview protocol:

- Tell us about your experience of how your initiative got started, what it has been doing, and how you have been working with other initiatives or organisations.

The following questions probe specific issues, as far as the narrative response above didn't address them... to be used organically and bearing in mind flow and timeframe of conversation:

1. How did you identify the problem that your initiative would try to address?
2. How did you recognise the opportunity for to address this problem?
3. If we can focus on you personally for a moment, what was it about your background that motivated you to do this?
4. How did your background give you skills or resources to do this?
5. Did you have relationships within or beyond your community that helped you in this process?
6. How did you make use of these relationship?
7. How did you build new relationships in this process? How did you identify people or groups that you wanted to connect with, and how did you go about making these connections?
8. What have been the key challenges of this process?
9. What are you most impressed by, or proud of?
10. What has surprised you about this process?

Second Round Interview Protocol

Intro: As you may remember from our previous conversation, we are exploring how civil society activists like you are responding to the Covid-19 crisis. In this discussion, we are particularly interested in how things have evolved since our last interview X weeks ago.

1. How have you seen the crisis evolve? How have community needs changed in the last few months, bearing in mind the shift from hard to the softer lockdown (Level 3), and how have you responded to these changing needs?

2. How would you summarize the impact of your initiative since the onset of the crisis in March? If appropriate, please quantify the material support (food, data, etc.) that you have been able to provide to vulnerable people, including changes in these amounts in the last few months.
3. Have you tried to scale your efforts to help more vulnerable people? If so, how, and with what success?
4. Civil society activists rely on diverse resources, including human resources, finances, and relationships – how has your access to such resources evolved in recent weeks or months? How have you responded to such changes?
5. *[Skip if #4 covers this...]* Please let's focus for a moment on your relationships and networks: How have your relationships and networks changed in recent weeks or months – both those within your own community and those with other communities? Did you develop new relationships, or did you perhaps stop working with others?
6. How do you engage with government? How did government or political actors support or hamper your work?
7. Some activists have told us about a tension they have experienced between establishing more formal structures and prioritizing flexibility and diversity – have you come across this tension, and if so, how have you responded?
8. Another tension we heard about is between activists responding to immediate needs in the community, on the one hand, and developing longer-term strategies, on the other. Have you come across this tension, and if so, how, and how have you responded?
9. Have you tried to develop a longer-term strategy for addressing the challenges caused or revealed by the Covid-19 crisis, and if so, what is it?
10. What challenges did or are you facing? Did you experience resistance to your work (by other organisations or people)? How have you responded to such challenges or resistance?
11. Did any unintended consequences emerge from your work, and if so, how did you respond?
12. What were important learnings for you from your crisis response work? What did you achieve? What are you proud of?

Third Round Interview Protocol

Intro: As you may remember from our previous conversations, we are exploring how civil society activists like you have been responding to the Covid-19 crisis. In this discussion, we are particularly interested in how things have evolved since our last interview last year.

1. How have you seen the crisis evolve? How have community needs changed in the last few months, bearing in mind the shift back into lockdown over the holidays and now the ease of lockdown to level 1, and how have you responded to these changing needs?
2. How has your personal role and involvement evolved over the last few months?
3. How has your access to resources (monetary, physical, people's time etc.) evolved in recent weeks or months? How have you responded to such changes?
4. How have your relationships and networks changed in recent weeks or months – both those within your own community and those with other communities? How have you sustained new relationships that were built during the crisis last year? Have you

- formed new relationships or partnerships in recent months?
5. How have you engaged with government, if at all?
 6. Are you focusing on longer-term strategies for addressing the challenges caused or revealed by the Covid-19 crisis, and if so, how?
 7. What are important learnings for you from your work to date? What did you achieve? What are you proud of?
 8. Do you have any questions for us?

Appendix 2. Preliminary case theme tables by temporal bracketing

Initial crisis response (onset – June) Key codes: Crisis Response, Relationships, Long-Term, Organizing/Structure

Case	Interviewee	Response prompted by	Response characterized by	Scale	Most Frequent Codes
Case #1	AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with prior crisis response (drought, Knysna Fires) • Focus on bridging networks, particularly public sector – civil society, through “connect, communicate, collaborate” during crisis • Pre-existing relationships and work connecting within and across/outside of Government • Pre-existing relationships with Cape Town Together initial members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected with CTT early to host a co-learning session with CANs and Alan Winde (by Day 10), food emerged as a focus area • Sought mandate for food relief coordination and started Forum, met every week - concrete and action-focused • After shift in lockdown levels, starting to talk about “window of opportunity” to influence before things “go back to normal” – influencing provincial recovery plan to include food • Wanting to use and build on relationships in food system that were built during response • Focus on linking short-term action with long-term systems change, “the relationships you build around short-term action become the platforms for longer term, deeper transformation” 	<p>Started with 14 larger NGOs that WCG identified to help distribute initial 50,000 parcels through Solidarity Fund</p> <p>Grew to 130-140 people in database for the Forum – mix of professional NGOs, volunteers, donors, activists, government officials etc.</p> <p>“I’ve met...100 new people dealing with food...over the last three months...how do we build on that incredible network of people?...how do we harness that?”</p> <p>Original larger “professional NGO” members dropped off Forum after initial food parcels, smaller NPOs and grassroots organizations persisted</p>	<p>Crisis Response</p> <p>Food Forum</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Informality</p> <p>Long-Term</p>
Case #2	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing relationships with initial group of 14 • Pre-existing work and relationships across civil society and government • Prior crisis response experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid community-led response • Eclectic initial group all tied to L • Catalytic spread – “first 10 days” • Self-organizing • Solidarity not charity • Networked way of working • Tensions around hierarchy, structure, formalizing, and ideas of “neoliberal sustainability” 	<p>“we had...set up a Google Form. Two hours later, there were 350 people that had signed up. The next day, 1000 people set up a Facebook page that night, and it was just growing. I think there's like 14,000 people on that Facebook page. And there's, I don't even know, I think 170 CANS across the city.”</p>	<p>Network</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Sustainable</p> <p>Tension</p>
	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing work and relationships through nonprofit branches • Told 10 branch leaders about CTT and CANs • Encouraged all branches through social media to “get yourself on to CANs” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on “pairing” CANs from different areas of the City – some organically, some through a pairing and partnering team • Also focused on new CAN support to “offer support and direction and orientation within the structures” • Struggled with tensions around structure and hierarchy “eventually they came around on some things like CAN support, when they could see...there was a way to orient 	<p>“What really transformed things is when Keren said she was setting up a CAN in [her community]. So P got in touch with her, and with CTT, and we raised on the agenda a way of formally pairing Community G with S”</p> <p>In early days, pairings “happened quite quickly” – 16 by mid-April – then became clear it wasn’t going to “be so easy to continue to expand”. Topped out at 22 or so</p>	<p>Organizing/Structure</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Crisis Response</p>

			<p>new CANs in a way that wasn't too demonstrative and telling people how to do things"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term interest in CTT as political organizing structure 		
	MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances during lockdown – “stuck” in South Africa and unable to move to US • Pre-existing work and relationships through experience running NPO • Filled out CTT form before knew L set it up, made the connection and became involved • Realized a lot of networks had built through prior NGO experience were part of CTT, was like “reconnecting with old friends” – knew almost all of initial 14 CTT members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing volunteer fatigue personally and drawing parallel experiences with running a volunteer-based organization • Recognizing that need continues to grow but energy and enthusiasm is waning • Interested in AI's concepts of budgeting good will in crisis response and identifying where people are in their energy levels • Thinks more structure would be helpful to long-term “I've been on the side of we should register...become more structured...I don't think it can be organic, fluid, non-registered forever.” • Long-term interests in public space, mobility, urban layouts, ecosystems of development 	Pre-existing volunteer network for NPO role included admins of CANs (e.g. Langa)	<p>Long-term Relationships</p> <p>Organizing/Structure</p> <p>Crisis Response</p> <p>Cape Town Together</p>
	AI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing expertise in humanitarian crisis response • Prior crisis response experience • Repatriated to Cape Town and connected with CTT/EDP through MA • Shared skills and technical expertise for two months and was involved in local CAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasized need for keeping “the long view” in humanitarian response plan as well as targeting the poorest of the poor • Pushed to move away from soup kitchens and food parcels towards cash assistance based on experience with humanitarian practice • Strongly urged groups to structure/formalize for sustainability, “generosity and wellspring of goodwill – be it human or financial – would be relatively short term” • “...you will need some degree of institutionalization and structuring and formalization. And that seemed like a dirty word. A dirty recommendation to...those people, on that call, who were highly inspired by this wellspring of goodwill, I just don't think it's sustainable.” • “... I just felt that it was really unfortunate that there was sort of this kind of like rabid non structuralist sort of naivete among highly qualified, highly educated people who were like, "No, no, no, don't touch it, don't touch it. As soon as you try and structure it'll die", And, you know, it'll probably die anyway. ... I just felt so despondent that there 	<p>Urged to focus on 75 kitchens for voucher programme for longer rather than scaling to feed more people for shorter term</p> <p>“A lot of the initial conversation was like ‘...we've got to feed these people...until the end of lockdown. And I was like no...I recommend that your planning horizon is to the end of the year, at least”</p>	<p>Crisis Response</p> <p>Organizing/Structure</p> <p>Tension</p> <p>Long-Term</p>

			was no sort of entertainment... [there] being some kind of introduction of structure or normative processes.		
Case #3	I&G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing relationships and work with vulnerable in own community • Pre-existing relationships with others in Cape Town Together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to think about response as a “long-term thing” • Large focus on sustainability of efforts – e.g. design of campaign to provide vouchers to families, with compensation for street champions and allotment for purchasing from informal traders • Fundraising and channeling resources (money, donation, mentorship) to Community G partners based on needs identified by CAN G 	500 vouchers distributed out of 2,000 identified households 23 community kitchens in Community G	Long-term Roles Relationships Resources Crisis Response Sustainable
Case #4	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing relationships and work with vulnerable in own community through role with unemployment movement • Pre-existing relationships with others in Cape Town Together • Recognized food insecurity as a pre-existing issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personally recognized problems with food security that would be an issue with lockdown – frustrated by governments’ lack of plan for food insecurity • Organizing in township came naturally based on collective experiences • Began mapping community with street champions, took data to CAN S to begin distributing food parcels and vouchers • Needed to reach more people, began partnering with soup kitchens • Focus on more than food (e.g. informal settlement fires) and had one of the highest COVID infection hotspots 	600 vouchers distributed 1200 families through food vouchers and parcels 25 kitchens feeding 4,300 people a day “as much as we’re feeding 4300 people it’s nowhere near the people that are hungry...we still see a lot of people that are hungry”	Crisis Response Government Relationships Resources
Case #5	N&T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing relationships and work within community through festival networks • Tight-knit community, “people are friends” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core main leaders (four) with fluid membership • Tensions and feedback around privilege, shifting from “handout” • CAN M fundraising to support CAN V through NPO partner and also working in Community M • CAN organized around peoples’ passion areas with long-term vision for “hub” • Don’t want to become NPO, want to remain loose network and support institutions doing work already 	“rapid pace and scale” went from 27 households to 180 in three weeks by word of mouth Roster of 150 people signed up for community kitchen support	Roles Crisis Response Long-term Organizing/Structure Relationships
Case #6	T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing relationships and work with Community V youth through NPO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on supporting youth-led response to map Community V • Building relationships and trust, using privilege to share 	“we didn’t move any food until about three weeks into lockdown... I just felt like, if you don’t have some kind of relationship in place, you’re just going to do more	Roles Crisis Response

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing work with community M festival to “bridge the gap” between M & V • Running a youth cohort when lockdown started, transitioned to CAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connections • Desire long-term to phase out NPO support, providing administrative and financial support. Current involvement gives stability (three years of programmes in place) • Supporting long-term entrepreneurial visions and mission of youth (e.g. around social work, GBV) 	damage than good.” – worked to map first in order to enable “food to be distributed without violence and jealousy”	Long-term Organizing/Structure Relationships
Case #7	C&M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing relationships and work with children at schools in Community D • Family connections in area and circumstance during lockdown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with pre-existing organization in Community D as NPO “anchor” – funneled resources to them as “tried and trusted people who have networks already” • Shop trolleys collection scheme • Desire to focus on long-term income generation • Already speaking of emotional toll 	Geographic scale through partners in multiple surrounding communities	Crisis Response Long-term Resources
Case #8	PA&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-existing relationships and work as ECD owners • Experience with trauma (especially for children) in township prompted involvement in ECD space • Began cooking for children during lockdown “if they are not at school, they are not safe... I know that they don’t have any food at home to eat” • Recognized food insecurity as a pre-existing issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly motivated by doing good for others (restoring dignity) as a way to carry on - “every single day I must wake up with a smile because there’s a line outside.” • Concerned about volunteers and lack of compensation for them • Concerned about ECD regulations, rent, and whether will have employment when lockdown lifts • Experienced personal trauma during crisis response as well (death of family members, spouse walking out) • Relayed strong feelings of ubuntu and togetherness, community values the work that they are doing 	Began with 20 children, line kept growing to 70-80 people by end of first three weeks. PA called E and connected efforts with NPO partner/CANs Feeding 300+ people	Crisis Response Roles Relationships Togetherness

Sustaining crisis response (June – October) Key codes: Crisis Response, Resources, Government, Long-term

Case	Interviewee	Response characterized by	Structure of response	Most Frequent Codes
Case #1	GA,LI,R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on data, Forum played the role of collecting data through a third-party and intermediary organizations to try to quantify food relief efforts of civil society • Continue to struggle to get CoCT involved – “getting them to the table, getting them to attend Forums, it’s not the fault of individuals, the system doesn’t empower or enable people to make decisions or share information” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifted from weekly meetings to bi-weekly meetings “got to a point where the life of the Forum was coming to a juncture, should we close it? Everyone said ‘no keep the Forum but shift it to every two weeks” • Beginning to look at recovery in addition to relief “We’re naïve to think we can move from relief to recovery, it’s both – 	Food Forum Government Relationships Crisis response

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA & LI worried that if the Forum shifts to long-term thinking, the value of short-term coordination may be lost “Forum may devolve to thinking about food systems and long-term solutions that people have been thinking about a long time and discard the immediate need of hunger today – need to focus on less sexy concerns and can’t leave those unaddressed and unsolved... [the] Forum itself doesn’t need to keep dealing with the day to day – but some coordinating venue does... people have no way to plug into decision making structures – need a way for citizens and citizen based organizations to connect with government and each other.” 	<p>[we’re] going to have to be providing food relief for the rest of our lives. Poverty isn’t going anywhere...it’s an unpalatable truth”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “[I’m] cautious about doing things too quickly, the way that it’s being driven now is by immediate need – need to look at long-term effects and planning that can be used from what is being learned now and filtering it into other aspects” 	
Case #2	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across network, see responses varying in terms of focus areas (local elections, registering as NPO, food gardens and sustainable food systems, co-ops etc.) Feel that the window that did exist for partnership and institutional change has closed “it felt like in these last six months, there was a lot of space to bring in sort of broader members of the public and policy processes in a range of different ways, at quite an intense personal cost for me... there was the frenzy of like, anything is possible...it felt like a lot of valuable, and a lot of valuable things were happening... we sort of saw discourses shift...we saw very different ways of working between government officials and community based actors.” “the willingness from both sides is waning...more and more people are frustrated at the ways in which things unfolded...people within the bureaucracy are so tired and I guess, starting to feel like to what end could we sustain such things anyway?” Government perception/politization of the CANs movement hindering further engagement at a personal and network level between CANs/gov. Culture of compliance in government driving behavior to revert to pre-crisis state “with sort of all of the current allegations about various PPE corruption, people are on high alert... during the crisis, there was more of a feeling of like, don’t let compliance get in the way of a good idea, like we can do anything. And now there’s like, much more of a focus on, ‘it’s likely that we’re going to get audited, we have to make sure that like everything is like above board’, which is the pity, because engaging with community groups is, of course, above board. And if we were to think of the role of the public service as serving the public, then what you need is all the flexible things we’ve seen during the crisis, but people are afraid...” Feel relationships formed will persist “when there are inevitably more crisis moments...there will be unexpected ways in which this work lives on...” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for change limited by government’s lack of ability to engage with informal, distributed network as well as politicization of efforts “It feels to me like that the space is closing for the informal network...many departments reached out, but it was just impossible for them to even imagine a way to engage... people need to connect with people and form relationships beyond institutional boundaries, there isn’t a shortcut, you know?” Seeing more formal partnership with organizations Seeing different paths and focus areas depending on individual CANs 	<p>Government Cape Town Together Roles Crisis response</p>

Case #3	I&G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immense frustration with lack of government response, and blockage of public resources (access to community hall, land for gardening etc.) “[I’ve] lost hope... no one’s coming for us...we really need to start looking after ourselves and our own and our neighbors...it’s weirdly been somewhat freeing for me, just letting go of expectation or the hope that help is coming...it’s quite liberating.” • Shifting from voucher system to kitchens to “get as much food out to people as possible” – had to make choices on how to direct resources due to big shift in donor fatigue, drying up of resources, need most “bang for buck” • Increased urgency, immense needs for food relief still present in Communities S and G • Disengaged with broader CTT framework • Feeling tensions around personal livelihoods and CAN work “we all need to make a living...I’m finding that quite challenging actually. I just can’t emotionally deal with this stuff.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still informal as an organization though beginning to speak of registering as NPO • Receiving resources from partnership organizations like Brewers cooperative, Ladles of Love – distributed to network of 30+ kitchens in Community G. Partnering with Souper Troopers and G’s environmental NPO • Looking at “sustainable models”, helping people create businesses 	Government Crisis response Resources
Case #4	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on social needs of people, more broadly than just food – youth programmes, environmental cleanup, unemployment etc. “If we could tackle [unemployment] in South Africa, we will [tackle]...half of the hunger issues” • Long term vision includes food security and a focus on becoming social worker and fighting for employment • However, feel the need for kitchens and food persisting. Also unable to stop feeding – “If you could see the people that are coming here each day, it’s hard to say, ‘no we are done.’ Whose responsibility is that then, to continue the work we’ve seen that we’ve done?...how do we say, ‘no it’s done’. For us, it can’t be done” • Strongly believe volunteers should be getting paid, hope that they might through Social Employment Fund • Government has reached out and provided support, albeit small amounts (20 maize packets, 50 food parcels, 100 water bottles etc.) but would like to see larger efforts like a Basic Income Grant and SEF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-off in kitchen numbers and an emergence of work like food gardens – encouraged farmers to start group. “So we saw a lot of people going back to their lives. We saw out of 38 soup kitchens, we are left with 16 soup kitchens...they needed to get back to getting an income...They were volunteering and with children going back to school, school fees...bills... they had to find ways to make a living. So some went to work, some are still looking for work. Some had no more strength to continue doing the work that they were doing.” • Partnering with established organizations within and outside of community like Belinda FC and Ladles of Love, VPUU “we know that to remain relevant and make it for a longer term...we have to build relationship with organizations that are around [Community G] and beyond.” 	Long-term Resources Partnership Crisis response
Case #5	N&T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from “panic” state of initial crisis response “CAN M we also kind of went through that phase of emergency, everyone was like really throwing in a lot of time and energy in that. And then then as the emergency passed... [there] definitely was like a, a kind of slowing down of the movement.” “in some ways, it feels like a really long time. And but actually, it’s been it hasn’t been that long at all since things started really moving. And there’s definitely been a shift from that initial panic state.” • Focus on reflection and visioning “We’ve done a lot of reflection and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing efforts on “cluster nodes of activities” like the kitchen, community garden, theatre production, Community V partnership • Partnering with established organizations like U-Turn • Grappling with level of structure desired “the thought is currently, which changes all the time, but like, do we become a registered entity with a bank account and capacity to kind of move money and, and then support all these projects in the 	Resources Crisis response Long-term Relationships Organizing/Structure

		<p>introspection and trying to figure out I mean, we're still in the process of trying to figure out what we want to become." "...that body that can fulfill the function that maybe in a dream world... you have the infrastructure to support projects and ideas within a community."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations in CAN around privilege, impacts, etc. prominent "I think there was also trying to ask the tough questions on that, are we just doing this so we can feel better about ourselves? Or are some of the interventions that we're doing actually having negative impacts and the relationships between the different neighborhoods? So I mean, all of these conversations start moving away from you know, an emergency health crisis to tackling issues that are linked to you know, structural inequality and identity politics and sense making...I think we also realized that suddenly... the things we were talking about and the actions we were doing, weren't necessarily linked to a health practice at all, but we're triggered by it." • Facing backlash/hostility/polarized responses within Community M to the work that's happening 	<p>community that are wanting to happen?"</p> <p>"Often to get the money, you have to have the structure. It's like a prerequisite."</p> <p>"I think the other thing that we realized is that in order to access any grants, we need to be formalized in some way. But who wants to take on that risk of becoming a formal entity? And what would that formal entity do? Because it was born out of a crisis and a health response. But actually, you know, a lot of the stuff that we're thinking about doing is more linked to connecting communities, local economic opportunities, those types of things. So is it an NPO that does that? And at the moment, I think there's a sense that rather partner with established organizations because of all of the admin work that comes with being an established entity. I'm not sure anyone has got extra bandwidth for that at the moment. And but then that immediately limits a whole lot of access to certain resources."</p> <p>See value in the CAN pairings, sharing of resources "the standard CAN partnering thing, I think has been incredibly effective...it's not a big ask, and I think that's our duty as privileged people is to, to share what we have, it's not to say, can you mortgage your house and invest that money into this community, it's like you, you have excess. So it's about taking that excess and putting it somewhere else. And I think that in itself is hugely powerful."</p>	Partnership
Case #6	T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency feeling dissipating, emotional work more taxing due to lack of unity and politicization "there was definitely a point...where the feeling of emergency stopped. And like it was very distinct, and you could feel it...everything in terms of people's time, people's energy in terms of funding, like everything, radically dropped off from that point. And then that's where it started becoming emotionally more exhausting, because then it was no longer like this unified, everyone together, no time for fighting operation, then it became more politically, personally, emotionally complicated." "the first three months were emergency response. And then after that, there was a period of...turmoil" "in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from ad-hoc donations from various sources (dropped off) to bigger grants with more long-term funding "...we always knew that we wouldn't ever be able to sustain what we were doing... we were building infrastructure so that when support came, it could have somewhere to go... there's a lot of money out there that's looking for places to go. If people can see, okay, here's a platform where it's visible, it's accountable, we can see what's happening, you know, it's being reported on, it's being audited, like they're looking for reliable places to 	Crisis response Resources Long-term Relationships Politics Partnership

		<p>terms of the support diminishing, it was definitely as people go back to work, or life becomes more normal for like the privileged...that directly correlated to diminishing support of time and money. But with [Community V], I don't actually know what that turning point was...like any community it is incredibly complex. And there's so many different groups and so many different agendas. That it's always it's always just complicated and difficult to work. There's a lot of disruptiveness... [that wasn't there] in the emergency response.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition from crisis relief focus to long-term change ambitions “...the COVID response, I would say, is kind of over. And their thinking is now very much around long term change. And these are dreams and visions they've had before this all began.” • Think ambition for long-term involvement is personality driven “I put that down to personality types... different people respond differently... some people are like, ‘Okay, cool. That’s over now. Let’s get back to business and others that are like, no way...we can't waste all that was done and just walk away. Like we have to keep building this thing.’” 	<p>put their money. So if you can create that, it makes it easier to get that support.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking of infrastructure in terms of resources + relationships “that's kind of the role that [we] have played... we have a website, we have a structure, we have the legal entity, we have the bank account. So that was a huge part of what we do is offer the group, so we mentor them, but we also have all the existing infrastructure that allows for those things to be easier. The accountability, the transparency, the storytelling, the fundraising, we had all of that. So it didn't need to be created from scratch. And also, we had access to networks of people.” <p>“when I talk about that infrastructure is more the relationship building...our stance has very much been like, it's very difficult to support if you don't have a relationship. So basically, we threw ourselves into developing relationships primarily.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational level of involvement shifting, high involvement (“7 days a week 15 hours a day”) in beginning, now youths growing more independent 	<p>Roles</p> <p>Organizing/Structure</p>
Case #7	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong themes of fatigue - “I’m quite tired” “people are tired, the donor fatigue is there, people are not donating money anymore. They don't want to donate food vouchers... I think we're a little bit done asking...I think the next three months will pretty much just plod on as they are now.” • Frustration with government’s lack of understanding the need and that the crisis is getting worse, not better • Experienced sharp drop in donations halfway through June – “the decline in donations is really strange...there was lots of stuff coming in. And then it seemed like over about two weeks, it just halved or like, it maybe even become became a third of what it was” • Seeing a split in people that want to continue this work long-term and those that don’t • Worried about long-term implications of kids not being in school, education and safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soup kitchens that were supported from trolley donations now fully supported by partnership with NPO (got funding) • Switched from food vouchers to supporting kitchens with money for gas when able to due to difficulty in identifying & verifying/prioritizing needs • Shops continuing to donate leftover/extra food 	<p>Crisis response</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Government</p>

Evolving responses (October – onwards) Key Codes: Resources, Roles, Long-Term, Government

Case	Interviewee	Update on response	Most Frequent Codes
Case #1	AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to sustain work because of organizational funding “EDP is funded to do this sort of work, thank goodness. So I think to sustain action beyond a crisis, that's again, where you need funded NGOs, or NPOs, or intermediaries, whose job it is, is to continue to keep actions going, dialogues going, forums going, consciousness raising and education going, connecting people. So how do we sustain, connect, communicate and collaborate beyond the crisis? Because people were doing it naturally in a crisis because it was the right thing to do. Now, it's back to “normal”, how do we sustain that?... we're paid to do that, and we've got to try and do it, in our little way in our sector.” • Shifting to both/and focus on short-term response and long-term systems change “How do you shift from just a short term response to linking short term action with longer term systems change?... short term disaster relief is needed, you know, and will be needed probably for the next year. And a lot of organizations and institutions and volunteers have run out of puff, run out of money. It's a dire situation. And in a sense, the 700- 800 community kitchens, driven by informal volunteers, feeding people two or three times a week is what stands between many people and absolute hunger...at the same time, I think we've been able to draw new voices into the forum, from the academic and research worlds who've really been very, very helpful in helping people to see the longer term and the bigger picture and the connections between different concepts and that it's not just about food relief.” • Still seeing overwhelming need for food relief “We had a list of 190 verified kitchens, we needed another 60. So we put out this call through the Food Forum. Could people refer us to community kitchens in the metro area, that were not currently receiving any government funding. And we got 553 applications in 24 hours, with a lot of stories behind that of people saying we are desperate, we are starving. We can't keep going. There's no funds...” • Also seeing a strong pull towards returning to pre-covid “business as usual crisis” state, trying to keep the door open and use each crisis as an opportunity to open it further “...we were very mobilized and shocked into action by the stage five lockdown for a month, I mean that changed everyone's consciousness because it affected everyone. Now, there's a whole lot of people out there who are not affected by the crisis, or affected minimally, a lot of middle class people are able to find work... and restaurants are open, and you can get a drink again, and you know, life's good...everyone was in it together, for a brief moment...But that moment in time comes and goes very quickly, when you all are acting in solidarity with each other. And you can't sustain that. Unfortunately, the pull towards business as usual is very strong. And it's distressing. Because we shouldn't go back to business as usual. We should have learned from a crisis just as we should have learned from water, or fire or whatever these crises are that sweep across us. But we don't, as human beings. And so, can we keep open 10% of the door in the post crisis arena, because for most people the crisis is over, even though it's still with us. And by that they mean the pandemic crisis is over and the business as usual crisis, which is poverty, unemployment, failing state, whatever, is normal... before the crisis, maybe the door had closed to 2%. People were cynical, people were not interested in government, people were not interested in helping their neighbors...I think the crisis has opened the door up...keeping the door open at 10% is a lot better than where we were prior to the crisis. And 	<p>Roles</p> <p>Crisis response</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Long-term</p> <p>Sustainable</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Civil society</p> <p>Intermediary organizations</p> <p>Cape Town Together</p> <p>Systems change</p>

		<p>every time we're hit with a crisis, we've got to keep opening that door a little bit more, a little bit more, a little bit more. And keep the dialogues and the connections and the communications and the collaborations going....it's slow, painstaking work. It's not big bang change stuff at all. But if it's not done, then society will deteriorate even more.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the ongoing role of EDP as an intermediary “translating” organization “So I think the role of EDP is being able to understand what's happening in the community sector, civil society organizations, the intermediaries, the community kitchens, the informal sector, but also equally, what's happening and what's changing in the government sector. And playing that...collaborative intermediary organization role, where you understand the different parts of the system and the different imperatives of different institutions within the system. And being able to translate that for each other.” This role translates to driving systems change outside of times of crisis as well “In between crises, the role of intermediary organizations...anyone playing that role in the system is invaluable. I can't see how you could get systems change happening without various types of intermediaries that bridge... or span or cross over the divides, because on their own governments struggle to engage with the non-government sector, and vice versa. It tends to break down it becomes futile engagements, people get frustrated, people start finger pointing and calling names.” • Bridging government and informality is a big challenge “one of the big challenges that we all face is bridging the divide between the over formalized state sector with very, very rigid rules which get longer and longer and longer and a commitment to compliance sort of at all costs, and informality... community kitchens, none of them are geared up in terms of the regularization of the structure and the administration and the format. They're not formal structures. So they cannot receive state funding... beyond food, you know, if you want to support informal traders, if you want to support informal food growers...urban farming, if you want to support all sorts of informality, you run into the same problem” • Facilitating reflection sessions for Cape Town Together, seeing themes of fatigue and sustainability of a voluntary movement tied to larger issues around power and inequality “[The Connecting CAN] asked us to help them with a review of the strategy... it gave them a space, a safe space I'm hoping, to think about themselves in relation to where they were...when you're a volunteer, you're an activist effectively, everything is for the cause, you're sacrificing...and you don't want to talk about it, because it's not about you, it's about the movement. And I remember that in the 80s, same sort of thing. And I think now we've got the tools to realize that you cannot separate the individual from the movement. And you've got to look at emotional wellbeing. And you've got to look at, at the limits of humans, human beings need support, to do their work. And whether it's individual support and emotional support, and networking and friend support, and family support, and financial support... people from poor and vulnerable communities, were saying, ‘well, we don't have a choice. We can't give up or stop. We literally have to keep going until it kills us’. And kind of by saying that, it implies people from middle class areas have a choice, they can volunteer, they can step out of that...it's not life and death in middle class communities. So it does raise issues of power relations and imbalances and inequalities...” • See tensions between informality of CTT and ability to interact with government and receiving funding “You cannot sustain for, under crisis conditions in particular...beyond six months. You've got to come up with some clever ideas about, I think a lightweight sort of hybrid structure, or platform, which can raise funds, be accountable for them, can pay some people to do...” 	
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		<p>the daily chore work... Cape Town Together will to this day say they're not an organization, they're a kind of vague movement with some ideals and some values... there's nothing wrong with that. But when government wants to talk to you, they want to talk to a structure that is accountable in terms of a constitution and probably registered...the formal government only deals with things that they can recognize. And they're certainly not going to give resources to people who are not accountable in terms of...formal organizational structures, a trust, a board of governors, a constitution[etc.]...I mean that, and you can understand that with so much public money being stolen, they have to hold people accountable if they're going to be using public funds. So it again, it goes back to that difficult conundrum between how formal do you want [to be], [whether or not] to formalize community activism and grassroots bottom up structures. And again, I think the role of intermediaries comes in here.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopeful about possibility of programs like Social Employment Fund remunerating volunteerism to sustain efforts “...you cannot sustain social movements just through volunteerism. People have to eat, people have to look after children... so the whole notion of a Social Employment Program, which national government through people like Kate Phillips, have been promoting...would be an interesting way of how do you actually remunerate community volunteerism?” 	
Case #2	EM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stepped back from co-learning work due to family issues, felt network was very supportive of when people needed to ebb and flow due to other commitments or priorities “What was incredible was I tapped out and people were incredible... It was such a supportive space that allowed for that...” • View the structure of the co-learning group as an evolving entity, past a network towards a constellation “...depending on the issue, depending on the topic, depending on what you're working on, you've built this kind of constellation of humans, that is able to show up when they need to and then be in the background and be present when they are not needed. That, for me was the power of the co-learnings [group]” • See people still doing the work in various forms, perhaps not under the name of CANs “It's not about the name of the thing. It's about the relationships and the connections that were created, in that time, and in that space...I'm like, look at all these people who are still doing stuff. There's people still making masks. There's still people still feeding homeless people. There's people still working with the Woodstock Peace Garden, there's movement. It's just not called the Woodstock CAN... And if that is not a result of this work, then what is you know? ...that's the work; keep showing up, keep doing the work, it doesn't have to be called anything to still matter... but that's really hard to do, especially in a world that wants pretty names and pretty things and organograms.” • View success of the CANs as scaling deep and out, not necessarily up “For me, systems work is about scaling deep, which is the depth of connection, the depth of relationship, of connectivity between those in the system. And that for me happened, which is really beautiful. And the scaling out happened, because it happened everywhere, which is really nice. So I think a lot of people who work in the policy and advocacy space would see the CANs as a failure because of the fact that they didn't move into the scaling up space. And I think that's part of our problem of how we think about systems change that it needs to be grand. But actually, it's in the changing of how we relate to each other that for me, systems change, that's the beginning. That's the process...that's what this year has meant to me.” 	<p>Network</p> <p>Crisis response</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Roles</p> <p>Privilege</p>

	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See involvement ebbing and flowing as people can be involved, difficult to maintain some aspects of CTT without organizational structure and resources “I think we were sort of very focused and had a very strong sense of collective purpose last year. And actually, some of that, in a healthy way, is shifting. And I think I think it's good, but it's difficult, because if we were an organization, we would have structures to hold that together.” “...in all of our minds, we had this sort of like unspoken agreement that we would just spend all of last year focusing on the CANs and having some time to sort of step back and reflect, you know, over the December period...when we set this up as a rapid response, we thought this thing was going to take a couple of months, you know, we didn't think it was going to be forever. “ • Predictions about closing window of opportunity to engage with the state came true • While engagement with the state wasn't fruitful, see it as only part of the longer-term vision “[The] last four months of the year were used to prioritize... [bringing] people together who would otherwise never have met, which is very much in keeping with some of our original ideas about, you know, organizing across race and class in somewhere as divided as Cape Town, and to start to I guess, distill some of the collective ideas about what this network means for us as a society moving forward. In part, some of that is influencing and working with the state to sort of build a better state. But in part, some of that, I think, is about building a social fabric of society that, hopefully... helps us to build something better than what COVID found. But as we know, things are resistant to change so only time will tell.” • See the work as “seeds of possibility” and perspectives and relationships as the thing that will have longevity “we really see the relationships between people as kind of the infrastructure of this network. And that, for me is what will enable its long term sustainability that will outlive specific projects...” “...for many of us, we will be forever changed as a consequence of this work. And we can see the way the kind of experience and the network and the way of thinking about the world feeds into our respective projects... there's these ways in which the ideas diffuse” “I think, now that we've seen the world, now that we've seen that it is possible to build a different society, even if only in times of crisis it's compelling, I think, to a lot of people...it inevitably sort of changes how you engage with whatever work is sort of your current focus.” • Experiencing more well-resourced CANs not continuing work while vulnerable areas can't stop their work – counter to what seen in mutual aid literature “In some of the research that's been done on mutual aid groups around the world, a lot of what they are seeing is that groups with higher social capital...higher socio economic brackets are more likely to continue. And I think we're seeing the opposite of that in Cape Town, I think we're seeing more sort of well to do CANs, much less likely to continue. And sometimes they're continuing through the supporting of in that that partnership initiative...sometimes I think the personal relationships that evolved from those connections are enduring. And that has resulted in people continuing to remain involved because they like each other a lot now, or because there's a new renewed sense of commitment to building society differently... I think there's very genuine, authentic, beautiful connections that have emerged, but I don't see sort of more well to do CANs continuing in the same way that they did in their own neighborhoods. Whereas if I look at Harare CAN, Gugs CAN, Site C CAN, I mean a lot of the Khayelitsha CANs, there is much more ongoing commitment...CANs where there's no other option, where your neighbors are knocking on your doors, because they're still hungry, we see a lot more of that kind of continuation of it.” 	<p>Roles</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Organizing/Structure</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Tension</p>
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	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stepped back from CTT to focus on own organization and employment organizing. Relationship with P has continued to grow, she was promoted to be the third Director for organization. Efforts stymied by lack of access to libraries and public resources • Think decentralized, self-organizing model was the right one for CTT to adopt in hindsight “Very early on in Cape Town Together I came in, I guess to some extent, like your typical white male, and was like, ‘I think you should attempt hierarchy here’...because it was open and free, they were able to keep it going in that way for much longer. I think it would have disintegrated faster and been so much more threatening ...what they did was really great for the time and there's certain outcomes that will last from it. And who knows where it goes from there” • Interested in lessons learned about mobilizing and sustaining involvement from the middle class “What I think is interesting is like something which we struggled to do, is to get middle class people, or richer people to be more active... how they managed to get across the board interest, how they managed to retain that interest is for me, probably where the most interesting learnings are.” • Personally feeling very cynical about ability to engage with government any way except to vote out politicians “My personal cynicism is just ramped up to an extremely high degree about civil society in South Africa...at its best it's Cape Town Together replacing governments on a minimal scale. And at its worst, it's completely irrelevant. I really do despair a lot about it...I'm just so despairing of engagement with government to get anything done. Basically, you might as well go to war with them and throw them out.” 	<p>Cape Town Together</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Roles</p> <p>Organizing/Structure</p>
Case #3	I&G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling deflated about fundraising for kitchens and the persistent need for food in Community G “The problem with the soup kitchen stuff, is that I just think it feels heavy...it just feels like a lost cause, a black hole. Endless kind of need.” • Feeling that resources are directed towards what donors view as more sustainable efforts “people want to see sustainable...want to give money to sustainable enterprises. I think that's a big thing. So the way that funding is working, it's less about like ‘oh we'll give for a crisis’. No, we want to see something where you're going to grow vegetables and be able to feed yourself or sell them or something” • Kitchen operations scaling down based on resources (monetary and physical donations like dry goods, gas) – from 36 kitchens to 14 • Struggling with volunteer-based model, volunteers unable to provide for themselves and maintain basics like access to electricity “The continuous problem for me... [is] that so many of these volunteers are not earning... these are people who are working daily they need to be able to sustain themselves and their families, and to be able to switch on the lights when it's available.” • CAN member communication quieted down except for the admin core group “the CAN group that we've still got is very quiet. People who respond on are the usual suspects.” “I think they more than likely were involved in this, before the CAN or before the pandemic. So it's, it's in their nature or their value system to be actively involved. And they're also more comfortable in this space, where this still touches a lot of sore points for a lot of people.” • Structuring activities based on where energy is, but feeling almost constrained by partner organizations’ focus areas “the whole point of it being a self-organizing organization, is that people have to do what they're interested in... and not everybody is interested in the homeless situation in [our community] so you know that becomes a whole kind of sub CAN structure where you 	<p>Resources</p> <p>Roles</p> <p>Long-term</p> <p>Partnership</p> <p>Government</p>

		<p>kind of have to then harness that energy so people who are interested... It's very hard when you don't, when you're not an NPO, we need to have a proper structure but I don't think any of us want to take on massive responsibility and, you know, they're [partner NPOs] very focused on social work, we're focused on a variety of things.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis response work took a strong personal toll, reorienting work towards more sustainable efforts “I basically had a psychological meltdown in December... I just realized that I'd been putting way too much time and headspace into unpaid work for like most of last year... I haven't really wanted to go back in that deep. It's quite a deep emotional well when you get on the ground ... I've had to be more discerning as to where I place my energy, my organization is environmentally focused. So I'm picking up the work from an environmental perspective... and I feel that that's where I can sustain myself emotionally and it's part of what I actually do...I wouldn't say I overstretched myself last year, because I just did what was needed and I filled up a lot of time, but it just wasn't sustainable the amount of exposure I gave myself because of it.” • Feeling South African response and attitude different from friends and family experiences in other countries “I think maybe it's because Europeans and Americans, they know there'll be a solution and we know there's no solution. There's no vaccination coming to save us anytime soon. So we have to find a way to deal with it... They know that being taken care of, but at the same time I do think that...we are forced to become more community minded because there isn't government. So it's kind of got it's like a positive side.” 	
Case #4	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channeling most activity through partner organizations inside community and receiving donations from partners outside • Kitchen volunteers are struggling to sustain efforts, down to 12 kitchens operating regularly, those who have been able to sustain “do their own side hustle to sustain themselves” • Even those kitchens who are receiving funding/donations are not receiving enough to meet the need, frustrated that organizations and government don't do the costings to understand the scale of supplies/food/gas that is truly needed • Aspire to have kitchens be hubs of social services “When I look at the kitchen, I see like many hubs of possibilities, many things that could happen, you know, and I want to get my [social worker] qualification...I do see a lot of potential of things happening, especially in the kitchen, because that's the way everyone is... I want the people to say okay this is what we need... [a] bottom up approach.” • Aspires for the CANs to persevere and sustain the work “I'm one of the people that says CANs should never die. You know, we would sit in meetings and I would remind people that, do you know what the CANs have done...with just relationships, you know, just kindness, we're just thinking of a better life that we want. I've never seen that in any organization. I've never seen that with any government...I've seen communities in the CANs coming together, wanting to change, that for me, should grow...For me, CANs are the next future, more than government, more than organizations... imagine if the whole network can make a change, Western Cape would be different... so I don't imagine a place without CANs at all. I'm still thinking this is just the beginning.” • See the kitchens (and broader work) being sustained through collaborations with government and partners in community “...I can have a voucher that R1000 but that voucher must double its value when I go to a shop...that's where the government would come in, that would build a relationship, you know. There's a kitchen here. There's a garden linked to the kitchen. There is a shop linked to the kitchen, meaning that whatever the needs of the kitchen, they buy it at lesser price to feed the community, they're 	<p>Roles</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Long-term</p> <p>Relationships</p>

		<p>able to access veggies and fruits for the community, but then the government must [also] support the gardens.” “We still on that dream that we want each and every kitchen to have their gardens, you know, and be able to be trained to take care of their gardens, so that later on we don't want to worry about [funding].”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See unemployment as the root cause of hunger “In South Africa, hunger is not gonna go out anytime soon... as long as unemployment is an issue...kitchens will remain a need in communities such as ours...it's something that the government should take ownership of... when it comes to people in need, it is the government's responsibility to take care of those people...And the problem [with] unemployment is there's so many problems. And as much as we if we don't fix those problems, we're always gonna have these problems, you know and we can't put bandages [on anymore]...we need to go and deal with the real problems.” 	
Case #5	N&T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't feel like it's a crisis response any longer “I don't think people are responding to a crisis now, now they're almost like just bouncing back to addressing the everyday needs” • Core funding dried up, people donating directly to initiatives “all of them are running semi-independently from the CAN... you can directly donate to the kitchen or to the garden... through their bank account[s]” • “Things definitely started quieting down over Christmas” – kitchen operations down from 5x a week to 2x feeding 100-150 servings each time. “There was a sense that things needed to...close for a bit. I think there's definitely volunteer fatigue... I think it was just a moment for people to...regroup, restock, try and think of ways to start afresh in the new year.” • Still not registering as NPO, but figuring out principles for how to allocate any funding that the CAN receives in the future “in late last year [2020], we revisited the idea of registering as an NPO. That hasn't gone anywhere” “I think there's a sense of... does the CAN need to formally exist then? ... it can leverage other networks.” • Tensions emerging around vaccination “divided the group” internally in the CAN • Tensions within community still exist around kitchen and approach to charity vs. solidarity “It's much more convenient for them to go the charity route. Because then they don't have to actually think about their role, you know, within a system that is trapping people in these kind of cycles of poverty.” 	<p>Resources</p> <p>Tension</p> <p>Partnership</p>
Case #6	T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing intense conflict with pre-existing community structures and leadership, based on influx of resources for youth initiative and pushing against status quo “...as soon as the sense of emergency passed, we all reverted back to our worst selves, and then it just became chaos. And a lot of conflict arose ... so that influx of [grant] money, which resulted in in our crew getting stipends, and the remaining kitchens getting stipends, which hadn't been happening before definitely just unleashed many cans of worms... since then, the conflict has been continuous.” • Group has shifted focus from solely food insecurity to broader topics like gender based violence. See long-term vision as creating spaces for dialogue “...one of the biggest needs in communities is just spaces for people to talk and be heard and be together. So that aspect is going really well... in essence, I think that's probably where the group will shift their focus to, not just around gender based violence, but just creating spaces for community to have dialogue around whatever they want to have dialogue about.” • Grant is supporting 7 kitchens, not sure if this support will be sustained post-grant funding ending March 2021 	<p>Resources</p> <p>Conflict</p> <p>Roles</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from Community M has shifted, not as much monetary but focused on mentorship and skills building • NPO has stepped back slowly since October as the youth have taken on the Oxfam grant. Personal and organizational involvement not accounted for in the grant “Our agreement with these youths is that this is theirs. It's not ours. And our role is to support them. And the grant that came from Oxfam was particularly for them... we're the fiscal host...we mentor them, but from October till now, like more and more and more, we step back and back and back so that they, they have now become like the primary drivers of the movement. And we just hold them accountable, like, morally, ethically and financially on the decisions that they make, but we try not to influence the decisions unless we can see that they're probably going to be disastrous.” • Have shifted focus of personal work as a result of the crisis “The crisis just took over my life, really. I mean, I just threw myself into it, like, seven days a week, and my clients were all suffering as a result. So at some point, I just had to admit that I couldn't do both... I had the intention to over the course of two or three years progress toward full time this, but I didn't plan on doing it so fast...[the crisis] kind of forced me into really changing some of my own behaviors... There's definitely been a movement towards like, let's use this as the push that is needed to up the priority of this kind of work that we've always sidelined... some people have made drastic changes. I was very disheartened when the majority just went straight back to normal after the crisis supposedly subsided... about three months in.” • Feel this is part of a larger movement that is emerging out of smaller efforts “A lot of movements have kind of come about because of this. And it does seem like they're actually all starting to overlap and creates much bigger change...I always describe it as a puzzle. It's like we're all working on a puzzle, but no one really knows what we're making. But if you work away at your little corner of blue or green, or whatever it is, then eventually, the big picture will emerge. So it does feel like that movement is happening, like the puzzle is slowly starting to work towards a bigger picture. I can't give you a very tangible proof or examples of that, but it's just a feeling. And a few people have been expressing it. It's like, you get so wrapped up in what you're doing. And it's exhausting, exhausting work. But every now and again, it's like, okay, it's not for nothing like it is actually something bigger happening here.” 	
Case #7	C&M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saw donations peter off from June until December, shops then stopped donating. CAN activity ran until Christmas Eve. Ongoing work through people previously doing community work persists at a smaller scale. • Personally, both have stepped back from CAN activity due to fatigue and new jobs to earn income – both started jobs around August. “I feel like I've been very out of the loop. And with me being away from the last two months or so. And also sort of towards the end of the year when everything started to quieten down with the CAN... there was a lot of communication lost...I personally didn't keep up to date with what it was like what was going on” • Strong themes of fatigue and burnout “...an article that came out from...a webinar about advocacy and action. And the strapline that came out of it was that building a social movement or working in social justice is like an extreme sport...is that healthy though? You know, is it possible to sustain? Because you just see people working on stuff and burning out?... I've burnt out several times in my career of working in this kind of space...how can we do that better? You know, how do we build the wellness into it?... you've got to have relief, there's got to be counseling at certain levels for certain people, depending on what they're doing and also just better structure...you've got to have a relay team, and everyone's got to have downtime... resting and self- 	Resources Roles Relationships Long-term Burnout

		<p>care has to be built into this kind of work because fundamentally it is not sustainable... That's for me as a huge takeout of last year's is how do you make it more sustainable without losing the energy...you have to keep energy alive because it's also what gives people hope and will bring them to rise to an occasion.” -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel relationships with Community D exist, even if communication hasn't been active “I feel like I've got some real kind of connections all around through all of the different people that I've worked with...but as far as actually having maintained all of those relationships... I've not been able to, I've just been keeping an eye on as many of the conversations as possible. So I think that's always a struggle... how do you keep those lines of communication?” • Proud of efforts and work that was done over the past year “I think meeting those meeting the women who are running those kitchens [in Community D] was amazing, and working with them, because they were very inspirational... I feel quite proud to be honest, like, of the whole situation, because we really started from nothing” • Long-term, hope this work serves to connect the dots between other efforts and relationships that have been ongoing “[The] pandemic hit, and it showed the real inequalities and the real broken systems. And it just shone a big light on that. But it also shone a light on the fact that people have been doing this work...in various different ways and forms, whether it's academic, whether it's on ground, whether it's connecting the two. And so there's a lot of understanding of how to actually go forward with it...it's like catching a wave you know, you just get a momentum.” 	
Case #8	PA&E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still persisting with feeding despite resources and funding from partners running out – continuing to cook four times a week “...there is no more resources coming from anybody. No donations. The only person that helps us with dry food at the moment, to keep us going and cooking what we can cook is Ladles of Love.” • Hunger is still a pressing issue due to previous unemployment, lockdown, limited school openings etc. • Communication with CAN and other partners has faded or stopped “I think that some of our relationships have really faded, because if you look at life you will think that everything has gone back to normalcy... when you're cooking here during the day still you can see how many people come to the line, but the relationship that we have made with our sponsors like CAN... it really has faded in some kind of way.” • Cannot stop feeding, despite lack of resources “...we opened the can of worms to our community, because everybody when they're hungry they know where to go, and it's very difficult to turn people back home with nothing to eat...the CAN introduced this kind of helping community, and then down on the line there is no help from CAN ...where the CAN is, or is the CAN still alive, or the CAN doesn't work anymore [are questions we have].” • No engagement with government to date “To be honest, I don't know how to engage with government. I think if government was a person, I would say that they doesn't care because some way, somehow, they should know that there are the people that are doing the job on the ground, there are the people that are helping the community. But till today, I have no idea if government really does care about this, that we are doing, or government doesn't know, but unfortunately I don't have, I don't know any channel that we can go to reach to government.” • Proud of perseverance and personal role “I am proud of myself. Because sometimes it's the most draining thing to ever do. But you wake up and do what you are doing and notice people that fully depends on you...When you become a small beacon of hope 	<p>Roles</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Partnership</p>

		<p>for a township like ours... I'm just proud of where we've become. I'm just proud [that] we could have given selflessly...I'm proud of who I have become during this. I've come to realize that not everything revolves around me... [there are] people with more problems than you. So you need to get up and get dressed and show up.”</p> <p>“I'm proud of myself. I'm proud of, to be a person that the community will have a hope from. I'm proud of to be in my community”</p>	
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