

Evaluation Report for the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation on the
'Gauteng Together Initiative'

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1. Executive Summary

A process evaluation research was conducted into the progress made by the Gauteng Together project. Several areas were considered, namely the quantum of activities undertaken and completed by the Community Action Networks (CAN's) as outlined in the Starter Pack, the sustainability of these activities, understand what the barriers were in implementing each activity and discover areas of improvement.

45 active CANs had fully completed the questionnaire. The quantum of activities that were undertaken and completed by CANs were initially primarily focused on food relief and a few were focused on additional areas of needs. Some CANs indicated that they were still active while others ended their activities. Furthermore, some CANs activities showed signs of sustainability while others did not. Most CANs experienced numerous barriers when implementing their activities while one CAN did not experience any barriers.

Although most CANs envisaged a hopeful future for the Gauteng Together Initiative, they had suggested several areas of improvements, such as communication with CANs, provision of support and funding to CANs, training sessions, a reduction in surveys, and use of collated data.

2. Introduction and background

The *Gauteng Together* initiative was launched in April 2020. It's an initiative calling for the establishment of community action networks (CAN) across Gauteng to address the social impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The project was initiated by The Angel Network, the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and CONECKT, and is supported by a range of organisations, individuals and local community volunteers.

The initiative, which was pioneered by Cape Town Together, was adopted in Gauteng in response to growing concerns over food insecurity, hunger and other social challenges impacting negatively on the lives of people due to lockdown. The Gauteng Together initiative created a province-wide network of CANs able to work together and share learning experiences, resources and best practice methodology to address social and economic needs in communities.

The five purposes of a CAN are to:

1. Identify the needs in communities and respond to those needs by distributing essential food and hygiene items, and assisting with other challenges including abuse of rights, access to services, education and awareness and combatting violence against women and children.
2. Pair up with surrounding communities to support food security or other initiatives.
3. Ensure that immediate community members put support mechanisms in place for those self-isolating.
4. Spread correct information on the pandemic at a localised level.
5. Identify needs in your broader area, and work towards addressing them

Assumption of Theory of Change

This researchers understanding of the Gauteng Together Initiative's theory of change is that **when** ordinary people organise themselves into local neighbourhood groups, otherwise known as Community Action Networks (CANs), to support or initiate localized action under lockdown conditions **then** their community's adaptive capacity and resilience will be strengthened during the social and economic impact of Covid 19 or future crisis.

3. Purpose of the evaluation and methods chosen

The Auwal Socio-Economic Research Initiative (ASRI) was contacted by the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation (AKF), requesting assistance with authoring a progress and evaluation report that seeks to document the progress made by the Gauteng Together project.

Objectives:

- To understand the status quo of active CANs (Community Action Network) operations
- To elicit information on the dynamics within different communities
- To elicit information on the sustainability of projects
- To document lessons learnt and recommendations for the Gauteng Together initiative.

Evaluation questions:

- What activities were undertaken and completed by the CAN's?
- What barriers did CANs experience in implementing activities?
- What lessons did CANs draw in co-learning sessions?
- What recommendations would CANs like to make to improve the Gauteng Together Initiative?

Method

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, the researcher conducted an evaluation research, also known as program evaluation research, a type of applied research that's used to capture real-life situations within organizational contexts (Hall & Hall, 2017).

It was originally intended to use a combination of data collection methods to collect information relevant to the identified objectives. The researcher had envisioned to use a google form questionnaire to be completed by the 46 active CANs and in-depth semi-structured telephonic interviews with 6 to 8 CANs purposively selected from their responses on the questionnaire. A short deadline was set for CANs to complete the questionnaire to allow enough time to conduct the in-depth interviews the subsequent transcription of interviews and thematic content analysis, and turnaround time to complete the report. The short deadline however, resulted in a low response rate.

To increase the response rate, the researcher and AFK representatives decided to alter the data collection process. The deadline was thus extended twice, and we cancelled the in-depth telephonic interviews. The deadline had to be extended to firstly, accommodate the CAN administrators' busy schedules (as a result of work and other engagements) and secondly, to accommodate the CAN administrators who experienced issues accessing the google form (either due to data or technological issues). The decision to cancel the in-depth interviews was made because we felt that if we increased the response rate for the questionnaire, it would elicit sufficient information for this evaluation, as it was comprised of both open ended and closed ended questions). Furthermore, the questionnaire would elicit both quantitative and qualitative data. It is important to note that the researcher worked hand in hand with the AFK representatives during the data collection process.

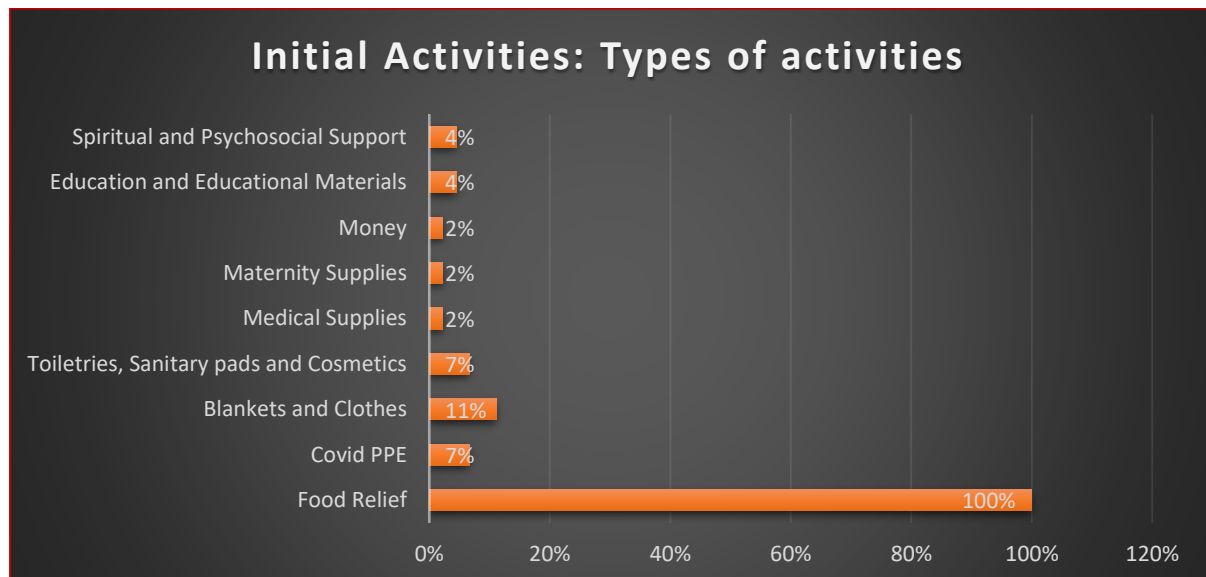
A total of 45 CAN representatives completed the questionnaire. A combination of descriptive statistical analysis and thematic analysis methods were utilised to analyse the data.

4. Results and findings

4.1. CAN's status quo

It important to track the active CANs operations from the beginning to understand their status quo. The researcher thus sought to find out the type of activities CANs were engaged when they first started. CANs responses were grouped into 9 initial activity categories. Figure 1 below illustrates that all the 45 CANs (100%) were initially focused on food relief activities. In addition, a few CANs also focused on a range of other activities. For instance, 3 other frequent activities that CANs engaged in, in addition to food relief were the distribution of blankets and clothes (11%), Covid PPE (7%) (which included things like masks, sanitizers or sanitizing things etc.), and toiletries, sanitary pads, and cosmetics (7%).

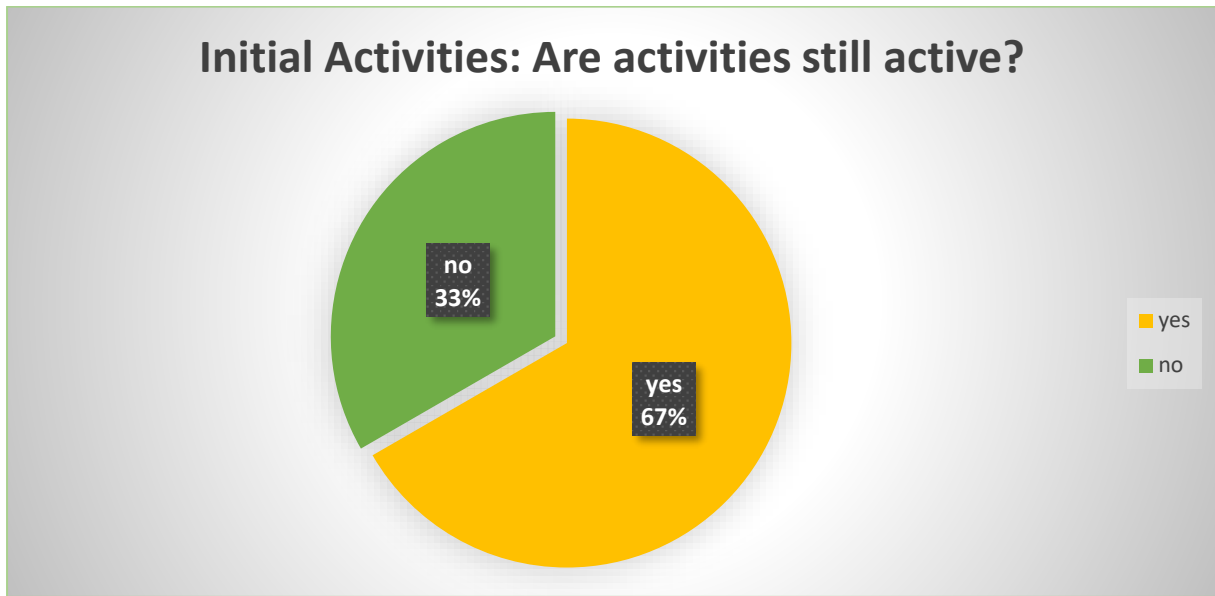
Figure 1



N (No. of participants) =45

The researcher also sought to find out if they were still engaged in these activities. Figure 2 below illustrates that 67% of the CANs were continuing with these activities and 33% had ended these activities.

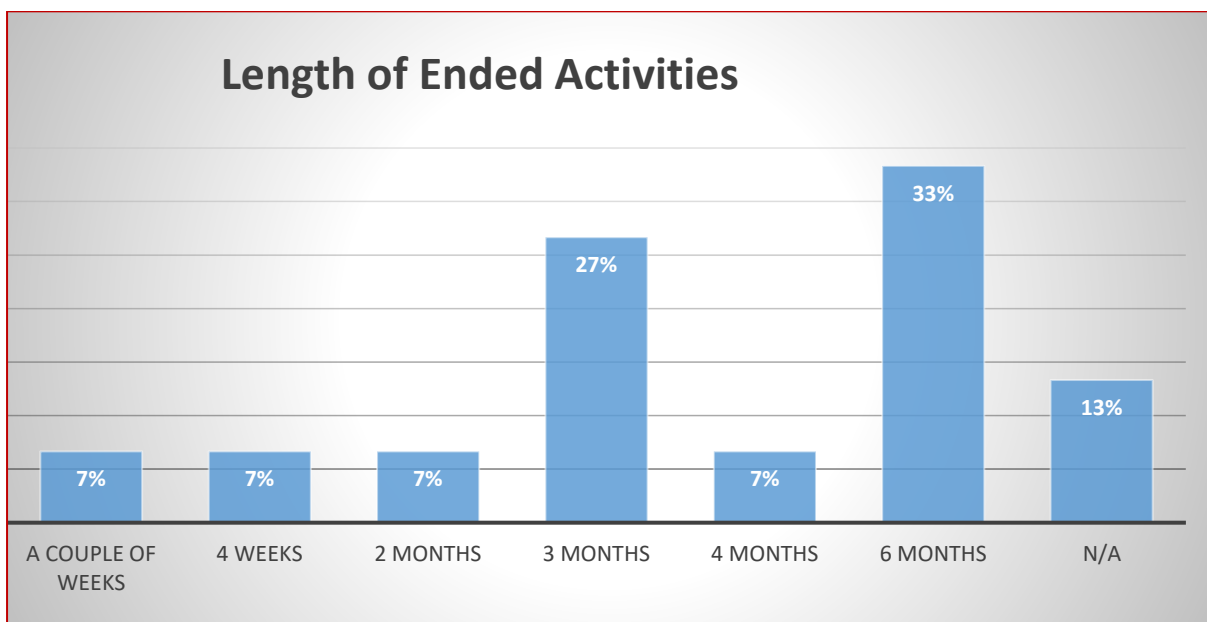
Figure 2



N=45

The CANs that had ended their activities indicated that their activities had run from a range of a couple of weeks (2%) to 6 months (33%), meanwhile 13% (2) of CANs selected not applicable (See figure 3 below). It is unclear whether the one CAN that selected not applicable had changed the nature of their activities, completely stopped engaging in any activities, or had other reasons. However, the other CAN indicated that they ended activities because of time constraints (as they had a full-time job).

Figure 3



N=15 participants

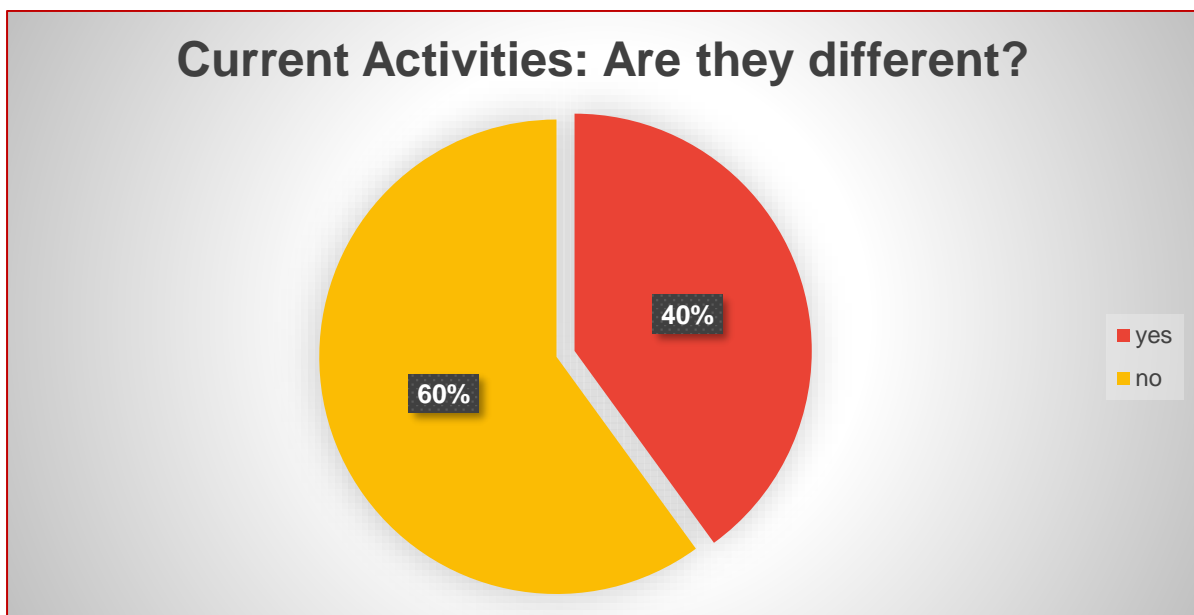
For those who indicated the length of time that their activities run for, expressed multiple reasons for ending their activities. Table 1 below illustrates the 3 themes that emerged from their responses and quotes. Most CANs indicated Lack of resources (both financial and non-financial) as the reason for ending activities. Others expressed that they had to return to work, and one indicated that they had met the needs of their targeted beneficiaries.

Table 1: Reasons for ending activities

Emerged Themes	Quotes
Lack of Resources (financial and non-financial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ "Out of financial resources"(CAN 2) ✚ "During exam time students were unable to help" (CAN 14) ✚ "Lack of resources to continue to help" (CAN 30) ✚ "Donor fatigue, too much donation coming solely form CAN members, not sustainable" (CAN 39)
Resumption of school and work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ "My work and my kids school resumed in full force." (CAN 20) ✚ "Time restrictions with my full-time job" (CAN 29)
Met the needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ "We had provided to all families in need" (CAN 34)

Of the CANs that were still engaged in activities, 60% indicated that they were engaged in the same activities that they began with, and 40% indicated that their current activities were different from their initial activities (see Figure 4).

Figure 4



N=30

When CANs were asked how their current activities differed from their initial activities, 6 themes emerged. Some CANs indicated that their activities shifted from relief work to more sustainable models like for example food gardens. Some CANs had expanded their activities to include other things such as the distribution of blankets, kids' books, etc. Meanwhile, some CANs had to scale down the number of beneficiaries they catered. Other CANs targeted specific beneficiaries or tailored their work to meet their beneficiary needs. Lastly others just changed the way that they conducted activities. (See Table 2)

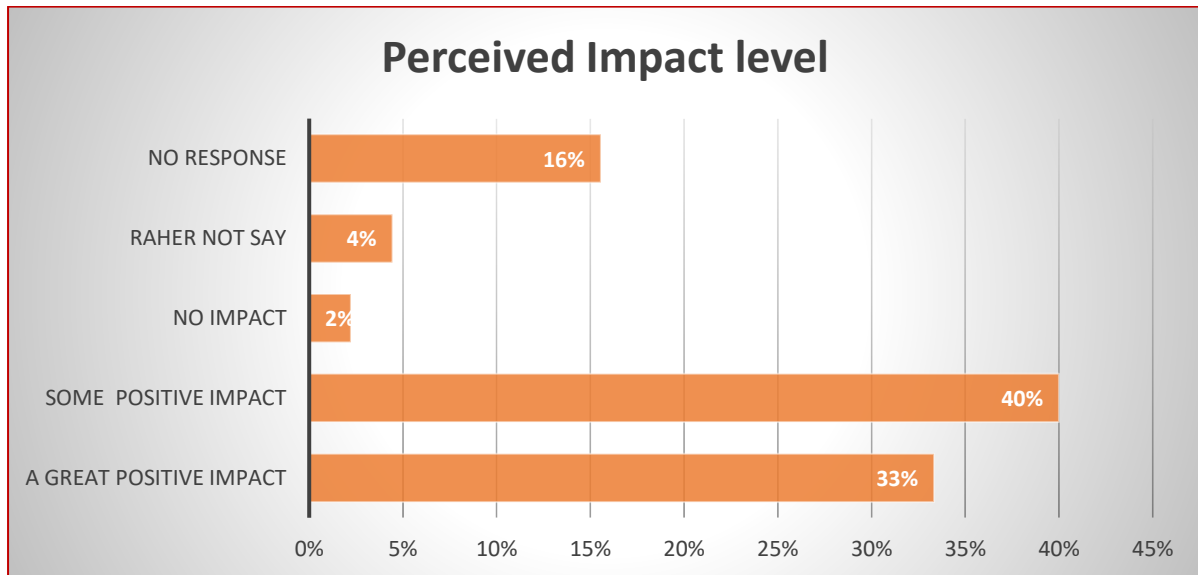
Table 2: How current activities differ from initial activities

Emerg ed Themes	Quotes
Shift from relief work to sustainable models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ "Development of food gardens, identification of land for long term collective food production, seed/plant swops; tentatively, education around home growing of foodstuffs" (CAN 1) ❖ "Empowerment of communities to enhance food security" (CAN 1) ❖ "We have moved from emergency food relief to support for more sustainable models where local community members are responsible." (CAN 9)
Expanded Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ "Added the distribution of food, blankets and clothes" (CAN 23) ❖ "We have received much more than just food. We get books (kids' books) and textbooks. Clothes. Baby items. Household items. Bedding and linen etc.." (CAN 12) ❖ "We expanded to add non-perishables, blankets, clothes, fire extinguishers etc." (CAN 6) ❖ "We have extended our activities to involve economic development" (CAN 36)
Scaled down number of beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ "Feeding, but on a smaller scale (used to be 150 people, this has decreased to about 80)" (CAN 26) ❖ "Scale of people has decreased; but types of activities increased" (CAN 33)
Targeted specific beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ "More specific and getting to know our families. Found a community on the N14 we've adopted" (CAN 41)
Tailored work to beneficiary needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ "ECD mainly need PPEs" (CAN 3)
Changed the way they conduct activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ "re-imagining work; lobbying for different social packages and some food relief as and when needed" (CAN 43) ❖ "We no longer do weekly food parcels. We supply 3 local kitchens with food." (CAN 10)

In figure 5, most CANs (40%) perceived that their activities had some positive impact in their communities, while 39% felt they had a great positive impact and 2% felt they had no impact. 4% of the CANs representative stipulated that they cannot quantify impact so they would rather not say.

In conclusion it appears that from the 45 CANs that were previously reported as active, some were no longer operational due to varying reasons discussed earlier in this section. Some CANs have shown progress in responding to community's needs

Figure 5



N=45

5.1. Dynamics within different communities

Different communities in which CANs served in demonstrated different dynamics. These dynamics were uncovered in CANs responses to the question around challenges they faced when conducting activities. 10 themes emerged (See Table 3). Interestingly one CAN (CAN 33) expressed not experiencing any challenges. Meanwhile others expressed experiencing several challenges. For example, the following list of challenges from CAN 45 reflects this notion:

- ❖ The need always outperformed the number of food parcels we could distribute. Weeding out names of people who were lying (for example about where they lived) to get a food parcel.
- ❖ Settling on an efficient way to distribute food etc. in a safe way following Covid-19 protocols for the safety of our team, and the community coming to our distribution centre.
- ❖ Finding a few recipients selling their food parcels for money up the road. Over time word got out that we would always be at our distribution centre on a Thursday – ques got long.

- ❖ We became worried that someone would get violent if we did not give them a food parcel or someone would want to steal the food hampers.
- ❖ Letting the community know that they are welcome to a food parcel if they need it, but to please let us know if their situation changes and they can be removed from our list. We make it a moral call for people to make if they still want to accept an emergency food parcel, but it has not been too effective. Sometimes we ask if we encounter them at their job for example and ask – there are compelling reasons, some still think we have millions to spend and want it ‘just because’.
- ❖ Operating in English mainly has been difficult at times.

The most common challenges involved in distribution of goods and lack of volunteers, and difficulty procuring donations and resources amongst both inactive and active CANs.

Tables 3: Challenges experienced by CANs

Emerged Themes	Quotes
Community members lack of understanding of CANs initiatives	"Gauteng's complete inability to understand the meaning of participatory democracy and cooperation. Their initial interpretation of the national regulations was an unproductive bureaucratic dream come true and a nightmare for civil societies ability to effectively respond effectively." (CAN 1) "We faced a lot of resentment from some members of the community who did not fully understand what our mission was about." (CAN 18)
Time	"For me is the time as I have 3 young kids and I am the only one in the can" (CAN 2), "Time challenges" (CAN 32)
Challenges around distribution of goods and lack of volunteers	"we had a challenge of distribution since people were not allowed to gather" (CAN 3) "We relied heavily on our "on the ground" workers and while most were willing we had some were not able to complete the admin around handing out of packs that donors required (filling out forms, taking photos etc.)." (CAN 5) "Climate challenge" (CAN 8) "Limited number of volunteers able/willing to travel into the downtown to deliver food parcels" (CAN 20) "... sometimes we had drunk people disrupting the handing out of food - otherwise all went well." (CAN 26) "Few CAN members (admin ended up needing to organise everything, burnout occurred)" (CAN 39) "Allocating services in fair and representative manner because of the diverse nature of the community" (CAN 40)
Difficulty procuring donations and resources	"We rely on donors who are private, and they are not always able to contribute." (CAN 9) "Keeping the momentum going with donations that would cover all beneficiaries" (CAN 12) "Getting people to donate non-perishable goods" (CAN 14) "Our ability to ensure steady and reliable and healthy food and other supplies." (CAN 8) "Sourcing funds and creating partnerships" (CAN 15) "We didn't have transport, funding nor storage space" (CAN 21) "Financial availability and being far from towns and mall or big stores." (CAN 22) "Challenges of finding a market to sell the art, land and space for gardening, volunteer fatigue, failed activities such as selling goods for commission because of competition" (CAN 36)
Higher demand than supply	"Not being able to provide for everyone in need" (CAN 19), "We could not help everyone" (CAN 27) "...reaching everyone" (CAN 32)
Difficulty establishing partnerships	"Lack of support from the councillor and assistance from local businesses" (CAN 30)
No challenges	"None- NPO facilitated everything efficiently" (CAN 33)

Covid Lockdown regulations and CAN volunteer safety	"Congregation of people" (CAN 35) "Covid exposure, fear of police in L5, being overwhelmed emotionally and physically" (CAN 41), Concerns for possible xenophobic attacks were ever present in these instances and on the ground, co-ordinators had their hands full" (CAN 42), "Settling on an efficient way to distribute food etc. in a safe way following Covid-19 protocols for the safety of our team, and the community coming to our distribution centre. We became worried that someone would get violent if we did not give them a food parcel or someone would want to steal the food hampers" (CAN 45)
Dealing with dishonest and difficult beneficiaries	"Some community selfishness, some driven by fear and greed, community despair at lack of concern and care shown, experiences of otherness in some places where some lives were seen as more important than others. so, for e.g. when massive screening and testing was being carried out in some communities like Diepsloot and Soweto, other communities saw that as government saying they don't matter." (CAN 42), "Weeding out names of people who were lying (for example about where they lived) to get a food parcel... Finding a few recipients selling their food parcels for money up the road" (CAN 45)
Language Barriers	"Operating in English mainly has been difficult at times." (CAN 45)

4.2. Sustainability

Sustainability can be determined by evaluating the programs ability to continue indefinitely through the involvement of community members, innovation, learning, and adaptation (Mog, 2004). For the purpose of this report, the researcher evaluated whether the activities CANs lead would be able to continue without them, by examining the responses they provided in several questions.

The researcher notes that all CANs activities are less than a year old, and thus it is difficult to determine their sustainability at this stage. However, some of the CANs (whose activities are still running) efforts reflect, per the definition of sustainability provided herein, involvement of community members, innovation, learning, and adaptation. For example, those who indicated that their current activities were different, expressed that they had to either centre their activities around specific beneficiaries or needs, or scale down, or adjust and change activities from relief to more developmental models. Some of these are reflected in the following statements:

"More specific and getting to know our families. Found a community on the N14 we've adopted" (CAN 41)

"We have moved from emergency food relief to support for more sustainable models where local community members are responsible." (CAN 9)

"We no longer do weekly food parcels. We supply 3 local kitchens with food." (CAN 10)

Others alluded that they would like their activities to be more sustainable. This notion is reflected in these CANs responses to the question what they see as the future of their CAN:

“As explained above our 'Network of Possibility' organically developing; community currency established; Food Hub established” (CAN 8)

“Future is there, but we need to find something sustainable” (CAN 36)

Furthermore, some of the CANs activities reflect growth because they are/were able to extend or expand their activities to cover more needs. This is reflected in the following response:

“Added the distribution of food, blankets and clothes” (CAN 23)

Some CANs activities ability to continue are dependent on funding, resources and volunteer enthusiasm. These are reflected in the extracts retrieved from CANs responses to the following questions:

What do you see as the future of your CANs?

“Depends on volunteers but there is some burn out being experienced so let's see after the December holidays” (CAN 6)

“Lots of potential but I am unable to commit sufficient time to it unfortunately” (CAN 20)

“Unfortunately, the CAN is currently inactive. Hopefully in December, I can possibly start a new initiative, but currently the CAN is too small for anything to happen without me.” (CAN 40)

How long does your CAN plan to run these activities for?

“As long as we have funds to do so” (CAN 5)

“As long as possible- as long as we have funding for” (CAN 32)

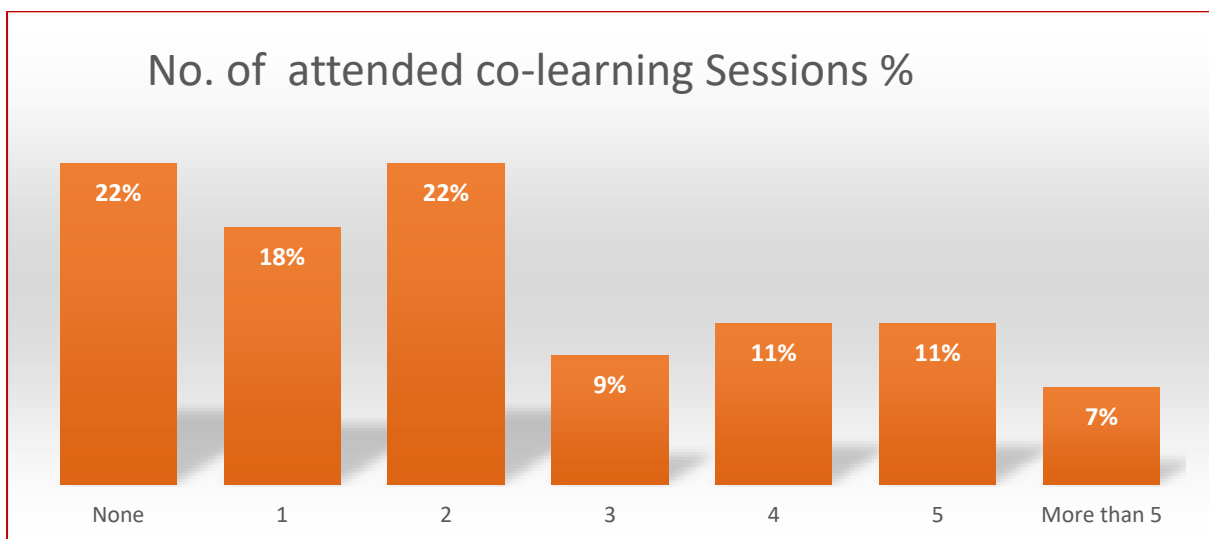
Overall, some of the CANs activities show sustainability potential, meanwhile others do not show any potential.

4.3. Lessons learnt

To evaluate the lessons CANs learnt from engagements in events organised by Gauteng Together, the researcher firstly investigated how many co-learning sessions they attended, then how effective they found them and what lessons, and then what explore what they drew from these sessions.

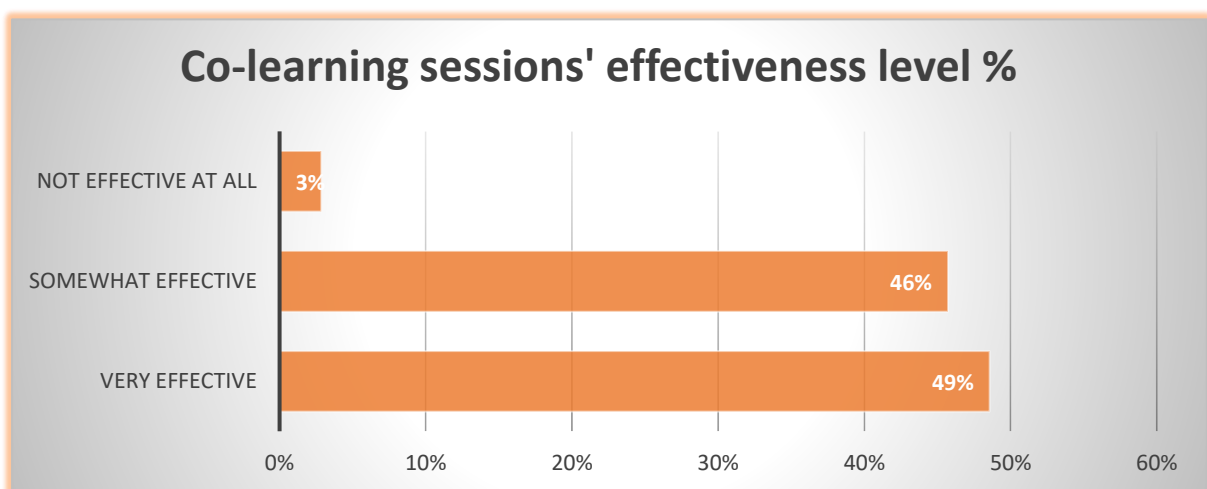
Figure 6 below illustrates that most of the CAN representatives had attended at least 1 or more of the co-learning sessions organised by Gauteng Together, only 22% of CANs attended none of these sessions.

Figure 6



N=45

Figure 7



N= 35

Most of the CANs that attended the sessions responded positively when asked how effective these co-learning sessions were. 49% of CANs found them very effective while 46% felt that they were somewhat effective and 3% expressed that they were not effective at all (See Figure 7).

Table 4: Lessons drawn from co-learning sessions

Emerg ed Themes	Quotes
Identifying community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "We learnt how to identify community needs and responding to the needs" (CAN 36)
Solidarity and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "That everyone should come together to make a difference" (CAN 32), ▪ "Working together" (CAN 27) ▪ "Success, giving and kindness" (CAN 3)
Gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Food sovereignty and veggie garden" (CAN 2) ▪ "Gardening" (21)
Acquiring resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ways on how to get support and resources to support communities. (CAN 11)
Organizational and leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "very useful in terms on how to handle such kind of initiatives" (CAN 18) ▪ "The importance of leadership" (CAN 19) ▪ "..., organising, planning to name a few" (CAN 21) ▪ "Improved and coordinated programmes based on trust" (CAN 25) ▪ "Learnt about organizing and leadership skills" (CAN 40)
Importance of networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "..., networking" (CAN 21) ▪ "Networking is key to growing our CANs" (CAN 35) ▪ "Ways of communication with other CANs" (CAN 23)
Strategies from other CANs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Good to know what is happening in other provinces and how they deal with issues" (CAN 28) ▪ "We learnt that working together and looking at what other CANs are doing we can learn from their strategies. Supportive but also to acknowledge that areas are different and have their own dynamics, but you can draw some lessons from their strategies" (CAN 40) ▪ "Information sharing, co-learning and encouragement are vital for all of us – and are more important now than they were 8 months ago by far! I loved all the ones I attended and hope they continue! More warning of when these critical discussions were happening might have meant more people could attend – the numbers from Gauteng were low and as always mostly by better funded CANs with admins who either worked from home or had flexible hours or bosses."(CAN 45)
Learned nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Not much" (CAN 17) ▪ "Just heard what other people were doing" (CAN 6) ▪ "None" (22)

Lessons drawn from co-learning sessions

When participants were asked what lessons, they learnt or drew from the co-learning sessions, 8 themes emerged. Some expressed that they learnt nothing from these sessions, meanwhile others learnt things like how to identify community needs, solidarity and collaboration, how to acquire resources, gardening, organizational and leadership skills, and the importance of networking. Some drew strategies from other CANs, both within the Gauteng Together Initiative and other provinces. One CAN's (CAN 45) response indicated that these sessions were mostly attended by CANs who

were better funded or had more flexible working hours. This response highlights that struggling CANs were missing out on valuable information that could assist them.

4.4. CANs recommendations for the Gauteng Together Initiative

Before discussing CANs recommendations for Gauteng Together (GT), it is important to first understand their level of understanding of GT's role.

Perceived role of Gauteng together

When CAN representatives were asked what the role of Gauteng Together is, 6 themes emerged (See Table). Most CANs seemed to understand GT's role, but a few CANs (2) stipulated that they were unsure. Their verbatim responses are provided in Table 5 below.

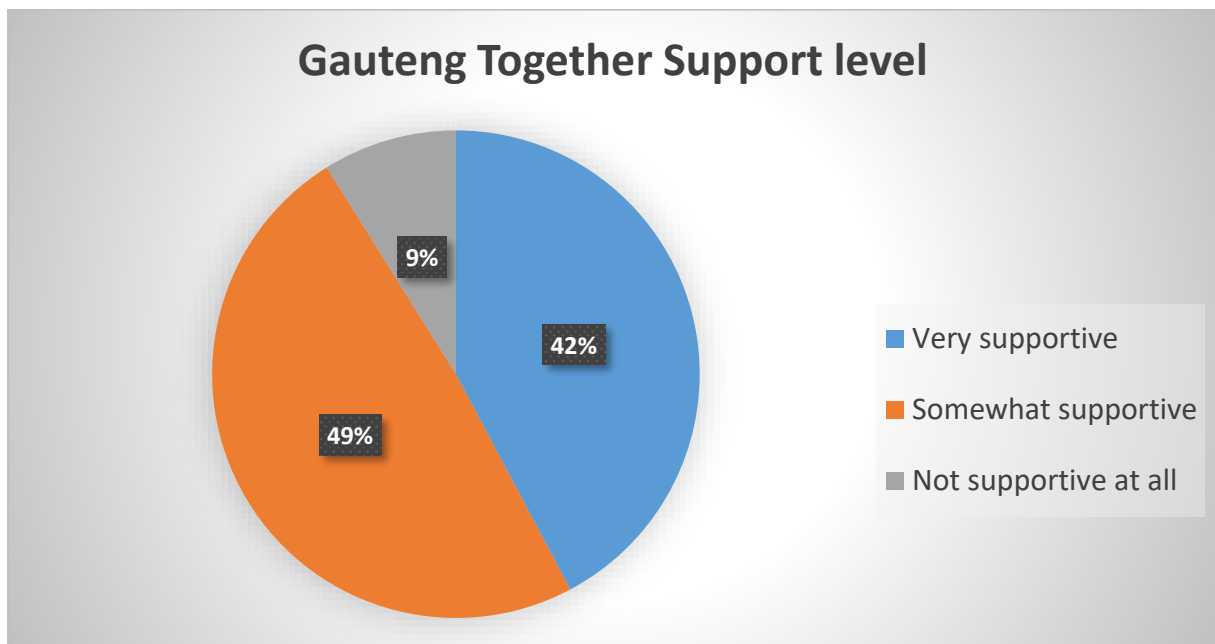
Table 5: Perceived role of Gauteng together

Emergед Themes	Quotes
To mobilize ordinary people to respond to community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "Facilitating the building of a reactivated, critical, civil society that works collectively together in the interests of our people" (CAN 1) ➤ "To bring community together to be present and actively participate" (CAN 21)
To facilitate CAN networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "Provide networking of CAN's"(CAN 6) ➤ "To bring us (CANs) together" (CAN 23)
To support CANs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "To provide support to CANs and ensure that CANs are connected to organisations and resources that enable them to reach their objectives." (CAN 11) ➤ "To support CAN in any possible way" (CAN 19)
To provide CANs with training and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "Training coordination" (CAN 20), ➤ "Guidance and advise to CAN members." (CAN 22) ➤ "Giving people practical tools on how to help others" (CAN 37) ➤ "I think it should be an umbrella for all the CAN's for advice, cohesion, finding solutions to problems CANs have (within reason), a unifying force and a force that drives change and uses the skills of its members to help others with educating them on issues of race etc." (CAN 45)
Encourage CAN collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "Hosting the WAGs, organising some joint collaboration" (CAN 10) "Working and sharing together" (CAN 28)
To provide structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "To structure and provide insight to role of CANs, to bring CANs together, to create a common platform" (CAN 39) ➤ "structure" (CAN 5)
Unsure of GT role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ "Not sure where GT falls as had little direct support" (CAN 12), ➤ "I am not sure anymore" (CAN 32)

Perceived support level of Gauteng Together

When CANs were asked how supportive Gauteng together was, most of them felt supported to some degree by Gauteng Together as 42% of CANs indicated that they felt very supported and 49% indicated that they somewhat felt supported, meanwhile 9% reported not feeling supported at all. (See Figure 8)

Figure 8



N=45

Improvements

CANs provided several improvements that Gauteng Together needs to make going forward. Some seem to feel that Gauteng Together' does not communicate enough with them hence they recommended Gauteng Together to improve their level of communication. CAN 4's response in Table 6 suggests that the sessions provided by Gauteng are high level and thus needs to make them more basic. Other CANs complained about the amount of surveys issued by Gauteng Together and how they find them unhelpful. This is reflected in the following extract:

"All they do is make do all this surveys which I don't know how they help us. This will be the last survey I take because I am tired of filling in these surveys."
(CAN 24)

Some CANs had issues with the length of this questionnaire and others on its accessibility and turnaround time. One expressed concern around the use of the collected data. There were thus two areas of improvement that CANs alluded to: reduction in the number and length of surveys issued by Gauteng Together and the collection and use of data.

Table 6: Improvements Gauteng Together needs to make

Emergед Themes	Quotes
Communication with CANs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "communication" (CAN 3) ○ "Zoom meeting with CANs from time to time. I think this will be an encouragement to some not so active CANs like mine. 😊"(CAN 2) ○ "Engaging more with CANs"(CAN 11) ○ "Gauteng Together needs to communicate with the CANs more often and directly like now when Kristen told us about this survey." (CAN 24)
Support and Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Assist with raising funds from large corporates" (CAN 5) ○ "providing support in the form of connection with potential funders and sponsors" (CAN 11) ○ "More structured support" (CAN 27) ○ "Have some support for non-resourceful CAN's." (CAN 22)
Basic training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Sessions need to be more grass roots and not high level" (CAN 4)
Lobbying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Given the diversity of the Volunteers in CAN's. Gauteng Together can be the ideological glue to reignite civil society activism." (CAN 1) ○ "Try to advertise the CAN more on social media platforms" (CAN 14) ○ "Become a voice to local government for funding that needs to reach the bottom feeders who are actually doing the work, instead of using political agendas and useless people who are defrauding government." (CAN 17) ○ "Make its presence more felt (unsure of what value it adds and brings); what is it offering as an organisation? Administrative role; just never anything afterwards; advice taken from Angel Network"(CAN 33)
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Don't make loooong surveys" (CAN 28) ○ "I worry that with the report being done in this manner that the vibrant voices of smaller CANs or those less able to communicate efficiently or who are filling this report in on cell phones will be lost. Online forms make explaining the magic difficult to express – conversations are better. For example – if I had to write about all the info, I have in my head about some of the magic and successes I would write a book. I hope those voices get heard but I already know of a couple that won't because of how this report submission process was handled unfortunately." (CAN 45) ○ "Use the data and info we have gathered to do better development planning that involves community participation. not saying not doing it but think it needs to be elevated" (CAN 42)
Nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "None so far" (CAN 8) ○ "I think you doing a great job!" (CAN 16),
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "If they can run one or two-day conference with all the CANs so that CANs can create a platform of painting a picture of their dynamics in their respective areas. To share experiences from the established successful CANs and how they acquired resources to help other CANs. Bigger CANs to adopt smaller CANs to help meet the needs of their areas." (CAN 40) ○ "The idea of an end of year congress was a good one when it was explained to me properly – I am sorry this is not happening. If it is happening – time is running out and I hope something can be arranged but I don't see where the capacity would come from" (CAN 45)

Future of Gauteng Together

Some CAN's felt that Gauteng Together played no significant role in their CANs and are unneeded, which is reflected in the following extracts:

"I'm not sure it's necessary."(CAN 5)

"Don't know - we have been independent & not really needed them" (CAN 6)

"I don't know; they need to figure themselves out because they are not useful."
(CAN 24)

Most CANs, however, would like for Gauteng Together to be taken forward. They felt that it was a "Good platform" (CAN 28) and "need a mechanism to hold the CAN movement/network together, as I said above. This is their role" (CAN 10).

One CAN felt that "it can play a big role in helping people to become self-dependent and for those who come looking for resources in our province can get these skills as well" (CAN 40).

So, most CANs see the need and high hope for the Gauteng Together Initiative to move forward even though some CANs did not see it.

5. Conclusions

CANs focus on food relief in the beginning was in line with the Initiatives call for ordinary South Africans to assist in ensuring food security during these unprecedented times as highlighted in the Community Action Network (CAN) Starter Pack. Gauteng together also called for them to help wherever help is needed, of which some CANs activities focused on other areas based on their community needs in the beginning and later on in addition to ensuring food security.

Although the call for establishing Community Action Networks by the Gauteng Together Initiative was focused on identifying and responding to communities needs during lockdown, some CANs feel the need to continue this work indefinitely. Even amongst those CANS who have ended their activities. Although some CANs are currently only hoping for developing more sustainable activities, some CANs began planning towards achieving this. Some CANs activities' sustainability is threatened by various barriers such as the availability of funding and resources, donor and volunteer fatigue.

This evaluation revealed that some CANs are not happy with the lack of communication from Gauteng Together. Some CANs also felt that some of their strategies to support CANs such as the organization of co-learning sessions and surveys were not considerable of less funded CANs challenges, hence their participation is missed during these sessions. This notion was raised by both more funded CANs and less funded CANs.

Furthermore, some CANs expressed how Gauteng Together has created a good platform and has great potential to re-ignite civil society participation in our country. CANs, however felt that this potential is slowly losing momentum and thus need to re-establish its presence in society. Several suggestions were provided to improve their work, including advertising itself on social media platforms and increasing capacity within their steering committee.

Moreover, some of the CANs felt that they could better secure or pull more funding under the umbrella of Gauteng Together, through the facilitation of registering itself and CANs as NPO's. They also felt that it could play a great role as a social wing of the government.

The concerns raised above illustrates the notion of social solidarity between CANs and belief in the ability of Gauteng Together to move forward beyond the impact of Covid 19 and the Lockdown in South Africa.

Even though several challenges were experienced during the data collection process and the short turnaround time for this report` the researcher hopes that she has managed to capture the voices of CANs and the progress made by the Gauteng Together Initiative.

6. Recommendations

The researcher would like to make the following recommendations based on my evaluation of the programs process:

- ❖ If possible, for Gauteng Together to continue with its Initiative with the recommended improvements made by CANs in this report.
- ❖ In future, should Gauteng Together want to conduct an evaluation of its program, if possible, it should allocate more time for better planning to optimise the execution of its program's evaluation.