



Strengthening Food Donation Operations During COVID-19:

Key Issues and Best Practices for Governments Around the Globe

Presentation by

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BACKGROUND

"A looming food crisis" – UN Food and Agriculture Organization

1. What are the impacts of COVID-19 on global food donation operations?

- Recognizing that food donation operations enhance food security and reduce food loss & waste

2. What policies will help global food donation operations mitigate hunger and food insecurity during the pandemic?

- Recognizing that governments owe a duty to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to food, *even in times of emergency*

Global FoodBanking Network "COVID Pulse Surveys" government partnerships

- May 2020 (**39 countries, 43** food banks/national networks)
- April 2020 (**45 countries, 48** food banks/national networks)



KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

1. Issue: Many countries do not officially recognize food banks and food recovery organizations and exclude entities as part of emergency response measures.

- Approx. **75%** of respondent food banks reported official or direct lines of communication with government since COVID-19.
- **But only 56%** of surveyed food banks had been **engaged** in local or national government response effort.

Lack of formal recognition in national legal frameworks suggests that the government is **unaware** of food donation operations or **undervalues** the potential of these operations.

KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

1. Best Practice: Formally recognize food banks and food recovery organizations as essential components of governmental response to food insecurity.

United States

- Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act—liability protection
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)—annual allocation
- U.S. Tax Code—enhanced tax deduction

Israel

- National food donation law (2018)—liability protection

Argentina

- National food donation law (2018 amendment)—liability protection

Peru

- National food donation law (2016)—donation requirement (natural disasters/emergencies)

KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

2. Issue: Food banks and food recovery organizations are independently filling the gaps left by non-existent or insufficient government social protections.

Before COVID-19, est. **4 million** people or **55%** of the global population lacked access to any form of social protection coverage (ILO)

- Equivalent of **200 million** full-time jobs will be lost in the coming year

Evidence of newly at-risk populations:

- **100%** of respondent food banks reported **surge in demand** since COVID-19
- **50%** reported at least **51%** increase in people served
- **37%** reported demand at food banks **doubling** (91-100%)

KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

2.

Best Practice: Deploy food banks and food recovery organizations as distribution centers for government social assistance, particularly food assistance to children during pandemic-related school closures.

Free & reduced price meals are recognized as an essential social safety net to break inter-generational cycles of hunger and poverty.

- As of May 2020: **188 countries** introduced national or localized school closures = **369 million children** without access to school meals
- Est. **73 countries** found alternative strategies (e.g., home delivery)

United States and Canada

- Meals-to-go
- Summer meal distribution sites
- Food distribution zones

KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

3. Issue: Food banks and food recovery organizations are facing severe resource shortages and lack of operational support despite increased demand.

Surveyed food banks reported shortages in funding, food, transport, cold-chain storage, personal protective equipment and volunteers.

Funding shortages

- **54%** reported an immediate funding shortfall
- **85%** reported an urgent need for funds simply to maintain operations

Food shortages

- **41%** of distributed inventories sourced from purchased food
- **88%** of food banks not purchasing food by May 2020 expected to do so in the following 90 days.

KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

3. Best Practice: Provide additional resources to food banks and food recovery organizations as a demonstrated mechanism to route food to hungry populations.

Additional funding, material, or logistics support for food banks is critical to advance immediate emergency assistance and support long-term recovery efforts (IMF)

United States and Canada offer direct funding

- **US\$850 million** in-kind support for US food banks through TEFAP
 - CARES Act also offered an additional tax benefit for charitable donations
- **CA\$50 million** to Food Banks Canada and CA\$3 million to provincial food banks

United States, China, India, & Ghana partnered with producers to create 'food boxes'

- US Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (fresh produce, dairy, and meat)



KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

4. Issue: Food banks and food recovery organizations are encountering new barriers to food rescue and delivery.

Which COVID-19 policies most **negatively impacted** food donation operations?

- **50%** of respondent food banks cited **curfews**
 - **52%** of respondent food banks cited **quarantine or shelter-in place orders**
 - **66%** of respondent food banks cited **transportation** restrictions
 - **24%** of respondent food banks cited government **closures of local beneficiaries**
- Restrictive policies have impeded day-to-day operations and innovative methods of food recovery, such as on-farm rescue.

KEY ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES

4.

Best Practice: Create exceptions to emergency response measures, such as lockdowns, curfews, and stay-at-home orders, to ensure that the receipt and distribution of food donations continue uninterrupted.

Designating food donation operations as “**essential services**” will enable continued activities during declared emergencies.

- **United States** has long integrated food banks as part of emergency response
 - **Argentina and Bolivia**—food banks have continued operations by way of **specific exemptions** to quarantines and curfews
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- Consultation with food banking networks and food recovery organizations
 - Investment in innovative, alternative food banking models



CONCLUSION


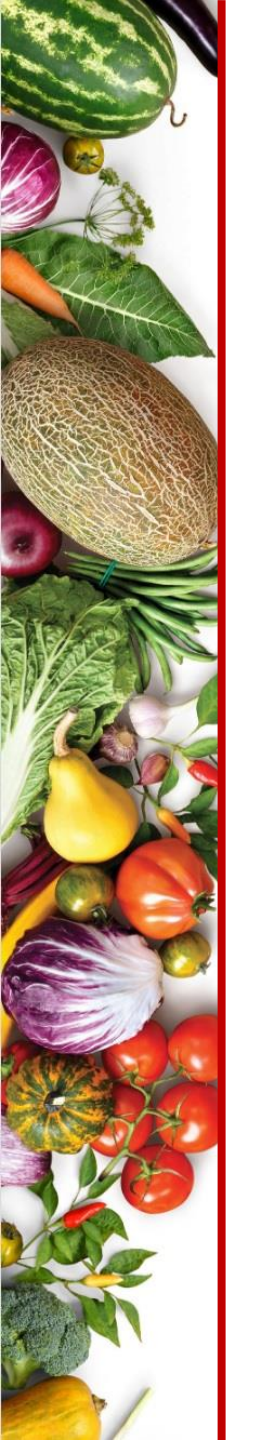
Many governments **are not adequately recognizing** the potential value of food donation operations **nor integrating** food banks and food donation as part of COVID-19 emergency response measures.

As the pandemic continues, governments **must afford these operations greater attention**, both as **(1)** essential providers of **humanitarian relief** during the crisis and as **(2)** essential **social safety nets** in the future recovery period.

ACCESS THE FULL BRIEF <https://atlas.foodbanking.org/covid.html>



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June 2020

COVID-19

The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas is intended to map the laws and policies that impact food donation in an everyday context. The legal guides do not consider emergency response measures that governments have adopted during COVID-19, nor do the policy recommendations respond to the challenges that have emerged since the virus outbreak.

The global pandemic has raised the profile of food banks and food recovery organizations as essential social safety nets for mitigating hunger and food insecurity around the world. With demand for food donation surging, the time is ripe for governments to formally recognize food donation as a solution to both hunger and food loss and waste, and to ensure that relevant laws and policies support rather than limit food recovery operations.

To learn more about how governments can effectively promote food donation during the global pandemic, check out the Issue brief "Strengthening Food Donation Operations During COVID-19" by the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic and The Global FoodBanking Network.

[View COVID-19 brief](#)



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ABOUT THE GLOBAL FOOD DONATION POLICY ATLAS

The Global Food Donation Policy Atlas is a first-of-its-kind initiative to promote better laws around food donation in order to help address both food loss and food insecurity. This project maps the laws affecting food donation in countries across the globe, in order to help practitioners understand national laws relating to food donation, compare laws across countries and regions, analyze legal questions and barriers to donation, and share best practices and recommendations for overcoming these barriers. The project is a partnership between Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic and The Global FoodBanking Network. To learn about and compare the food donation laws and policies for the countries FLPC has researched to date, visit www.atlas.foodbanking.org.

About the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic

The Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic (FLPC) serves partner organizations and communities by providing guidance on cutting-edge food system legal and policy issues, while engaging law students in the practice of food law and policy. Our focus is on increasing access to healthy foods, supporting sustainable food production and food systems, and reducing waste of healthy, wholesome food. For more information, visit www.chli.org/FLPC.



About The Global FoodBanking Network

The Global FoodBanking Network is an international non-profit organization that nourishes the world's hungry through uniting and advancing food banks in more than 40 countries. GFN focuses on combating hunger and preventing food waste by providing expertise, directing resources, sharing knowledge and developing connections that increase efficiency, ensure food safety, and help food banks reach more people facing hunger. For more information visit www.foodbanking.org.



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