



# TACTICS TO TRY FOR EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING:

## Building knowledge and momentum for Emergency Food Planning

The Tactics to Try series includes the following:

**1. Voluntary Sector Mobilization for Efficient Food Distribution in Birmingham, UK**

**2. Municipal-Level Strategies for Sustainably Feeding Refugees in Gaziantep, Turkey**

**3. Planning for Catastrophic Events with Lessons Learned from Puerto Rico**

**4. Using a Global System for Monitoring and Multisector Engagement for Addressing Food Insecurity in Yemen**

**5. A Roadmap for Creating Your City's Emergency Food Response And Recovery Plan**

The Tactics to Try series of case studies was created to complement the Emergency Food Planning webinar series presented by Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership. Tactics to Try highlight proven emergency food responses in a format that offers practitioners the most essential points for trying something similar in their own city.

We have compiled them into a single resource to provide insight, information and inspiration for cities worldwide, as they plan for recovery, response and resilience against both acute and chronic food emergencies.

*"This powerful collection of case studies details how cities coped when they faced emergencies which left their citizens facing severe food insecurity. Throughout the series we saw the importance of data, networks and resources. We hope these Tactics To Try will provide practical information and ideas for cities to harness these three key elements as they create plans for emergencies, ultimately leading to food in the hands of people in need."*

**Anna Taylor, Executive Director, The Food Foundation**

### Emergency Food Planning Series

In the second webinar series in the [Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership](#), The Food Foundation explored emergency food response and recovery planning. This topic fits within the broader food strategy context of the Learning Partnership. It was motivated by the pandemic, as cities everywhere scrambled to address unprecedented food insecurity and food supply chain disruptions. Cities were unprepared and their responses were often slow and insufficient.

Our lead consultant, The Feeding Cities Group, took a novel approach in structuring the webinar series based on the knowledge that a 'one-size fits all' approach to emergency food planning is not sufficient. Different 'shocks' or disasters drive different sets of food system problems, which in turn require unique solutions. The webinar series explored emergency food initiatives in the context of four different crises:

## Additional Information

### FOOD CITIES 2022 Learning Platform:

For access to the entire series, including recordings, presentations, Tactics to Try and many other accompanying resources click the Emergency Food Planning tab on the Learning Platform.  
<https://www.bit.ly/FC2022>

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The mission of the Feeding Cities Group is to create equitable and resilient urban food systems—globally. To learn more, please visit our website:  
[www.feedingcitiesgroup.com](http://www.feedingcitiesgroup.com)

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1. Pandemics
2. Refugees and migrants
3. Natural disasters
4. Conflict

The webinar series intentionally demonstrated the universality of emergency food crises. They are no longer the sole domain of the global south. The five-part webinar series was presented over three months, November 2021-February 2022. An incredible group of international thought leaders, along with practitioners leading ‘on-the-ground’ emergency food initiatives, spoke to the complexities of navigating each type of crisis.

The webinar series also intentionally established the need for emergency food planning to happen where the crisis happens—at the local level. For each webinar, we captured a single initiative—or strategy—in a series of very accessible case studies called Tactics to Try. They are meant to offer practitioners the most essential points for trying something similar in their own city. The final Tactics to Try, the roadmap, synthesizes key learnings from the webinar series as well as the resources curated for the Learning Platform.

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### 1. VOLUNTARY SECTOR MOBILIZATION FOR EFFICIENT FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN BIRMINGHAM, UK

This Tactics to Try case study describes how the voluntary sector worked together—in partnership with the local authority—to solve three key problems in emergency food response: (1) how to rapidly respond to the crisis; (2) how to identify in real-time those in need of emergency food; and (3) how to efficiently distribute and deliver emergency food. The case study shows the tremendous power of voluntary organisations to collectively address an emergency food crisis.

### 2. MUNICIPAL-LEVEL STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLY FEEDING REFUGEES IN GAZIANTEP, TURKEY

This Tactics to Try case study takes a long-term, city-level perspective on emergency food planning for refugees. It describes how the municipal government of Gaziantep has leveraged local, national and international resources to feed a very large Syrian refugee population for over a decade. This case study demonstrates how planning at the municipal level is critical to ensure refugees receive both immediate and long-term food aid.

### 3. PLANNING FOR CATASTROPHIC EVENTS WITH LESSONS LEARNED FROM PUERTO RICO

This Tactics to Try case study describes the devastating effects of Hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico’s food system in 2017. The lessons learned from the Puerto Rico case provide key areas for other cities to consider as they develop robust emergency food plans for natural disasters.

### 4. USING A GLOBAL SYSTEM FOR MONITORING AND MULTISECTOR ENGAGEMENT FOR ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN YEMEN

This Tactics to Try examines the role of two comprehensive and standardized tools that are used to monitor food insecurity during humanitarian crises and an approach to multisector engagement that sustainably addresses chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. A country in the midst of a prolonged civil war, Yemen offers interesting insights into strategies for addressing chronic food insecurity.

### 5. A ROADMAP FOR CREATING YOUR CITY’S EMERGENCY FOOD RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PLAN

The final Tactics to Try in our series synthesizes key learnings from the webinar series and resources curated for the Learning Platform. We have organized them into a ‘roadmap’ for city leaders—to catalyze their journey towards creating their own emergency food response and recovery plan. It is offered as a starting point. Cities will need to seek out additional resources and expertise to make their plans a reality.



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# TACTICS TO TRY FOR EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING:

## Voluntary Sector Mobilization for Efficient Food Distribution in Birmingham, UK

The Tactics to Try series of case studies was created to complement the Emergency Food Planning webinar series presented by Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership. Tactics to Try highlight proven emergency food responses in a format that offers practitioners the most essential points for trying something similar in their own city.

### Objective

This Tactics to Try case study highlights the innovative and successful efforts taken in Birmingham, England to rapidly address rising food insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. It describes how the voluntary sector worked together—in partnership with the local authority—to solve three key problems in emergency food response: (1) how to rapidly respond to the crisis; (2) how to identify in real-time those in need of emergency food; and (3) how to efficiently distribute and deliver emergency food. The case study shows the tremendous power of voluntary organisations to collectively address an emergency food crisis.

### Geography

Birmingham is a large, ethnically-diverse city in the West Midlands region of England, home to approximately 1.2 million people.

### Major Participants

- **THE ACTIVE WELLBEING SOCIETY**  
(a large, well-established cooperative and community benefit society)
- **INCREDIBLE SURPLUS**  
(formerly The Real Junk Food Project, a food distribution charity)
- **THE BIRMINGHAM VOLUNTARY SERVICE COUNCIL**  
(one of the largest voluntary sector support organisations in the UK)
- **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**  
(the local authority)
- **FARESHARE**  
(UK's oldest food distribution charity)
- **MKG FOODS**  
(a regional independent foodservice distributor)



## Background

The COVID-19 pandemic that spread across the globe in early 2020 exacerbated food insecurity in every city in its wake and Birmingham was no exception. The pandemic increased food insecurity rates, and vulnerable populations experienced more severe food insecurity, due to increased unemployment and insufficient emergency food supplies. In January 2021, adults in Birmingham reported experiencing hunger (2.3%), struggling with accessing food (11.8%) and worrying about food insecurity (12.4%).<sup>1</sup> At the onset of the pandemic, the national government intervention was focused only on the approximately 23,000 residents in Birmingham that the National Health Service (NHS) England determined were clinically vulnerable residents (those most at risk for Covid-19 implications), which left out other socially and economically vulnerable residents. A rapid response was needed at the local level that would target all vulnerable residents, but the local authority was also grappling with numerous pandemic-driven crises. The voluntary sector mobilized to rapidly respond to the crisis, which required new methods for identifying those experiencing food insecurity and expanded and more efficient emergency food distribution mechanisms.

<sup>1</sup> Food Foundation and University of Sheffield Institute for Sustainable Food, Research: <https://shefuni.maps.arcgis.com/apps/interactivelegend/index.html?appid=8be0cd9e18904c258afd3c959d6fc4d7>

## How it Works

### ***Coordinating mechanisms for voluntary sector mobilization***

- Birmingham has a robust voluntary sector, with hundreds of organisations that serve the city's most vulnerable groups (although only a small share have traditionally focused on alleviating food poverty). Before lockdown in early March of 2020, the voluntary sector realized the communities they served were facing a looming food insecurity crisis. They immediately began to share information and informally coordinate a response using WhatsApp. Many of the voluntary organisations had already partnered in various ways with each other and they were used to self-coordinating in response to crises.
- The formalization of voluntary sector coordination, with support from the local authority, was the innovation that happened during the pandemic. The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS), which had the reputation and capacity to serve as an effective mobilizer and leader of this effort in the voluntary sector, was asked by the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) (at the behest of the local authority) to lead a more formal 'Food Group' from the WhatsApp community under the banner #BrumTogether.
- The 'Food Group' initially included approximately 80 voluntary organisations working together to address food insecurity in their communities. The 'Food Group' connected with each other regularly (in-person, virtually and through WhatsApp) to share information on local food demand and coordinate the redistribution of their collective food supplies to serve those most in need. TAWS dedicated one full-time staff member to provide staffing for the 'Food Group' and TAWS facilitated group meetings, drawing from distributive leadership principles (group members assumed leadership on different issues).
- Birmingham City Council (BCC), which at the time did not have a dedicated food team, relied heavily on the voluntary sector to address the food crisis city-wide. The local authority did not have the infrastructure to quickly distribute emergency food. BCC already had a strong relationship with the voluntary sector and open channels of communication, both of which were critical for a rapid response. They knew who were trusted partners, based on previous contracts. BCC turned to BVSC, one of their "go-to champions," to set up thematic leads to coordinate the voluntary sector's community response to various emergency situations, not only food. TAWS, also a trusted partner, was asked to serve as the primary lead for the food response and became the primary point-of-contact for BCC.
- BCC eventually created a 'Food Team' led by their Public Health department in mid-2021 (as part of a larger effort to address food poverty), but initially the emergency food crisis was handled by staff in the Adult Social Care department.

### ***Key partnerships and resources to expand and modify food distribution networks***

- Two new food distribution hubs were quickly established to scale up delivery of food to vulnerable residents during lockdown. To serve all socially and economically vulnerable residents, TAWS expanded a small food distribution hub they were operating with Incredible Surplus. This hub became 'central command' for coordinating emergency food distribution and delivery efforts across the city.
- BCC also set up the 'Emergency Community Response Hub' to serve the approximately 23,000 residents deemed 'clinically vulnerable' by the National Health Service at the beginning of lockdown. As such, these residents were targeted to receive free food parcels from the national government. The national government quickly realized they needed local authorities to support a timely distribution of the parcels. BCC's hub operated alongside the TAWS-managed

hub through March 2021 to deliver national government food parcels to the 'clinically vulnerable' during each lockdown.

- TAWS had the capacity and networks to manage a city-wide initiative, but did not have food redistribution expertise. As an experienced food charity, Incredible Surplus had invaluable expertise in food redistribution, including complicated logistics and safe food storage practices, as well as actual food supplies.
- The hub managed by TAWS and Incredible Surplus became the central point for food redistribution throughout the city. Food banks and food charities brought their donated food supplies (surplus food from food stores and businesses) to the hub for redistribution. About 1/3 of bulk food received by the hub was packaged into food parcels, while 2/3 of the bulk food was redistributed back to local, voluntary organisations. The 80 or so 'Food Group' organisations came to the food hub every two weeks for bulk food that they brought back to assemble into food parcels.
- As demand continued to rise with the pandemic, especially for the shelf-stable products included in food parcels, food donations were no longer sufficient. BCC spent well over £1million on three rounds of contracts with organisations to purchase food for distribution through the food hub. The first contract went to FareShare, the second to MKG Foods, and the third directly to TAWS. TAWS and Incredible Surplus also received other government and philanthropic grants and donations to fund food purchasing and hub operations.
- BCC found the hub free physical space for their initial operations in a community health centre. However, as demand and operations evolved during the pandemic, TAWS had to secure new space, ultimately moving their operations three times—using a custard factory and university space. It was challenging finding facilities that were centrally located, accessible, had enough space to serve as a very large warehouse, floors that could endure significant weight and commercial equipment, etc.
- The hub served as the central coordinator for all food aid requests and parcel deliveries in Birmingham. All food aid requests were directed to the hub where staff then mapped out the most efficient delivery methods and routes and gave deliver instructions to local voluntary organisations. TAWS and Incredible Surplus delivered the food parcels packaged at the hub and made additional deliveries as needed to support the local voluntary organisations.
- TAWS also coordinated voluntary recruitment for the hub and for organisations in the 'Food Group.' During peak demand (summer of 2020), the hub was distributing 60 tonnes of food per week. To distribute approximately 15 tonnes of food per week, 6-10 drivers and about 8 packers per day were needed. All of these were volunteers, supplemented by staff from TAWS and Incredible Surplus.

#### ***Real-time identification of those most in need***

- TAWS set up a phone line that Birmingham residents could call to request food aid. The phone line was publicized through TAWS networks and by 'word-of-mouth.' People who received food parcel deliveries shared with others, who in turn requested support.
- BCC established an emergency control center at the start of the pandemic with a helpline and online form that Birmingham residents could use to request assistance of any type, including food. They received over 1,300 requests for food in the first week alone.<sup>2</sup> Ward-level coordinators were also tasked with monitoring food demand on a daily basis. BCC referred all food aid requests to TAWS. BCC also publicized the food distribution hubs through their own communication channels, including their website and newsletter.

- TAWS promised to deliver a food parcel within 72-hours of receiving a request, but most deliveries were made within 24-hours. Everyone that requested food was served; the food hub did not ask for proof of need. TAWS established a Food Administration Team to handle food supply and delivery logistics, as well as data collection, with a small team based at the distribution hub managing bulk orders for partner organisations and coordinating volunteer drivers and packers daily.
- Data collected from the TAWS phone line and BCC confirmed that the majority of food was delivered to the most socio-economically vulnerable residents in Birmingham. The data collected included age and ethnicity of person making the request, number of people in their household, and postal code. TAWS reported data every week to BCC, including data on daily deliveries and routes.

## Results

- BCC set up their food distribution hub within 48 hours of being asked for support from the national government. TAWS and Incredible Surplus set up the primary food distribution hub within a week of the national lockdown announcement.
- The total tonnes of food distributed to city residents increased by over 200% from March-May 2020. In addition to the approximately 23,000 clinically vulnerable people, it was estimated that food was distributed to about 21,000 additional people each week during peak activity in June 2020.
- The food parcels contained high quality food, including high protein items and tinned vegetables. FareShare provided fresh vegetables when available. Religious requirements and cultural preferences were considered when assembling food delivery parcels. All food parcels were vegetarian and dietary restrictions, such as gluten or dairy intolerance, were also considered when possible.
- The emergency food distribution initiative was the first time that such a diverse set of community based organisations in different neighborhoods coordinated their efforts to address food insecurity in the city. The informal 'Food Group' ultimately became the Food Justice Network, a group of over 200 community organisations who work together to ensure food and basic necessities are readily available to all who are in need. They are working on food justice issues locally and advocating nationally, including support for the Right To Food Campaign, a nationwide initiative to end food poverty.

By working together, instead of trying to manage it individually, the voluntary sector was able to respond to the crisis faster and more efficiently (i.e., they were able to serve more people with fewer resources). Food charities did not have the capacity or resources to easily expand to adequately respond to the food crisis. For other voluntary organisations new to emergency food aid, it would have taken them a longer period of time and significant resources to figure out food distribution.

- BCC's Food Team is collaborating with the voluntary sector to create a comprehensive emergency food plan to make the Birmingham food system more resilient (by addressing food poverty and food justice) and to ensure they are prepared for the next crisis. BCC also continues to improve their data collection on food insecurity in the city, which gives them a more accurate picture of the issue and trends.
- BCC launched the Global Cities Pledge on Food Justice at the 7th Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Global Forum. The pledge emphasizes the need for local, national, and international policies which create and support an affordable, nutritious and sustainable food system for all citizens, irrespective of social or economic grouping.

<sup>2</sup> Birmingham City Council and The Food Foundation (2020) City of Birmingham COVID-19 Emergency Food Response: A Local Authority and Voluntary Sector Partnership Approach #BumTogether

## Additional Information

**The Active Wellbeing Society**  
(TAWS): <https://theaws.co.uk/coronavirus/>

**Department of Public Health,  
Birmingham City Council  
(BCC):** [https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50119/health\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_board/2414/creating\\_a\\_healthy\\_food\\_city\\_forum/3](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50119/health_and_wellbeing_board/2414/creating_a_healthy_food_city_forum/3)

**Emergency Food Plan**  
(placeholder for link if published)

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The mission of the Feeding Cities Group is to create equitable and resilient urban food systems—globally. To learn more, please visit our website:  
[www.feedingcitiesgroup.com](http://www.feedingcitiesgroup.com)

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## Implications for Emergency Food Planning

Acting early and quickly is critical when responding to any emergency food crisis. Local authorities are unlikely to have the capacity to ‘go it alone.’ They will need to rely on the voluntary sector to both address the crisis and to signal when one arises, since they have daily connections to any city’s vulnerable populations. Likewise, voluntary organisations will need critical support and resources that only the government can provide. The following elements should be included in your city’s emergency food plan to ensure this happens:

1. During any massive crisis, government authorities will be overwhelmed dealing with response and recovery for multiple sectors (transportation, housing, etc.). To ensure a rapid, robust emergency food response, the local authority should establish a dedicated Food Team that will be able to quickly mobilize government resources, establish help lines and online help portals, act as the primary contact for the voluntary sector and collect critical data and information city-wide. This team will bring together key staff from various departments that will be needed to respond to the crisis.
2. Local authorities will not have the resources to fully address a food crisis in the midst of a massive disaster; they will need to rely on the voluntary sector. Emergency food plans should identify the voluntary organisations with the capacity and resources to manage an emergency food distribution hub. Consider food charities with extensive food distribution expertise as well as those not currently focused on alleviating food poverty but that have the capacity to lead a city-wide initiative.
3. The voluntary sector can, and typically does, self-coordinate in response to any crisis (and faster than if the government tries to do so). However, to formalize the coordination with the local authority, a communication and coordination platform should be developed before the next crisis, if one does not already exist. The platform will allow the voluntary sector and the government’s Food Team to strengthen their relationship and provide a means for quickly amplifying food crisis concerns as they arise.
4. Emergency food response is very resource intensive. Being prepared for the next crises requires having the funding in place to adequately support the response being planned. Identify potential sources of public and private funding to support capacity building within the voluntary sector during an emergency food crisis and to purchase bulk food (instead of relying on uncertain food donations). Voluntary sector organizations will need more staff, instead of relying strictly on volunteers, especially for prolonged emergencies. The emergency food hub will need specialized equipment for moving, storing, packing and distributing food. Purchasing food is more efficient, more reliable and allows more control to ensure emergency food is high quality and culturally appropriate. Further, the local authority needs to set up contracts for procurement so they can act quickly because complex government procurement channels can be cumbersome. Local authorities will need to advocate for food justice and the right to food at all times to secure more funding from the national government. Local authorities will not be able to afford funding for the voluntary sector without national government and private sector contributions.
5. Find public and private buildings that could serve as emergency food hubs. They will need to have enough capacity and infrastructure for food storage as well as accessibility for distribution. Develop emergency use agreements for the space for the duration of any crisis to prevent operation disruptions due to moving.



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# TACTICS TO TRY FOR EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING: Municipal-Level Strategies for Sustainably Feeding Refugees in Gaziantep, Turkey

The Tactics to Try series of case studies was created to complement the Emergency Food Planning webinar series presented by Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership. Tactics to Try highlight proven emergency food responses in a format that offers practitioners the most essential points for trying something similar in their own city.

## Objective

This Tactics to Try case study takes a long-term and city-level perspective on emergency food planning for refugees that highlights the complex mix of policies and strategies that need to be developed to support sustainable food access. It describes how the municipal government of Gaziantep has leveraged local, national and international resources to feed a very large Syrian refugee population for over a decade. This case study demonstrates how planning at the municipal level is critical to ensure refugees receive both immediate and long-term food aid.

## Geography

Gaziantep is the capital of the Gaziantep province, which is home to approximately [2.1 million people](#). Gaziantep is located along the southern border of Turkey about 92 kilometers north of Aleppo, Syria.

## Major Participants

The municipal government of Gaziantep, the national government of Turkey, The Gaziantep Metropolitan Food Bank, the Turkish Red Crescent, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the European Union (EU).

## How it Works

### Local control and coordination

- For the first few years, the majority of Syrian refugees were housed in refugee camps. But, as the Turkish national government moved away from an 'emergency management' mindset and began to plan for refugee support over the mid- and long-term, they supported refugees resettling outside of camps. This change in policy meant that the responsibility for caring for the resettled refugees fell more directly on local government authorities.



## Background

The outbreak of civil war in Syria in March 2011 led to millions of Syrians fleeing into neighboring nations. Almost overnight, Gaziantep, like other provinces in Turkey, had to absorb tens of thousands of unexpected refugees. In 2012, 1.7 million people lived in Gaziantep province. Today, the population has swelled to nearly 2.1 million with almost 460,000 registered Syrian refugees (representing 22% of the population). More than 3.7 million Syrian refugees have temporarily resettled throughout Turkey and over [90% live in communities outside of refugee camps](#).

The refugee camps in Turkey are run by Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Crescent with assistance from numerous national and international aid organisations. Only the most vulnerable refugees (<10%) are sheltered in camps.

Many refugees have required food aid, even after they were resettled from camps and integrated into Gaziantep, because of the [high cost of food and financial insecurity](#). Food prices in the province have increased significantly (approximately 30% by some estimates), although this is only due in part to increased demand from refugees. Turkey is also experiencing significant general inflation, caused by multiple economic factors.

Feeding refugees is complex and typically involves both locally and internationally sourced food. Gaziantep is situated in a thriving agricultural region (the so-called 'Fertile Crescent') that supports a robust food system. It is estimated by those we interviewed that about 70% of the food for refugees is sourced locally and only 30% is imported for distribution by international aid organisations (primarily for the camps). This is also supported by [WFP estimates](#).

- In Gaziantep, the refugees not only increased the demand for social services, but the rapid population growth also increased demand for food, water, housing, transportation, solid waste management, etc. The municipality needed to quickly expand the capacity of all its systems to serve more residents, which required the political support and resources of the national government. Their Mayor had previously served as a minister in parliament, which made her very effective at working with the central government.
- In late 2015, the first Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Migration Management Office (the Directorate of Migration) was established. It is a permanent government entity dedicated to providing migrants with social services, providing coordination between municipal departments, and with international institutions and NGOs, and establishing and managing 'needs-oriented' projects.
- The Directorate of Migration allows the municipal government to plan and manage refugee activities at the municipal level. Gaziantep was the first municipality in Turkey to establish such a department, which reflected their mindset that the refugee crisis was 'not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be managed.'

### A strong, diverse agricultural base

- When refugees first started arriving, Gaziantep relied on AFAD, the Turkish Red Crescent and other NGOs to provide emergency food aid. They utilized all potential sources of food, including restaurants.
- The Turkish government had already developed an emergency food plan, which was created in the 1990's in case of conflict with neighboring countries and upgraded in the early 2000's. The government was able to use this plan to guide their emergency response to mass refugee arrivals.
- Every metropolitan area in Turkey has a large warehouse of food as part of their emergency preparedness. They are actively managed by the Turkish military to ensure old food stock is used and replenished.
- Turkey is one of the world's largest agricultural producers. It produces and exports a wide variety of agricultural products, although once food self-sufficient, it has recently become a net food importer. However, there were no significant local food shortages caused by refugee demand because of the robust agricultural sector and because food exports to Russia were halted due to the Syrian conflict, creating some temporary surplus.

### Policies and programs supporting refugee self-sufficiency

- The key tenant of the municipal government's approach to refugee food security was to help refugees secure stable sources of income (including opportunities to open new businesses), which would allow them to purchase sufficient food for their families.
- Because of their proximity, Syrians had already been migrating to Gaziantep before the war seeking economic opportunities in one of the largest cities in Turkey. Turkey established a temporary protection regime for Syrian refugees beginning in 2011, granting them access to basic services such as health care and education.
- In 2016, Turkey passed the Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection. According to this regulation, refugees are entitled to apply for work permits (and also may be eligible for some work permit exemptions) six months after completing temporary protection registration. This gives refugees greater access to the formal labor market, with higher wages and better working conditions.

Although refugees [typically land in metropolitan regions](#), national governments have traditionally taken the lead in managing refugee support, in part because of national security concerns (national governments also have authority over border protection and set immigration policy). They, in turn, often receive support from large, national and international aid agencies (e.g., UN agencies (UNHCR, WFP, FAO), CARE international, etc.).

Initially, the national government and Turkish nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) provided emergency food and humanitarian aid for the refugees. As the number of Syrian refugees flooding into Turkey (and elsewhere) started to rapidly increase, the crisis received global attention and numerous aid organisations from around the world also moved in to provide support. The [UNHCR's Operational Data Portal](#) currently lists 34 organisations working on food security for Syrian refugees. Their support goes well beyond the direct provision of food—they provide financial, operational and capacity building support for all agencies and organisations directly supporting the refugees in and outside of camps.

- Work permits must be requested by employers, who need to be informed about how the process works. The employers also have to cover the costs associated with the work permit and navigate administrative requirements.
- In 2017, the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce, and other NGOs, were mobilized to help Syrians start their own businesses. The Chamber developed an innovative business support service for refugees, “The Syrian Desk,” which connected refugees with Syrian businesses. It also partnered with the EBRD, the Confederation of Danish Industry and SPARK to build their capacity to support refugee entrepreneurs and refugee-driven enterprises to grow their businesses and support an entrepreneurial culture among the refugee community.

### Cash assistance for food purchases

- All refugees (in and outside of camps) requesting any type of support have to be registered with the municipal authority and undergo a needs assessment by government social workers or an aid association (standard forms are used to create a Social Assessment Report).
- Those approved for aid are given electronic or debit cards issued by local banks. The municipal government, NGOs and aid organisations all use the same card system. Each month the cards are loaded automatically with cash and/or points based on the recipient’s needs assessment. The cards can be used to cover essential needs beyond food, including transportation, bills, health care, etc.
- The local banks are paid up front for this service, giving them the opportunity to invest and earn returns on the funds (providing an incentive to participate). The funding comes from the EU, UN agencies, Turkish Red Crescent and the national government. A national cash assistance program called the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) is funded by the EU. The IFRC, Turkish Red Crescent and the EU work in close coordination with the Government of Turkey and its Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services to administer this program.
- The municipal government cards use a point system and may only be used at the Gaziantep Metropolitan Food Bank market.
- The NGO and aid organisation cards are cash based and can be used at any food market or for ATM cash withdrawals.

## Results

- In October 2021, over [3,000 Syrians in Gaziantep](#) received in-kind or cash food assistance from international aid organisations.
- Through the [ESSN program](#), 1.5 million refugees living in Turkey receive cash assistance, allowing 77% of families to maintain an adequate and nutritious diet.
- [According to the WFP](#), refugees have been very satisfied with the cash assistance programs and appreciate being able to purchase food at local markets.
- Although the temporary protection status of refugees gives them access to work permits, the [number of permits issued to date](#) represents only a small percentage of refugees (although it continues to increase). The majority of Syrian refugees [work in the informal labor market](#).
- As of December 2019, nearly [14,000 registered businesses in Turkey were owned by Syrians](#), representing 29% of all foreign-owned companies in the country.
- Although social, political and economic tensions surround the Syrian

## Additional Information

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refugee situation, Gaziantep has received [global attention](#) as a model of a small city that successfully absorbed a large influx of refugees. The 'Gaziantep Model in Migration Management' has been recognized internationally by organisations such as [United Cities and Local Governments](#) and [OECD](#), as a successful model for other cities hosting refugees.

## Implications for Emergency Food Planning

To prepare for a sudden influx of refugees, city leaders need to plan for providing food aid both immediately and for the long-term, which involves a complex mix of policies and strategies. All urban systems, including food, will be stressed. This will require city-level solutions, partnerships and resources. The following elements should be considered as you develop your city's emergency food plan to ensure this happens:

1. Manage the immediate crisis but plan for the long-term at the outset. Most refugees [stay in their host country for more than five years](#) (in some cases longer than 20 years). Review the emergency food plans of national disaster response agencies and the relevant NGOs that will be mobilized to respond to the crisis. Explore convening a task force for better coordination and mapping all potential food sources (food assets). Consider whether the refugees will be allowed to settle outside of refugee camps, allowing them to become self-sufficient and integrated into the local economy (driving economic, not just population growth).
2. Cash assistance programs are gaining in popularity among humanitarian aid organisations because of their numerous benefits. This will increase and change demand at local markets. Do their supply chains have the flexibility and capacity to adapt? Which local banks will participate in such programs and do they have the capacity to set up a system quickly? Are social services and the voluntary sector prepared for the intake and monitoring of refugee needs and supplying adequate food if it is not available at local markets?
3. Assess whether local food production has the capacity and flexibility to meet the demand of a large refugee population. Invest in greater food self-sufficiency and/or diversifying food supply chains, as well as possibly creating an emergency food stockpiling scheme for critical commodities. What is the relative cost of locally produced food, versus imports? This will signal where aid associations will source their food aid. Imported food may erode local agricultural production.
4. Establish a dedicated migration office in city government. This office will play a key role in implementing the emergency food assistance for refugees and coordinating within government and with aid associations. A large refugee crisis generally brings support from numerous aid agencies. Involve aid associations in the planning to help define the short and long-term support they will be able to provide.

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resilient urban food systems—  
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# TACTICS TO TRY FOR EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING:

## Planning for Catastrophic Events with Lessons Learned from Puerto Rico

The Tactics to Try series of case studies was created to complement the Emergency Food Planning webinar series presented by Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership. Tactics to Try highlight proven emergency food responses in a format that offers practitioners the most essential points for trying something similar in their own city.

### Objective

This Tactics to Try case study describes the devastating effects of Hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico's food system in 2017. We provide some insights behind the startling '[All the Food Is Gone](#)' headlines that appear after catastrophic hurricanes hit any region. The lessons learned from the Puerto Rico case provide key areas for other cities to consider as they develop robust emergency food plans for natural disasters.

### Geography

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is an archipelago in the Caribbean Sea consisting of the main island, four small islands, and hundreds of cays and islets. An unincorporated territory of the United States, the island territory is only 160 km long and 55 km wide. Home to [3.19 million people](#), Puerto Rico is the smallest and easternmost island in the Greater Antilles, located in the Caribbean Sea east of the Dominican Republic and approximately 1,600 km southeast of Miami, Florida.

### Major Participants

[U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA)

[Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency](#) (PREMA)

[Banco de Alimentos Puerto Rico](#)—Puerto Rico's Food Bank

[Unidos por Puerto Rico](#)—a Puerto Rico non-profit established in the aftermath of Maria to utilize donations support individuals and small businesses devastated by natural disasters

[The World Central Kitchen](#)—a non-profit created by Chef José Andrés to provide food in the wake of disasters



## Background

On September 20, 2017 Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico. This catastrophic, category 5 hurricane devastated the island, and was the [worst storm to hit the island in over 80 years](#). The hurricane traveled across the island from coast to coast, plunging the entire island into crisis. Although Puerto Rico is in '[Hurricane Alley](#)' and always at risk of being hit by hurricanes, the government and residents were completely unprepared for a catastrophic hurricane because one had not occurred in recent memory.

Although Puerto Rico's climate could support diverse agricultural production, [89 percent](#) of food was imported in 2017. Although the island was relatively [food self-sufficient into the 1950s](#), industrialization expanded food consumption and the reliance on food imports. Puerto Rico primarily depends on food imported from the United States. As an island nation, this means almost all food is imported through its ports, which means its supply chain is very vulnerable to natural disasters. Although Puerto Rico has [22 ports](#), only one (San Juan) has a container terminal. The majority of food is [imported through San Juan from the port of Jacksonville, Florida](#).

The damage from Hurricane Maria to infrastructure on the island put Puerto Rico at significant risk for food shortages and created a critical need for emergency food aid. Air and seaports were closed immediately after the storm. The port of San Juan, where Puerto Rico would receive emergency supplies from the mainland United States, closed immediately and [did not re-open for three days](#). Heavy rains and high winds covered much of Puerto Rico's [600 miles](#) of roads in debris and water, destroying bridges and making the mountainous interior almost inaccessible. Eighty percent of the already vulnerable electrical grid was destroyed, leaving the entire island without power. The storm also [knocked out 96 percent of telecommunication cell sites](#) in Puerto Rico, leaving millions without access to any form of communication.

## How it Works

### Emergency Food Aid

- As part of the U.S., the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides emergency assistance to Puerto Rico in partnership with the Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency (PREMA). However, the degree of devastation caused by Hurricane Maria overwhelmed both FEMA and PREMA in the immediate aftermath of the storm.
- After the storm hit, FEMA was working to provide 20 percent of the population with food, water and other life-saving essentials, but by September 27 the Puerto Rico government was requesting support for 60 percent of the population.
- The situation was compounded by four important factors: (1) FEMA was facing 'unprecedented' demands on their staffing, resources and budget in 2017 as three major storms hit the United States in quick succession; FEMA's support for Hurricane Irma just two weeks prior to Hurricane Maria had [depleted FEMA's supply warehouse](#) in Puerto Rico; (2) Puerto Rico's electrical grid was in a state of crisis before the storm, meaning there were no 'quick repair' options; (3) the closing of air and seaports for the first few days delayed emergency provisions; and (4) there was significant food insecurity and poverty in Puerto Rico before the storm and the hurricane pushed even more into poverty and food insecurity.
- Once the air and seaports re-opened, emergency provisions still needed to be distributed throughout the island and the damage to the roads and fuel shortages immobilized transport trucks. Further, the lack of telecommunications made it extremely difficult for agencies to know where aid was most needed. According to some reports, some communities in the interior region of the island [waited for days for pallets of food sitting in distribution centers](#) to arrive.
- In the weeks following Hurricane Maria, FEMA [delivered 18 million shelf-stable meals](#) and sent all food and water it could procure, but this did not meet demand. In the first month after the hurricane hit, FEMA and partners were providing an estimated 600,000 meals a day, but more than two million people needed to be fed—leaving a huge gap of unfilled meals. Further, many of the meals being provided were military style 'ready-to-eat' meals, which are not designed for long-term consumption.
- The [World Central Kitchen](#), aware of the need for food aid in Puerto Rico, created a network called #ChefsForPuertoRico which began as a [small operation in Santurce](#) to feed local residents, and turned into a massive relief operation. While they originally had a FEMA contract to provide just 20,000 meals a day, they ultimately provided one million hot meals to residents after three weeks, and four million meals in total. This massive endeavor to provide hot, nutritious, culturally-appropriate meals drew on a massive network of chefs and local volunteers, restaurants, and businesses.
- From September 20, 2017 to March 31, 2018, [FEMA ultimately shipped 62,062,317 meals](#) to Puerto Rico. Although FEMA mobilized to distribute a historic amount of food and water, the [scope of problem was far larger](#) than they initially realized, and the agency [received criticism](#) for the scale and speed of their response.

### Expanded Food Bank Operations

- As FEMA, PREMA, and the Puerto Rican government struggled to effectively distribute enough food to manage the crisis, Banco de Alimentos Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico's food bank was up and running two days after Maria hit. They provided critical support, first assessing their own damages and then those of their food distribution network.

- The food bank is part of [Feeding America](#), a nationwide network of 200 member food banks and 60,000 food pantries. Feeding America supports its members through food, funds, and advocacy. [Feeding America also plays an active role in recovery efforts following major disasters](#) by providing local food organizations with food, water and trained staff, while also providing specialized disaster training for its food banks around the country.
- Within Puerto Rico, Banco de Alimentos partners with over 170 agencies in 40 municipalities to provide emergency food support to vulnerable residents. Partner agencies are chosen to cover the largest possible geographical area for distribution, ensuring fewer residents who are unable to access food.
- Initially, Puerto Rico's food bank also faced a food shortage. Like all food banks, they struggle to meet demand for food aid in normal times. Prior to the hurricane, it was estimated that Puerto Ricans were [four times more likely to be food insecure](#) than the U.S. average. After Hurricane Maria, it was estimated that 85 percent of Puerto Ricans were food insecure.
- In addition, the main anti-hunger program in Puerto Rico is different from the system in the rest of the U.S. Puerto Rico receives [capped funding for its Nutrition Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) about 25 percent less than funding for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Not only is the total amount of funding less, but it also provides a fixed amount of money, regardless of the need (including hurricanes). One study provided by FEMA estimated that up to 70 percent of Puerto Ricans could need food assistance after the hurricane. The hurricane pushed more people into poverty and caused an increase in food prices.
- The food bank was also housed in small (22,000 square feet), sub-standard facilities that limited their ability to store and distribute enough food to meet the island's needs. According to the President of the food bank, "it was a miracle that the buildings withstood the hurricane."
- With local and international donations flooding into Puerto Rico after the hurricane, food supply became less of an issue than storing and distributing food. The port quickly became jammed with emergency provisions.
- In the first few months following the hurricane, the breakdown of communications systems made it difficult for municipal leaders to communicate needs to the central government, creating a need for non-profit organizations and food banks to step in with small volunteer crews to inventory and distribute emergency food.
- Banco de Alimentos organized the island into a grid system, distributing emergency food to regional centers that would then distribute the food more locally.
- A new non-profit, Unidos por Puerto Rico, was established in 2017 by a well-connected group of Puerto Rico leaders, to be able to consolidate and manage monetary donations under a well-organized umbrella. As is the case in many disasters, the sudden influx of massive donations causes its own sets of challenges. In the aftermath of the hurricane, [many new grant making non-profits were created](#) in Puerto Rico.
- Unidos por Puerto Rico provided Banco de Alimentos with \$2 million, and coordinated with capital donors who contributed over \$3 million, totaling a \$5.3 million investment in the food bank's new distribution center.

## Grocery Store Closures and Reopening

- The majority of the island did not regain power until nearly four months later in January 2018. The blackouts did not end for most until August of 2018, when [PREPA announced it had reconnected all customers](#) to the electrical grid. However, power outages still plague the island. · In the first week following the storm, only a [small number of grocery stores](#) were prepared and had access to generators and fuel to run them. However, even the grocery stores that had generators soon ran out of fuel to operate them. Further, none of the commercial back-up generators were designed to operate continuously for weeks on end. In the immediate aftermath of the hurricane, daily fuel consumption jumped more than [40 percent](#), as people were relying on generators to power their stores and homes. Fuel tankers were [delivering with security escorts](#). Initially, fuel was rationed until the Secretary of Consumer Affairs made rationing illegal and extended curfew for delivery vehicles, which improved the flow of fuel on the island.
- Many grocery stores on the island, even large, corporate supermarkets such as those [owned by Walmart](#), were not able to access generators or emergency fuel.
- Without electricity, food stores were unable to power refrigeration and freezer units to safely store perishable food. Likewise, households also did not have power, meaning they were unable to safely store perishable food. · The transition to stocking shelf-stable food products was also difficult. [Puerto Rico has an inventory tax](#) that limits the amount of excess inventory that grocery stores and warehouses can stockpile. The island was only able to hold a 30-day supply of grocery items at the time Maria hit, quickly causing food shortages.
- One week after the hurricane, [most grocery stores on the island remained closed](#), without reliable access to generators and fuel. Those open [quickly ran out of food, both fresh and shelf-stable, and water](#).
- The state of the roads and the ports in Puerto Rico created significant problems for food and fuel distribution to keep grocery stores running, as trucks now had to navigate dangerous roads to make their deliveries, even paving new routes in some cases.
- Without electricity and telecommunications, the grocery stores that were able to re-open within days of the hurricane were unable to process bank card payments. Likewise, the lack of cellular and wireless services left millions [unable to use credit, debit, and Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) cards](#) to purchase food. This effectively turned the island into a [cash-only economy](#), and left the most vulnerable residents of the island, who rely on their PAN (Puerto Rico's Nutrition Assistance Program) cards to feed themselves and their families, without reliable access to food.
- By November 6, over one month after the storm, [89 percent of grocery stores had re-opened](#). Some stores began offering items on [a credit system](#), to be paid back when communications systems could process bank and PAN cards. The [major fuel terminals were operating at or well above levels prior to the storm](#) by mid-October, allowing stores to use their generators (if they had them) for power.
- To support the private sector and avoid sustained dependency on FEMA-supplied food, FEMA developed a 'Food Availability Index' to assess the local food system in each of Puerto Rico's 78 municipalities. The index supported data-driven decisions on food distribution.

## Implications for Emergency Food Planning

To prepare for catastrophic disasters, emergency food response and recovery plans need to be aligned with broader emergency management plans and prioritized within those plans. The plans need to leverage all food assets to ensure residents will have access to food over an extended period—months if not years. The following elements should be considered as you develop your city's emergency food plan to ensure this happens:

1. During any massive crisis, government authorities will be overwhelmed dealing with response and recovery for multiple sectors (transportation, housing, etc.). Without an emergency food plan in place, government leaders will be forced to scramble and provide inequitable, inefficient solutions. To ensure a rapid, robust emergency food response, the local authority should establish a dedicated Food Team that will be able to quickly mobilize government and non-governmental resources, establish help lines and online help portals, act as the primary contact for the voluntary sector and collect critical data and information city-wide. This team will bring together key staff from various departments that will be needed to respond to the food system crisis (e.g., public health, transportation). The government team should also seek input, or include, relevant non-profit and private sector stakeholders who are critical in assessing need and delivering food resources, such as food banks, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, relevant food manufacturing and retail trade associations, and in the United States, state or local Voluntary Organisations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
2. Establish a plan for rapid assessment of need and response that is independent of telecommunications. It is critical to have a fully developed plan, that has been communicated to key stakeholders throughout your city, that will be implemented without communication. Cities will need to be broken down into areas small enough to canvass physically (e.g., the grid system used in Puerto Rico). Key liaisons for each area should be established. Create a database of vulnerable community members (relying on food assistance and healthcare providers) and plan to provide shelf-stable food assistance immediately to them in the event of a disaster.
3. For catastrophic events that capture the world's attention, critical donations of supplies and money often follow. Establish or identify charity (grant-making) organisations that have the capacity to manage the donations and redistribute donations. Food banks will play a critical role. Review your food bank's capacity to support the storage and redistribution of food aid and donated funds to purchase food. What criteria will be used and what are the logistics for food distribution? New storage facilities, equipment and experienced workers will be needed to handle the food distribution. They may be needed now, especially if the food bank is located in areas at risk of impact, in sub-standard facilities. Plan how to fully leverage support from [The Global FoodBanking Network](#).
4. Review the national government's emergency food plans for your city. Are sufficient resources for a catastrophic event accessible? Set up warehouse facilities with enough rations of nutritious, shelf-stable food items to distribute in the event of infrastructure failure. Have plans in place for temporary cold storage of perishable food items. Most plans involve moving resources from unaffected areas to those hardest hit. What happens when the entire region or country is decimated? With climate change, natural disasters are increasing in frequency and severity. The storms are massive in scope. Plans also need to account for multiple natural disasters, which deplete resources. In their report on the 2017 hurricane season, FEMA describes struggling to manage relief efforts for a record breaking hurricane season, with [nearly five million people applying for assistance](#). Emergency management leaders should also plan to engage with local food banks



5. Grocery stores need solid emergency plans, not just generators. Even national chains should be required to submit their response and recovery plans for review. Generators, fuel reserves, transitioning to more shelf-stable products, workforce considerations and alternative payment systems all need to be considered in the plan. Stores may be without power for months, not days. National or international grocery stores will not always have the resources (or the incentive) to re-open their stores immediately. They will also be relying on emergency aid. Smaller grocery stores may be more nimble and more committed to their community, but may not have the capacity or resources either to re-open.

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The mission of the Feeding Cities Group is to create equitable and resilient urban food systems—globally. To learn more, please visit our website:  
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# TACTICS TO TRY FOR EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING: Using a Global System for Monitoring and Multisector Engagement for Addressing Food Insecurity in Yemen

The Tactics to Try series of case studies was created to complement the Emergency Food Planning webinar series presented by Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership. Tactics to Try highlight proven emergency food responses in a format that offers practitioners the most essential points for trying something similar in their own city.

## Objective

This Tactics to Try examines the role of two comprehensive and standardized tools that are used to monitor food insecurity during humanitarian crises in more than 30 countries, including Yemen, and an approach to multisector engagement that sustainably addresses chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. A country in the midst of a prolonged civil war, Yemen offers interesting insights into strategies for addressing chronic food insecurity.

## Geography

The Republic of Yemen is a Middle Eastern country on the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by Saudi Arabia and Oman, and has a population of approximately [30 million people](#). Yemen is divided into 21 governorates and one municipality. The Hajjah governorate, 123 kilometers from the capital city Sana'a, is located in the northwest of Yemen bordering Saudi Arabia and the Red Sea. Hajjah is divided into 31 administrative districts, and has a population of approximately [2.1 million](#) people. The majority of residents in the Hajjah governorate live in rural areas, with only [10 percent](#) of the population living in urban centers.

## Major Participants

### [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#)

A multi-partner initiative and analytical tool for improving food security and nutrition globally

### [Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions \(SMART\)](#)

A multi-agency initiative providing standardized survey methods and resources for host governments and humanitarian organisations

### [Famine Early Warning Systems \(FEWS\) Network](#)

A USAID organisation that provides evidence based analyses to agencies responding to acute food insecurity

## Background

Yemen is currently experiencing one of the [world's largest humanitarian crises](#). Major political changes and civil unrest in 2011 erupted into widespread conflict in 2015, dividing the country, spurring extreme economic instability and rising unemployment, and resulting in an unprecedented food security crisis. According to a 2021 [Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNO\)](#), 20.7 million people rely on humanitarian assistance, 12.1 million of whom face acute malnutrition. Critical levels of acute malnutrition affected nearly one third of all districts and it is estimated that [56 percent](#) of Yemenis suffer from severe levels of food insecurity (crisis, emergency, and famine levels). Yemenis living in rural and conflict-affected regions are most affected by severe food insecurity and malnutrition.

In addition, the [Yemeni Rial continued to depreciate](#) causing food prices to rise and exacerbating the already dire nutritional situation. Yemen's domestic food production only covers approximately [30 percent](#) of its total food needs, but importing food into Yemen remains logistically and economically difficult. Yemen has been experiencing a [significant fuel shortage](#) and the country is in danger of [losing their import financing mechanism](#), which allows Yemen to access credit to pay for imported goods.

In recent years, with widespread conflict and economic deterioration, Yemen has increasingly relied on international partners, including various U.N. agencies, to help address the food crisis.

### [Scaling Up Nutrition \(SUN\) Yemen](#)

Part of a global movement seeking new ways to collaboratively end malnutrition in Yemen

### [Scaling Up Nutrition \(SUN\) Yemen Business Network](#)

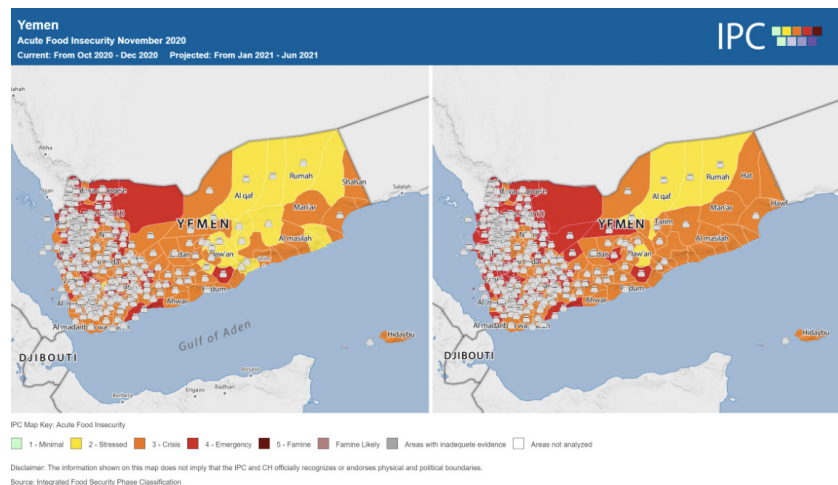
A multi-sector initiative focused on improving nutrition through business partnership

## How it Works

### An objective tool for monitoring food insecurity

- The Yemen government and international partners have relied on the IPC since 2011 to monitor food insecurity conditions within the country and help them make data-informed decisions about interventions.
- IPC produces reports on acute malnutrition and acute food insecurity conditions covering a six-month period with projections for the following six months. It is planned as an annual exercise, but timing varies depending on data limitations due to the ongoing conflict. Conditions are reported at the administrative district level within each governorate and municipality, data permitting.
- The IPC is a standardized, comprehensive monitoring tool that seeks consensus on local conditions from multiple stakeholder perspectives. Governments, U.N. agencies, nongovernmental organisations, the civil sector and other organisations and experts collaborate to determine the severity and magnitude of food insecurity, subscribing to scientific standards to guide their efforts.
- The IPC was developed in 2004 for the FAO's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit in Somalia. It now comprises a global partnership of 15 organisations and is used in over 30 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. This type of tool is critical because it provides a comprehensive, reliable, objective method for monitoring food insecurity in complex, political contexts.
- [In Yemen](#), the IPC Acute Food Insecurity scale is hosted under the Food Security Technical Secretariat with the support of the FAO-FSIS Programme. It is managed by the National Technical Working Group (NTWG), which includes more than 10 organisations (FAO, WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, CARE, Mercy Corps, NRC, Oxfam, SUN, SC, Relief International, and Food Security and Nutrition Clusters).
- According to IPC, the process in Yemen has an average participation of about 70 analysts, including experts in agriculture, livestock, nutrition, food security, statisticians, engineers, economists, markets, water and sanitation and other persons familiar with the local conditions.
- The IPC primarily relies on Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys. A network of organisations and humanitarian practitioners developed SMART in 2002 to improve and standardize survey methodology for rapid assessments of humanitarian crises. SMART also advocates a multi-partner approach to collecting and analyzing data and establishing shared systems and resources within countries.
- Data limitations are a problem and some systemic data that IPC uses in other countries is either not available in Yemen or difficult to collect. Local government authorities may also [interfere with data collection](#), manipulate data or completely block data collection, which means not all of the data is independent and may not be reliable. The IPC [process also has been criticized](#) for a lack of data sharing and transparency, compiling data from different time periods.

- Although Yemen has implemented SMART surveys for several years, some report [capacity gaps](#) that may constrain the implementation of the SMART surveys. The surveys do require staff with knowledge of the SMART methodology and skills in data collection. A [food security outlook for Yemen in 2020](#) noted that no recent SMART surveys had been conducted at that time, although this was largely due to the pandemic.



### Local predictions of famine conditions

- The Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), developed and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is part of the IPC global partnership. FEWS NET provides [additional analysis of famine conditions in Yemen](#).
- FEWS NET [scenario-analysis](#) is used to develop eight-month predictions for different regions within Yemen. The projections are based on a set of assumptions about events, their impact, and expected responses from stakeholders. They also require data on current conditions, including food prices, fuel availability, recent harvest levels, and any existing humanitarian assistance programs.
- FEWS NET analysts gather data from a variety of sources, including U.S. science agencies, national ministries of trade and agriculture, international organisations, and non- governmental organisations (NGOs). FEWS also employs people to monitor localized data, such as food prices or rainfall, and will collaborate with partners to develop household surveys and assessments as additional sources of data.
- In the [most recent report](#), the Hajjah Governorate is noted as an area of significant concern. FEWS models predict an increasing severity of food insecurity due to a combination of declining economic conditions, continuing conflict, and flooding.
- Protracted conflict in the Hajjah Governorate has caused loss of livelihoods, created a fuel shortage and restricted access to infrastructure, preventing the movement and sale of agricultural goods. Flooding in Hajjah city in 2020 affected over [5,353 households approximately 30,000 people](#)), destroying infrastructure and homes, killing livestock, and disrupting humanitarian aid in the area. While prices of imported cereals have remained relatively stable following a [five percent increase](#) from March to May of 2020, crop production levels remain significantly lower than pre-conflict levels.
- As of September 2020, within the Hajjah region [40 percent of households rated borderline on the Food Consumption Score \(FCS\)](#), and in the most affected district, [25 percent of children were suffering from moderate acute](#)



[malnutrition \(MAM\) and 10 percent were suffering severe acute malnutrition \(SAM\).](#)

- The latest FEWS report indicates that [crisis level \(IPC Phase 3\) food security outcomes are likely to continue](#) in the Hajjah Governorate for the first four months of their October 2020- May 2021 predictions, noting that in the start of the 'lean season,' or the time of year between planting and harvest when food becomes scarce, there will likely be a decline in food and labor availability. In the latter four months of the October 2020-May 2021 analysis period, there will likely be an [increase in food insecurity](#) to IPC Phase 4 (emergency level), due to reduced humanitarian assistance and the lean season.

### **Multisector engagement to sustainably address food insecurity**

- Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) is a global movement of government leaders and their partner organisations that was established in 2010 to end all forms of malnutrition by promoting a multi-sectoral, country-led approach. The initiative was motivated by the global financial crisis and rapidly rising food prices that exacerbated food insecurity and nutrition crises around the world. Following the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, political leaders came together around a commitment to end hunger and began the collaborative process that coalesced into the SUN movement, generating the publication of the first SUN policy brief: [Scaling Up Nutrition: A Framework for Action](#) in 2010. With over 100 endorsements and engagement from donors, civil society, U.N. agencies, and governments, the SUN movement was formalised through the first [Movement Strategy](#) in 2012, which continues to provide the guiding framework for the SUN movement.
- The SUN model is structured around four separate networks globally, which are then mirrored in the countries it works: (1) the United Nations Network, responsible for achieving U.N. nutrition goals; (2) the Donor Network, which brings donors together around the shared goal of ending malnutrition; (3) the Civil Society Network, which brings national and international aid and humanitarian organisations together in support of ending hunger; and (4) the Business Network, which engages private sector businesses to invest in ending hunger. Globally, SUN is managed by the SUN Secretariat and [Principles of Engagement](#) are used to guide government and partner agencies.
- Yemen joined the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in 2012 in response to ongoing critical malnutrition issues in the country . SUN is part of the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) that manages the IPC process. The IPC analysis, supplemented by other factors, helps them target certain geographies.
- SUN partnered with key ministries in the Yemeni government, and provided technical assistance, to finalize the country's first [Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan \(MSNAP\)](#) in 2020 (first developed in 2014), as well as an associated costed common results framework, a monitoring and evaluation plan and an advocacy strategy and action plan. The plan is based on the concept that reduction of malnutrition requires coordination and collaboration among multiple sectors and aligning development and humanitarian responses.
- The SUN Secretariat recommends close ties between public and private sectors, especially small- and medium-sized private enterprises that can work to support the promotion of food and nutrition through business and provide input and insights into emergency food plans.
- Establishing the SUN Yemen Business Network began in 2019 to help reduce pressure on an already overextended government. The SUN Yemen

Business Network will engage private sector organisations in a formalized structure to support the MSNAP. The [Federation of Yemen Chambers of Commerce and Industry](#) is closely involved in operationalizing the SUN Yemen Business Network.

- The private sector businesses engaged in the Business Network thus far include food companies, corporations, banks, trade associations and agricultural and fishery unions. They have also reached out to women-owned small businesses (SMEs) because of their predominance in the food industry and support from UNDP.
- Organisations that support SMEs in Yemen found gaps in food safety and nutrition knowledge, especially in start-ups targeting food for children. MSNAP includes a pledge from businesses to comply with food quality and safety standards, as well as a commitment to promote the International Code of Marketing for Breast Milk Substitutes for improving infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices.
- The SUN Business Network global guidelines were used as a model for Yemen. The SUN network did not consider setting up a Business Network in a conflict area like Yemen feasible at first, but now they realize its importance and feasibility. SUN Business Network-Yemen was not formally launched due to the pandemic and fund limitations from declining global aid. Since then, SUN and the U.N. World Food Programme-Yemen are discussing the most efficient approach to establishing the Business Network in Yemen. They are planning to target local businesses all over the country through a decentralized model.

## Results

- IPC and FEWS NET are independent and objective sources of information that allow the Yemen government and national and international partners to more accurately monitor the food crisis in the country in a timely manner and plan accordingly. This type of information allows for data-informed decisions by the government and more efficient interventions by national and international food aid partners.
- Yemen's partnership with SUN has led to the formation of new government structures dedicated to addressing the food security crisis, increased government engagement with multiple stakeholders to address food insecurity, increased analyses and mapping of the situation, the creation of a common results framework, and development of a cost analysis of planned interventions. Of particular importance is the country's first Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MSNAP), which was finalized in 2020.
- Yemen has shown the SUN network the feasibility and importance of creating a Business Network in a conflict area. During the war, food businesses flourished. There are more local food businesses post-conflict because (1) it is difficult for people to travel beyond their neighborhood to access food; (2) food businesses are a relatively easy business to establish, (3) there is a high rate of unemployment among youth and women; and (4) there is still local demand—people still need to eat, even during conflict. It may be one of the few strong sectors that can be leveraged by the government.
- New partnerships between the private food sector and the government are being established to jointly address food insecurity and malnutrition.

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Group is to create equitable and  
resilient urban food systems—  
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## Implications for Emergency Food Planning

Monitoring and adaptive planning is critical when managing emergency food in a chronic food insecurity context. When chronic food insecurity is part of a national humanitarian crisis, the national government and international aid organisations will be the major players driving the response. However, planning and response demands engagement from local government authorities as well. The following elements should be included in your country and municipality's emergency food planning:

1. Objective and reliable data, collected at local levels, is needed to accurately monitor the location, severity and scale of food insecurity and malnutrition. For some countries, especially those overwhelmed by natural disasters, economic collapse or conflict, they may need the additional capacity and technical expertise of international organisations. Planning should include how best to support and engage in networks such as IPC of FEWS NET. These connections are especially important during disasters or conflict when countries may need to rely on external sources of data because of barriers to data collection. The volatile conditions in Yemen have constrained regular data collection and IPC has had to rely on partners at the global level for their data.
2. Multi-sector approaches are necessary to address chronic food insecurity, emergency food provisions and malnutrition. Governments do not have the capacity to address these issues in isolation; they need to partner with international organisations, the civil sector and private businesses to efficiently provide food, social services and education on nutrition. Public-private partnerships can leverage assets to invest more and create outcomes with greater impact.
3. National emergencies, disasters and conflicts still require local actions for local interventions to address chronic food insecurity, malnutrition and the need for emergency food. National governments are generally overwhelmed and lack the capacity and resources to effectively engage at the local level. Local authorities and organisations also have the best knowledge of the situation and relationships for implementing interventions. Planning for emergency food needs to happen at the local level and should be supported by and coordinated with national government planning.
4. In addition to investing in farms and fisheries, investing in food start-ups and women-owned food businesses can be important long-term investments that address both chronic food shortages, malnutrition and unemployment/low income levels (an underlying cause of food security). The food sector is often one of the most resilient because it provides a basic human need. During a conflict, it may be one of the few strong sectors that can be leveraged by the government.

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# TACTICS TO TRY FOR EMERGENCY FOOD PLANNING: A Roadmap for Creating Your City's Emergency Food Response And Recovery Plan

The Tactics to Try series of case studies was created to complement the Emergency Food Planning webinar series presented by Food Cities 2022 Learning Partnership. Tactics to Try highlight proven emergency food responses in a format that offers practitioners the most essential points for trying something similar in their own city.

## Objective

The final Tactics to Try in our series synthesizes key learnings from the webinar series and resources curated for the [Learning Platform](#). We have organized them into a 'roadmap' for city leaders—to catalyze their journey towards creating their own emergency food response and recovery plan. It is offered as a starting point. Cities will need to seek out additional resources and expertise to make their plans a reality.

## Emergency Food Planning Guidance

### 1. Gaining 'Authorisation' and Coalition Building

- Some cities—especially those that have not recently experienced a food crisis—may need to start by building a case, or value proposition, for an emergency plan centered around the provision of food. The following considerations may be used for justification:
  - Planning for emergency food needs to happen at the local level and should be supported by and coordinated with national government planning.** National emergencies, disasters and conflicts still require local actions for local interventions to address chronic food insecurity, malnutrition and the need for emergency food. During a crisis, national governments are generally overwhelmed and lack the capacity and resources to effectively engage at the local level. Local authorities and organisations also have the best knowledge of the situation and relationships for implementing interventions.
  - Acting early and quickly is critical when responding to any emergency crisis.** During a massive crisis, government authorities will be overwhelmed dealing with response and recovery for multiple sectors (transportation, housing, etc.). Without an emergency food plan in place, government leaders will be forced to scramble and provide inequitable, inefficient solutions.



- **Emergency food situations are increasing in duration, lasting months and years, not days or week.** To prepare, city leaders need to plan for providing food aid both immediately and for the long term, which involves a complex mix of policies and strategies. All urban systems, including food, will be stressed.
- Local authorities are unlikely to have the capacity to 'go it alone.' They will not have the resources to fully address a food crisis in the midst of a massive disaster. They will need to rely on the voluntary sector (international aid organisations as well as national and local charitable organisations) to both address the crisis and to signal when one arises, since charitable organisations (local nonprofits) have daily connections to any city's vulnerable populations. Likewise, voluntary organisations will need critical support and resources that only the government can provide. Consensus among government and aid agencies on how residents should prepare for disasters is also a crucial aspect of emergency preparations.
- In addition, it is critical when addressing food situations that governments also partner with private businesses, since they are the backbone of food systems. Public-private partnerships can leverage assets to invest more and create outcomes with greater impact.

## 2. Establishing Ownership and Leadership

- To ensure a rapid, robust emergency food response, the local authority should establish a dedicated, government Food Team that will be able to quickly mobilize government resources, establish help lines and online help portals, act as the primary contact for other sectors and collect critical data and information city-wide. This team will bring together key staff from various departments that will be needed to respond to food system crisis (e.g., public health, transportation). Some staff should be permanently deployed to the Food Team to manage it during non-emergency times.
- For refugee situations, establish a dedicated migration office in city government. This office will play a key role in implementing the emergency food assistance for refugees and coordinating within government and with aid associations. A large refugee crisis generally brings support from numerous aid agencies. Involve aid associations in the planning to help define the short and long-term support they will be able to provide.
- To prepare for catastrophic disasters, emergency food response and recovery plans need to be aligned with broader government emergency management plans and prioritized within those plans.
- The government team should also seek input, or include, relevant non-profit and private sector stakeholders who are critical in assessing need and delivering food resources, such as food banks, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, relevant food manufacturing and retail trade associations, and in the United States, state or local Voluntary Organisations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
- Emergency food plans should clearly identify the voluntary organisations with the capacity and resources to manage an emergency food distribution hub (with current contact information). Consider food charities with extensive food distribution expertise as well as those not currently focused on alleviating food poverty but that have the capacity to lead a city-wide initiative.
- Grocery stores also need solid emergency plans, not just generators. Even national chains should be required to submit their response and recovery plans for review. Generators, fuel reserves, transitioning to more shelf-stable products, workforce considerations and alternative payment systems all need to be considered in the plan. Stores may be without power for months, not days. National or international grocery stores will not always have the resources (or the incentive) to re-open their stores immediately. They will also be relying on emergency aid. Smaller grocery stores may be more nimble and more committed to their community, but may not have the capacity or resources either to re-open.

### 3. Building Communication and Monitoring Infrastructure

- The voluntary sector can, and typically does, self-coordinate in response to any crisis. However, to formalize the coordination with the local authority, a communication and coordination platform should be developed before the next crisis, if one does not already exist. The platform will allow the voluntary sector and the government's Food Team to strengthen their relationship and provide a means for quickly amplifying food crisis concerns as they arise.
- Establish a plan for rapid assessment of need and response that is independent of telecommunications. It is critical to have a fully developed plan that has been communicated to key stakeholders throughout your city and that will be implemented without communication. Cities will need to be broken down into areas small enough to canvass physically. Key liaisons for each area should be established. Create a database of vulnerable community members (relying on food assistance and healthcare providers) and plan to provide shelf-stable food assistance immediately to them in the event of a disaster.
- Objective and reliable data, collected at local levels, is needed to accurately monitor the location, severity and scale of food insecurity. For some countries, especially those overwhelmed by natural disasters, economic collapse or conflict, they may need the additional capacity and technical expertise of international organisations. Planning should include how best to support and engage in networks such as IPC or FEWS NET. These connections are especially important during disasters or conflict when countries may need to rely on external sources of data because of barriers to data collection.

### 4. Securing Resources

- Emergency food response is very resource intensive. Being prepared for the next crises requires having the funding in place to adequately support the response being planned. Identify potential sources of public and private funding to support capacity building within the voluntary sector during an emergency food crisis and to purchase bulk food (instead of relying on uncertain food donations).
- Voluntary sector organizations will need more staff, instead of relying strictly on volunteers, especially for prolonged emergencies. The emergency food hub will need specialized equipment for moving, storing, packing and distributing food. Purchasing food is more efficient, more reliable and allows more control to ensure emergency food is high quality and culturally appropriate.
- The local authority needs to set up contracts for procurement so they can act quickly because complex government procurement channels can be cumbersome. Local authorities will need to advocate for food justice and the right to food at all times to secure more funding from the national government. Local authorities will not be able to afford funding for the voluntary sector without national government and private sector contributions.
- Identify public and private buildings that could serve as emergency food hubs. They will need to have enough capacity and infrastructure for food storage as well as accessibility for distribution. Develop emergency use agreements for the space for the duration of any crisis to prevent operation disruptions due to moving.
- Cash assistance programs are gaining in popularity among humanitarian aid organisations because of their numerous benefits. This will increase and change demand at local markets. Do their supply chains have the flexibility and capacity to adapt? Which local banks will participate in such programs and do they have the capacity to set up a system quickly? Are social services and the voluntary sector prepared for the intake and monitoring of refugee needs and supplying adequate food if it is not available at local markets?
- For catastrophic events that capture the world's attention, critical donations of supplies and money often follow. Establish or identify charity (grant-

## Additional Information

### FOOD CITIES 2022 Learning

**Platform:** For access to the entire series, all Tactics to Try and accompanying resources click the Emergency Food Planning tab on the Learning Platform.

<https://www.bit.ly/FC2022>

### Milan Urban Food Policy Pact:

<https://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/>

### RUAF:

<https://www.ruaf.org/>

**C40:** <https://www.c40.org/>

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making) organisations that have the capacity to manage the donations and redistribute donations.

- Food banks will play a critical role. Review your food bank's capacity to support the storage and redistribution of food aid and donated funds to purchase food. What criteria will be used and what are the logistics for food distribution? New storage facilities, equipment and experienced workers will be needed to handle the food distribution. They may be needed now, especially if the food bank is located in areas at risk of impact, in sub-standard facilities. Plan how to fully leverage support from [The Global FoodBanking Network](#).
- Review the national government's emergency food plans for your city. Are sufficient resources for a catastrophic event accessible? Set up warehouse facilities with enough rations of nutritious, shelf-stable food items to distribute in the event of infrastructure failure. Have plans in place for temporary cold storage of perishable food items. Most plans involve moving resources from unaffected areas to those hardest hit. What happens when the entire region or country is decimated?
- With climate change, natural disasters are increasing in frequency and severity. The storms are massive in scope. Plans also need to account for multiple natural disasters, which deplete resources. Emergency management leaders should also plan to engage with local food banks in the development of their emergency food plan, so they can leverage the food bank's distribution network for staged supplies.

## 5. Planning and Investing for the Long Run

- Manage the immediate crisis but plan for the long-term at the outset. [For example, most refugees stay in their host country for more than five years](#) (in some cases longer than 20 years). Review the emergency food plans of national disaster response agencies and the relevant international aid organisations that will be mobilized to respond to the crisis. Plans should include mapping all potential food sources (food assets). To prepare for catastrophic disasters, plans need to leverage all food assets to ensure residents will have access to food over an extended period—months if not years.
- In the example of refugees, consider whether they should be allowed to settle outside of refugee camps, allowing them to become self-sufficient and integrated into the local economy (driving economic, not just population growth) and relieving food insecurity.
- Assess whether local food production has the capacity and flexibility to meet the demand of a large refugee population. Invest in greater food self-sufficiency and/or diversifying food supply chains, as well as possibly creating an emergency food stockpiling scheme for critical commodities. What is the relative cost of locally produced food, versus imports? This will signal where aid associations will source their food aid. Imported food may erode local agricultural production.
- In addition to investing in farms and fisheries, investing in food start-ups and women-owned food businesses can be important long-term investments that address both chronic food shortages, malnutrition and unemployment/low income levels (an underlying cause of food security). The food sector is often one of the most resilient because it provides a basic human need. During a conflict, it may be one of the few strong sectors that can be leveraged by the government.