

A Systemic Evaluation of the Food Bank Program of the Social Service of Commerce in Pernambuco, Brazil

Programa Banco de Alimentos do Serviço Social do Comércio em Pernambuco: uma abordagem sistêmica

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Abstract

The Food Bank of the Social Service of Commerce (SESC) of Pernambuco aims to reduce food waste through the promotion and diffusion of sustainable practices and social action, reduce the number of people who are in situation of Food Insecurity, train beneficiary organizations with regard to handling and full use of food and the promotion of healthy eating habits. Food donated by companies has no commercial value, but it keeps its nutritional properties unchanged. In Brazil, SESC created the Food Bank Program based on philanthropy and social action, aiming at the expansion and consolidation of a network of solidarity formed by public institutions, volunteers, private sector and social institutions such as churches, shelters, asylums and orphanages. This paper aims to analyze the inter-relationships in the cooperation and operation of the Program, based on the Theory of Systems. The results showed that the program keeps a network of solidarity and partnerships in the public and private spheres, which corroborates the maintenance of social actions and practices that guarantee its sustainability.

Keywords: Food Bank. Food Security. Systems Theory. Food Wastefulness.

Resumo

O Banco de Alimentos do Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC) de Pernambuco tem como objetivo reduzir o desperdício de alimentos, por meio da promoção e difusão de práticas sustentáveis e da ação social; reduzir o número de pessoas que se encontram em situação de Insegurança Alimentar; capacitar entidades beneficiárias no que concerne a manipulação e aproveitamento total dos alimentos e a promoção de hábitos alimentares saudáveis. Os alimentos doados pelas empresas não têm valor comercial, mas mantêm inalteradas suas propriedades nutricionais. No Brasil, o SESC criou o Programa Banco de Alimentos, pautado na filantropia e na ação social, visando a ampliação e consolidação de uma rede de solidariedade formada por entidades públicas, voluntariado, iniciativa privada e instituições sociais como igrejas, abrigos, asilos e orfanatos. O propósito deste trabalho é analisar as inter-relações na cooperação e funcionamento do programa, tendo como fundamento a Teoria dos Sistemas. Os resultados indicaram que o programa mantém uma rede de solidariedade e parcerias na esfera pública e privada, que corrobora com a manutenção das ações sociais e das práticas que garantem sua sustentabilidade.

Palavras-chave: Banco de Alimentos. Segurança Alimentar. Teoria dos Sistemas. Desperdício de Alimentos.

Introduction

Hunger is the cruelest face of social inequality and poverty. Lack of access to food is associated with lack of money to purchase foods.¹ Many factors that hamper access to food are related to structural and institutional causes, nonexistent public policies to fight hunger or an efficient management of the programs that fight hunger. In Brazil, income inequality and increasing unemployment rates are causes of hunger in part of the Brazilian population, especially in the poorest states of northeastern region, where, added to the socioeconomic factors, there are climate issues.²

The problem of hunger in Brazil is rooted in the historical-political process of the economy, which prioritized to direct production to the external market to the detriment of the domestic market.² In addition, there is the problem of wealth distribution – 10% of the Brazilian population absorbs 41% of the gross national income.³ The problem of hunger is associated with unequal income distribution, food prices policy which mostly favors commodities, the precarious conditions of quality of life, which contributes to high levels of poverty, and intensification of social ills.²

In this context, the State is responsible for guaranteeing the minimum necessary for the survival of these populations, considering that food is a fundamental human right. The human right to food was approved in 2010 by the Constitutional Amendment no. 64, which included food in Article 6 of the Federal Constitution of Brazil.

The human right to adequate food consists of everyone's physical and economic access to foods and resources such as employment and land, in order that access to food is provided continuously.⁴ This right includes the most diverse forms of access to water for production and consumption. Saying that food must be adequate means that it should be pertinent to the context and the cultural, social, economic, climatic and ecological conditions of every individual or social group.⁵ However, the Law itself does not ensure in practice that there is a guarantee of rights, which represents a challenge for society, public and private institutions to mitigate the problem of access to adequate food.⁶

Food wastes throughout the Brazilian production chain reach 40 thousand tons per day.⁷ The causes of food losses vary all over the world, from production/cultivation, going through the distribution channels, sales, until reaching consumers and their consumption practices, that is, food losses occur from harvest to the consumers table.⁸

Data from FAO report (2011)⁹ show that a third of the foods produced for human consumption are lost or wasted, accounting for about 1.3 billion tons of food per year. These foods are lost along the food supply chain. However, as pointed out in this report, countries have different wastes, which are associated with the country's per capita income. In middle- and high-income countries, there are large amounts of wasted foods still suitable for consumption. However, foods are also wasted in the beginning of the supply chain, while in low-income countries foods are wasted during the first and subsequent stages.

Food banks were created to fight hunger by recovering the foods that are lost and wasted somewhere in the production chain, when they are still suitable for human consumption. Most of the donations of grains, cereals, meats and other foods received by the food bank come from local producers and merchants, or are part of a larger system where, by diverse reasons, are unfit for sale but still keep their nutritional properties.

The best use of foods and actions designed to eliminate wastes are the main actions of the Foods Bank Program. These actions have a significant impact on improving food security, especially for the poorest, and on the socioeconomic development and environment preservation.¹⁰

Hunger is a consequence of the historical process of economy, which does not distribute resources efficiently, in addition to weak public policies designed to minimize the socioeconomic discrepancies existing in Brazil, especially in the northeast region. Food banks thus become a key instrument, operating in a network of solidarity that in a systematic and organized way meet

diverse demands from institutions, acting in the promotion, development and maintenance of multipliers of social and charitable actions.

This work aims to identify and analyze the systemic relationships that ensure sustainability of the Food Bank Program of SESC in the state of Pernambuco. To achieve this goal, a systematic analysis was carried out using program managerial information such as donations volume and number of recipient institutions, a field survey with the actors comprising the food bank as well as reading and analysis of academic documents on mechanisms to fight hunger and food insecurity. In this context, the following question is asked: *Which are the relations employed by the Foods Bank of SESC in Pernambuco with business companies and institutions, which guide the social actions and sustainability of the program?* Suggested hypothesis is that the food bank relates with other actors in a systemic way, working as a link between companies and the recipient institutions so as to ensure the solidarity network.

Food Bank

The historical process of creation of the first food bank has as its pioneer the American John Van Hengel in Phoenix, Arizona.

Observando uma mulher pobre que alimentava seus nove filhos recolhendo os produtos que caíam ao chão durante as descargas efetuadas de madrugada nos supermercados, John Van Hengel desenvolveu a ideia do Banco de Alimentos e com outros voluntários organizou uma primeira coleta junto aos supermercados de Phoenix.

In 1967, the St. Mary's Food Bank was created, and with support and government incentives, the idea spread across the United States and Europe. This initiative came from the need to alleviate hunger of a large number of people and motivated the present movement.¹¹

Food banking is based on the principles of charity and sharing, on the gratuity of contributions, on the fight against food waste and distribution foods to the most deprived people through a solidarity network. These are also the principles that guided all other banks founded.

The food banks in developed countries work in the same way. Estimates indicate that there are currently more than 200 food banks composing the America's Second Harvest network, providing food products to more than 23 million of Americans.¹¹

The first food banks in Brazil date back to 1988, and since 2003, when actions to fight hunger were resumed, they have grown, especially public food banks.¹² Currently, there are dozens of banks in operation or in progress of implementation all over the country, constituted by nonprofit

organizations. In this context, the Food Bank of the *Serviço Social do Comércio (SESC)* (Social Service of Commerce) became a national reference as Solidarity Network in the field of Food Security.¹³

Mesa Brasil SESC Program

Mesa Brasil SESC (MBS) (Food on the Table Brazil SESC) is a food and nutritional security program aimed at social inclusion, being consolidated as a national network of solidarity to fight hunger and food waste in partnership with diverse sectors of society. Learning outcomes from these partnerships show that this program can effectively mitigate the difficulties and problems of hunger that still persist in our country.

It was created in 2000 by SESC Rio de Janeiro and has expanded since 2003 as a result of policies and actions designed to fight hunger in Brazil, such as the Zero Hunger Program implemented by the federal government in 2002, which aimed to minimize food and nutritional insecurity of the population living in socioeconomic vulnerability.

The MBS program is consolidated in the country and its actions go further than simply obtaining and distributing donated food. Diverse partnerships have been created with the control and supervision of agents of the federal government, e.g., Anvisa, Embrapa and CNPq, to build tools that promote the action based on laws and norms, such as the *Manual de Boas Práticas* (Best Practices Manual) and the *Sistema de Análise de Perigos e Pontos Críticos de Controle* (System for Analysis of Hazards and Critical Control Points), which promote food safety all over the foods production chain.¹³ Present in most of the Brazilian states, the MBS represented an institutional and collective effort towards the creation of the National Solidarity Network against hunger and food waste. This network has become essential in the improvement of the quality of life and inclusion of people in conditions of vulnerability by integrating several operating units across the national territory, in the capitals and in the interior regions of the country.¹³

In Pernambuco, the SESC Food Bank was created in 2002 with the purpose of receiving foods from donors (companies, industries, producers), storing and distributing them to the beneficiaries. Since it started its activities, a network of foods donors and receivers has been built, and today it supplies to 402 charitable institutions that benefit children, young people and adults. It also serves some families through community leaders and resident associations who perform social work to improve the quality of life of the community. In Recife, the food bank is located near the Pernambuco Center of Supply and Logistics, in Curado neighborhood.¹⁴

The Food Bank of SESC Pernambuco covers the capital and interior of the state.

In addition to Recife and the Metropolitan region, it supplies to the cities of Arcoverde, Caruaru, Garanhuns and Petrolina through the bank branches there set up. In 2016, the bank

received 14,302,185.05 tons of donations of foods and non-food products in the capital and cities in the state; in the same year, the total number of people assisted was 46,952 in 402 institutions in the capital and interior of the country. The magnitude of these numbers requires huge efforts to meet the institutions demands and their particularities. For this reason, the food bank plays a key role in this transaction system between who wants to donate and who needs the donation.¹⁵

To achieve its objective, the food bank has a structured, shared management arrangement involving all agents in the process of obtaining, sorting, storing and distributing foods. The program is a system fed by flows of information, people, products and social capital. Considering these aspects, the food bank receives foods donated by businesses and individuals from any town in the state of Pernambuco, especially where it operates more intensively. Donors provide the most varied foodstuffs such as fruits, vegetables, grains and cereals, which are collected and taken to the storage and distribution place, with exception of some companies which take the donations to the food bank. The bank has partnerships with donor companies with activities in the most diverse sectors, from small to large size companies as well as with the *Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento de Pernambuco (CONAB)* (National Company of Supply in Pernambuco) through the *Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos (PAA)* (Foods Obtainment Program).

Theoretical and Methodological Aspects

Systems Theory

System is a set of interacting elements such as physical-chemical systems.¹⁶ An open system is defined as an exchange system of raw material with its surroundings. Thus, the open system comprises in its totality a set of parts that interact with one another, influencing and being influenced by the environment in an interdependent relation.

Public policies are viewed, in the systems theory, as a product of the political system. It is an identifiable set of institutions and activities of the society. The systems theory of social sciences must be applied from a broader perspective, involving human groups and society in their totality, i.e., in the whole social system.¹⁶

A closed system is dealt by conventional physics and is considered isolated from its environment, when there is no material input or output. The opposite is when there is export and import and when it causes changes in behavior. Living systems are open and exchange matter with their environment.¹⁷

The open system concept has been largely discussed and became popular, especially in the mass media. Thought, in terms of system, plays an essential role in many fields.¹⁶

A system is a set of interdependent elements and can be either an organized whole or parts that are integrated to one another, constituting a single, complex whole.¹⁷ Thus, the systemic approach became necessary to make relationships efficient and minimize transaction costs in complex interactions. As Bertalanffy states *apud* Manning:

[...] existe uma relação entre todos os elementos e constituintes da sociedade. Os fatores essenciais dos problemas públicos, das questões e programas a adotar devem sempre ser considerados e avaliados como componentes interdependentes de um sistema total.¹⁶

In contemporary society, systems are even more complex, if one considers all transaction networks, a large amount of information being continuously updated, demanding social inter-relationships and combined efforts to handle and manage huge volumes of data, techniques and structures. In a globalized world, needs appear together. Thus, in order to ensure an efficient flow of information and action, it is necessary that the system stages – input, processing, and output – are managed by all actors involved in the process, as illustrated in Fig. 1:

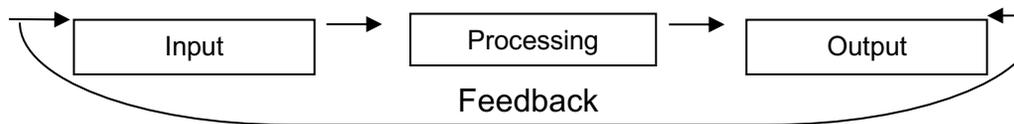


Figure 1. Systemic Model.

Source: Bertalanffy (1977).

The system works to make demands turn into official decisions. In addition, the notion of system also implies that the system elements are inter-related. The system can respond to the forces present in its environment, striving for self-preservation.¹⁸

The system processes, as pointed out by Bertalanffy,¹⁶ are living bodies, so are institutions, which also comprise a set of interdependent elements that exchange energy with the environment, such as business partners, stakeholders, equity, human capital, i.e., all agents that influence or are influenced by the organizational system.

These organizational systems usually comprise other sub-systems, forming a larger system. So, the food bank can be considered a sub-system of the *Mesa Brasil Program*, characterized as an open system since the system inputs, after being processed, generate outputs. To this end, institutions are equipped with human, financial and technological resources, capable of delivering, after processing, goods and services to the society.

Methodological procedures

To achieve the objective proposed in this qualitative study, field surveys were conducted with donor companies, the Food Bank of SESC-PE and recipient institutions. Three kinds of questionnaires with open questions were used, covering the stages and processes outlined in the proposed analytical model. The questionnaires were administered to the Food Bank in previously scheduled meetings with the institutions and donor businesses as well as during visits to the facilities of the institutions and companies.

Considering the great diversity between the profile of the companies that donate foods and the profile of recipient institutions, three donor companies were selected at random (a large-size retailer, fruits producers and merchants, and a public institution). With respect to the recipient institutions, it was decided to administer the questionnaire to four institutions that have their social actions oriented to diverse publics (children, young people, seniors, families and communities). The survey was conducted in person with the president/director of the institutions, the manager or owner of donor companies and the manager of the Food Bank. Some interviews were conducted in the Food Bank in previously scheduled meetings and others occurred in visits to the beneficiary institutions and donor companies.

Analytical Model

Organizations are viewed as systems, allowing that their surroundings influence them and be influenced by them. Pressures on this environment are the most diverse due to socioeconomic, cultural conditions and the political system of each society. Viewing the organization as a system is vital to understand the interactions that occur between the diverse institutions and the political and social levels.

In this work, institutions were considered as an open system, in which flows a great amount of information and people. Thus, to better visualize the analytical model for the Food Bank Program, we attempted to understand the program's input, processing and output processes.

For a better understanding of the relationships that exist between institutions that work against hunger and food waste, a work flowchart was prepared, comprising the dynamics of the Food Bank Program of SESC in Pernambuco and the institutions that donate and receive foods (Fig. 2).

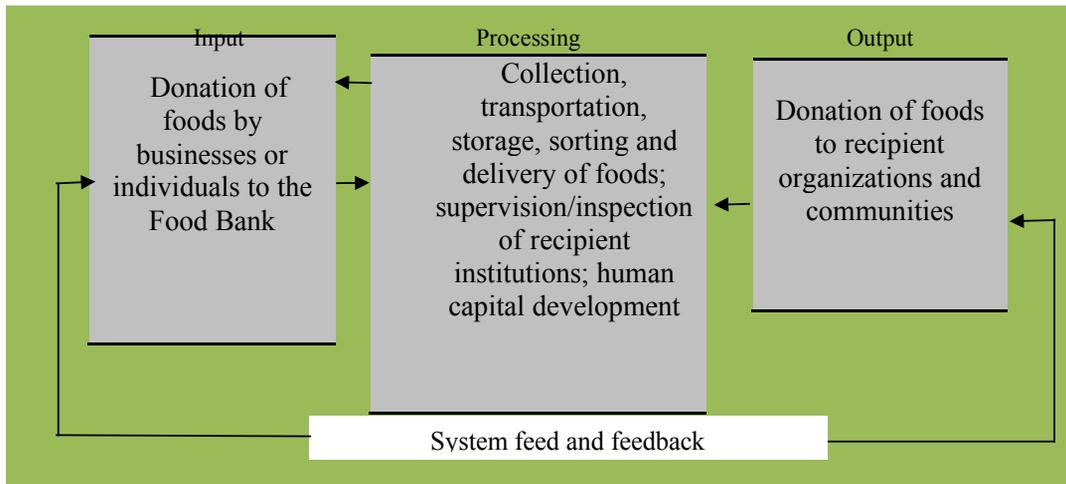


Figure 2. Input, Processing and Output of the Analytical Model.

Source: adapted from Von Bertalanffy's (1977) Systems Theory.

Figure 2 represents the system between the Food Bank's agents and respective inputs, processing and outputs. In this aspect, the model input consists of the donation of foods by businesses or natural individuals. Processing comprises foods transportation, storage and sorting, supervision of recipient institutions and human capital development. The system output comprises donations of foods to the institutions/communities.

Analysis Of The Systemic Model

Foods donation by businesses and individuals

Companies donate foods which, by many reasons, such as short shelf-life, or perishability, lose their commercial value, but maintain their nutritional properties. Examples are businesses that market fruits and vegetables. For this kind of foods, the interviewed companies provide the donation every day. The other businesses that contribute with less perishable products have more time to deliver them or do it when there are products to be donated.

Chart 1. Reasons why companies decide to donate to the Food Bank. Pernambuco, 2016.

Companies' motivations to donate
Foods perishability (fruits, vegetables and greens)
Food aid to people in need
Contribution to minimize hunger of people in socioeconomic vulnerability
Companies' social role
Satisfaction in doing good

Source: Authors (2018).

Chart 1 describes various reasons why businesses decide to donate foods. The short shelf life of perishable foods such as fruits and vegetables make that companies donate every day and in the long term. On the other hand, there is personal satisfaction in donating, in doing good to those in need aiming to social inclusion and to alleviate the hunger of deprived people. The donor companies' efforts aim to avoid food wastes and losses, according to literature, which are one of the biggest problems found in the supply chain – from production to the end user. In addition, they seek to contribute to minimizing the nutritional deficiency found in diverse cities and communities, more present in developing countries.

The business that donates fruits and vegetables selects foods suitable for consumption and sale, in conformity with the Mesa Brasil SESC' standards. In the interviewed company, the fruits and vegetables are selected according to the First-in, First-out (FIFO) method used in inventory accounting. The food bank then collects the foods that were selected for donation after another inspection on the products. Control of the donations is made by documents – control slips – with quantities and kinds of products received.

In 2016, the Food Bank SESC received donations from 522 business companies located in the capital of Pernambuco and in the interior of the state. The donated volume was 1,591,380.78 kg of foods, and 1,726,365.49 kg of non-foods (toiletries, cleaning products, clothes, etc.). In turn, the food bank distributed 1,536,807.39kg of foods both in the capital and in the interior of the state, and 1,677,722.34 kg of other products. Table 1 shows the total of foods and non-foods donated in the state of Pernambuco in 2016.

Table 1. Total donations (in kg) received from January to December 2016 by cities. Pernambuco, 2016.

Cities	Perishable Foods	Non-perishable Foods	Non-food products
Recife	1,600775.34	3,165201.37	6,251922.99
Arcoverde	59,675.39	115,592.78	227,704.05
Caruaru	118,275.74	233,817.80	459,827.77
Garanhuns	143,619.50	279,171.00	552,514.50
Petrolina	160,562.39	319,408.28	614,116.16

Source: Internal managerial report of the Food Bank of SESC Pernambuco. 2016. Adapted.

Collection, Transportation, Storage, Sorting and Delivery of Donations

The foods are taken from each donor company following a schedule previously agreed with each donor company using appropriate transport equipment and packaging as required for each product or food. As informed by a member of the management staff of the food bank, “*the Food Bank collects the donations using refrigerated vehicles following the schedules, times and dates as agreed between the staff of Food Bank and the donor company*”. Some foods are not collected, depending on the evaluation of the food bank’ staff, which only receives donation that meets safety standards. Therefore, the products are received within the validity period and when they do not present risks to the beneficiaries’ health. Some problems are encountered during the collection, such as the long waiting time for issuance of the donation receipts or even during the pre-selection performed by the donor companies to check whether the products are fit for consumption. This demands more time of the Food Bank’ staff to collect and sort the foods.

Food Bank’s Infrastructure

The Food Bank’s infrastructure consists of equipment for foods collection and the place where donations are stored. The bank has a fleet of 11 vehicles (refrigerated trucks and vans) and non-refrigerated kombis with capacity to transport 1.0 to 7.5 tons. There are no problems of idle time in transportation due to the organization and planning of daily collections and technical visits, which are previously scheduled by the food bank’ staff with companies and institutions.

Human Capital Development

Human capital development is vital to maintain the solidarity network. Training programs are conducted with the social institutions' managers, volunteers and food handlers, addressing topics on nutrition, food safety and full use foods, as well as social services, environment and institutional enhancement. Trainings on the best practices are developed in compliance with the requirements of the sanitation inspection services, according to the Best Handling Practices of RDC no. 216/2004.

Admission and Supervision of Recipient Institutions

Institutions that wish to receive foods must comply with the requirements of social organization, according to criteria defined by the food bank. They must inform the kind of public served, number and age of the beneficiaries, kind of meal offered and number of meals served in the unit. So, the institution must meet the following requirements:

- Not being a governmental institution.
- Not having political ties or affiliation to political parties.
- Availability to attend educational actions
- Facilities such as adequate pantry room, kitchen and dining room for foods storage, preparation and handling.
- Attendance to meetings, lectures, courses and other educational actions promoted by the Mesa Brasil SESC program.
- • People receive foods in the Mesa Brasil SESC program under mediation of a charitable institution that will be responsible for the records, monitoring and distribution foods after signing a cooperation agreement. The charitable institution must serve segments of population in vulnerability and social and personal risk, in situation of food and nutritional insecurity or poverty.
- Serve the population gratuitously, without discrimination of any kind (religion, race or age).
- In case of social institutions that provide services in a continuous, permanent and planned manner to vulnerable groups of people and in social risk, and execute projects, the foods must be prepared and consumed within the institution itself.
- If it is a resident association, the foods may be distributed, without the obligation to produce the meals at the site; however, in addition to the criteria cited above, the association must have the records of the families served in order that they can receive the donations.

- The Mesa Brasil SESC also provides emergency services to victims of floods. With a humanitarian logistical joint work, the program raises and distributes donations to unsheltered and displaced people across the country.

The food bank monitors and inspects the institutions through visits prior to their admission to the program and afterwards, and a team composed of a social worker and nutritionists check *in loco* the operation and structure of the institution. Thus, by means of training and supervision, it is possible to maintain the institutions able to meet the program standards.

Human Capital Development

By means of diverse actions, the food bank seeks to qualify people who are directly involved in the bank services or represent charitable institutions (managers, volunteers and food handlers). Training sessions are carried out monthly, when topics on nutrition, food safety and full use of foods as well as other topics related to social welfare service, environment and institutional strengthening are addressed.

Courses on best practices follow requirements of the Sanitation Inspection Agency. The workers and volunteers of charitable institutions are instructed to comply with the guidance of the Best Handling Practices contained in RDC 216/2004. Diverse topics are addressed, namely:

- Full use of foods;
- Best food handling practices;
- Healthy foods;
- Environment, life and sustainability;
- Development of social projects;
- Creation and enhancement of social networks;
- Entrepreneurship.

Output

Donation of foods to institutions/communities

The institutions that receive foods represent the outputs in the system model. Those that were part of this study collect the foods from the food bank facilities.

The benefits for the institutions that receive foods are many, especially regarding the access to food and the quality of life of numerous children and families in need. On the other hand, there are some difficulties that the institutions have to cope with since they are charitable organizations and very often have limited resources even to pick up foods donated by the bank because not all institutions are located in the neighborhood. Charts 2 and 3 describes the benefits and some difficulties mentioned by the institutions during the field survey:

Chart 2. Benefits for the institutions that receive foods.

Enables access to healthy foods by deprived and nutritionally-vulnerable families
Improves the quality of life of needy families served by the institutions
Ensures nutritional benefits to deprived and unemployed families
Improves self-esteem of children that are cared for
Ensures that institutions continue to perform their social function for families and communities

Source: Authors (2018).

Chart 3. Difficulties pointed out by institutions. Pernambuco, 2016.

Distance between the beneficiary institution and the food bank
Sporadic donations
Quantity of foods received by institutions is not enough to meet their demands
Need to have more than one donor and seek other business or individual partners
Courses should be offered to communities

Source: Authors, 2018.

The institutions understand that the food bank needs more partnerships with private businesses to be able to donate foods more frequently. Some institutions receive food once a month or every 15 days, but provide foods each day. There is also the problem of the distance between the institution and the food bank. Thus, it is necessary to seek other partnerships between institutions and food donors as well as in other social spheres, including public organizations.

In general, institutions consider that the food bank is crucial for maintaining their social welfare actions. With foods received through the program, the organizations provide food to 50% to 60% of the public. With respect to the training/qualification courses to the institutions, 25% of the respondents would like that the courses could also be extended to the community.

The food bank provides courses to several actors involved in the food handling process, but there are also several courses designed to end users – the beneficiaries of the institutions – about good use of foods.

The institutions consider that the food bank has a professional team able to provide them with knowledge so that they can serve the beneficiaries in a safe and satisfactory manner. The food bank is considered part of a whole, important for people in need to have access to foods systematically. It recognizes, however, that it is vitally important to seek more partners in order that the solidarity network can grow and be sustained in the long term.

Final considerations

The current economic situation allows us to realize the importance of food banks in the life of beneficiary families and institutions, which in partnership with donor businesses and individuals build and maintain a solidarity network. Programs like the food bank have become increasingly indispensable in our society. Partnerships between public and private sectors can strengthen and provide services with improved efficiency and possibly expand them.

The study aimed to identify and analyze the systemic relationships that ensure the sustainability of the Food Bank Program of SESC, based on the systemic model of analysis of public policies described by Dye¹⁸ and on Bertalanffy's ideas.¹⁶

With respect to the system inputs, it could be identified that businesses decide to donate by several reasons, but, as pointed out in literature, the main motivation is the philosophy of sharing and donation and the social role that each citizen/organization has. Furthermore, some typical characteristics of fresh food, particularly perishability, make that many businesses donate products still suitable for consumption. Actions are also driven to the aim of preventing food losses and waste and in ensuring access of needy people to quality foods.¹⁹

With respect to processing, it was found that the program pursues the goal of obtaining donate foods, following a previously agreed schedule with the donor companies and according to packaging and transport requirements for each kind of food. The foods are stored in conformity with the provisions contained in RDC 216/2004, which deals with best food handling practices. The final stage comprises sorting and delivery of the donated foods to the institutions, also following a previous schedule agreed with the recipient institutions.

The program has infrastructure such as transport and physical space to meet the donation demands, and part of the scope of their actions is human resources development. Thus, the program trains and qualifies the main actors of the institutions to serve their beneficiaries in a secure and safe way. It is also the food bank's duty to supervise the institutions with respect to the fulfillment of their obligations as previously defined when they decided to join the program.

With respect to the system outputs, the main aspect examined were the donations of foods to the recipient institutions. According to the institutions, the benefits are enormous, but due to typical characteristics of charitable institutions, there are some difficulties such as the distance from the food bank and the amount of foods received.

As mentioned by the institutions, the quantity of foods received do not meet their demand, even considering that the program maintains some constancy in the volume of products distributed. They also cited the need for more partnerships in order that the food bank and recipients can meet satisfactorily the populations that need foods. On the other hand, the institutions also seek for more partners to maintain their social actions.

Finally, suggestions for future studies include an extension of the research to the beneficiaries of the institutions and application of the systemic model of analysis of public policies to other programs, aiming to analyze the relationships between the diverse stages of the model.

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