

## ORGANIZATIONS ACTING IN A SUBSIDIARY WAY IN CIVIL SOCIETY (THE CASE OF THE 'FOOD BANK')

GIORGIO VITTADINI

### *Introduction*

The present intervention describes the experience of the Fondazione Banco Alimentare Onlus, the Onlus Foundation Food Bank (FBAO) which operates in Italy for the socioeconomic valorization of surplus food by collecting and redistributing it to non-profit organizations that help the poor and marginalized on a national level. The Food Bank operates like a 'bank' that redistributes the available food resources amongst charitable and volunteer organizations that request them, above all in the South, where the need for food seems to be the highest.

Further to demonstrating the relevance of suggestions derived from the Church's social doctrine, the originality and success of this social enterprise offers points of reflection with regards to the possibility of coexistence and mutual strengthening of the two social forms in discussion at this conference, solidarity and subsidiarity. As we will see throughout this treatment, their significance will be clarified and elaborated through the description of the experience of FBAO.

### 1. FOOD SECURITY AND THE BIRTH OF FOOD BANKS

According to FAO, the World Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, food security consists of the circumstances in which all persons have economic, social and physical access to healthy and nutritious

food, sufficient to satisfy the preferences and dietary needs that permit an active and healthy lifestyle.<sup>1</sup>

Ensuring the provision of food is a leading problem in underdeveloped countries, but is also a problem in wealthier countries, in those strata of the population for whom the cost of food is high, given their low-income level. A recent analysis of the European population at risk of poverty brings into focus not only the monetary dimension, but also the ties and the rationing for certain particular needs, such as the possibility to purchase goods like food, medicine and clothing. In Italy approximately 5% of families (average 2005-2006) declared having encountered difficulty purchasing food goods at least once in the last 12 months. The percentage is even higher for single persons, single-parent families, families with two or more children, and single-income families. The percentage is higher in the South of Italy compared to the North, but with a narrower gap if we compare it to the corresponding measures of income.

A survey conducted in Europe allows the identification of other specific dimensions, such as the difficulty procuring/consuming, for those who desire, a meal with meat, poultry or fish every two days. In 2005, the incidence level of individuals in difficulty was 3.67% of the population in Italy (of which 4.01% represent minors, 0-17 years old). The percentage against the total population was equal to 2.94% in France, to 2.2% in Germany and 2.47% in Great Britain. The incidence rate of not being able to eat meat, poultry or fish every two days was greater than 10% for 5 European countries (out of 25).

Therefore the question of being able to provide food security is present to a significant degree in many wealthy European countries, as well as in the United States: in effect proven by the birth of many voluntary experiences, by now well-established as social enterprises of the Third Sector, with the specific objective of meeting the food needs of families in difficulty.

In Europe, as in the United States, a central role is played by 'Food Banks' which are non-profit organizations, that function in principle like banks. These 'banks' collect production surpluses from businesses and farmers and their work involves directly and indirectly engaging with families with difficulties procuring food.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'food security' used here intends both the ensuring of food (in a quantitative sense) as well as ensuring the quality of food (in terms of food safety).

The underlying implicit idea of the experience of Food Banks, in Europe and in the United States, is that there exists a tendency to over-produce food and agricultural products, which given the prices on the market and distribution of buying power, would be wasted: the 'banks' represent a social invention that transform goods which would otherwise be wasted, either because the supply exceeds demand at fixed prices or because they cannot be sold (due to slight defects), into goods of positive value for those individuals whose basic food needs are otherwise rationed. These surpluses are generated by private companies in the agriculture, food manufacturing and distribution sectors, and/or by the public sector as a result of the subsidizing of the agriculture industry.

## 2. THE ORIGINS OF FOOD BANKS: THE EXPERIENCE OF SECOND HARVEST

The first food bank was born in 1967 in Phoenix, Arizona, thanks to the intuition of an American named John Van Hengel. In 1979 America's Second Harvest was constituted, which incorporated the network of Food Banks which had developed throughout the country in the meantime. Second Harvest collects food products rejected by companies that operate nation-wide to then redistribute them to the various Food Banks.

In the year 2000 America's Second Harvest merged with The Food Chain – America's most important organization for the collection of perishable food items – thus succeeding in becoming the most powerful and efficient collector and distributor of food in the country.

During the course of 2006 the association collected, just in the form of donations of products, a total of *1.48 billion* pounds of food goods from 500 food companies (with an estimated value of 576.7 million dollars). Every day, thanks to the contributions of many donor associations, the association succeeds in guaranteeing thousands of needy people a meal. They do so by distributing stocked products in surplus to its 206 recognized and certified members, amongst which are the 195 food banks located across the country, and 11 volunteer organizations and non-governmental non-profits. They collaborate with approximately 50,000 local charitable agencies that participate in over 94,000 programs including 'food pantries', 'soup kitchens', 'emergency shelters', kids' cafes and after school programs in all 50 States, in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In 2006, 25,300,000 people were reached by this association.

From this initial experience other Food Banks have been born: in 1984 in France, and then in successive years in 16 other European countries (Spain, Belgium, Ireland, Czechia, Portugal, Poland, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Hungary, Germany and Italy).

In South America as well *Bancos de alimentos* (Food Banks) are present in the following countries: Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Mexico. Today 155 Food Banks exist around the globe.

### 3. ITALIAN FOOD BANKS: THE ORIGIN IN AN ENCOUNTER

The first Food Bank in Italy was born in 1989. In 1999 the *Fondazione Banco Alimentare Onlus* (FBAO) was established, with a headquarters in Milan, which guides and coordinates the activities of 20 Food Bank Associations, operating throughout Italy. The Foundation and the 20 Associations constitute the Food Bank Network, *Rete Banco Alimentare*.

So what is the uniqueness of the FBAO with respect to analogous experiences in the United States and around the world?

First of all, the Italian Food Bank was not born out of a sociological motivation or the welfare state, but rather because of an encounter, which occurred in 1989 between Danilo Fossati, President of the STAR corporation (a highly successful food manufacturing company), and Fr. Luigi Giussani, founder of the Catholic Movement of Communion and Liberation (CL).

Danilo Fossati was a great man and a great entrepreneur who had actually created an industrial empire starting from a family-run business, perfecting it and betting it all on a future to come.

Fossati belonged to that generation of men who can be considered the creators of the 'Italian system', protagonists of an unforgettable period of the reconstruction of our country. He had an element of melancholy, like in all great men who see something still unaccomplished in their lives, and feel the need to leave a sign, that goes beyond that of their professional capacity. Fossati was not an exception to that rule. From his parents he had learned how to work hard and that upbringing had served him well to become rich and famous. With that success he had not lost the ability to look at people, to discover their needs, to be moved by those who suffer and be indignant about wastefulness. For example, it weighed on his conscience that while his company produced excellent products – some of which were imperfect and thus needed to be discarded and destroyed – many Italians

struggled to put a square meal on the table. Near the end of the 1980s, during a period of great social and political changes in the world, Fossati, thanks to two of his employees, met with don Luigi Giussani.

In his encounter with don Giussani, Fossati began by speaking of his mother, of her generosity and of all the good she had done in her life. So don Giussani spoke to him of charity: a good act redeems life, and a good act is to share the life of another human, through a concrete, simple gesture in which is inherent the desire to partake in the destiny of the other. Without a gesture everything remains abstract, but without meaning, generosity does not last.

The discussion turned to a small Food Bank that was just starting because an Italian entrepreneur, who was living in Barcelona, had suggested to his Italian friends of CL to open an Italian branch of the Food Bank, an entity unknown in Italy up until then.

For Fossati it was inevitable for him to say 'I will help'. So that is how the Italian Food Bank was born; from an encounter between two men who enthused one another and who imagined that the Food Bank could represent a gesture of education for all about sharing, an education to charity, and the desire of good for Christians and non-Christians. It has become an example of subsidiarity, that is the valorization of anyone's positive impetus and effort, according to the traditions of the Church's Social Doctrine. Every move and activity of the Italian Food Bank had at its origin and as its inspiration the continual replication of that relationship which had generated it. Which according to the dual nature of Christian charity, that so easily attaches itself to lay generosity, and to subsidiarity, which gives values to each person's impetus.

#### 4. ITALIAN FOOD BANKS: WORKS OF CHARITY

From its beginning, the Italian Food Bank has proceeded according to a revolutionary idea of charity that goes beyond any form of State welfarsim.

Increasingly, the Food Bank acts according to the characteristic principles of Christianity, that are embodied in the moved gift of self towards the concrete, unique and unrepeatable person. These ideas are shown in the following aspects.

##### 4.1. *Charity is above all an education for who does it*

The educative work of the Bank has at its core a Christian anthropological conception, according to which an act of charity is such if you consider

man in his totality. It is this which constitutes human nature and the infinite desire for truth, justice, beauty and love. It is not possible to act in a complete and correct way with regards to the poor if we do not look at them from the starting point of the whole of fundamental needs and facts that constitute – using biblical language – their ‘heart’, ‘objective criteria by which nature throws man into the universal paragon’.<sup>2</sup> Only with this stance can a true desire remain to realize a need and to not reduce it in an effort to try and respond. Don Giussani says: ‘desire is like the spark that ignites the motor. Every human action is born of this phenomenon, of this dynamism that is inherent to man. Desire ignites the human motor. So he puts himself to the task of finding bread and water, finding work, looking for a wife, finding a more comfortable armchair and a better home, he becomes interested in why some have much and others have nothing, why some are treated fairly and he isn’t, right to the point of enlarging, expanding and changing himself and these stimuli that he has inside and that the Bible globally calls, heart’.<sup>3</sup>

This is particularly true for whom as a Christian, working at the Food Bank, remembers the parable of the Good Samaritan that perpetually describes the face of our neighbor from the teachings of Christ on earth: ‘In as much as you have done it unto the least of these you have done it unto me’.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore the Food Bank is conceived as a place of education to this charity as the gift of self moved. This does not come about through abstract discussions or political claims, but through concrete gestures, and in line with the teachings of Benedict XVI: ‘Love – *caritas* – will always prove necessary, even in the most just society. There is no ordering of the State so just that it can eliminate the need for a service of love. Whoever wants to eliminate love is preparing to eliminate man as such’.<sup>5</sup>

#### a) *Voluntary service*

Firstly, the FBAO has relatively *few employees*. Instead the association is maintained by the *strong* support of a staff of *volunteers*.

The volunteers who donate their work on a daily basis at the Food Bank Network, are approximately 1140 in total; some offer their time on a regular

<sup>2</sup> Giussani L., *The religious sense*, McGill-Queen’s University Press (October 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Giussani L., *L’io, il potere, le opere*, Marietti, Genova 2000, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> *Mt* 25,40.

<sup>5</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 25 December 2005, 28b.

schedule, while others on a periodical or occasional basis. These volunteers carry out on the one hand an economic function and on the other a social function. The volunteers are made up of pensioners, the employed and unemployed, and to a small degree of students who are of age. The nature of their duties is always growing; more and more often they are in decision-making roles and have the same morally implicit contract with the organizations as employees, thus assuming a certain status as interest holders.

It is worth nothing that, at this time, the number of employees is decisively lower compared with the number of volunteers: 78 employees in all of Italy, but their ideal attunement with the goals of the Foundation, as is the case with the volunteers, is unavoidable.

#### b) *Education*

The second distinguishing element of the Italian Food Bank experience is *the attention to training and education*. The first duty of employees and volunteers is to learn not only what to do but to understand how one works, and this is accomplished through the suitable moments of training and reflection. Such moments are proposed and shared even by the larger network of 8248 social assistance centers and charitable organizations that receive monthly shipments of food products free of charge from the Food Bank. In these moments there is reflection on the significance of human and Christian charity, study of the causes of poverty, what are the relevant and determining factors of food security, and what are best ways to respond without causing a division between ideals and an analytical knowledge of reality.

To continue highlighting the educational aspect for those working at the Food Bank, it is important to add that at the heart of these activities are moments for public education to charity which in turn reinforces the Foundation's overall activities.

In 1997 the *Giornata Nazionale della Colletta Alimentare (GNCA)/ National Food Collection Day*, was born. This event has become the most visible and important sign of the Foundation's work. This day is an annual appointment in which millions of Italians are asked to contribute to the activities of the Foundation by making donations of non-perishable food items – in particular olive oil, homogenized foods, baby food, canned meat, tuna, legumes and vegetables – purchased from supermarkets throughout Italy. The Network of Food Banks then redistributes these donations for free to their associated assistance agencies and organizations.

In 2007, the eleventh edition of the food collection day, we saw over 6,800 supermarkets participating, 100,000 volunteers mobilized for the entire day, from a multitude of grassroots organizations, and 8,932 tons of food collected from more than 6 million donors. Every citizen is stimulated to make a gesture of charity and to share in the basic needs of those who are marginalized, becoming educated to charity through an active gesture for the common good.

From the desire/request to continue these acts of charity in one's daily life, the *Banchi di Solidarietà/Solidarity Banks* were born (today there are more than 150). In the vein of the ideals of the traditions of San Vincenzo, every day thousands of volunteers across parishes, tenement buildings, bars and places of employment, take on the task of responding to the needs of the hungry by donating a part of their groceries to prepare food care packages. Without asking for anything in return, they take these packages to the homes of poor families.

#### c) *Governance*

The Food Bank is certainly an example of coexistence of an organization with typical motivational aspects for its nature and with managerial ways typical of the dynamics of an entrepreneurship. In fact the *governance* of the Food Bank system is regulated by agreements initiated between the individual Food Banks and the Foundation. The 20 Food Bank Associations (amongst whose statutes there are common points) are autonomous juridical entities with their own directing bodies at the local level. These local directors manage the relationships with companies donating food surpluses and they are the owners of the products collected. They also negotiate and manage the relationships with the associations and organizations that are assisted. Furthermore, the administrative councils oversee the presence of presidents of the local Food banks, the volunteer representatives and employees such that even these decisions are a reflection of who works and who educates those who are working.

#### d) *Networks of relationships*

In order to address poverty, the Food Bank intends to favor the building and strengthening of enduring and stable relationships between the companies who donate, the volunteers who give their time and abilities, the charitable organizations who receive and distribute the food and finally the poor



who accept this relationship. *Value is given to each encounter* and care to the relationships each of these generates has distinguished the FBAO since the beginning of the project. The FBAOs development plan is not the result of business strategies determined in the boardroom, but is the outcome of encounters, not pre-determined and frequently unexpected and of relationships cultivated with all and with each one: with the organizations, the companies, the volunteers, with the public institutions, with the sponsors and with the individual persons.

#### 4.2. *Helping the poor be protagonists of their own destiny*

The new poor are not usually 'loafers' or 'lazybones', it is thus people who have lost hope in a cause for life. The new poor are those who have experienced a difficult immigration, the need to care for a chronically ill person, the involuntary loss of employment at 50, the solitude of a failed marriage, or those who are experiencing old age with a poor pension-plan. Therefore the fight against poverty can never be won from above, but from helping each person to become free and responsible, protagonists of a possible change of their own destiny. It is this approach that liberates each person, as poor or rich as they may be. In the conception of the Food Bank the real poor person is not just the person who has no food: it is the person who cannot alleviate their own condition because they are incapable of acting. Instead, through the activities of the Food Bank, even the most needy people are helped to judge their own conditions and all of their reality with a new vision. These people are helped to not just wait for social assistance from the State – which may be necessary in certain situations of extreme disadvantage and lack of supportive response – or private donations.

- a) *Charity towards the person not collective management of the need.* When you are working through organizations sharing people's destiny through their daily lives, when you express something like the Solidarity Banks, you choose to deal with the person, not the problem. By doing so many can begin to experience a journey of conscience and awareness. Giving food aid is important but it isn't everything: often time the food aid given by organizations providing assistance and Solidarity Banks allows the recipients to acknowledge the gratuitousness of which they are subjects. They are also given a chance to open up and begin to discuss their own destiny with someone who is willing to listen. Many times they are given a chance to regain their self

consciousness, their need for happiness, to rediscover that no matter what you are always free and to begin again to face with greater strength and responsibility the existing difficulties.

- b) *A Study of Poverty*. Love towards the person has driven a desire to deepen the understanding of the reasons for poverty, and thus the great social experience of the Foundation has been put at the disposal of scientists and researchers. Thus a collaboration was born between the FBAO, the Foundation for Subsidiarity and the Department of Economics at the Catholic University under the leadership of Professor Luigi Campiglio. The collaboration sets out to realize an annual recording on poverty on a sample drawn from the population of people who indirectly benefit from the services of the FBA. The desire is to give life to research, study and working groups that help tackle poverty at the social, political and economic level.
- c) *Towards a more whole response*. From the experience of the FBAO came an important 'outreach' initiative as an attempt to respond to other needs of the poor. We are speaking of the *Pronto Banco* project, a *Prompt Response Crisis Hotline*. The hotline is a free telephone service for people in crisis and has been active since 2004 in the region of Sicily in the provinces of Palermo, Catania, Trapani, Messina and Caltanissetta. The operators receive calls for help, and they provide counseling, as well as 'accompanying'/directing the caller to public and private resources in their community based on the needs that have been reported.

#### 4.3. *Charity, production of value and redistribution*

All that is good in this start-up can be found in its outcomes and results. Even without mentioning its overall success, the benefits are undeniable.

The benefits produced by the virtuous cycle primed by the FBAO are concretized in the following three areas:

- a) *Economic Benefits*: because of savings in costs (for example the cost of liquidating surpluses) as well as because of the added value to the surplus itself. By creating a 'market' that responds to a need that previously could not express itself, a manifestation of the same is corrected and an economic efficiency is gained. As we will see, the economic benefits aren't limited to monetary aspects; gains/earnings in terms of social responsibility, education in solidarity and faith have an important economic value.

- b) *Social Benefits*: as previously mentioned, we are referring to benefits linked to an increase in social responsibility, inter-institutional trust and the education of the numerous parties taking part in commensurate activities according to the methods of subsidiarity.
- c) *Environmental Benefits*: Lastly, there are also benefits of the environmental kind, linked for example to the reduction of waste.

a) *Economic Benefits*

During the fiscal year of 2006 the Network spent roughly 8 million Euros to operate while approximately 160 million Euros worth of food goods were distributed. A primary characteristic of the socioeconomic activity of the FBAO is a characteristic that is probably unique amongst non-profit organizations from the point of view of efficacy: the FBAO is an organization that multiplies its resources. In fact, for every Euro spent, the return obtained, in terms of commercial value of food products destined for the needy, is equal to 20 Euros. The chain of subsidiary actions and cooperatives of different origins, give rise to a lever effect that permits exceptional results. Particularly, as mentioned before, these great results are due in great part to the fact that much of the Foundation's workforce is made up of volunteers, thus without cost, and at the same time finds its respective benefit in the growth of awareness and solidarity.

As illustrated in Table 1, from an economic standpoint, the results are positive for all involved. Looking at the monetary effects, in the context of the production chain, we see that the benefits are superior to the costs (first line, last column of the table). Looking at the monetary effects we see the same result. Finally, (as we see on the last row of the table) all parties of the FBAO's production chain have a positive balance sheet. Furthermore, there is an increase in social equity in that the poor have access to goods they would not otherwise have had access to. But above all it substantiates a strong increase in social capital in terms of education and responsibility, an asset which accumulated over time produces further social and economic advantages.

TABLE 1.

	<b>Companies, Supermarkets, cafeterias</b>	<b>Foundation and Volunteers</b>	<b>ONLUS clients</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Production Chain</b>
Financial Impact	Saved liquidation costs – positive balance	Overall organizational costs and storage	Saved delivery costs, efficacy/efficiency in the specialization of the production chain	Final value of goods net of the monetary costs of the various agents in the production chain – highly positive	Overall monetary effect is highly positive (Lever effect)
Non-financial impact	Social Responsibility, reputation – positive balance	Volunteer work (cost), social education to subsidiarity (benefit)	Educating the network on subsidiarity; self-reinforcing	Experience of solidarity, education up to network protagonism	Non-monetary effects (social, educational) highly positive
Overall Impact	Positive	Highly positive	Positive	Highly positive	

### b) *Social Benefits*

The social value of the FBAO is undisputed, given that the immediate purpose of its activity is to deliver food to those who are not in a position to purchase food with their own means, and that its long-term goals are the education of those who receive as well as those who give to a greater self-awareness of their worth and responsibility.

From the quantitative perspective it is a fundamental reality in the fight against poverty in our country. The latest figures, from 2007, are impressive: approximately 58,705 thousand tons of food goods are recovered from the surplus production of the food-farming production chain and then distributed to 8,248 associated charitable organizations who then accommodate about 1,435,500 needy people on a daily basis. If you compare this last statistic with the 2,200,000 people who declared having difficulty buying food on a regular basis,<sup>6</sup> we can certainly argue that the FBAO makes a consistent contribution to the needy people in Italy.

<sup>6</sup> Our interpretation/processing from 'La povertà e l'esclusione sociale nelle regioni italiane'/'Poverty and social exclusion in the regions of Italy', ISTAT, December 2003.

c) *Environmental Benefits*

The ecological merit of the FBAO is of value to the community at large by decreasing the waste that would be stocked in garbage dumps or brought to incinerators. As a result the FBAO is fully in-line with the priorities of European, Italian and the Region of Lombardy's laws, which put at the top of their list the importance of preventing the production of waste.

In this way the FBAO brings about an interesting form of interaction between the profit-making businesses and non-profit organizations, triggering a impressive course which plays out in a series of benefits to be described ahead.

## 5. SUBSIDIARITY, THE METHOD OF INTERVENTION

The second component of intervention of the Italian Food Banks is the principle of subsidiarity as it is formulated by the Compendium of the Social Doctrine: 'The principle of solidarity, even in the fight against poverty, must always be appropriately accompanied by that of *subsidiarity*, thanks to which it is possible to foster the spirit of initiative, the fundamental basis of all social and economic development in poor countries. The poor should be seen not as a problem, but as people who can become the principal builders of a new and more human future for everyone'.<sup>7</sup> And further from Benedict XVI in the encyclical *Deus caritas est*: 'We do not need a State which regulates and controls everything, but a State which, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, generously acknowledges and supports initiatives arising from the different social forces and combines spontaneity with closeness to those in need'.<sup>8</sup>

Based on this worldview, central to the FBAO is the involvement of a network of entities that share the *mission* of the organization and participate towards the ideal drive that sustains and guides development in the belief of subsidiarity. The Foundation has never started certain activities instead of others, it has never substituted itself for any social entities, but it has constantly mobilized itself such that each entity could be carried out as best to meet its purpose. Therefore, the FBAOs activities are subsidiary in

<sup>7</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, n. 449.

<sup>8</sup> Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, Vatican City 25/12/2005, n. 28b.

comparison with the companies; in its relationships with assistance-giving organizations and public institutions, through its contribution in the general field, towards the State, and finally through the GNCA, national day of food collection, with the single citizen.

### 5.1. *Relationship with businesses*

Historically, the FBAO's first sources of supplies came from companies in the food manufacturing industry (Star, Barilla, Ferrero, Ponti, Nestlé, etc.) that account for 18.1% of the food donations, and a further 15.4% of donations from large-scale distributors (Esselunga, Coop Italia, Auchan, Carrefour, etc.). There are actually about 400 companies who supply the FBAO with their surpluses. In addition, for some time it has been possible to start a project called *Pronto Fresco (Ready Fresh)* with many hypermarkets. In the Pronto Fresco project, surplus fresh products such as vegetables, dairy products and meat that would not be sold the next day, but are in excellent condition, are collected on a daily basis.

Following the example of the American *Good Samaritan Donation Act*, which the FBAO greatly promoted, Italy has passed the so-called 'Legge del Buon Samaritano', 'The Good Samaritan Act' which is one of its kind in Europe. The passing of this law has opened a chain of recovery or surpluses in the restaurant and catering sector through the 'Siticibo' project. The 'Siticibo' project involves the daily collection of fresh food and cooked food that has not been served, from catering and restaurant chains (company cafeterias, school refectories, university cafeterias, hospitals, hotels, etc.) to then give them to charitable organizations that assist needy people through various food programs such as soup kitchens, community housing, outreach centres, residential programs, etc.

The supply from the *Associazioni di Produttori ortofrutticoli/Associations of Fruit and Vegetable Producers* has become an important source quantitatively (increase in the amount of produce collected) as well as qualitatively as it provides additional new types of foods donated to the needy.

The method pursued by the FBAO consists of engaging in its activities those responsible for the companies, through direct contact with these representatives and through the construction of a network of relationships that involve the company and the public institutions. In this way it becomes clearer that the FBAOs objective is to create partnerships between the profit and non-profit worlds. Thus in time, the type of relationship with the company has changed from one that was casual and 'voluntaristic' to a proposal of eco-

nomical service and managerial utility whose aim is an act of solidarity. The business is not simply a supplier of surpluses, but a client to whom the FBAO delivers an efficient and efficacious service. This service includes simultaneously the collection of the excesses of supply, the advantageous reduction of warehouse space, the containment of costs, tax reductions, an image of social engagement, and last but not least the conviction of carrying out an activity inspired by and moving toward strong ideals.

### *5.2. Relationship with Public Institutions*

In the last ten years a strong relationship has also developed with the Public Institutions, who are the chartered interlocutors in the recovery of surplus and excess in the European agricultural market.

Public institutions such as the AGEA (Agenzia per le Erogazioni in Agricoltura/Agency for the Supply in Agriculture), and Ente Nazionale Risi (National Rice Agency), represent the first important sources of supply for the FBAO, whose goals are to support the prices and yields of this market as well as to purchase the product surpluses from the primary sector once they have completed their distribution, in order to shift them from the food industry to the organizations that help the needy in the countries of the Union, as per the European Union regulations. The relationship between the FBAO and the AGEA was born in 1993. Since then the quantities received have increased exponentially from year to year, whereby in 2007 approximately 33,841 tons, representing 57.6% of the food donations, were received.

This juncture in the network is of particular relevance because it brings to light how a proper relationship between public and private sectors can contribute to the achievement of efficient returns in a public system that often lives and breathes according to auto-referential logic and does not help 'subsidize' the society it governs. Even in this case, the FBAO has carried out an innovative social, economical and managerial activity by intervening in the typical bureaucratic logic of entities such as these. On the one hand it has changed the management of the turnover of produce, making it compatible with the needs of its recipients, and on the other hand, positioning itself as logistical middle-man, it has permitted/allowed a decrease in the costs of transportation and distribution.

Thus this is an example of subsidiarity oriented towards 'the valorization of private initiatives', which represents an important breakthrough from the point of view of public governance with respect to the traditional methods of out-sourcing public services.

### 5.3. *Relationship with organizations providing social assistance*

There are 8,248 varied organizations and charitable groups to whom the FBAO provides a monthly delivery of food products at no cost:

- Soup kitchens for the poor
- Welcoming centres
- Recovery centres
- Therapeutic communities for individuals with addictions
- Communities for Disabled Individuals
- Youth homes and shelters for young mothers
- Organizations who assist families and the elderly
- Solidarity banks

The working agreement between the Foundation and these beneficiary organizations places the commitment on the part of these groups listed above to use the products received exclusively for the use of needy people. It also provides that overseers for the BA can check the actual activities of assistance carried out.

In setting up working relationships with the above described groups, which imply both ex-ante and ex-post examinations of the activity, the FBAO tries to avoid bureaucratic types of controls and to educate a sense of co-responsibility. This sense of co-responsibility has facilitated activity and has improved the results and it is a fundamental element of the 'subsidiary' nature of the Foundation because the Foundation wants to put itself to the service of those who already give aid without claiming to substitute itself in its relationship with those helped.

As mentioned, while the immediate mandate of the FBAO's activity is to provide food to those who are unable to acquire it themselves, its long-term goals are to educate those who give and those who receive to a greater sense of consciousness, of their own value, and responsibility. The educative value of the FBAO's activities is the heart of its subsidiary action because it offers the person the tools to put into action their personal initiative of responsibility towards their needs.

The relationship that the charitable organization establishes with the final recipient allows the overcoming of the informative problem dictated by embarrassment and modesty which can lead to not asking for help when necessary, because the organization starts a direct connection with the needy person, developing a confidential and trusting relationship which means they will more easily report the necessity for the need.



## 6. CONCLUSION

Given this description, what are the future possibilities for this type of intervention that joins together solidarity and subsidiarity? The strategy and configuration of Food Banks should change in light of changes taking place around the world and the new requirements and needs.

In fact, first of all, in the course of the past few years, we have seen a structural increase in the demand of agricultural goods as well as an increased demand in cereals destined to be transformed into bio-fuels, consequently there has been a reallocation of use of agricultural lands and a progressive reduction of food surplus.

Therefore, it is necessary to shift towards direct purchases from companies on the internal and international markets, especially for food banks, such as the Italian one, where about 60% of the current collection is derived from the excesses of community farms, through the Pead, the European program for food aid.

Furthermore to avoid imbalances that come from malnutrition or from imbalanced nutrition, of great consequence for children and adolescents, particularly in the form of obesity, it is crucial to emphasize the quality as well as the quantity of food.

It is necessary to resolve two further problems which contrast with each other: as mentioned, on one side there are families who because of pride or social shame do not come to the assisting agencies even though they are in need, and on the other hand it is possible that the resources are requested by those who really do not have the need, thus taking away from those needy families who request nothing.

Finally, the lack of food security is a sign of other binds and rationings: the 84% of families who declare a disadvantage in food, also declare economic difficulties for costs associated with purchasing clothes and for 71% of them costs related to illness.

So how do we tackle these problems and provide for these new needs?

Once again the answer is not to be drawn up in the boardroom.

A logic analogous to that of the food bank could be extended to medicines and clothes, where the 'problem' of excess and surplus continues. This is testified by the birth of the Pharmaceutical Bank in Italy that is growing along side the Food Bank.

The Food Bank can change, innovating itself, if it is true to its novel methodology: an example of those 'facts of new life' mentioned by Pope John Paul II in his lecture at the Rimini Meeting of 1982: an example of

good social practice that is born from the desire of truth, justice, beauty of the heart of man, from his vision of the ideal, from the Christian faith.

These good practices are experiences and social and economic works where the human subject is reborn. Where man is capable of active initiatives, moved by a brotherly love that fills itself of material need and of the destiny of other men, desiring to build the common good. In clear contradiction with the slogan 'we don't need charity, we need justice', which ideologically sets itself against two just things, right in this reality one can find the roots of a concrete social justice that grows from the grassroots in the perspective of subsidiarity.

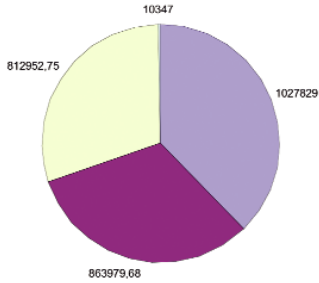
Reflecting on the experience of the Food Bank, developing and expanding to meet new needs, also helps to identify new and suitable interpretive models to understand how a renewed political-economic-social action is possible in the current society.

As Benedict XVI affirmed in *Deus Caritas Est*, even in the most just society, charity will always be necessary: we need to continue to educate ourselves and educate others to that charity, to that subsidiary construction of works that are the beginning of justice.

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

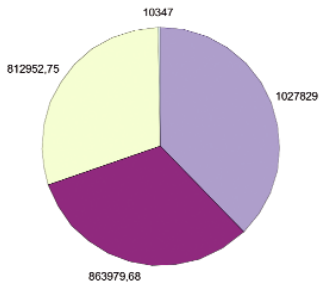
**1. ECONOMIC-FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

**Source of Foundation's resources**



PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	1,027,829
INSTITUTIONAL DONORS	863,980
PRIVATE	812,953
FINANCING AND CAPITAL ASSETS	10,347

**Deployment of Foundation's Resources**



INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITES	2,065,349
FUNDRAISING	495,768
OPERATING COSTS	380,011
FINANCING AND CAPITAL ASSETS	24,484
OTHER	143,102

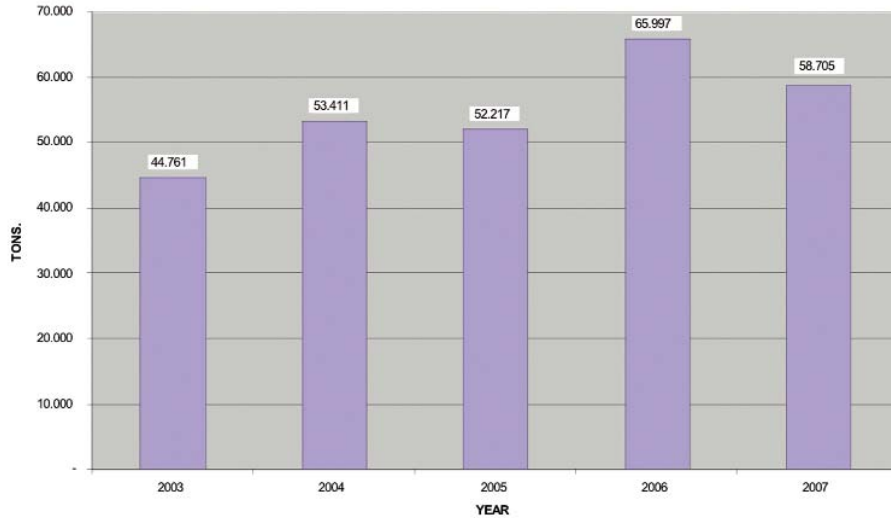
**Sources and Deployment of Resources for the Food Bank Network 2006**

	The FB Network	FBAO	TOTAL FB Network
<b>MAIN COSTS</b>	3,331,533	1,750,239	5,081,772
<b>SIDE COSTS</b>	1,198,343	404,495	1,602,838
<b>PROMOTION AND FUNDRAISING COSTS</b>	81,974	495,768	577,742
	<b>4,611,850</b>	<b>2,650,502</b>	<b>7,262,352</b>
<b>PROCEEDS FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS</b>	1,688,566	1,027,829	2,716,395
<b>PROCEEDS FROM PRIVATE SECTOR</b>	2,393,894	2,086,826	4,480,720
	<b>4,082,460</b>	<b>3,114,655</b>	<b>7,197,115</b>

## 2. LOGISTICS

<b>Logistics of the Food Bank Network</b>		
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>STORAGE</b>		
Warehouse spaces (m <sup>3</sup> )	29,665	32,156
Offices (m <sup>2</sup> )	2,653	2,721
<b>REFRIGERATORS</b>		
Refrigerating rooms – regular (positive) (m <sup>3</sup> )	6,775	7,678
Refrigerating rooms – below zero (negative) (m <sup>3</sup> )	2,784	2,939
<b>WAREHOUSE EQUIPMENT</b>		
Transpallets	138	148
Fork Lifts	48	49
<b>MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Refrigerator Delivery Trucks – positive	15	20
Refrigerator Delivery Trucks – negative	9	13
Other vehicles	30	21

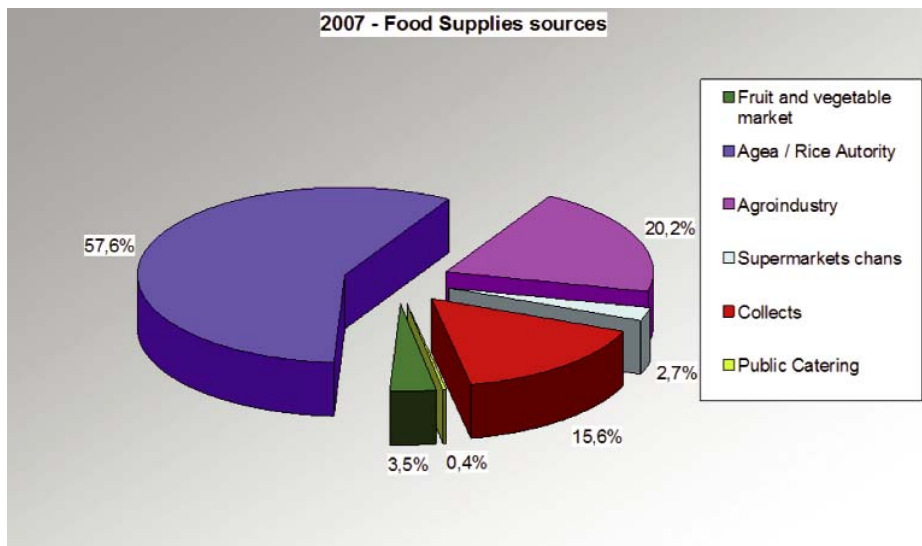
### 3. SOURCES OF FOOD COLLECTION



#### SUPPLY TREND 2004-2007

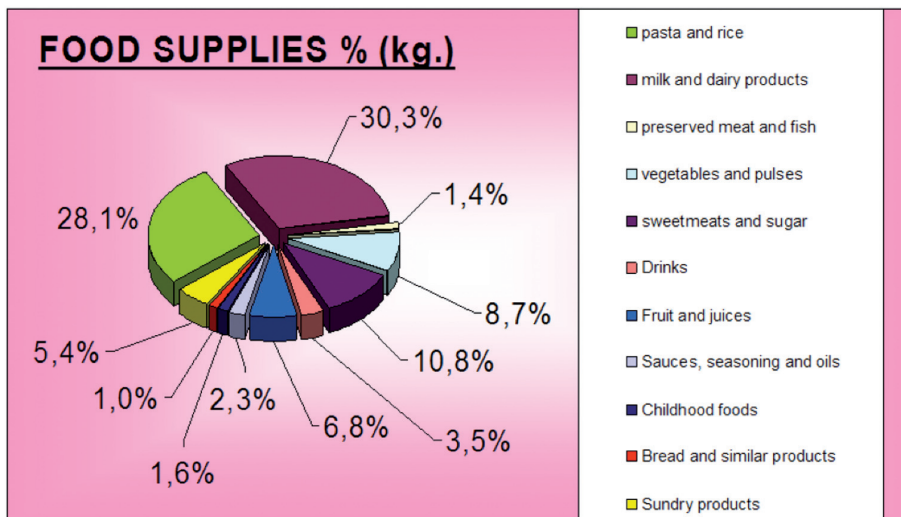
	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Market-Garden Produce</b>	<b>2,205</b>	<b>2,437</b>	<b>2,310</b>	<b>2,045</b>
<b>European Union</b>	<b>34,681</b>	<b>30,357</b>	<b>41,287</b>	<b>33,841</b>
<b>Food Manufacturing Industry</b>	<b>8,532</b>	<b>9,233</b>	<b>11,936</b>	<b>11,850</b>
<b>Wholesale Distributors</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>1,534</b>	<b>1,557</b>
<b>Collection</b>	<b>7,147</b>	<b>8,479</b>	<b>8,666</b>	<b>9,184</b>
<b>Restaurants and Catering Industry (Siticibo + 'Good Samaritan' Project)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>Total Collection</b>	<b>53,411</b>	<b>52,217</b>	<b>65,997</b>	<b>58,705</b>

<b>ACTUAL SUPPLY – Year 2007</b>			
	<b>tons</b>	<b>% of total</b>	<b>Trend 07vs.06</b>
<b>Market-Garden Produce</b>	2,045	3.5%	-5%
<b>Agea/Ente Risi</b>	33,841	57.6%	36%
<b>Food Manufacturing Industry</b>	11,850	20.2%	29%
<b>Wholesale Distributors</b>	1,557	2.7%	10%
<b>Collections</b>	9,184	15.6%	2%
<b>Restaurants and Catering Industry</b>	228	0.4%	-15%
<b>Total</b>	58,705	100.0%	26%

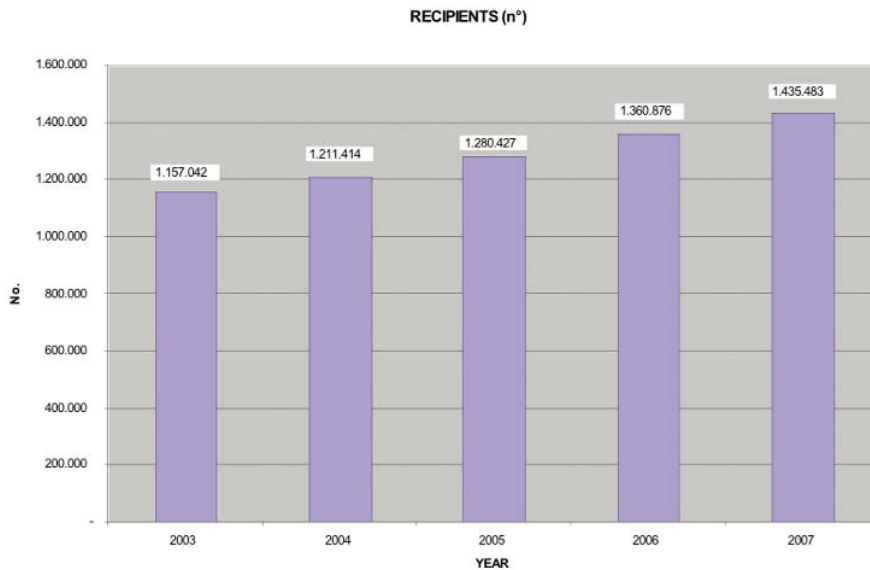
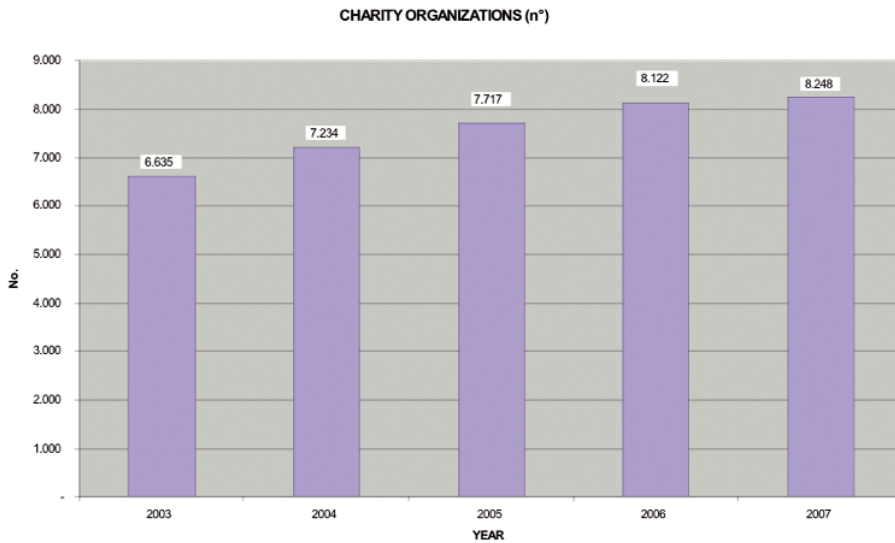


## DESCRIPTION/CLASSIFICATION OF FOOD PRODUCTS COLLECTED 2007

<b>COLLECTION – Year 2007</b>	<b>KG.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Economic value*</b>
Pasta and rice	16,507,636	28.1%	€ 25,437,734
Milk and dairy products	17,806,410	30.3%	€ 77,038,100
Preserved meat and fish	812,526	1.4%	€ 8,101,242
Vegetables and pulses	5,115,290	8.7%	€ 12,524,626
Sweetmeats and sugar	6,314,832	10.8%	€ 26,556,477
Drinks	2,057,934	3.5%	€ 3,489,759
Fruit and juices	4,018,032	6.8%	€ 9,947,277
Sauces, seasoning and oils	1,347,971	2.3%	€ 4,770,730
Childhood foods	964,039	1.6%	€ 6,609,579
Bread and similar products	605,671	1.0%	€ 2,119,132
Sundry products	3,154,932	5.4%	€ 10,724,751

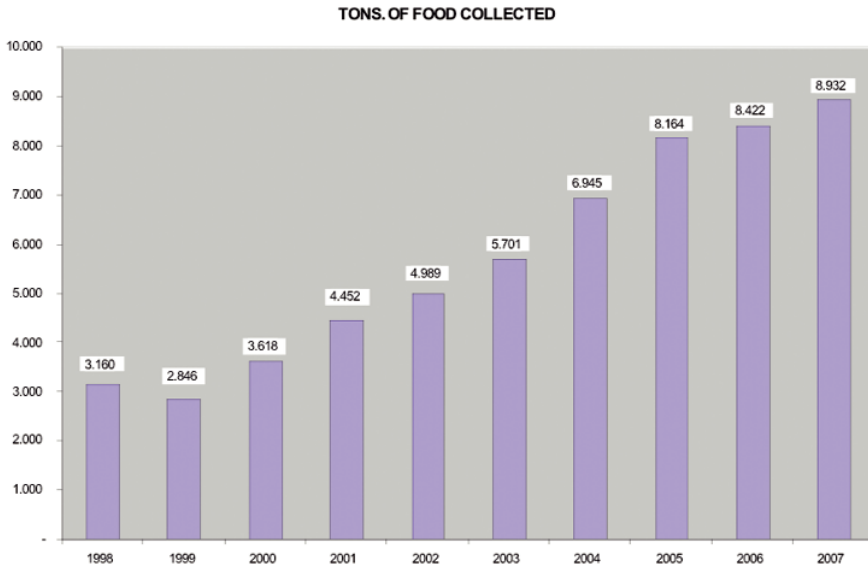


#### 4. TRENDS FOR ASSOCIATED SERVICE PROVIDERS AND PERSONS ASSISTED





### 5. TREND GNCA NATIONAL DAY OF FOOD COLLECTION



### NUMBER OF STORES, SUPERMARKETS AND SHOPS INVOLVED

