

# URBAN FOOD INSECURITY AND THE ADVENT OF FOOD BANKING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Daniel Novik Warshawsky

Warshawsky, Daniel Novik. (2011). "Urban Food Insecurity and the Advent of Food Banking in Southern Africa." Urban Food Security Series No. 6. Queen's University and AFSUN: Kingston and Cape Town.



**FOODBANK**

Johannesburg

**Securing quality food for the hungry**

Web: [www.foodbank.org.za](http://www.foodbank.org.za)

URBAN FOOD INSECURITY AND  
THE ADVENT OF FOOD BANKING  
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

URBAN FOOD INSECURITY AND  
THE ADVENT OF FOOD  
BANKING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

DANIEL NOVIK WARSHAWSKY

### **Previous Publications in the Afsun Series**

**No 1** *The Invisible Crisis: Urban Food Security in Southern Africa*

**No 2** *The State of Urban Food Insecurity in Southern Africa*

**No 3** *Pathways to Insecurity: Food Supply and Access in Southern African Cities*

**No 4** *Urban Food Production and Household Food Security in Southern African Cities*

**No 5** *The HIV and Urban Food Security Nexus*

## **EDITORIAL NOTE**

The introduction of American-style food banking in Southern Africa requires monitoring and evaluation. AFSUN is publishing this report in order to provide background information on the origins of food banking and its development in South Africa to date. We also aim to stimulate discussion and debate on the role of food banking in addressing the epidemic of food insecurity in Southern Africa's poor urban communities. The report was published with funding from the CIDA UPCD Tier One program. However, the findings and opinions expressed in the report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of AFSUN or its funders.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author would like to thank Jennifer Wolch and Michael Dear at the University of California – Berkeley and William Worger at the University of California – Los Angeles for their intellectual guidance; graduate students at the University of Southern California for their valuable suggestions; to AfriGIS and Jennifer Mapes for cartographic design assistance; and Jonathan Crush, Susan Parnell, Bruce Frayne, Jane Battersby-Lennard, Miriam Grant, and other colleagues working with the African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN) who have provided me with constructive comments and professional support. I am also grateful to staff at Johannesburg food security organisations who took time out of their busy schedule to speak with me, especially those at FoodBank Johannesburg. Lastly, I would like to thank the University of Southern California for financial support to conduct this research. All remaining errors and omissions are the sole responsibility of the author.



© *AFSUN 2011*

ISBN 978-0-9869820-5-7

First published 2011

Design and cover by Welma Odendaal

Cover Photograph: Daniel Warshawsky

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior permission from the publishers.

# CONTENTS

---

1	Introduction	6
2	The Evolution of Food Banking	8
3	Food Banking in South Africa	12
4	FoodBank Johannesburg: A Case Study	16
	4.1 Food Insecurity in Johannesburg	16
	4.2 Research Methodology	19
	4.3 The Development of FoodBank Johannesburg	21
	4.4 Food Delivery NGOs: Objectives and Structure	24
	4.5 Food Delivery NGOs: Relationship with FoodBank Johannesburg	30
5	Conclusion	32

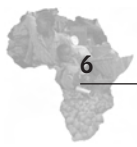
## FIGURES

<i>Figure 1:</i>	US Food Banking Flow Chart	9
<i>Figure 2:</i>	Timeline of Food Banking into South Africa	12
<i>Figure 3:</i>	Existing and Planned Food Banks in South Africa	15
<i>Figure 4:</i>	Johannesburg Metropolitan Area, Study Area	16
<i>Figure 5:</i>	Food Sourcing Flow Chart for FoodBank Johannesburg	23
<i>Figure 6:</i>	Johannesburg Food Security Organisations Prior to FoodBank Johannesburg	25
<i>Figure 7:</i>	Johannesburg Food Security Organisations after Advent of FoodBank Johannesburg	26

## TABLES

<i>Table 1:</i>	Funding for FoodBank South Africa (November 2009)	15
<i>Table 2:</i>	Food Insecurity Rates in Johannesburg	18
<i>Table 3:</i>	Household Sources of Food for Johannesburg Residents	18
<i>Table 4:</i>	Food Delivery NGOs	24
<i>Table 5:</i>	Joint Aid Management Organisational Profile	27
<i>Table 6:</i>	Meals on Wheels Organisational Profile	29

<b>ENDNOTES</b>		35
-----------------	--	----



## I. INTRODUCTION

Southern Africa is one of the most food insecure regions in the world. Even before the world food price increases of 2007 and the global economic recession in 2008, the number of food insecure people in Southern Africa was growing inexorably. Between 1990/2 and 2004/6, for example, the number of food insecure people increased from 32.4 million to 36.7 million.<sup>1</sup> Today, it is estimated to be over 40 million.<sup>2</sup> Food insecurity is partly a result of particularly rapid urbanization. Cities are growing at 4-5% per annum and the proportion of the population living in urban areas is expected to exceed 50% by 2025. In some countries, such as South Africa and Botswana, the proportion is already over 60%. The capacity of cities to ensure food security for all is strained by high unemployment, low wages, the challenge of integrating large numbers of in-migrants, and the persistence of HIV and AIDS.<sup>3</sup>

Until recently, there was an assumption that most of the Southern African region's food insecure live in rural areas. Urban food insecurity has tended to be overlooked as international organisations and governments focus on increasing small farm production and municipal managers focus on other urban problems and challenges.<sup>4</sup> Urban managers confront extreme social challenges including persistent poverty in informal settlements, high demand for social services, rapid in-migration, and the debilitating effects of HIV and AIDS.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the downloading of responsibility for economic development and poverty reduction from national to local governments, combined with increasing fiscal austerity, has significantly limited local government's capacity to formulate and implement effective food security policy. Urban food insecurity is often "unnoticed" until severe price increases "scale up" the issue from the household to the national scale. Scaling up is often precipitated by protests against food price increases. Between 2007 and 2008, world food prices increased significantly, by 130% for wheat, 87% for soya, 74% for rice, and 31% for corn. The price increases caused significant civil unrest and deadly riots and destabilized many low income countries.<sup>6</sup> More recently, in 2010, 'bread riots' in Maputo were precipitated by a 30% increase in the price of bread. Six people died in the violence and the government quickly reversed the price increases. The situation remains extremely volatile in Maputo and many other African cities.<sup>7</sup>

In most cities in Africa, sufficient food is available to feed everyone. The problem is one of access: most poor households are food insecure because they cannot afford to purchase a regular supply of nutritious food.<sup>8</sup> Poor households generally lack a regular and reliable income

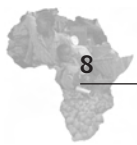


stream and are extremely vulnerable to food price increases. There are also individuals and groups within cities without any earning power at all, such as orphans, the elderly, and the disabled. To assist these food insecure populations, numerous interventions are currently utilized to promote food security in low income countries, including direct feeding programmes, social assistance, urban agriculture, public works, and food price controls. These programmes are implemented by many different types of institutions, including multiple levels of government, NGOs (non-governmental organisations), CBOs (community based organisations), and private sector businesses.<sup>9</sup>

For poor households and impoverished groups, social protection programmes (in the form of cash or food transfers from the state or non-governmental actors) have become an increasingly important way of mitigating food insecurity in Southern Africa. Typically, multi-national, national, or local governmental departments operate feeding agencies and programmes for vulnerable populations, such as school children, the elderly, the disabled, and the very poor. It is common for direct feeding programmes to be coupled with food for work programmes, cash for work programmes, food stamps, or other social welfare services.<sup>10</sup> While food redistribution is often associated with governmental departments, NGOs and CBOs have always been an important fabric of feeding programmes through food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, crèches, and other local food organisations.

One form of social protection which is likely to be of growing importance involves the (re)distribution of unused, surplus or donated food to those who need it. In recent decades, large food warehouses -- or “food banks” -- that collect, systematize, and deliver food to poor communities have emerged as important institutional players in large cities in developed countries.<sup>11</sup> More recently food banks have been advocated as a means of ensuring the efficient collection and distribution of surplus food to poor urban communities in developing countries. While food banking has grown rapidly in size and influence, it has not been given much attention as a policy option in the cities of the Global South.

The redistribution of donated food by registered charities and NGOs is a well-established practice in South African cities. Since 2005, however, the idea that large centralized food banks would facilitate food redistribution and reach greater numbers of the food insecure has taken hold in South Africa. Over the years that followed, with logistical and financial support from a national food banking organisation in the United States, a similar organisation (FoodBank South Africa or FBSA) was established. The question that needs to be asked is what impact the advent of



American-style food banking will have on the food security of the urban poor in South(ern) Africa? The short answer to this question is that it is probably too soon to tell. What is certain, however, is that food banking does have immediate implications for existing food redistribution NGOs, some of which have quickly folded into the new system, while others have been more cautious.

The North American food banking model has been the subject of considerable debate over the years. Given that the South African system is modelled very closely on the American food banking model, it is as well to be aware of the criticisms levelled against that model. The first section of this report therefore examines the evolution of food banking in North America and the research on its functioning and efficacy. The next section reviews the transplantation of this model to South Africa in the last five years and the emergence of FoodBank South Africa. Finally, the paper discusses a case study of FoodBank Johannesburg, one of five food banks that are currently part of FBSA. As well as reviewing the origins, organisation, and operation of FoodBank Johannesburg, the report examines the implications of food banking for existing food redistribution NGOs. The report concludes with a discussion and recommendations on the potential of food banking for resolving the “invisible crisis” of food insecurity in Southern African cities.

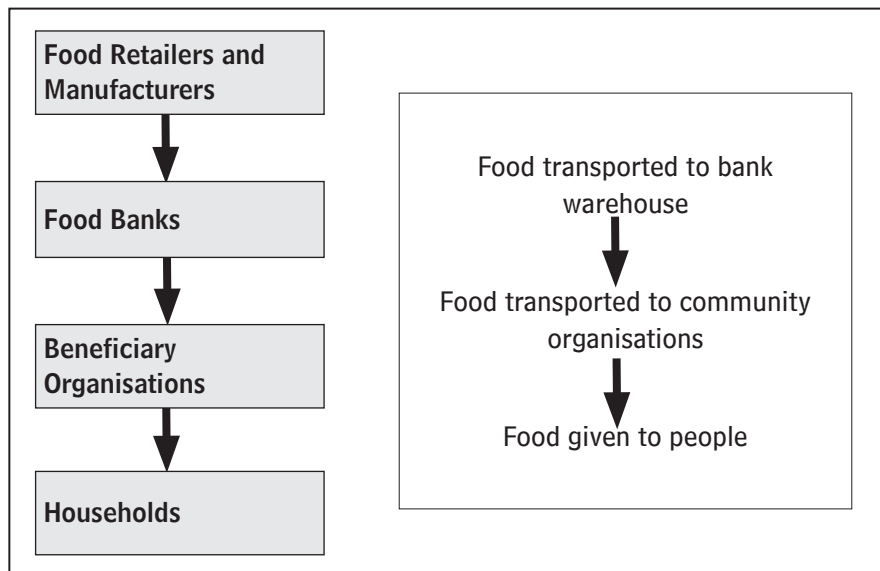
## 2. THE EVOLUTION OF FOOD BANKING

Food banking emerged in the 1960s in Phoenix, Arizona, in the United States when John van Hengel decided to store food donations in a centralized warehouse where he could distribute food to the region’s hungry people.<sup>12</sup> This concept of food banking -- defined as warehouses that collect, systematize, and deliver food to non-profit member agencies -- spread to other US cities in the 1970s and 1980s. With federal funding guaranteed during this critical start-up period, America’s Second Harvest (now known as Feeding America), developed into a central clearinghouse for national food donations.<sup>13</sup>

By the 1990s, Feeding America had become the largest national network of food banks in the United States. Today, it serves all 50 states and around 25 million people annually through more than 60,000 local member agency food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. Moreover, it is now one of the ten largest charitable organisations in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Due to its overall size and influence, Feeding America’s four step food redistribution model has become the dominant food banking model in the United

States (Figure 1). In this process, food flows from government agencies, food industries, and individuals to regional food banks to beneficiary organisations to people in communities. Beneficiary organisations often pay user fees to food banks as a way of buying food for a relatively low price.

**FIGURE 1:** US Food Banking Flow Chart



Source: *Feeding America*

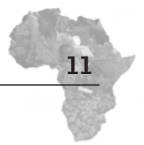
One of the earliest -- and arguably still most important -- studies of US food banks is Janet Poppendieck's *Sweet Charity: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*.<sup>15</sup> Poppendieck analyzes the evolution of food banks and their beneficiary organisations in the United States from temporary relief mechanisms to permanent institutions. She notes that food banks initially developed as a means to confront growth in food insecurity during the 1970s. Subsequently, federal tax incentives for corporate food donations facilitated food bank growth to a point where they have become one of the largest food security networks in the United States. Food banking has produced a nationally-coordinated strategy, increased the efficiency of food donation processes, and provided many food organisations with support and leadership. It has also introduced new problems and challenges, including the delivery of inappropriate, inadequate, and unstable food supplies. Most importantly, Poppendieck argues that food banks have also "depoliticized" hunger and poverty, successfully shifting the political debate from a focus on the causes of structural inequality to strategies for building an ever-larger social service structure to feed the hungry. Building on Wolpert's studies on the limits of charity, she

suggests that food banks have provided people with the false idea that voluntary contributions of time and money can effectively eradicate hunger, even as food banks replace governmental food programmes and food insecurity rates remain high.<sup>16</sup>

Henderson argues that food banks have now become a key site of social struggle over the causes and remedies for hunger.<sup>17</sup> Like other umbrella-like organisations, such as the United Way, food banks redistribute food to hundreds of organisations with different political views. As food banks gain more stakeholder support and increased membership, they become divorced from the political perspectives of their member organisations. This has produced a contradictory effect: food banks have become legitimized as powerful hunger-fighting institutions, yet they are also limited by the fact that they have to balance the various political and economic interests of their organisational stakeholders, including private donors and various constituent organisations. Ultimately, this has limited food banking's advocacy roles in areas of social policy and structural inequality more broadly.

Poppendieck's ground-breaking critique of food banking has been further augmented by Patricia Allen who places food banks within the context of ever-growing anti-hunger and community food movements in urban areas.<sup>18</sup> Allen notes that even as food banks grow in size and influence, urban community food movements have burgeoned across the United States. She notes that community food movements are promoting a different approach to food insecurity, one which promotes local processes of self-empowerment and environmental sustainability, not the feeding schemes regularly associated with the food bank network. Studies of food banks in Canadian cities demonstrate that Canadian food banking has a similar structure and the same limitations as that in the United States.<sup>19</sup> As in the US, Canadian food banks have emerged as major institutional players, even as food justice movements have grown in importance in many urban areas.<sup>20</sup>

Non-profit food banks in American cities such as Chicago have commercialized their operations in order to respond to increased demand, enhance their institutional independence from government, and reassert their local dominance in emergency food service delivery.<sup>21</sup> For the member agency of the food bank, the consolidation of food banking's institutional power has produced new bureaucratic limitations, user fees and increased competition. Metropolitan food banks have become important players in neoliberal urban governance regimes, as they control the conceptualization of hunger, the management of poverty and the organisation of food distribution systems.



As Feeding America has grown in size and influence during the 1990s and 2000s, international attention has focused on its methods and operations as a model to emulate. In 2006, demand for international food banking led to a spin-off organisation called the Global FoodBanking Network (or GFN), also located in Chicago, Illinois.<sup>22</sup> The Global FoodBanking Network is a non-profit organisation funded primarily by wealthy individuals and corporations, including many food retailers and manufacturers based in the United States.<sup>23</sup> Although technically founded with leaders from the American, Canadian, Argentinean, and Mexican food banks, Feeding America has led the drive to spread food banking across the world.<sup>24</sup> According to their most recent financial statement, the Global FoodBanking Network's revenue is disproportionately from corporate and foundation contributions (64%) and donated goods and services (27%). Major contributors include Cargill, Kellogg Company, and Kraft, among other individuals, foundations, and corporations.

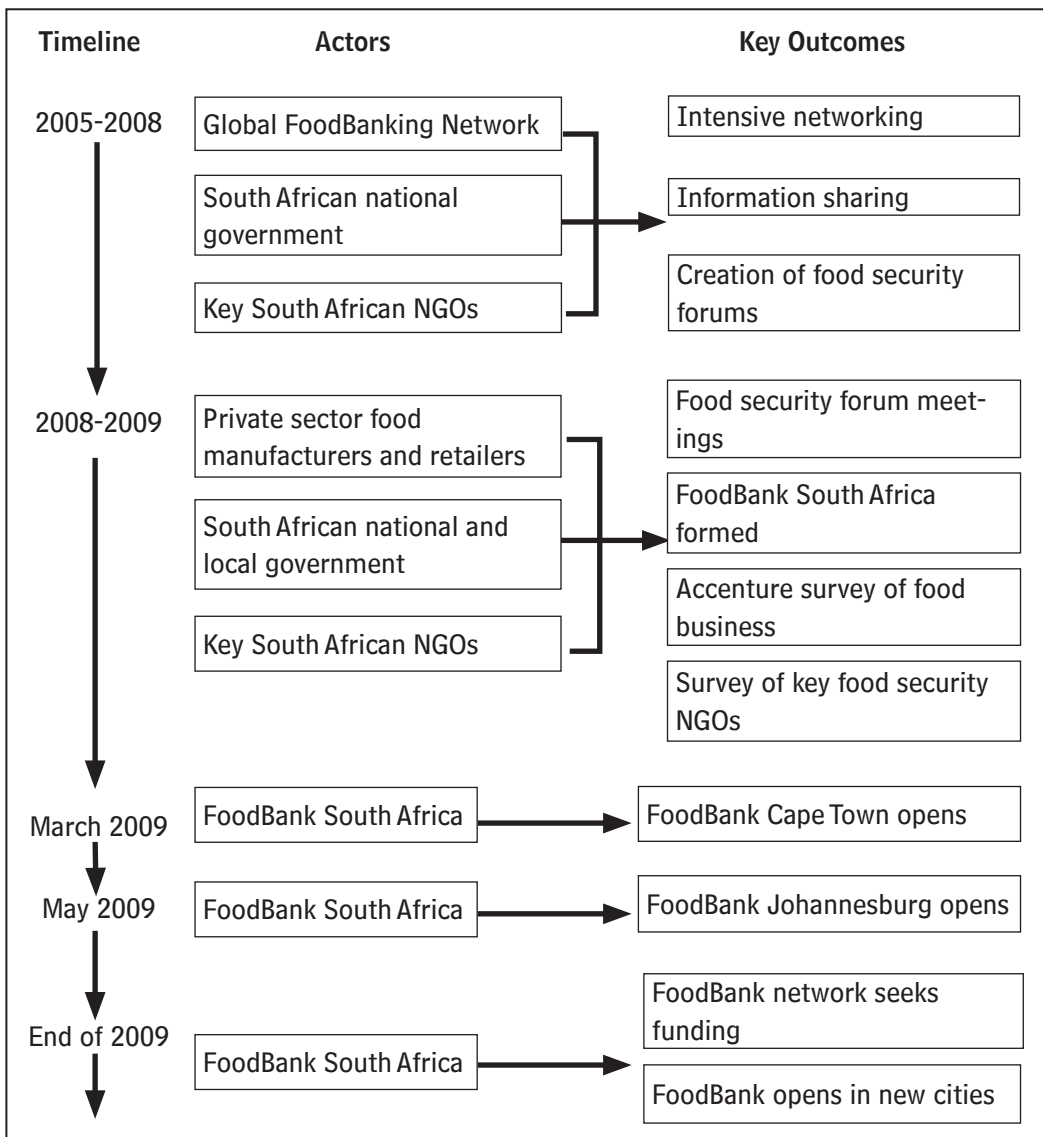
Since its founding in 2006, the Global FoodBanking Network has been instrumental in the development of food banking systems in 18 different countries on six continents. They include Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru in Central and South America; India and the Philippines in Asia, and South Africa and Ghana in Africa.<sup>25</sup> The Global FoodBanking Network facilitates food bank development in various ways depending on the location. These include the evaluation of ideal-type food banking models for particular contexts, leadership and technical training for food bank administrators, funding and staffing to develop and manage food bank systems, and administration of grants to support food banking. While the Global FoodBanking Network works with local stakeholders to develop food banking systems which fit into local contexts, Feeding America's model of food banking is often used as the best practice model for building and implementing a food banking system.

The North American model of food banking is now spreading rapidly to other countries around the world. While the critiques of food banking discussed above are limited to the North American model, it is important to ask whether similar challenges will accompany the expansion of food banking into middle and low income countries. A recent study of Brazil has identified some of the challenges in that country.<sup>26</sup> This report is the first to examine the emergence of food banking in South Africa.

### 3. FOOD BANKING IN SOUTH AFRICA

A national South African food banking system emerged in 2007 through the combined efforts of three key stakeholders: South African managers of several food security NGOs,<sup>27</sup> the Global FoodBanking Network, and South African national government administrators (Figure 2).<sup>28</sup> In 2005, a few key South African NGO managers began to study Feeding America and solicited information and guidance from the Global FoodBanking Network as a way to begin building a food banking network in South Africa.<sup>29</sup>

**FIGURE 2:** Timeline of Food Banking into South Africa



The Global FoodBanking Network saw South Africa as an ideal place to build a food bank system due to its sound infrastructure, political stability, wealthy private sector, strong food manufacturers and food retailers, and vibrant NGO sector. The interest of South African NGOs in food banking was received with great enthusiasm by the Global FoodBanking Network.<sup>30</sup> The development of a national food banking system in South Africa was facilitated by the South African Minister and Department of Social Development who openly supported the Global FoodBanking Network's goal of building food banking in South Africa. The Global FoodBanking Network and South African government then systematically surveyed key players in the NGO sector and food industry. This process, together with active lobbying for their support, took 18 months to complete.

Many South African food security NGOs were more used to competing than cooperating, as one food banking advocate argued:

They all try to do the same thing, but they are working independently and they have been big enough to see the importance of letting go of their own little area and... (commit in the) best interest of the people. NGOs are very unsure how much they want to share with other NGOs because they (are) obviously seeing it as competitive. They (are) worried about where they are going to get their next funding from.<sup>31</sup>

In early 2008, a South African Forum for Food Security was formed to integrate the numerous government, private sector, and civil society players involved in food security in South Africa. Simultaneously, food security forums were convened in key cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg. Initially these monthly meetings were attended by more than 100 stakeholders. By 2009, attendance had fallen to as few as ten people at times. Part of the reason for the decline in attendance was the inevitable discord arising from so many different perspectives, combined with the slow and sometimes overly deliberative process at meetings. Regardless, the forums were successful in spreading the message of food banking and how it might work in South Africa.<sup>32</sup>

Towards the end of 2008, a number of leading hunger relief organisations (including Feedback Food Redistribution, Lions Food Project, Robin Good Initiative and Johannesburg Foodbank – an earlier initiative run out of the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market since 2006) agreed to amalgamate their national operations to form FoodBank South Africa (FBSA). FBSA was constituted in March 2009 as a not-for-profit (Section 21) company, defining food banking as follows:

A food bank is an organisation that acts on behalf of all of the non-profit organisations (or “agencies”) operating in its area. The food bank procures food (and essential non-food groceries) usually from donors such as producers, manufacturers, retailers, government agencies, individuals and other organisations. The food bank defaces the donated product (to protect the brand) and stores it in one of its warehouses. FBSA’s warehouses are equipped to safely sort and store all manner of food and non-food items. Food is dispatched from the food bank every day (depending on supply) and delivered to depots in the communities where our agencies are located. In this way, we save agencies the expense of having to travel long distances to fetch food from our warehouses, and FBSA saves itself the cost of delivering to 1300 agencies country-wide.<sup>33</sup>

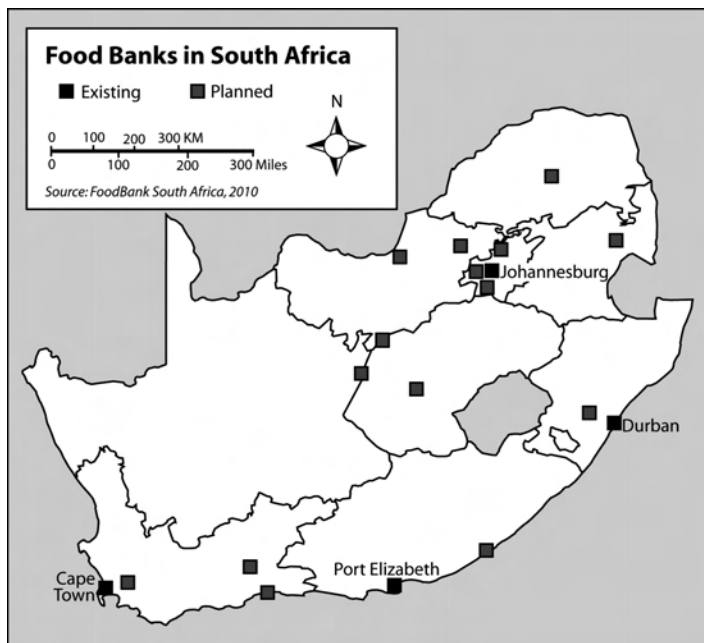
Since its inception, FBSA has distributed 5.6 million kilograms of food valued at R76 million to 66,000 beneficiaries per day. It currently supplies food to 1,278 non-profit organisations countrywide including crèches, children’s homes, old age homes, shelters, feeding schemes, clinics and hospices. FBSA says it has a waiting list of more than 2,000 agencies. It has also launched a programme called “Lunch Buddies” which redistributes sandwiches from middle-class schools to schools in poor areas of a city.

The main focus of FBSA activity to date has been the country’s major urban centres, a tacit acknowledgement of the severity of urban food insecurity. FoodBank Cape Town opened its doors in early 2009. Soon thereafter, food banks opened in South Africa’s other major cities, including Johannesburg (May 2009), Durban (July 2009), and Port Elizabeth (September 2009). FoodBank South Africa plans to add as many as 16 more food banks across South Africa within 2–3 years and to build a food processing plant to produce food for the food banks (Figure 3). In October 2010, the Tshwane FoodBank Community Depot opened a facility at the Tshwane Fresh Produce Market. This is the first food bank to be run by an affiliate organisation, the Tshwane Chapter of the Progressive Women’s Movement of South Africa (PMWSA). Food bank administrators also plan to incorporate rural producers into the food banking system by creating markets for farmers to sell their goods direct to the FoodBank.<sup>34</sup>

FBSA’s total operating budget -- including the four urban network food banks -- was R26.5 million in November 2009 (Table 1). The major contributors are the state-run South African Lottery (R16 million), private charitable donations (R3.3 million) and the Department of Social Development (R3 million). Private sector companies, including major



**FIGURE 3:** Existing and Planned Food Banks in South Africa



food manufacturers and retailers, have contributed over R2 million. The Global FoodBanking Network makes a modest contribution of US\$25,000.<sup>35</sup> The funds are distributed by FBSA to each of its member food banks. Much of this funding is once-off, so food bank officials continue to seek more long-term funding contracts with government and private sector donors.<sup>36</sup>

**TABLE 1:** Funding for FoodBank South Africa (November 2009)

Contributors	Source of funding	Amount (Rand)	Amount (Dollars)
South African National Lotteries Foundation	Government	R16,000,000	\$2,133,333
Individual Contributions	Private	R3,800,000	\$506,667
South African National Department of Development	Government	R3,300,000	\$440,000
Pioneer Foods	Private	R1,000,000	\$133,333
Sundry	Private	R995,350	\$132,713
Engen	Private	R518,925	\$69,190
Old Mutual	Private	R500,000	\$66,667
Global FoodBanking Network	NGO	R183,738	\$24,498
Investec	Private	R125,000	\$16,667
Other	Mixed	R62,728	\$8,364
<b>Total</b>		<b>R26,485,741</b>	<b>\$3,531,432</b>

Source: FoodBank South Africa

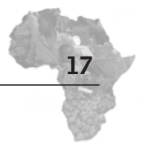
## 4 FOODBANK JOHANNESBURG: A CASE STUDY

### 4.1 Food Insecurity in Johannesburg

In this study, the Johannesburg metropolitan area is defined as the Witwatersrand (including the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality, Ekurhuleni metropolitan municipality, and West Rand municipality) (Figure 4). According to the most recent census estimates, the Johannesburg metropolitan area has a population of approximately 7.2 million.<sup>37</sup> Collectively, these three municipalities make the Johannesburg metropolitan area one of the forty largest metropolitan areas in the world and one of only a few global cities on the African continent.<sup>38</sup> While Gauteng is already 96% urbanized, urban to rural migration in the rest of South Africa and the Southern African region more generally ensures that the Johannesburg metropolitan area continues to receive new residents from other non-urban areas throughout Southern Africa.<sup>39</sup>

**FIGURE 4:** Johannesburg Metropolitan Area, Study Area





In contrast to other rapidly urbanizing regions which are experiencing rapid industrialization, Southern Africa is urbanizing without concomitant job opportunities. This has resulted in the urbanization of poverty, as many rural residents migrate to cities, only to live in informal settlements without adequate economic opportunities.<sup>40</sup> In Johannesburg, this has resulted in the extensive growth of informal settlements, such as Diepsloot and Orange Farm. Furthermore, the combination of immigration and lack of economic opportunities has contributed to civil unrest in the townships and informal settlements surrounding Johannesburg, as economic desperation turned into xenophobic violence in 2008.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, even though Johannesburg may seem “better off” than neighbouring urban centres, high expectations for improved quality-of-life have not been met for all, as unemployment, extreme inequality, and food insecurity persist in Greater Johannesburg.

According to a recent AFSUN study on food insecurity in Johannesburg, approximately 2 million people are food insecure with 15% of households rating as moderately food insecure and 27% of households as severely food insecure.<sup>42</sup> In addition, households tend to eat foods that are calorie dense, full of sugar, but low in fibre, while they eat fewer foods with micronutrient dense pulses and fruit and vegetables.<sup>43</sup> These dietary patterns are associated with dietary related chronic illnesses.

Another study shows that Gauteng children consume white sugar, maize, whole milk, tea, and brown bread more than any other food and drink products.<sup>44</sup> The Gauteng Department of Health notes that compared to children in eight other provinces, Gauteng children have the lowest carbohydrate intake, highest sugar intake, and second highest fat intake.<sup>45</sup> Gauteng children also have deficient levels of vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, iron, and zinc. According to the most recent National Food Consumption Survey, these problematic food choices produce negative health outcomes for Gauteng children, including stunted growth (20%), underweight (9%), obesity (6%), and wasting (1%).<sup>46</sup> For the 31% of Gauteng residents infected with HIV in 2006, the ramifications of poor diet can be severe, as anti-retroviral medicines are only effective in conjunction with a healthy diet and adequate nutritional intake.<sup>47</sup> In all, this data suggests that food insecurity, malnutrition, and hunger remain a significant problem for Johannesburg residents and illustrate the need for new urban food interventions that can reduce the prevalence of food insecurity (Table 2).

TABLE 2: Food Insecurity Rates in Johannesburg

Food Insecurity Rates	Percentage
Household Food Insecurity	42
Severe	27
Moderate	15
Childhood Stunted Growth	20
Childhood Underweight	9
Childhood Obesity	6
Childhood Wasting	1

Source: Rudolph et al, "Food Security, Poverty and Health"; Hendricks et al, National Food Consumption Survey.

AFSUN found that in Johannesburg the majority of households buy food through the cash economy, particularly through supermarkets, small shops and restaurants and the informal sector (Table 3).<sup>48</sup> Informal markets and sellers are patronised far more often than the other two sources. Only 9% of households surveyed actually grow some of their own food, although the proportion is higher in peri-urban areas (16%) than townships (8%), and the inner city (2%) where land is less available. Communal sharing of food resources is actually more significant than urban agriculture and includes shared meals with neighbours (14%), food provided by neighbours (13%), and borrowing food from others (6%).

TABLE 3: Household Sources of Food for Johannesburg Residents

Food Source	% of HH Using Source
Supermarket	96
Small Shop or Restaurant	80
Informal Market or Street Food	85
Grow It	9
Food Aid	2
Remittances (Food)	2
Shared Meal with Neighbors	14
Food Provided by Neighbors	13
Community Food Kitchen	9
Borrow Food From Others	6

Source: Crush and Frayne, Pathways to Insecurity



Cash transfer programmes are the South African government's most important mechanism to confront poverty and food insecurity in cities. In Johannesburg, the South African government operates numerous programmes which provide money that is used to purchase food. Most of these are "social grants" operated through the South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA), an independent agency which reports to the Department of Social Development (DSD). Social grants are provided to the aged, war veterans, disabled, those caring for vulnerable children (foster care, child dependency, and child support), and grant in aid (in-home full time care).<sup>49</sup> Additionally, since 2004, the South African government has promoted job creation programmes as a way to reduce food insecurity. Through the Expanded Public Works Programme, for example, thousands of people have been employed on governmental projects and received money in turn.<sup>50</sup> In all, these cash transfer programmes have provided hundreds of thousands of people in Johannesburg with needed money to purchase food in the formal and informal economy. Only 2% of poor Johannesburg households report receiving food aid, although 9% use community food kitchens, a figure which is significantly higher than for other Southern African cities.<sup>51</sup>

Numerous institutional players are involved in providing direct food transfers. While there are governmental programmes which provide food directly to vulnerable populations, NGOs and CBOs operate important feeding schemes, food pantries, and soup kitchens.<sup>52</sup> Also, private sector institutions, including foreign and domestic donors, provide funding for civil society food security efforts, while food businesses operate corporate philanthropy initiatives and donate food and money to local NGOs. Although food redistribution has existed in South Africa for a long-time through local religious organisations and other community food agencies, the emergence of the North American food banking model has only emerged on the food scheme since 2008. While the food bank has been touted as a possible solution to food insecurity in Johannesburg and other large South African cities, it must be questioned whether food banks can effectively reduce food insecurity when only 9% of Johannesburg residents actually use community food kitchens at all. We now turn to the details of FoodBank Johannesburg to determine its process of development, analyze its impact on existing NGOs and CBOs, and assess its potential as a food insecurity reducing institution.

## 4.2 Research Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with global, national, and local food bank administrators between February and July 2009 and in January 2010 to determine their organisational objectives and institutional

structure. Administrators at the Global FoodBanking Network and FBSA provided important international and national context for the development of food banking in South Africa. Managers, administrators, and fieldworkers at FoodBank Johannesburg described how the food bank process evolved, including their relations with the state, civil society and the private sector. Also, they revealed the motivations and objectives behind different institutional players, identifying zones of institutional friction and internal dissension.<sup>53</sup>

These interviews were supplemented during short periods of participant observation as a volunteer at FoodBank Johannesburg, attending the Johannesburg FoodBank Grand Opening on May 26, 2009 and participating in multiple Johannesburg based Food Security Forum meetings between March 2009 and July 2009. The purpose of these meetings was to encourage stakeholder participation in the food bank's development process. Participants included government, private sector, and civil society players involved in food security in South Africa. In addition, detailed case studies of civil society organisations involved in food security were conducted to investigate how, if at all, the development of FoodBank Johannesburg has transformed state-civil society relations and the institutional relations of NGOs and CBOs. These case studies included open-ended interviews with managers and staff to collect in-depth data on basic organisational and funding structure, relationships with government and other civil society organisations, and challenges faced by the organisation.

Interviews were also conducted with each NGO's network of member agencies to understand how CBOs contend with both NGO partners and state agencies. Also, short periods of volunteer work were conducted to allow participant observation and gather more nuanced contextual information about the dynamics and operational strategies of the organisations and their member agency relations. The resulting data provided rich portraits of food security civil society organisations in Johannesburg and how they negotiate, contest, or ignore the processes related to food bank development.

Lastly, a comprehensive census of food security organisations in Johannesburg was developed from existing directories and snowball interviews. Using this comprehensive database, a new survey was administered to identify NGO and CBO relations with FoodBank Johannesburg. Survey questions asked organisational managers to provide basic information on the types and quantity of services offered, amount and sources of funding, and their relationship with FoodBank Johannesburg.

To identify which organisations to survey, a master list was created from those groups identified on the South African Department of Social Development's National Database on Non-Profit Organisations, South African Non-Governmental Organisation Network's (SANGONeT) PRODDER database, South African NGOs and Development Directory, and from word of mouth references from other NGOs and CBOs. Importantly, these two formal databases do not reflect all urban food security civil society organisations in Johannesburg, as many organisations are small, informal, legally unregistered, and relatively unknown. To minimize this weakness, organisations on the master list were asked about other groups with whom they interact, using snowball techniques until a saturation point was reached. Groups added to this master list were either member agencies of a larger network of organisations, informal institutional partners, or stand-alone organisations, all three of which are of interest in this study. While the snowball approach did not identify the entire universe of food security organisations, it minimized weaknesses intrinsic to the two available databases. These methods revealed approximately 183 NGOs and CBOs, of which 49 actually completed surveys.

Survey administration was conducted in collaboration with a survey team at the University of Witwatersrand between March 2009 and July 2009.<sup>54</sup> Surveyors were trained to ensure inter-rater reliability and validity. Surveys were conducted in person to the extent possible (under specific circumstances, such as the location of the organisation in an area deemed too dangerous, some telephone responses were accepted).

### 4.3 The Development of FoodBank Johannesburg

For a number of reasons, the process of developing a food banking system in Johannesburg was initially slow. The most important factor was that some NGO managers were concerned about the potential loss of their organisational identity and about new food bank bureaucracies developing. In addition, the implications of supporting a large non-profit food distribution NGO took time for local government to fully appreciate.<sup>55</sup> In early 2009, after months of stalling and prevarication, food bank administrators and advocates decided that the initial momentum had to be carried through to the actual opening of the food bank or the various stakeholders would lose interest and the food bank might not materialize:

(They have) their own agendas ...What do they want? What don't they want?... We've decided we're not going to wait any longer. We are sitting with close to 1million people in Joburg alone starving. And, at the moment, we are not even covering 20,000 if we are lucky. We're not getting 10 percent. I don't know what the rest of them

live on – We can't wait any longer. So, we got to a point where we said we are going to...start with the operations...and anyone else that wants to join is welcome (to join)...We got to a point where we're not going to beg and plead any longer.<sup>56</sup>

A key development was the decision by Feedback Food Redistribution and the Johannesburg Foodbank to fold their operations into the newly formed food bank. On 26 May 2009, FoodBank Johannesburg finally officially opened its operations when the City of Johannesburg's Joburg Market (formerly known as the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market) gave the food bank 750 square feet of warehouse space for a sub-market rent in a central Johannesburg location.<sup>57</sup>

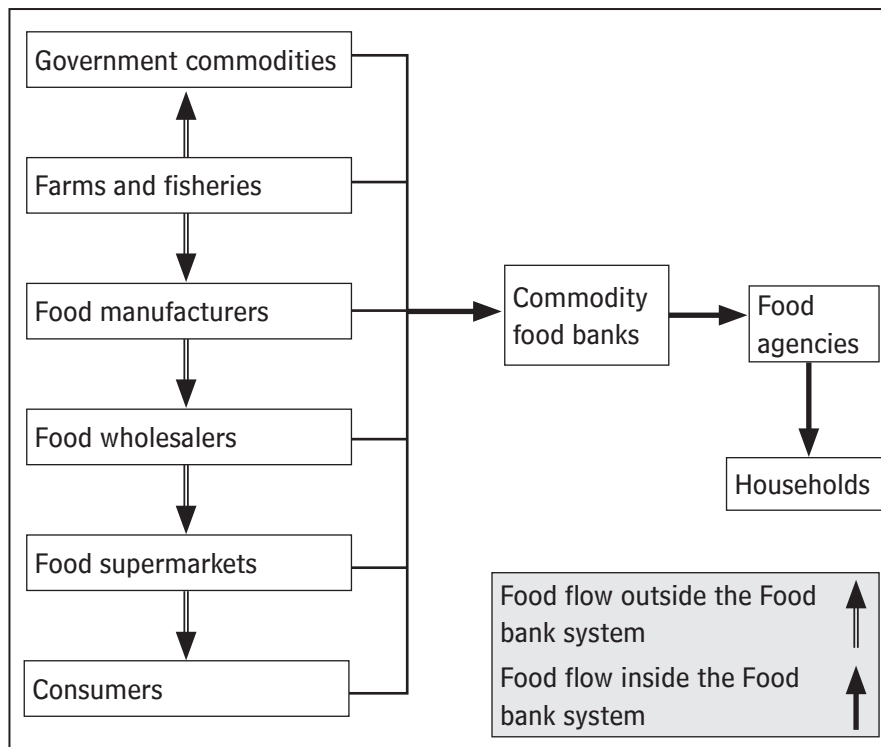
By mid-2010, FoodBank Johannesburg was delivering more than 200 metric tons of food each month to over 440 beneficiary agencies in the metropolitan area, including feeding schemes, soup kitchens, crèches, old age homes, and HIV clinics.<sup>58</sup> At this point, only those organisations originally affiliated with the Johannesburg Foodbank and Feedback Food Redistribution are part of this network. In the future, FoodBank Johannesburg plans to reach as many as 5,000 beneficiary organisations and up to 2 million people, which would make it one of the world's largest food banks.<sup>59</sup>

FoodBank Johannesburg operates in a way that is consistent with the Global FoodBanking Network model. Although primarily resourced by food manufacturers and food retailers as of 2010, FoodBank Johannesburg administrators are in the process of securing food donations from a wider range of institutions.<sup>60</sup> These include both public and private donors, including the South African government, farms and fisheries, food retailers, food wholesalers, and food supermarkets (Figure 5).<sup>61</sup>

The amount and timing of donations is often uneven, as food is typically delivered when private sector food businesses need to offload excess or mislabelled food. Donated food can vary significantly from fresh produce, poultry, and meats to canned goods, bottled drinks, and condiments. These perishable and non-perishable food products are transported from donors to FoodBank Johannesburg via truck before the food can spoil. Once the food arrives at FoodBank Johannesburg, food products are typically sorted and repackaged into smaller more manageable sizes. These donations are then warehoused, refrigerated, and stored at FoodBank Johannesburg until they can be delivered to beneficiary agencies (or food aid agencies) who are members of FoodBank Johannesburg's network of food organisations. From there, households can access food from these beneficiary food pantries, soup kitchens, crèches, and other local food



**FIGURE 5:** Food Sourcing Flow Chart for FoodBank Johannesburg



Source: FoodBank South Africa

organisations. Thus, people can only access food from FoodBank Johannesburg’s affiliated beneficiary organisations, not the food bank itself.<sup>62</sup>

To be eligible for food, beneficiary organisations have to register with FoodBank Johannesburg or show evidence of their organisational mission to feed the hungry. However, due to high demand for food resources, it is likely that FoodBank Johannesburg will have to limit the number of food beneficiary organisations receiving food, at least until food bank resources increase. While no member fees are assessed at present, there is a strong possibility that a small fee will be required for future food organisations to become registered members of FoodBank Johannesburg. However, this proposal remains hotly contested.<sup>63</sup>

While food bank administrators emphasize integrity, accountability, and efficiency, the food bank operates on a more ad hoc basis.<sup>64</sup> Many questions remain unresolved: How often and in what ways will beneficiary agencies be allowed to collect food? Will they pay member fees? Will these agencies be allowed to be permanent food bank members? Additionally, future funding is uncertain. According to one food bank administrator, FoodBank Johannesburg needed approximately R5.8 million

to continue food bank operations over the ten month stretch from May 2009 to March 2010. Yet, even this high level administrator was not sure who was sourcing the money.<sup>65</sup>

Prior to the advent of FoodBank Johannesburg (Figure 6), food security NGOs tended to receive food directly from private sector food manufacturers and food retailers. NGOs received money from private foreign and domestic donors and food donations from food manufacturers and food retailers. The foodstuffs were then donated directly to community-based organisations (CBOs). The emergence of FBSA and the FoodBank Johannesburg has led to new institutional relationships. While many NGOs continue working in collaboration with the private sector and CBOs remain marginalized, FoodBank Johannesburg is transforming how the network of urban food security organisations operates in Johannesburg (Figure 7). While some NGOs have successfully adapted to FoodBank Johannesburg’s institutional presence, others face new challenges and an uncertain future. The remainder of this study examines FoodBank Johannesburg’s effects on food delivery NGOs.

#### 4.4 Food Delivery NGOs: Objectives and Structure

The food security NGOs considered here include Joint Aid Management, Robin Good Initiative and Meals on Wheels (Table 4). These food security NGOs rejected the option of folding their operations into the Johannesburg FoodBank and decided instead to work with the food bank but maintain their institutional independence. These NGOs have developed strong reputations over many years of work and were therefore resistant to incorporation.

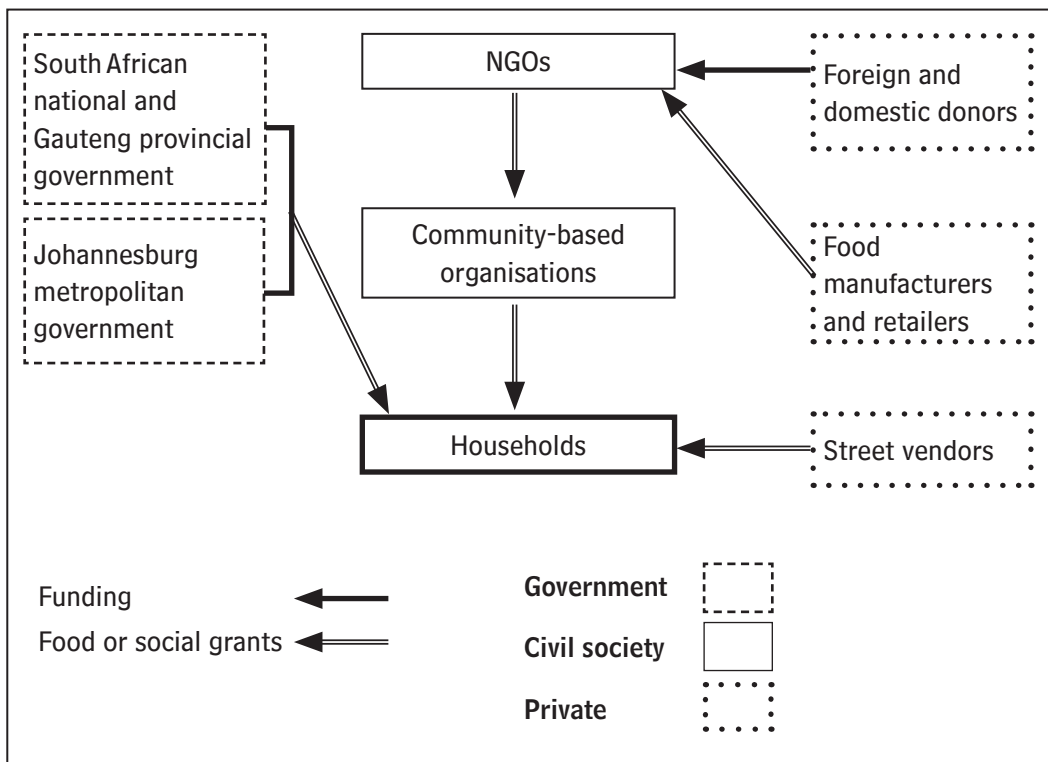
TABLE 4: Food Delivery NGOs

	Joint Aid Management	Robin Good Initiative	Meals on Wheels
Budget (Rand)	R4,500,000*	R10,324,303**	R480,000**
People Served (per month)	5,000*	120,000*	20,000**
Funding Type	Mostly Private	Mostly Private	Mostly Private

\* National figure \*\*Johannesburg figure

Founded in 1984, Joint Aid Management or JAM (formerly Jesus Aid Ministries) is a faith-based organisation which operates feeding schemes throughout Africa (Table 5).<sup>66</sup> Joint Aid Management does not use the

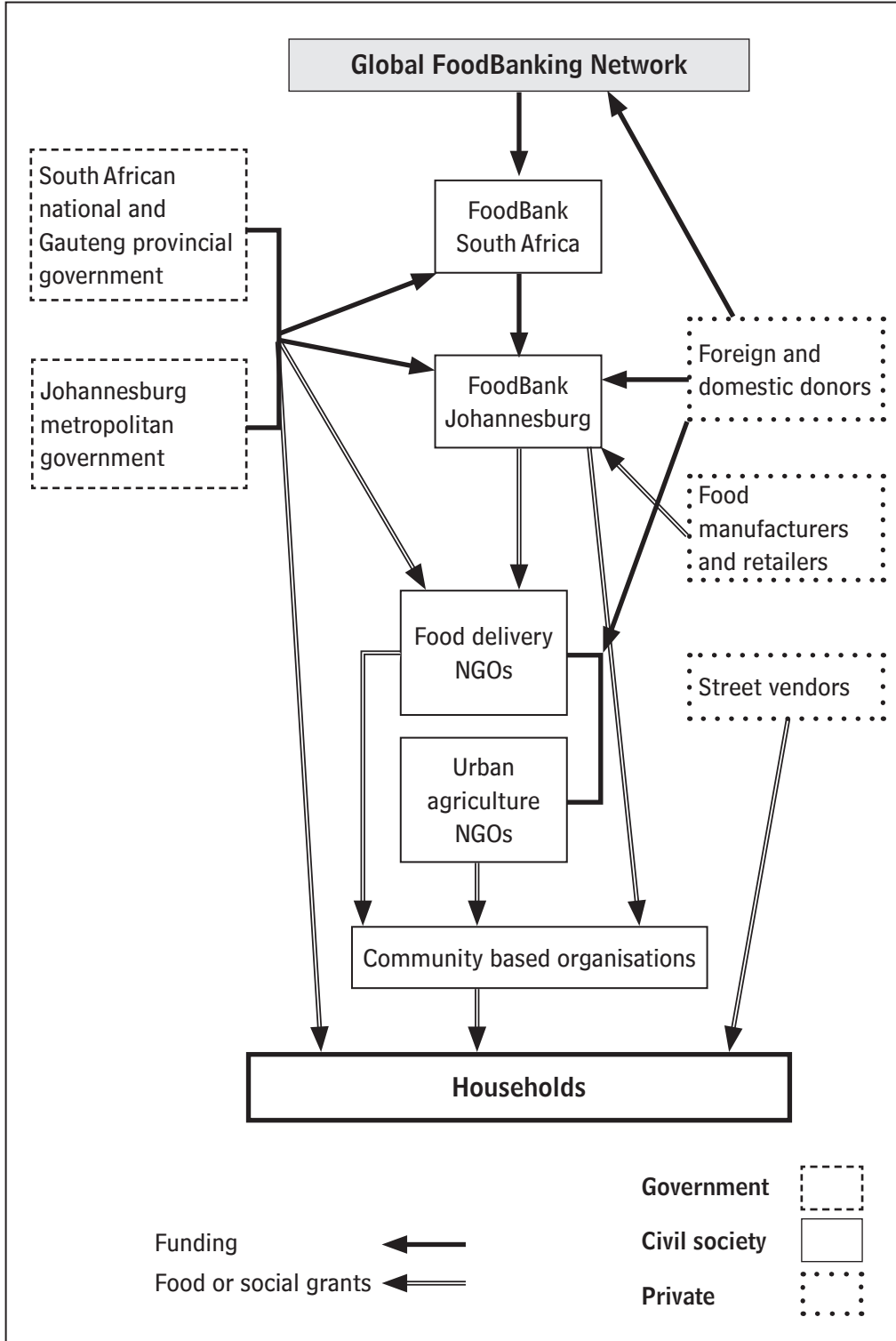
**FIGURE 6:** Johannesburg Food Security Organisations Prior to FoodBank Johannesburg



food bank logic of food redistribution; rather, it primarily operates feeding schemes for children. Although the majority of its programmes are located outside South Africa, JAM does have major school feeding programmes in the Johannesburg metropolitan area, feeding thousands of children in schools in informal settlements in Orange Farm and Ekurhuleni.

In the 2007–2008 fiscal year, JAM’s international budget was R104.8 million which helped feed 498,000 children across Africa. Only 4 percent of the total budget is geared towards food insecurity programming in South Africa and only 1 percent of children fed by JAM are actually in South Africa. In 2008–2009, JAM’s South African budget was R4.5 million with approximately 5,000 children served per month across South Africa.<sup>67</sup> The South African budget comprises 81% private donations, 17% foreign foundation grants, and 2% domestic foundation grants. In contrast to some NGOs, it is fully funded by private donations and foundation grants and receives no funding from government.

**FIGURE 7:** Johannesburg Food Security Organisations after Advent of FoodBank Johannesburg



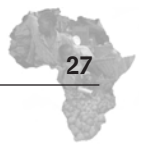


TABLE 5: Joint Aid Management Organisational Profile

Organisation Location	Gauteng
Organisation Service Area	Gauteng
Food Gardening	Yes
Feeding Schemes	Yes
Soup Kitchen	No
Other Services	Yes – Take home rations
Served per Month	5,000 people
Want to Serve per Month	12,000 people
Size of Budget	R4,500,000
Private donations	82%
Foreign Private Donations	NA
Domestic Private Donations	NA
Foundation Grants	19%
Foreign Foundation Grants	17%
Domestic Foundation Grants	2%
Government Grants and Contracts	0%
Foreign Government Grants and Contracts	0%
Domestic Government Grants and Contracts	0%
Fees, Sales, and Dues	0%
Investment Income	0%
Rental Income	0%
Other Income	0%
Lack of Government Funding	Yes
Lack of Private Donations	No
Lack of Contacts with Potential Funding Sources	Yes
Delays and Red Tape Associated with Financial Support	No
Other Problems	Yes – Ineligibility for grants
Full Time Paid Staff	8
Part Time Paid Staff	0
Volunteers	10
Hours per Week Organisation Spends Applying for Government Money	5
Hours per Week Organisation Spends Raising Private Sector Money	5
Percentage of Staff With College or University Degrees	Less than 20%
Heard about FoodBank South Africa	Yes
Means of learning about FoodBank South Africa	Meeting with GFN
Effect of Food Bank South Africa on Your Organisation	Very Positive

Founded in 1997, the Robin Good Initiative operates like a food bank in that it receives food donations from food retailers and manufacturers and then distributes these food products through its member agencies.<sup>68</sup> In addition to food banking, the Robin Good Initiative has promoted 2,000 VegeTunnels as a way to grow vegetables in gritty urban locations, such as tunnels and concrete streets.<sup>69</sup> Compared to its peer NGOs, the Robin Good Initiative is quite large, as its Johannesburg location has approximately 230 beneficiary agencies, with approximately 750 to 800 agencies nationwide providing approximately 11 million meals to people across South Africa. However, these figures have diminished since early 2009, as the Cape Town branch of Robin Good folded into FoodBank Cape Town. In the 2008–2009 fiscal year, the Johannesburg Robin Good Initiative's operating budget was R10.3 million.<sup>70</sup>

Due to its size and food banking mentality, the Robin Good Initiative is a natural fit for FoodBank Johannesburg, but administrators at the Robin Good Initiative were concerned about losing their identity and therefore decided not to fold their operations in Johannesburg. Since each Robin Good Initiative is a franchise and manages its own operations, each location can choose to remain independent or fold into FoodBank South Africa. Unlike the Robin Good Initiative in Cape Town, the Robin Good Initiative started its first operations in the Johannesburg area and built a long-term investment in the Johannesburg community more broadly which made it more hesitant to fold.<sup>71</sup> Although it is still possible that the Robin Good Initiative would merge with FoodBank Johannesburg, it seems unlikely. In the coming years, the management of each Robin Good Initiative warehouse will have to decide how to proceed in relation to FoodBank South Africa. Even if the Robin Good Initiative remains in certain cities, it will have to compete with FoodBank South Africa for potential donors. Overall, it is unclear how this will impact the institutional capacity of the Robin Good Initiative over the long-term.

Meals on Wheels is one of the largest feeding NGOs in the world, started in 1939 during World War II in the United Kingdom.<sup>72</sup> There are approximately 81 branches throughout South Africa with 35 branches in the Johannesburg metropolitan area.<sup>73</sup> The core mission of Meals on Wheels is to provide elderly people with food access. However, Meals on Wheels also provides other basic services as well, such as home-based care and social events, although not all branches provide comprehensive services.

The Meals on Wheels branch analyzed as part of this study is located in south Johannesburg near Turffontein and delivers meals to the elderly and has food pickup from its area office as well. This particular branch



location was chosen due to its relatively unusual situation of providing food both to CBOs and directly to individuals. Typically, other food security NGOs work through CBOs only as a way to feed communities. Additionally, Meals on Wheels at this location has provided food to FoodBank Johannesburg staff.

In the 2007–2008 fiscal year, the national budget for Meals on Wheels in South Africa was R19.9 million, while the 2008–9 fiscal year budget for the specific Johannesburg branch located in Turffontein was R480,000 with 100% coming from private donations. The Turffontein branch served approximately 20,000 per month from its south Johannesburg location (Table 6). Thus, while this branch is quite small in comparison to other NGOs in this study, its impact is actually large in terms of numbers served. When put in context, this Meals on Wheels branch combined with the other 35 branches, have a major impact throughout the Johannesburg metropolitan area, particularly for the elderly.

**TABLE 6: Meals on Wheels Organisational Profile**

Organisation Location	Haddon, Johannesburg
Organisation Service Area	Turffontein
Food Gardening	No
Feeding Schemes	Yes
Soup Kitchen	Yes
Other Services	No
Served per Month	20,000 people
Want to Serve per Month	50,000 people
Size of Budget	R480,000
Private donations	100%
Foreign Private Donations	0%
Domestic Private Donations	100%
Foundation Grants	0%
Foreign Foundation Grants	0%
Domestic Foundation Grants	0%
Percentage Government Grants and Contracts	0%
Foreign Government Grants and Contracts	0%

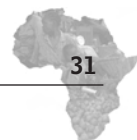
Domestic Government Grants and Contracts	0%
Fees, Sales, and Dues	0%
Investment Income	0%
Rental Income	0%
Other Income	0%
Lack of Government Funding	No
Lack of Private Donations	Yes
Lack of Contacts with Potential Funding Sources	No
Delays and Red Tape Associated with Financial Support	No
Other Problems	No
Full Time Paid Staff	6 people
Part Time Paid Staff	4 people
Volunteers	6 people
Hours per Week Spent Applying for Government Money	0
Hours per Week Organisation Spends Raising Private Sector Money	5
Percentage of Staff With College or University Degrees	20%
Heard about FoodBank South Africa	Yes
Means of learning about FoodBank South Africa	GFN
Effect of Food Bank South Africa on Your Organisation	Very Positive

## 4.5 Food Delivery NGOs: Relationship with FoodBank Johannesburg

Joint Aid Management, Robin Good Initiative, and Meals on Wheels all chose affiliation with FoodBank Johannesburg, rather than amalgamation. Meals on Wheels is intercontinental in reach and deeply rooted in communities and was therefore always likely to resist full integration into FoodBank Johannesburg. As faith-based organizations, JAM and the Robin Good Initiative were hesitant to lose their religious identities:

We started this as a Christian organisation. I was called to do this (by God). Now, (I am suppose to) hand over (control) to the food bank, to a non-Christian, non-religious (organisation). (I don't want to) take a Christian organisation and dump it in there and lose the Christian ethos of the whole thing.<sup>74</sup>





According to administrators at JAM and Meals on Wheels, neither NGO operates according to the food bank logic:

They (Feedback and the Joburg Foodbank) are actually dissolving into the food bank. That's because they are food bank organisations, (but our organisation) isn't (a food bank). What (our organisation) will do and what any organisation (will do) that signs up (to join) the food bank is that you will source all of your food through the food bank. So, even if we got a grant with money for food, we would actually source that food through the food bank.<sup>75</sup>

Yet, in spite of these differences, all three organizations said they were supportive of the food bank's efforts to streamline food donation processes, increase the amount of food delivered to the food insecure, reduce food waste, and expand the number of institutions committed to food security.<sup>76</sup> The managers of these affiliated NGOs thus decided to explicitly support the food bank, yet maintain their own identities as NGOs.

JAM has representation on FoodBank South Africa's board of members, while Meals on Wheels has provided meals for FoodBank Johannesburg's workers. The Robin Good Initiative's relationship with FoodBank Johannesburg is a bit less clear. Although the Robin Good Initiative in Cape Town folded its operations into FoodBank Cape Town, the Johannesburg Robin Good Initiative has remained supportive of the Johannesburg FoodBank but has yet to publicly express a formal relationship with the food bank.<sup>77</sup> Most likely, it will remain independent yet supportive of the food bank's overall goals.

The managers of each NGO also expressed concerns about the possible impacts of the food bank on their operations. The food bank will, for example, inevitably affect existing donor relationships. FBSA and FoodBank Johannesburg have secured food from food manufacturers and food retailers, companies that once gave food directly to NGOs. While these donor-NGO recipient relationships still exist in many places, they are vulnerable to the new food bank bureaucracy. As one food retailer noted: "That is one of our challenges -- How do we marry this whole food bank (network) into what already exists, without some of the charities that we have been working with for twenty years just being cut out completely?"<sup>78</sup>

As FoodBank Johannesburg gains in size and legitimacy, these food delivery NGOs may have to change their relationship with the food bank, as their donor relationships become either co-opted or strained. While the development of FoodBank Johannesburg has streamlined food donation efforts, it is not clear whether the food bank will add or reduce

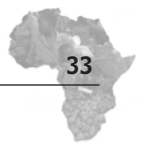
bureaucratic hurdles. The NGOs might well be affected by new bureaucratic hurdles, such as member fees, forced pick-up of food stuffs, and overall ineffective beneficiary agency monitoring and evaluation. More significant, if FoodBank South Africa is to become the most important NGO player in food security in South African cities, it is unclear if it will actually be capable of contributing to lower food insecurity rates.

FoodBank Johannesburg's effects on civil society have been quite uneven to date. Before the development of FoodBank Johannesburg, food security NGOs tended to work directly with food manufacturers and food retailers. NGOs accepted funding from private foreign and domestic donors and received food donations from food manufacturers and food retailers and then supplied these in-kind donations directly to CBOs. Now, with the development of FoodBank Johannesburg, NGOs may have to reshape their relationships with both the private sector and CBOs. While these three NGOs remained strong as of 2009, it is not clear whether they will be able to compete with the food bank as it takes over relationships with former donors and earns more financial contracts with private and public agencies.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The American food banking model has developed in South Africa with the assistance of key institutional players such as the Global FoodBanking Network. FoodBank Johannesburg, the largest of these food banks, has the potential to transform the ways that food security NGOs operate in Johannesburg. The introduction of the American food banking model into Johannesburg has some positive outcomes, including increasing the number of institutions committed to food security and streamlining food donation processes. The development of food banking in South Africa also raises many important questions.

While food banking will have a major impact on the organisation of food redistribution within South African urban areas, it is not clear what its impact will be on food insecurity in the cities. Data from FoodBank Johannesburg has shown a significant increase in food delivery, providing more than 200 metric tons each month to over 440 beneficiary agencies.<sup>79</sup> Even though it is clear that the food banking network is growing in South Africa, it is not known whether this increase in food delivered is in addition to or in place of food delivered by other NGOs before food banks started functioning. As food insecurity rates in South Africa and Johannesburg remain high, it will be important to critically examine the real long-term potential of the food bank as a model to reduce food



insecurity rates, especially as food bank models expand across the country and region.

As noted above, FBSA has ambitious plans to extend its operations outside the large metropolitan centres of South Africa. Even though food banks currently only exist in two African countries -- namely South Africa and Ghana -- it is likely that the food banking model will, over time, be advocated for other countries and cities in Southern Africa.<sup>80</sup> Most of these countries also lack the state-funded social protection schemes that have grown rapidly in South Africa over the last decade. They do not have a well-developed private sector, especially among food manufacturers and retailers, which can sufficiently contribute to the food banking model which the Global FoodBanking Network and FoodBank South Africa espouse. As the North American model of food banking is dependent on “excess” food and money from the corporate sector, it is unclear how the food banking schematic could operate at all in other Southern African countries. On the other hand, the rapid expansion of South African supermarkets and agri-food chains into the region could well provide some of the pre-conditions for an expansion of food banking regionally.

FoodBank South Africa was only able to form after national and local levels of governments committed money and political will to the broader aims of the food banking project. In comparison to South Africa, it seems unlikely that neighbouring countries have the institutional capacity to adequately support such a large-scale food banking model, especially with other urban crises, such as persistent poverty in informal settlements, high demand for social services, rapid in-migration, and the debilitating effects of HIV and AIDS. Overall, the North American food banking model has never been tested in a context outside upper and middle income countries. Thus, as low-income countries have the highest levels of food insecurity, it is exactly in these high-need locations where food banks may not work effectively.

More broadly, it is not clear whether the food bank has evolved in conjunction with or in opposition to the South African state. While FoodBank South Africa received financial assistance from the South African state, it is not clear how the food bank-state relationship will evolve over time. According to Poppendieck and other scholars of food banking in North America, the central state has benefitted from food banking development, as it has reduced political pressure on social welfare programmes and ultimately deflected focus from the state to the non-profit sector.<sup>81</sup> Poppendieck argues that food bank growth has had significantly affected the broader poverty discourse. Instead of asking why people are food insecure, attention has focused on building an ever-larger social service

structure to feed the hungry. While this discursive shift in North American cities is profound and well-documented, it has definitely not materialized yet in South Africa. As food banking spreads from South Africa to neighbouring Southern African nations, it is important to examine how, if at all, food banking will defer political attention to food insecurity from the state to NGOs or other institutional players.

Although given little attention in this report, more research needs to be conducted to assess the reasons how and why private sector food manufacturers and food retailers participate in the food banking process. Food businesses inevitably receive good public relations, potential tax deductions, and markets for unsellable food products. Researchers need to identify the extent to which food manufacturers and retailers are actually profiting from the food banking system. We need to ask what institutional role they should have in a food redistribution system which theoretically exists to reduce food insecurity, not help agribusinesses or other food businesses. These assertions clearly need more attention in future research endeavours. It is also critical to analyze the impacts of food bank development on urban food insecurity levels over time. The food banking process also needs to be examined in its inter-urban context to examine how and why food banks have developed in certain countries and cities and not others. As urban areas in developing regions, such as Southern Africa, continue to transform rapidly, it is critical for scholars, urban managers, and policymakers to understand how various food security interventions, such as food banks, evolve in cities and identify the roles that local urban governance structures play in facilitating food bank growth, social change, and the reduction of food insecurity.

## ENDNOTES

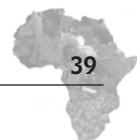
- 1 This FAO figure includes Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- 2 FAO, *The State of Food Insecurity* (Rome, 2009).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 J. Crush and B. Frayne, *The Invisible Crisis: Urban Food Security in Southern Africa*. AFSUN Series No. 1, Cape Town, 2010.
- 5 S. Parnell and J. Robinson, "Development and Urban Policy: Johannesburg's City Development Strategy" *Urban Studies* 43(2) (2006): 337-55; U. Pillay, R. Tomlinson and J. Du Toit, eds., *Democracy and Delivery: Urban Policy in South Africa* (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2006).
- 6 M. Cohen and J. Clapp, eds., *The Global Food Crisis: Governance Challenges and Opportunities* (Waterloo: WLU Press, 2009).
- 7 R. Patel, "Mozambique's Food Riots – The True Face Of Global Warming" *The Guardian*, 6 September 2010.
- 8 J. Crush and B. Frayne, *Pathways to Insecurity: Urban Food Supply and Access in Southern Africa*. AFSUN Series No. 3, Cape Town (2010).
- 9 S. Atkinson, "Approaches and Actors in Urban Food Security in Low Income Countries" *Habitat International* 19 (1995): 151-63.
- 10 S. Devereux, "Transfers and Safety Nets." In S. Devereux and S. Maxwell, eds., *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa* (London: ITDG Publishing, 2001), pp. 267-93.
- 11 J. Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement* (New York: Viking, 1998); V. Tarasuk and G. Beaton, "Household Food Insecurity Among Families Using Food Banks" *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 90 (1999): 109-13; V. Tarasuk and J. Eakin, "Charitable Food Assistance as Symbolic Gesture: An Ethnographic Study of Food Banks in Ontario" *Social Science & Medicine* 56 (2003): 1505-15; K. McPherson, "Food Insecurity and the Food Bank Industry: A Geographical Analysis of Food Bank Use in Christchurch" M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 2006; V. Tarasuk, "Food Charity: When Doing Our Best is Not Enough" *Esurio: Journal of Hunger and Poverty* 1 (2009) at <http://www.esurio.ca/ojs-2.2/index.php/esurio/article/view/45/85>
- 12 See P. Sullivan, "John van Hengel Dies at 83; Founded 1st Food Bank in 1967" *Washington Post* 8 October 2005 at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/07/AR2005100701911.html>
- 13 See <http://feedingamerica.org/about-us.aspx>
- 14 <http://feedingamerica.org/about-us.aspx>; C. Hawkes and J. Webster, "A Comparison with Surplus Food Distribution in Other Countries" In *Too Much and Too Little? Debates on Surplus Food Redistribution* (London: Alliance for Better Food and Farming, 2000).
- 15 Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity*.
- 16 J. Wolpert, *What Charity Can and Cannot Do* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1996); J. Wolpert, "How Federal Cutbacks Affect the Charitable Sector" In L. Staeheli, J. Kodras and C. Flint, eds., *State Devolution in America* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1997), pp. 97-117.
- 17 G. Henderson, "'Free' Food, the Local Production of Worth, and the Circuit of

- Decommodification: A Value Theory of the Surplus” *Environment and Planning D* 22 (2004): 485-512.
- 18 P. Allen, “Reweaving the Food Security Safety Net: Mediating Entitlement and Entrepreneurship” *Agriculture and Human Values* 16 (1999): 117-29; P. Allen, “The Disappearance of Hunger in America” *Gastronomica* 7 (2007): 19-23; M. Winne, H. Joseph and A. Fisher, *Community Food Security: A Guide to Concept, Design, and Implementation* (Venice, CA: Community Food Security Coalition, 1997).
  - 19 W. Husbands, “Food Banks as Antihunger Organizations” In M. Koc, R. MacRae, L. Mougeot and J. Welsh, eds., *For Hunger-Proof Cities* (Ottawa: IDRC, 1999), pp. 103-9; G. Riches, “Food Banks and Food Security: Welfare Reform, Human Rights and Social Policy. Lessons from Canada?” *Social Policy and Administration* 36 (2002): 648-63.
  - 20 G. Wekerle, “Food Justice Movements: Policy, Planning, and Networks” *Journal of Planning: Education and Research* 23(2004): 378-86.
  - 21 D. Warshawsky, “New Power Relations Served Here: The Growth of Food Banking in Chicago” *Geoforum* 41 (2010): 763-75.
  - 22 Interview with Administrator, Global FoodBanking Network, 31 March 2009.
  - 23 <http://www.foodbanking.org/news/documents/GFN%20FY%2008%20Audit%20Report.pdf>
  - 24 <http://www.foodbanking.org/about/>
  - 25 <http://www.foodbanking.org/work/>
  - 26 C. Rocha, “Developments in National Policies for Food and Nutrition Security in Brazil” *Development Policy Review* 27 (2009): 51-66.
  - 27 This included approximately twenty major national and local NGOs approached by the Global FoodBanking Network and FoodBank South Africa.
  - 28 Interview with Administrator, Global FoodBanking Network, 31 March 2009.
  - 29 Interview with Administrator, FoodBank Johannesburg, 31 March 2009.
  - 30 [http://www.foodbanking.org/news/documents/GFN\\_South\\_Africa\\_March\\_2008v5print.pdf](http://www.foodbanking.org/news/documents/GFN_South_Africa_March_2008v5print.pdf)
  - 31 Interview with Administrator, Food Retailer, 2 April 2009.
  - 32 Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 17 March 2009.
  - 33 <http://www.foodbank.org.za/what-we-do>
  - 34 Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 27 March 2009.
  - 35 Exchange rate of R7.5 to \$1.0 in mid November 2009.
  - 36 Interview with Administrator, FoodBank South Africa, 11 January, 2009; Interview with Administrator, Global FoodBanking Network, 4 January 2009; Interview with Administrator, FoodBank Johannesburg, 17 June 2009.
  - 37 <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/statsdownload.asp?PPN=p0302&SCH=4437>
  - 38 See “Classification of Cities” Globalization and World Cities Research Network, Loughborough, 2008, at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2008t.html>
  - 39 South African Cities Network, *State of the Cities Report* (Johannesburg: SACN, 2006).
  - 40 Crush and Frayne, *The Invisible Crisis*; UN-HABITAT, *State of the World’s Cities*, 2006/7 (London: Earthscan, 2006).
  - 41 J. Crush et al, *The Perfect Storm: The Realities of Xenophobia in Contemporary South*

- Africa*, SAMP Policy Series No. 50, Cape Town, 2008.
- 42 M. Rudolph, S. Ruysenaar, T. Dlamini and F. Kroll, "Food Security, Poverty and Health in Three Study Areas in Johannesburg" Unpublished Report for AFSUN, Cape Town, 2009.
- 43 Crush and Frayne, *Pathways to Insecurity*.
- 44 J. MacKeown, T. Pedro and S. Norris, "Energy, Macro- and Micronutrient Intake Among a True Longitudinal Group of South African Adolescents at Two Interceptions (2000 and 2003): The Birth-to-Twenty (Bt20) Study" *Public Health Nutrition* 10(6) (2007): 635-43.
- 45 Department of Health, Gauteng Province (DOH Gauteng), *Health in Gauteng: Status Report 2005-2006*, Johannesburg, 2007 at <http://www.health.gpg.gov.za/report/wholereport.pdf>
- 46 M. Hendricks, B. Eleyi and L. Bourneii, *National Food Consumption Survey*, 2000 at [http://www.hst.org.za/uploads/files/chap12\\_06.pdf](http://www.hst.org.za/uploads/files/chap12_06.pdf)
- 47 DOH (Gauteng), *Health in Gauteng*.
- 48 Crush and Frayne, *Pathways to Insecurity*.
- 49 South Africa Social Security Agency, *2008/09 Annual Statistical Report on Social Grants*, Pretoria, 2009 at <http://www.sassa.gov.za/content.asp?id=1000000567>
- 50 Department of Public Works, Expanded Public Works Programme, Pretoria, 2009 at <http://www.epwp.gov.za/>
- 51 Crush and Frayne, *Pathways to Insecurity*.
- 52 The Integrated Nutrition Programme (INP) of the National Department of Health provides food supplements to vulnerable populations for three months to two years. Eligible groups include those with debilitating diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, young children, and pregnant women. In addition, the Department of Education's National School Nutrition Programme provides a combination of free school lunches and breakfast to eligible primary and secondary schoolchildren.
- 53 Although a standard protocol guided each interview, the question format was open and exploratory, and meant to provide in-depth data on the evolution of food banking in South Africa.
- 54 The survey team was coordinated through Wits Enterprise at the University of Witwatersrand.
- 55 Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 17 March 2009; Interview with Administrator, Global FoodBanking Network, 31 March 2009.
- 56 Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 17 March 2009.
- 57 Interviews with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 17 March 2009, 7 May 2009.
- 58 FoodBank Johannesburg, "FoodBank Jo'burg Now Serving City's Hungry" at <http://www.foodbank.org.za/jhb/73-foodbank-joburg-now-serving-citys-hungry>
- 59 Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 27 March 2009.
- 60 Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 13 March 2009, 17 March 2009; Interview with Administrator, Global FoodBanking Network, 31 March 2009.
- 61 <http://www.foodbank.org.za/what-we-do/foodbanking>
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 13 March 2009, 17 March 2009; Interview with Administrator, Global FoodBanking Network, 31 March 2009.

- 64 Interview with Administrator, Global FoodBanking Network, 31 March 2009; Interview with Administrator, FoodBank Johannesburg, 18 June 2009; Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 7 May 2009.
- 65 Interview with Manager, FoodBank Johannesburg, 26 May 2009.
- 66 Joint Aid Management, “Who We Are” and “Organisational Profile” at <https://www.jamint.com>; and Annual Report, 2007–2008 (Johannesburg, Joint Aid Management, 2008).
- 67 Interview with Administrator, Joint Aid Management, 16 March 2009.
- 68 Staff at the Robin Good Initiative did not complete the survey questionnaire and a more detailed picture of the organization was thus not available for this study.
- 69 Robin Good Initiative, “Profile of the Robin Good Initiative Operation” at <http://www.robingood.ws/profile1.htm>; and Interview with Manager, Robin Good Initiative, 27 May 2009.
- 70 The public-private funding breakdown was unavailable; however, Robin Good administrators stated that the majority of funding was from corporations or individuals.
- 71 Interview with Manager, Robin Good Initiative, 27 May 2009.
- 72 Meals on Wheels, “Meals on Wheels Community Services” and “The History of Meals on Wheels” at <http://www.mowaa.org>
- 73 Interview with Manager, Meals on Wheels, 26 May 2009.
- 74 Interview with Administrator, Robin Good Initiative, 17 March 2009.
- 75 Interview with Administrator, Joint Aid Management, 16 March 2009.
- 76 Ibid and Interview with Manager, Meals on Wheels, 26 May 2009; Interview with Manager, Robin Good Initiative, 27 May 2009.
- 77 In Cape Town the benefits of amalgamation seem to have outweighed concerns about the preservation of religious identity. In Johannesburg, however, this was a prominent reason for non-amalgamation. Each Robin Good Initiative location is independently run and different institutional responses are possible in different centres; see Interview with Manager, Robin Good Initiative, 27 May 2009.
- 78 Interview with Administrator, Food Retailer, 9 April 2009.
- 79 FoodBank Johannesburg, “FoodBank Jo’burg Now Serving City’s Hungry” at <http://www.foodbank.org.za/jhb/73-foodbank-joburg-now-serving-citys-hungry>
- 80 <http://www.foodbanking.org/work/>
- 81 Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity; Husbands*, “Food Banks as Antihunger Organizations”; Riches, “Food Banks and Food Security.”





## **AFSUN PARTNERS**

### **SOUTHERN AFRICAN PARTNERS**

African Centre for Cities,  
University of Cape Town  
University of Botswana  
National University of Lesotho  
University of Malawi  
Eduardo Mondlane University  
University of Namibia  
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal  
University of Witwatersrand  
University of Swaziland  
University of Zambia  
University of Zimbabwe  
ABC Ulwazi  
CARE International  
Food & Trees for Africa  
Idasa  
Reos Partners

### **Municipal Networks**

Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa  
(MDPESA)  
South African Cities Network (SACN)

### **CANADIAN PARTNERS**

Southern African Research Centre, Queen's University  
University of Calgary  
University of Guelph  
University of Western Ontario  
Ryerson University

Securing quality food



## URBAN FOOD INSECURITY AND THE ADVENT OF FOOD BANKING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

In most African cities, there is sufficient food to feed everyone and considerable wastage of fresh and processed foodstuffs. Poor households are food insecure because they cannot afford to purchase enough quality food and are unable to access the surplus food that exists. Food redistribution NGOs are well established in Southern Africa but more recently large centralized food banks have been advocated as a means to get surplus food to the hungry. In 2009, the first food banks opened in the South African cities of Cape Town, Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth. The South African model of food collection and distribution was developed in collaboration with American food bankers. This paper examines the arrival of American-style food banking in Southern Africa and its potential to “depoliticise” the problem of urban food insecurity. More food banks are planned for other South African cities. While foodbanking can offer temporary relief for the urban food insecure, they do not address the deeper, structural causes of food insecurity.



[www.afsun.org](http://www.afsun.org)

978-0-9869820-5-7

