FEBA SKILL-SHARING SESSION

REPORT

Donation Cycle: from planning to reporting
12 APRIL 2021 / ONLINE MEETING

Overview

Target

FEBA Full and Associate Members

38 participants from 18 different countries

Objective

The skill-sharing session “Donation Cycle: from planning to reporting” was organised by the European Food Banks Federation on 12 April 2021 and took place virtually.

Building on the skill-sharing sessions “Partnerships for the SDG 12.3” in November 2019 and “SDGs and Partnerships: how to tackle the COVID-19 today and tomorrow together” in March 2020, this session aimed at consolidating the relationships between corporate partners and Food Banks sharing best practices and experiences about partnerships with the private sector.
Introduction / Welcome to our virtual skill-sharing session!

The first part of the session built on the experience of some corporate partners – General Mills Foundation, Kellogg Europe, and Charity Fund Intesa Sanpaolo – that shared their point of view.

Three questions were addressed to the external corporate experts:

1 / Why does your company make donations to non-profit organisations? Why is your company supporting the European Food Banks Federation and/or its members?

2 / What are the expectations of your company towards the European Food Banks Federation and/or its members? How can we make the donation cycle more effective and meaningful? (For instance, assessing the needs, planning the actions and the use of funds, reporting, etc.)

3 / Needs, activities, operating grants, projects, results, and now impacts. Measuring and reporting the impact is increasingly required by corporate donors. This information is usually included in corporate sustainability reports. How can we better gather and share this information with you?

After listening to the corporate partners, the second part was an internal session. FEBA and Food Bank representatives worked together on the donation cycle, from the first contact with a corporate donor till the end of the reporting process. Identifying positive aspects and areas for improvement, the goal was to strengthen the process and to improve the results for the whole network.
Experts’ views and advice

1 / Why does your company make donations to non-profit organisations? Why is your company supporting the European Food Banks Federation and/or its members?

Amie Kegler, Impact Lead, Global Engagement in Food Recovery, General Mills Foundation

Increasing food security is one of General Mills’ key focus areas in our Foundation and within our company, and so that is one of the reasons that we deeply value our strong partnerships with all of our food banking partners globally, but specifically the European Food Banks Federation.

And we overall believe that food banking is one of the most effective solutions to address food insecurity while also reducing food waste and food loss at the community level. So those are two things that food banking really touches on that are core to our mission as a company and a foundation. And then the other focus is our constant work to advance and to expand food banking as far as possible.

Bruce Learner, Senior CSR and Partnership Manager, Kellogg Europe

For us, basically it is a matter of responsibility, considering that nowadays companies are required to take on a broader responsibility which is not limited to the economic effects of their activities. Socially responsible companies should take care of the wellbeing of the entire community, creating long-term value and reducing the impact on society of social inequalities.

The Charity Fund contributes to this mission by supporting projects with a high social impact in favour of the most fragile members of the communities in which we work. So mainly in Italy, but also abroad, and we have a special consideration for the communities in which our group operates, for example in Central and Eastern Europe.

Cristina Aspesi, Head of Charity Fund, Chairman’s Technical Secretariat, Intesa Sanpaolo

We evaluate interventions proposed by not-for-profit organisations - like the Food Banks - which are included in our Regulations and projects that are selected if in line with our two-year Guidelines. We have recently released our new Guidelines for 2021 and 2022. In the Guidelines we identify social problems and needs to be dealt based on an accurate analysis that we carry out considering the most urgent needs and issues at national and international level, and of course the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, so food security of course is one of them.

The Charity Fund, which works under the direct responsibility of the Chairman of the Bank, uses resources which are allocated every year by our shareholders, so it is a part of profits which are not distributed but they are used to support good causes.

Regarding the cooperation in place with FEBA, last year we supported the project Food No Waste, which is being carried out in Hungary and Slovenia with the support of the Italian Banco Alimentare as trainer and project manager. This was the result of a cooperation among our International Subsidiary Banks Division, the local banks, that is to say Intesa Sanpaolo Bank in Hungary and Intesa Sanpaolo Bank in Slovenia, and of course the local Magyar Élelmiszerbank Egyesület in Hungary and SIBAHE – Slovenian Food Bank in Slovenia.

Consequently, General Mills will invest time, food and philanthropy over the next years to all our global food banking partners; so, we really value deep partnerships here where we can have kind of thought leadership, thought partnership, talking about best practices, sharing what’s happening, working to improve our product donation process to get more of that good food to people who need it. And then of course the lever of philanthropy.

Cristina Aspesi, Head of Charity Fund, Chairman’s Technical Secretariat, Intesa Sanpaolo

And we overall believe that food banking is one of the most effective solutions to address food insecurity while also reducing food waste and food loss at the community level. So those are two things that food banking really touches on that are core to our mission as a company and a foundation. And then the other focus is our constant work to advance and to expand food banking as far as possible.
We have several different global goals and targets related to sustainability and one of them is around feeding people, and we have a target which is to feed 375 million people by 2030 as part of our role to tackle food insecurity. And the way we do that is through breakfast programmes and by making food donations to Food Banks. Most of the people we reach, is through working with Food Banks and other food redistribution organisations.

So, for us, you are a way that we deliver our CSR commitment to society. And if you did not exist, we could not do that. So that is the first reason, it is down to a stated corporate objective / commitment to society.

The second reason is that we have surplus food. Now, as I keep saying on these calls, we are trying as hard as we can to not have any, and in one strange way a definition of success would be us saying to you guys oh yeah, 'Sorry, we haven’t got any food to donate', and I am sure you would applaud us on the one hand. We are not there yet, so we have food that we can donate, and because working with you towards this goal is so important, we donate cash as well because we recognise you have operating costs. We also support Food Banks through volunteering.

One of the most important elements of volunteering, is that our employees can see things with their own eyes.

I think if I go back 10 years, the main reason we work with Food Banks is you can do what we cannot do. We used to donate food in small amounts – in a very effective but inefficient way. We can give whole truck loads to Food Banks, which is far more efficient. We trust you implicitly, with our reputation, with our brands. And you have never abused that trust. We know that we give food to you, and you get it to people in need in an efficient way, in a safe way, and in a way that protects our brands.

I think that Food Banks are also getting much better at communication and telling stories.

And that is important for our stakeholders, our employees and our stakeholders in the wider community, you help us put together a good story behind the food we donate.

Because General Mills does provide annual funding in general to FEBA, but also, we do focus on a very country-specific way for some of our funding, and this information was incredibly helpful to us in that process to plan and adjust our funding to make sure that we are addressing the need and providing funding support where it was most needed. We really appreciated having access to that information for our planning.

As many companies do, we have a global responsibility report and specific goals and commitments that we are tracking towards. We do outcomes reporting each of the grants that we make, and we do have some key indicators that we look at. I think commonly you will see a number of pounds of food redistributed or the number of agencies served.

We are also very interested in hearing about innovative solutions that Food Banks develop, specifically those that meet the unique needs of their communities and learning how those could maybe be shared and overall to understand the great work that is happening.
And then the last thing I will touch on is just that stories really capture the impact on community as well as having those more quantitative key indicators. It is just extremely helpful to us to share the impact that our Food Bank partners are making through those stories of the individuals that are being served and what that looks like on the ground at the community level.

We can say that we have some equal expectations, but our point of view is a little bit different because basically when you are food company, of course your requests can be more precise and they can be more linked to your core business. While for us, it’s more a matter of giving you the possibility to be selected first of all, and then maybe to get a renewal of your support if your project, the intervention that you submit to the Charity Fund, is in line with the problems and the needs that we want to solve. And of course, at the moment with the Covid-19 pandemic, food security is one of them.

So basically, going back to what I was saying, the first point is to submit a good proposal, a complete proposal, so we expect to receive a proposal with clearly stated beneficiaries, direct and indirect ones, with a clear methodology you follow to select them. We expect to read the activities that you are going to carry out, the outputs, the outcomes and relevant KPIs. KPIs are very important because we use them to communicate internally with our management, but also externally in terms of projects selected and their final outcomes.

We want to understand which is the social impact that you want to generate through the intervention, and of course we need to have a complete and in-depth context analysis, so we want to understand why you are intervening in a certain area, who are your beneficiaries, what kind of problems you encounter there. And we would also like to know if you work with other organisations in order to avoid overlapping and the double-usage of resources. And maybe, even more importantly, in order to create a network with other organisations.

We are also interested in understanding if you encountered problems and how you solved them. When submitting a proposal, we want to know if you could envisage some problems in the future; in the reporting stage we want to know if you actually encountered them, and we want to know something about sustainability, so how you can go on with your intervention.

In the majority of times, in the case of the European Food Banks Federation, it’s a matter of ability to reach new donors rather than being self-sustainable. So, that’s the idea for me, but I think that there are commonalities with the other organisations, even though we are a different company, and we have a different approach.

Then we want to know if you pre-envisage some risks in your work and if you have mitigating measures to tackle them afterwards. And of course, we consider the usage of resources (efficiency).

At the end of the intervention, we have a look at reporting, so we analyse both the financial reporting and the qualitative reporting, but this qualitative report should be supported by KPIs. So again, we want that your results are supported by numbers. Of course, as we are a bank, we have a look at numbers.

Our expectation is that you continue to protect our brand in the way that you do and ensure that the food goes to where it is needed, which I know that you will do.

Secondly, consistent reporting on a market-by-market basis. We talked about this before, and I know you are working on this. For example, it would be nice to be able to say something like: Kellogg in Belgium donated 47 tonnes of food in 2021. That food reached 22,000 people in 11 cities and was redistributed through 265 local charity organisations. I would love that kind of consistent reporting across every Food Bank.

We have absolutely no problems with Food Banks at all, whatsoever. We think they are brilliant, right across our global business. If there was one thing to look at: I think there are some inconsistencies across the food banking network in terms of Best Before Dates and the time Food Banks need. I know that a couple of Food Banks require a lot more date left on the food, and there are good reasons for that, and I respect those reasons, but it makes it harder for us. So, for example, we have some Food Banks that will take food with 15, 20 days left, maybe less and there are a couple I can think of that say they need 30 to 40 days. This presents a problem because we can sell food with 40 to 60 days ad by the time it is available to donate it might be too late for the Food Bank.

Another wish is that a Food Bank could accept food and then redistribute it throughout its national network.

But I would also say, and I probably should have started with this, the biggest challenge I’ve got is internal, you know. It is making sure we identify that food we can donate have the contacts with the Food Banks, have the “donation culture” embedded within us, so we can give you guys the time that you need. I think that’s the overwhelming priority for us.
3 / Needs, activities, operating grants, projects, results, and now impacts. Measuring and reporting the impact is increasingly required by corporate donors. This information is usually included in corporate sustainability reports. How can we better gather and share this information with you?

Amie Kegler, Impact Lead, Global Engagement in Food Recovery, General Mills Foundation

Of course, we would love to hear about everything, every possible impact and data point, but there are some very key indicators that we could prioritise to reduce the amount of work that goes into reporting.

Also, our reporting period often doesn’t match up with the reporting cycles for our Food Bank partners, and so it would be great in the future to have consistent reporting that is maybe a bit more in real time than looking back a full year at a time. We are understanding that this could be a burden unless we can streamline that or get that process ironed out, that can be difficult. But it’s extremely helpful to have that data available.

The question we’ll often get internally regarding our philanthropy is what does it enable? So, what does the funding enable meaning beyond the immediate results, what are the long-term impacts? And just knowing that it’s okay to have that in more general terms, but I think a lot of times with our funding we’re wanting to dedicate it to new capabilities that are going to have long-term effects, and that could be as simple as investing in additional trucks or cold storage or technology solutions, but going a step beyond what the impact is – for example, not simply purchasing more refrigeration units, but what will that impact be over the next couple of years? How many more people would be served?

So, that forward-looking piece of what does that donation or funding enable is a question that we do get a lot.

I also wanted to say thank you for inviting us to share in this space, and I especially wanted to say thank you to all the Food Bank representatives on the call for all of the great work that you’re doing. I just appreciate it so much and know that you’re making such a huge difference, and that we see that and appreciate it.

Cristina Aspesi, Head of Charity Fund, Chairman’s Technical Secretariat, Intesa Sanpaolo

Well, I tried to bring at the table some concrete KPIs. Take them as suggestions. So basically, from these kind of interventions, we would like to read among outputs the quantity of food collected and distributed to charitable organisations, the number of food donors that enter your network, the number of charitable organisations that you support, and the number of people in need reached by those organisations. Then we have outcomes, and in terms of outcomes we talk about the increase in of all the above items. So basically, you calculate the add-on of the intervention.

And as for the impact, maybe if you can try to determine the decrease of food poverty for needy people that were not previously supported by charitable organisations at all, or maybe the increasing quality of food that you make available to needy people.

It would also be interesting in my opinion to understand how surplus food distributed to people in need can be translated into meals. I know that it’s very complicated, but it’s very interesting, because it’s an easier way to communicate to the public, to donors and also to our management. For example, you can say one person that before ate twice a week, now through your support can have three, four additional meals.

And a final proposal: I would be interested in understanding how charitable organisations can save resources through your help and divert those resources that were not spent...
to buy food in order to start additional services that help beneficiaries to become autonomous and get out of poverty. For example, to start services to help people get a job, buy/rent a house. This is even more complicated than calculating meals, but that would be really very interesting for us. Because, as you can understand, we are looking to determine the social impact of initiatives. It’s a proposal of course, it’s a long list of suggestions, starting from the basics to the most structured.

“I think that Amie & Cristina made a good point which I’d never considered it, we (Corporates) probably all want slightly different things, and that’s not fair on you and not practical. So, we probably need to decide what it is as an industry we want and agree on maybe four factors.

When I talk about the donations, we make to Kellogg people and other people, one of the things that I say is that every donation of food you make is effectively supporting a care worker, or a member of staff, or a volunteer because if the Food Bank gets food, and gives that food to an organisation, then that organisation can spend its money on providing frontline services. If you are a charity which supports homeless people, if you can get all your food from Kellogg and General Mills and so on via the Food Bank, then you do not need to spend EUR 20,000 a year on food, which means you can spend EUR 20,000 a year on a frontline care worker, or an advice worker.

For me, it would be great if there would be some sort of indicator of what the donation of food meant to the end organisation, the frontline organisation. How much it saved, you know, and was able then to redeploy somewhere else.

My only other point that I have not covered is the fact that you, FEBA, lobby at policy level to raise the profile of donations and the importance of donations, and that is really important for us, really important for Kellogg. Thank you FEBA for that.

Internal session for Food Banks representatives / Donation cycle: how does it work?

Valentina D’Arrigo, Partnerships and Capacity Building Manager, European Food Banks Federation

1 / Contact with a partner

A corporate partner often wants to join forces with Food Banks to meet a common goal on the basis of shared values. They often want to collaborate with Food Banks in multiple countries and they may want to be engaged in a number of activities such as:

- donation of surplus food
- in-kind donations
- economic donations
- raising awareness and sharing knowledge
- volunteering activities or other initiatives engaging employees.

FEBA can receive multiannual or one-off economic donations which can be used as operating funds or funds for specific actions or projects.

Economic donations are usually accompanied by precise and punctual indications by the donors. Indeed, corporate partners are pretty clear on the purpose and allocation of the funds, and their expectations as regards the reporting and the expected results and outcomes.

As learned from the experts, it is a matter of trust and responsibility to allow all the actors to report back to the management of the company that made the donation.

Economic donations vs. operating funds: what’s the difference?

- Economic donations can be usually used as operating funds or funds for specific actions or projects.
- Operating funds can support operating expenses related to the daily activity, such as personnel costs, infrastructure, rent and utilities, equipment, training costs, communication activities. Funds for specific actions or projects have a limited and defined scope.
2 / Signature of the Donation Agreement

Once defined the common goal and the activities envisaged in the framework of the partnership, FEBA and the corporate partner sign a Donation Agreement where all the aspects of the partnership are regulated. FEBA liaises with the donor to define the communication activities, ensuring that both parties – including FEBA Members – are agreeable to communicating, using the logos, and disseminating information through several channels.

Most of the time FEBA is as punctual as possible in the Donation Agreement, without taking any decisions on behalf of the national/local Food Banks. If a FEBA Member must be involved, FEBA regulates this aspect in a preliminary discussion with the member before making any kind of commitment.

3 / Communication to FEBA members

Following the signature of the Donation Agreement, FEBA communicates to the entire network about the new collaboration or the renewal of the long-lasting partnership. As part of this information, FEBA outlines the common goals and the activities of this partnership as well as the eligible members.

4 / Signature of a Letter of Agreement with every single beneficiary (FEBA Members)

When transferring funds to one of its members, FEBA prepares a Letter of Agreement outlining the objective and requirements of funding. For a FEBA Member, it is important to pay attention to the purpose where there are clear indications on how to use the funds, to avoid using the funds received for other purposes. Moreover, it is important to look at the timing to use the funds and the necessary documents and deadlines to report back to FEBA at the end of the process.

5 / Use of the donation

Most of the time, the donations received should be used with limited scopes and in a determined timeframe.

6 / Collection of reports from FEBA Members

Upon the completion of the use of funds, the FEBA Member is required to submit a final report to FEBA. FEBA may also require a midterm report or ad hoc information. The Letter of Agreement always specifies the timing to complete the report and submit it to FEBA. Therefore, it is important to have the deadline in mind to prepare the report and the necessary documents to report back and send the materials on time to the FEBA team.

Providing a precise report and using the template prepared by FEBA with information about the use of funds is essential. Filling in the report with all the information requested (including testimonials, stories and pictures) can then have a great impact in the process of reporting back to the corporate donor.

7 / Reporting back to the donor

Before sending the reports to the donor, FEBA usually summarises the reports with all the information received from its members in order to provide a comprehensive European overview. For this reason, punctuality and precision are essential for the reputation both of FEBA and its members.

This might seem like the end of the donation cycle. However, when FEBA provides a positive feedback and a complete report to the corporate partner, the dialogue can continue so that the collaboration can be strengthened, and the donation cycle can start again. This is essential to maintain long-lasting partnerships and stabilise the new ones.

Good to know

- **Save the dates** for reporting back to FEBA in your agenda
- **Take note** of the data and information necessary for reporting

**Good to know**

- **Use the template provided by FEBA**: this is the information requested by the donor
- **Add pictures as stories**: they can complement your description and financial reporting

**Good to know**

- **Read carefully the Letter of Agreement** that regulates these issues
- **Contact FEBA** for any questions or challenges encountered while using the donation

**Filling in the report with all the information requested (including testimonials, stories and pictures) can then have a great impact in the process of reporting back to the corporate donor.**
Overview of 2020

On 21 March 2020 FEBA established a COVID-19 Social Emergency Fund

Contacts with more than 130 corporations, foundations and other organisations

Over 80 corporations, foundations and other organisations committed to donate over €4.5 million to sustain the daily activity of FEBA and its members

Between March-December 2020, FEBA supported 27 members with over €4.2 million for COVID-19 related actions

Moreover, in line with their core business, many companies also donated food or other goods such as PPEs, transports, and carton boxes for the benefit of FEBA Members

14 companies decided to extend their commitment to their employees involving them in online fundraising campaigns to support FEBA and its members.

Positive aspects

- Opportunity to act as a network, giving a broader overview of the needs, activities, results and impacts, and positive spill over effects on the whole network
- Reinforcing long-lasting partnership and starting new collaborations
- Report as a means for internal communication to better assess the needs
- Report gives consolidated & updated information by a European organisation

Areas of improvements

- The donation is not fully spent, without any justification
- Change of the purpose, without informing and without any justification
- Not compliant with the purpose requested by the donor
- Delay in receiving reports, with necessary follow-ups and reminders from FEBA
- Missing, poor or unclear information
- Non-respect of the template provided
- Same reports for several donations

Open discussion and Q&A / How can FEBA strengthen the process and improve the results for the whole network?

FEBA team and Food Bankers participating in the session started an open discussion to exchange views, hurdles and challenges.

Paula Capodistrias, Project Manager, Matsentralen Norge (Norway)

It was really good to see an overview like this because it gives a clear picture of how important this is and how we really all need to work together on this, because at the end of the day it’s for the benefit of all of us.

(…) It has actually been very positive to have requests for reports, and mapping, and putting numbers to things, and writing these things down, because in this period everything is so hectic, and sometimes in our daily operations we don’t stop to look and think some of those things, and then we just do it at the end of the year: what was that money for? And what did we pay with that? And it has been great to actually have all of these reports that we send to FEBA in order to be more organised internally.

So, I would also encourage all of the FEBA Members to do this because it really has helped us internally. We have been inspired to set up new systems in place and realising the things that we needed to start recording information. It’s just a bit painful sometimes, but it’s very useful for the organisation.
Valentina reported that in the first months of 2021, compared to 2020, the trend of donations to FEBA is slowing down. The pandemic has touched people very, very close to you. That’s why it would be interesting to compare the trend in donations, during the period mentioned by Valentina, at the level of FEBA and of the national organisations and local Food Banks. In fact, in Europe there are not only 29 national organisations but over 300 Food Banks. This could help us to understand if donations have decreased or increased, in total. It would be interesting to know if companies have increased donations to local Food Banks rather than to national organisations or FEBA.

For example, in Barcelona, economic donations from society decreased during August, September, October, but then increased again and were high much later, around Christmas. I would like to suggest to FEBA to get more information about donations directly from the local Food Banks. This analysis may help to understand if the first months of 2021 indicate that the effort made by everyone in 2020 is running out or has shifted to more local interventions.

At FBAO we are working on this topic: how can we strengthen our relationship with a donor over time and move from a one-off to a long-lasting partnership? We are very good at initiating an engagement with companies but not so good at continuing the relationship. For example, we have been offering corporate volunteering activities to companies for years. The experience has always been positive, but the relationship did not always expand or continue over time.

A few weeks ago, we decided to do a double test: we organised a virtual corporate volunteering activity and at the end we didn’t close as usual with a “THANK YOU” but we added a slide saying explicitly what we needed to achieve our goals, how much reaching these goals could positively impact, and how the company could help us. The participants were really surprised and expressed interest in continuing the partnership.

Generally speaking, FEBA team and FEBA Members highlighted the importance of what said by the corporate experts at the beginning of the session. If FEBA network is able to communicate its data and information about the impact but also stories about the activities of Food Banks (and not only how the funds have been used) on the ground, the whole network can achieve better results.

FEBA is working hard to provide donors with consistent reports and information, but a strong collaboration and cooperation with its members can be a crucial asset for the future of a fruitful collaboration between Food Banks and corporations.
Acknowledgement

The European Food Banks Federation takes this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the European Commission for concretely supporting the capacity building of FEBA and its membership.

A deep appreciation to Amie Kegler (General Mills Foundation), Cristina Aspesi (Charity Fund Intesa Sanpaolo) and Bruce Learner (Kellogg Europe) for dedicating their time to our meeting, sharing very interesting experiences, helping FEBA Members to deeply understand the important relationship between FEBA and Food Banks and donors and how to continue developing that kind of collaboration for the benefit of all.

Finally, many thanks to all the participants who actively contributed to the success of the skill-sharing session!