

Wasteless Vantaa

So that nobody or
nothing were lost.

ABC-BOOK





ABC Book is a developer’s guide on the way from offering traditional food aid to enabling open participation and sustainable development. It provides tools to start initiatives like “Wasteless” and “Shared Table” in your own community.

Contents

Introduction – what is Shared Table? _____	4
Shared Table is set with common values _____	6
Core processes of developing and modeling the food aid field _____	7
Our vision is that nobody or nothing were lost _____	8
This is how you ensure success _____	10
1. Get started by engaging with important networks _____	10
2. Look for best practices _____	11
3. Choose a content expert for the project _____	11
4. Pay attention to the network’s expectations and needs _____	12
5. Facilitate and coach community work _____	14
6. Build infrastructure _____	15
7. Ensure expertise in logistics and food safety _____	15
8. Engage with both food aid donors and distributors _____	16
9. Hire enough regular staff _____	17
10. Make community work an integral part of networking and logistics _____	18
Benefits experienced by the Shared Table network and results of impact assessment _____	20
Partnership criteria and benefits _____	22

Introduction: What is Shared Table?

Managed and funded by the City of Vantaa and the Parish Union of Vantaa, Shared Table is a food aid development model currently being built and developed in collaboration with the existing food aid network. It combines traditional food assistance and a community-based approach that supports volunteering with centralized, high-quality distribution of surplus food.

In 2018, the food aid network in Vantaa included around 35 surplus food donors, such as food factories, wholesalers and retailers, and around 65 wide-ranging food distribution agencies, including associations, city resident facilities and parishes.

A surplus food terminal set up by the city, employing both long-term unemployed and volunteers, is in charge of making the surplus food available to the network. And community work, that lies at the core of Shared Table, is about co-developing food aid. It is accomplished through, for example, Cable community coaching, audit discussions and workshops, making thousands of Vantaa residents beneficiaries of the initiative every week.

The aim of Shared Table is to get rid of the outdoor bread queues in Vantaa and to develop food assistance so that people are faced holistically and with respect. The approach combines efficient utilization of surplus food, saving resources within the food aid network, and sharing best practices. Food aid is developed in a networked and community-based manner, in order to increase the well-being of those in need as sustainably as possible.

Since 2013, a new operational culture and network in the field of food aid has been consistently built through workshops, discussions and interviews. All willing food aid distributors in Vantaa and a large part of their customers have been involved in developing the model.

In December 2017, The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra and Shared Table started a two-year-project to spread the Shared Table operating model to other parts of Finland. The project's goal is to model Vantaa operations so that the key successes, lessons and best practices can be utilized and implemented locally.

Shared Table in Vantaa



Shared Table is set with common values.

- ✓ We build trust.
- ✓ We nurture humanity, inclusion and respect.
- ✓ We promote sustainable development in various ways.
- ✓ We develop our operations creatively and open-mindedly.
- ✓ We seek for socially sustainable efficiency.
- ✓ We nurture a sense of community and agency.
- ✓ We empower individuals and communities.



Core processes of developing and modeling the food aid field



Centrally transport surplus food from donors to distributors.



Put together a network, and develop and facilitate it.



Increase utilization of surplus food as well as welfare and empowerment of the food aid recipient.



Employ long-term unemployed in surplus food operations.



Develop food aid in a community-based and inclusive way – empower both individuals and the community.

Our vision is that nobody or nothing were lost.

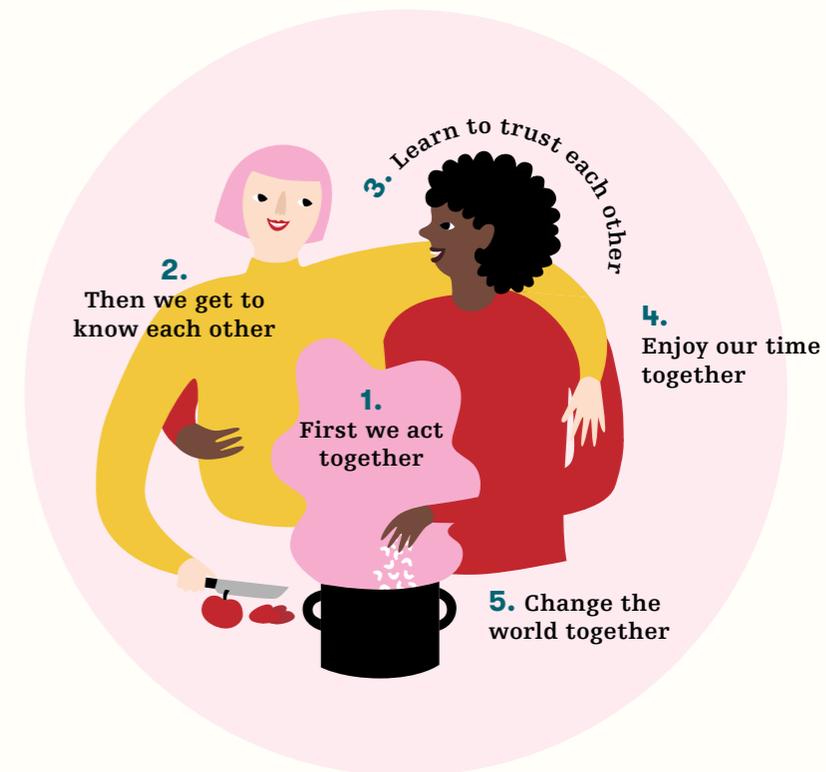
Therefore:

- We face people in a holistic and respectful way
- We develop food aid so that nobody has to que outside
- We respect voluntary community action
- We increase well-being and empowerment of food aid recipients
- We encourage people to think and act together
- We help each other
- We strengthen local communities and activities that add well-being and create new employment opportunities
- We increase utilization of surplus food
- We reduce food loss and, at the same time, carbon footprint of the food chain
- We benefit from centralized surplus food logisticst
- We save money and common resources
- We create a sense of belonging, meaningful things to do and willingness to make a difference.



"Especially those who volunteer at our luncheons attach great importance to social encounters."

Social Circular Economy



This is how you ensure success

1. Get started by engaging with important networks

There are many established actors in the field of food aid. That is why local cooperation is of paramount importance.

- Identify key stakeholders and influencers in your area.
- Create structures and a meeting place to bring stakeholders together and engage in a dialogue.
- Engage in a communal, respectful dialogue, genuinely listening.
- Document the discussions that have taken place to ensure a common understanding for all participants.



2. Look for best practices

Learning from others' experiences is important. The starting point is to understand the specific quality of each respective operating environment, so that Shared Table and Wasteless models can be naturally built into it. Involving different stakeholders from the very beginning makes the activity sustainable.

- Identify areas where food aid development has already been applied and implemented.
- Choose a development team from among you that represents the various actors in the network.
- Learn together: Choose places to visit and set clear goals for your excursions.
- Combine the similarities and differences, the pros and cons of different practices. Build your own model based on these experiences and observations.

3. Choose a content expert for the project

Changes are not automatic. In order to implement a new operating model, it needs to be developed, promoted and managed by a designated and selected expert within the organization. – Such a big project cannot be run by a consultant.

The development manager must possess:

- good knowledge of the operating environment
- profound knowledge of the food aid field and its operations
- good communication skills and knowledge in network management
- authority, motivation and desire to manage development work
- sufficient operational capacity and acceptance by the network after being selected for the job.

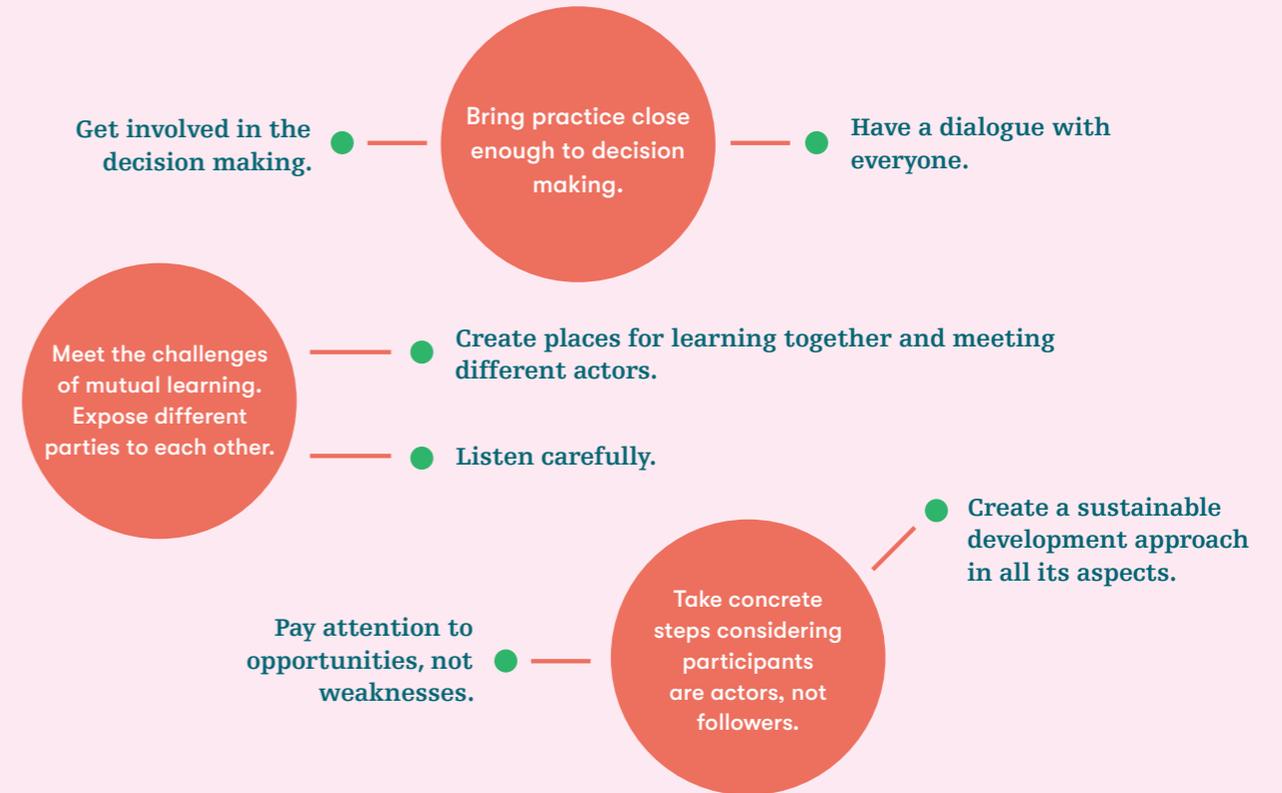
Help the development manager succeed by drawing up a support plan.

4. Pay attention to the network's expectations and needs

Instead of there being one network driver that would rule others, in a network like Shared Table, activities are developed through facilitation, support, discussion, interviews, and surveys; the expectations and needs of the network must first be identified, and each actor in the network must retain control over their own activities.

- Lay down procedures for consulting the network: studies, surveys, interviews, workshops, discussions, service design, etc.
- Document and model the different expectations and needs of the network.
- Take into account the needs of the network when designing services and operating models by applying, for example, customer-oriented product development methods.

Co-development of a non-wasteful approach





5. Facilitate and coach community work

Shared understanding and trust do not arise in an instant, but are built on a long-term basis, through concrete actions. Share information, face up, train, coach and facilitate.

It is important for everyone in the network to understand what participation means as a part of everyday operations. To support this, Shared Table has developed its own version of Cable community coaching for the food aid field. It is tailored to each community locally.

Important steps towards a community

- Be prepared to create and nurture a sense of community and inclusion on an ongoing basis.
- Help the community understand that this applies to all activities.
- Plan your trainings and workshops according to the principles of community.

(Cable = Community Action Based Learning for Empowerment)

6. Build infrastructure

Running Shared Table requires a well-functioning transport process and a surplus food terminal.

- Ensure finance and key actors.
- Get enough premises, vehicles and equipment.
- Recruit a sufficient number of employees.
- Take advantage of existing networks and resources and develop them together.
- Plan the flow of material from food donors to food distributors.
- Secure your partners and their commitment as well as their benefits through agreements.
- Design the flow of information and processes smoothly across the chain.
- Draw up a self-monitoring plan to process surplus food.
- Make a plan on how to deal with an exceptional situation.
- Document your plans and processes in a visual format.

7. Ensure expertise in logistics and food safety

The right kind of expertise, in the right place and at the right time, guarantees success.

Working with food requires solid industry and hygiene expertise to ensure food safety. Therefore, it is important for a food logistics expert to be involved from the beginning. His or her expertise is needed to design, implement and maintain a process that is functional and guarantees food safety.

Another critically important expert is a logistics specialist with a task of building trust in the corporate network by setting up a functioning centralized transport system.

"Shared Table carries out pickups spot on, and the collaboration is smooth. It's easy to direct the stores [to donate surplus food] to such an actor."

– Representative of a surplus food donor

8. Engage with both food aid donors and distributors

Smooth surplus food logistics requires commitment from all parties involved. Therefore, it is necessary to establish sufficiently precise ground rules, the effective compliance of which is supported by agreements, continuous facilitation and discussion.

- Together, define the policies that implement community and shared values.
- Take advantage of community work tools, such as workshops.
- Organize face-to-face meetings with network members and be prepared for an open discussion of their expectations and needs.
- Agree on the ground rules for purpose-built surplus food transportation and employment.
- Create a conversational process within which all members of the network can participate in the discussion on the ground rules and their importance in the future.
- Everyone willing can sign a paper of commitment. It is a good starting point for facilitation.



9. Hire enough regular staff

Subsidized employment is a key part of the Shared Table model. However, wage subsidies are short-term and the staff turnover tends to be high. For this reason, smooth, efficient and safe operations require that you have a sufficient number of regular staff to ensure the continuity of professional know-how.

- Make a staffing plan: what responsibilities and roles are called for? Write down the job descriptions and skills required for the respective tasks.
- Carefully carry out recruitment.
- Make sure that volunteering and subsidized employment are equally valued at the workplace.
- Draw up a plan on how to maintain the staff know-how and support their coping.

10. Make community work an integral part of networking and logistics

Shared Table has demonstrated that community work cannot be treated as a standalone activity. Network facilitation and community coaching are an important part of food aid development, together with networking with surplus food donors, subsidized employment at the surplus food terminal, and development initiatives carried out with food aid distributors.

- Identify common goals and write them down.
- Observe that development activities are based on existing resources.
- Make sure that each operating site retains its originality and control over its activities.
- For community work, develop processes and content that tie in well with logistics processes (eg. drivers' peer group, or a network of surplus food cooks).
- Agree with the network on how to continually improve its operations. Inclusion can be enhanced by providing community coaching and other community work tools.



"We have been involved in every possible event. They have been very inspiring! Great initiative!"

– Representative of a surplus food distributor

Benefits experienced by the Shared Table network and results of impact assessment

Results of Network Survey and Interviews 2018:

- Through Shared Table, the network gets more free surplus food.
- Surplus food is delivered directly to the recipient's door free of charge. Half of the respondents said that their community had saved costs.
- The network provides support for the development of one's own activities as well as useful peer support and contacts. Of the food aid recipients interviewed, 23/27 considered community to be important.
- Social events strengthen the network.

Network impacts

- For food aid distributors, the network provides networking opportunities for mutual benefit as well as peer support.
- Best practices are shared between the actors in the network, which improves organization of food aid in concrete terms and has helped address a number of operational challenges.
- The Shared Table model has increased interaction between parishes.
- At best, community dining reduces the feeling of inequality between different groups.

Wellbeing and social impacts

- Well-being and social impacts play a key role when comparing Shared Table with other food distribution models.
- Food aid recipients have felt that communal food aid has helped to form and consolidate communities.
- Communal food aid has nurtured humane treatment and encounters.
- Employment activities reinforce the empowerment of subsidized workers providing them with concrete help to get back to work.

Ecological and economic impacts

- Recycling surplus food reduces bio-waste load and carbon footprint.
- Centralized logistics reduces the cost of distributed food as well as helps fight climate change.
- Centralized logistics management by one single operator saves human resources, money and time.
- Some food distribution organizations have had to allocate less resources to buying food than before.
- Surplus food distributed as food aid facilitates the recipient's economy, saving money for other purposes.

"The good thing about community dining is getting to know new people as I feel terribly lonely at home. The food is also tasty!"

– Shared Table customer

"You save on travel expenses as you don't have to collect surplus food from the shops yourself."

– Representative of a surplus food distributor

The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra and Shared Table Project's partnership criteria and benefits:

- Developing food aid from bread queues to communal ways of distributing food aid.
- Understanding the principle of community work, with the objective of increasing food aid recipients' sense of community, wellbeing and empowerment.
- Network cooperation.
- Implementing the values of Shared Table (trust, respect, humanity, social efficiency, empowerment, commitment and participation, sustainable development).
- Role of the city and the church in the project / platform: They define their own involvement in the initiative.
- Surplus food utilization and logistics.
- Employment as an opportunity, not a compulsory part of the project.

⇒ **Contact us, if you feel you meet the criteria.** Let's join forces to draw up an implementation plan for the development of food aid in your area and for applying the Shared Table model to your advantage.

How can you benefit from The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra and Shared Table Project 2017-2019?

Impact assessment of the Vantaa food aid field as a benchmark for your own region.

RESULTS HIGHLIGHTED

Communication ideas

STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

Shared Table Operations Manual to help you build your own model

SPREADING THE MODEL

Partner Search and Consultation
(10 areas are targeted)

Networking enables collaboration and audits



Contact us

Project Manager Hanna Kuisma
+358 50 318 0983
hanna.kuisma@vantaa.fi
hukatontantaa.fi



VANTAA SEURAKUNNAT
FÖRSAMLINGARNA I VANDA

SITRA

