



Pro Bono Q&A: The Global Food Banking Network (GFN)

PRO BONO Q&AS

18 May 2020

In the fourth in our series of Q&As spotlighting food banks across the country, we talk with Lisa Moon, president & CEO of The Global Food Banking Network (GFN). DLA Piper is proud to assist the organization's effort to unite food banks in 43 countries and provide meals for more than 9.6 million people annually.

"It is now projected that COVID-19 will double the number of people facing hunger. Our food banks are on the front lines of this health and economic crisis – and they will be for some time. We're working every day to support their efforts."

Tell us about your organization and the community you serve.

Lisa Moon: The Global Food Banking Network (GFN) was founded to help launch and support hunger relief organizations in communities where they are needed. Our scope is global, but we focus on nurturing food banks in countries where hunger and malnutrition rates are high.

Today we unite food banks in 43 countries. We help start new organizations and then provide technical support, financing, partnerships, and a platform for knowledge sharing and testing and scaling new approaches. Our network provides meals to more than 9.6 million people annually. Given the UN goal of zeroing out hunger by 2030, last year GFN committed to expanding food banking service to 50 million people facing hunger by the end of the decade. To do this, we are supporting new food banking operations in Southeast Asia, India, and urban areas of Sub-Saharan Africa, among other

efforts.

How has the pandemic changed your daily operations?

Lisa: Since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic on March 12, our team has been laser focused on supporting our members in scaling up hunger relief in their communities.

We're helping navigate severe restrictions on movement. In places like Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and India, the military and police are resorting to extreme violence to carry out lockdown measures. For our food banks operating in these countries, we're providing them with technical assistance to ensure safety.

Sourcing food and moving to point of contact or home delivery parcel distribution are also key focus areas. In some cases, food banks have had to entirely re-engineer their operating model because donated food has completely disappeared. We're trying to get in front of supply chain disruptions with our members. Food purchasing is difficult – food prices are spiking and food banks are competing with retailers for product.

It is now projected that COVID-19 will double the number of people facing hunger. No doubt we have all seen the images of the migrants in India, the children in Africa, the heavy toll in Ecuador – these are all countries where the vast majority of people work in the informal economy. But there is no informal economy right now, and the human results are devastating. Our food banks are on the front lines of this health and economic crisis – and they will be for some time. We're working every day to support their efforts.

What is the greatest need right now, and how should people reach out if they want to help?

Lisa: GFN recently conducted a survey with our member food banks to understand how the needs in communities are changing amid COVID-19. Hunger relief organizations in 39 countries are reporting:

- 100% increase in demand for emergency food assistance
- 93% reported an urgent need for food
- 87% reported an urgent need for funds

As you can see, the need is massive and urgent. Since early March, GFN has been technically and financially supporting our member food banks as they mobilize to address COVID-19 impacts. In the past few weeks, we've distributed \$9M in funds to our network and European food banks. Funds are being used to purchase food, hire staff to offset the loss of volunteers, and support logistics to ensure safe deliveries of product.

Our greatest need remains funds. With estimates that global hunger will more than double by the end of this year, we know demand at food banks around the world will continue to rise. And we need to continue to support our network.

For those wanting to help, please visit www.foodbanking.org/covid19. You can donate, share our social media posts, read updates on our work, and sign up for our weekly newsletter.