

From Charitable Food to Food as a Human Right

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- **Explore how describing/defining the problems we're trying to solve affects the work we do to make change in the world**
- **Use the “Food Systems Change Continuum” tool as a way to dissect the “who, what and how” of different approaches to food systems change**
- **Explore the barriers and opportunities to adopting a rights-based lens to eradicating hunger**

Food Security in the U.S. Today

47

million people
are food
insecure

14

million
children are
food insecure

49

million people
turned to food
programs in
2022

100%

of U.S.
counties have
food
insecurity

Now Presenting: 50+ Years of Food Banking



#AreWeDoneYet?

Contradictions in the food banking economy

Food banks have been in existence for more than 50 years and have grown in number and size.

The number of food insecure households has steadily increased, as has a racialized gap between the rich and the poor.

Dominant Narrative

Reality

Hunger will always be with us so charity will always be necessary.

Charity alone will never end hunger. The root cause of hunger is POVERTY: low wages, job insecurity, and erosion of social services and entitlements, particularly for BIPOC communities.

Food corporations have a major role to play in ending hunger. Walmart and Sam's Club are Feeding America's largest donors with more than \$240 million in investments and 7.5 billion pounds of food donated over the last 20 years.

\$85 million of the total investment made to food banks was raised directly from Walmart's *customers at the check out*. Meanwhile, Walmart takes in the most food stamp dollars among retailers, benefiting from tax payer dollars.

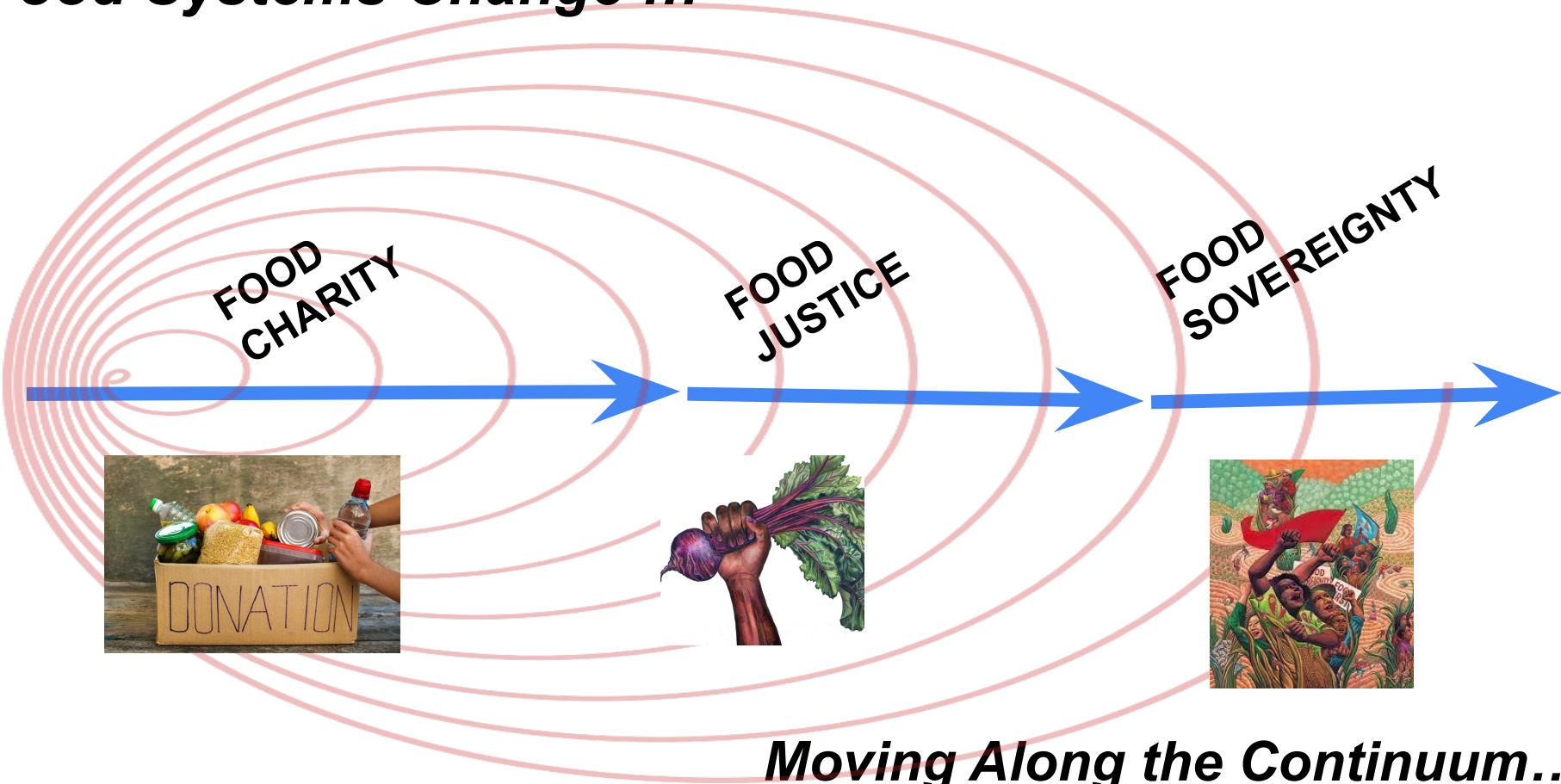
Volunteers are celebrated at food banks for serving up kindness. 51% of all food programs in the U.S. relied on volunteers in 2022. Worldwide the number of volunteers providing local hunger relief increased by 28% over the previous year – an all-time high.

For many, volunteering provides a moral safety valve for a society coming to terms with the dismantling of the welfare state. Volunteering often reinforces class and racial divides, especially if volunteer training does not include discussion about the root causes of hunger.

Food Waste = feeding people and saving the planet, "a win-win" for society.

Large-scale food waste is an inevitable outcome of the competition, speed, and growth-driven market mechanisms which rely on overproduction to generate profit at the expense of people and the environment.

Food Systems Change ...



Moving Along the Continuum...

Vision: *The purpose of our food system is to nourish people and the planet by producing food, health and well-being for everyone, now and in the future.*

What is the Problem? 

Who are the Main Actors? 

What is our Strategy for Change? 

What are the Outcomes / Results? 

Food Charity → → Food Justice → → Food Sovereignty

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Problem | Hunger | Food Insecurity | Nutrition Insecurity | Economic Insecurity | Resource Inequality | Food is devalued (commodity) / food producers and eaters are disenfranchised and devalued |
| Main Actors | Volunteers / 'the poor' / private and faith sector | Private donors / public programs / children / education / agriculture | Public health / people with diet related and chronic disease | Labor / food chain workers / farmers / working poor | BIPOC / urban agriculture / youth / values-based markets | Social movements / eaters / food producers |
| Strategy for Change | Respond and react | Build and develop | Fix and maintain | Redevelop and reform | Educate and liberate | Dismantle and transform |
| Results / Outcome | Food access / hunger reduction / relieve moral safety valve | Pounds of food / number of people / \$\$ spent | Nutritious food / health outcomes | Living wages / fair market value / affordable food | Racial equity / land availability / fair market value | People who produce, distribute and consume food also control the mechanisms and policies of food production and distribution |

Right to Food

Policies and laws lack coordination and intersectionality across food, agriculture, health, labor, and the environment

Problem

Social movements / people as rights holders / governments as duty bearers

Actors

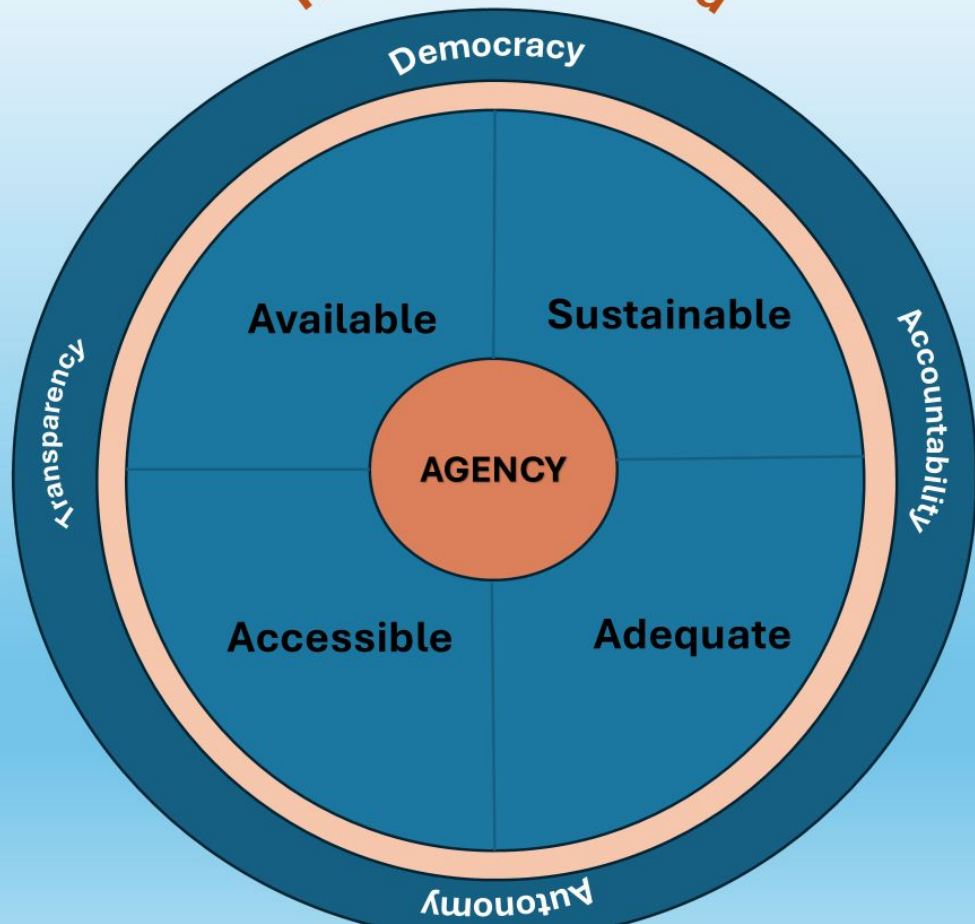
Build anew and transform

Strategy

Food is available, accessible, adequate, sustainable and self-determined for all people at all times.

Outcomes

The Right to Food



What is the added value of the Right to Food?

- ▶ **DEMOCRACY:** Empowers people to be active participants in decision making, and in creating accountability mechanisms
- ▶ **ROOT CAUSES:** Provides new insights into the causes of food insecurity
- ▶ **MEASUREMENT:** Basis for better goals and indicators relevant to food insecurity
- ▶ **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Provides a means to address rights impacts of international institutions, such as corporations





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