

# DIVERSE RELATIONSHIPS BUILT BY A COMMUNITY FOOD BANK: THE ROLE OF "TSUNAGARI"

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## [BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE]

A food bank was created by Co-op members to support the community. It has provided aid for three years. This project built diverse relationships, called "TSUNAGARI" in Japanese.

## [METHOD/INTERVENTION]

- ◆Period of project: March 2021 to March 2024
- ◆Frequency: Once a month and emergency requests.
- ◆Target: People whose income was reduced due to the COVID-19 disaster, pensioners, economically disadvantaged, etc.
- ◆Amount provided: A total of **3,500 meals**.
- ◆Supplies provided: Rice (6,240kg), canned food, retort pouches, noodles, bread, vegetables, fruits, etc.
- ◆Funding: Approximately 1.5 million yen from CO-OP Kyosai and 2.5 million yen from Co-op members.

## [ACHIEVEMENTS]

### ◆Recruitment of staff

**720 people offered to participate.** Staff members used their existing expertise. Staff members lobbied for free or discounted supplies from public institutions, stores, and local farmers.

### ◆Food bank users

Non-regular workers, the elderly, single parents, welfare recipients, and foreign people. Users got to know each other. One commented, "It's good to come here and talk to everyone." **Some young users became staff members.**

### ◆Local people

People with disabilities and volunteer groups supported the project. Co-op members also provided supplies and donations.

### ◆Staff from the Co-op hospital

Obtained grants and provided counselling, space, and supplies.

## [CONCLUSION/LESSONS LEARNED]

Along with nutritional support, the food bank built five types of TSUNAGARI:

- (1) among Co-op members;
- (2) among users;
- (3) from aid recipients to aid providers;
- (4) the community and public institutions
- (5) in hospitals. Each relationship expanded and was strengthened.

## [RELEVANCE TO HPH]

The food bank relied on **social capital built by Tokyo Health Co-op members**. It allowed the cooperative hospital to reach reluctant clients. Diverse TSUNAGARI enabled users not only to secure food, but also to maintain physical and mental health. The food bank provided an opportunity for empowerment by preventing isolation for users and staff. A future task is to create a community where everyone can continue to reside in their own neighborhoods.

## [RELATION TO CONFERENCE MAIN THEME]

The role of equity for health and the role of healthcare and innovation for equity.

## [RELATION TO HPH TASK FORCE]

Interventions for health promotion in the local community and for the population served  
COI: The authors declare no conflicts of interest associated with this manuscript.

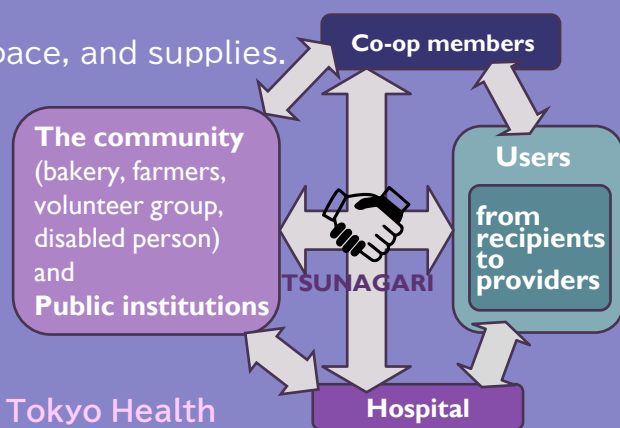
The 1<sup>st</sup> Food Bank



Prepared packages



Supply packages last about 10days



Staff meeting

