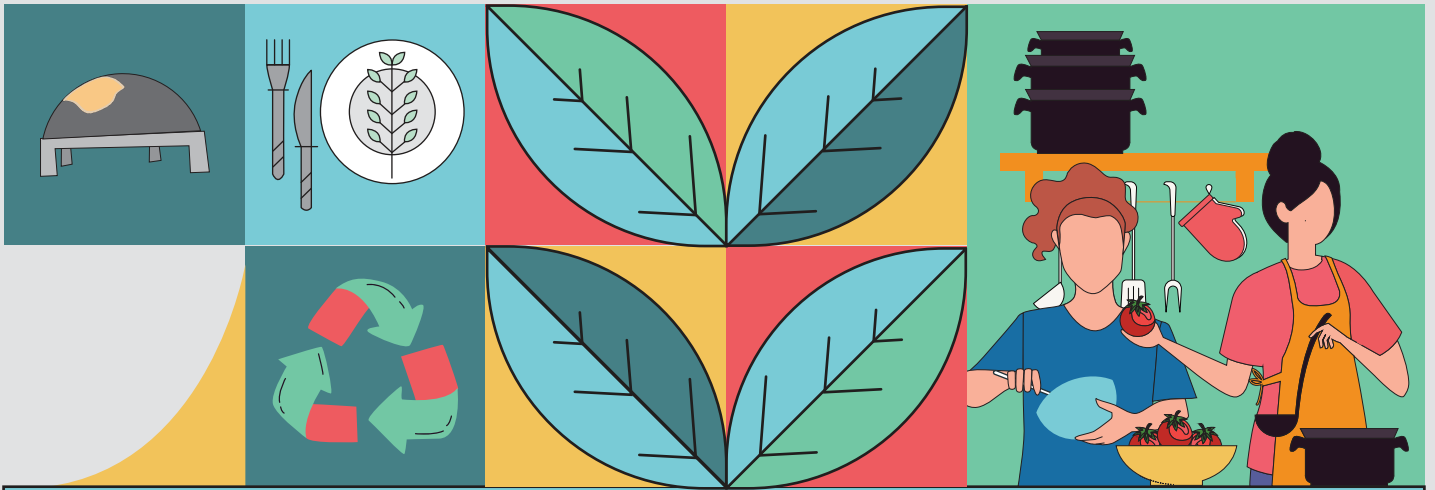




Guide to Establishing and Operating Community Kitchens in Lebanon During Crises and Emergencies



Guide to Establishing and Operating Community Kitchens in Lebanon

During Crises and Emergencies

The development of this manual was led by the Next Gen(D)eration Leadership Collective (NGLC) and implemented by the Center for Public Health Practice at the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut, with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

This manual was co-designed with community kitchen focal points, who generously shared their experiences, challenges, and stories, and provided their valuable input. Their contributions and coproduction efforts shaped the content and spirit of this manual, ensuring that it reflects the realities, creativity, and resilience of community-based solidarity initiatives on the ground.

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Preface

This guide was developed as part of the project *Understanding and Amplifying the Role of Women's Leadership in Food Systems Transformation*, led by the [Next Gen\(D\)eration Leadership Collective \(NGLC\)](#) and implemented by the [Center for Public Health Practice \(CPHP\)](#) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) between July 2022 and 2025. The initiative offers a timely opportunity to engage in the ongoing transformation of the Lebanese food system and to help steer this change toward healthier, more resilient, and sustainable models, particularly those capable of supporting nutritional needs during times of crisis, with a focus on displaced populations.

The project recognizes the potential of solidarity-based initiatives that work collectively to address the nutritional needs of displaced communities. It also highlights the importance of documenting the collaborative efforts currently taking place in community kitchens. These collective cooking activities not only influence food demand and public perceptions of food, but also support local markets and farmers, contributing meaningfully to food system transformation. In response to this critical juncture, a pilot project was launched under the theme *Capacity Sharing for Collective Action*. These solidarity initiatives exemplify collective support, agency, and action through the operation of community kitchens. They also provide the NGLC with a valuable opportunity to document collective processes, support organizations in challenging power imbalances in existing paradigms, and sustain food system agendas during crises.

The development of this guide draws upon our direct experience in establishing and managing community kitchens during the successive crises Lebanon has faced in recent years. These include the Syrian war beginning in 2011 and the subsequent influx of refugees into numerous Lebanese towns and cities; the devastating Beirut port explosion in 2020, which displaced many families and disrupted livelihoods; and the most recent war in late 2024, marked by repeated aggressive Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut, resulting in widespread displacement across the country. These events have contributed to the instability Lebanon continues to endure.

Our data collection methodology combined firsthand experience with qualitative insights gathered through interviews and discussions with volunteers who played key roles in setting up and operating community kitchens during the recent conflict. This was complemented by a review of global benchmark studies, academic and journalistic literature, and credible online resources. Through this process, we identified both local and international best practices that facilitated the successful establishment of community kitchens during crises, as well as the challenges encountered and the strategies employed to overcome them.

Essentially, the guide is grounded in the humanitarian principle of *do no harm*, which seeks to ensure that relief efforts are effective and do not inadvertently exacerbate suffering. In line with this principle, we advocate for collaboration with local farmers, producers, and vendors to source food and cooking ingredients—such as vegetables, fruits, meat, and grains. We also emphasize the importance of respecting local cultures, customs, and traditions by involving displaced individuals in menu planning and daily meal preparation. Finally, we underscore the need to consider the diverse nutritional requirements of vulnerable groups—including pregnant women, children, the elderly, and individuals with medical conditions—and to design meals that meet their specific dietary and caloric needs, with particular attention to special cases.

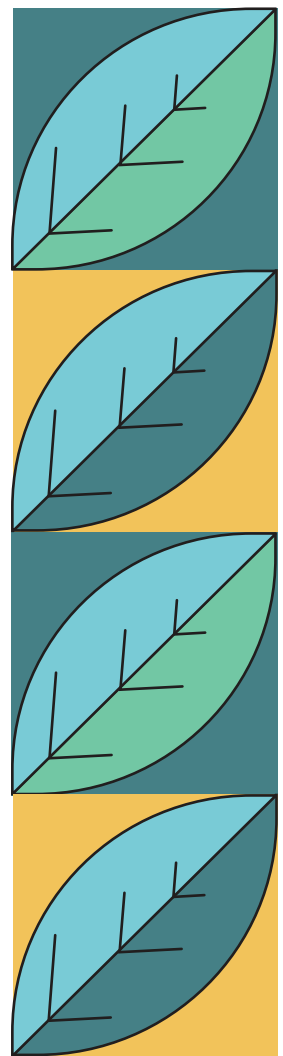


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Introduction

In light of the recurring humanitarian and economic crises in Lebanon, the establishment of community kitchens, designed to uphold food safety standards and capable of producing meals to meet urgent needs during emergencies, has become essential for ensuring food security among vulnerable and affected populations.

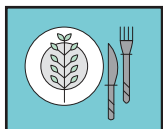
Generally, community kitchens vary in form. Some are operated by non-governmental organizations and cooperatives, functioning on a permanent basis and adapting their activities according to prevailing conditions. Others are set up during emergencies as part of rapid response interventions and continue operating throughout the crisis period until stability is restored and normal life resumes. These kitchens may be centralized or decentralized, established within displacement centers and operated either directly by displaced families and individuals with support from volunteers and grassroots initiatives, or by organizations and consultants who coordinate kitchen operations and assist newcomers in accessing the necessary resources for food preparation and kitchen management.

This guide aims to provide a practical framework for establishing and operating a community kitchen under exceptional circumstances such as wars, natural disasters, pandemics, and similar events. It emphasizes adherence to health, environmental, and economic standards, as well as respect for human dignity, while highlighting the leadership role of women in this context. We hope that the community kitchen models presented in this guide will contribute to social rehabilitation, food security, and dietary diversity among disaster-affected communities, and help promote food sovereignty.

The guide outlines detailed steps for setting up a community kitchen in response to crises—whether security-related, climatic, economic, or health-related—that result in the displacement of individuals and families. Priority is given to rapid deployment to meet the immediate needs of affected populations with minimal delay. We also address various aspects of kitchen setup and operation based on best practices, taking into account the exceptional circumstances and pressures faced by emergency response teams. This includes securing the necessary resources (human, financial, and material), developing culturally and socially appropriate menus that meet nutritional standards, and attracting partnerships and funding.

Furthermore, we explore the sustainability of community kitchens beyond the crisis period, depending on the nature of the kitchen, the conditions under which it was established, and the stakeholders involved. Sustaining the kitchen can also yield benefits for the host and local communities. Transitioning from an emergency kitchen to a development-oriented kitchen is a delicate process that requires the involvement of multiple parties, including those responsible for the facility where the kitchen was established, the entities that funded its setup, the individuals and organizations that contributed to its creation and operation, and, notably, the civil society actors engaged in its mission.





The Role of Community Kitchens in Humanitarian Crises

Community kitchens play a vital role that extends beyond food provision. They contribute to rapid crisis response, strengthen the fabric of local communities by fostering solidarity and food independence, and help build effective support networks. Below, we outline key benefits these kitchens offer during times of crisis:

Improved Access to Nutritious Meals

During emergencies, people often rely on ready-made or canned foods, and the loss of cooking facilities can reduce access to healthy, home-cooked meals. Community kitchens provide balanced meals prepared in clean environments, ensuring access to essential nutrients through wholesome food.

Enhancing Food Self-Sufficiency Skills

Community kitchens offer a practical platform for individuals, particularly women and youth, to acquire essential skills that support the future management of their food resources. These skills include:

•	Planning nutritious meals using simple, locally sourced ingredients.
•	Learning healthy cooking techniques and collaborative food preparation practices.
•	Managing portion sizes and rationing in alignment with available budgets.

Many community kitchens also emphasize economic empowerment by providing women with opportunities to develop skills, contribute to household income, and assume leadership roles. These competencies are not only valuable during times of crisis, but also extend beyond emergency contexts, supporting individuals as they transition back to everyday life.

Building and strengthening community partnerships

In displaced, underserved, or marginalized communities, community kitchens can serve as social hubs for families and individuals, fostering a sense of belonging and stability. They offer shared spaces where displaced persons can gather, cook, and share meals, helping to rebuild social ties and restore a sense of normalcy.

Community kitchens also function as collaborative environments that bring together diverse segments of society, including non-governmental organizations, volunteers, host community members, and representatives of displaced populations. Through this interaction, they help:

•	Create an environment of trust and mutual support.
•	Facilitate the exchange of skills and experiences among participants.
•	Open new avenues for collaboration in areas such as education, agriculture, and healthcare.
•	Increase opportunities for volunteering and employment, especially for youth and women, within a safe and organized setting.
•	Encourage cultural exchange, as families from different backgrounds come together to share traditional recipes and cooking practices—strengthening cultural identity and mutual understanding.
•	Promote social cohesion among families, foster friendships and support networks through joint meal preparation, which helps reduce isolation and emotional distress.
•	Enhance social interaction and solidarity between displaced individuals and volunteers.

Empowering Local Communities to Provide Innovative Food Solutions

Community kitchens enable affected populations to shift from being passive recipients to active agents of change by fostering self-sufficiency, leadership, and innovation.

•	They encourage the development of sustainable solutions, such as growing vegetables near the kitchen or recycling food waste.
•	They promote the use of local resources rather than relying solely on external aid.
•	They inspire creative approaches to developing recipes that suit local tastes using available ingredients.
•	They support local and sustainable food systems by promoting plant-based diets and locally sourced ingredients, which help reduce environmental impact and reliance on resource-intensive foods.

This empowerment positions the community kitchen as a catalyst for long-term transformation. It upholds individual dignity and strengthens the capacity of communities to adapt to new situations.

Section one

Kitchen Setup



Section One

Kitchen Setup

The establishment of a community kitchen depends on several factors, including the size, and location of the available space, the existing infrastructure, and the capacity of the site to accommodate and serve displaced individuals.

The following table outlines the ideal conditions for setting up a kitchen, while noting that these requirements may not be fully met at the initial stage. Securing them may require time and effort. However, innovation combined with solidarity can help identify practical solutions and make use of available resources—even if rudimentary—to initiate kitchen operations with minimal delay.

Table 1: Essential Requirements and Conditions for Setting Up a Community Kitchen

Location and Infrastructure	Food and Storage Supplies	Cooking Equipment and Utensils
• A safe and easily accessible space, such as a community center, school, or large tent. • Reliable access to clean water for cooking and sanitation. • Basic utilities including electricity or alternative energy sources (e.g. generator or solar panels), gas, and ventilation. • Cooking stations equipped with stoves, ovens, or portable burners. • Designated areas for handwashing and utensil cleaning to ensure hygiene. • Separate storage areas for dry and refrigerated food items.	• Essential non-perishable food items with long shelf life (e.g. rice, beans, canned goods*, etc.). • Fresh produce, proteins, and dairy products with appropriate storage options (availability of refrigerators). • Refrigerators, freezers, and dry storage containers. • Safe handling equipment (e.g. gloves, aprons, sealed containers, etc.).	• Large pots, pans, knives, cutting boards, etc. • Serving utensils for single-use or reusable purposes (plates, cups, containers). • Cooking tools (spoons, ladles, peelers, etc.).
Staff and Volunteers	Safety and Hygiene Essentials	Logistics and Communication
• Cooks or food preparation teams with basic training. • Volunteers responsible for food distribution and cleaning. • Safety officers overseeing hygiene and emergency response. • Volunteers from displaced families involved in meal preparation (with the possibility of training over time).	• Handwashing stations and hand sanitizers. • First aid kits and fire extinguishers. • Waste management systems (trash bins, recycling or composting when possible). • Clear protocols for food safety and storage.	• A communication system to coordinate operations. • Partnerships with local suppliers, farmers, relief organizations, local associations, and civil society initiatives. • Transportation means for food distribution (in the case of a centralized kitchen). • Signage to guide recipients and maintain order

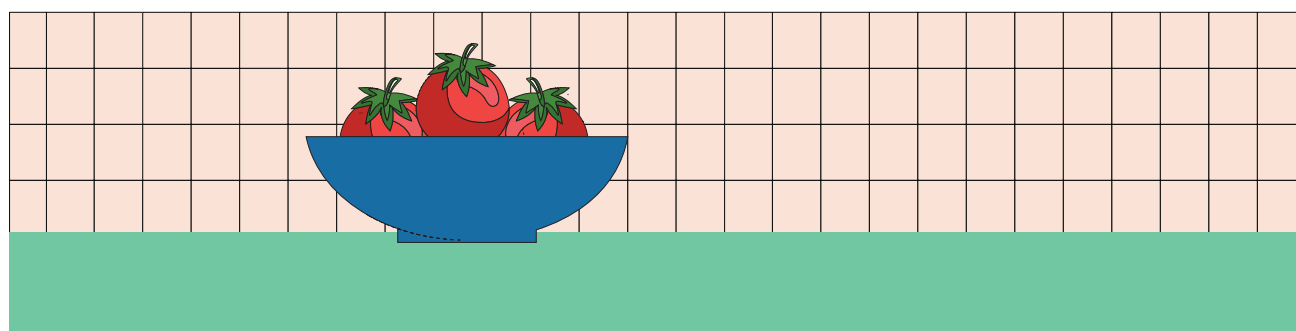
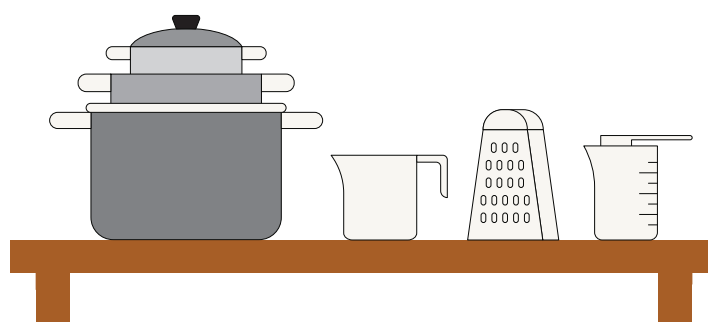
**Note:**

In general, priority should be given to fresh foods when available. However, in cases where fresh items are not accessible, canned foods may serve as a practical alternative due to their long shelf life and ease of storage, especially when compared to perishable fresh produce and grains, which are more susceptible to environmental factors, pests, and spoilage. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the sodium content in canned foods, as it may present health risks for individuals with hypertension. To address this concern, canned products should be rinsed thoroughly with clean drinking water to help reduce their salt concentration.

1.1.**Basic Planning for a Practical and Safe Community Kitchen**

Designing an effective and safe community kitchen requires careful consideration of various structural and organizational elements that ensure smooth operations, food safety, and user comfort. The process begins with selecting an appropriate space for the kitchen, based on the number of meals to be prepared daily. This helps determine the operational capacity and the number of individuals who can work in the kitchen simultaneously.

In cases where space is limited, creativity and efficient organization can optimize the available area and transform it into a functional and practical kitchen. Typically, kitchen operations are facilitated through rotating shifts among volunteer groups or individuals involved in meal preparation. Volunteers are organized into teams that prepare food on designated days of the week or during specific times of the day, following a schedule agreed upon by all stakeholders.

**Kitchen design**

The design of a kitchen plays a pivotal role in the overall efficiency of its structure, particularly when the kitchen is shared among multiple families or used in emergency or communal settings. Several factors influence the design of a community kitchen, including:

- **Available Space and Infrastructure:** Adequate floor area, proper ventilation, sanitation systems, and access to water are essential for ensuring the kitchen's functionality and must be carefully considered during the design process. The layout should also include suitable pathways for receiving supplies and distributing prepared meals.
- **Sustainability and Energy Efficiency:** Optimizing energy use—such as clustering cooking stations in one area to reduce emissions—can contribute to making the kitchen more environmentally friendly.
- **Work Environment and Safety:** A well-designed kitchen minimizes user movement, thereby reducing the risk of accidents and improving workflow efficiency.
- **Flexibility and Scalability:** The ability to adapt to seasonal pressures or future growth ensures long-term usability and resilience.

Below are common layout models that can be adopted in kitchen design:

Table 2: Common shapes used in kitchen design

Kitchen design	Advantages	Disadvantages	Illustration
L-shaped	- Utilizes two adjacent walls - Suitable for medium spaces - Possibility of adding a focal point (island) to increase efficiency	- It may not be sufficient if the number of employees is large. - The central space may be underutilized.	
U-shaped	- Provides workspace on three walls - Facilitates simultaneous work for multiple people	- Requires a relatively large space - May be difficult to navigate if it is narrow	
Galley	- Effective in tight spaces - Easy access to all equipment	- May lead to crowding among workers - Limited expansion potential	
One wall	- Enhances social interaction with seating areas - Gives a sense of spaciousness and openness	- Requires a clear separation between the preparation and resting areas. - Requires constant ventilation and cleaning	

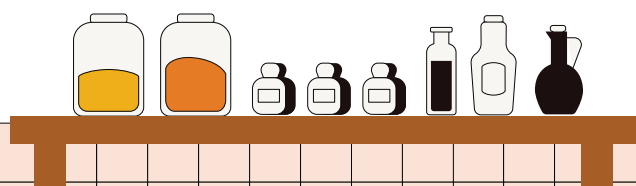
Despite the importance of these designs, their implementation within a community context presents structural and organizational challenges, most notably:

- Overcrowding due to use by multiple families or a large number of volunteers
- Lack of privacy, which may lead to tensions

To address these structural and organizational challenges that may arise in community kitchens, we propose a set of practical solutions tailored to each specific case. These measures aim to enhance operational efficiency, reduce potential conflicts, and contribute to the creation of a safe and well-organized working environment for all users.

Table 3: Key recommendations for equipping and organizing a community kitchen, with an explanation and example of each point

Organizational or operational element	Description
1. Clear scheduling	Establishing designated time slots for kitchen use in consultation with users, displaying them clearly, and updating them regularly to prevent overlap and overcrowding.
2. Division of workspaces	Divide the kitchen into functional zones (preparation, cooking, storage, packing, etc.) to ensure food safety and efficient workflow.
3. Provision of adequate tools and equipment	Providing essential tools to avoid unsafe sharing practices and delays in operations. These tools include, but are not limited to, knives, large cooking pots, storage containers, and food carriers (ideally with sufficient capacity to store a family-sized meal in cases where the meal is not consumed immediately after distribution).
4. Strengthening communication among users	Holding regular meetings, using clear directional signage, appointing a coordination officer to resolve disputes, and promoting a culture of cooperation and mutual respect.
5. Cooking appliances	Installing large industrial ovens and gas stoves, along with pots ranging from 50 to 100 liters to prepare substantial quantities of food daily (depending on the number of individuals being served), and/or small stoves for families preparing their own meals.
6. Refrigeration equipment	Equipping the kitchen with industrial refrigerators and freezers to store large volumes of meat, vegetables, and prepared foods.
7. Preparation and hygiene facilities	Providing stainless steel preparation tables, double sinks, and organized shelving units to maintain cleanliness and order.
8. Essential industrial-grade cooking tools	Supplying knives, spoons, industrial mixers, and digital scales to ensure precise portion control.
9. Clear scheduling	Establishing designated time slots for kitchen use in consultation with users, displaying them clearly, and updating them regularly to prevent overlap and overcrowding.



Section Two

Food Management Process Plan



Section Two

Section Two: Food Management Process Plan

2.1.

Meal Planning

In humanitarian settings, particularly among displaced and refugee communities, the challenge of food provision extends beyond securing sufficient quantities. It also involves ensuring dietary diversity and nutritional balance. Limited and nutrient-poor diets can lead to chronic malnutrition, especially among children and pregnant women.

2.1.1.

Menu Development

When designing meal plans, several key considerations must be taken into account, including:

Utilization of Local, Seasonal, and Readily Available Ingredients

Using locally sourced ingredients helps reduce costs and promotes sustainability. For example, lentils can serve as a plant-based protein source, bulgur as a carbohydrate source, and seasonal vegetables such as chard, cabbage, potatoes, or zucchini can be incorporated.

Respect for Local Dietary Customs

It is essential to consider the preferences of the beneficiary community. Serving traditional meals such as *mujaddara* and green salads can enhance acceptance and reduce food waste.

Achieving Nutritional Balance in Each Meal

Each meal should include:

- A carbohydrate source: bulgur, rice, or potatoes
- A protein source: lentils, beans, eggs, chicken, or meat (when available)
- Cooked or fresh vegetables to provide essential vitamins and fiber

For further details, please refer to Annex 1: “Weekly Menu for a Community Kitchen.”

2.1.2.

Health Considerations in Selecting Recipes

When preparing meals, it is crucial to ensure they meet the daily nutritional requirements of all age groups to maintain health, prevent malnutrition, and provide safe and appropriate food. These requirements vary not only by age but also by health status, gender, and level of physical activity. Below are some of the key considerations that must be taken into account:

Table 4:

Health considerations to take into account when choosing recipes

Health Conditions	Proposed Solution
Food allergies , as some people are allergic to milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soy, in addition to gluten intolerance	Avoid allergenic ingredients or replace them with safe alternatives, making sure to ask beneficiaries about any allergies and taking this into account when preparing meals.
Diabetes	Adjust ingredients to fit medical diets, such as low-sugar meals.
High blood pressure	Reduce salt and saturated fats, and increase fruits and vegetables in meals.

Irritable bowel syndrome (Low FODMAPs)	Exclude irritating ingredients such as onions, garlic, and highly fermentable legumes such as lentils, beans, and chickpeas to prevent potential health complications.
Lactose intolerance	Avoid regular dairy products and replace them with lactose-free alternatives such as soy milk, rice milk, or almond milk.

Recommendations from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the World Health Organization (WHO), and sources such as the Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) serve as essential references for daily food planning, particularly in emergency contexts. In humanitarian settings, WHO and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recommend providing a minimum of 1,700 kilocalories per day for each adult to ensure survival and support vital bodily functions. When emergencies extend over weeks or even months, and displaced individuals rely exclusively or predominantly on food assistance, these rations should supply between 1,700 and 2,100 kilocalories per person per day.

Table 5: Daily Nutritional Requirements (for Adults) – According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Elements	Daily requirement
Calories	1800–2400 calories per day (depending on age, gender, and activity level)
Carbohydrates	45–65% of calories: approximately 225–325 grams (for a 2,000-calorie diet)
Protein	10–15%: approximately 50–75 grams (for a 2,000-calorie diet)
Fats	20–35%: approximately 44–78 grams (for a 2,000-calorie diet)
Vitamin and minerals	From various natural sources such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The amount varies depending on each nutrient, for example: calcium approximately 1,000 mg, iron approximately 18 mg, and vitamin C approximately 75–90 mg
Fiber	20 – 30 grams

2.1.3.**Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergency Situations**

Ensuring appropriate nutrition for infants and young children during emergencies is vital for safeguarding their health. The importance of adhering to the Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) guidelines is paramount. These guidelines emphasize exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life, followed by the introduction of nutritious complementary foods, while cautioning against the use of breast milk substitutes without medical justification. The core principles include:

- 1. Exclusive Breastfeeding:** Infants should be exclusively breastfed during the first six months. In emergency contexts, it is essential to support mothers in continuing breastfeeding or to identify alternative solutions (such as volunteer lactating mothers) in cases where the biological mother is absent.
- 2. Safe and Appropriate Complementary Feeding:** Beginning at six months of age, infants should receive safe and nutritious complementary foods while continuing breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond.
- 3. Protection Against Unnecessary Use of Breast Milk Substitutes:** Breast milk substitutes (e.g. infant formula) should not be distributed or used unless absolutely necessary and under strict supervision, to avoid undermining breastfeeding practices.
- 4. Support for Non-Breastfed Infants:** In situations where breastfeeding is not feasible, safe and appropriate, alternative feeding must be provided, ensuring hygienic preparation using clean and safe water.
- 5. Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular monitoring of feeding practices is essential to ensure the effectiveness of interventions and to adjust programs in response to evolving needs.

Table 6:

Nutritional Needs and Practical Examples for Vulnerable Groups in Emergency Situations

Category	Energy Requirement	Protein Requirement	Fats	Micro-nutrients	Practical Examples in Emergency Situations
Pregnant women	Under normal conditions, an adult woman requires approximately 2,000 kcal per day. During pregnancy, additional caloric intake is necessary as follows: • An extra 285 kcal per day during the second trimester • An extra 475 kcal per day during the third trimester	A pregnant woman requires the equivalent of the standard adult protein intake (50 grams per day), in addition to an extra 25 grams, resulting in a total of approximately 75 grams of protein per day.	20–35% of total energy	Iron, folate, calcium, iodine	Provide an additional meal containing lentils/spinach (iron), calcium-fortified milk, and citrus fruit to enhance iron absorption.
Lactating women	An additional 500 to 675 kcal per day should be added to the standard requirement of 2,000 kcal per day.	A lactating woman requires the standard adult intake of 50 grams of protein per day, plus an additional 25 grams, totaling approximately 75 grams daily.	≥20% of total energy	Vitamin A, iodine, calcium, zinc	Distribution of nuts, cheese or yogurt, and cooked vegetables. Provision of awareness sessions on postnatal nutrition.

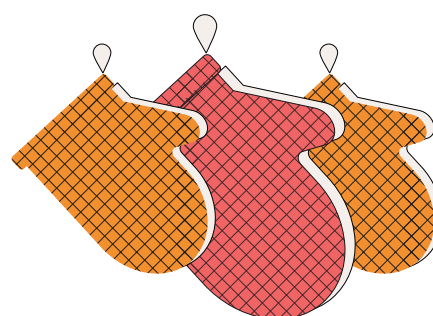
Infants (0–6 Months)	Full reliance on exclusive breastfeeding	Met through breastfeeding	Met through breastfeeding	Vitamin D and iron (as needed)	Establishment of a safe, designated breastfeeding area; psychological and nutritional support for mothers; supervision by trained health educators to promote exclusive breastfeeding.
Children (6–23 months)	600–900 kcal/day	1.1–1.3 g/kg/day	30–45% of total energy	Iron, zinc, vitamin A, iodine	Provide a mashed meal of lentils and vegetables with a spoonful of vegetable oil. Support continued breastfeeding and provide homemade recipes.
Children (2–5 years)	1000–1400 kcal/day	1.0–1.2 g/kg/day	~30% of total energy	Iron, calcium, vitamin A, folate	A complete meal of rice and eggs or chicken with cooked vegetables and fruit.

Examples of Balanced Meals

Numerous studies¹ indicate a widespread prevalence of iron and vitamin D deficiencies across various population groups in Lebanon. Despite the country's sunny climate, vitamin D deficiency remains highly common due to several contributing factors, including conservative clothing, predominantly indoor lifestyles, and unbalanced diets. Adults typically require approximately 400–600 International Units (IU) of vitamin D daily, while children and infants may need lower but still essential amounts to compensate for limited sun exposure.

As for iron, requirements vary by age and gender: non-pregnant men and women need around 8–18 mg per day, whereas pregnant women require significantly higher amounts—up to 27 mg daily—to offset the increased demands during pregnancy.

It is therefore crucial to consider these nutritional patterns when planning emergency kitchen menus and to incorporate foods rich in iron and vitamin D. These include fortified cereals, red meat, liver, lentils, beans, spinach, fish, egg yolks, and certain fortified dairy products. Additionally, including a source of vitamin C—such as citrus fruits, tomatoes, or bell peppers—can enhance the absorption of plant-based iron found in foods like lentils and spinach.



¹ Arabi A, Chamoun N, Nasrallah MP, Tamim HM. Vitamin D Deficiency in Lebanese Adults: Prevalence and Predictors from a Cross-Sectional Community-Based Study. *Int J Endocrinol*. 2021 Aug 20;2021:3170129. doi: 10.1155/2021/3170129. PMID: 34462634; PMCID: PMC8403038.

Below are examples of traditional, well-balanced, and easy-to-prepare meals:



Mujaddara with rice and green salad

A traditional Lebanese dish rich in energy and plant-based protein, easily prepared in large quantities. The ingredients are readily available in Lebanese markets and include:

- **Brown lentils:** a rich source of protein and iron
- **White rice:** provides energy and healthy carbohydrates
- **Onions:** add flavor and contain antioxidants
- **Olive oil:** healthy fats that enhance vitamin absorption
- **Salt and black pepper:** for seasoning
- **Cumin:** aids digestion
- **Clean water:** for cooking lentils and rice

This dish is typically served with cabbage salad or seasonal green salad, and may also be accompanied by yogurt – presentation varies by region.

Benefits of this meal:

- Contains plant-based protein, making it suitable when meat is unavailable
- Includes rice for sustained energy, and onions to boost immunity
- Simple, nutritious, and easy to prepare with minimal resources; can be served hot or cold



Potato and Meat Stew (served with vermicelli and rice)

A balanced Lebanese recipe featuring meat, easy to prepare and suitable for distribution in community kitchens during emergencies. The ingredients are nutritious and widely available, offering protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and healthy fats:

- **Beef or lamb, cut into small cubes:** a rich source of protein and iron
- **Potatoes:** provide energy and carbohydrates
- **Onions:** enhance flavor and contain antioxidants
- **Olive oil:** a source of healthy fats
- **Tomatoes:** rich in vitamin C
- **Tomato paste:** adds depth of flavor
- **Salt and black pepper:** for seasoning
- **Cumin and turmeric:** aid digestion and add distinctive flavor
- **Clean water:** Used for cooking the stew

Benefits of this recipe:

- **High in calories:** Potatoes provide carbohydrates for energy, while meat supplies essential protein for muscle maintenance.
- **Easy to prepare and store:** Can be cooked in advance and stored in airtight containers, making it suitable for emergency situations.
- **Rich source of vitamins and minerals:** Contains onions, garlic, and tomatoes, which are high in antioxidants that support immune function.
- **Promotes satiety:** Offers fats and proteins that help sustain energy over extended periods, making it ideal in contexts where food availability is limited.

2.2.**Standardizing Recipes**

Standardizing recipes enhances kitchen workflow, reduces waste, and ensures consistent quality and flavor. This process relies on several key steps:

Accurate Quantity Determination

Quantities should be calculated precisely based on the number of servings to be prepared. For example, preparing a bulgur-based mujaddara meal for 100 individuals requires:

- 10 kg of lentils
- 6 kg of bulgur
- 3 liters of oil
- 2.5 kg of onions

It is recommended to use *Template 1 "Scaling a recipe designed for 5 people to serve 100."*

Clear Documentation of Preparation Steps

Each step of the preparation process should be recorded in detail, including the required duration (per step or phase), cooking temperature, and tools used.

Small-Scale Recipe Testing

Initial testing in small quantities allows for flavor evaluation, cost adjustment, and nutritional improvement prior to large-scale implementation.

**Note:**

When defining recipes, the following factors must be considered:

- Types of food allergies among beneficiaries
- Age of the beneficiaries
- Special dietary needs (e.g. medical conditions or prescribed diets)

Additionally, some beneficiaries may suffer from chronic illnesses such as diabetes or hypertension, which necessitates the preparation of balanced meals tailored to their specific needs. In cases of food allergies, certain ingredients must be strictly avoided to ensure the safety of recipients.

Annex 1 "Weekly Menu for a Community Kitchen," provides examples of traditional Lebanese recipes that can be prepared. The menu includes sample main dishes, fruits and desserts, salads and vegetables, along with logistical notes to facilitate kitchen operations.

2.3.**Preparation – Safe Cooking Techniques**

Although community kitchens are not classified as commercial establishments and are not subject to commercial food safety regulations, it remains essential to adhere to the highest standards of hygiene and safety to protect the health of individuals consuming meals prepared in these settings. Based on various studies in this field, several key considerations should be taken into account, including:

Food Safety Training

Each kitchen should have at least one individual trained in safe food handling practices. The training should cover the following core topics:

Ensuring Safe Cooking When Working in Large Quantities

- Preferably use deep pots with continuous stirring to ensure even heat distribution.
- Ensure the internal temperature of food reaches at least 75°C.
- Use a clean and sanitized thermometer (if available) to verify that food has reached a safe cooking temperature.

Keeping Food Hot

- Maintain a temperature of no less than 60°C during serving.
- Ensure meats are thoroughly cooked, with clear juices released.

Cooling Food

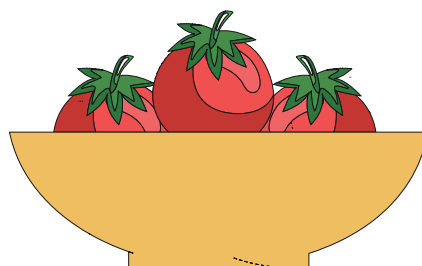
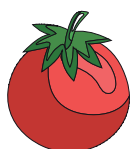
- Do not place hot food directly into the refrigerator.
- Cool food to 21°C within two hours, then to below 5°C within the following four hours.
- Divide food into small containers to accelerate cooling. This can be achieved by using shallow containers where food height does not exceed 5 cm, and by distributing large quantities across multiple containers instead of storing them in a single deep vessel. This practice helps reduce temperature more rapidly and limits bacterial growth.
- Label each container with the meal name, preparation date and time, and store items on shelves rather than on the floor.

Handling Refrigerated Food

- Cooked food may be left outside the refrigerator for a maximum of two hours, after which it must be reheated as needed.
- If food remains unrefrigerated for more than four hours, it must be discarded.

To document changes in the cooling system, the following templates may be used

- **Template 2:** Thermal Monitoring System and Records
- **Template 3:** Cooling Interruption Log



2.4.

Food Service and Distribution

The stage of serving and distributing food is among the most critical for ensuring food safety. This phase encompasses three essential components: safe serving practices, temperature control, and off-site delivery.

Safe Serving Practices

Food must be served in a manner that minimizes the risk of contamination and preserves the quality and safety of the meal. To achieve this, the following measures should be implemented:

- Consistent use of gloves and hair coverings for both head and hands during food service
- Use of dedicated serving utensils for each type of food
- Minimizing the time food remains in the “danger zone” (temperature range between 5°C and 63°C) by promptly cooling cooked items or reheating chilled foods. Food should not remain in this zone for more than two consecutive hours, as exceeding this limit significantly increases the risk of bacterial growth and foodborne illness.

Temperature Control

To ensure food is served in a safe and healthy condition, temperature must be properly managed during distribution through the following simple procedures:

- Use of thermal containers to maintain food temperature
- Verification of food temperatures prior to distribution
- Avoid leaving food at room temperature for extended periods

Off-Site Delivery

When food is transported to other locations—whether for community distribution or service at an alternate site—it is essential to follow specific safety protocols to ensure the food arrives intact and safe for consumption, as outlined in Table 7 below:

Table 7:	Specific safety procedures to ensure food arrives intact and safe for consumption
Cold Food Transportation	Hot Food Transportation
• Use refrigerated carts or insulated containers with cooling panels to maintain temperatures below 5°C. • Ensure that frozen food remains in a solid frozen state. • Employ passive cooling (insulated containers) only for short-distance transportation. • Record the preparation and delivery times accurately. • Deliver food within a maximum of two hours.	• Use insulated thermal containers or carts equipped with heating systems. • Ensure that the temperature remains above 60°C during transportation. • Avoid transporting hot food over long distances without appropriate means.

Transport Vehicle Requirements

- Separate food from any chemicals or hazardous materials during transportation.
- Clean the transport vehicle and its containers before each delivery.
- Load food only when it is ready for dispatch.
- Deliver food immediately after loading to minimize time outside refrigeration or heating.
- Keep ready-to-eat food separate from raw food.
- Ensure all food items are securely covered before transport.

2.4.1. Service – Post-Meal Follow-Up

Post-meal follow-up is a critical step in ensuring service quality and beneficiary safety. This phase aims to assess meal acceptance, document any feedback or complaints, and investigate any food-related health symptoms, thereby contributing to performance improvement and risk reduction. While follow-up mechanisms may vary depending on circumstances, they remain essential at all times. The following steps are recommended for emergency settings:

- **Rapid Field Assessment:** A member of the kitchen team visits serving or distribution sites to monitor the situation and ensure there are no immediate complaints or adverse reactions among consumers.
- **Simplified Reporting Mechanism:** A verbal system or basic paper forms are used to document any issues, with records maintained daily—even manually if necessary.
- **Immediate Response to Health Incidents:** In cases of suspected food contamination, the remaining food is withdrawn immediately, the health officer is notified, and the incident is documented promptly.
- **Ongoing Improvement Within Available Resources:** Despite limited resources in emergency situations, procedures should be reviewed and adjusted to maintain a minimum standard of quality and safety.

2.5.**Waste Reduction and Quality Control****2.5.1.****Minimizing Waste in Community Kitchens**

Reducing food waste is a fundamental aspect of resource management, especially in emergency situations where food supplies are limited. Therefore, precise practices must be adopted when reheating food, repurposing leftovers safely and creatively, controlling portion sizes, and assessing the usability of food items without compromising safety or quality.

Safe Food Reheating

- Food must reach an internal temperature of 75°C during reheating.
- Food should be reheated and served only once to prevent bacterial growth.
- Hot food must be maintained at a temperature of no less than 60°C during service.

**Important Note:**

The use of bain-marie or pastry ovens for reheating is prohibited, as they do not raise the temperature quickly enough and keep food in the “temperature danger zone” (between 5°C and 63°C), which promotes bacterial growth.

Creative Reuse of Leftovers

- Leftover rice can be repurposed into new dishes such as spiced rice or rice kibbeh.
- Cooked vegetables can be used to prepare soups.

Accurate Portion Control

- Prepare daily schedules indicating the number of beneficiaries to determine quantities precisely.
- Train staff to estimate portions effectively to reduce food waste.

Assessing Ingredient Usability

- Dry bread can be converted into breadcrumbs for cooking purposes.
- Soft carrots are suitable for soup preparation instead of being discarded.

2.5.2.**Management of Perishable Resources in Emergency Situations**

In emergency contexts, community kitchens may receive large quantities of perishable food items – such as meat, poultry, vegetables, fruits, or dairy products – either as urgent donations (perishable goods or meals requiring immediate consumption) or through irregular distribution channels. In such cases, time becomes a critical factor, and swift action combined with smart organization is essential to prevent waste and ensure the safe use of these resources.

Every food item received by the kitchen should be treated as a valuable resource to be utilized with maximum efficiency, while upholding food safety standards and minimizing the risk of spoilage or foodborne illness.

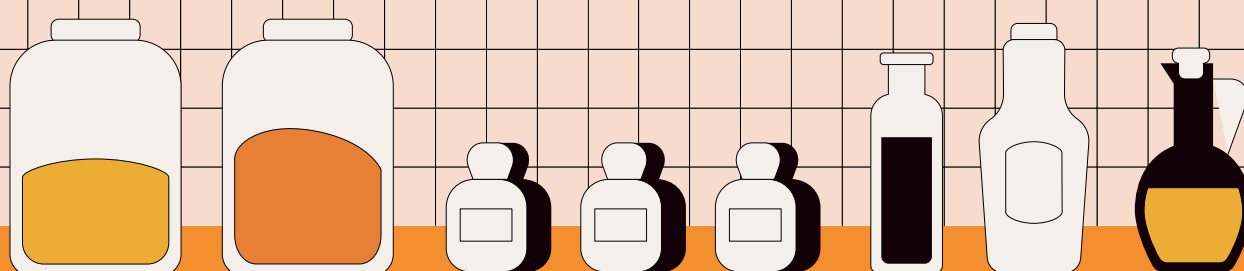
Objectives of Rapid Response

- Prevent spoilage caused by improper storage or delays in usage and distribution.
- Extend the shelf life of perishable items—such as fruits and vegetables—through pre-cooking, freezing, or drying.
- Minimize food waste to the greatest extent possible.
- Ensure beneficiary safety by adhering to safe cooking and cooling practices.

Table 8: Practical Examples of Quick and Smart Management of Perishable Resources

Food Item	Possible Emergency Situation	Storage Method / Later Use	Proposed Solution
Fresh chicken in bulk	Is not consumed within 24 hours	- Refrigerate at 5°C or cooler for 3–5 days - Freeze for up to 3 months	- Cook immediately (boil, grill, with vegetables) - Freeze as meals
Red meat nearing expiration	Unsuitable for raw serving	Temporary cooling or immediate freezing after cooking	Mince and cook as kofta or sauces
Overripe tomatoes	Not appropriate for salads or fresh storage	Refrigerated storage at 5°C or below, or sealed packaging	Cook into a sauce (for stews or pizza, etc.)
Soft bananas	Altered texture, not suitable as fresh fruit	Immediate consumption or refrigeration for up to two days	Use in banana cakes or natural juices
Assorted ripe vegetables	Loss of firmness, nearing spoilage	Rapid cooling after cooking	Cooke into soups or stews
Stale (dry) bread	Not fit for direct consumption	Storage in a dry place using sealed containers	Fully dry and ground for use in baking or as a coating

In the event that large quantities of perishable food items are received and the kitchen is unable to utilize them, or if they exceed the needs of individuals present at the center, it is recommended to share these food supplies with other kitchens or distribute them to displaced families in the area. For further guidance, refer to *Annex 2 titled "Approximate Production Capacities of an Emergency Community Kitchen."*



Section Three

Team Management and Kitchen Operations



Section Three

Team Management and Kitchen Operations

3.1.

Kitchen Team Structure

Managing and operating a community kitchen requires meticulous organization, efficient task allocation, and the support of a versatile team whose members work collaboratively to ensure safety and quality. These operations are essential for the regular provision of safe and nutritious meals, particularly in emergency situations or crises such as displacement, armed conflict, or natural disasters. Below is a proposed structure for the team responsible for running a centralized community kitchen:

- **Head Chef:** Oversees all cooking and cleaning operations, assigns tasks, and ensures compliance with food safety procedures.
- **Assistant Chefs:** Support the head chef in food preparation, cooking, cleaning, and storage. They must be familiar with basic food safety principles.
- **Volunteers:** Contribute to various tasks such as washing vegetables, organizing ingredients, packaging meals, and post-service cleaning. Volunteers must receive training prior to beginning work.
- **Administrative and Logistics Coordinator:** Manages work schedules, liaises with suppliers, organizes daily operations, and monitors kitchen inventory (i.e., ingredients, dry goods, cleaning supplies, cooking essentials, etc.).
- **Safety Officer:** Monitors hygiene standards, uses regular inspection checklists, and intervenes in the event of any violations.

In emergency settings, the composition of the kitchen team may differ from standard conditions. The team may include volunteer chefs, local women, and displaced individuals who rotate cooking duties. Therefore, flexibility in role distribution and effective communication become essential to ensure safe and efficient operations. It is also important to consider the diversity of backgrounds and experiences, and to provide simplified, rapid training for all new team members. This training should clearly outline basic hygiene and safety rules and define responsibilities to prevent overlap or confusion. Flexibility in such contexts must not compromise public health or food safety standards. Strict adherence to personal hygiene, handwashing, the use of clean and sanitized tools, and the implementation of food safety procedures throughout all stages of preparation, cooking, and distribution is imperative.

3.1.1.

Orientation Training for Team Members and Kitchen Volunteers

Orientation training is a fundamental step that must precede the involvement of any individual in kitchen operations. This training aims to establish a unified understanding among team members regarding hygiene and food safety concepts, clearly define individual responsibilities, and prevent errors that could lead to accidents or food contamination. It is recommended that this training be conducted upon the onboarding of new members and repeated periodically.

Below are examples of key topics that may be covered in orientation training. For a more detailed overview, please refer to *Annex 3 "Training Topics"*:

1. **Personal Hygiene Principles:** Handwashing, wearing gloves, covering hair, and avoiding the use of jewelry.
2. **Food Safety Fundamentals:** Preventing cross-contamination, controlling storage and cooking temperatures, and proper handling of meat and poultry.
3. **Emergency and General Safety Procedures:** Responding to fire or injury incidents, and using a fire extinguisher.
4. **Waste Management:** Separating organic and inorganic waste, and disposing of waste in a healthy and safe manner.
5. **Daily Operational Procedures:** Work schedules, food packaging methods, and equipment cleaning.

Please refer to *Template 4 "Worker Training and Awareness Form"* and *Template 5 "Rapid Training Attendance List"* to document the training session.

In normal conditions, a specific food management process is followed, illustrating the ideal sequence of operations. However, in emergency situations (e.g., crises, wars, or disasters) these steps may be altered or shortened depending on the needs and available resources. The following table compares the process under normal conditions with what may occur during emergencies. It also highlights practices to avoid in emergency contexts, while emphasizing the importance of prioritizing food quality and hygiene practices during meal preparation and distribution.

3.2.**Time Management and Teamwork**

Work within a community kitchen during emergency situations differs significantly from operations in conventional food production environments. These kitchens may involve volunteers from diverse backgrounds, including professional chefs, cooking enthusiasts, women from various families, and individuals with little to no professional culinary experience. This diversity makes coordination and teamwork critically important, while also presenting a challenge that requires thoughtful and flexible management.

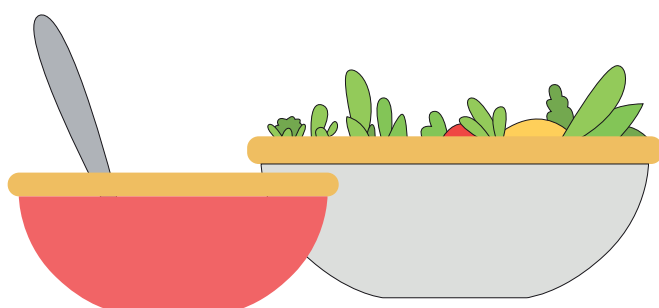
Table 9:

Challenges Within the Kitchen Team

Challenge	Description	Proposed Solution
Differences in experience levels among team members	Professional chefs work alongside volunteers and individuals cooking for the first time in a communal setting	Clear guidance and task allocation aligned with each individual's abilities and skills
Cultural and social diversity	Women from various families participate, potentially differing in cooking methods, dietary customs, and even language	Promoting mutual respect and understanding of differences, and incorporating recipes suggested by women into the menu to strengthen their sense of belonging to the kitchen
The role of volunteers	Volunteers may not adhere to fixed working hours	Task distribution that allows for substitution and smooth collaboration
Time pressure and workload	The need to prepare large quantities of food quickly can intensify work pressure	High-level coordination to prevent overcrowding and errors

3.2.1.**Principles of Time Management and Teamwork**

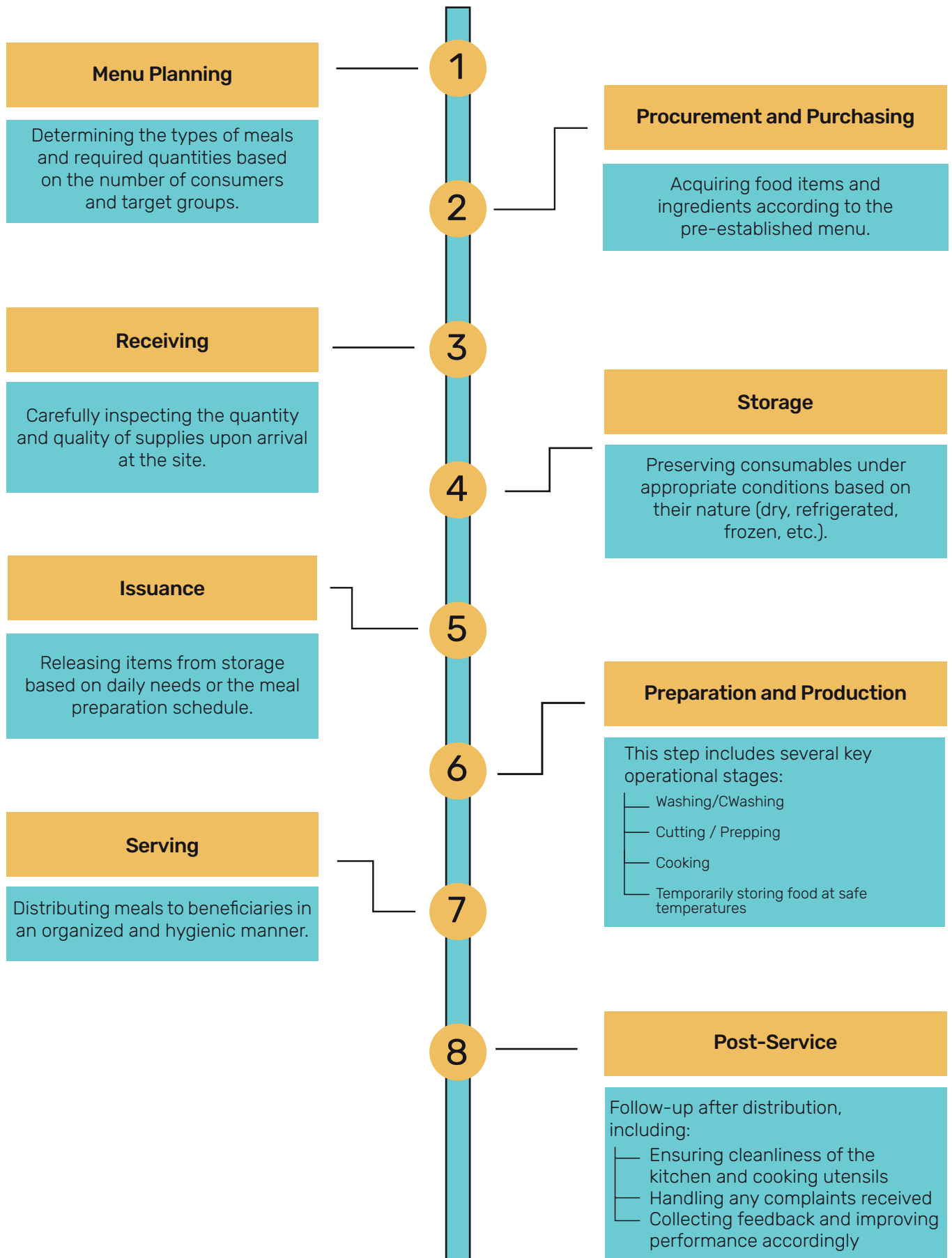
- **Clear task allocation with flexibility for adjustments:** Assigning clearly defined responsibilities to each individual while allowing adaptation based on availability and skill level.
- **Continuous and effective communication:** Utilizing simple and clear communication tools to ensure instructions are conveyed, while encouraging questions when needed.
- **Fostering a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect:** Valuing each person's contribution regardless of background, and promoting mutual support among team members.
- **Careful scheduling:** Creating flexible schedules that allow volunteers to join and leave without disrupting workflow.
- **Providing training and guidance:** Offering simplified and repeated instructions on essential tasks, safety protocols, and hygiene standards.
- **Avoiding overlap and congestion:** Organizing workspaces so that each team or individual has a designated area to minimize confusion and errors.



3.3.

Organizing Kitchen Workflow

To ensure a well-structured flow of operations within the kitchen, it is recommended to design the workflow as follows:



In normal conditions, a specific food management process is followed, illustrating the ideal sequence of operations. However, in emergency situations (e.g., crises, wars, or disasters) these steps may be altered or shortened depending on the needs and available resources. The following table compares the process under normal conditions with what may occur during emergencies. It also highlights practices to avoid in emergency contexts, while emphasizing the importance of prioritizing food quality and hygiene practices during meal preparation and distribution.

Table 10: Comparison Between the Ideal Process and the Emergency Process

Step	How Things Operate Under Normal (or Ideal) Conditions	How Things May Operate in Emergency Situations	What Should Be Avoided in Emergency Situations
Menu Planning	Detailed planning based on nutritional value and dietary balance	Rapid menu planning based on available ingredients, while considering nutritional value as much as possible	Preparing random menus without considering nutritional balance or the needs of beneficiary groups
Procurement (Supply)	Procurement from certified suppliers through formal contracts	Procurement may occur through donations or emergency purchases	Accepting food items of unknown origin or those past their expiration date
Receiving	Quantitative and qualitative inspection of goods	Quick inspection to ensure basic safety: checking the quality of consumables (smell, color, etc.) and expiration dates	Receiving supplies without inspection or verification of expiry dates
Storage	Compliance with precise temperature and specification standards	Storage using available means, with emphasis on safety and hygiene	Storing food directly on the floor, in open containers, or alongside chemical substances
Issuance (Consumption and Expenditure)	Use of accurate records and controlled quantities	Fast release of items to secure meal provision	Disorganized distribution that leads to food waste or shortages
Preparation	Food preparation following clear and sequential steps	Streamlining steps to accelerate production and meet urgent needs, especially at the onset of the emergency	Neglecting or underestimating the importance of organizing kitchen operations
Cooking	Cooking according to specific temperature and quality standards	Focus on eliminating harmful bacteria and ensuring safe meals	Ignoring food safety procedures related to cooking and thawing temperatures, such as partial or undercooked meals that fail to eliminate bacteria
Temporary Holding	Storing food at appropriate temperatures	Food is often served immediately after cooking, or briefly stored using simple methods such as covering or keeping it warm	Leaving food in the "temperature danger zone" (5–63°C) for extended periods
Serving	Serving food using designated tools and containers	Distribution may be carried out using the simplest available means, such as clean plastic containers, shared metal utensils, or packaging in clean bags	Serving food with bare hands or unclean utensils, or placing hot food in plastic containers not designed to withstand heat, which may cause the plastic to melt or release harmful substances into the food
Post-Service	Meal distribution under the direct supervision of the responsible person	Voluntary or self-service depending on need and availability of human resources	Lack of supervision, which may result in chaos or food contamination

3.4.**Preparatory Steps for Activating Community Kitchens Before an Emergency Occurs**

To ensure a swift and efficient response during emergencies, it is essential to develop a comprehensive preparatory plan covering all operational and logistical aspects. These preparations help maintain continuity of operations and reduce chaos when a crisis arises, with a strong emphasis on the safety of both beneficiaries and workers. This preparatory phase requires coordinated efforts from various stakeholders, including volunteer groups, the local community, civil society organizations, municipalities, and local authorities.

Below are some suggested actions that local communities, associations, and volunteers can undertake to facilitate emergency response and efficiently prepare and operate community kitchens to provide safe and nutritious meals during a crisis or disaster.

Phase One: Pre-Emergency Preparedness

- **Develop a list of ready-to-activate kitchens.** These may belong to charitable organizations, food production cooperatives, associations, or even restaurants and catering companies. It is advisable to reach out to their owners and discuss potential use.
- **Identify contact points and responsible personnel** for each kitchen.
- **Establish a database of local suppliers** for essential equipment (e.g. cookware, gas, safety tools, refrigerators), food items, agricultural products, local farmers, and distribution centers, and ensure it is regularly updated.
- **Conduct initial training for a team of volunteers** on hygiene standards, teamwork, safety, and working under exceptional conditions. Ongoing training on relevant topics is also important to keep information current and active, and to train individuals who join the kitchen later.
- **Assess the possibility of storing essential dry goods** (e.g. lentils, rice, beans, canned foods) and secure a suitable storage location. (Please refer to the note on canned foods, page 10.)
- **Identify local and international donors**, especially those involved in relief and food security, and determine their local representatives or affiliated entities for direct communication.
- **Establish partnerships with municipalities, local associations, and donors**, and develop a collaborative emergency response plan.

Phase Two: First Week of Activation

- **Engage with volunteers and kitchen staff** to establish work schedules and participation plans.
- **Assess the available kitchen or the location designated for kitchen setup:** identify existing infrastructure, potential hazards (if any), and evaluate the suitability of the space in terms of safety and security.
- **Clean and sanitize the available kitchen, and inspect equipment to ensure proper functionality.** If no suitable kitchen is located near the reception center for displaced persons, designate and equip a space within the center to serve as a community kitchen.
- **Estimate the initial number of beneficiaries.**
- **Prepare preliminary meal plans** consisting of simple and nutritious recipes that include protein, carbohydrates, and vegetables (e.g. mujaddara, potato stew, fava beans with meat and rice, lentil soup etc.), using available seasonal ingredients.
- **Adapt recipes to available ingredients** – for example, substituting chicken with lentils or eggs – and consider food allergies during planning.
- **Assign tasks within the team and clarify teamwork protocols.**
- **Secure raw materials** either through purchase (if funds are available) or via food aid.
- **Coordinate with local suppliers or cooperatives** to agree on procurement procedures and payment mechanisms.
- **Communicate with relief organizations** to secure food rations and establish a distribution mechanism based on priority (e.g. most vulnerable, large families).

- **Ensure proper storage** by cleaning and sanitizing designated storage areas.
- **Prioritize the use of food items** based on their expiration dates.
- **Coordinate with charitable organizations, NGOs, and government entities** that provide hot meals and food rations to ensure food availability for new arrivals at the center until the kitchen becomes operational, and to supply cooking ingredients and other essentials.

Phase Three: Kitchen Operation and Performance Improvement (Week 2 and beyond)

- **Conduct a trial run of kitchen operations** to test preparation, distribution, and responsiveness, and implement necessary adjustments based on feedback received.
- **Involve displaced individuals in kitchen operations** and identify those interested in participating in food preparation.
- **Include displaced individuals in decision-making** by appointing a representative from each family or group.
- **Organize daily processes for receiving, storing, and distributing supplies.**
- **Standardize recipes** and accurately estimate quantities.
- **Minimize waste** by safely repurposing leftover food.
- **Hold regular meetings and submit daily reports** to assess performance and identify gaps.



Note:

These steps are intended as guidelines for orientation purposes. Actual implementation and the duration of each phase will depend on the severity of the emergency and the speed of response.

3.5.

Procurement and Supply

To ensure the sustainability and quality of the supply chain and to improve the process of selecting suppliers and farmers, it is recommended to use a Supplier and Farmer Map as an organized and documented tool. This map helps collect and arrange essential information for each supplier or farmer, such as location, products, product quality, available quantities, prices, health and food safety certifications (e.g. a health certificate from the Ministry of Agriculture or Ministry of Health confirming the products are fit for consumption), and delivery and payment terms.

By using this system, supplier performance can be monitored regularly; communication and coordination can be streamlined; and supply chain risks can be reduced. The system also facilitates informed decision-making when contracting new suppliers or evaluating existing ones (*See Annex 4: "Sample List of Equipment Suppliers in Lebanon" and Template 6, "Supplier and Farmer Mapping"*).

Receiving

The process of receiving food items and raw materials is a critical point in the food supply chain, as it directly impacts the quality and safety of prepared meals. Therefore, it is essential to adopt precise and well-documented procedures to ensure that received items meet the required standards—whether under normal conditions or during emergencies.

In emergency situations, where official oversight may be weakened and supply chains disrupted, it is necessary to strengthen self-verification standards to safeguard consumer safety, taking into account the following:

Alternative Field Verification

- In the absence of official documentation, conduct a thorough sensory inspection (*Annex 5, Organoleptic, Sensory, Check for Common Foods*) as a preliminary method to verify product safety.
- Verbally document the source of the product if written records are unavailable.

Flexibility in Validity Verification

- Use experience-based sensory evaluation when expiry dates are unclear or missing, exercising extreme caution with high-risk products such as meat, dairy, and ready-to-eat meals.

Exceptional Manual/Paper-Based Recording

- In case of power or internet outages, use manual logbooks to record receiving and storage operations.
- Keep paper records in a secure location.

Self-Monitoring of Supply Sources

- Rely on suppliers known locally or within the community to ensure a minimum level of trust.
- Encourage sourcing from farmers and suppliers within trusted and well-established networks.

Alternative Hygiene Procedures

- Enhance manual inspection of trucks and storage areas due to potential disruption of cleaning and refrigeration services.
- Minimize storage duration and prioritize rapid consumption of fresh items.

Team Training for Rapid Risk Assessment

- Train staff to make quick decisions regarding the acceptance or rejection of products based on circumstances and the potential risk level of each item.

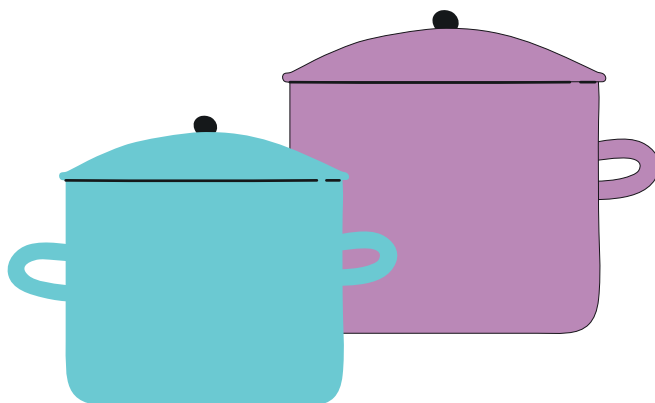
Storage

To enhance the efficiency and flexibility of the inventory system, the following measures are recommended:

- Use movable or adjustable shelving to facilitate product arrangement based on expiry dates.
- Reorganize storage after each new food delivery.
- Continuously monitor humidity and temperature indicators in storage areas, as some signs of food spoilage may not be immediately visible.

Three templates have been prepared to support inventory tracking:

- **Template 7:** Goods Receiving Monitoring Table
- **Template 8:** First-In, First-Out (FIFO) System
- **Template 9:** Food Spoilage Documentation Form



3.5.1.

Issuance in Emergency Situations

The term "issuance" refers to the process of transferring food items from the warehouse or storage area to the kitchen, preparation zone, or final consumption points. This process aims to ensure the organized and efficient use of food supplies while maintaining their safety and quality, and avoiding waste or improper storage.

During crises, the importance of rationing and precise inventory management increases to ensure the continuity of food provision for as long as possible. Below are some steps that help regulate and optimize the issuance process:

Rationing Issuance

Food items are issued according to an approved emergency plan that specifies:

- Nutritional priorities
- Daily rations per individual or group
- Estimated coverage period for the remaining stock

Emergency Record Updates

- Create a dedicated issuance log for emergency situations, updated manually or on printed sheets (in case of power outages).
- Accurately record each issuance operation, including notes on remaining quantities.

Issuance Based Solely on Actual Need

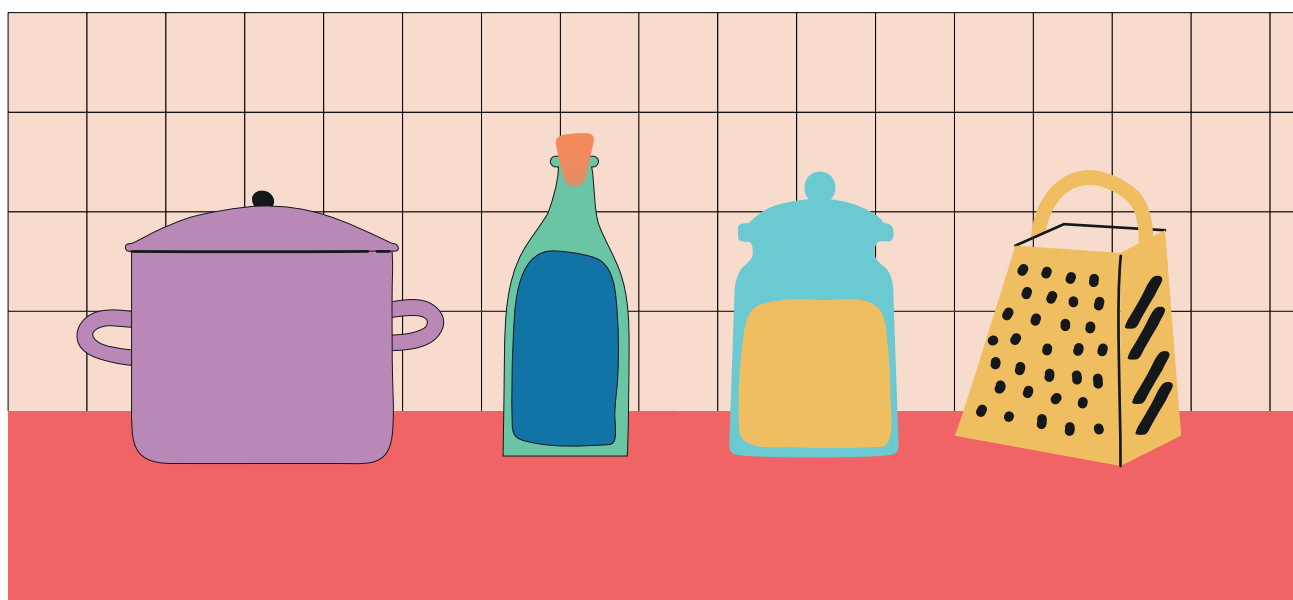
- Avoid issuing quantities beyond daily requirements to ensure continued supply.
- Review the preparation plan to adapt recipes and reduce reliance on scarce ingredients.

Use of Alternative Products

- Issue alternative or long-shelf-life products when fresh items are unavailable (e.g. canned goods, legumes, flour).

Daily Monitoring of Remaining Stock

- Update inventory after each issuance and submit a daily report to the nutrition and emergency response authority.



Section Four

Basic Food Safety



Section Four

Basic Food Safety

Food safety is a cornerstone in protecting the health of individuals and communities, both in normal times and during emergencies and crises. Providing safe and healthy food requires adherence to a set of rules and practices that minimize health risks associated with food consumption, including biological, chemical, and physical contamination. In this context, food safety becomes a collective responsibility shared by everyone involved in the food supply chain – from production to distribution.

Emergency situations present exceptional conditions that require those responsible for food preparation and service to adopt flexible and rapid measures that ensure continuity of service without compromising food safety.

Key recommendations to consider under such circumstances include:

- **Preparing a clear emergency plan** that includes alternatives for water, refrigeration, and energy, and ensuring adequate supplies of cleaning and sanitation tools and materials (*see Template 10: Cleaning and Maintenance Inventory Log*).
- **Training staff** on proper hygiene practices under pressure.
- **Establishing clear mechanisms for food classification and shelf-life monitoring** based on the “first to expire, first out” principle, and implementing systems to document all activities related to storage, preparation, and distribution.
- **Managing food leftovers and food allergies** by using designated symbols or color codes and documenting cases accurately.

4.1.

Good Hygiene Practices

Good hygiene practices are a set of daily guidelines and behaviors aimed at maintaining a clean food environment and minimizing contamination. These practices are essential for reducing the risk of foodborne illnesses and are required at all stages of production, preparation, and distribution—whether under normal conditions or during emergencies.

The following table outlines the fundamental principles of good hygiene practices that should be followed.

Table 11: Principles of Good Hygiene Practices

Item	Recommendation
Personal Hygiene	Handwashing, hair covering, nail trimming, avoiding accessories, and wearing gloves when necessary
Cleanliness of the Environment and Equipment	Regular cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, proper waste disposal, and maintenance of equipment (Refer to Template 11: Daily Hygiene Task Checklist and Template 12: Daily Cleaning Checklist)
General Health of Workers	Prevent individuals with symptoms of illness (e.g. diarrhea, coughing, sneezing) from working, and report any health discomfort.
Emergency Health Management	Use sanitizers as an alternative when sufficient water is unavailable: • For hand hygiene, use alcohol-based sanitizers containing at least 70% ethanol or isopropanol; • For disinfecting surfaces and tools, use diluted chlorine solutions (50–100 ppm) after mechanically removing food residues; • If commercial disinfectants are unavailable, a simple chlorine solution can be prepared by adding one tablespoon of household bleach (5%) to one liter of clean water. Ensure the availability of clean water and protect food from contamination.

Protective clothing in community kitchens

Protective clothing plays a vital role in preventing food contamination and maintaining personal hygiene for kitchen staff—especially in situations where large quantities of food are prepared in crowded and high-pressure environments, such as community kitchens during humanitarian emergencies.

Table 12: Potential Challenges in Implementing Protective Clothing in Community Kitchens During Emergencies

Item	What May Go Wrong During Emergencies	Suggested and Possible Solutions
Full Head Covering	- Insufficient availability of head coverings or repeated use without proper cleaning; - Staff neglecting to wear them due to pressure or workload	- Provide inexpensive disposable paper or cloth caps; - Assign an entry monitor to ensure compliance before entering the kitchen
Dedicated Apron	- Inadequate number of aprons or using them outside the kitchen; - Forgetting to wash aprons regularly	- Designate aprons in a distinct color that remain exclusively within the kitchen; - Hang clean aprons at the entrance and provide a bin for collecting used ones
Maintaining Cleanliness	- Wearing aprons over dirty clothing or without washing hands beforehand; - Lack of oversight regarding overall hygiene and attire	- Display reminder signs (simple visual cues); - Conduct brief training sessions explaining the importance of hygiene and protective clothing in just a few minutes; - Refer to Template 13: "Guidelines for Work Attire"
Lack of Awareness and Oversight	- Volunteers or newly recruited staff unaware of the importance of protective clothing; - No designated personnel to monitor compliance	- Appoint a volunteer as hygiene and protective clothing supervisor for each shift; - Organize quick awareness sessions during breaks or at the start of the day



Note:

A volunteer may be assigned during each shift as a basic supervisor to monitor team compliance with head coverings, apron use, and handwashing. This helps reinforce a culture of prevention and discipline within the community kitchen, especially during emergency situations.

Proper Hygiene Behavior in the Kitchen

Adhering to hygienic behavior in the kitchen is just as important as personal cleanliness or food quality. It is a key component in ensuring food safety and protecting the health of beneficiaries, particularly in environments where illness spreads easily, or during emergencies when general immunity is low and health oversight is limited.

To maintain a safe and healthy kitchen environment, the following instructions must be observed:

- Smoking, eating, or drinking is strictly prohibited in food preparation areas.
- Individuals showing symptoms of illness (i.e., diarrhea, coughing, sneezing, fever, or skin rashes) must not work. It is recommended to isolate themselves for at least 48 hours after symptoms disappear to prevent transmission to colleagues or food recipients.
- Any injury or illness must be reported immediately to the supervisor.

In Case of Injury During Work

Even minor injuries must be handled with care. The following steps are required:

- Wash the wound thoroughly.
- Cover it with a waterproof dressing.
- Immediately inform the supervisor before resuming work.

It is strictly prohibited to handle food with an injured hand unless it is fully covered with an appropriate glove.

If feeling unwell or suspecting an infection, the supervisor must be notified immediately. Symptoms must not be ignored in order to protect public health and safety.

4.2.

Principles of Safe Food Preparation

These practices aim to produce food that is both safe and of high quality by organizing operations and applying specific technical standards. Their purpose is to reduce risks in food production processes through structured procedures and the enforcement of strict control measures, including hygiene, temperature regulation, and prevention of cross-contamination.

Table 13: Principles of Good Manufacturing Practices and Recommendations

Process	Recommendation	Required Templates
Cold Storage	Maintain temperatures between 0–4°C; conduct daily temperature checks	Template 2: Temperature Monitoring System and Logs
Freezing	Store at –18°C or lower; refreezing food is strictly prohibited	
Cooking	Cook to an internal temperature of 75°C or higher, especially for meat and poultry	
Rapid Cooling	Cool food within two hours; do not place hot food directly into the refrigerator	

Kitchen Environment Assessment

To ensure compliance with health and safety standards, a regular evaluation of the kitchen environment should include the following points:

- Proper ventilation to allow odors and steam to escape
- Adequate lighting for safe work and accident prevention
- Clear pathways free of obstacles or wet surfaces that may cause slipping
- Functional fire extinguishers placed in visible and easily accessible locations
- Ideally, emergency exits should be clearly marked, unobstructed, and labeled with appropriate signage
- Sharp tools and chemical substances must be stored safely and in designated areas

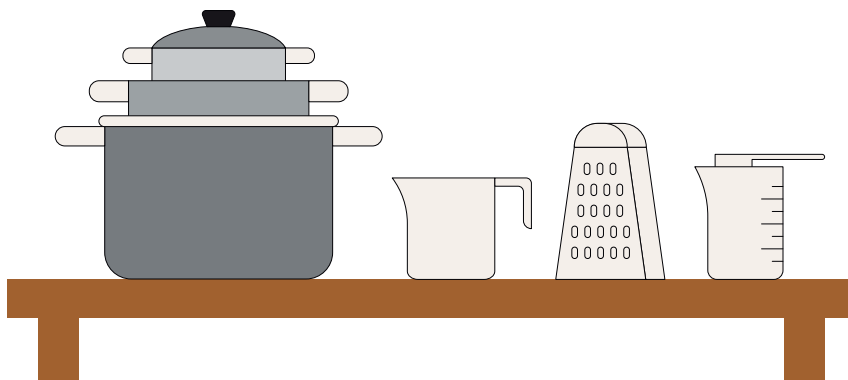


Table 14: Examples of Common Kitchen Hazards

Type of Hazard	Details
Improper Storage of Knives	Knives must be stored in designated holders or drawers, away from untrained individuals.
Slippery Surfaces	Slippery surfaces must be cleaned immediately and marked with warning signs until dry.
Cords or Tools on the Floor	Cords or tools on the floor pose a tripping hazard; they must be secured or removed promptly.
High Heat and Steam	Adequate ventilation must be ensured to manage heat and steam.
Incorrect Lifting of Heavy Objects	Staff must be trained in safe lifting techniques to protect their backs and joints.

Procedures Upon Identifying a Potential Hazard

- Immediately stop the activity if the hazard poses a direct threat.
- Notify the responsible person or supervisor without delay.
- Record the observation in a logbook or incident report.
- Propose a preventive solution to avoid recurrence, if possible.
- Follow up on the implementation of the solution and ensure it is evaluated after application.

Preventing Cross-Contamination

Cross-contamination refers to the transfer of germs or contaminants from one food item to another, or from a contaminated surface to food. It is one of the leading causes of food poisoning. This often occurs when the same tools or surfaces are used to prepare both raw and cooked foods, or when food is stored haphazardly without proper separation and hygiene.

To prevent cross-contamination, the procedures outlined in Table 15 must be followed. Additionally, we recommend using *Template 14: "Monitoring Form for Separation Between Raw and Cooked Food."*

Table 15: Preventing Cross-Contamination and Recommendations

Procedure	Details	Required Templates
Separation between raw and cooked items	Store and prepare tools and ingredients in separate areas using dedicated containers or utensils for each type, with color coding to aid identification.	Raw and Cooked Food Separation Monitoring Form
Minimizing cross-contamination risks through practical and hygienic practices	Follow a specific food preparation sequence: begin with ready-to-eat items (such as bread or fruit), then vegetables, followed by cooked meats, and finally raw meat or fish. Clean surfaces after each step.	Preparation Station Cleaning Checklist
Cleaning the workstation between tasks	Clean and sanitize surfaces and utensils between handling raw and cooked ingredients to prevent bacterial transfer.	Preparation Station Cleaning Checklist
Distinguishing between clean and contaminated areas	Organize the workspace to include a designated clean area for ready-to-eat foods and a separate area for raw food preparation.	Diagram Showing Kitchen Area Zoning
Using identification boards or visual signage	Use signs and color-coded or symbolic labels to identify tools for each area and remind staff of hygiene and sanitation procedures.	Visual Awareness Materials (Posters/ Symbols) for Each Area

Kitchen and Equipment Cleanliness

Maintaining the cleanliness of the kitchen and its equipment is just as important as the food ingredients themselves. Achieving proper hygiene in the kitchen requires clear cleaning schedules, dedicated tools, and effective drying methods to prevent bacterial growth. Table 16 provides a summary of the key challenges and proposed solutions.

Table 16: Challenges in Enforcing Kitchen Hygiene Standards and Proposed Solutions

Challenges	Proposed Solutions	Required Forms
Lack of time or cleaning agents	Assign a hygiene supervisor for each shift; use safe, locally sourced disinfectants	Template 12: Daily Cleaning Checklist Template 15: Non-Compliance Report
Shortage of tools	In case of limited resources for purchasing new tools, it is recommended to rotate or reuse consumable items	Template 10: Cleaning and Maintenance Tools Inventory Log
Drying of equipment	Use paper towels and dry equipment away from food preparation areas	Template 16: Equipment Cleaning and Drying Monitoring Form
Cleaning supplies	Store cleaning tools in a dry place and replace them weekly	Template 17: Cleaning Tools Condition Log and Replacement Schedule

4.3.

Quality Monitoring and Testing

Daily and continuous monitoring of food preparation processes is not merely a routine procedure. It is a fundamental pillar for ensuring food safety and the health of beneficiaries, especially in sensitive environments like community kitchens during emergencies. Any failure in temperature control, equipment cleanliness, or water sources can lead to food contamination and result in mass food poisoning incidents.

Quality monitoring aims to achieve the following:

- **Prevent Food Poisoning:** Poisoning may occur due to the presence of bacteria or toxins resulting from improper storage, undercooking, or inadequate cooling. Therefore, it is essential to adhere to safe cooking and cooling temperatures to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria such as Salmonella or E. coli.
- **Ensure Hygiene and Sanitation:** Inspecting the cleanliness of preparation, serving, and washing tools reduces the risk of cross-contamination. It is crucial to ensure the use of effective and non-harmful cleaning agents and disinfectants.
- **Monitor Bacterial Contamination and Risky Practices:** Such as storing raw and cooked foods together, in sufficient reheating, or preparing food in high-temperature environments. Teams should be trained in proper behaviors to enhance prevention.
- **Test Water Quality:** Contaminated water is one of the most dangerous sources of disease transmission. It is essential to ensure that water used for cooking and washing is safe and subject to regular testing.
- **Document Quality and Compliance:** Daily records of temperatures, equipment cleanliness, and the condition of received materials enable rapid tracking of any errors.

Table 17: Essential Monitoring Tools

Tool	Primary Use	When to Use	Acceptable Results
Digital Thermometer	Measuring the temperature of cooked/stored food	Daily or with each meal	Hot: Above 60°C Cold: Below 5°C
Chlorine Test Strips*	Measuring chlorine concentration in cleaning water	Daily	Chlorine Concentration: 50–100 ppm (parts per million)
pH Test Strips*	Measuring the pH level of water	When in doubt or when the source changes	pH Level: Between 6.5 and 8.5
TDS Meter (Total Dissolved Solids)**	Assessing water quality (dissolved salts)	When in doubt or when the source changes	TDS (Total Dissolved Solids): Less than 500 ppm
Bacterial Test (Coliform)**	Verifying that water is free from bacterial contamination	Monthly or as needed	Bacterial Contamination: None detected

* These tools can be used where laboratory facilities are available.

**Chlorine and pH test strips are easy to use and available at Casa Pools (50 strips for \$12) or at Arabian Lab Technologies.

Steps for Measuring Food Temperature:

- Wash the thermometer with warm water and soap.
- Sanitize it using an alcohol wipe or hot water (77°C for 30 seconds).
- Insert the probe into the thickest part of the food.
- Read and record the temperature.
- Clean the thermometer after each use.

4.4.

Good Storage Practices

Good storage practices contribute to ensuring the quality and safety of products by implementing a regular inventory system, using tightly sealed containers, and adhering to proper food handling principles to prevent waste and ensure usage before spoilage.

For packaged food items with a clear expiration date, the principle of *First Expired, First Out (FEFO)* must be strictly applied. *The First In, First Out (FIFO)* method should only be used when expiry dates are identical.

For fresh products without visible expiry dates (such as fresh vegetables and fruits), it is recommended to apply the FIFO principle, as it is more suitable in this case.

To facilitate practical implementation of the FEFO method, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Classify products by expiration date:** Upon receiving new shipments, inspect expiration dates and arrange products so that those expiring soon are placed at the front of shelves or in easily accessible areas.
2. **Attach clear identification labels to each product:** Each item should have a label displaying the product name, quantity, date of entry into storage, and expiration date clearly for staff.
3. **Train staff** on reading expiration dates and understanding the importance of using products that expire first to avoid waste.
4. **Conduct regular inventory reviews** to ensure there are no expired products, and dispose of any found immediately.
5. **Use electronic systems**, such as Excel sheets, that automatically alert staff to upcoming expiration dates and help organize product distribution according to the FEFO method.

Table 18: Recommendations for Adhering to Good Storage Practices

Recommendations	Required Templates
Store food in clean, tightly sealed containers	Template 18: Standardized Storage Labels (Includes: Item Name – Date Received – Expiration Date)
Apply FIFO and FEFO principles when arranging products on shelves, and attach clear identification labels to each item including name, quantity, entry date, and expiration date	Template 8: Inventory Movement Log (FIFO) (Tracks incoming and outgoing items based on First In, First Out principle)
Ensure all products have clear labels with name, quantity, entry date, and expiration date, and promptly remove any spoiled or damaged items	Template 9: Food Spoilage Documentation Form
Train the storage team on good storage practices and review compliance through regular inspection checklists	
Allocate separate areas for storing raw and cooked materials, as well as cleaning agents	
Regularly measure temperature and humidity, and ensure proper ventilation	
Elevate products at least 15 cm off the ground using metal or plastic shelving	

Examples of Proper Food Storage Methods in the Refrigerator and Freezer

To ensure the quality and safety of food, it is important to follow appropriate storage methods for each type of food. Below are examples of common food items along with their shelf life in the refrigerator and freezer, as well as proper storage instructions for each case:

Table 19: Storage of Common Protein Foods

Food item	Shelf life in the refrigerator (0–4°C)	Freezer shelf life (–18°C or cooler)	Storage Instructions
Raw Eggs (in shell)	Up to 3 weeks	Not suitable for freezing	Store in the original container on the middle shelf.
Boiled Eggs	1 week	Not suitable for freezing	Store in a closed container.
Cooked Chicken	3–4 days	4–6 months	Store in an airtight container.
Cooked Beef	3–4 days	4–6 months	Best consumed within 72 hours.
Raw Ground Meat	1–2 days	3–4 months	Store in an airtight container.
Cooked Kofta	3–4 days	2–3 months	Cook within 24–48 hours.
Cooked Fish	2–3 days	2–3 months	Store in an airtight container.

Canned Tuna (after opening)	2 days	Not suitable for freezing	Refrigerate immediately after cooking.
Cooked Lentils / Chickpeas / Fava Beans	3–5 days	2–3 months	Store in a clean glass or plastic container.
White Cheese / Greek Yogurt	5–7 days after opening	Not suitable for freezing	Store with a little cooking water or olive oil.
Yellow Cheese	2 weeks	Can be frozen for up to 6 months, but texture and flavor may be affected	Store in a closed container.
Milk	5–7 days after opening	Not suitable for freezing	Store in an airtight container, keeping the surface dry.

Table 20:

Storage of Other Common Products

Food item	Shelf life in the refrigerator (0– 4°C)	Freezer shelf life (–18°C or cooler)	Storage Instructions
Fresh Vegetables	3–7 days	8–12 months after quick freezing	Store in perforated plastic bags or airtight containers.
Fresh Fruits	3–10 days	6–12 months (chopped or mashed)	Store in the fruit drawer or designated containers.
Breads and Pastries	3–5 days	Approximately 3 months	Store in a plastic bag or airtight container.
Fresh Dairy	5–7 days after opening	Butter up to 6 months, milk not preferred	Store in the coldest part of the refrigerator.
Fresh Seafood	1–2 days	3–6 months	Store in a sealed container or wrapped in plastic wrap.
Prepared and Cooked Foods	3–4 days	2–3 months	Store in airtight containers. Refrigerate quickly after cooking.
Tomato Sauce	5–7 days	2–3 months	After opening the container, transfer the sauce to an airtight glass or plastic container and store in the refrigerator. Before freezing, it's best to drizzle a little olive oil over the sauce to reduce exposure to air and preserve the flavor.

4.5.**Waste Management**

It is essential to address the topic of proper waste management in community kitchens, especially during crises and emergencies, due to its critical role in maintaining cleanliness, protecting public health, and ensuring environmental safety.

During wars, natural disasters, and other emergencies, the operations of municipalities and waste collection authorities are often disrupted. This leads to the accumulation of waste, which in turn contaminates food and water, increasing the risk of diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and others. Clean environments help reduce the spread of infection, particularly in densely populated displacement areas and community kitchens serving large numbers of affected individuals.

Effective waste management in community kitchens during emergencies is vital for maintaining hygiene, preventing health hazards, and ensuring efficient operations. Below are the types of waste typically generated in community kitchens (mostly organic waste), along with the key steps in managing them.

Efficient waste management is based on minimizing waste generation, separating waste types, and ensuring safe disposal or reuse. Prioritizing waste separation at the source (e.g. using separate bins for food scraps, recyclable materials, and general waste) and engaging community members in waste reduction efforts are key strategies.

We recommend using *Template 19: Daily Waste Disposal Monitoring Sheet*.

Table 21: Types of Waste Generated by Community Kitchens

Type of Waste	Examples	Waste Disposal Methods
Organic Waste	Food scraps, vegetable and fruit peels, meat waste	- Convert organic waste into compost, considering materials suitable for compost production; - Dispose of waste in biodegradable waste pits; - Coordinate with agricultural associations that can collect and convert waste into compost.
Non-Organic Waste	Plastic, paper, and packaging materials	- Collect recyclable materials separately for recycling; - Ensure safe disposal of hazardous or contaminated waste; - Contact organizations that recycle paper, plastic, etc.
Hazardous or Contaminated Waste	Cleaning residues, tools contaminated with blood, chemicals, or medications	Coordinate with relevant associations and authorities to process waste properly and prevent contamination.

Safe Waste Disposal Steps

- Separate waste into designated containers and/or bags. Ensure the use of strong bags to prevent tearing and liquid leakage.
- Seal bags tightly and move them outside the kitchen, away from children and animals (such as cats or wild animals).
- Dispose of waste daily and avoid leaving it in the kitchen overnight.
- Clean and disinfect waste containers at least once a week.

Controlling Food Waste and Waste Generation

- Plan efficient meals to reduce leftovers.
- Encourage safe reuse of excess food (e.g., using leftover vegetables in soups).
- Monitor food distribution to avoid over-serving and unnecessary waste.
- Consult with families and collaboratively develop the menu to ensure proposed dishes suit everyone's tastes.

Section Five

Financial Management, Accounting, and Budgeting



Section Five

Financial Management, Accounting, and Budgeting

Organizing financial matters helps ensure the sustainability of the initiative, as well as transparency and efficiency. This organization is based on several key points, which are briefly presented in the table below.

Table 22: Challenges of Financial Management, Accounting, and Budgeting in Emergencies, and Proposed Solutions to Overcome Them

Financial Management Elements	Explanation	Challenges and Difficulties	Possible and Proposed Solutions
Budgeting	Refers to allocating resources and determining how funds are used—such as purchasing food and raw ingredients, cooking equipment, transportation, staff wages, etc.	• Difficulty in forecasting expenses due to price fluctuations, daily needs, or an increase in the number of displaced people • Irregular access to financial resources • Overspending on non-essential items	• Develop a flexible budget that can be adjusted weekly in response to supply shortages or unexpected needs • Adopt multiple budgeting scenarios (minimum, average, emergency)
Accounting	Accurately recording every purchase or donation and issuing regular reports.	• Psychological pressure, time constraints, security conditions, and other stressors can lead to neglecting documentation • Lack of accounting expertise among volunteers	• Use a paper ledger or a simple daily Excel sheet to document donations and purchases • Train at least one person to serve as a field accountant
Invoice Management	Archiving invoices and tracking deadlines with suppliers.	• Loss of invoices or delays in their issuance by suppliers • Difficulty in archiving them electronically	• Photograph each invoice immediately upon receipt (e.g., using a mobile phone) • Archive invoices in paper format inside a folder organized by date or supplier
Cost Control	Monitoring material usage to avoid waste and comparing prices between suppliers.	• Poor estimation of quantities • Lack of monitoring of material usage • Suppliers taking advantage of the emergency situation	• Monitor inventory daily • Compare prices from at least 2–3 suppliers • Appoint a single purchasing officer to avoid randomness • Negotiate better deals to secure significant discounts from suppliers and avoid price fluctuations
Transparency and Accountability	Ensures that donor or relief organization funds are used properly, which builds donor trust and helps maintain credibility with volunteers and beneficiaries.	• Poor allocation of funds and lack of clear records • Unfair distribution of food • Favoritism or bias in supply distribution, which may lead to conflicts within the community • Operational inefficiency, where poor decision-making can result in food shortages or unnecessary waste	• Compliance with regulations by organizing financial records in case of audits or government reporting • Involving volunteers – especially displaced individuals – in decisions related to spending and priority setting • Adopting accountability policies • Implementing a transparent food distribution system and encouraging community feedback mechanisms to identify unfair practices • Promoting a culture of integrity among volunteers and staff, and encouraging open communication and exchange of ideas among all relevant stakeholders

Section Six

Key Challenges in Establishing and Managing a Community Kitchen During Crises



Section Six**Challenges in Running a Community Kitchen During Crises**

After outlining the stages of establishing and operating a community kitchen, it is essential to address the problems encountered in implementing this type of initiative, such as challenges related to security conditions, weak infrastructure, and supply disruptions. Below, we present the most important of these challenges, along with some practical solutions that can be considered.

Safety and Security

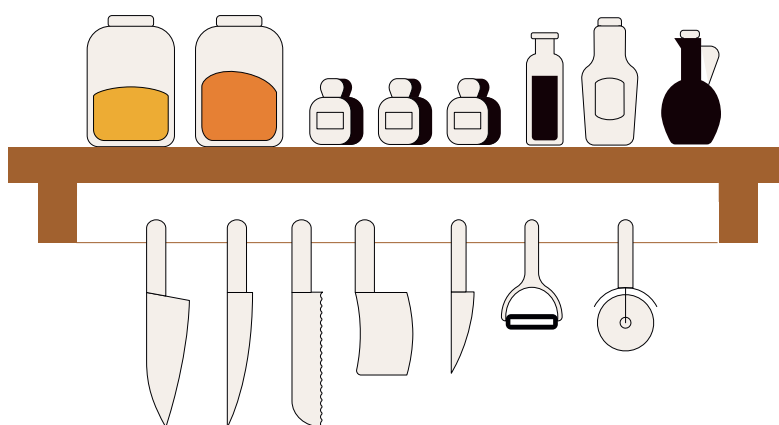
War and unstable security conditions expose working teams and displaced individuals to direct risks, such as shelling and armed clashes.

Challenge	Proposed Solutions
Risk of shelling or gunfire	Choose a relatively safe location (such as a basement, an interior building, or a site far from conflict zones)
Difficulty in movement for the team or displaced individuals	Collaborate with volunteers from within the local community to reduce the need for travel
Lack of nighttime security	Limit kitchen operating hours to safe periods – preferably during daylight only

Supply Chains and Provisioning

Blockades or road closures lead to disruptions in essential resources such as food, fuel, and water, or make them difficult to access.

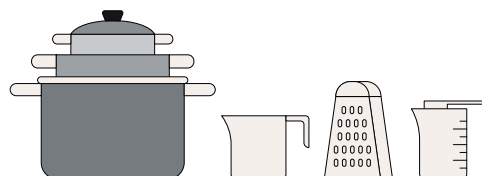
Challenge	Proposed Solutions
Difficulty in obtaining food	Rely on local resources, coordinate with relief organizations, and maintain a small emergency stockpile
Lack of fuel for cooking or heating	Use alternative tools (such as portable gas stoves or firewood) and ration fuel usage
Water shortages or contamination	Store clean water and use filters or chlorine tablets for purification
Receiving large quantities of the same item, or receiving goods that displaced people do not use or consume	Communicate with local shops to explore the possibility of exchanging these goods



Weak infrastructure

In situations where buildings are destroyed, electricity and water are cut off, and the equipment needed for food preparation is unavailable, the responsible parties must rely on creativity and sound judgment. The following table presents examples of infrastructure-related challenges that may arise during emergencies, along with proposed innovative solutions to address them.

Challenge	Proposed Solutions
Lack of a fully equipped kitchen	- Set up a simple and temporary space (such as a kitchen tent) and use basic manual equipment - Combine meals prepared in the kitchen with hot meals and/or food rations received from donors such as NGOs
Power outages	- Use cooking methods that do not rely on electricity - Utilize small temporary generators - Prioritize cooking with fresh, perishable ingredients like meat and chicken, and reserve dry items such as grains, pasta, and canned goods for later use
Difficulty preserving refrigerated food	Reduce the production of meals that require refrigeration and cook only according to daily needs



Shortage of Trained Personnel

In emergency situations, volunteer teams may not be trained to work under pressure or may lack experience in preparing food for large groups and applying food safety standards. In such cases, we suggest the following actions:

Challenge	Proposed Solutions
Shortage of qualified personnel	- Provide quick training for local volunteers on basic tasks and food safety - Train displaced individuals and involve them in kitchen work, food preparation, and distribution
Fatigue or psychological stress	- Organize flexible kitchen shifts - Offer basic psychological support when possible - Arrange group support sessions or gatherings to share experiences and stress, helping to ease emotional burdens - Create a positive work environment where everyone feels valued and included

Difficulty in Documentation and Follow-Up

It is challenging to monitor quality or needs amid chaos or in the absence of communication. In such cases, we suggest simple solutions that can help operations run more smoothly until a permanent solution is found.

Challenge	Proposed Solutions
Inability to maintain records	Use simple notebooks or brief, easy-to-follow paper templates. These forms and tables can be improvised and adapted based on the type of data that needs to be collected and tracked
Lack of communication between teams	- Assign a coordinator for each team and each family present at the center/shelter - Use any available communication tool (such as WhatsApp, if accessible), where a group can be created to include designated individuals

The local community's resistance to the presence of displaced individuals in their town or neighborhood

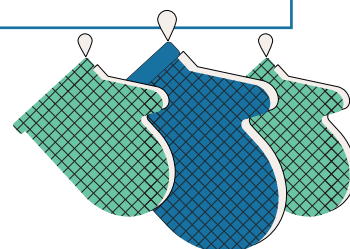
Managing and operating a community kitchen in an environment that does not accept the presence of displaced persons can be a significant challenge for both the kitchen organizers and the displaced individuals. However, it also presents an opportunity to foster positive change within the surrounding community. Below are some steps that may help improve engagement with the local community:

Challenge	Proposed Solutions
General resistance from the local community	• Organize dialogue sessions or community meetings to introduce local residents to the concept and objectives of the community kitchen. • Engage the local community rather than focusing solely on displaced persons: Local residents can be invited to participate in cooking, distribution, and even benefit from the services. If they feel the kitchen serves everyone, it may help ease tensions. • Conduct workshops that bring together displaced individuals and members of the local community, such as cooking classes, to foster personal relationships and break down barriers. • Involve community leaders, such as religious figures or local influencers, in supporting the kitchen, along with municipalities, public institutions, and local stakeholders.
Refusal by some shopkeepers and business owners to engage with displaced persons	• Identify businesses that are open to commercial interaction with displaced persons, and share a list of their names and locations with the displaced community.
Hesitation among business owners to support kitchens that serve displaced individuals	• Explain the objectives of the kitchen and its positive impact on the broader community, while persuading shop owners that collaboration could enhance their reputation, attract new customers, and contribute to the local economy. • Seek alternative suppliers, including wholesale markets, charitable organizations, local farmers, and agricultural or food cooperatives who may be more willing to support the initiative. • Establish partnerships with supportive entities, and engage with humanitarian organizations, major companies, or even government bodies to secure alternative support and help overcome obstacles.

Competition over available resources in the community kitchen

Under existing pressures, challenges may often arise among displaced families who use and benefit from the services of the community kitchen. Therefore, it is recommended to adopt transparency and promote dialogue and mutual understanding to reduce tension. These challenges can be transformed into opportunities to foster stronger solidarity among families and to ensure the kitchen continues to serve everyone effectively.

Challenge	Proposed Solutions
Disputes related to the distribution of food rations and/or hot meals	• Establish a fair and transparent distribution system that is clearly communicated to all. • Define food distribution mechanisms that ensure equal and transparent access for everyone. • Engage family representatives in discussions around challenges and decision-making related to kitchen management, use of available supplies and resources, food distribution procedures, and the selection of individuals responsible for meal preparation, among other matters.
Disagreements arising from cultural and social disparities	• Offer a variety of meals that reflect diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. • Involve families in the development of meal plans to foster a sense of belonging.



Section Seven

Water Testing and Purification



Section Seven

Water Testing and Purification

In general, prioritizing water and sanitation management is critical for public health and safety. Effective water and sanitation management is essential to maintaining hygiene and food safety in community kitchens during emergencies.

Water quality and supply are often severely impacted during emergencies due to various factors, including:

- Damage to infrastructure
- Pollution (such as sewage, industrial waste, and chemical contaminants)
- Limited access to reliable water sources and sanitation facilities
- Overuse and strain on resources
- Disruption of supply chains
- Spread of waterborne diseases

Key aspects of water management during emergencies include ensuring a safe and sufficient water supply, implementing basic sanitation systems, and promoting good hygiene practices. These measures may also involve temporary water transportation, provision of sanitation infrastructure such as trench latrines, and hygiene awareness campaigns.

In Lebanon, where infrastructure is already fragile and citizens frequently face water shortages – especially in densely populated areas and during periods of drought – ensuring access to clean and continuous water during emergencies becomes a real challenge.

This section presents simple and cost-effective methods for testing and purifying water to secure safe water for cooking and cleaning in community kitchens.

Water Testing

Why do we test water? Because water is used for cooking, cleaning, and washing vegetables, and it must be 100% safe. Refer to *Template 20 for the Water Testing Form for Community Kitchens in Emergency Settings*.

Table 23: Water testing techniques

Testing Methods	Desired Results	What to do if the water is unsuitable
Visual and olfactory assessment	Clear, odorless, and colorless water with no visible sediment	Do not use the water and notify the responsible authority
Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) test	Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) below 500 ppm or less than 1000 mg/L	Use bottled or treated water as an alternative
Use of portable water testing kits (rapid field tests), such as microbial test strips	No bacterial growth detected	Immediately stop using the water and report the contamination
Laboratory testing (for long-term safety assurance)	Absence of heavy metals, viruses, toxins, and harmful microorganisms	Immediately cease water usage and seek reliable water sources

It is possible to collaborate with private or public local laboratories—such as the Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (LARI), the Industrial Research Institute (IRI), the American University of Beirut's (AUB) laboratory, and the specialized Water and Soil Analysis Laboratory at Beirut Arab University (BAU)—to test water quality in community kitchens.



How Do We Purify Contaminated Water?

Water purification in emergency situations is critically important to ensure safety, hygiene, and health in community kitchens. Contaminated water can pose serious risks, especially during crises when medical support is limited. Water purification therefore helps to:

- Prevent waterborne diseases
- Maintain food safety
- Ensure hygiene in cooking and cleaning
- Remove harmful chemicals and toxins
- Prevent gastrointestinal issues and dehydration
- Support long-term emergency operations, enabling sustainable food production without relying on expensive bottled water

There are various methods for purifying water to make it suitable for drinking, cooking, washing vegetables and fruits, and cleaning kitchen utensils. The following table outlines the most commonly used purification methods, ranging from simple and low-cost techniques—such as boiling water and using household chlorine—to those requiring budget allocation for equipment purchases, like filters available in the Lebanese market.

Table 24: Water purification techniques

Purification Technique	Details	Notes
Boiling	• Boil water for at least one minute. • Store the cooled water in a clean, sterilized container with a tightly sealed lid to prevent recontamination.	• Boiling water is a reliable method for disinfecting and purifying water, especially in situations where other options are unavailable.
Household chlorine (unscented, with a concentration of 5% to 6%)	• Add two drops of chlorine per liter of water. • Stir the water thoroughly to ensure even distribution of the disinfectant. • Let the water sit for at least 30 minutes before drinking, to allow for the elimination of bacteria and viruses.	• Avoid adding excessive amounts of chlorine, as it becomes toxic at high doses.
Water filters	• Have the filter installed by a specialist to avoid errors. • Replace the filter regularly (depending on the type). • Portable mini-filters are easy to use.	• Activated carbon filters are effective at removing chemical contaminants, but may not efficiently eliminate bacteria or parasites. • There are also portable water filters such as LifeStraw and Sawyer Mini, among others. These are compact, lightweight, and effective in removing bacteria and parasites.



Important Notes:

- Water test results must be recorded in a dedicated log and preserved.
- The water source must be changed immediately if found unsuitable.
- Support may be requested from the municipality or relevant organizations if water quality issues persist.



Section Eight

Kitchen Safety and Occupational Health



Section Eight

Kitchen Safety and Occupational Health

General Kitchen Safety

In emergency settings and community kitchens that bring together volunteers from diverse backgrounds and varying levels of experience, general safety and emergency procedures become top priorities. These measures are essential to ensure the safety of both workers and visitors, and to maintain uninterrupted operations without accidents or damage.

It is crucial that every team member—whether a professional chef, a new volunteer, or a participating family member—is fully aware of the procedures to follow in case of an emergency. This includes knowing the location of safety equipment, how to respond quickly and effectively, and how to communicate with supervisors or relevant authorities.

Risk assessment in the kitchen involves identifying potential hazards and implementing necessary measures to mitigate them. Preventive actions are based on the following:

- **Identifying potential hazards:** Such as slips, burns, food poisoning, or improper handling of food.
- **Risk assessment:** Evaluate the likelihood and severity of each identified hazard. For example, a wet floor poses a high risk of slipping, while a dull knife increases the chance of injury.
- **Review control measures:** Check existing safety precautions, such as fire extinguishers, proper chemical storage, and safe equipment handling.
- **Implement additional safety measures if needed:** Such as adding non-slip mats or improving ventilation.
- **Provide regular training:** Teach staff how to handle fires and use firefighting equipment.
- **First aid availability:** Ensure a first aid kit is visible and easily accessible to all staff.
- **Monitoring and updating:** Regularly review safety protocols and adjust them based on new hazards or incidents.

To support a safe, professional environment in the kitchen, we have prepared *Template 21: Occupational Safety Checklist for Community Kitchens*.

First Aid in the Community Kitchen

Providing a first aid kit and using it properly is a vital component of managing incidents that occur during kitchen shifts. Below are some basic guidelines regarding the first aid kit and how to use it:

Location and Handling of the Kit:

- Place the kit in a visible and easily accessible location.
- Ensure all staff are familiar with the kit's location and contents.
- Regularly check the kit's contents and refill as needed.

Contents of the First Aid Kit – to ensure readiness at all times:

- Sterile gauze pads.
- Adhesive bandages.
- Medical tape.
- Medical gloves for protection.
- Antiseptic solution for wound cleaning.
- Scissors and tweezers for facilitating initial care.
- Soothing cream for burns.
- Instant cold packs.
- Mild pain relievers, such as paracetamol.
- A dedicated notebook for recording accidents and injuries.

Handling Emergency Cases

Minor Cuts



Wash hands thoroughly and wear gloves



Gently clean the wound with clean or sterile water



Dry the wound and cover it with sterile gauze



Monitor the wound in the following days for any signs of infection

Minor Burns



Place the burned area under cool running water for 10–15 minutes



Avoid applying ice directly to the skin



Do not pop any blisters that may form



Cover the burn with a non-stick dressing



Apply a soothing burn cream if available

Choking Incidents



Encourage the person to cough if they are able



If coughing does not work, perform the abdominal thrust technique (Heimlich maneuver)



Contact emergency services immediately

Loss of Consciousness or Fainting



Check that the person is breathing normally



Place the individual in a safe lateral (recovery position)



Call emergency medical services immediately



Do not offer any food or drink while the person is unconscious

Severe Bleeding



Apply pressure to the bleeding area using sterile gauze or a clean cloth



If possible, elevate the injured limb above heart level



Continue applying pressure until the bleeding stops



If bleeding persists, contact emergency services immediately

Fire Safety

To prevent fires in the kitchen, follow these guidelines:



Never leave food unattended on the stove or in the oven



Use a timer or alarm to remind you of cooking durations



Avoid wearing loose clothing while cooking



Keep flammable materials, such as gloves, towels, and plastic bags, away from heat sources.



Ensure a fire extinguisher and fire blanket are available in the kitchen, and make sure everyone knows how to use them.

Incident Reporting

To enhance safety, it is essential to document all incidents that occur in the kitchen. This helps to:



Improve future preventive measures



Learn from past mistakes and avoid repeating them



Provide legal protection for participants and organizers through reliable documentation

Table 25:

Emergency Numbers in Lebanon

 Lebanese Army 1701 Lebanese Army Operations Room 117	 General Security 1717	 Police 112
 175 Fire Brigade	 125 Civil Defense	 140 Lebanese Red Cross

Community Kitchen Sustainability



Section Nine

Community Kitchen Sustainability

Community kitchens contribute far beyond addressing food security. They extend their impact into broader aspects of human and social life. As previously mentioned, these kitchens offer spaces for learning leadership skills and strengthening social bonds between those receiving food and those producing or contributing to its preparation. Therefore, in certain cases, it becomes essential to work toward sustaining the kitchen to support local communities and promote meaningful change toward healthier and more resilient local food systems, especially during times of crisis.

Mobilizing Support and Funding

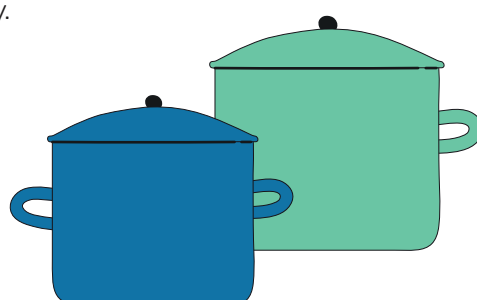
Despite widespread recognition of the multiple benefits of community kitchens, their sustainability is not guaranteed. During emergencies in particular, kitchens require ongoing support and funding to remain operational and serve communities in need. This support may come from various sources, including:

- **United Nations agencies** such as the World Health Organization (WHO), UNHCR, World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- **Nonprofit organizations** such as the International Red Cross, International Relief, Catholic Relief Services, Islamic Relief France, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), Action Against Hunger and others
- **Local relief and development associations**, which operate across different regions and sectors
- **Corporate sponsorships**, where private companies—especially those in the food sector—may donate supplies, equipment, or financial aid
- **Community contributions** from local residents and volunteers through donations, fundraising events, and hands-on support
- **Support from local governments**, particularly municipalities

Developing an Integrated Strategy

Sustaining kitchen operations during emergencies requires an integrated strategy that goes beyond securing support and funding. It also involves organizing internal workflows and improving operational management through:

- **Diversifying food sources** by building partnerships with local farmers, food banks, and suppliers to ensure a steady flow of ingredients and resources;
- **Ensuring flexibility in weekly menu planning** based on available ingredients;
- **Practicing efficient cooking strategies**, such as preparing large quantities and planning meals to maximize resources and minimize waste. If refrigeration is available, surplus food can be stored; otherwise, excess portions may be distributed to other displacement centers;
- **Setting emergency planning** for power outages, supply chain disruptions, and increased demand during crises;
- **Strengthening relationships** with local organizations, volunteers, and donors to maintain support; and
- **Resolving conflicts** among kitchen users promptly and diplomatically.



Kitchen for Development

A key consideration is how to sustain community kitchens when displaced individuals begin returning home, bearing in mind that many will not be able to return for a long time. This sustainability does not apply to all types of kitchens, such as those temporarily established in schools, tents, or provisional centers. Instead, it refers to kitchens founded within associations or other centers that meet specific criteria allowing them to continue operating.

Some of these kitchens were already active before the crisis and simply adapted their activities to meet emergency needs. This leads to the concept of a "Kitchen for Development": community kitchens originally created to address food insecurity among displaced populations and refugees can now evolve into more sustainable entities that support local livelihoods—including those who remain displaced.

Post-emergency sustainability requires strategic planning and long-term support, particularly from the local community and government entities such as municipalities, which play a vital role in providing not only financial aid but also structural support. The goal is to transform the kitchen into an income-generating initiative that serves diverse audiences and creates job opportunities, especially for women and youth.

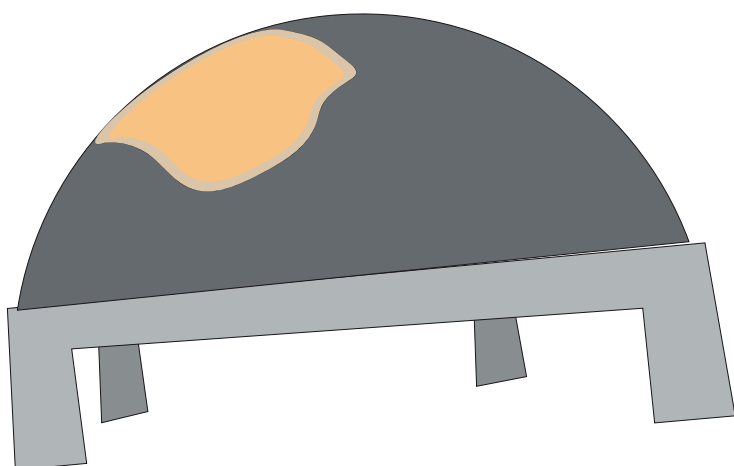
It is equally important to discuss the kitchen's future with the managing organization and explore the range of services it can offer, such as catering, food aid distribution, and the production of pantry items (*mouneh*). This process also requires conducting market research and feasibility studies to ensure the chosen model is financially viable and aligned with the kitchen's goals.

Establishing Community Gardens for Sustainable Food Sources

Community gardens—particularly urban ones—play a key role in enhancing food security and strengthening social ties. In the Lebanese context, establishing such gardens depends on the availability of land that can be converted into a space for growing vegetables, herbs, and fruits, and for hosting community activities.

If land is unavailable, vertical farming or rooftop gardening can be alternatives. Regardless of the garden's form, certain basic conditions must be met, including obtaining permission from the local municipality or relevant authority, access to clean irrigation water, financial resources to purchase equipment and launch the project, and the presence of individuals with agricultural expertise. These individuals may volunteer or be hired to maintain the garden daily.

The garden can supply fresh produce to the kitchen, reducing costs, and surplus products can be sold to generate additional income. Moreover, food scraps from the kitchen can be converted into organic compost for the garden (*Template 22: Food Waste Disposal Record*).



Providing Regular Meal Services

An emergency kitchen can transition into a facility that offers daily meals. However, this transformation requires strategic planning to ensure long-term sustainability. The strategy should include:

- **Upgrading equipment and improving storage and logistics** to meet the kitchen's new goals and activities;
- **Enhancing food safety standards** and obtaining necessary health certifications;
- **Developing and diversifying the menu** to align with the kitchen's new objectives;
- **Specializing in certain food products**, depending on available space and equipment. For example, the kitchen may produce daily meals, frozen items like kibbeh patties and various pastries, ready-to-cook foods such as stuffed grape leaves, and pantry products (*mouneh*) like jams, pickles, and dried goods;
- **Hiring women from the local community**;
- **Regularly training and building the capacity of kitchen staff**;
- **Strengthening relationships with small-scale local farmers** to maintain the kitchen's social and developmental mission;
- **Marketing and outreach** to potential clients such as event organizers, companies, and local communities to secure catering contracts;
- **Developing partnerships with civil society organizations** that can support the kitchen through training, equipment donations, and marketing assistance; and
- **Offering weekly or monthly meal subscriptions** to enhance the kitchen's sustainability.

Organizing Community Activities

To maintain its role as a space for connection, social development, and empowerment, community kitchen coordinators can strengthen this function by organizing cultural and educational activities that engage a broad audience. These activities may include cooking workshops, homemade pantry production (*mouneh*), food safety fundamentals, and other related topics such as food preparation, agriculture, and nutrition. The content of these training sessions can be adapted to suit different age groups and specific needs.

These proposals aim to ensure the long-term operation of community kitchens, create job opportunities, foster collaboration with surrounding communities, and promote sustainable local food systems. It is also critically important to adopt a flexible strategy that allows the kitchen's activities to evolve as circumstances change. Additionally, periods of stability should be used to improve kitchen infrastructure and build staff capacity, ensuring effective emergency response when needed.



Section Ten

Case Studies



Section Ten

Case Studies

This section highlights two case studies of community kitchens and initiatives launched in Lebanon during the late 2024 conflicts. It highlights specific practices implemented within these kitchens that contributed to the success of each initiative.

Community Kitchen No. 1

A skilled female chef who had been running her own kitchen in a southern town for years never imagined that her culinary expertise would become a lifeline during a national crisis. When war broke out in Lebanon in the fall of 2024, she was forced to leave her home and seek refuge in a public school in a mountainous town. Despite the shock and uncertainty, her sense of initiative resurfaced, and she saw an opportunity to serve her community through what she knew best: cooking and organizing.

With support from the municipality and the school coordinator, she reactivated an industrial kitchen in the town and helped launch a large-scale feeding initiative. The central kitchen quickly became a hub for supporting seven neighboring schools hosting displaced families, and auxiliary kitchens were established around it.

Operations began with the preparation of 500 meals per day, which later increased to 1,000 and eventually 1,500 meals daily. Cooking was supervised by displaced volunteers—primarily women and youth—under the chef’s guidance, fostering community empowerment and a sense of participation and hope.

Key Success Factors

- **Technical expertise:** The chef provided essential knowledge for organizing operations, portion control, food safety, and training volunteers to prepare nutritious meals suitable for diverse groups.
- **Kitchen management and structure:** The central kitchen functioned as a production hub, distributing semi-prepared meals or prepped ingredients to smaller kitchens. This helped optimize resources, reduce waste, and allowed families to customize their meals according to preference.
- **Municipal coordination:** Effective communication between Fatima (the school coordinator) and the municipality was crucial for securing and distributing resources and overcoming logistical challenges during the war.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- **Structural issues:** Upon reactivating the central kitchen, asbestos was discovered in the walls—a serious health hazard. This underscored the importance of pre-operational facility inspections and allocating emergency maintenance budgets.
- **Diverse tastes and backgrounds:** Differences in food preferences among families from various regions occasionally led to tension. A model offering semi-cooked ingredients for families to adjust according to their tastes proved essential for preserving dignity and fostering inclusion.
- **Managing psychological stress:** As the war continued, tensions rose among residents, and food became a symbol of identity and belonging. The chef organized weekly gatherings for families and volunteers to share feedback, which helped ease tensions and build trust.

Community Kitchen No. 2

As displaced families from southern Bekaa villages and Beirut's suburbs began arriving in a mountainous Lebanese town, a group of volunteers approached the mayor to open the public school for shelter. Their goal was to support the families, ensure their safety and basic needs, and foster connections between newcomers and local residents.

A kitchen was set up inside a truck container. Volunteers equipped it initially at their own expense and with support from the local community, followed by assistance from organizations such as the UN World Food Programme. The kitchen began by serving sandwiches to approximately 400 people. Once fully equipped, four women from the displaced families volunteered to prepare meals for all families housed at the school—eventually reaching 300 families.

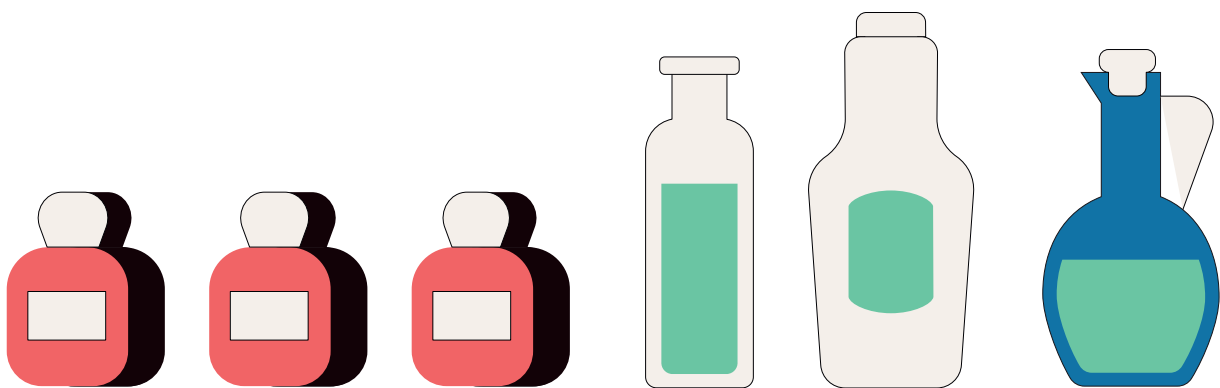
Decisions regarding the kitchen (e.g. what to cook and how to distribute meals) were made jointly by the four women, volunteer representatives, and family members. This participatory approach ensured transparency and minimized misunderstandings. Although the kitchen was a primary solution to food insecurity, families still had the option to prepare their own breakfast and dinner using food baskets. Hot meals distributed by NGOs were welcomed, and any surplus was sent to families outside the school who lacked cooking facilities.

Key Success Factors

- **Technical expertise and volunteerism:** One volunteer, who owned a catering company, asked his chef to train the women in large-scale cooking.
- **Effective management and organization:** Daily lunch menus were shared, and meal requests were collected from families—helping reduce food waste.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- **Community engagement:** Volunteers compiled a list of cooperating shops offering fair prices and shared it with displaced families.
- **Unstable electricity supply:** To prevent food spoilage, especially in the absence of reliable electricity, meals were consumed the same day and not stored for long periods.





Case Study Activity Sheets

Case Activity Sheet 1: The case ² The Kitchen That Wouldn't Fit

The Challenge:

The shelter, operating in a school building, was denied permission to install a permanent kitchen due to liability and restoration concerns.

The Response:

A Radical Solution: Volunteers designed a container kitchen just outside school property.
Rapid Execution: With donations from an NGO, they purchased and equipped the container with second-hand appliances, and plumbing.

Key Lessons:

Autonomous Infrastructure: The container kitchen became a stable, hygienic, and efficient food hub.
Community Ownership: Building their own kitchen gave volunteers pride and long-term control.
Space as Power: Controlling their own kitchen meant volunteers could plan ahead, expand operations, and maintain dignity.

Suggested Relevant Discussion Points and Related Scientific Knowledge:

- Management Leadership
- Negotiation

Case Analysis Results

	Do's	Don'ts
Management Leadership		
Negotiation		
Other		

² The Team didn't modify or edit the cases. Not content wise and not grammatically.

Case Activity Sheet 2: The case ³ Volunteer Fatigue and Uneven Participation in Large-Scale Cooking

Challenge Summary:

In the town of a Lebanese city, one of the schools sheltering displaced families became the central cooking site not only for its ~300 residents, but also for the entire city's area—an estimated 1,500 displaced people scattered across multiple schools and shelters.

A small group of women—most notably A.B., an experienced chef—took on the responsibility of preparing massive quantities of food under stressful and under-resourced conditions. Despite the critical role of this kitchen in sustaining the broader displaced community, very few others stepped in to help. Each day, the kitchen team was forced to operate under exhaustion and emotional pressure, as it was clear that without a functioning kitchen, hundreds would go hungry.

Many of the displaced people, particularly women staying in the school, refused to join kitchen shifts—some saying they were not used to such work, others arguing they should be paid if they were to help. Additionally, outside food deliveries from NGOs or political parties created a dependency dynamic, leading some to prefer receiving handouts rather than participating in collective cooking.

Proposed Response (Partial Implementation):

A strategy was suggested and partially applied: the person coordinating the shelter would go room to room each morning and select new helpers to rotate into the kitchen. The goal was to ensure shared responsibility and prevent burnout. Some residents complied; others resisted or found excuses to avoid kitchen duty. The few committed volunteers carried an outsized burden—often without recognition or adequate rest.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations:

1. **Anticipate Burnout in Emergency Kitchens:** Feeding 1,500 people daily with a handful of volunteers is unsustainable. Emergency kitchens should be prepared with rotation plans, breaks, and reinforcements built into their models.
2. **Establish Clear Participation Agreements Early:** Upon arrival at shelters, all families can be informed (verbally and through visual signs) that shared participation in cooking, cleaning, or logistics is part of communal survival. This sets expectations before habits of avoidance take root.
3. **Coordinate with Other Shelters for Task-Sharing:** Instead of one site cooking for all, consider dividing duties—one site bakes, another preps dry meals, a third handles vegetables. This decentralizes labor and creates a web of solidarity.
4. **Incentivize, Don't Punish:** Offer small incentives—extra portions, small comfort items, recognition boards—for those who take part. Avoid shaming or forcing, which can breed resentment.
5. **Redirect External Aid Through the Kitchen:** NGOs and donors should be asked to supply the central kitchen rather than bypass it. This strengthens the local support network and prevents a parallel aid economy from weakening collective structures.
6. **Recognize Emotional Toll and Gender Expectations:** Many women had just fled warzones, were caring for children, or were grieving. Expecting immediate participation may be unrealistic without emotional support and gender-sensitive planning.

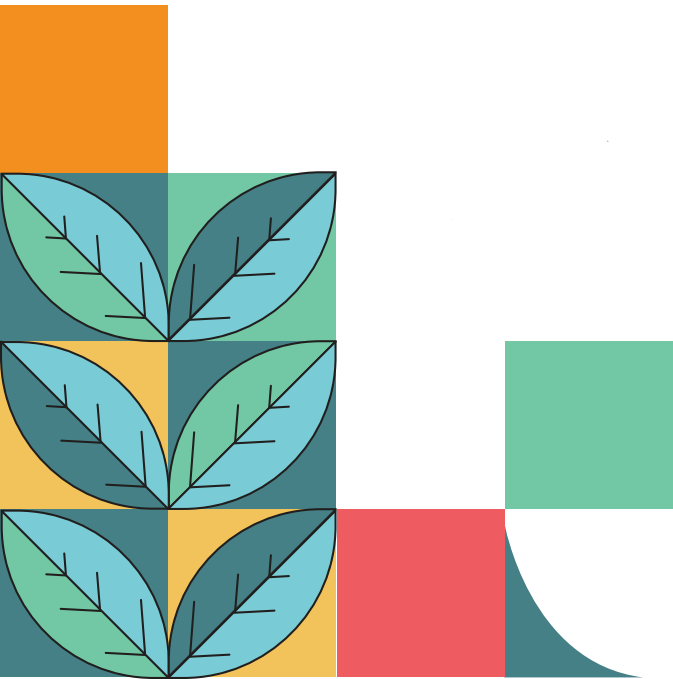
This case reveals how logistical problems are deeply tied to emotional, social, and political dynamics.

Suggested Relevant Discussion Points and Related Scientific Knowledge:

- Management Leadership
- Negotiation

³The Team didn't modify or edit the cases. Not content wise and not grammatically.

Case Analysis Results		
	Do's	Don't's
Management Leadership		
Negotiation		
Other		



Case Activity Sheet 3: The case ⁴ Work Fees and Rumors

Challenge Summary:

As the war continued and the kitchen in one town (serving ~1,500 displaced people) became a central site of daily life, a damaging rumor began to spread: that the women consistently seen working in the kitchen—like A.B. and others—were being paid for their efforts.

This perception, though false, quickly undermined the kitchen's communal spirit. Many people began asking: "Why should I help if they're already getting paid?"

Others outright refused to volunteer unless they too were compensated. Despite the team's repeated explanations that no one was receiving payment and that the kitchen was based on voluntary mutual aid, mistrust lingered.

The reality was that the work was emotionally and physically exhausting, and the core group of kitchen workers continued out of commitment, not compensation.

Impact:

- Morale among the kitchen volunteers dropped.
- Feelings of resentment and injustice spread.
- Fewer new volunteers came forward.
- Some families began withdrawing from collective life altogether, preferring external food aid.

Suggested Solutions & Preventive Strategies:

1. **Transparent Communication from the Start:** Display clear signs or posters stating that the kitchen is a volunteer-based initiative. Daily reminders during announcements or meal distributions can reinforce this.
2. **Daily Recognition Circles:** Begin or end each day with a short group gathering to thank kitchen workers publicly. This visibility helps clarify that their work is unpaid, appreciated, and essential.
3. **Documentation of Volunteerism (Informal Badges or Aprons):** Offer aprons, badges, or kitchen scarves labeled "Mutatawwi" (Volunteer) to make their role clear and dignified. This can neutralize misinformation and build pride.
4. **Open Invitations to Observe:** Allow residents to sit in, watch, or help in low-effort ways (washing vegetables, stirring soup) without pressure. Seeing the labor up close often changes perception.
5. **Create a Volunteer Rotation List:** When everyone sees that no "favorites" are being chosen and that the workload is fairly distributed, rumors of favoritism or hidden payment tend to decrease.
6. **Conflict Mediation Spaces:** If rumors escalate into open conflict, consider forming a small group of trusted people (elders, youth, respected women) to hold listening sessions and dispel falsehoods calmly.

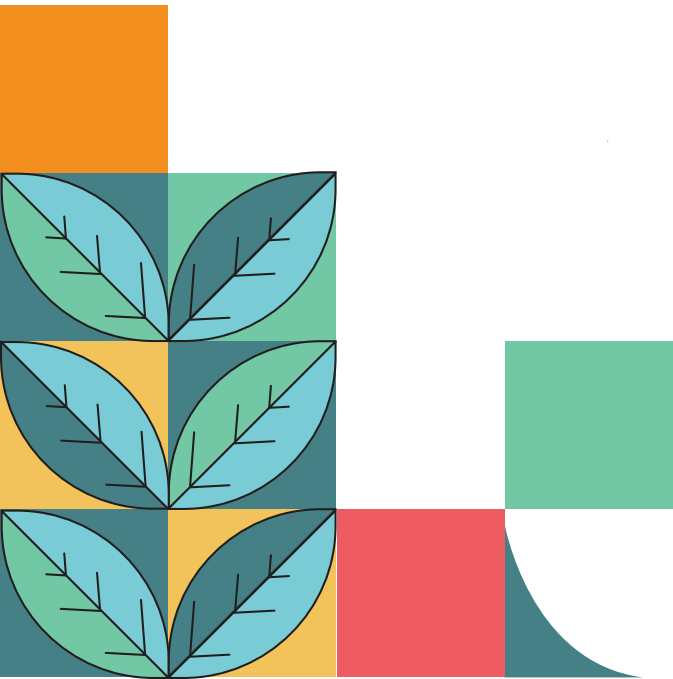
This challenge highlights how fragile trust can be during wartime, and how misinformation—especially around money—can fracture even the most well-intentioned efforts.

Suggested Relevant Discussion Points and Related Scientific Knowledge:

- Management Leadership
- Problem Solving
- Communication

⁴ The Team didn't modify or edit the cases. Not content wise and not grammatically.

Case Analysis Results		
	Do's	Don't's
Management Leadership		
Problem Solving		
Communication		
Other		



Case Activity Sheet 4: The case ⁵ "The eye sees, but the hand is short"

Challenge Summary:

In the school of a village in Mount Lebanon, displaced families were receiving weekly food parcels from various NGOs, political parties, and humanitarian actors. These parcels, often sufficient for a week or two, were not distributed by external agencies but by a self-elected committee formed from within the displaced community itself. This democratic approach initially fostered a sense of ownership and internal accountability.

However, over time, a troubling pattern emerged: some families began redistributing their received parcels to relatives and friends living outside the shelter, who were not eligible for aid. Then, those same families would report to the internal distribution team that they had not received anything, in order to receive more aid.

This behavior strained both resources and relationships:

- It placed unfair pressure on the elected committee, who were now being accused of favoritism or inefficiency.
- It undermined trust within the displaced community itself.
- It triggered conflict, resentment, and suspicion among families.
- It forced the kitchen and aid organizers into a policing role—one they were never meant to play.

Why This Happened:

While some cases involved manipulation, many families were simply trying to support extended kin who had also fled their homes but did not find shelter in the school. This reflected a deep culture of generosity and communal survival, but it collided with the limited resources and the need for equitable distribution.

Lessons Learned & Recommended Strategies:

1. **Protect Internal Committees Through Clear Mandates and Support:** Ensure elected aid distribution teams have clearly defined roles, written guidelines, and moral support from community leaders and external partners. Their credibility must be protected.
2. **Use Transparent Documentation Methods:** A basic signature sheet, card stamping, or numbered voucher system can help the team track who received what and when—without requiring digital tools or harsh surveillance.
3. **Hold Weekly Community Assemblies:** Provide a regular space for all families to raise concerns, ask questions, or suggest improvements. This helps dispel rumors, reduce tension, and reinforce community governance.
4. **Formalize a "Sharing Protocol":** Acknowledge that some people will want to share aid. Instead of hiding it, allow families to formally declare if they wish to donate a portion of their parcel, or request an extra one with explanation—this fosters transparency over secrecy.
5. **Provide External Mediation If Conflict Escalates:** If accusations and tensions rise, bring in an external mediator or social worker to help resolve disputes fairly. This protects the internal committee from being overburdened or scapegoated.
6. **Create Alternative Aid Channels for Unregistered Families Nearby:** Work with NGOs to create supplementary aid for "external" relatives living near the school but outside its shelter system. This relieves pressure on those inside from having to lie or redistribute secretly.

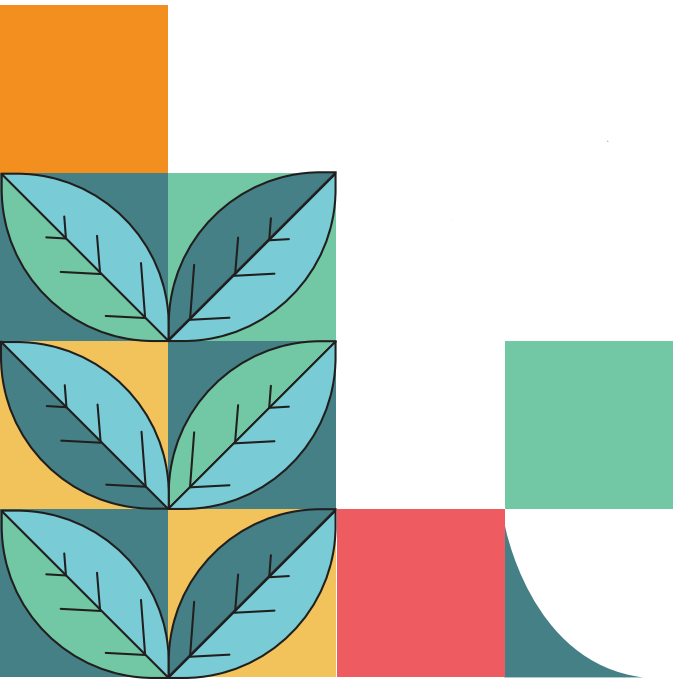
This case reveals how even well-intentioned community systems can break down under pressure when resources are limited and social obligations run deep. Strengthening transparency, communication, and fairness is key to preserving solidarity under crisis.

Suggested Relevant Discussion Points and Related Scientific Knowledge:

- Mediation
- Negotiation

⁴ The Team didn't modify or edit the cases. Not content wise and not grammatically.

Case Analysis Results		
	Do's	Don't's
Mediation		
Negotiation		
Other		



Case Activity Sheet 5: The case 6 Conflict Between Supporting Local Markets} and Managing a Crisis Budget

Challenge Summary:

During the 2024 Israeli war on Lebanon, the mayor of a Mount Lebanon village showed generosity by opening the public school to host displaced families. However, he imposed strict conditions: all food and supplies had to be purchased from within the village. His aim was to support the local economy during war time.

For the solidarity kitchen, this created a serious dilemma. The team had a limited and fluctuating budget and was responsible for providing daily meals to around 200 displaced families. While the village did offer access to basic goods, organizers knew that some supplies could be sourced from neighboring areas or through external donors at lower or subsidized prices, allowing them to stretch resources further and feed more people.

The mayor's restriction was non-negotiable. In the context of displacement and emergency, challenging local power structures could have led to tensions or even loss of access to the school space and facilities.

How We Managed (Partial Resolution):

While food and goods were purchased within the village as required, external food parcels continued to arrive from NGOs, political parties, and solidarity groups. These parcels helped relieve the burden on the budget and ensured a more diverse food supply.

What could be also done:

Volunteers finding ways to coordinate directly with villagers to negotiate reasonable prices or receive donations in-kind, such as greens, cooked meals, or bread.

Lessons Learned & Recommendations:

1. **Negotiation & Framing:** When working with local power holders, frame external aid not as a threat to the local economy but as a support mechanism that allows the community kitchen to function without exhausting village resources.
2. **Establish Mixed Procurement Agreements:** Propose a clear plan that combines local purchasing (to support the economy) and external donations (to expand capacity). This can build trust while maintaining operational flexibility.
3. **Use Visual Budgets to Communicate Limits:** Simple charts or daily cost summaries can help local authorities understand the strain on resources and open space for compromise.

Keep Community-Led Solidarity Visible:

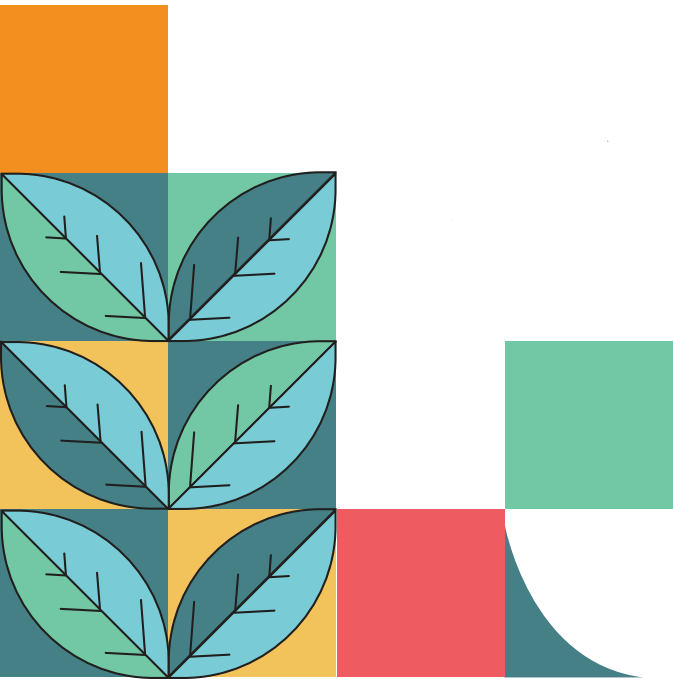
Involve local residents in the kitchen—not only as suppliers but as helpers and co-organizers. This builds a sense of joint ownership and softens rigid policies.

Suggested Relevant Discussion Points and Related Scientific Knowledge:

- Negotiation
- Conflict Resolution

⁶ The Team didn't modify or edit the cases. Not content wise and not grammatically.

Case Analysis Results		
	Do's	Don't's
Negotiation		
Conflict Resolution		
Other		



List of Templates

Template 1

Scaling a recipe designed for 5 people to serve 100

To convert a recipe designed for 5 people into one that serves 100 people, a simple mathematical rule can be followed:

Conversion Formula: $\text{New Quantity} = (100/5) \times \text{Original Quantity} = 20 \times \text{Original Quantity}$.
That means all ingredients should be multiplied by 20.

Ingredient	Quantity for 5 Servings	Quantity for 100 Servings (×20)	Notes



Important Notes When Scaling Up Recipes

1. **Spices:** Reduce spice quantities by 10–25% of the calculated amount, then adjust to taste.
2. **Liquids:** Start with 90% of the calculated liquid amount and adjust based on desired consistency.
3. **Equipment:** Ensure the use of appropriate cookware and stoves that can handle large batch quantities.
4. **Stirring:** Frequent stirring is crucial to ensure even heat distribution and uniform seasoning.
5. **Serving:** Prepare a collective serving plan, such as buffet tables, thermal containers, and suitable serving utensils.

Template 2

Temperature Monitoring System and Records

1. Refrigerator Temperature Monitoring Log (Cold Storage)

Temperature Range: 0–4°C

Frequency: Twice daily (morning and evening)

Date	Time	Refrigerator Name	Temperature (°C)	Status (Normal / Alert)	Action Taken	Employee	Signature

2. Freezer Temperature Monitoring Log (Frozen Storage)

Temperature Range: -18°C or below

Note: Do not refreeze thawed products.

Date	Time	Freezer Name	Temperature (°C)	Any Thawed Product? (Yes/No)	Action Taken? (Yes/No)	Employee	Signature

3. Cooking Temperature Monitoring Log

Temperature Range: ≥ 75°C (internal temperature, especially for meat and poultry)

Date	Dish Name	Food Type (Chicken, Meat, etc.)	Internal Temperature (°C)	Time of Measurement	Reached ≥75°C? (Yes/No)	Employee	Signature

4. Rapid Cooling Procedure Checklist

Rule: Food must be cooled from 60°C to 4°C within 2 hours.

Note: Never place hot food directly in the refrigerator.

Date	Product Name	Cooking End Time	Cooling Start Time	Time Reached 4°C	Process Successful? (Yes/No)	Cooling Method (Ice Bath, Ventilation, etc.)	Employee	Signature

5. Thermal Deviation Report Log

For recording any temperature deviations that exceed safe limits.

Date	Type of Deviation	Location (Fridge / Freezer / Cooking Area)	Recorded Temperature (°C)	Safe Limit (°C)	Immediate Action Taken	Reported By	Signature



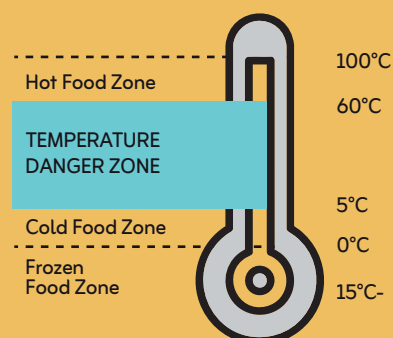
General Notes

- All temperature monitoring logs must be filled accurately and promptly by designated staff.
- Supervisors should review records daily and verify corrective actions.
- Calibration of thermometers should be performed regularly to ensure measurement accuracy.
- Any major temperature deviation must be reported immediately to the food safety supervisor.

Why?

Whether preparing food before or after cooking, cooked food should not remain outside the refrigerator for more than two hours to prevent the rapid growth of harmful bacteria that can cause foodborne illness.

Danger Zone: This is the temperature range where bacteria multiply rapidly, so cooked food should not remain in this zone for more than two hours and must be placed in the refrigerator (<5°C) or over heat (>60°C).



Template 3



Cooling Interruption Log

This form is used to record any incident of interruption or malfunction in refrigeration systems (refrigerators, freezers, or cold rooms).

It helps evaluate the impact on food safety and ensure immediate corrective actions are taken.

No.	Date	Time (From - To)	Affected Cooling Unit	Temperature Before Interruption (°C)	Temperature at Inspection (°C)	Cause of Interruption	Stored Items	Action Taken	Responsible Employee	Signature

Details to Note

- **Affected Cooling Unit:**
Specify whether it is a display refrigerator, cold room, freezer, or transport refrigerator.
- **Possible Causes of Interruption:**
 - General power outage
 - Equipment malfunction
 - Human error (e.g., forgetting to close doors, unplugging by mistake)
 - Overloading or frequent door opening
- **Stored Items:**
Include the type of food stored, such as cooked meals, raw meat, dairy products, vegetables, or frozen goods.
- **Action Taken:**
 - Transfer items to an alternative refrigeration unit
 - Assess food safety using a thermometer or sensory evaluation
 - Dispose of unsafe items
 - Notify management or maintenance
 - Perform immediate repair or schedule a technical inspection

Recommendation

This record should be kept in the Food Safety File and accompanied by any photos, maintenance reports, or energy outage notifications in case of major incidents.

Template 4

Worker Training and Awareness Form

No.	Date	Training Topic	Trainer's Name	Employee's Name	Department	Attended (Yes / No)	Employee Signature	Employee Evaluation of Training (Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor)	Remarks

**Usage Notes:**

- **Date:** The date when the training session was conducted.
- **Training Topic:** Examples include Hand Hygiene, Food Safety, Working in Cold Environments, etc.
- **Trainer's Name:** The person responsible for conducting the session.
- **Employee's Name:** The staff member who attended the training.
- **Employee Evaluation:** May be collected through a short questionnaire or verbal feedback.
- **Remarks:** Add any additional details such as the need for retraining, outstanding participation, or specific follow-up points.

Template 5**Rapid training attendance list**

This form is used to document the names of participants in rapid training sessions (such as workshops, on-the-job mentoring, short awareness sessions, etc.).

Type of training:

Trainer:

Date:

No.	Full Name	Job / Department	Phone Number / E-mail	Signature	Remarks

Template 6**Supplier and Farmer Mapping**

Supplier/ Farmer Name	Location (Region/ Village)	Product/s	Product Quality (Rate 1-5)	Available Quantity (Monthly)	Price Range	Certificates	Delivery Criteria	Contact Person Info	Payment Criteria	Remarks

Template 7

Goods Receiving Monitoring Table

Date	Item Name	Supplier Name	Batch No./ Code	Quantity Received	Packaging Condition (Intact / Damaged)	Temperature at Delivery (C°)	Sensory Check (Color/ / Odor/ Texture)	Expiry Date	Storage Requirements	Storage Location	Accepted /Rejected	Remarks
23/05 /2025	Chicken breast	Supplier A B C	2025052 3A	20 kg	Intact	4°C	Normal	01/06/ 2025	Refrigeration (0–4°C)	Main refrigerator	Accepted	Delivery delayed by 2 hour



Usage Notes:

- This form should be used at every goods delivery to record product quality, temperature compliance, and storage conditions.
- The receiving staff must inspect for:
 - Packaging integrity
 - Temperature consistency
 - Product freshness (color, odor, texture)
 - Accurate labeling and expiry dates
- Any product that fails quality checks must be immediately isolated and reported to the food safety supervisor.
- Completed forms should be reviewed weekly as part of incoming goods monitoring records.

Template 8

First In, First Out (FIFO) System

Item Name	Quantity Received	Date of Entry	Expiry Date	Storage Location	Date of Use	Remaining Quantity	Remarks

Purpose:

This form is used to implement the First In, First Out (FIFO) principle – ensuring that older stock is used before newer stock to maintain product quality and minimize waste.

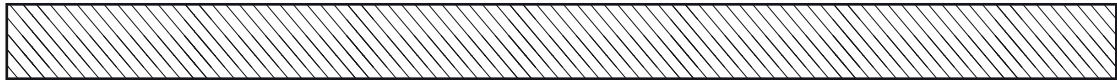
**Usage Notes:**

- Record each batch of incoming materials or food items immediately upon delivery.
- Always use items according to their entry date, prioritizing the oldest first.
- Monitor expiry dates and verify before using or distributing products.
- Storage areas (e.g., fridge, freezer, pantry) should be labeled clearly to help staff follow FIFO easily.
- Keep this record as part of your inventory control and food safety documentation.

Template 9**Food Spoilage Documentation Form**

This form records any spoiled or damaged food items, helping track causes and corrective actions to minimize waste and improve food safety control.

Item Name	Quantity Spoiled	Date of Discovery	Expiry Date	Probable Cause of Spoilage	Action Taken	Employee Name	Remarks

Template 10**Cleaning and Maintenance Inventory Log**

This form is essential for tracking available tools, used items, and those requiring repair or replacement in workplaces such as kitchens, schools, warehouses, or healthcare facilities.

No.	Tool / Equipment Name	Category (Cleaning / Maintenance)	Available Quantity	Quantity Used	Condition (Good / Needs Repair / Damaged)	Date of Last Inspection	Remarks	Responsible Person

Examples of Tools to Include:**Cleaning Tools:**

- Cleaning brushes
- Mops
- Buckets
- Gloves
- Sponges
- Sanitizer containers

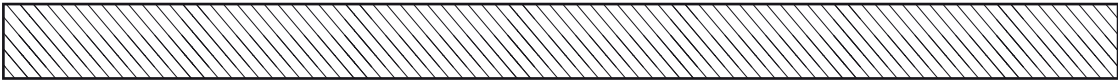
Maintenance Tools:

- Screwdrivers
- Wrenches
- Basic electrical or plumbing tools
- Lubricants and oils
- Spare light bulbs

Organization Tips:

- Categorize tools by **type** or **area of use**.
- Establish a **regular inspection schedule** (weekly or monthly).
- Assign a **responsible person** to review the log and reorder items as needed.
- Consider adding a **code or barcode** to each tool for digital tracking.

Template 11



Daily Hygiene Task Checklist

Task	Scheduled Time	Responsible Person	Completed (✓)	Additional Remarks
Wash hands before food preparation	Before each meal	All staff	☐	
Sanitize all surfaces before preparation	Before starting cooking	Cleaning staff	☐	
Clean cutting and cooking utensils after each use	After every use	Assistant cook	☐	
Check refrigerator temperature	Morning and evening	Health supervisor	☐	
Remove waste	At least once daily	Cleaning worker	☐	
Clean floors	Morning and evening	Cleaning worker	☐	



Usage Notes:

- This checklist should be filled daily and kept in the kitchen logbook.
- Supervisors must verify task completion and sign after each shift.
- Any irregularities (missed cleaning, damaged tools, etc.) should be recorded under remarks and addressed promptly.
- Forms can be archived weekly as part of hygiene monitoring records.



Template 12

Daily Cleaning Checklist

Area / Tool	Task to Be Done	Cleaned (✓)	Responsible Person	Time	Remarks
Floors	Sweep and mop using disinfectant solution	☐	[Name]	Morning / Evening	
Surfaces / Tables	Wash with water and soap, then sanitize	☐	[Name]	After each use	
Cutting Boards	Wash and disinfect after each use	☐	[Name]	Immediately after use	Use color coding by food type
Sinks / Wash Basins	Clean with disinfectant and remove food residues	☐	[Name]	Morning / Evening	
Cooking Utensils (knives, spoons)	Wash with hot water and soap, then disinfect	☐	[Name]	After each use	
Refrigerators / Freezers	Clean shelves and wipe spills	☐	[Name]	Weekly	Check temperature
Door / Cabinet Handles	Wipe and disinfect	☐	[Name]	3 times daily	
Waste Bins	Empty, wash, disinfect, and replace with new bags	☐	[Name]	Daily	New bags are always used
Handwashing Facilities	Refill soap, check towels	☐	[Name]	Morning	
Large Cooking Equipment (pots, pans)	Clean and sanitize after use	☐	[Name]	After each use	

Additional Instructions

- Always use approved disinfectants containing 100 ppm diluted chlorine or as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Wear gloves during cleaning and change them when moving between dirty and clean areas.
- Keep a signed copy of this checklist daily by the cleaning supervisor or hygiene officer.

Weekly Deep Cleaning Checklist

Area / Tool	Deep Cleaning Task	Day	Responsible Person	Cleaned (✓)	Remarks
Walls	Remove stains and grease using disinfectant	Saturday	[Name]	☐	
Floors & Corners	Clean behind and under equipment with a hard brush	Friday	[Name]	☐	
Exhaust Hoods & Filters	Degrease and replace filter if needed	Sunday	[Name]	☐	Use protective gear
Refrigerators / Freezers	Clean thoroughly and discard expired items	Monday	[Name]	☐	Check FIFO
Cabinets & Drawers	Empty, wash, and disinfect	Thursday	[Name]	☐	
Heavy Cooking Equipment (oven, grill)	Clean inside and outside with non-abrasive cleaner	Tuesday	[Name]	☐	
Dry Storage Areas	Clean floors and shelves	Wednesday	[Name]	☐	Inspect for rodent signs

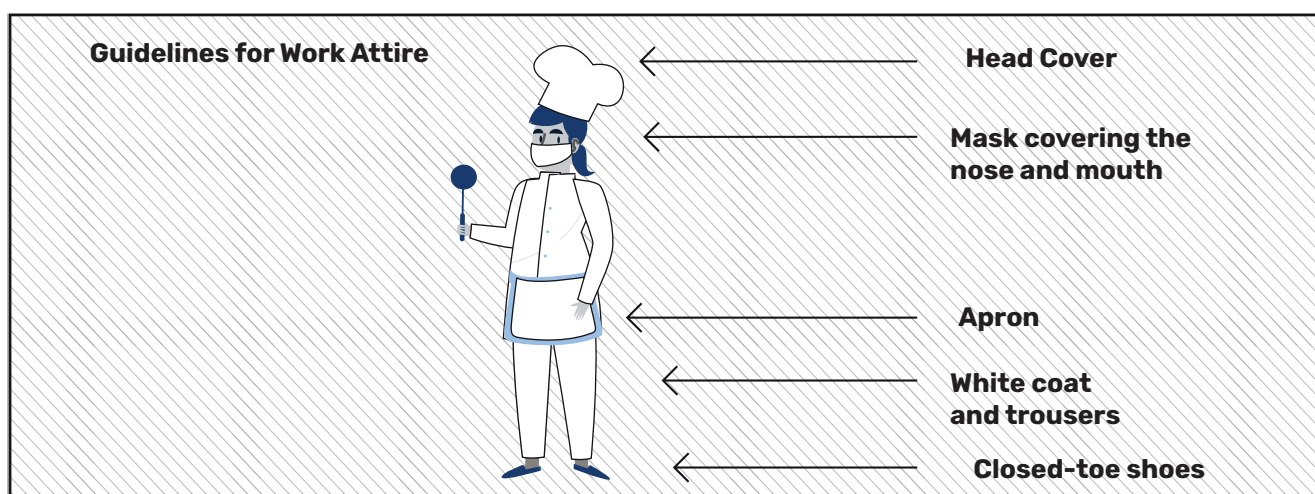
Emergency Cleaning Checklist

Incident / Condition	Required Steps	Done (✓)	Remarks / Follow-up
Food or chemical spill	- Stop activity immediately - Clean area with disinfectant - Change gloves	☐	
Power outage (more than 2 hours)	- Record date/time of outage - Check refrigerator temperature - Discard perishable food - Notify supervisor	☐	
Pest or rodent presence	- Stop food prep - Clean and disinfect thoroughly - Call pest control - Document incident	☐	
Staff illness	- Remove staff from kitchen immediately - Disinfect all shared areas - Staff may not return until fully recovered	☐	
Expired food found	- Remove product immediately - Clean storage area - Record quantity/date - Review FIFO system	☐	

Template 13

Guidelines for Work Attire

No	Date	Employee Name	Department	Trained? (Yes /No)	Cap (Distributed / Used ✓ x)	Apron (Distributed / Used ✓ x)	Gloves (Distributed / Used ✓ x)	Compliance Notes	Supervisor /Trainer Name	Employee/ Supervisor Signature



Usage Notes:

- **Purpose:** This form is used to monitor compliance with work clothing and hygiene requirements in the kitchen or food handling areas.
- **Training:** Indicate whether the employee has completed the hygiene and protective clothing training.
- **Protective Clothing Items:**
 - **Cap:** Must be worn at all times to cover hair.
 - **Apron:** Should be clean and used only during food handling.
 - **Gloves:** Must be worn and replaced frequently as per food safety protocol.
- **Compliance Notes:** Supervisors should record any non-compliance, missing items, or improper use of protective clothing.
- **Signatures:** Both the employee and supervisor/trainer should sign the form after inspection or distribution.

Template 14

Monitoring Form for Separation Between Raw and Cooked Food

This monitoring form ensures one of the core principles of food safety—preventing cross-contamination, especially between raw meats and cooked or ready-to-eat foods.

No	Date	Shift (Morning / Evening)	Location (Kitchen / Storage / Refrigeration)	Separate Tools Used?	Stored on Separate Shelves?	Separated During Cutting / Preparation?	Employee Name	Signature	Remarks

Key Monitoring Points

- Use of Separate Tools – Different cutting boards, knives, or containers must be used for raw and cooked foods.
- Separate Storage – Keep raw food on lower shelves and cooked / ready food on upper shelves to prevent drips and contact.
- Separate Preparation Areas – If shared areas are used, ensure complete cleaning and sanitizing between tasks.
- Staff Hygiene – Verify that staff change gloves and wash hands between handling raw and cooked items.

Implementation Tips

- Train all employees on the dangers of cross-contamination and safe separation procedures.
- Attach photos or spot-check audits (if available) to strengthen verification.
- The Quality Supervisor / Food Safety Officer should review and sign this form on a regular basis.

Template 15



Non-Compliance Report

A hygiene and clothing supervisor must be assigned for each work shift to monitor the proper implementation of personal hygiene and protective clothing requirements.

Non-Compliance Report Template

Date	Employee Name	Type of Violation	Work Area	Description of Violation	Corrective Actions Taken	Supervisor Name	Signature

Examples of Violations and Corrective Actions

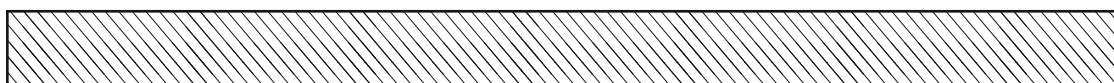
Type of Violation	Work Area	Description of Violation	Corrective Actions Taken
Failure to wear gloves	Food preparation area	Employee did not wear gloves while handling food	Employee instructed immediately to wear gloves; retraining on hygiene rules conducted
Failure to wear protective clothing	Sorting area	Employee not using apron and hairnet	Provided protective uniform; daily compliance follow-up
Eating during work hours	Packaging area	Employee ate a meal inside the food preparation zone	Verbal warning issued; awareness raised on food safety rules
Not washing hands after restroom use	All sections	Employee observed returning to work without handwashing	Awareness session conducted; reminder posters displayed
Use of contaminated tools	Cutting section	Unsterilized cutting board used during work	Tools sanitized immediately; scheduled routine inspection of utensils



Usage Notes:

- This form should be completed by the hygiene or shift supervisor whenever a non-compliance is observed.
- Corrective actions must be clearly stated and followed up within the same day.
- The completed forms should be filed monthly and reviewed during food safety audits.

Template 16



Equipment Cleaning and Drying Monitoring Form

No	Utensil Name	Date	Time	Cleaned?	Dried?	Cleaning Method (Manual / Dishwasher)	Detergent Used	Remarks (Damage / Frequent Dirt)	Employee Name	Signature

Form Usage Instructions

- **Frequency:** The form should be used once or more daily, depending on the kitchen's workload.
- **Cleaning Method:** Indicate whether cleaning was done manually or using a professional dishwashing machine.
- **Remarks:** Document any defects, persistent stains, grease residues, or color changes on utensils.
- **Approval:** The form should be signed by the responsible employee and the supervisor at the end of each shift.

Practical Recommendations

- **Air Drying:** Utensils should be dried by air and not with a towel to avoid cross-contamination.
- **Approved Detergents:** Always use authorized cleaning products suitable for the utensil material (e.g., stainless steel, plastic).
- **Damage Reporting:** In case of breakage or rust, report immediately and record it in the logbook.

Template 17**Cleaning Tools Condition Log and Replacement Schedule**

This log is used to track the condition of cleaning tools (such as mops, brushes, gloves, sponges, etc.) and determine their replacement schedule to ensure effective hygiene and prevent cross-contamination in line with food safety and sanitation standards.

Cleaning Tools Condition Log

No	Tool Name	Location of Use	Date of First Use	Current Condition	Inspection Date	Remarks / Defects	Replacement Recommendation	Responsible Person	Signature

Suggested Cleaning Tool Replacement Schedule

Tool Type	Maximum Usage Period	Replacement Notes
Cleaning Sponge	1 week	Replace immediately if odor or tearing appears
Cleaning Brush	1–2 months	Replace if bristles are damaged or discolored
Floor Mop	1 month	Replace if odor develops or head becomes cracked
Bucket / Cleaning Container	3–6 months	Replace if cracked or if scale buildup cannot be cleaned
Rubber Gloves	1 week (limited use)	Replace daily if single-use

Implementation Tips

- **Color Code Tools:** Assign specific colors for tools by area (e.g., red for bathrooms, green for kitchens).
- **Regular Inspections:** Conduct and document inspections at least weekly.
- **Proper Storage:** Store all tools in a clean, ventilated, and designated area.

Template 18**Standardized Storage Labels (Includes: Item Name – Date Received – Expiration Date)**

Standardized labels make it easier to apply the FIFO system and help staff quickly identify the storage status of food items.

FOOD STORAGE LABEL

Item Name: _____
 Date Received: ____/____/_____
 Expiry Date: ____/____/_____
 Quantity: _____
 Storage Location: _____
 Responsible Staff: _____

Standardized labels make it easier to apply the FIFO system and help staff quickly identify the storage status of food items.

Usage Recommendations

- **Printing:** Use moisture-resistant or erasable labels.
- **Language:** Can be bilingual (Arabic / English).
- **Placement:** Stick on the front-facing part of the container or shelf.
- **Color Codes:**



Green = Fresh



Yellow = Near Expiry



Red = Expired / Discard Immediately.

Template 19**Daily Waste Disposal Monitoring Sheet**

Task	✓ Done	✗ Not Done	Remarks
Waste is properly separated	☐	☐	
Waste is emptied before the end of the shift	☐	☐	
Waste containers are cleaned and disinfected	☐	☐	
No odor or insects present in the area	☐	☐	

Additional Guidelines

- Do not leave open garbage bags inside the kitchen.
- Do not place waste near food preparation or storage areas.
- Use covered containers to minimize odors and insects.
- Report immediately to the supervisor if any animals or insects are observed near waste areas.

Template 20

Water Testing Form for Community Kitchens and Emergency Sites

Date: Name of Responsible Personnel: Site:

Type of water source: Municipal / Well / Tank / Other:

Date of last laboratory test (if available):

Test Type	Acceptable Value	Recorded Result	Applicable / Non-applicable	Remarks / Action Taken
Visual and smell assessment	Clear, colorless, no odor or sediment			
Temperature (°C)	25°C (normal for water use – 20°C for treated water)			
Free chlorine test	> 0.2 ppm			
TDS test	< 500 ppm			
pH test	Between 6.5 and 8.5			
Bacterial test (Coliform)	No bacterial growth			

Recommendations:



Notes:

- The form should be filled out at least once a month, or whenever the water source changes.
- In case of "Non-compliant," water use must stop immediately and the technical officer or relevant authority should be notified.

Template 21

Occupational Safety Checklist for Community Kitchens

Kitchen Name: _____

Date: _____

Inspected By: _____

Section 1: General Safety

Task	✓ Done	✗ Not Done	Remarks
Are walkways clear of obstacles and slip hazards?	☐	☐	
Are floors clean and dry?	☐	☐	
Are wires and electrical devices organized and safe?	☐	☐	
Is lighting adequate in all areas?	☐	☐	
Is ventilation sufficient inside the kitchen?	☐	☐	

Section 2: Fire Prevention

Task	✓ Done	✗ Not Done	Remarks
Are fire extinguishers available and functional?	☐	☐	
Do staff know the locations of fire extinguishers?	☐	☐	
Are escape routes clear and well marked?	☐	☐	
Has the team received fire extinguisher training?	☐	☐	

Section 3: Sharp and Hazardous Tools

Task	✓ Done	✗ Not Done	Remarks
Are knives stored safely?	☐	☐	
Are there clear instructions for using sharp tools?	☐	☐	
Are damaged or hazardous tools reported immediately?	☐	☐	

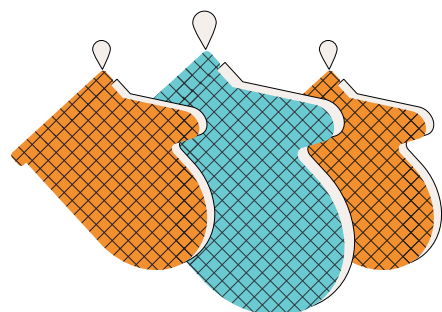
Section 4: First Aid

Task	✓ Done	✗ Not Done	Remarks
Is a first aid kit available?	☐	☐	
Do staff know where it is located?	☐	☐	
Is it stocked with updated supplies?	☐	☐	

Section 5: Hygiene and Food Safety

Task	✓ Done	✗ Not Done	Remarks
Are hands washed regularly?	☐	☐	
Is food stored safely?	☐	☐	
Are equipment and utensils clean and sanitized?	☐	☐	

Additional Notes / Required Actions:



Template 22**Food Waste Disposal Record**

This record is used to document the quantities and types of leftover or unused food in community kitchens, restaurants, schools, or any food-serving institution. It helps track sources of waste and improve food planning and purchasing.

Responsible Person	Disposable Method	Reason for Disposal	Quantity Discarded (kg/L/unit)	Type of Meal / Food Item	Date	Serial No.

Examples of Disposal Reasons

1. Surplus production (more than needed)
2. Not consumed within the safe period
3. Spoilage during cooking or storage
4. Sensory complaint (taste, smell, color, etc.)
5. Expired product
6. Poor handling or contamination

Possible Disposal Methods

- Disposed of in a dedicated organic waste bin
- Redirected to animal feed (where legally permissible)
- Composting
- Donation, following the institution's policy and food safety compliance

**Notes:**

- The log should be filled daily or after each meal distribution period.
- It is recommended to analyze the log monthly to identify trends in food waste, overproduction, or distribution/cooking inefficiencies.
- The responsible person must sign to confirm actual documentation.
- All spoilage incidents must be reported immediately and reviewed by the Food Safety Supervisor.

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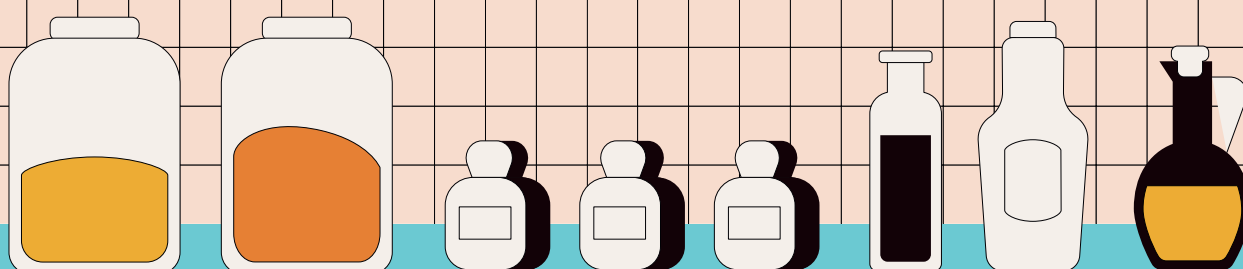
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List of Annexes

Annex 1

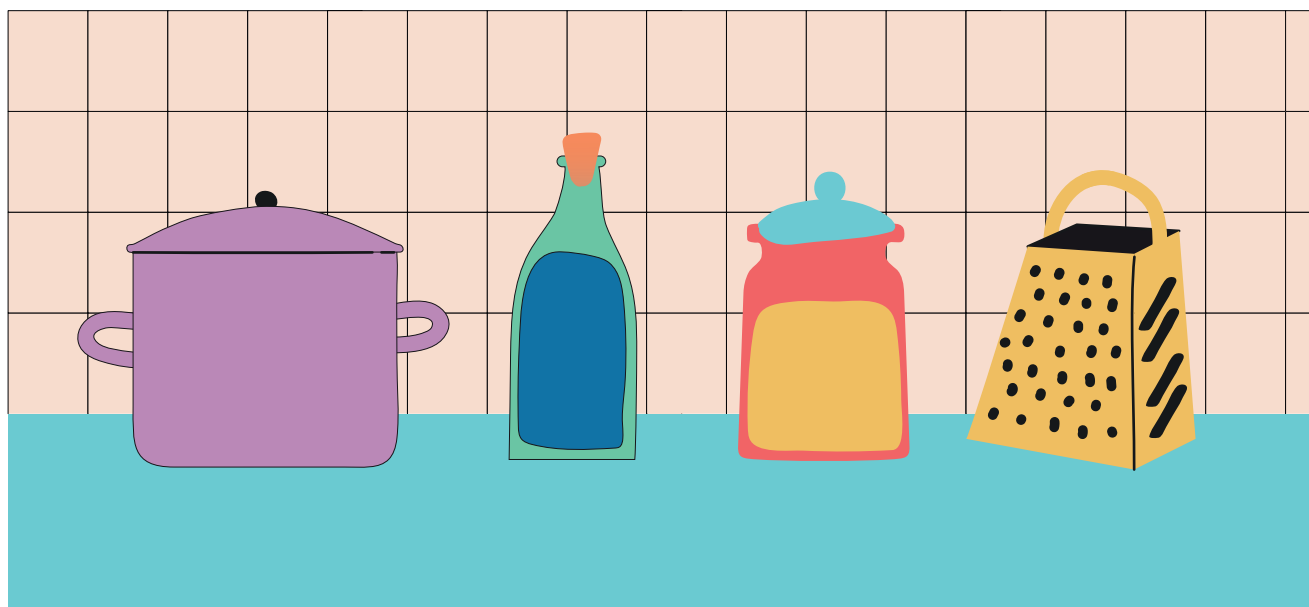
Weekly Menu for a Community Kitchen

Day	Main Dish	Starch	Vegetables/Salad	Fruit or Dessert	Notes
Monday	Potato stew with chicken	White rice	Cabbage salad	Apple or banana	Prepare the chicken one day earlier
Tuesday	Mujaddara	Arabic bread	Sliced cucumber and tomato	Laban (yogurt)	Use bulgur or rice depending on availability
Wednesday	Pasta with vegetables or meat	Boiled pasta	Lettuce with yogurt - garlic dressing	Dates or seasonal fruit	Cook a large batch and cool immediately
Thursday	Green beans stew with meat	Bulgur	Green salad	Small cake	Serve with bulgur or rice depending on availability
Friday	Grilled chicken with rice	Rice with vegetables	Yogurt with cucumber	Apple or pear	Distribute chicken portions equally
Saturday	Lentils with fattoush	Toasted bread	Fattoush	Banana or dates	Light vegetarian meal
Sunday	Hummus with tahini and fava beans stewed in oil	Arabic bread	Pickles and sliced vegetables	Simple dessert (muhallabieh)	Prepare chickpeas the day before



General Notes:

- Ingredients should be adjusted according to **availability** and **budget**.
- Use **seasonal vegetables** to reduce cost.
- Meals can be **repeated** or **rotated** every two weeks.
- **Food safety** conditions must be followed during storage, preparation, and serving.
- Quantities should match the **number of beneficiaries** (example: *10 kg of rice serves approximately 100 people*).



Annex 2**Approximate Production Capacities for a Community Emergency Kitchen**

Equipment Type	Typical Specifications	Daily Production Capacity	Approximate Number of Beneficiaries (Meals/Day)
Industrial Cooking Pot	Capacity: 80 L × 3 units	240 L of cooked meals per day	1,200–1,500 meals (soups/stews)
Industrial Gas Stove	4–6 burners	Operates 4 or more cooking pots	Supports simultaneous meal preparation
Industrial Oven	Electric or gas – 4 trays	400 loaves of bread or 200 trays baked daily	800–1,000 meals (including grilled dishes)
Industrial Floor Blender	30 L capacity	3 batches per hour	300–400 blended meals or sauces
Commercial Refrigerator	500–700 L capacity	Storage for 2–3 days	1,000 meals with chilled ingredients
Commercial Freezer	500–700 L capacity	Storage of frozen meat and vegetables	3 days' stock for 1,000 people
Stainless Steel Preparation Tables	2 m × 1 m × 3 tables	Supports collective preparation	Serves up to 1,500 meals/day
Double Sink Units	Stainless steel with hot water	Continuous washing of utensils and tools	Serves 4 preparation stations

Annex 3**Training Topics****Axis 1: Personal Hygiene and Health**

Topic	Description
Proper Handwashing	Steps of handwashing and key times (before/ after handling food, after using the restroom, etc.)
Protective Clothing	Importance of wearing caps, gloves, aprons, and masks (when needed)
Personal Behaviors	Prohibition of smoking, eating, drinking, touching the face, or using the phone while working
Reporting Illnesses	When staff should refrain from working (fever, diarrhea, open wounds, etc.)

Axis 2: Food Safety

Topic	Description
Cross-Contamination	How cross-contamination occurs between raw and cooked foods – and methods to avoid it
Critical Temperatures	Cooking ≥75°C, refrigeration 0–4°C, freezing –18°C
Rapid Cooling	Cooling food within two hours before final storage
Handling Sensitive Foods	Proper handling of dairy, meat, poultry, and seafood
Shelf Life and Labeling	Using labels and applying FIFO/FEFO principles

Axis 3: Cleaning and Disinfection

Topic	Description
Daily Cleaning Schedule	Who cleans what, when, and with which material
Types of Cleaners and Disinfectants	Using the right product according to surface or purpose
Storage of Cleaning Materials	Avoid storing them near food; use proper labels and warnings
Cleaning of Utensils	Steps for cleaning knives, pots, and surfaces

Axis 4: Maintenance and Storage

Topic	Description
Temperature Monitoring	Regularly using refrigerator and freezer logs
Food Separation	Separating raw from cooked foods, and dry from moist foods
Pest Control	Identifying signs of rodents and insects and reporting them
Malfunction Reports	How to record and report refrigerator or power failures promptly

Axis 5: Public Safety and Emergencies

Topic	Description
Handling Accidents	Cuts, burns, slips – what to do first
Evacuation and Emergencies	How to act in case of fire or gas leak
Handling Hazardous Materials	Safe use of cleaning agents, sharp tools, and heating devices

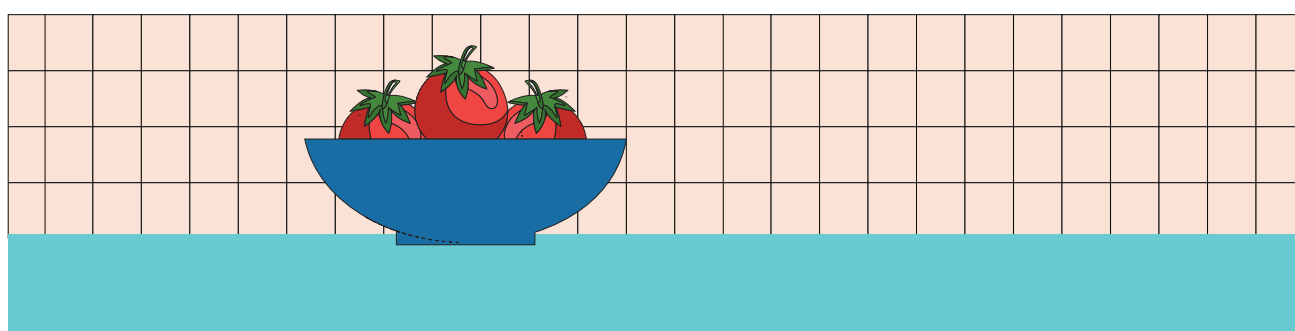
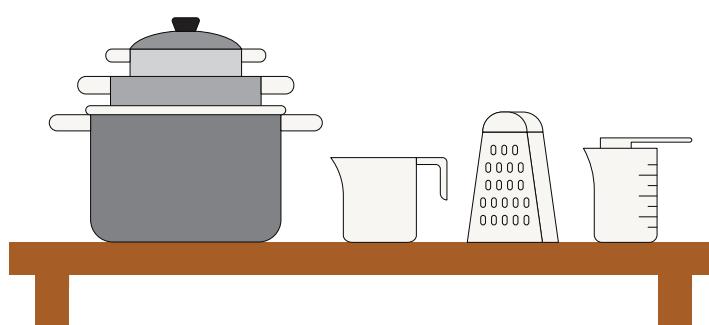
Axis 6: Documentation and Monitoring

Topic	Description
Importance of Records	Temperature log, cleaning log, equipment distribution log
Reporting Non-Compliance	Non-compliance forms and how to respond
Quality Monitoring	How staff can contribute to improving food and service quality

Annex 4

Sample List of Equipment Suppliers in Lebanon

Equipment	Primary Supplier	Secondary Supplier	Tertiary Supplier
Cooking Equipment (ovens, gas stoves, industrial pots)	Mina Industry	IPEC	Al Abdullah Trading
Temperature Measuring Devices	Cansoun food safety and processing	MEFOSA sarl	IPEC
Cooking Utensils (knives, pans, cookware)	IPEC	Mina Industry	—
Storage Equipment (refrigerators, freezers)	IPEC	Mina Industry	Hijazi
Cleaning and Sanitizing Equipment	LIFE Ltd.	Saker	Sanita
Food Storage Systems (shelves, containers)	IPEC	Hijazi	Mina Industry
Bakery Equipment	IPEC	Al Abdullah Trading	Adnan Takkoush
Food Service Utensils	Al Abdullah Trading	Mina Industry	—



Suppliers' Contact Information

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Annex 5

Organoleptic (Sensory) Check for Common Foods

Food Item	Acceptable Characteristics (Color, Odor, Appearance, Texture)	Unacceptable Signs (Spoilage /Deterioration)	Notes
Lentils / Dried Legumes	Uniform color, firm grains, natural smell	Presence of insects, moldy odor, broken or discolored grains	Should be stored in a dry place away from humidity
Spinach / Leafy Vegetables	Fresh green leaves, natural smell, no wilting	Yellowing, severe wilting, sliminess, bad odor	Best consumed fresh
Fresh Green Beans	Firm green pods, crisp texture	Wilting, black spots, fermented smell	Can be kept in the refrigerator for a short period
Red Meat	Natural red color, firm texture, fresh odor	Brownish/ gray color, off odor (ammonia/ putrid), slimy texture	Optimal storage temperature is between 1°C and 4°C
Eggs	Clean, uncracked shell, firm yolk, clear egg white	Broken/contaminated shell, sulfuric odor	Use the float test to check if the egg is fresh or spoiled*
Fish	Shiny eyes, red gills, firm texture, natural sea odor	Cloudy/sunken eyes, gray gills, excessive slime, bad smell	Fresh fish should be kept on ice or at 0–4°C
Dairy Products (Milk / Yogurt /Cheese)	Natural odor, uniform texture, normal color	Abnormal curdling, strong sour odor, color change	Must be stored at 1–4°C

**Note:**

* The **egg float test** is a simple and common way to determine whether an egg is fresh or spoiled.

Fill a deep bowl with cold water and gently place the egg inside:

- If the egg lies flat at the bottom, it is very fresh.
- If it tilts slightly or stands at an angle, it is still usable but less fresh.
- If it starts to float partially or vertically, it is old and should be used with caution (depending on smell and appearance).
- If the egg floats completely to the surface, it is spoiled and must be discarded immediately.

Annex 6**Essential Supplies for a Community Emergency Kitchen**

An emergency community kitchen should be capable of serving large numbers of beneficiaries during crises. The listed specifications and quantities are illustrative guidelines and can be adjusted based on the kitchen's size, number of beneficiaries, and resource availability. Efforts should be made to minimize the use of plastic materials, replacing them with more sustainable alternatives such as stainless steel, glass, or ceramic, in order to protect the environment and promote reusability.

List of Essential Equipment

Large Equipment	Tableware and Serving Utensils
• Industrial cooking pots (80 L) • Industrial gas stove (4–6 burners) • Industrial oven (gas/electric, 4 trays) • Industrial floor blender (30 L) • Commercial refrigerator (500–700 L) • Commercial freezer (500–700 L) • Stainless steel preparation tables (2 × 1 m) • Double stainless steel sink (with hot water)	• Plates (stainless steel or ceramic) • Serving bowls (stainless steel or glass) • Serving spoons and ladles • Forks, knives, and spoons (stainless steel) • Glass cups • Salt and pepper dispensers (glass)
Cooking Utensils	Preparation and Cutting Tools
• Pots of 10 L, 8 L, and 5 L • Baking and roasting trays • Various frying pans (deep and shallow) • Whisks • Heat-resistant spatulas (food-grade silicone) • Wooden spoons • Potato masher • Can opener • Grater	• Professional knives (for meat, vegetables, and bread) • Cutting boards (wood or stainless steel) • Colanders and sieves • Mixing bowls (stainless steel or glass) • Measuring tools (metal spoons and cups)
Hygiene and Safety	Electrical Equipment
• Multi-size rubber gloves • Metallic scrubbers • Cotton towels (to replace paper towels) • Dishwashing and hand soap • Sanitizers (vinegar / baking soda / diluted chlorine) + testing strips • Fabric aprons • Hairnets • First aid kit	• Electric blender • Electric hand mixer • Industrial food processor (for mixing, kneading, grating, peeling, and preparing sauces or soups in large quantities)

Illustrative Example

To serve 1,000 beneficiaries daily (one full meal each), the approximate required items are:

- 1,000 stainless steel or ceramic plates (one per person)
- 1,000 glass cups
- 1,000 forks + 1,000 spoons + 1,000 knives (stainless steel)
- 50 large serving spoons and ladles
- 20 serving bowls (stainless steel or glass)
- 15 cutting boards (dedicated separately for meat and vegetables to prevent cross-contamination)
- 10 industrial cooking pots of varying sizes (10 L to 80 L)
- 10 frying pans (8–10 inch, deep and shallow)
- 3 electric blenders + 1 industrial food processor
- 3 stainless steel preparation tables (2 × 1 m each)
- 2 stainless steel sinks with hot water