

**Actually Existing Food Resilience:
Community Food Provisioning in
Tāmaki Makaurau in Covid-19 Times**

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Abstract

Food insecurity is increasingly recognised as a significant public health issue in high-income countries (Tarasuk, 2005), an issue that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated. The dominant approach to hunger and food insecurity in high-income nations has historically leaned on the charitable distribution of food through community-led, not-for-profit, third sector organisations and projects. For the most part, literature on food charity as a response to food insecurity focuses on its negative impacts, such as depoliticisation and the stigma and shame associated with receiving food charity. Yet, the extent to which food aid organisations have acknowledged and responded to these critiques has been underexplored (Wakefield et al., 2013). Taking together the concepts of food security, food charity and food resilience, this research aims to address this gap by exploring what actually existing community-based food provisioning looks like. This research utilises experiential qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews and participant observation to collect data. The primary data is supplemented by documentary sources and grey literature such as media reporting, official reports, policy and other organisational documents, and thematic analysis was used to code and interpret the data. Findings indicate that community-led food aid organisations can be largely constrained within a charitable model of food provision because of the massive demand for their services and the need to alleviate the immediate food insecurity of recipients. This is compounded by many challenges organisations encounter in their day-to-day operations. These challenges create a state of instability, whereby these organisations are constantly in flux or are subject to ad hoc resources and relationships. Despite these challenges, organisations appear to be employing diverse strategies in their actually existing food provisioning, contributing towards local food system resilience.

Key words: *food security, food insecurity, food charity, resilience, community food, community economies*

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AFRA	Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance
CCNZ	Commerce Commission New Zealand
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSC	Food Secure Communities
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NZ	Aotearoa New Zealand
NZFN	New Zealand Food Network
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand

Glossary of Te Reo Māori Terms ¹

Aotearoa – North Island, now used as the Māori name for New Zealand

Hāngī – earth oven to cook food with steam and heat from heated stones

Kai – food, meal

Kaupapa – topic, policy, matter for discussion, plan, purpose, scheme, proposal, agenda, subject, programme, theme, issue, initiative

Koha – gift, present, offering, donation, contribution - especially one maintaining social relationships and has connotations of reciprocity

Manaakitanga – hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others

Maara kai – food garden

Marae – the courtyard of a Māori meeting house

Pakeha – non-Māori New Zealander

Pātaka kai – community food pantry that can vary in size from a community fridge to a large store house

Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland

Whānau – extended family, family group, a familiar term to address a number of people – the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society

¹ The English translations of the Te Reo Māori words used in this thesis are sourced from the Māori Dictionary <https://maoridictionary.co.nz>

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview and research rationale

As a growing public health issue in many high-income countries, food insecurity exists when an individual or household does not have access to a sufficient amount of safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences (Lindberg et al., 2014; Tarasuk, 2005). The degree to which food insecurity is experienced can vary in severity, from never having enough food to meet dietary needs, or going hungry, to experiencing worry and anxiety around food acquisition (Smith, 2011). Across affluent nations such as the United States (US), Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ), a sufficient quantity of food is produced at each national level to adequately provide food for all citizens. Therefore, food insecurity is not an issue of production or supply but rather, primarily an issue of individual and household *access* to nutritionally adequate and culturally appropriate food (Riches, 2002). The dominant response to growing levels of food insecurity in these countries has been through the charitable distribution of food, led by not-for-profit, community-led organisations.

Since its conception, the definitions and understandings of food security and its related terms have been contested in international policy, practice and scholarly debate. Comprehending the historical context of food security is critical to understanding how food charity has been positioned as *the* solution – the silver bullet – for food insecurity in high-income countries. Moreover, the multitude of definitions, frameworks and understandings creates a lack of precision around the problem at hand and therefore, produces a complex environment where tensions arise as to how best coordinate efforts and develop actions around inequitable access to food.

Across high-income countries, rates of food insecurity have been growing. The increase in food insecurity occurred alongside an increase in poverty experienced by many high-income countries that were subject to considerable economic and social restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s (McPherson, 2006). The neoliberal philosophies that underpinned this restructuring have contributed to growing inequalities and the tightening of welfare states through privatisation and the defunding of social services (McNaughton et al., 2021; McPherson, 2006). Poverty in

affluent nations manifests in people struggling to meet the basic living costs. Because of this, food quantity and quality are sacrificed as a discretionary and flexible expenditure, and inelastic costs such as bills and rent are prioritised.

As a consequence of these reforms that began 30-40 years ago, people have been increasingly forced to rely on the community and the voluntary welfare sector for social services that had previously either not been required or had been supplied by the state (Crack et al., 2007). As a result, countries with increasingly inadequate social welfare systems have seen massive growth in the charitable distribution of food through third-sector, community-based, not-for-profit, voluntary responses to food insecurity (Riches, 2016).

Not unlike other high-income countries, food insecurity in NZ has been growing since the significant economic and social restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s. High rates of food insecurity are persistent for Māori (Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) and Pasifika (Pacific Islander) peoples, women, sole-parent households, beneficiaries and those on low-incomes. The last nationally representative assessment on food security in NZ indicated that 7.3% of the adult population was food insecure (University of Otago & Ministry of Health, 2011). Subsequent estimates predict that now 15-20% of the population are food insecure (Kore Hiakai, 2021b) - a clear indication that the problem is worsening.

Community-based food organisations have long been acting as a safety net for many New Zealanders, and research suggests that charitable food provision is institutionalised within the welfare landscape (Dey & Humphries, 2015; Watson, 2019). Here, *community food organisations* refer to community-led, non-profit projects and organisations concerned with fostering local food production, access and distribution. This can include (but are not limited to) food banks, soup kitchens, food rescue, *pātaka kai* (food pantry/store), free stores, community meals, school breakfast programmes, food box schemes, fruit and vegetable co-ops and community or *maara kai* (Māori food gardens). These organisations are typically run by voluntary social welfare agencies and rely on charitable donations (cash or food) made by the government, industries or the public. Rising levels of hardship have led an increasing number of people to rely on these organisations, and successive governments have actively supported the institutionalisation of these organisations by factoring them into welfare services (Watson, 2019). The current approach to tackling food insecurity in NZ has been allocating money and

resources towards the food charity system rather than directly into the hands of those most in need (Dey & Humphries, 2015).

The ongoing rise in demand experienced by voluntary and community organisations providing food support is a sign of the worsening food poverty, inequality, and insecurity in NZ and has only been compounded since 2020 by the impact of COVID-19 and the associated responses and hardships. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted entrenched inequalities in food security and has exacerbated socioeconomic barriers to access to affordable, nutritious and sustainable food. Before COVID-19, there were limited public discussions about food insecurity, specifically its causes, drivers, prevalence and severity. This absencing of the problem in public spheres was a denial of the food-insecure reality for many New Zealanders (Robinson, 2019). Since the outbreak of COVID-19, food security has become a national matter of concern in NZ (Dombroski et al., 2020; Healy et al., 2020). Given the role of food charities as the dominant responder to inequitable food access, charitable donation and emergency food aid were once again presented as the means to address these inequalities during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the vulnerabilities within global, national and local food systems. At the same time, it has highlighted the “already existing webs of sociality and community resourcefulness that hold everyone together” (Healy et al., 2020, p. 278). Throughout NZ’s COVID-19 response, we have seen communities respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic with renewed practices of economic and social solidarity, and mutual aid. These responses highlight the capacities of communities’ collective efforts to sustain food access in times of shock (Healy et al., 2020).

Despite being positioned as the conventional (and institutionalised) solution to growing food insecurity in high-income countries, charity-based food aid has also received considerable criticism for its negative impacts, including depoliticising the problem of food insecurity, shifting the responsibility for providing for citizens from the state to the voluntary sector, creating feelings of stigma and shame and absolving guilt for the food-secure (all of which are attended to more closely in Chapter Two). Much of the literature on food charity centres on criticisms, and the extent to which food aid organisations have acknowledged and responded to these critiques has been underexplored (Wakefield et al., 2013). Extant literature almost

entirely speaks to the shortcomings of community food aid organisations or misalignments between their intended goals and perceived impacts. Cerrada-Serra et al. (2018, p. 1372) identify a gap in the research on how community food organisations actually “contribute to delivering healthy, culturally appropriate food for all in discursive, political and material terms”. My research takes up this challenge, assuming the research aim of filling this research gap, to explore the actually existing performances of community-based food provisioning on the ground, to include the models, framings and practices of ensuring appropriate community food access. *Actually existing* here refers to the real, grounded practices and experiences of food security work, which can look quite different to theorised abstractions of food security in policy documentation and scholarly literature. As Williams (2017) draws out of community economies literature “recognising the here and now as the time and place for bringing ‘other worlds’ into being” is empowering for actors in their pursuits (Gibson-Graham, 2008).

I approach this project by first understanding what the theory had suggested we might expect to find – I review the concepts of food (in)security, food charity and food resilience in the academic literature in general, and in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, and consider the implications of critiques of the dominant deficit-modelling (theory and practice) of food insecurity and food charity. Then I undertake work in the field, employing in-depth interviews and participant observation that observes what is actually happening on the ground in attempts to achieve food security. My thesis develops a strengths-based approach, that acknowledges the positive tangible work of these organisations in creating more food-secure, food resilient communities. Additionally, the subjects of my study are novel for this research area. My study researches the perspectives of the food *providers* rather than the rather more well-researched recipients of food charity (Booth et al., 2018; Graham et al., 2018a; Lambie-Mumford & Dowler, 2014; Lindberg et al., 2015).

1.2 Research objectives and thesis structure

The aim of this thesis is *to explore to explore the actually existing performances of community-based food provisioning on the ground*. In NZ, food insecurity research, particularly place-based food insecurity research, is limited (Robinson et al., 2021). Moreover, Crack (2001) has argued, that in a NZ context, more research and focus is needed on critically examining the intricate relationship that exists between these organisations and people in need. Promising recent research in the vein of food security in NZ by Robinson et al. (2021) also

looks to promote a strengths-based model of food security, over a deficit model. One limitation of this work is that it is based on quantitative data, which is valuable for having metrics to be able to present at a population level for policy but does not delve into humanistic examinations of hunger, nor the intersectional dependencies of how it is experienced. The intention of my research is therefore to look at *actually existing* constructions and performances of food security, by organisations that ‘do’ food provisioning as their core work.

The research aim is investigated and addressed using the following research objectives:

1. To examine the challenges and barriers associated with actually existing performances of community food provisioning for food security
2. To identify the goals and aspirations of community-based food aid organisations

To address my research question and objectives, this thesis is divided into five chapters. In the chapter that follows I bring together and discuss the concepts of food (in)security, food charity and food resilience. Specifically, the historical context and evolving definitions, frameworks and understandings of food security and insecurity are explored. Within this section, attention is paid to how shifts have occurred in relation to scale, from a focus on the nation and international dimensions to the household and international level, with increasing emphasis on multiple dimensions of food security, including access, availability, utilisation and stability (FAO, 2021; Jarosz, 2011). Following the examination of food security, food charity is interrogated as the dominant solution to food insecurity in high-income countries. Here, the rise of food charity and the criticisms of food charity are explored. The remainder of the chapter delves into community food security and food resilience concepts that have developed partly in response to some of the critiques levelled at food charities and community-based food organisations.

Chapter Three discusses the place-based context of Tāmaki Makaurau that informs this research. Here, food insecurity in NZ is situated within the broader neoliberal economic and social reforms of the late 1980s and 1990s. Statistics pertaining to food insecurity in NZ are followed by a discussion of food insecurity as a nested problem, which arises as a symptom of widening inequality and growing poverty levels. The high costs of living, particularly the high cost of food, are interrogated. Before concluding the chapter, the rise of the charitable food

sector as an antidote to food insecurity is explained, and the impacts of the COVID-19 on food security for New Zealanders explored.

Chapter Four describes and justifies the methodological approach and methods used to address the research aims and objectives. The chapter begins by discussing the methodological approach, experiential qualitative methodology and the research design. Next, the data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and the use of secondary data sources are described, including a discussion of the quick adaptations that were required due to the spread of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns. Before concluding the chapter with research challenges and ethical considerations, the data analysis technique of thematic analysis is justified.

Combining the results and discussion, Chapter Five brings together the research findings and places them within the theoretical and conceptual insights outlined in Chapter Two. The chapter is divided into three sections, within which the following themes are presented: 1) (re)acting in the meantime, 2) (in)stability, and 3) towards resilience. Within the first theme, I discuss the reactive nature of community-based food aid organisations that are constrained by the immediate, short-term need to feed. Consequently, in attempting to move beyond a charity model of food provision, these organisations have limited time and opportunities available to move towards strategies of food resilience. In the second theme I describe the challenges and barriers community-based food aid organisations encounter in starting up and in day-to-day operations. These challenges create a state of instability, whereby these organisations are constantly in flux or are subject to ad hoc resources and relationships. In the third and final theme, I describe the goals and aspirations of these organisations, which were themed to fit 'resilience' as this was a term or state that was commonly expressed by participants as the goal for their communities.

To conclude the thesis, the research conclusions are presented in Chapter Six, and future research avenues are suggested. In answering the research objectives, this thesis contributes to a previously under-researched area by exploring actually existing performances of community-based food provisioning on the ground. Findings indicate that community food providers are flexible enough to do things differently, which means they can attend to different priorities that can actually address the issues of dignity and cultural appropriateness, among others. Food charity is just one of a number of offerings that actually exists in community food provisioning.

The diverse strategies in their actually existing food provisioning contributes to local food system resilience by providing physical, affordable and culturally relevant food access.

Chapter 2: Food security through food charity?

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I bring together and discuss the concepts of food (in)security, food charity and food resilience. The chapter begins by tracing the historical context and evolving definitions, frameworks and understandings of food (in)security. Specifically, I examine how shifts have occurred in relation to scale, from a focus on the national and international dimensions to the household and international level (Jarosz, 2014), with an increasing emphasis on the dimensions of food security – access, availability, utilisation, stability (FAO, 2021), and later, sustainability and agency. Following this, food charity is introduced as a concept, as the dominant approach to addressing hunger and food insecurity in high-income countries has been through the charitable distribution of food through community-led, not-for-profit, third sector organisations and projects (Pollard, 2018) in a deficit-model approach. Here, the rapid expansion of food charity and its critiques are explored, suggesting that not only a deficit approach unhelpful but it does not lead to a buffer for those experiencing intersectional food-related injustice; in short, in isolation it does not build food resilience. Towards the end of the chapter, food resilience as a concept and practice is introduced as a possible departure from food charity. By tracing the extant literature on food (in)security, food charity, and food resilience, this chapter aims to summarise what is currently known and highlight the gap in the literature that this thesis seeks to address; and that is, the extent to which community-based food aid organisations have acknowledged and responded to the critiques of food charity (Wakefield et al., 2013). Further, this chapter provides the reader with background on the concepts that are used in detail in the results and discussion.

2.2 The context of ‘food security’ and ‘food insecurity’

Before jumping into a discussion of food (in)security, it is important to distinguish between these terms and others. The terms ‘hunger’, ‘food poverty’ and ‘food insecurity’ are often used interchangeably, and food poverty and food insecurity are widely understood to mean the same thing. Critically, Lambie-Mumford (2017) notes that a lack of clarity between these two terms is symptomatic of an overall lack of agreed definition of this experience. Generally, food insecurity encompasses more dimensions than food poverty, which is the inability of individuals or households to secure an adequate and nutritious diet. Food poverty is recognised as mainly concerned with access to food at the household level and is referred to as ‘household

food insecurity' in the US (Eskandari et al., 2022). Food insecurity is ultimately a consequence of poverty and is rooted in inequality (Huang et al., 2020). Hunger, however, is strictly understood as the prevalence of calorie deficiency (Lappe & Collins, 2015). The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2021, n.p.) defines hunger as an “uncomfortable or painful sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy.” When someone is severely food insecure, they have most likely experienced hunger.

While this is not a thesis on food security *per se* it is important for this work to recognise that food security, as a terminology, a framing, and an objective, has changed markedly over time, and looms large in the work of food charities, and community food organisations more generally. Food security has been a prevalent feature on the development agenda, and meanings behind the term have changed considerably, as demonstrated in policy, practice and scholarly debate (Westengen & Banik, 2016). Researchers have charted the changing nature of food security definitions, and the shifts that have occurred, including in relation to scale (from a focus on the national and international dimensions to the household and international level) with an increasing emphasis on *access* to as well as *availability of* food (Jarosz, 2011; Maxwell, 1996). Groups and organisations situated across a broad spectrum of political positions employ the term not only to define food access but also to respond to the problem of world hunger (Jarosz, 2015). However, the global and local attention on hunger has not always been oriented around the attainment of food security. Instead, there has been a convention that has focused on preventing food insecurity, framing the problem as one of deficit. This framing has created an impetus for institutions, governments and non-profit organisations to do something – to change the state from one of insecurity to one of security. Most notably, this is reflected in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with Achieving Food Security as the second sustainable development goal, just after Ending Poverty (Arduin & Saïdi-Kabeche, 2022). The below review outlines the distinctions and how they have played out in practice. Table 1 outlines some of the food security definitions over time in international policy and academic discourse, emphasising the particularly important changes.

Table 1. Food security definitions over time in international policy and academic discourse (emphasis added)

Date	Definitions in international policy	Definitions in academic discourse
1970s	<u>Availability</u> at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices (World Food Conference, 1974).	
1980s	Ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic <u>access to the basic food they need</u> (FAO, 1983).	A country and people are food secure when their food system operates in such a way as to remove the fear that there will not be enough to eat. In particular, food security will be achieved when the poor and vulnerable, particularly women and children and those living in marginal areas, have <u>secure access to the food they want</u> (Maxwell, 1988).
	Food security has to do with <u>access</u> by all people <u>at all times to enough</u> food for an active and healthy life (World Food Bank (now World Food Programme, 1986).	
1990s	The <u>right</u> of everyone to have <u>access</u> to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger (Rome Declaration on World Food Security, 1996).	<u>Access</u> by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life and includes at a minimum: a) the ready <u>availability</u> of nutritionally <u>adequate</u> and <u>safe</u> foods, and b) the assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in <u>socially acceptable</u> ways (e.g. without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, and other coping strategies). Food insecurity exists whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain (Anderson, 1990).
	Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels is achieved when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, <u>safe and nutritious</u> food to meet their dietary needs and <u>food preferences</u> for an active and healthy life (World Food Summit, 1996).	
2000s	Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, <u>social</u> and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious	A situation in which all community residents obtain a <u>safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate</u> diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice (Bellows & Hamm, 2003).

	<p>food that meets their <u>dietary needs</u> and <u>food preferences</u> for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2001).</p>	<p><u>Secure access</u> by households and individuals to nutritionally adequate food at all times and procured in conformity with human aspirations and <u>dignity</u> which must be safeguarded and sustained by the world, nations, districts, villages, households and individuals (Yaro, 2004).</p>
		<p>The <u>absence</u> of need for food banks, soup kitchens, breadlines, and dumpster diving (Riches & Silvasti, 2014).</p>
<p>2010s</p>	<p>Food and nutrition security exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food, which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their <u>dietary needs</u> and <u>food preferences</u>, and is supported by an environment of adequate sanitation, health services and care, allowing for a healthy and active life (FAO, 2012).</p>	<p>The inability to acquire or consume an adequate quality of sufficient quantity of food in a socially acceptable manner, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so (Dowler & O’Connor, 2012).</p>

2.3 Food *insecurity* in international policy

In response to rising food prices, crises, and hunger, food security was first defined at the 1974 World Food Conference as the “availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices.” (FAO, 2003, p. 27). In this definition, the idea of food security appeared in publications from the FAO as ‘food security’ by name, but what was actually being narrated was a state of food *insecurity*. Early definitions focused on resource scarcity and availability in developing countries, narrating a *deficiency* for which solutions centred on increasing production and transferring food to places of deficit through ‘dumping’ or food aid (Westengen & Banik, 2016). Here, food security discourse is situated at the global level, as the solution to food insecurity rests on the readiness of grain-producing countries to stockpile grain for food aid exports and the ability of food-insecure countries to increase food grain and self-sufficiency (Jarosz, 2011; 2014; Maxwell, 1996).

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the narratives around food security’s geopolitics and scale had changed. While definitions continued to locate the problem of food insecurity in the developing world, solutions began to shift from the global to the national scale (Bellows & Hamm, 2003; Jarosz, 2011). By this point, it had become apparent that although grain production and the amount of food being produced had increased, people were still hungry due to the inefficient allocation of resources. The market was viewed as the mechanism capable of re-allocating resources leading to what Carolan (2013) calls the *neoliberalization of food security*. Here, top-down approaches to “accelerating economic growth through structural adjustment policy and investment, poverty alleviation, and the coordination of food aid with other forms of economic aid” took priority (Jarosz, 2011, p. 124). Although favoured by national governments and industry alike, academics and practitioners critiqued these solutions for privileging economic growth over other non-market solutions to hunger, including policies aimed at improving food production, environmental protection, and educational access. Likewise, their failure to acknowledge the role of neoliberal economics in reinforcing systems of inequity created more hunger led to further critiques (Jarosz, 2011; Maxwell, 1996).

Critics argued against the biophysical framing of food security, calling for more attention to be paid to the social and structural determinants. Amartya Sen, a prominent economist and philosopher, and an influential voice in food security debates, brought the issue of food access

and distributional aspects of food security to the centre stage. Sen (1982) rejected the idea that hunger was caused by a lack of food availability and instead argued that certain socioeconomic and political conditions influenced a person's ability to acquire food. Sen asserted that:

Hunger relates not only to food production and agricultural expansion but also to the functioning of the entire economy and—even more broadly—the operation of the political and social arrangements that can, directly or indirectly, influence people's ability to acquire food and achieve health and nourishment. (p. 162)

Following Sen's argument, understandings and solutions to hunger and food security issues were no longer just about the ability to supply available food resources but to ensure that people had economic, physical and social means to access those resources. International institutions such as the FAO and World Bank adopted this idea of food access and availability and began to incorporate these ideas into their definitions and policies. In 1986 the World Bank redefined food security as having “to do with access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life.” Here, a scalar shift occurs again, moving from a national focus to the micro-level of the individual.

By the end of the 1990s, food security had become a commonly used term and increasingly complex with multiple perspectives and meanings. A review of the concept in the late 1990s yielded more than 200 definitions (Maxwell, 1996). Understandings of food security had shifted from a focus on production and the stability of food to a focus on food access and availability. At the 1997 World Food Summit the root causes of hunger were attributed to poverty and a lack of purchasing power, with trade, technology and financial resources viewed as the solution. It was at this time that the most widely used and accepted official definition of food security today was established, which is “a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2003, p. 28). The term ‘social’ was added to this definition in 2002. From this definition, four main dimensions of food security were identified as historically important: availability, access, utilisation and stability. These are described in Table 2 along with two further dimensions, agency and sustainability, that have since become critical dimensions of food security (Arduin & Saïdi-Kabeche, 2022; Clapp et al., 2021).

Table 2. Dimensions of food security (adapted from FAO, 2021; Arduin & Saïdi-Kabeche, 2022)

Availability	A quantitative dimension that represents the actual or potential physical presence and amount of food, including aspects of production, food reserves, markets and transportation.
Accessibility	Both economic accessibility (financial capacity of households to acquire foodstuffs) and the physical accessibility (proximity between populations and foodstuffs).
Utilisation	Quality of food and usage conditions including the logistical capacity to prepare safe and nutritious meals that meet the nutritional needs of the individual or household.
Stability	Refers to the fact that food security must be stable over time. Climate, economic, social and political factors can all be a source of instability.
Agency	The capacity for individuals or households to make decisions about what food they eat (social, cultural and religious preferences) and how that food is produced, processed and distributed.
Sustainability	The long-term ability of food systems to provide food security and nutrition in a way that does not compromise the economic, social and environmental bases that generate food security and nutrition for future generations.

There has been a continuous shift in food security thinking, from focusing on food production, a framing informed by a natural science perspective, to social science analyses on access and the right to food (Westengen & Banik, 2016). Food security has moved in and out of focus for international institutions, governments, policymakers, and academics. From the early 2000s to the 2010s, globalisation and governance redefined food security at an international scale (Jarosz, 2015). Economic recessions and environmental concerns, which were factors in the food price crisis of 2005 – 2008, put food security back on the global agenda. Following the crisis, Jarosz (2015) described a ‘hopeful’ approach by the FAO as detailed in the *State of World Food Security 2009* annual report. She noted this report signalled a departure from an emphasis on technology, productivity and market-based solutions to hunger and food insecurity. Instead, the report calls for a ‘right to food approach’ that allows people to have control over resources and the production of food and improved government at an international, national and local level.

This framing of food security led the FAO to commit to the goal of ending hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (SDG Targets 2.1 and 2.2) (FAO, 2019). However, recent evidence has shown that in the past two years, progress towards ensuring access to safe, nutritious and adequate food for all people at all times has been regressing, even before the COVID-19 pandemic (FAO, 2021) and this has been attributed to economic downturns, geopolitical conflict, and climate change (FAO, 2019). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, hunger in both developing and developed countries has worsened. While the full effect of the pandemic remains unknown, the FAO estimated that food insecurity doubled to 265 million people by the end of 2020 (FAO, 2021).

2.4 A brief history of food charity

In high-income countries, by far, the most prevalent approach to hunger and food insecurity has been the charitable distribution of food through food banks and other voluntary organisations (Pollard, 2018). Given that charity-based food-aid aims to relieve household or individual level food insecurity symptoms, it is clear that the evolving understandings and framings of food security have shaped responses to food insecurity (Lambie-Mumford, 2017).

The provision of free and subsidised food as a response to food insecurity is not a new phenomenon (Lambie-Mumford, 2016; 2017), with the origins of food charity predating

modern history (Vlaholias-West et al., 2018). The charitable model has been shaped over time by society, culture, and religion and is embraced as the hegemonic, common-sense response to need (Poppendieck, 1998; Smith-Carrier, 2020). Charity is a fundamentally relational phenomenon that is shaped by, and helps to shape, the changing social, political, and cultural worlds in which it is embedded (Clarke & Parsell, 2021). Religious organisations have long been providing food assistance to those in need through food banks - now the most common and well-known form of charitable food provision (Lambie-Mumford, 2017; Schanbacher & Gray, 2021). The goal or idea behind various food charity operations, such as food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens is similar – to provide cheap or free food as a public service. These organisations have emerged as in response to the growing problem of hunger and food insecurity, intended as short-term solutions for those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Although food charities have traditionally been seen as a source of supplemental food and not a solution to achieving food security, there is increasing evidence to suggest that some people are coming to rely on these services as their only source of food (Aron Aimol, 2022).

Nowadays, food charity includes a broad spectrum of activities delivered through various means - from small to large scale, local to national, and one-off emergency operations to established, corporatized, and institutionalised food banks (Lambie-Mumford et al., 2014). Volunteer labour and donations are the most significant basis of running food charities (Aron Aimol, 2022). Food is sourced from well-meaning individuals, private organisations, food producers, industry and corporate food donations. In addition to food donations, funding also comes from many sources such as individuals, fundraising, private organisations, governments and corporations (Dey & Humphries, 2015). Often, charity and community organisations utilise surplus food (also known as food rescue) to transfer food surpluses from the commercial food system to people in need (Papargyropoulou et al., 2022).

Charitable organisations provide critical ‘spaces of care, sustenance and survival’ (DeVerteuil & Wilton, 2009). Rooted in compassion and a spirit of generosity, the charitable food sector responds directly to alleviate human suffering (Smith-Carrier, 2020). Concrete action is prioritised to provide short-term, immediate relief to people experiencing hunger and food insecurity. Charitable food programmes can also have positive effects beyond providing immediate relief, such as providing social contact to combat social isolation (Middleton et al., 2018) and, in some instances, address natural resource wastage (Vlaholias-West et al., 2018).

Across charity approaches, a ‘common good’ is assumed for its contribution to overall levels of community welfare and the benefits to society at large (Caraher & Cavicchi, 2014). Combating hunger through charitable giving to assist those living in poverty has been an important agenda of many not-for-profit organisations and philanthropists, alongside individuals and corporations, to respond to a vexing social problem (Clarke & Parsell, 2021). Positive images of food charities are widespread in society, allowing the public to believe that the issue of hunger in their communities is being answered.

Before the establishment of the welfare state, charity proliferated as a response to the inequalities brought about by rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. During the post-war period, the main focus of the voluntary welfare sector was the provision of secondary or complementary services to those offered by the state (Black, 2000). However, since the 1980s, there has been a dramatic proliferation of local hunger relief and food assistance programmes. The rise of the emergency food assistance system can be divided into two main periods – the “emergency period” and the “institutional period” (O’Brien, 2014). The emergency period is characterised by the phenomenon of breadlines and soup kitchens during the Depression of the 1930s and, later during this period, the establishment of food banks and predominantly faith-based soup kitchens and pantries in response to growing poverty and urban and rural areas in developed nations. These programmes were mostly small, meant to be temporary, and often a physical extension of the spiritual mission of faith-based organisations. The institutional period, from the 1980s to the present, is characterised by a steady increase in the number of emergency food providers, leading to the institutionalisation of these services in the welfare landscape (O’Brien, 2014).

The transformation of the emergency food assistance sector from local, community and faith-based charities to the larger institutionalised form that exists today can be defined by two significant movements - the first being the establishment and spread of the food bank. Generally, food banks procure food donations, warehouse them, and then make the donated food available to people in need or other local charitable agencies. Food banks have always existed in some form; what is now different is the scale and logistics of food aid being delivered through these outlets (Caraher & Cavicchi, 2014). The number of food banks across OECD countries has proliferated, with most having some form of these by the mid-1990s (McPherson, 2006). Today, they are the most common and well-known form of charitable food provision. More recently, and the second significant movement leading to the proliferation of charitable

food assistance is the food rescue movement. Food rescue is viewed as a ‘win-win’ scenario whereby surplus food is redirected to prevent waste to support those in need (Papargyropoulou et al., 2022; Poppendieck, 1998) and is now a large part of the emergency food sector.

2.5 Contemporary food charity

Throughout recessions and recoveries, the demand for emergency and charity-based food support has continued to grow leading to this approach being institutionalised in the welfare landscape (Lambie-Mumford, 2016). The recent growth and current scale of charitable initiatives is unprecedented and has been documented across developed countries (Lambie-Mumford, 2016; Riches, 2002; Watson, 2019). Today, charitable and community food provision exists in many forms including, food banks, food rescue organisations, food pantries, soup kitchens, community meals, community gardens, and more. While the food charity has overwhelmingly been an undertaking of the private, not-for-profit, voluntary sector (Poppendieck, 1998), government at all levels have increasingly become more involved in the emergency and charitable food system. The sheer range in type and size of the projects under the umbrella of food charity makes their full extent and coverage hard for policymakers and researchers to capture. Moreover, the terminology used to refer to charitable, emergency and community food provision can vary between countries (Lambie-Mumford, 2017). Consequently, there is very little data available regarding the form and prevalence of these programmes.

While charitable food provision is not new, what is new is their professionalism, coordination and the scale of their initiatives, and how they have come to symbolise an increasing role for charities in caring for people in food insecurity (Lambie-Mumford, 2016). Traditionally, charity and community-based responses to hunger have been ad hoc, localised, and concealed out of view from mainstream media (Lambie-Mumford, 2017). Today, food charities are recognised as an established, albeit second class, food market to the primary capitalist one. Their increased establishment has been met by comparable bureaucratisation, which has been noted in high-income countries including the UK, the US and Australia (Booth et al., 2018; May et al., 2019). As Lambie-Mumford (2014) explains, the increase in objective professionalism has come about with increased need. In addition, the false premise that the free provision of food influences and distorts people’s incentives and creates opportunities for abuse

or dependency has created heightened restrictions, such as registration and other gatekeeping processes within food charity operations (May et al., 2019).

New and emerging models of food charity, such as food pantries, social supermarkets, and food cooperatives, give recipients more agency and choice, for example, by enabling small monetary exchanges for this provision (Papargyropoulou et al., 2022). Despite the evolving models and prevalence of food charities in high-income countries, they are still thought to be underutilised. The underutilisation of these charities is explored in the next section by looking at the barriers which deter and prevent people from accessing them. This research needs to consider the obstacles for people accessing food charity, as this is one of the challenges that community food providers face in reaching people to create more food-secure communities.

2.6 Barriers to accessing food charity

Food charity is understood to be under-utilised (Riches, 2002) due to numerous barriers that prevent people from accessing food charity (McPherson, 2006). These barriers can include a lack of access; insufficient information; unclear and differing perceptions of food aid and who it provides for; assessment of household need and negative emotional experiences of indignity and stress (Lambie-Mumford, 2017). The location and hours of charitable food assistance can be a deterrent for those who have limited mobility and the operations of the organisation can prevent people from accessing assistance, for example, limits of the number of times you can access assistance, eligibility criteria and the need for personal identification or evidence of hardship (McPherson, 2006; Tarasuk & Eakin, 2003). A significant barrier that prevents food charity usage is the stigma attached to such assistance. This can be of particular concern for people in small communities where they wish to preserve anonymity and keep their struggles to themselves. Given these barriers and the under-utilisation of food charity, it is critical to remember that failure to utilise food charity does not necessarily indicate an absence of food insecurity (McPherson, 2006). These barriers to accessing food charities are connected to some of the limitations of food charities, which are explored in more detail in the next section.

Research shows that individuals and families turn to emergency food provision as a last resort. Drawing on food charity is just one of the strategies that people will adopt when experiencing food insecurity. Other strategies include managing limitations to their food access, including drawing on social networks to borrow money or food, eating less varied diets or staggering the

payment of bills to release money for food, among other practices (Lambie-Mumford, 2017). That being said, the fear of eviction and disconnected water or electricity and repossessed goods generally means that household bills will still take precedence over food, which is considered an elastic expenditure. Those experiencing food insecurity are forced to adopt food consumption patterns that fall outside of the socially accepted norms of food access (Tarasuk, 2005). Borrowing money from friends or family, seeking emergency government assistance, and turning to food charity for assistance can be a demeaning experience as dependency on others is required to fulfil basic food needs. Not every household has relationships that they can rely on for informal assistance, and pride may deter seeking help (McPherson, 2006). Evidence suggests that when households do turn to charitable food assistance, they are also likely to be drawing on multiple forms of food and other welfare support, where these exist (Berner & O'Brien, 2004).

2.7 Critiques of food charity

Despite having good intentions, the charitable food sector has been criticised widely for its role in perpetuating hunger and food insecurity. While charitable food provisions may meet immediate food needs and ameliorate some instances of hunger, they can only address the symptoms of poverty (Graham et al., 2018b; Lambie-Mumford et al., 2014). Often referred to as “temporary” or as providing “emergency” food relief, the charitable and emergency food sector is, in fact, a misnomer as many recipients access these services for extended periods of time, and some users obtain a significant proportion of their dietary requirements from these sources (McKay & Lindberg, 2019). Charitable responses may even perpetuate food insecurity by offloading safety net functions onto corporations and communities that cannot compensate for adequate welfare programmes (Tung et al., 2021).

One of the most influential and well-known critiques of food charity was posed by Janet Poppendieck (1998) in her book *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*. Poppendieck studied food relief programmes in the US and concluded that these programmes were incapable of dealing with rising hunger in their communities in a practical, meaningful, or culturally appropriate way (Vlaholias-West et al., 2018). Further to these critiques, she found that these programmes have facilitated government retrenchment allowing the state to evade its responsibility to ensure everyone has adequate access to food (Wakefield et al., 2013). Her critique on food charity is synthesised as encompassing seven deadly “ins” with these being (1) inaccessibility, (2) inadequacy, (3) inappropriateness, (4) indignity, (5) inefficiency, (6)

insufficiency, and (7) instability. Others have expanded on her critique, such as McIntyre et al. (2016) who extended the “ins” with ineffectiveness, inequality, institutionalisation, invalidation of entitlements and invisibility. These critiques and others are explored in more detail below. They are used throughout this thesis to demonstrate how a charitable response to food security has been approached in the past, and inform how food security may be sought in the future.

Table 3. *The seven deadly ‘ins’ of food charity (adapted from McIntyre et al., 2016; Poppendieck, 1998)*

Insufficiency	The failure of food charity programs to manage rising hunger, as the amount of food that is rescued is not enough to feed everyone who asks for provision.
Inappropriateness	The deficiency of communication between food providers and the needs and desires of recipients because the food does not always meet the recipient’s food preferences – be they religious, cultural, or dietary.
Inadequacy	The nutritional adequacy of the food provided.
Instability	The unpredictability inherent in a system reliant on charitable donations that ebb and flow based on the needs and priorities of corporate and individual donors.
Inaccessibility	The often random geographical locations of charitable food programs, which develop out of volunteer motivation, rather than assessed need.
Inefficiency	The disorder of ineffective systems of food collection, reprocessing, and redistribution, the bulk of which is supported by a large amount of volunteer work.
Indignity	The costs to human dignity and social othering (i.e., constructed identities of “haves” and “have-nots”).

Since Poppendiecks' assessment of the charitable food sector in the US, similar research has been conducted in other high-income countries where high rates of food insecurity and hunger are present. Critical geographers Williams et al. (2016) identify four critiques of the practice of food banking (which apply to the broader food charity sector) that have emerged. They are that food banking: 1) depoliticises food insecurity issues, 2) enables the state to retreat, 3) contributes to the subjectification of 'the poor' and, that 4) the charitable ethos of food banking assuages guilt rather than promoting active engagements. Taken together, these narratives provide a framework through which to consider the politics of food aid and the depoliticisation of food poverty (Dower & Lambie-Mumford, 2015). These narratives are explored in more detail below:

2.7.1 Depoliticisation

The first narrative argues that charitable food assistance depoliticises problems of food insecurity by providing immediate relief and treating the 'symptoms' rather than confronting the systemic injustices that lead to issues of hunger in wealthy countries. Today, food charity has come to represent a business in itself, as evidenced by the food charity social enterprises such as the Trussell Trust in the UK, but it has also been used by businesses to treat the symptoms of hunger and food insecurity. Williams et al. (2016) use the example of corporate agribusiness and private philanthropy to explain this, pointing to the food rescue sector, which redistributes food surpluses from for-profit growers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers. Concern has been expressed over the food rescue sector legitimising injustices in food systems, particularly in food production, consumption and retail. The biggest beneficiary to emerge from the increased social acceptability of food charities, other than the state, has been the supermarket. They benefit on an economic level through their ability to save money by giving their 'waste' to food charities instead of spending money on dumping it, and in the form of tax rebates. They also save time and money by not having to address the issue of surplus waste in the first place (Creswell Riol, 2021). Furthermore, they benefit on a social level through brand reinforcement. Their partnerships with NGOs can present the supermarket as altruistic and

humanitarian, sustainable and environmentally friendly, and a good corporate citizen (Booth & Whelan, 2014).

Importantly, Poppendieck (1998) considers how food charity has received broad approval from political representatives, the food industry, the media, and the general public, to such an extent that it can be taken for granted as the only solution to food insecurity and hunger. Access to food in wealthy countries is not regarded as a matter of political concern because of the broad public perception that charitable food provision is an effective and efficient solution to hunger and food insecurity (Riches, 2012). Charitable food groups offer temporary respite to experiences of hunger but also shift the burden of food insecurity from broader government policies to charities and individuals (Silvasti & Riches 2014). Riches (2012, p. 314) surmises, “while makes a contribution to short-term relief, it is no guarantee of meeting demand, nor of ensuring nutritious or culturally appropriate foods. Its institutionalisation and corporatisation allow the public and politicians to believe that hunger is being solved. It reinforces the notion of hunger as a matter for charity, not politics. If there is to be a strong public commitment to eliminating hunger and reducing poverty in the wealthy states, there is an urgent need for governments to think and act outside this charitable food box.”

2.7.2 Institutionalisation

The second and arguably the most pervasive critique of food charity amongst human geographers is the institutionalisation of the charitable food sector, shifting from ‘emergency’ food provision to a vital tool in allowing governments to shed their role in providing welfare support for citizens (Poppendieck, 1998; Williams et al., 2016). As a result, food charity has become a key part of welfare systems, allowing growing hunger and food insecurity to be neglected (Poppendieck, 1998; Riches, 2012). Amongst scholars, there is considerable agreement that countries that have experienced a growth in charitable food organisations have also seen a retrenchment in government welfare and social services (Lindberg et al., 2014). Given the prevalence of charitable food organisations in wealthy countries, it is reasonable to question the existence of these organisations, where they perform a function that was once assumed by the state.

Critics have argued that the rise of the voluntary welfare sector was a reaction to the increased need caused by the introduction of neoliberal policies and significant reductions in welfare-

state-type-provisions (Poppendieck, 1998; Riches, 1986; Watson, 2019). Tung et al. (2021) point to the retrenchment and appropriation of welfare regimes worldwide as evidence of the spread of the institutionalised charitable sector and a direct consequence of neoliberalism. Food charities were able to flourish within high-income countries with the introduction of neoliberal policies: they upheld one of the chief objectives of neoliberalism – state disengagement. Lawn and Prentice (2015, p. 20) explain “as the state retreated from its role in redistributing wealth through universal provision, charity has increasingly become the implicit model for managing the most vulnerable members of society.” By fostering the growth of food charities, states have been able to underfund and under-provide welfare services, with shortfalls in benefits and wages overlooked or ignored because of the reliance on these groups to ‘fill the gaps’ (Wynd, 2005). The institutionalisation of charitable food assistance in the welfare landscape has removed government pressure for not prioritising the right to food for its citizens (Poppendieck, 1998; Riches, 2002).

To compensate for increasingly reduced welfare provisions in developed nations, many people now rely on the private sector and charities for food aid and other essentials to cope with the impacts of austerity (McKay & Lindberg, 2019; Riches, 2002). The cost of living has only increased, meaning that people from disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly reliant on food sourced from donations to charitable community organisations (Hardcastle & Caraher, 2021). The primary response to rising hunger and food insecurity has not come from governments but charitable food organisations, which have become institutionalised as part of the welfare landscape (Watson, 2019). However, the institutionalisation of what was supposed to be an emergency and temporary response to the problem is evidence that the charitable food sector cannot solve the problem of hunger and food security alone.

The role and function of these organisations has shifted far beyond merely dispensing food. At the same time, charities are being expected to do more with less. Organisations in the charitable sector are often aware that an immediate need is being addressed, but poverty's root causes and symptoms remain. As a result, some organisations have shifted focus from meeting the immediate needs of food-insecure people to working towards empowering recipients and advocating for a system that does not allow for individuals and families to go hungry in the first place (Thériault & Yadlowkil, 2000). However, due to an ever-increasing demand for their services, many do not have the resources to move beyond emergency food relief to provide support or advocacy. The charitable food sector needs to be supported in its efforts to

emphasise the structural causes of food poverty to avoid stigmatising people living with food insecurity (Graham et al., 2018b).

2.7.3 Stigma, indignity and a lack of autonomy and choice

A principal reason for the underutilisation of food charities, and one of the main critiques levelled against them, has to do with the shame and indignity people experience when accessing charitable food services (Smith-Carrier, 2020). Food-insecure people often turn to charitable food sources as a last resort and a way to cope and meet their basic needs. The unidirectional nature of food charity creates an unequal power dynamic between the giver and receiver, where one is superior and the other subservient (Smith-Carrier, 2020). As Walker and Bantebya-Kyomuhendo (2014, p. 54) write, “charity demeans the recipient while serving to enhance the status of the giver.” Though well-meaning, charitable food provision can contribute to classist attitudes that impoverished people need to be grateful for any support received (Silvasti and Riches 2014). Charitable food sources are considered free, but there are hidden costs of social stigma, shame and embarrassment. Expecting recipients to be grateful for what they receive individualises food insecurity and conceals systemic issues that contribute to their position (McKay & Lindberg, 2019).

The stigma and shame tied to food aid has been informed by neoliberalism and the individualisation of poverty. Neoliberal-inspired solutions to food insecurity and poverty focus on perceived individual failings, such as an inability to budget and poor food choices (Graham et al., 2018b). These solutions ignore broader structural issues that contribute to food insecurity, such as low wages, precarious and insecure work, unaffordable housing and welfare retrenchment (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2017). By prompting feelings of shame, the individualisation of poverty delegitimises the realities of people experiencing hardship (Probyn, 2005). Food-insecure people often hide their realities from friends, family, and the public to reduce encounters and feelings of shame and stigma. Consequently, this can prevent them from engaging in social practices, such as hosting and sharing food with others, which is important for building relationships and networks (Graham et al., 2018a). Or alternatively, relationships can become strained when food-insecure people appeal to family, friends, and neighbours for support (Gazso et al., 2016).

“Indignity” is another term that has been directly equated to food charities, particularly food banks. In her critique of the food charity system, Poppendieck (1998) lists indignity as one of her seven deadly “ins”; in fact, of the seven, she places most emphasis on this concept. A lack of dignity and autonomy has been associated with food aid because the food provided can be limited, insufficient, and substandard (Smith-Carrier, 2020). One of the four themes recognised by Booth et al. (2018) through their Australian based research was ‘eroded dignity’, specifically due to “being fed without choice and queuing for food in public spaces” (p. 2836). Research has found suboptimal nutrition to be a potential negative effect of the overreliance on charity. Because food charities rely on donations (either cash or food donations), they cannot always provide sufficient quality or quantity of food. In most cases, they only provide people with food for approximately three days (McKay & Lindberg, 2019). While a move to food rescue more recently has been shown to provide recipients with more fresh fruits and vegetables, often the food is close to its expiry or has been damaged (Tarasuk & Eakin, 2003). Importantly, Tung et al. (2021) point out that even with healthy food in some initiatives, the recipients' choices and autonomy are still restricted due to a lack of purchasing power. In line with Poppendieck's (1998) findings, Middleton et al. (2018) found that the feelings for recipients can be contradictory. While they are thankful for what they receive, recipients also reported limited or inappropriate food choice, poor quality, shame, stigma, and embarrassment as some of the socio-psychological impacts of food aid.

2.7.4 Charitable ethos

The fourth narrative questions the ethos of food aid claimed and supported by volunteers and supporters of charitable food organisations (Williams et al., 2016). The charitable food sector heavily depends on unpaid volunteers, donations, and goodwill (Poppendieck, 1998; Smith-Carrier, 2020). Food charities can be seen to symbolise active communities, allowing members to band together for a cause and assist those that are less fortunate. In her comprehensive critique on food aid, Poppendieck (1998) argued that food charity functions as a ‘moral safety valve’ which diminishes activism by ‘assuaging liberal guilt,’ enabling volunteers and donors to feel better while critical public policy issues and action are neglected. Participating in the food aid sector gives volunteers reassurance that something is being done and placates energies for political action towards more just alternatives (Poppendieck, 1998; Williams et al., 2016).

Similarly, Riches (2012) argues that it provides a convenient and conscious appeasing way to absolve the wealthy and advantaged from systemic responsibility. He labels them as an “important expression of community altruism’ (1997, p. 70). In a world filled with inequality, individuals who want to ‘do their bit’ to help the disadvantaged find volunteering or contributing to the charitable food system as a win-win (Dey & Humphries, 2015). Food charities offer a manageable and feasible solution for community groups, comparatively easier than addressing the systemic root causes of poverty, hunger, and discrimination, which can appear remote and unconquerable, especially if considered within the wider economic context (Tarasuk & Davis, 1996). Unfortunately, food aid’s demanding and continuous nature reduces the time and energy available for advocacy and action towards more fundamental approaches to poverty and hunger.

2.8 What role do charities play in structural issues?

Food charities are caught in a dilemma when addressing the underlying, root-structural causes of poverty and, ultimately, food insecurity – should they invest energies into more fundamental solutions or serve the immediate need? As examined above, some query whether food charities undermine efforts for food security to be prioritised as a universal human right (Riches, 2012). Notably, Poppendieck (1998) found that charities alone cannot solve food insecurity and can only alleviate immediate hunger. Given the proliferation of food charities and the ever-growing presence of food insecurity, one could assume this to be true. Not only are food charities’ efforts constrained by a need to alleviate the symptoms of food insecurity, they are also constrained in advocating for systemic change due to a need to retain relationships with government and industry in order to function. This creates tension between meeting the growing needs of food-insecure people and the expectations that come with government and donor funding (Lindberg et al., 2015).

An analysis by Clarke & Parsell (2021) notes that while charity cannot address poverty alone, it can play a role, but it must be based on the recipient's needs. They explain that charitable encounters should be transformed to continue to provide direct support and relief; however, this must be done in a way that minimises shame and includes providing access to support with few conditions. Further, charity should provide opportunities for reciprocity, give people the ability to tell their stories in their own words, and focus on strengths as well as struggles. They also recognise the place for food charities in advocating for structural change because they bear

witness to the everyday struggles of people in poverty and can form relationships with them as a basis for solidarity and struggle. This depicts a departure from the traditional food bank style of food charity and are in some cases, referred to as food justice organisations, particularly if they are involved in advocating for structural change. These organisations do not understand food insecurity as simply the absence of food, but rather they conceive of food security as a result of broader, inequitable structures resulting from colonialism, misogyny and capitalism. These organisations frame food insecurity as more than a food issue. As a result of looking at the entire food system through interdisciplinary and equity lenses, many food justice organisations understand the root causes of food insecurity as comprising intersecting social, political, and ecological inequities and therefore, propose solutions beyond the traditional food bank model. Beyond providing food for those who need it, these organisations agitate for policy change. As an example, NZ-based social service organisation, Kore Hiakai, is made up of a collective of social service organisations (many of which offer food bank services) that have formed a collective to address the root-causes of food insecurity.

2.9 Resilience?

The concepts ‘community food security’ and ‘food resilience’ developed, in part, as a response to some of the critiques levelled at food charities and community food organisations. Community food security is said to offer a broader approach to food security and a departure from current solutions to inequitable food access and availability. Community food security is critical of traditional charity approaches to food security because of a lack of attention to developing long-term food security and sustainable food systems. This organising structure has become popular amongst social service organisations, including those in the food aid sector. Certain initiatives are seen to enhance community food security, such as community gardens, fruit and vegetable food boxes, community kitchens and meals, and affordable farmers markets in deprived or marginalised communities. These are becoming a key part in the food aid sector (Wakefield et al., 2013). The community food security approach has been praised for addressing food system issues in a more holistic way while simultaneously contributing to community development (Johnston, 2003).

The concept of food system resilience has also emerged as an alternative. Traditionally rooted in ecology, resilience can be understood as the capacity of a system to absorb shocks whilst maintaining function (Folke, 2006). A well-known definition by Tendall et al. (2015, p. 19)

defines food system resilience as the “capacity over time of a food system and its units at multiple levels, to provide sufficient appropriate and accessible food to all, in the face of various and even unforeseen disturbances”. Here, they describe three capacities by which a system can react to a shock – absorptive, adaptive, and transformative. The absorptive capacity is the ability to continue as usual in the event of a shock. The adaptive capacity is the ability to adjust and adapt to situations, and the transformative capacity is the ability to transform and create a fundamentally new system when needed. Preventative actions can also be taken to prevent disruptions from future shocks (Tendall et al., 2015).

Understandings of resilience have evolved to be applicable to social systems, and alternative approaches such as socio-ecological (Folke, 2006) and social resilience (Adger, 2000) have been developed. A social resilience approach focuses on understanding the response of human systems to shocks and disturbances (Wilson, 2012). Individuals, households, communities, or even whole societies are often expected to strive for resilience (Béné et al., 2020). For instance, a socio-ecological system should not only re-establish its livelihood, physical assets and patterns of access, but also reduce, respond, and recover from the impacts of future hazards (Blaikie et al., 2004).

Over the last decade, resilience research has begun to find application at the community level. Community resilience is defined as the “existence, development and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterised by change, uncertainty, unpredictability and surprise” (Magis, 2010, p. 401). A resilient community was originally seen as capable of withstanding sudden shocks, such as natural disasters or major economic failures. More recent research on community resilience has evolved to include the ability of communities to prepare for anticipated shocks, adapt to and take advantage of changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions brought about by globalisation, climate change, technological advancement, and economic collapse (Blair & Mabee, 2020). Aldrich & Meyer (2015) describe community resilience as the collective ability of a neighbourhood or geographically defined area to deal with stressors and efficiently resume the rhythms of daily life through cooperation following shocks. The scale at which community resilience tends to be examined is regional rather than global in scope. The community level is increasingly considered the most appropriate scale at which to apply resilience-building efforts because the social and governance structures that exist are not so rigid that they cannot be changed, which can be the case at larger scales. At the community

level, people can be actively involved in and initiate meaningful changes that positively impact their everyday lives. Furthermore, community resilience considers the importance and contribution of smaller subsystems such as the individual or household level and interactions with larger systems to which the community is connected, such as national economies and wider ecosystems (Blair & Mabee, 2020). Connecting this to food security, community resilience is about the capacities of individuals, households and communities to deal with adverse events in a way that does not negatively affect their long-term wellbeing and function. A local, community-based food sector, that includes emergency food provision, can create alternative options and therefore market diversification, and enhance resilience (Jones et al., 2021).

At present, the global food system is not particularly resilient because of its vulnerability to political upheaval, natural disasters, and economic crises, amongst other things. As the global population and urbanisation continue to grow, these crises and pandemics will likely occur more often, highlighting the need to ensure more resilient food systems (Boyacı-Gündüz et al., 2021). Research has shown that local food systems have the benefit of enduring resilience during these times (Toth et al., 2016). Food system resilience at a local, community-level can be bolstered through food initiatives that build local food systems and local food security (Dombroski et al., 2020; McDaniel et al., 2021; Turetta et al., 2021). Drawing on the experiences of community food organisations, Dombroski et al. (2020) argues that fostering diverse food access pathways, while working towards wider community food security in multiple, overlapping enhances food system resilience. Community-based food initiatives (in the form of both charity and social enterprise) can have important economic impacts such as reducing the cost of living, retaining money in local communities, and increasing food security and resilience (Mintz & McManus, 2014). Further, they can enhance resilience by creating more robust social support networks, greater social cohesion, increased connectivity, and greater engagement in the community (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). Diversity in the food system offers resilience to a range of potential shock and crises, such as those resulting from a global pandemic (Dombroski et al., 2020).

Like food security, the concept of resilience is a widely used term, and many variations of the term exist, leading it to receive considerable critique. Given the concept means different things to different groups, the concept has been criticised for having meanings that are often contradictory (Blair & Mabee, 2020). Perhaps most notably, resilience has been critiqued by

DeVerteuil and Golubchikov (2016) for being regressively status quo, lacking transformative potential, and being in support of neoliberal systems that neglect people and places in need. Resilience has been criticised for maintain and propping up the existing, dominant system – one which is driven by capital and neoliberal philosophies at present. Governments have been criticised for using resilience as a reactionary tool used to perpetuate, sustain and reinforced the hegemonic status quo of capitalism. As a result, resilience is said to lack progressive and transformative potential (Derickson, 2016). The up-take of the notion of resilience has sidelined calls for social justice and transformative political action. In times of need, people and places are labelled as ‘resilient’ are left to themselves, thereby individualising responsibility (DeVerteuil and Golubchikov , 2016).

Braun (2014) criticises resilience for being a ‘dispotif’ of government that is mobilised and taken up in governance to maintain the status quo. He also draws attention to the ad hoc, decentred nature of resilience that does not allow for any singular politics of opposition. In essence, he argues that resilience sustains the conditions that produce the problem it purports to solve. Similarly, Derickson (2016) argues that discussions of resilience direct our attention toward a social formation that is uninspiring because its emphasis on enduring the effects of the very processes we ought to be transforming. The application of a narrow definition of resilience has been criticised by those who feel the need to restore pre-existing conditions could remove the chances of purposeful societal transformations and profound change.

Social scientists have criticised resilience for assuming that social systems act like ecosystems. Within resilience scholarship, the external problems or threats are routinely viewed as exogeneous disruptions based on naturalistic assumptions and metaphors informed by the ‘hard’ sciences. Blair and Mabee (2020) point to the resilience vocabulary, which uses terms such as system boundaries, equilibria, thresholds and feedbacks which do not fit easily into the social sciences, where concepts and theories, such as agency, conflict, knowledge and power are utilised. These criticisms have been addressed by the development of new social studies concepts of resilience, such as social and community resilience. Social science approaches to resilience have broadened the neutral ecological concept of resilience by incorporating transformability. Transformability is the capacity to bring about a radical shift which fundamentally changes the wider system in beneficial ways.

Without discounting the valid critiques of the use of the term, DeVerteuil and Golubchikov (2016) argue that critical geographers should not dismiss resilience as a concept, entirely. Instead, it is recommended to be adapted to suit situated agendas, because resilience provides a powerful metaphor that can capture important social processes and is flexible enough to work for various systems and temporal frames (DeVerteuil and Golubchikov, 2016). Taking this approach, resilience is used in this thesis with caution and curiosity, as it is a term increasingly used in the community-based food aid space and was used by participants in this research, as examined in Chapter Five. Examining the practices, the organisational experiences and the theoretical and tangible ambiguities in these spaces reveal the difficulties these organisations grapple with along with a perspective of resilience that might not otherwise be recognised as such through predetermined definition alone.

2.10 Conclusion

Taking together the concepts of food security, food charity and food resilience, this chapter has explained how the evolving understandings of food (in)security (at a policy and academic level) have influenced and shaped responses to the problem. Namely, the perceived solution to food insecurity in high-income countries has been through the charitable distribution of food. The changing nature of food security definitions, particularly in relation to scale, from a focus on the national and international dimensions to the household and individual level, has led to a charity-based response that aims to relieve household and individual-level food insecurity (Lambie-Mumford & Dowler, 2014).

Today, food charity encompasses a broad spectrum of activities that are institutionalised in the welfare landscape of many wealthy countries, such as the US, UK, Canada, Australia and NZ. Given that the expansion and professionalisation of food charity has not curtailed increasing rates of food insecurity, food charity has received considerable critique in the literature. As mentioned in this chapter, food charity has depoliticised food insecurity, treating the symptoms rather than the root causes of the issue. The responsibility of the state to provide for its citizens has been shifted onto the voluntary welfare sector. Critics have reported on the indignity associated with receiving food from charity and the feelings of shame and stigma that come from receiving ‘free,’ sub-par food. Furthermore, the food charity sector can lead volunteers and advocates to believe that the problem of hunger is being answered, shifting attention away from broader systems-level changes. What is missing from the extant literature is how

community-based food aid providers have evolved and responded to these critiques (Wakefield et al., 2013). Participants in this research described a desire for ‘food resilience’ and explained the challenges they encounter in attempting to shift beyond the traditional, charity-based model of food provision (explored in detail in Chapter Five). In the following chapter, I focus on the situated-context that informs this research, which is Tāmaki Makaurau, NZ.

Chapter 3: The research context: a situated study in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

3.1 Food insecurity in a ‘land of plenty’, Aotearoa New Zealand

NZ is considered a food-secure nation that produces more than enough food to feed its population yet has seen a steady increase in food insecurity over time (O’Brien, 2014; Rush, 2019). As a significant player in global food systems, NZ produces enough food to feed about 40 million people but has a population of only 5 million (Hancock, 2021). Given NZ’s role as a food producer, it is reasonable to question how an ever-growing number of New Zealanders experience food insecurity. Understandably, this has prompted recent calls to feed the ‘team of five million’ first (Hancock, 2021). The last nationally representative assessment on food insecurity in NZ, the 2008/09 Adult Nutritional Survey, indicated that 7.3% of the adult population was food insecure (University of Otago & Ministry of Health, 2011)². Subsequent research revealed a growth in this percentage, with Cafiero et al. (2016) estimating that the situation had only worsened with a rate of 1 in 10 adults experiencing food insecurity. Further, in 2018, the FAO and WHO reported that 14% of NZ’s population was food insecure (FAO et al., 2019). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, estimates predict that food insecurity is now affecting 15-20% of the population (Kore Hiakai, 2021).

Food insecurity data in NZ is minimal (Robinson et al., 2021). However, we know that food insecurity is not experienced equally across different groups. Women are more likely to be food insecure, and Māori and Pasifika peoples fare worse when compared to the general population and all other ethnicities (University of Auckland & Ministry of Health, 2011). Children are also particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. The Ministry of Health (2019) reports that just under one in five children experience severe to moderate food insecurity, and both Māori and Pasifika children were over-represented in these figures. In 2019/2020, 20% of children aged 0-15 reported living in households where food runs out sometimes or often, with 4% reporting often (Robson, 2021). Place-based research from McPherson (2006) analysed the sociodemographic characteristics of food bank clients accessing support through the Christchurch City Mission and found that Māori, sole parents and those receiving benefits were

² The Ministry of Health (2019) defines food insecurity as a limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited ability to acquire personally acceptable foods that meet cultural needs in a socially acceptable way.

significantly over-represented amongst food bank clients. Given the limited data on food insecurity in NZ, food bank statistics are often used as proxy measures to determine prevalence (O'Brien, 2014).

Economic security, and consequently, food security for New Zealander's has been eroded since the introduction of neoliberal social and economic policies in the late 1980s (Kelsey, 1995 as cited by O'Brien, 2014). Importantly, O'Brien (2014) recognises that a discussion of hunger, food insecurity, and nutritional inadequacy cannot be separated from a rising inequality and poverty framework that has shaped NZ's social and economic policy since the introduction of these extensive neoliberal reforms. Between 1984 and 1990, a Labour government began a major programme of economic restructuring. The extensive neoliberal reforms have contributed to income inequality growing in NZ faster than any other country since the 1980s, with the exception of the United Kingdom (O'Brien, 2014). Internationally, NZ has offered a practical example of the socioeconomic consequences of these reforms and political philosophies. As part of these reforms, and a significant contributor to the growing inequality and poverty in this country, were the reforms to social security since benefits were cut in 1991. At this time, benefits (other than superannuation for pensioners) were cut by up to 20% (Stephens, 1992 as cited by O'Brien, 2014) which contributed to significant growth in food banks. Subsequent governments have failed to increase benefit rates (until recently), and Māori, Pasifika, single-parent families, and beneficiaries have borne the brunt of the impact.

A discussion of food insecurity in NZ cannot be separated from the growing gap between the rich and poor, the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' As Kaloga (2021) notes, both income and wealth inequality in Aotearoa have reached historically high levels. Many families face severe hardship, with the rate of low-income citizens doubling since the 1980s. In 2013, the bottom 10% of the population earned eight times less than the top 10% (Rashbrooke, 2013). Wealth inequality and poverty in NZ are systemic, with sexism, racism, colonisation, and how power and resources are allocated across the country driving this. Inequality in wealthy countries is associated with lower life expectancy, poorer child well-being, worse health and social problems, and a high prevalence of mental illness (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). In NZ, the widening gulf between the living conditions of the rich and poor has been ignored, with overall levels of health continuing to suffer (Skegg, 2019). While these health issues impact society as a whole, the country's most marginalised populations suffer to an increasingly greater degree

(Kaloga, 2021). In Tāmaki Makaurau, NZ’s largest city, the high costs of rents and low-incomes from benefits and wages continue to drive poverty (Haigh, 2021).

As with other capitalist welfare states, the greatest determinant of food insecurity can be attributed to insufficient income (O’Brien, 2014; Smith et al., 2011). In wealthy countries with high rates of food insecurity, the supply and availability of food is not a problem. Rather, food security is lacking in terms of economic access, quality, diversity, and environmental integrity (Lawrence et al., 2013). In the same national nutrition study undertaken by the University of Otago and Ministry of Health (2019) mentioned above, the greatest determinant of food insecurity for New Zealand families was economic in origin. It is then no surprise that for families receiving a government benefit, food insecurity was most predominant. Low-income families in NZ are increasingly unable to afford food due to a lack of sufficient income; a common consequence of neoliberal and reactionary social policy (Smith et al., 2011; Watson, 2019). A lack of discretionary income means that essential expenses such as housing and utility bills are prioritised over food (Graham et al., 2018; McKay & Lindberg, 2019). Despite this, the relationship between food and socioeconomic status is commonly ignored in discussions regarding eating and poverty (Schrecker & Bamba, 2015).

Food insecurity in NZ is part of a series of nested problems related to poverty. The high cost of housing and food, coupled with low incomes, obesity and the long supply chains all contribute to a steady increase the number of New Zealander’s facing food insecurity (Huang et al., 2020, Kore Hiakai, 2021). Housing costs are a significant component of household budgets (Pierse et al., 2016) and rising housing costs in NZ have accelerated rates of food insecurity because many people are left with little money for food after accommodation costs (Huang et al., 2020). At the time of this study, national house prices are 12.4 times the average wage. In Tāmaki Makaurau, the advertised weekly median rent has surpassed \$600, and the average house price has topped \$1.2 million (Flaws, 2021). Figure 1 demonstrates the enormous increase in house and rental prices in NZ and compares this against the average wage over the last twenty years. This comes at a time when food prices in NZ have seen the highest increase in a decade, with a 5.9% increase from January 2021 to January 2022 (Stats NZ (Statistics New Zealand), 2022). Strapped with low wages, insecure work and high rents, more and more of whānau are being pushed into poverty. While financial constraints play the most significant role, other factors such as adverse life events or transition periods can also impact a household’s food security, for example, relation breakdowns, job losses, illness, and injuries

can impact one's access to food (Smith, 2011). As a result, many people move in and out of a food-insecure position; food insecurity can be both a persistent and transient experience.

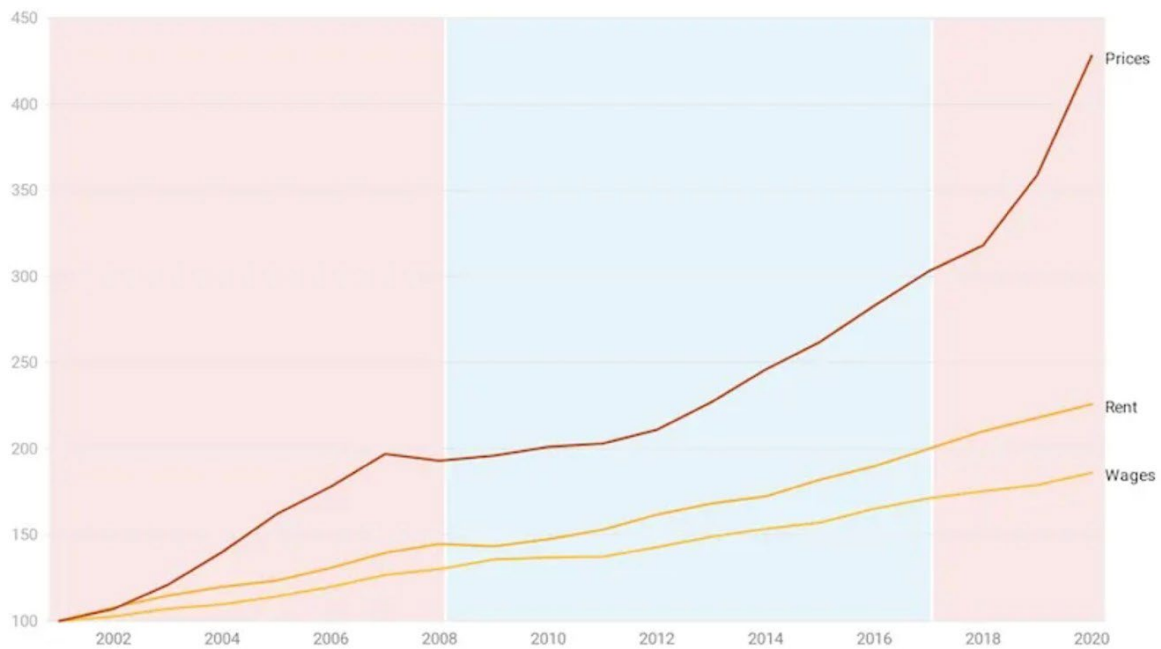


Figure 1. Percentage increases in average NZ wages, median rent and median house prices 2001-2020 with the red shade denoting Labour-led government and blue a National-led government. (Source: *The Spinoff*, 2021)

The uptake of neoliberal social and economic policy often comes with an emphasis on individualism. Dominant understandings of inequality and poverty in NZ emphasise individual responsibility, ‘choice’, and a supposed ‘lack of ambition’ (Graham et al., 2018; Neuwelt-Kearns et al., 2021). Aligning with international trends, successive governments in NZ have characterised those in need of welfare assistance and provisions as overly reliant, maladjusted failures (Hodgetts et al., 2014), and these ideas have become entrenched. Neoliberal discourses of self-responsibility individualise blame for lack of access to appropriate food. As a result, solutions to food insecurity focus on perceived individual failings such as poor budgeting skills and purchasing choices (Graham et al., 2018). This discourse is pervasive with NZ and can evoke feelings of shame and personal inadequacy within food-insecure New Zealander’s, causing these people to conceal their hardship for fear of judgement. Low-income families are expected to survive on underfunded welfare provisions while simultaneously being constructed as a burden to society due to their own personal failures. Graham et al. (2018a) describe welfare support’s humiliating and degrading nature, such as state-funded food assistance, which requires extensive paperwork and bureaucratic challenges. Neuwelt-Kearns et al. (2021) argue

that food-insecure people are systematically constrained in their abilities to achieve their ambitions and aspirations. A focus on the individual means that economic and structural forces which create and sustain poverty and inequality are ignored (O'Brien, 2014). Food insecurity issues are not reducible to individual responsibility and choice. Instead, they exist in a system that is structured to perpetuate unequal power relations and poverty.

3.2 Food price hikes

Like global trends, the cost of food in NZ has been increasing (Smith, 2011). Over the last five years, the cost of food has risen by 4%, with fruit and vegetables increasing by 9% (Rush, 2019). The rise in food prices can, in part, be attributed to the significant concentration of supermarkets in NZ. A lack of competition has created a duopoly between the two large conglomerates, Foodstuffs and Woolworths. By 2014, these supermarket chains dominated 95% of the grocery retail market, making NZ's grocery sector one of the most concentrated in the world. This affords a level of control and power that allows them to set the rules and dictate conditions, and force suppliers to comply with their requests, no matter what they may be, because they are reliant on these supermarkets to provide them with access to the consumer (Commerce Commission New Zealand (CCNZ), 2021; The Guardian, 2021). Given that supermarkets are an essential avenue for local growers and suppliers, the concentration makes it increasingly difficult for small-scale producers to gain access (Carolan, 2013), further pushing out the competition and reinforcing the duopoly.

A 2021 report by CCNZ revealed that consumers are not being given a fair deal because of a lack of competition between Foodstuffs and Woolworths, pushing up the price of food. These chains share power in the duopoly and actively avoid competition, particularly regarding prices. CCNZ reported that NZ has the sixth most expensive grocery market and the sixth-highest spend per capita on grocery products in the OECD. Food was the second largest expense for New Zealanders in 2019, with an average spend of \$234 per week (The Guardian, 2021). At the same time, CCNZ (2021) reports that profits for the conglomerates are persistently high, with profits exceeding their international counterparts (CCNZ, 2021). As profits continue to soar, the benefits are not trickling down to the in-store workers with low wages keeping profits high for a few. CCNZ has considered a series of interventions to keep food prices fair for New Zealanders, including breaking up the duopoly. However, in their final 2022 report, CCNZ recommended a suite of changes to increase competition and help improve

prices, quality and the range of groceries that did not include breaking up the duopoly or introducing a government-assisted competitor. Instead, CCNZ reported that the intense competition between the major grocery retailers is muted and competitors wanting to enter or expand face significant challenges, including a lack of suitable sites for store development and difficulties in obtaining competitively priced wholesale supply of a wide range of groceries.

3.3 The rise of charitable food sector in NZ as an antidote to food insecurity

In line with other wealthy countries with high levels of food insecurity (Lambie-Mumford & Dowler, 2014; Poppendieck, 1998; Riches, 2012; Tarasuk et al. 2014), NZ has seen the institutionalisation of not-for-profit charitable food organisations (Watson, 2019). These organisations have been a dominant feature of NZ's food landscape since the first food bank was created in 1980. Successive governments have become dependent on the provision of food from charitable food organisations (Riches, 1997) and these organisations have continued to grow in response to rising, inequality, poverty, and benefit cuts (O'Brien, 2014). Charitable food organisations act as a safety net for many New Zealander's (Smith, 2011) with services often extending beyond immediate food support by offering other services like budgeting skills and welfare support (Huang et al., 2020; McPherson, 2006). During their early conception, many of these organisations engaged in social action, including nationally organised and local protests, to highlight the social justice issues associated with the rise of food banks and charitable food sources (O'Brien, 2014). This engagement with broader social justice issues that contribute to the rising demand for these organisations is arguably being revived due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will be discussed in a greater deal later in this thesis.

The first community food organisations in NZ tended to be locally-based, affiliated with a wider religious organisation (particularly when it came to food banks) and received very little financial support from local or central government (Schanbacher & Gray, 2021). Today, community food organisations exist in many forms, including food banks, food rescues, pataka kai, free stores, community meals, fruit and vegetable co-operatives, community, and marae gardens. It is important to note that many of these organisations are working towards moving beyond the traditional charity model of food provision by fostering local food production, access, and distribution. For example, local co-operative gardens encourage social integration and distribute locally grown food. Community cafes and meal initiatives offer meals and food for a small fee (McPherson, 2006). However, while community food provisions may

ameliorate some instances of food insecurity through the distribution of food to their communities, they cannot address the symptoms of poverty and the heart of the issue – a lack of money (Graham et al., 2018b).

Rising levels of hardship in NZ have led more people to turn to food banks and charitable food sources to feed themselves and their families. In a study on the experiences of New Zealander's living with food insecurity, Graham et al. (2018b) described the experience of one woman who walked ninety minutes each day to get a free community meal, which was the only meal of the day. Food banks and other charities have become increasingly incorporated into public assistance, either directly (via funding such services) or indirectly (through referrals), indicating that food banks have become a part of the 'shadow state' over time. Literature on the shadow state describes how the boundaries between the state and the voluntary sector have blurred. While the state has withdrawn its responsibility to provide adequate social welfare for its citizens, it still holds a degree of control because of the dependence of voluntary organisations on state funds and contracts and its administrative and regulatory authority (Baker & McGuirk, 2021). The NZ government has actively supported these food groups' institutionalisation by factoring them into welfare services (O'Brien, 2014). For example, government social service provider WINZ frequently refer clients in need of food support to food banks. Despite this, charitable food organisations received little support from the government (McPherson, 2006) until recently. Studies that investigate the reasons for food bank use have consistently found that inadequate benefit levels, the cost of housing, and household bills are the most common factors (McPherson, 2006; Olds et al., 1991). Contrary to popular misconceptions, food bank usage is rarely a result of poor household budgeting or poor decision-making (McPherson, 2006).

3.4 COVID-19 and food insecurity in NZ

Across both developing and developed countries, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and accentuated food insecurity (Arduin & Saïdi-Kabeche, 2022). The pandemic has negatively impacted all four dimensions of food security across the globe: availability, access, stability and the utilisation of food (Aron Aimol, 2022). The structural weaknesses of industrial food systems have been revealed, and the consequences for food-insecure people and communities are laid bare (Schanbacher & Gray, 2021). For NZ, the inequities built into the current food system and the unsustainability of a food security framework that relies on emergency food

provision with no commitment or plan towards achieving long-term food security have been brought to the forefront.

Existing food insecurity has been amplified, with a growing number of New Zealander's turning to community food organisations and welfare assistance for their basic needs (Dombroksi et al., 2020; McAllister et al., 2020;). The pandemic exacerbated already present socioeconomic inequalities, with the greatest impact borne by the most vulnerable segments of the population such as, beneficiaries, low-income workers, single-parent households, Māori and Pasifika, and those living in deprived areas. However, a sustained and unpredictable loss of employment and income has seen many accessing food assistance who have never used these services before. The temporary suspension of food support programmes such as healthy school lunches, breakfast, and after-school clubs, the loss of community meals, the ability to share food with wider whānau, and bigger home bubbles has meant that access to healthy food has been much harder for many.

The NZ government responded to the growing need by increasing welfare support and allocating funds and grants to community food groups working to alleviate food insecurity in their communities. As part of the 2020 COVID-19 Recovery Budget, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) committed \$32 million over two years (up to June 2022) to support food banks, food rescue and other community organisations distributing food to vulnerable people and building community-led solutions for food security. They have partnered with national organisations Kore Hiakai, the New Zealand Food Network (NZFN) and the Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance (AFRA) to increase food supply to community food services, reduce food waste and increase food security (MSD, 2020; Tanielu, 2021). This indicates a strengthening of the connections between the state and NGO food bank sector; COVID-19 presented a crisis moment whereby food banks as an extension of the shadow state were strengthened. Criticism has been levelled at the NZ government for responding to calls for additional support for financially precarious New Zealanders with extra-funding for food aid organisations, who have agreed that this is not a viable solution to the problem (Muru-Lanning, 2021). A focus on food banks and food rescue has dominated the government's response to COVID-19 hardship to address the symptoms of food insecurity, rather than the causes. Further, at the time of writing this thesis, Tāmaki Makaurau entered the longest lockdown to date. This lockdown was arguably the hardest to date as the same provisions that were put in place in 2020 were not implemented this time around. Social support systems like rent freezes, increased winter energy

payment, and easier access to food grants and emergency accommodation were not re-enacted in 2021 (Muru-Lanning, 2021).

The next chapter turns to the research methodology and methods employed to address my research aims and objectives.

Chapter 4: Methodology and methods

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach and methods used to address the research objectives of: 1) examining the challenges and barriers associated with actually existing performances of community food provisioning for food security; and, 2) identifying the goals and aspirations of community-based food aid organisations. The section begins by discussing the methodological approach and justifies the use of qualitative methodology. Next, the data collection methods are detailed, including a discussion of semi-structured interviews (and visits to community provisioning sites), participant observation and secondary data collection. This section includes a discussion of conducting interviews online and the changes to the research design that needed to occur given the outbreak of COVID-19 in the community during the data collection period. Following this, I explain the data analysis technique of thematic analysis. Finally, I conclude the chapter with ethical considerations in the study and some research challenges.

4.2 Positionality statement

Positionality “reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 71) and therefore influences how the research is conducted, the outcomes and the results (Holmes, 2020). Therefore, this research is ultimately informed by my experiences and background as a well-educated, middle class, Pākehā, female, who has not experienced food insecurity at the level that the communities served by the organisations involved in this project have experienced. As the researcher, I acknowledge that I bring my own subjectivity and value judgements to this project which is informed by my views, perspectives, politics and ways of making sense of the world inform this research.

4.3 Methodological approach

This project adopts a qualitative research paradigm, using qualitative data collection and analysis techniques to inform the results and discussion. Qualitative research makes use of written and spoken language and images as data to understand and interpret meaning and meaning-making (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Crang, 2005). A qualitative approach was selected over a quantitative one because of the research topic’s requirement to generate rich data with

detailed and complex accounts from a range of participants. This project also adopts a non-positivist paradigm, recognising that multiple versions of reality exist and are closely linked to their context (Aliyu et al., 2014). This is particularly relevant for this project because I am looking at the *actually existing* practices employed by community food providers in their attempts to achieve food security in their communities. Moreover, community food providers have close relationships with the individuals and families they serve. Adopting a qualitative approach provides a way of getting to the detail of what food impoverishment is and the actually existing differences between individuals experiences. For example, details like not having access to culturally relevant food do not come out in numbers.

This research project engaged in experiential qualitative research to explore the challenges and goals of Tāmaki Makaurau’s community-based food aid organisations in working towards food security in their food provisioning (see Braun & Clarke, 2013). Qualitative research as a field is primarily understood to be in two categories (Reicher, 2000), which Braun and Clarke (2013) call experiential and critical. Defined in 1994 as “information and wisdom gained from lived experience” (Given, 2008, p. 322), experiential qualitative research focuses on the meanings, views, perspectives, experiences and practices expressed in qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2013) put forward the following five reasons to justify a qualitative approach over a quantitative approach when trying to understanding people’s meanings:

1. Experiential research focuses on the participants understanding of an issue and is not pre-determined by the researcher.
2. When compared to quantitative research’s focus on collecting numbers, experiential qualitative research allows for a rich and deep understanding of the phenomenon as the complexity of people’s experiences can be lost in numbers.
3. A quantitative methodology cannot embrace the ‘messiness’ often expressed in reality, experiences and meaning.
4. Qualitative experiential research can be open-ended and exploratory, allowing the researcher to accommodate unexpected ideas expressed by participants, thus enabling the project to evolve as required.
5. Through collecting and analysing experiential data, we can discover unanticipated findings, opening the scope of knowledge and understanding.

It was important that this research was participant-led, qualitative, exploratory and open to unanticipated feelings - embracing the messiness. This project purposefully did not pre-determine the experiences, challenges, goals and aspirations of the community food organisation that were the subjects of the study. Rather, it aimed to discover these from an on-the-ground, community perspective; from the people who are actively working in this space every day. By using an experiential qualitative approach to drive this research, the outputs were not limited to the researchers' imaginations or existing knowledge of food security, food charity and food resilience.

4.4 Semi-structured interviews

4.4.1 Participant recruitment

Participants in this research project were both 'warm' (known to the researcher from previous research) and 'cold' (new to the researcher) contacts. Those that were new to the researcher were found through a web-based search on community food organisations in Tāmaki Makaurau. All participants were invited to participate in the project and were provided with a brief description of the research via email. A participant information sheet (PIS) and consent form (CF) were provided in advance of an interview, in accordance with University of Auckland Human Participant Ethics Committee protocols³, to provide the participants with descriptions of the research practices and process. Participants were given several days to think about the information provided and ask questions if any arose. To recognise the participants' time and contribution to the research project, they were given a \$30 Gift Pay voucher as a koha. Braun and Clarke (2013) note that offering some form of 'thank you' can make research more inclusive as participants offer up their time and may inadvertently incur costs with participation, such as travel and childcare. Given this study's work with groups who might comprise individuals who do suffer, or have suffered food insecurity themselves, it was important to make this offer.

When recruiting participants for this research, the intention was to seek out the employers (and managers), employees and volunteers of community food organisations based in Tāmaki Makaurau. Of the participants, four were employers (or managers), one was an employee and

³ Ethics approval for this project was sought and granted by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 20/08/2021 for three years, Reference number UAHPEC22594.

two were volunteers. The decision was made to exclude recipients of the organisations' services. Parnell (1996) recognises that individuals and groups affected by poverty are not always able or willing research subjects. Poverty is, by nature, a stressful experience, with shame and stigma are deeply implicated in the experience (Sen, 1982). Recounting such issues to a researcher may be problematic or upsetting. Moreover, given the length of this research was one year, this was not considered to be enough time to form a trusting and respectful relationship with such as vulnerable population. Additionally, there is some existing research into the individual experience of food insecurity (Graham, 2018a; Smith, 2011). Further, given that the central research question was centred on the actions community food organisations take in attempting to achieve food security for their communities, it was a priority to report the voices of those creating and running these organisations. However, future research that includes the voice of recipients would be beneficial.

Following the recruitment of participants, I conducted seven interviews between August – October 2021. All interviews were held by phone or video call to adhere to COVID-19 restrictions and safety measures. Two interviews were conducted over the phone, while the remaining interviews were conducted using Zoom video conferencing software. Participants were encouraged to suggest a time and length of the interview that worked for them to maximise convenience and facilitate a more relaxed conversation (Valentine, 2005). Interviews lasted between thirty and ninety minutes. The data collection period closed with a total of seven in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Participant characteristics are summarised and described in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Description of (deidentified) interview participants

Participant*	Role	Type of organisation
Participant 1	Manager	Community meal initiative
Participant 2	Concept creator	Food hub
Participant 3	Founder and general manager	Community meal initiative
Participant 4	Manager	Food bank
Participant 5	Director	Social service organisation collective
Participant 6	Volunteer	Community meal initiative
Participant 7	Volunteer	Community meal initiative

- The food hub is a community-led enterprise that provides meals and food education programmes. Surplus food is rescued and turned into nutritious and affordable meals using a circular economy model. The food available for purchase is locally sourced and culturally diverse. Educational programmes aim to provide the community with more food resilience knowledge and skills. For example, an on-site composting and recycle station designed to minimise food and other waste is used as an educational tool for the local community, with workshops demonstrating how to create similar models at home. Informed by a Good Food Roadmap, the Food Hub model has been adopted by other community food organisations in Tāmaki Makaurau, who have adapted the model to their unique context.
- The community restaurant/meal initiative is a pay-as-you-feel three course meal prepared by volunteer chefs and operates across multiple sites in Tāmaki Makaurau. The initiative utilises surplus food and has the interconnected goals of addressing food poverty, food waste and social isolation.
- The food bank distributes food in the form of food parcels to community members in need. They receive surplus food donations that are included in the parcels.

- The collective of social service organisations supports community food organisations across NZ while also working to address the root causes of poverty-related hunger. They bring together community producers, retailers, philanthropy and government to form a collaborative approach to food inequities.

Qualitative interviews have long been one of the most common methods of data collection in the social sciences (Braun & Clarke; 2013; Campbell et al., 2013). The semi-structured interview was selected as the preferred method because of its suitability to experience-type questions and usefulness in understanding and perception. This framework was chosen because of its ability to provide a rich insight into personal accounts. The limited structure allows conversations to flow smoothly and permits the interviewee to guide the conversation to relevant topics and unforeseen areas of interest as they arose (Longhurst, 2016; Valentine, 2005). Applying a semi-structured framework to my interviews allowed me to maintain some flexibility which is essential for facilitating the discussion of new questions and ideas. As a result, participants were able to discuss their experience without being restricted to specific questions or categories, like in a questionnaire survey (Valentine, 2005).

A preliminary online search of the organisations was conducted to inform the interviews to provide background information on the organisation, their practices and highlight some points of interest for conversation. This was particularly useful for organisations that were not familiar to the researcher. Prior to conducting the interviews, an interview schedule was prepared (see Appendix C) to guide conversations with participants. Creating a well-thought interview schedule was important for generating rich and detailed participant accounts while also helping to build trust and rapport (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Given the semi-structured nature of the interviews, the interview schedule was flexible, not fixed, allowing for new points of discussion to be added to the conversation.

4.4.2 Navigating online interviews with Zoom

Face-to-face contact between the researcher and participant has typically been viewed as the ideal way to collect interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Novick, 2008). However, as technology has advanced, evidence shows that the quality of online video conferencing interviews can be comparable to face-to-face interviews (Cabaroğlu, Basaran, & Roberts, 2010; Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). In some cases, online participants were considered more open and expressive (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). Nowadays, substitute methods for face-to-face

interviews, such as telephone, email, and virtual interviews, are considered extensions of the traditional method, with strengths and weaknesses just like face-to-face interviews (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004).

While the preference was to interview participants face-to-face, alert level restrictions associated with an outbreak of COVID-19 in the community in Tāmaki Makaurau meant that several interviews were conducted virtually through the video conferencing platform Zoom. Conducting interviews online has a host of benefits for both the researcher and participants. The most notable advantage being the accessibility to participants (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2020). Logistical factors that may be a barrier to participants, such as geographical location, distance, travel time, and funding for travel, are removed when conducting an online interview. Similarly, because neither the interviewer nor interviewee is required to travel to the interview location, there is increased flexibility in the timing and length of interviews. Participants can participate in their own convenient space and stop and exit the interview at any time, which may provide more comfort and be less intimidating than an in-person interview (Gray et al., 2020).

Zoom was selected as the preferred video conferencing tool because of its user-friendliness, cost-effectiveness, data management features, and security options (Archibald et al., 2019). Other technologies, such as Skype, have reported connectivity issues that lead to dropped calls, poor audio and video quality, and inconsistent and delayed connectivity (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Weller, 2015). Zooms afford participants convenience and relative ease of use because it offers a free basic programme that only requires the researcher to download. Another advantage for both the interviewer and interviewee is the screen and file sharing option (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2020), which allowed me to review the PIS and CF with the participant before the interview. A significant advantage for the researcher is Zoom's ability to securely record interview sessions without relying on third-party software (Archibald et al., 2019).

Despite these advantages, some challenges come with conducting research interviews through video conferencing technologies. One challenge is the possibility that technical challenges may arise, either in conducting the interview or recording failures. To mitigate this, Lobe et al. (2020) recommend spending time becoming proficient in the chosen platform before conducting any interviews. While an interview using video conferencing software allows a digital form of face-to-face contact, it is possible that not occupying the same space may result

in missed opportunities to observe physical space, body language and emotional cues (Cater, 2011). There is disagreement in the literature regarding the ease of establishing rapport in online interviews. Some have suggested that it is more difficult to establish rapport using online platforms when compared to face-to-face interviewing (Cater, 2011; Gray et al., 2020), while others have found participants using video conferencing software to be more responsive and as a result build rapport more quickly (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Tuttas, 2015), particularly when compared to nonvisual communication forms such as telephone or email (Archibald et al., 2019). Deakin and Wakefield (2013) suggest exchanging several emails before the video conferencing interview as a method of helping build rapport. Although video conferencing software allows the participant and researcher to interview in their own space, there may be household distractions and a lack of privacy (Gray et al., 2020). This was of particular concern for participants in this research because of the lockdown restrictions and the need to manage home environments, including children, shared house situations, and shared workspaces.

4.4.3 Recording and transcription

Both face-to-face and online interviews were audio-recorded (with the consent of participants), enabling me to focus on the conversation at hand without being preoccupied with taking notes. Braun and Clarke (2013) stress the importance of having a precise record of the interview to avoid losing the detail of participants' responses and the language and concepts they use when talking about their experiences and perspectives. Recording the interviews meant that more attention could be placed on the discussion while it took place, allowing me to pick up on non-verbal cues such as tension and body language without the distraction or pressure of taking notes (Cope, 2005). During and after the interviews, brief notes were taken to keep track of things to follow up on or note points for further questions and discussion. However, taking notes can make it difficult to develop rapport with participants because of the need to look down or away to scribble notes (Braun & Clarke, 2013), hence why the notes were kept brief.

Although participants were emailed the PIS and CF prior to interviews, these were reviewed with the participant before the interview began. Participants must understand that they consent to be interviewed and audio-recorded (Braun & Clarke, 2013). For the interviews conducted via Zoom, this involved using the share screen function to review the documents. Following the interviews, audio recordings were transcribed as soon as possible while the interview was still fresh in mind (Longhurst, 2016). Audio recordings were listened to multiple times to understand results better and pick up on important nuances and missed points (Cope, 2005).

4.5 Participant observation

Participant observation is a method that has been viewed as complementary to conducting interviews. Observation is concerned with ‘what people do’ and discovering the meanings people attach to their actions (Curtis & Curtis, 2011). Before the community outbreak of COVID-19 in Tāmaki Makaurau and the subsequent lockdown, I intended to follow up interviews with visiting and volunteering at some of the community food organisations involved in this project to see the practices on the ground. Given the nature and length of the outbreak, this was not possible, and I needed to adapt to the circumstances. However, I did managed to (informally) visit some community food provisioning sites earlier in the year. During a web-based search of community food organisations in Tāmaki Makaurau, two community events related to food security and food systems in NZ came to my attention. Both organisations were contacted via email to see if they would accept my attendance and raise the possibility of collecting data during the sessions. After my attendance was accepted, I attended two public sessions/meetings with each organisation. Participating in these events involved a degree of participant observation because as a participant myself, I listened to experiences and insights from multiple people and observed how they interacted and responded to different questions and opinions. In attendance at these public hui (food collective workshops) were managers, volunteers, and staff involved in education and community engagement, from a range of food growers, food banks, community houses with food programmes, and school or community gardens. Further, members of the public with an interest in the discussed topics were in attendance at some meetings.

Participating in a community meeting is a more unconventional form of research when compared to interviews but offers a relatively quick, simple, accessible and inexpensive way to collect data (McComas, 2001). However, it is important to recognise that there will always be a gap between the data collected and the reality the data is supposed to represent. The data is collected from my point of view, and observations are collected through “spectacles with lenses that are shaped and coloured by the researcher’s language, culture, discipline-based knowledge, past experiences (professional and lay), and experiences that follow from these” (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Quotes and findings from the meetings are included in the results and discussion section of this thesis. One organisation allowed the inclusion and analysis of raw data while the other allowed the inclusion and analysis of analysed data. Both organisations

remain deidentified as with the organisations that were interviewed. Organisation characteristics and descriptions are summarised in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Description of (deidentified) food collective hui attended that generated data

Hui number*	Number of events	Estimated number of participants	Type of (host) organisation	Type of organisations in attendance
Hui 1	2	<50	Community food organisation collective group that coordinates and distributes emergency food support while working toward long-term, structural solutions to food insecurity.	Food banks, kitchens and pantries, food rescue, community meal initiatives, community gardens and education programmes, academics and members of the public engaged in these topics.
Hui 2	3	>25	Innovative eco-hub that supports local food production through community-led teaching gardens and community compost hubs.	Food growers, food banks, community houses with food programmes, schools, community gardens and community meal initiatives.

Both hui included a wide range of community food providers operating in Tāmaki Makaurau and across Aotearoa, giving a comprehensive insight into the experiences and challenges these organisations were facing during a time of unprecedented need as a result of COVID-19. At both hui, a goal was to bring together organisations that share similar visions, but often work in isolation from one another.

- Hui 1, led by a community grounded initiative taking a social impact design and innovation approach, involved two sessions which brought people together to discuss the work they have been doing, share knowledge and brainstorm what a thriving food system for both people and planet might look like in NZ.
- Hui 2, led by an eco-hub initiative that endeavours to grow and build food resilience, involved three sessions, two of which took place during the data collection period in 2021 and one in 2022 to share and discuss findings. Their aim was to capture the experiences of providers in identifying people in the local community who are food insecure and identify ways to connect them with support and address this need. Further, the hui included aspirational conversations about what success in food security could look like.

4.6 Secondary data collection

To supplement the primary data collection, I drew on quantitative methods used in other places to provide statistics, online interviews, documentary sources and grey literature. Documentary sources included media reporting, reports, policy, organisational, and other official documents. Further, I attended and participated in community meetings, webinars and hui that were related to food (in)security and were open to the public. For example, Kore Hiakai ran a series of *Just Kai?* webinars relating to defining food (in)security, mana-enhancing practices of food distribution and exploring models and community *kai* (food) social enterprise. Throughout the year, webinars and events similar to these would materialise and I would attend, for example, the Eat NZ Hui. The collection of secondary data and analysis was also the starting point of this project, in the form of a literature review (chapter two), to understand previous research and findings in similar areas (Curtis & Curtis, 2011). Secondary documentary sources are used in this thesis's results and section to support primary data findings and link these findings to the existing literature (Mogalakwe, 2006). Given that participants have been de-identified, any publicly available online interview resources have been kept anonymous to avoid revealing the identity of my participants.

4.7 Thematic analysis

Both primary and secondary data was analysed by thematic analysis. This allowed the researcher to analyse patterns, while also exploring difference and divergence within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). These forms of analysis are explored in more detail below.

Thematic analysis was chosen as the preferred form of analysis to interpret the data. As one of the most common forms of qualitative data analysis, thematic analysis enables the researcher to identify themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The first step of thematic analysis involved ‘immersion’ in the data, which required reading, re-reading, highlighting, and making initial notes of items of interest. I chose to do this step and the next step (coding) manually by printing my transcripts and research materials rather than doing this digitally on the computer. Bringer et al. (2006) note that moving away from the screen allows for a different mode of interaction with the data by taking you into a different conceptual and physical space for analysis. Manual immersion and coding enabled me to connect more intimately with the data and notice things relevant to my research question.

The next step of thematic analysis was to code the data. Coding is the process of identifying aspects of the data that relate to my research questions, aims and objectives. By highlighting and making notes on my transcripts, I was able to identify anything and everything of interest or relevance across the entire dataset. Using the complete coding method (Braun & Clarke, 2013), I began with the first transcript and systematically worked through the whole item, looking for areas of the data that could relate to my research question. Each time something relevant was identified, it was coded by making a code name and marking the associated text. Candidate themes were then selected from the codes and added to a table with relevant quotes attached.

After coding the data, I moved on to looking for larger patterns across the data set. Thematic analysis is a pattern-based form of analysis that assumes that ideas that reoccur throughout the dataset capture something of significance, meaning, and importance for answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2013). The first step was to look for provisional themes that could be revised, refined, and possibly let go through the developing analysis. I sought coherent, distinct themes that worked together to contribute to answering my research question

in some way. Throughout this process, revisiting and re-reading all of my data was important to make sure I recognised the bigger patterns across the dataset. Once I was confident with the themes identified, they were defined and named.

By adopting thematic analysis in this research, I made sense of the experiences shared by the community food organisations and identified common themes across my discussions. Importantly, it is acknowledged that I offer one interpretation of the data, and other interpretations are possible (Hardcastle & Caraher, 2021). However, through the use of extensive quotes, the reader can, to some degree, evaluate the interpretation and make inferences of their own. Regardless, I aimed to present a trustworthy interpretation that accurately captures the participants' experiences, understandings and perceptions.

4.8 Research challenges and ethical considerations

Before data collection, participants were assured they would be de-identified in this research. However, it became clear that given the small network of community food organisations in Tāmaki Makaurau, participants might be identified despite efforts to de-identify participation. The decision was made to de-identify participants to give them the space to discuss topics that could be sensitive. This was also done to make it deliberately clear that this research is not to take advantage but to make visible the opportunities and challenges for community food organisations to alleviate food insecurity in Aotearoa. In line with this, organisations were kept anonymous in reporting results and interviewee descriptions deliberately brief.

Like in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic first hit NZ and resulted in lockdowns that saw demand for emergency food service soar, the demand for food assistance during the most recent and longest lockdown Auckland has experienced skyrocketed (see Franks & Mayron, 2021; Latif, 2021; Radio New Zealand, 2021). Because of this, the people behind community food organisations are under significant pressure to serve an unprecedented demand, which is emotionally and physically exhausting for many (and this has been noted in participants' accounts). Given that the data collection period was during lockdown, the demand for these services made accessing potential participants difficult. Many expressed an interest in the project but noted that they were overwhelmed and frantic with providing emergency food support. Some asked to be re-engaged after the restrictions eased, however, the length of the lockdown meant that this was not always possible.

Because of the significant pressure on community food organisations throughout the duration of this research, a strong commitment was made to the participants, and you will see this come through more in the Results and Discussion section. An effort was made to keep the relationship between the researcher and participants as reciprocal as possible by offering space for participants to edit transcripts, see conclusions before the research was published, and receive a summary of findings in their preferred form (written summary, infographic, hui). Not only were participants time-poor, but it also quickly became apparent that some were experiencing consultation fatigue, which was expressed during data collection. Consultation is costly; time, energy, and trust are invested in the researcher. Past experience of the social and economic cost of participation mediates an individual's decision to participate (Hayward et al., 2004). If the project's outcomes are not perceived to be valuable, the participant may be deterred from participating.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from a thematic analysis of in-depth, semi-structured interviews (including visits to community provisioning sites), and public hui (food collective workshops) with community food providers based in Tāmaki Makaurau, through which I examine the actually existing performances of food security for communities by community food providers. In discussing my findings, I revisit my research objectives which were to: 1) examine the challenges and barriers associated with actually existing performances of community food provisioning for food security 2) identify the goals and aspirations of community-based food provisioning organisations.

I argue that these organisations are constrained in moving beyond a charitable model of food provision because of the massive demand for their services and the need to alleviate the immediate food insecurity of recipients. Food charity however is deployed as just one of a number of strategies of working towards a strengths-based community food security. This is compounded by many challenges these organisations encounter in their day-to-day operations. These challenges create a state of instability, whereby these organisations are constantly in flux or are subject to ad hoc resources and relationships. Despite these challenges, organisations appear to be employing diverse strategies in their actually existing food provisioning, contributing towards local food system resilience. Three central themes, 1) (re)acting in the meantime, 2) (in)stability, and 3) resilience are drawn from the thematic analysis and explored in detail below.

5.2 Theme one: (Re)acting in the ‘meantime’

*“Should food banks disappear overnight, thousands of people in Aotearoa
New Zealand would be hungry”*

(Robinson, 2019, p. 4)

5.2.1 The immediate need to feed

Food aid organisations are forced to be reactive. They respond to external triggers such as a lack of food supply and problems of access and distribution to meet the immediate, short-term food needs of those experiencing food insecurity. These organisations exist in a challenging context where performances of food provision towards food security are hindered because of situations outside of their control.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in NZ, which led to an unprecedented need for food support across the country, presents an important example. When the pandemic began, many food-secure families were pushed into food insecurity due to the rapid rise in unemployment and rising poverty due to stay-at-home orders and other restrictions. The sharp rise in food insecurity was also driven by panic buying, food shortages, food unaffordability and disruptions in supply and food systems (Eskandari et al., 2022). The demand for food banks increased dramatically, with the most significant rises in Tāmaki Makaurau, Northland and Christchurch (Martin-Neuninger, 2021). Dombroski et al. (2020) attribute the following three factors to the surge in demand for food support following the outbreak of COVID-19 in NZ; an unaccounted for third-sector, the closure of small-scale food providers, and most significantly, a loss of employment and income which reduced people's ability to purchase adequate food. Since 2020, the demand for food aid across the country has continued to grow but has been of particular concern in Tāmaki Makaurau because of an almost ten week-long lockdown in 2021 that hugely impacted people's access to food. During this lockdown (which coincided with the data collection period), participants described concern over the extended length of this increased demand and fear that it would not ease anytime soon. The strain placed on community food groups in Tāmaki Makaurau has been well documented in NZ media (see Franks & Mayron, 2021; Radio New Zealand (RNZ); Sachdeva, 2021) bringing the issue of food insecurity to the forefront of New Zealander's minds.

Several organisations described similar experiences of needing to ramp up and expand existing operations to meet the increased demand. In contrast, others had no choice but to shut down operations altogether to comply with the government-mandated restrictions. This funnelled the demand into the organisations that were able to continue operating. For those operating, demand, at times, more than doubled. One interviewee described the shift in demand between several lockdown periods:

Once people got back into work and all that it went down and we were doing maybe fifty a week or something like, fifty, sixty, that kind of thing, and then with lockdown this year it's gone up to about one hundred and twenty or more a week. [Participant 4]

The same participant suggested that the impact of lockdown restrictions was worse for people in 2021 when compared to the lockdown in 2020. They said:

I think that it's worse this year for families, and I think the reason is probably because they were on catch up from having had that time last year. I mean a lot of people in the area where we're working in... they live from week to week, there's not any spare money to have any savings for a rainy day or anything like that so then when something happens, you know, their incomes reduced at the moment through COVID, there's no backup, they don't have anything to fall back on or anything like that so I think that probably because of already having that happen last year, I mean maybe some people did but that was all used up than last year, and so I think people are in a worse position. [Participant 4]

Supporting this participant's comment, McAllister et al. (2020) found that financial distress remained at elevated levels from March 2020 to March 2021 compared with previous years. This was indicated by food bank use, government supplementary assistance and hardship assistance, and the number of children in benefit-receiving households. However, understanding the full extent of hardship resulting from COVID-19 is difficult because of a lack of data and measurement. Given that we know that estimations based on food bank usage are likely to be unrepresentative because many of those needing help are ashamed to ask for food assistance (Haigh, 2021), the financial distress levels are likely to be even more elevated. The longer-term economic impact of the pandemic will likely exacerbate existing poverty and inequalities (Ahmed et al., 2020). This is of concern since income inequality exerts a range of harmful effects on health and social outcomes that persist above levels of absolute poverty (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). In NZ, the impacts of the pandemic are occurring alongside other economic issues, such as a rise in petrol, food and house price, which are increasing faster than wages, further exacerbating the impacts of the pandemic.

The pandemic was extremely challenging for many community food providers as they adjusted to increased demand for basic food-provisioning services, a reduced volunteer base,

emotionally exhausted staff and volunteers, intense uncertainty, and increasingly marginalised community members. During lockdown periods, organisations are stretched as food is restricted and food insecurity spikes. As organisations respond to the immediate needs of the food-insecure, efforts to diversify performances of food provisioning towards food security are constrained. For those organisations whose work may extend beyond the immediate need to feed, the acute and cascading COVID-19 crisis meant that many organisations (even temporarily) were forced to shift to a charitable food bank model. In 2020, NZ's largest indoor stadium in Tāmaki Makaurau was transformed into a food bank to support thousands of households who were struggling to access food (Martin-Neuning, 2021).

While the primary goal of food aid initiatives is to meet the immediate food needs of recipients, nowadays, many of these organisations often have several interrelated goals that attempt to address wider dimensions of food security. For example, an interviewee from a community food initiative explained the initiatives interconnecting goals of reducing food insecurity, food waste and social isolation by bringing people together from all walks of life. For most of 2020 and 2021, the initiative was forced to shut down because of space limitations and social distancing restrictions. Instead, they shifted to working with a local marae to create and deliver ready-to-eat dinners for families in need, using the rescue food that is usually used to produce their community meals. Although this organisation successfully pivoted to utilise the rescue food for another purpose, this was a return to a traditional food bank model of food charity, and the benefits of community socialisation that come from the community meal initiative were lost.

Numerous organisations shifted to a food bank model of community food provision in response to the increasing intensity of food insecurity during the pandemic. At this time, the NZ government were also providing funding for organisations that operated to this model. Essentially, the government conscripted community food providers into its efforts to address dramatically increasing rates of food insecurity across the country through charity emergency food provisioning. A interviewee from a community-driven food hub, explained the decision to reject these funds to avoid functioning as a food bank. Because the food hub operates as a social enterprise and avoids functioning like a charity, when they applied to be an essential business during the first lockdown in NZ, they were rejected. The participant described his frustration with this as the *kauapapa* (purpose) of the food hub is give the community access to affordable, nutritious food, which for many families, was needed during lockdown. They

described the irony of them being shut down while funding was given to another business to provide free *hāngī* (a traditional Māori method of cooking using heated rocks buried in a pit oven) for the community. He said:

Why do you get some businesses to produce food to give for free but they're getting paid for it?

The food hub provides culturally significant food like *hāngī* to the community for an affordable price. Instead of allowing the hub to continue serving the community affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food, funds were allocated to a business to make and deliver *hāngī* for free, returning to an unsustainable and undignified model of food provision.

It is these elements of food security, like providing dignified and culturally appropriate access to food, that the organisations interviewed seek to incorporate into their practices. Additionally, despite these organisations focus on meeting alleviating the immediate food insecurity of recipients, several participants identified the broader structural uses that contribute to rising inequality, poverty and food insecurity in NZ, highlighting the need for a multi-pronged approach to attaining food security. The following quotes were drawn from participant interviews and demonstrate an awareness of the structural and 'system-level' challenges to food security:

There is a lot of food poverty in this country despite us being a food producer. We produce enough food for forty-five million people a year, and we're a tenth of that, so we're a huge food exporter, we're a food nation, yet the distribution of it and access to it [is inadequate], and certainly the pricing of it is high. [Participant 6]

It's the whole system really isn't it. The reason people are food insecure is because of our [wider] 'system'. [Participant 4]

Food insecurity is really just the system, we're a low wage economy and people are paying far too high, far too much for their rents and stuff, so it's not going to go away in a hurry, minimum wage has been put up a bit but the costs that people have is just out of proportion on lower incomes with wages. [Participant 4]

By referring to the ‘system’ these participants point to the interconnected and complex dynamics that influence NZ’s food system and food security, for example the reliability of wage-paid work, housing status, benefit levels and access, ableness, time and connectivity to the community. These quotes therefore demonstrate the participants’ awareness of multiple dimensions of food security, particularly accessibility and availability. They express dissatisfaction with several aspects of NZ’s food systems, such as the high cost of food and prevalence of food poverty, despite NZ being a major food producer. This speaks to other recent studies of food security in NZ, such as Miller (2021) who reported citizens’ dissatisfaction with the perversity of NZ’s food system and a belief that the status quo is failing people, particularly regarding the cost of healthy food and the widespread prevalence of unhealthy food. Similarly, when looking at food rescue, Diprose and Lee (2021) found that volunteers were aware of rising food poverty in NZ but felt powerless in the face of the wider structural causes of inequality. The interrelated goals of food rescue to reduce food waste and food poverty appealed to volunteers and gave them something practical to do in the ‘meantime’ while solutions to broader structural issues are sought.

5.2.2 Consequences of (re)acting in the meantime

Needing to react in the meantime has had the consequence of creating and perpetuating organisational instability, encouraging an even greater reliance on a charity model of food provision. In Hui 1, organisations described their practices as “filling a gap” rather than being a solution to the problem of food insecurity, yet there was simultaneously recognition that there will always be a need for a “hand-out” within communities. It did appear that the over-arching goal was to find a way for individuals and families to “self-help” and offer a hand-up as well as a hand-out, despite this. While systemic and structural level changes are needed to see a reduction in the need for food support, organisations described feeling “caught” as producing food parcels was still a necessary, humane and immediate response to the current need. A participant noted:

There is tension between ‘how do we address the root cause of this?’ and ‘how do we make sure that nobody is hungry?’... [there is a] constant tension between those two places. [Participant 5]

Food charity organisations react to a crisis of food insecurity. While their work may not address the root-causes of poverty, they are providing a solution for people to meet their basic needs, that would otherwise not be met. It is clear here is a place for these organisations that are “gap-fillers” – without them, many people would go hungry. The context of the gap-filling is, of course, of consequence: there is an apparent difference when there is connection, comprising real relationships on the ground with people in need, and not merely abstracted food supply.

However, there are risks in ‘reacting in the meantime’. The phrase introduced here of ‘meantime’ points to waiting, in a holding pattern, while newly emerging and not yet fully formed ethical and political responses to welfare are sought (Cloke et al., 2017). There is a need to react to the immediate needs of the food-insecure. Reacting in the meantime therefore reduces opportunities and time available to build strategies and resilience, based on a need to keep on top of immediate, and burgeoning need. This was especially visible over the COVID-19 period which, as explained above, the demand on community food organisations created an enormous pressure to keep up with the need. Winne (2008) considers it paradoxical that energy and resources go into the charitable system, ensuring that this system is sustained and supported. She argues that because of this, the underlying problem of income poverty and food insecurity gets no closer to transformation. Dey and Humphries (2015) posit that the place for food charities in a socially just NZ should be one of emergency food assistance only. Their approach raises the question ‘what constitutes an emergency, and for whom?’. Surely an inability to service basic needs at any time, would qualify. Their main departure from wholesale advocacy for food charity however is an increase in incomes to improve food security, which echoes the holistic systems-based approach to understanding food need, that the organisations interviewed also held.

Reacting to an ever-increasing demand, which has been the case for NZ’s community food organisations, limits opportunities to question how charitable food is being administered - its nutritional content, its cultural appropriateness, or whether it is provided in a dignifying, mana-enhancing way. Taking these in turn, the healthfulness and quality of food charity food was commented on by participants. At Hui 1, organisations commented on the lack of “conversation about health and healthy food” during the COVID-19 response. In this moment of shock, providing nutritionally adequate food had to be side-lined to meet the demand of those in need. An interviewee from a community food hub, discussed wanting to improve the communities access to “good food.” Rather than using loaded terms such as ‘healthy,’ they explained their

goal to simplify the message and use “good food” to refer to nutritious and locally sourced food. They said:

I think when they come to the food hub it’s almost like an alternative option rather than going to McDonald’s. The same money they’re going to spend to have bad food, they [get to] have good, nutritious, quality food, which is done by the community, and the money is going to stay there. [Participant 2]

This person's views reflect the approach by community-based food organisations in aiming to provide an affordable and nutritious alternative to families with limited income. For participant three, serving a “restaurant-quality” pay-as-you-feel meal is an attempt to bring nutritional food and dignity into the charity space. Participant five also reflected on the nutritional content and appropriateness of food charity food. Their social service organisation has worked to challenge the nutritional content of food parcels delivered by community food organisations in NZ by creating a standard food parcel measure. They work with NZFN and AFRA to ensure providers access fresh, nutrient-dense foods. While this might improve the nutritional quality of food parcels in NZ, it also reinforces the traditional food bank and food parcel method of food distribution. Aligning with what Wakefield et al. (2013) concluded, these organisations can both challenge and reinforce the charity model of food provision.

Regarding the cultural appropriateness of food, participant two explained the goal of the food hub in providing affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food. They noted that as the hub adapted to the cultural flavour of the location and community, it caught more community members attention and they began selling more. The hub makes a concerted effort to provide culturally appropriate food – both the team (employees and volunteers) and the menu reflect the multicultural character of the community. Māori, Pasifika, South Asian and Pakeha cultural values and flavours are embedded in the hub, reflecting the diversity within the community, and hāngī and umu (Pacific Island term for earth oven) are utilised.

To the latter point, one national-scale social service organisation which works alongside community food organisations across NZ, acknowledges that shame is commonly felt by those in need when they ask for help. This can be a barrier to accessing the food they need. Kore Hiakai (2021c) describes a mana-enhancing practice of food distribution as thinking through ways of breaking down these barriers and enabling people and whānau to access food in ways

that enhance their autonomy and right to make decisions and that provide a positive experience. The mana-to-mana tool aims to approach food inequality in a way that honours Te Tiriti and cultural dignity. A mana-to-mana practice means that the relationships between community food organisations and recipients are not conducted in a way that would compound their state of whakamā (shame), but contributes to the restoration of their mana (Kore Hiakai, 2021c).

Significantly, Kore Hiakai (2021a), a social service organisation with experience in the slower, deeper work of addressing hunger's root causes, defines food security using the following three dimensions/objectives:

1. Ensuring all people have regular access to sufficient, nutritious, sustainably sourced, culturally appropriate food and access includes economic, physical, and social access to kai.
2. Ensuring food is sustainably sourced, including food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management to enhance environmental, economic, social, and physical health.
3. Ensuring the inclusion of community-led initiatives that increase food production, knowledge of food production, and empower people to access their own food and build the level of food security within our local communities.

Food security is not only about food – it is about resilience in a community, adequate housing and income, affordable food, shortened supply chains, and access to land and knowledge to grow food and more. Conversely, food insecurity is defined as a state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious, sustainably sourced, culturally appropriate food, including the right to self-determine how food is accessed. The provision of food through food parcels or low-cost meals provided by charities are examples of responses to food insecurity. Importantly, Kore Hiakai (2021a) makes the distinction between temporary and food insecurity more broadly, noting that temporary food insecurity is caused by sudden shocks, such as natural disasters, or personal shocks such as a sudden change in health or familial circumstance. Notably, Kore Hiakai provides a more comprehensive definition of food security than the definitions outlined in Table 2 and incorporates a dimension that speaks to culturally relevant foods explicitly.

Instead of discounting a charity-based approach to food security, which as explained in Chapter Two, has received considerable critique, nor discounting a systems-approach, I argue that both

approaches are necessary to create a holistic multi-level approach to addressing food need. This echoes Cloke et al. (2017) sentiment that *both* revolutionary change and immediate food redistribution are needed now. Because of the attention paid to the negative impacts of food charity, Cloke et al. argue that critical human geographers have neglected the complexities within these spaces. In the context of food banking, Cloke et al. contend that they offer more than just a response to food insecurity. They view food banks as spaces of care and encounter capable of incubating political and ethical values and with practices and subjectivities that can challenge neoliberal austerity. Cloke et al. view food banks as an ethical and political response to welfare ‘in the meantime’ that bring together values other than neoliberal capitalism as a response to austere conditions. They suggest that we need to appreciate how spaces of charitable care can transcend short-term pragmatism and offer spaces for ethical talk and performance that connect to broader transformative politics and praxis. Similarly, while recognising the importance and value in the normative narratives of food charity, Williams et al. (2016) argue that these critiques can miss or downplay opportunities. By this, they refer to the potential for these spaces to generate new relationships and enable dialogue between people with different experiences, backgrounds, incomes, cultures, resources and values. Food aid organisations represent important spaces of encounter between individuals of differing backgrounds and within which dominant discourses of poverty may be reproduced, reinforced or challenged (Williams et al., 2016).

Williams et al. (2016) experience of the Levington Foodbank in the UK revealed that volunteering acted as a catalyst for a transformation in the ethical and political sensibilities. Through the experience of volunteering, volunteers shared experiences of becoming ‘sensitised’ to people’s stories drawing attention to broader structural issues such as the precarious labour market and welfare cuts and reforms. This finding is in opposition with Poppendieck’s (1998) critique of traditional food charity, which argued that volunteering acted as a ‘moral safety valve’ and placated energies for political campaigning against the systemic injustices. For some individuals volunteering at the Levington Foodbank “invigorated a desire for wider structural change and social justice” (Williams et al., 2016, p.). Further, volunteers who had previously identified as apolitical, disinterested or conservative reported a sharper emotional response to the failings of government policy and a greater willingness to engage in various forms of ‘anti-poverty’ activism. Other volunteers spread awareness of these issues to their wider social networks by engaging in challenging discourses about poverty and

deservedness, and working to recruit other volunteers and supporters willing to engage in and speak out about issues of food poverty and insecurity (Williams et al., 2016).

While they are reactive, the actions these organisations take in the meantime have the capacity to influence systems change. As Carceller-Sauras and Theesfeld (2021) noted, when several individual initiatives gain momentum and start being considered in policy debates, the overarching discourse is scaled-up and can transform into policy. Participant two commented on the ability for the food hub to influence wider change:

It's a tiny micro initiative within the system, but that has been enough to create a little bit of disruption in terms of thinking. [Participant 2]

The above quote shows the participants desire to disrupt the status quo. Indeed, the food hub has created disruption in terms of thinking as the Auckland Council has supported the model and food hubs have been established in other locations in Tāmaki Makaurau. Community-based food aid organisations represent an essential informal, local, non-institutionalised method of addressing food insecurity. While they alleviate symptoms of food insecurity, these organisations can also influence systems-level change towards food security. As Wekerle (2004, p.) explains, food aid organisations “facilitate spaces of encounter that can, even if only partially, rework, reinforce and generate new and progressive political sensibilities among food bank volunteers and clients, then there is scope for food banks to connect with, and help catalyse, wider food justice campaigns that seek to address deeper inequalities in the food system.” Similarly, Lindberg et al.’s (2015) work indicated that a combination of innovative strategies, across state, private and the third sector, are required to reduce food insecurity. The significant demand for charitable food provision only emphasises the importance of this insight. Uncertainties exist about the present and future contributions of the charitable food sector in meeting the needs of recipients and, ultimately, the experience and causes of food insecurity. Therefore, research into the experiences, challenges, barriers and goals that these community food provision organisations encounter is worthwhile to consider how better to support these initiatives (Lindberg et al., 2015) in working towards food secure futures.

5.3 Theme two: (In)stability

In this section, I describe how the challenge of reacting in the meantime to alleviate the immediate food insecurity of recipients is compounded by many other challenges these organisations encounter in their day-to-day operations. These challenges create a state of instability, whereby these organisations are constantly in flux or are subject to ad hoc resources and relationships. Stability, in a food security context and as discussed in this thesis, relates to an increased certainty surrounding the availability, volumes, variety and access to adequate and culturally appropriate foods. For the organisations involved in this research, achieving stability, whether it be stability of resources, or stability in relationships, was identified as a challenge, and instability was identified as a barrier to creating food-secure communities. Notably, this aligns with Poppendiecks' (1998) findings, as she named instability as one of her seven deadly "ins" of food charity. She described the unpredictability inherent in a system reliant on charitable donations that ebb and flow based on the needs and priorities of corporate and individual donors.

5.3.1 Stability of resources

5.3.1.1 Food

The charitable food sector relies on donations, be it monetary or food, from government, industry, philanthropy, or communities themselves. One of the most significant challenges for any community food organisation and described by participants in this research is the stability of resources, including food, funding and space. In addition to stability, Poppendieck (1998) referred to insufficiency and inadequacy of food charity in her critique, noting that unpredictability is inherent in a system reliant on charitable donations. Participants made the following comments in relation to their organisations' experiences:

Often the can is empty... we didn't always have something for the following week [to give to the food-insecure]. [Participant 4]

What is frustrating is when we don't have enough food to serve the numbers. That's not necessarily our fault by any means, you just feel bad for the customers and say 'sorry, run out of food'. [Participant 6]

It is common for demand for food charity to exceed the supply of food available, which in turn can lead to a greater reliance on the community for support and donations. Along with grappling with knowing whether they would have enough food to meet the demand, participants also described experiences of receiving unsuitable deliveries from donors. For example, one participant shared an occasion where they were sent a pallet of coffee and tea from a donor when they were expecting a pallet of food. The participant said:

It was great to have that, but I just contacted them again and said... we can't feed people on coffee and tea. [Participant 4]

After contacting the donor, the participant was able to obtain a more suitable and appropriate delivery the following week that contained food items such as corned beef, mackerel and coconut milk. Given this organisation is based in an area that services a large number of Pasifika families, this donation was significantly more appropriate, not just nutritionally but also culturally. The cultural appropriateness of food donations and offerings is discussed in greater detail in the next theme.

To create a sense of stability, community food providers have to be resourceful in order to access and utilise food and employ strategies such as growing their own food, purchasing or receiving it for free directly from manufacturers, retailers, cafes and restaurants, and farmers or from larger-scale food rescue distributors (Healy et al., 2020). A challenge for community food organisations is the mismatch between the type of products that are often donated or arise as surplus and the variety of products the organisations need or are suitable to the dietary needs of their communities. In the context of food rescue, often charities have no use for what has been donated as surplus or it is not sufficient or appropriate for distribution. This can be difficult for both the retailers and the organisations because each organisation's needs will be different from the next (Papargyropoulou et al., 2022). Further, this can create competition between food charities for resources and donations. Smaller organisations are often disadvantaged and come up short next to organisations with a large public profile. A participant described this experience, where a supermarket who had once provided them with a large volume of rescue food has since re-directed its surplus to a much larger organisation:

Then Salvation Army signed a contract with Countdown and then all the rescue food started going to them. [Participant 4]

5.3.1.2 Funding

Community-based food initiatives need funding support because the effective and safe redistribution of food requires storage infrastructure, transport, appliances such as fridges and freezers, and volunteers and staff, all of which incur capital and operational costs (Papargyropoulou et al., 2022). Having enough cold storage was seen as a significant challenge for participants, and this challenge is likely to grow as food rescue becomes more present within NZ's food aid system. Hui 2 identified navigating bureaucratic and funding barriers as one of the biggest challenges for community food organisations. Developing practices to more effectively navigate these barriers was seen as essential to creating more secure community food projects, and thereby creating a more food-secure community. For example, navigating funding for labour to manage gardens, facilitation and coordination of growing projects as well as investing in pilot projects were prominent in the discussions.

Funding for food-related projects is generally fragmented and short-term in nature (Cooper & Kennerley, 2019; Papargyropoulou et al., 2022). In a Canadian study of emergency food provision, Wakefield et al. (2013) reported that organisations were perpetually uncertain of where funding would come from and whether it would be enough to sustain the initiative. Seeking out and applying for funds can be extremely time-consuming for organisations. This continual uncertainty prevents groups from advocating for broader systemic changes because they are caught up with attending to the circumstances of their own precarity, as well as busy responding to the immediate demand and food needs. As organisations have become institutionalised and demand has grown, the need for funding and donations has also increased. Critically, Cooper and Kennerley (2019) highlight that as these organisations receive more funds, the system of food charity is further reinforced.

5.3.1.3 Space

The stability of space or a 'venue' was seen as one of the biggest challenges for participants. During Hui 2, navigating the bureaucratic barriers that are associated with using community spaces was also seen as extremely challenging. When acquiring a space, the space needs to be secured for an extended period and with few strings attached for the community food organisation to be successful. Using the example of a community garden, a participant described the lack of stability in securing a space in the short-term:

When they say, oh, you can do that for the next two years, there's no stability in that, so why would you plant in that. [Participant 5]

Here the participant explains that there is little value in a community investing their efforts into a community garden that they may need to give up after two years. Tenure security is extremely important to protecting community investments (Mintz & McManus, 2014). Conversely, the same participant described a situation where if the land is gifted for a maara kai for fifty years, this ensures stability for the community.

Several participants commented on the local government's role in creating space and ensuring its stability for the community.

I think that stability comes from... local government and the role that local government can play in that space. [Participant 5]

Local government can create some of a sense of stability and even leadership pathways. Then you see all sorts of things change. [Participant 5]

For one organisation, the importance of spaces and venues for communities to use free of charge or rent or with reduced overheads was seen as necessary for the success of the initiatives.

Council have lots of buildings and places that are just waiting for development, or they're empty. This house was empty for five years before we got here. So yeah, why not use the spaces like that for community or initiatives like this? But that's all part of the questioning to re-thinking of how we do things. [Participant 2]

To address these challenges and move towards a more resilient system of food provision, the same organisation stressed the importance of having a commercial aspect to the model to ensure its viability and longevity. By having a commercial aspect to the model, it ensures the continuity of the project and builds resilience because it is not dependent upon outside funding (Miller, 2021).

5.3.2 Stability of relationships

The stability of relationships, whether with volunteers, donors, government, or the communities themselves, poses a significant challenge for community food organisations. These relationships are often critical to their operations but these relationships can be precarious and come with “strings attached.” [Hui 1]

5.3.2.1 Volunteers

A common challenge for community-based food aid organisations described in the literature is the rotation of volunteers. This is seen as challenging for the organisations because a significant amount of time is spent recruiting and training volunteers. In other research, the reliance on volunteers was seen as a challenge due to the unreliability, time constraints, and an inability to find sufficient volunteers to meet the demand (Papargyropoulou et al., 2022). For most participants, relying on volunteer labour was not a significant challenge because they had a strong base of regularly returning volunteers. However, organisations that had other locations outside of Tāmaki Makaurau identified this as a pain point. Having a solid volunteer base was essential to their daily practices for most participants. One participant said:

Having those regular volunteers just makes everything run so smoothly. [Participant 1]

One participant who is involved in an organisation that has a committed volunteer base of people that regularly return made the following comment:

It’s not for the faint-hearted, and some of the volunteers just find it too much, but not many, it sort of weeds itself out. [Participant 7]

While the stability of volunteers was not described as a significant concern by participants at the time of this research, a central problem regarding the resilience of community food organisations is the reliance on volunteers, who are often older or retired (Dekkinga et al., 2022). Since the outbreak of COVID-19, organisations have seen a drop in this volunteers base because of their vulnerability to the virus. As COVID-19 becomes more widespread in the NZ communities, there are fears that the number of people volunteering will drop. Another concern is volunteer fatigue and concerns for volunteers health and wellbeing as demand continues to increase. NZ’s community food organisations have experienced an unrelenting increase in demand since the outbreak of COVID-19, creating significant stress and burnout for volunteers

(Roche & Odgen, 2016). One participant described organisations as “beyond breaking point” because of the amount of food that is being distributed.

5.3.2.2 Community

A critical and often overlooked challenge for community food organisations is establishing themselves within a community, creating community and reaching food-insecure populations. Given the stigma that has been associated with seeking food assistance, food-insecure people may prefer to remain anonymous and not want to make their struggles public, particularly within close-knit, small rural communities. Moreover, community food providers are often based utilitarian buildings which may present a barrier for some (Cloke, 2017). With regards to creating and/or finding a community, participants commented:

Creating a community collective, you know, getting people to work together is not simple and establishing an entity that is for purpose not for profit. [Participant 2]

Some people will put their hands up to ask for help whereas it's often the invisible families that don't want to ask for help that really need help. [Hui 1]

When an organisation cannot source sufficient monetary or food donations from their traditional sources, they often must rely on the generosity and contributions from food-secure members of the community. Church-affiliated food groups will, for example, turn to their members for support. A participant commented on the generosity of the community during a nation-wide COVID-19 lockdown:

We'd get random people in the community turning up with shopping bags... six bags of shopping, or something like that. [Participant 4]

While having support from the community is beneficial for these organisations, establishing and maintaining trust with the community and the people they are serving is essential. A participant commented on the distrust that is often felt by people seeking help:

There's a lot of things out there that are trying to help the community, but there's a lack of trust, and often there's sort of strings attached to services that help them. [Participant 2]

Several participants discussed distrust as deterring people from accessing food support, especially when there are requirements (from the organisation, funders or donors) to collect recipients personal information. Participant four commented on the distrust in accessing food support during the first nation-wide COVID-19 lockdown:

Some people who were here on work visas, they were actually reluctant to ask [for food support] because they were worried it was going to impact their immigration applications and that sort of thing. [Participant 4]

This quote speaks to the intersectional precarity of those accessing these services and relates back to participants identifying food insecurity as a ‘systems’ issue. Similar comments were made in Hui 1 and are explained in the next section which turns to relationships with the state.

5.3.2.3 State/government

Governments can offer some stability to organisations through funding, resourcing and removing regulatory roadblocks. They can also support establishing and shaping the organisation's projects (Miller, 2021; Wakefield et al., 2013). However, some food aid organisations will refuse to work with or receive support from government agencies because of the contingencies that can come with this. For example, government agencies that make food support conditional on the provision of recipient names erodes trust, causing some community groups to reject food and donations. Importantly, Poppendieck (1998) noted that there is a tension between meeting the growing needs of food-insecure people and the expectations that come with government and donor funding.

It was recognised by participants that there is a huge distrust for many whānau with government agencies because of negative experiences with WINZ and other government agencies. Members of a community food organisation in Hui 1 described being offered food parcels in exchange for a list of recipient names. This organisation refused as they were unwilling to provide the list of names after seeing overstayers deported in the previous lockdown. A participant said:

For a community group to be responsible for a punitive outcome is not what this kaupapa is about. [Hui 1]

Organisations are often constrained by stakeholders, such as government and other funders, who ask them to provide data or evidence that the initiatives are making an impact or difference. A participant from a community dining initiative described setting funders expectations ahead of time:

We try to set up expectations of funders in the way that we do our applications so that it's not usually onerous in terms of data. [Participant 3]

Barton et al. (2011) recognise that there is a growing interest to demonstrate the effects of community food initiatives from a wide range of groups – from academics to community members, donors and funding organisations, and those within the organisations. Formal, established organisations are often expected to develop frameworks to evaluate outcomes concerning the intended goals. Funding-related partnership requirements can be a barrier for some organisations who find complex and lengthy evaluations and reporting challenging, financially taxing and time-consuming.

5.3.2.4 Supermarkets (industry)

In Tāmaki Makaurau, many community food organisations are in relationship with the local supermarket or other local food stores. As noted in the literature, supermarkets are increasingly involved in food security reduction schemes (Kennedy & Snell, 2021), usually through surplus food redistribution. Of the participants interviewed, six of them were a part of an organisation that was in relationship with a local supermarket. As explained above, in some cases the relationship can be precarious, with participant four describing how the organisations relationship with the supermarket ended when a larger and more well-known organisation took over in receiving rescued food donations. In a study on supermarket involvement in food security schemes, Kennedy and Snell (2021) identified three common challenges in the relationship between supermarkets and food charities:

1. They found a mismatch between the values and goals of supermarkets and charities involved in food security work.
2. Charities spoke of a one-sided relationship that did not align with their capabilities or meet the needs of their recipients.
3. Often supermarkets' own policies, structures, and practices can contribute to food insecurity within their own businesses and supply chains.

The relationship between food charity organisations and supermarkets and other industries can act as a barrier in food charities efforts to alleviate food insecurity. There is a distinct power imbalance supermarkets and food charities, which is exacerbated by a lack of shared values (Kennedy & Snell, 2021). The relationship is often formed and implemented based on the supermarkets' needs, rather than being mutually agreed upon. Food charities are often required to collect donations at a time and place convenient to the supermarket, sometimes with little notice. Kennedy and Snell (2021) reported that the charities feel as though they have little voice in this uneven power dynamic and were unable to reject donations in case it jeopardised what they received in the future. Papargyropoulou et al. (2022) describe the power of supermarkets in this relationship in that retailers are not prepared to expand redistribution efforts beyond the extent that it was economically viable, despite their best moral, ethical and environmental intentions. Often charities are left with unfit food for redistribution (spoiled) and therefore have the burden of disposing of the food. In this situation, there is little power to negotiate demands with retailers. Everything has to be done on the retailers' terms despite charities doing them a favour by taking their food surpluses.

5.3.4 An opportunity for stability

Although the first research aim was to identify the challenges associated with moving beyond a charity model of food provision, naturally, in identifying these challenges, participants were also able to identify the opportunities that create stability and resilience for the organisation. Clearly, secure space, funds, resources and stable relationships are essential to creating a sense of stability for these organisations. Another opportunity for stability that several participants identified was the importance of leadership and collaboration between groups. In regards to leadership, participant five said:

If you've got leadership and you've got stability, then you've got a higher likelihood of success.

They discussed how in many cases, funders would fund an initiative that would “only get so far and then someone moves on, and it all falls over.” They believe that an initiative with strong leadership is more likely to be sustainable and make it long-term. When a community project has community members who have stayed with the initiative for several years, it builds trust between the initiative and the community. In their view, leadership creates a sense of stability

that could withstand the challenges of insecure funding, space, resources and precarious relationships. Participant seven supported this view, who said “most good things like that start from the top-down” when speaking about the success of the organisation they volunteer for. The importance of community connectedness was highlighted by Cavaye (2001, p.), who said, “it is through action, participation and contact that the community becomes more vital, more able to manage change with stronger networks, organisational ability, skills, leadership and passion.”

5.4 Theme three: Towards resilience

Despite the challenges associated with community food provisioning towards food security identified by participants and detailed above, participants also described a desire to create and move toward local food system resilience in the face of these challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted and re-inspired discussions around food inequities by highlighting the enormous need for assistance. This has led community food organisations to consider the inequities in the NZ food system and collectively take action towards creating food-secure communities that will be more resilient to future shocks.

5.4.1 Everyday resilience

With pandemics (Zerbian et al., 2021) and crises of different kinds, such as the Christchurch earthquake (Berno, 2017), South Island floods and Northland droughts, there is a need to move to a model that assures everyday resilience towards food security. As identified by Iriti et al. (2022), major drivers of food insecurity include biophysical and environmental, economic and market, political and institutional and economic and socio-cultural drivers. These can manifest in climate-related disasters, economic slowdowns and downturns, conflicts and food crises, and poverty and inequality, which exacerbate food insecurity. Participants expressed concern over the resiliency of NZ food systems to these events. One participant said:

That's the question that I keep asking, if we have an earthquake tomorrow or if with climate change, you know things are going to change, are we going to get to the point where we should be able to have local access to food at all times. [Participant 2]

While not every participant nor organisation referred directly to ‘resilience’, this concept is representative of the shared goals and aspirations that participants expressed. For example, when speaking of the organisations goals, participants said:

Our goal is simple, we want to see a food ecosystem in Aotearoa that is thriving for both people and the planet. [Hui 1]

The opposite to poverty is not wealth; it's actually connection, and it's community, and so the more robust our communities can be, and to a degree self-sufficient or interdependent in their sufficiency, I think the more food-secure our whole nation would be. [Participant 5]

Over the course of this research, participants expressed desires to see a more resilient, sustainable and equitable food system that moves beyond a charitable model of food provision for those experiencing hardship. Organisations described an acute awareness that more food does not equate to resilience. Instead, they are staunch advocates and seek to address the underlying structural causes of food insecurity and poverty. These organisations bridge the gap between the two dominant and competing responses to food insecurity: charity and justice. The charity model is associated with voluntarism, neighbourliness, localism, spiritual good, and personal involvement whereas the justice model is associated with dignity, entitlement, accountability, and equity (Poppendieck, 1998). Traditionally thought to be concerned only with emergency food relief, these organisations are expanding operations, converging and working together at multiple levels and adopting a community food security approach to create a more resilient food system (Wakefield et al., 2012).

5.4.2 Resilience to crises and COVID-19

Ensuring food system resilience is a significant concern in the wake of COVID-19 (Jones et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of food systems, and we have seen how unforeseen disturbances can worsen food insecurity on a global scale. Disruptions to food systems has led to an increase in poverty and inequality, particularly for vulnerable populations (Martin-Neuninger, 2021). All dimensions of food security – availability, accessibility, utilisation, and stability – have been impacted. The rise in food insecurity has led to the consumption of inadequate, inappropriate, or unhealthy foods among some individuals

and households (Antwi et al., 2021). To respond to the increased food needs of the food-insecure, the demand for food aid from community organisations has grown exponentially across many countries. Charitable and community food aid organisations have grown and expanded operations to meet the immediate food needs of those struggling (Martin-Neuninger, 2021).

Despite the disruption to food systems by COVID-19, over the previous two years, NZ has continued to export high-quality food worldwide, highlighting we do not have a food deficit but a lack of access, including food affordability for those on low incomes. Miller (2021) notes that NZ's food products have been trusted and in-demand internationally, highlighting the importance of food production. However, COVID-19 has exposed the fragilities within NZ's food system, the inequalities present, and the need for communities to be self-sufficient. Critically, she states, "if we are to learn from COVID-19, then we need to not just meet immediate needs, but also address the underlying issues that have caused those to arise".

Participants commented on and described how COVID-19 and the associated lockdown periods in NZ have both limited and driven opportunities for food system resilience. For some, they were unable to adjust to the increased health and safety or logistical requirements and had to no choice but to shut down operations until they could comply with requirements. For others, COVID-19 has prompted active involvement in finding solutions to food insecurity in their communities and acted as a catalyst to bring organisations together to create shared, core infrastructure, and acknowledge shared problems. A strong theme running through the discussions in Hui 2 was the need for a collective approach. This aligns with my own calls for a holistic, multi-level approach to food security. During the hui and in the related outputs, they identify a need for structural change, relational change and transformative change. For this to happen, a coordinated and collective response is needed to build food-secure communities. Sharing knowledge and deepening community connections were seen as essential components that look beyond emergency provision and towards self-determination.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges for food production, distribution and consumption and has exacerbated existing inequalities, in some cases it has provided new opportunities for local communities work differently, to increase collaboration and improve outcomes for those most in need (Zerbian et al., 2021). Further, the COVID-19 pandemic provides an example of how responses to major disruption can bring about collective

questioning of current models of food aid and create strong collaborative bonds within the existent organised networks (Zerbian et al., 2021). However, Feldman and Goodman (2021) warn against the success of voluntary, charity-led food security initiatives. Their ability to keep the vulnerable from going hungry or dying during the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions might signal to governments that these initiatives are sufficient, and thus provide further rationale for more and deeper cuts to social services and support for the most vulnerable groups and individuals. While mitigating the need for food aid is vital, at some level, the need for these community-led food organisations will remain. It is therefore important to improve the efficacy and effectiveness of these organisations, especially their ability to respond in times of shock (Martin-Neuninger, 2021).

Participant accounts indicated that collaboration between community food providers had increased as a result of COVID-19. Further, the hui that I attended was some of the first of its kind and provided a concrete example of how organisations were collaborating. However, recent research from Chu Ling (2022), who interviewed a policy analyst from a social service organisation, identified that collaboration with other organisations has eroded. In the past, providers kept records of who was accessing support. Information was shared between different groups, which gave insight into what kind of help people were getting or needing, enabling multiple organisations to support the same family or individual. As assessment criteria have changed (such as who is eligible for a food parcel), information is no longer being shared between organisations, creating an information silo in this space. Consequently, instead of building resilience and breaking cycles of dependency, these fragmented efforts prolong food insecurity as such efforts fail to recognise the interconnectedness of issues that result in people needing support. This has led the this social service organisation and other organisations to move away from food parcel support because it is a temporary solution, viewed as a last resort, to a deeply systemic issue. When there is no collaboration between organisations in this space, fragmented accounts of how best to support people in need exist.

While the impact of COVID-19 was a central topic of discussion for participants, several participants made clear that food insecurity was present before the pandemic, and COVID-19 has only exacerbated the crisis. One participant said:

Food insecurity was always here. Lockdown didn't create food insecurity. It just exacerbated it. [Hui 1]

The NZ government's response to the increased pressure on food aid due to the COVID-19 pandemic was reactive. As mentioned in Chapter Three, after the initial outbreak of COVID-19 NZ, the government allocated \$32 million over two years towards supporting food banks, food rescue and other community organisations distributing food to vulnerable people, and those building community-led solutions for food security (MSD, 2020). During the extended, ten-week lockdown during 2021, MSD FSC team allocated an additional \$12 million to support community food organisations and provided support in the form of food (organised through partner organisations NZFN and AFRA) and grants (Muru-Lanning, 2021). One participant said it was four weeks into this lockdown before they began receiving funding from MSD. Access to food has continued to be a challenge with an increasing number of people needing to isolate as COVID-19 variants spread in NZ communities. For people isolating, food was identified as the greatest need and has been the most requested hardship grant provided by MSD, making up 67% of all grants. This continued demand for food assistance has seen a further \$85 million invested by the government in food banks.

This is the first time that community food aid organisations in NZ have received government funding (other than one-off grants). Across the ditch, Australian governments have funded charitable food assistance (Oz Harvest, Second Bite). However, McNaughton et al. (2021) note that funds have been inadequate and subject to considerable fluctuation, limiting the capacities of these organisations to meet growing needs. Funding these organisations presents an interesting paradox: money and resources are increasingly going into the food charity system, yet the system is not one designed to get smaller (Dey & Humphries, 2015). The NZ governments response to the increased need was reactive. What we saw in the response was a capital investment in food charity which is of concern – we do want to emerge from the pandemic with a bigger, better system of food charity.

Critically, Muru-Lanning (2021) acknowledges that there is a lack of *secure* (or stable) funding for food banks and other community food aid organisations. She calls on the government to provide more than ad hoc boosts of money to these organisations. The impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on community organisations were far-reaching and were not limited to having to more people to serve – supermarket restrictions made it difficult to buy in bulk, businesses had less surplus food, and large number of volunteers dropped off due to the risk of the virus. An interviewee of Muru-Lanning (2021, n.p.) (a co-founder of a food bank charity in Tāmaki Makaurau) said, “the quality of our food has gone downhill dramatically over the lockdown

period because I've had no volunteers for cooking." A lack of volunteers meant switching from their usual hot home-cooked meals, sandwiches, fruits, and baking to less nutritious but more convenient food like pizzas. The political decision to direct people who are struggling towards food aid, rather than striving to give them self-determination, neglects food's important well-being functions where people have differing tastes, allergies, dislikes, cultural traditions, and dietary requirements. The same interviewee made the important note that while her food bank strives to provide as much choice as possible, it is still a limiting model. She reiterates that the most vulnerable are deserving of choice, especially when it comes to kai, and that food autonomy is a key part of maintaining a person's dignity.

Community food organisations in Tāmaki Makaurau showed organisational resilience during COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns by adapting their procedures for distribution and intake, allowing them to ensure the continuation of food aid. Such changes are temporary but have, in some instances, led to more long-term changes (Dekkinga et al., 2022) as the COVID-19 context provides an important chance to re-think existing food practices, including responses to food insecurity (Dombroski et al., 2020). While the COVID-19 crisis has brought a need for immediate change to cope with the ongoing situation, there is an opportunity to implement long-term changes (Martin-Neuninger, 2021). Food aid organisations can offer valuable relief to individuals and households in need, however, there are structural issues that create inequalities where people become dependent on food aid (Dekkinga et al., 2022). Therefore, implementing change is not a task for food charities alone. System-wide barriers confront and inhibit efforts to foster resilience and just local food systems (Daether, 2021). In order to cope with future shocks and ongoing food insecurity, governments, industry and others could make longer term structural changes to protect the most vulnerable, taking principles of resilience into account (Martin-Neuninger, 2021). While food aid initiatives appeared resilient by adjusting operations and meeting the steep increase in demand, Dekkinga et al. (2022) argues this cannot be mistaken for a resilient society that ensures safe, sufficient and dignified access to food for all. Further, they warn that this resilience may be jeopardised when social interaction lessens and social inequalities grow bigger during the pandemic.

5.4.2.1 A dignified experience of food

Throughout the world, many are calling to design food systems promoting human dignity i.e., considering dignity as crucial not only for life quality but also for health (Arduin & Saïdi-

Kabeche, 2022). As described in Chapter Two, one of the most extensive criticisms of food charity organisations is the consequences of indignity and the stigma attached to these services. In her critique of food charity, Poppendieck (1998) identified indignity as one of the seven deadly “ins” whereby receiving food charity is a stigmatising experience because of a lack of correspondence between the food provided and the preferences and desires of recipients. For example, the food provided may not meet religious or cultural preferences, recipients may not like the food, it may lack nutritional adequacy, or they may not have the knowledge or resources to prepare it. Further, Poppendieck described the costs to human dignity of receiving charity based on the constructed identities as ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots.’

Participants described a deep awareness of stigma and indignity within the food charity system. One participant who is involved in a community food initiative that provides low-cost nutritious meals to the local community said the following about the dominant approach to emergency food provision:

People feel bad about food banks. The vast majority really don't like the idea of going and getting free food or asking for food, and that's just a given, you know, we know that. [Participant 2]

For this participant, operating as a food bank was not conducive to ensuring dignity. Several organisations mentioned the importance of moving beyond simple food access to incorporate other dimensions of food security in their projects. In particular, providing a nutritionally adequate, culturally appropriate and dignified experience food was described by many organisations as important. A participant made the following comment on dignity:

The term dignifying for me was allowing the community to come to a place, and families to come to a place, where I identify myself, everyone is in there... it's not just for one ethnic group or another one, it feels like a community place. It's run by the community, it's not for-profit, it's for-purpose, the money - it's clear that it's going back into the kaupapa and the kaupapa is just to provide good and affordable food. [Participant 2]

This participant is a part of a community food initiative in Tāmaki Makaurau that aims to provide nourishing food that is affordable, locally produced and culturally appropriate. Based

in an area where healthy food options are limited, this initiative offers a healthy and affordable menu based on the communities preferences. In addition to this, the initiative provides the community with a space of *manaakitanga* (hospitality, kindness, support) with educational programmes on cooking, gardening, composting, learning about healthy food, and putting on cultural events. The initiative makes a concerted effort to provide culturally appropriate food to reflect the multicultural character of the community.

The practices of food charity organisations to assuage experiences and feelings of stigma and indignity are often overlooked in the literature. Williams et al. (2016) examined how both the recipients of food charity and volunteers adopt a range of strategies to reduce inequalities of power between them. These included using humour, discussing shared interests, and continuing to deepen relationships beyond one of the ‘giver’ and ‘receiver’ after the service had ended. Likewise, Graham et al. (2018b) outlined how aspects of a community meal can act as a humanising space for those who attend. They found that a community meal could provide a constant, reliable source of food within a judgement-free space. However, given the barriers that community food providers encounter in their day-to-day operations, trying to meet the religious, cultural and dietary preferences of recipients can be difficult. Moreover, the high volume of service demand can limit the organisations capacities to respond to criticisms such as these. One participant urged caution in celebrating organisations who focus on one point of improvement (e.g. socialisation or dignifying experience of food) because in some cases it can stop there and not go beyond that.

5.4.3 Advocating and leading structural change

While charitable and community-based food organisations have been critiqued for sustaining the systemic conditions that lead to food insecurity, what is often overlooked is the capacity for these organisations to build political will for large-scale structural and policy change while also improving immediate access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food. Participants expressed desires to move beyond a charitable model of community food provisioning. The following two quotes were drawn from participant interviews:

We need to move away from the charity model. We need to move away from the dependency model. [Participant 2]

No one wants to sit in the space for our communities of doing emergency food parcels. Everyone wants to live in a world and have a food system where that's not an issue. So that started us looking more deeply at those broader issues. [Hui 1]

Participants also expressed a keenness to address issues within NZ food systems. One participant commented:

We need to design a new food system. We often say, the food system is working exactly as it was designed, it's not broken. [Hui 1]

Critically, Wakefield et al. (2013) note that community food security projects can both challenge and reinforce the charity model of food provision. Some organisations maintain traditional understandings of the charity model, while others specifically acknowledge and try to address the critiques of food charity and some do a bit of both. While the organisations interviewed as part of this research are making strides towards working beyond the traditional model of food charity, it is important to acknowledge that they are still constrained by the structural causes of food insecurity that curtail progress in this space (Wakefield et al., 2013). One participant said:

While you can have a really good community response to food which brings food really close to people it doesn't address the poverty that's being experienced through the cost of housing, or it doesn't address the fact that women are the ones that are most commonly in a space where they have to actually really really think about this. It occupies a large part of their thought process through the day, and you can't take the gender off it, and you can't take the racism off it. [Participant 5]

Within recognising the ability for community food organisations to address some of the critiques of traditional food charity and move beyond these, the root cause of food insecurity in NZ and other high-income countries is inadequate incomes coupled with an unaffordable standard of living. Sanders (2021) argues that direct investment in local food system activities along with investment into housing, transportation, and healthcare would indirectly bolster food security and provide a platform to boost physical and financial access to food. Additionally, not unlike other high-income nations, the NZ government has factored community and charitable food sources into their social services (Smith, 2011), and this was

commented on by multiple participants. One participant, who at the time was not a part of an organisation that was not receiving any funding from the NZ government, discussed the paradox of government agencies referring people in need on to food aid organisations:

It was kind of bizarre because we were supplying food to all these people, I mean for months and months and months, they were being referred to us from Kainga Ora, tenancy managers, WINZ, you know all sorts, and I thought this is kind of ironic because this is the government telling people to come to us for food, but they weren't giving us any money which to me is crazy. [Participant 4]

Research has reported on the distressing and degrading experience of seeking support from social service organisation, WINZ. Graham et al. (2019) found that some people in need chose to go without food rather than seek assistance from WINZ to protect their psychological wellbeing and dignity. The following comment was drawn from a community food organisation member:

Empowering, recognising that people have their own capability, they don't need to be reliant on social services, the model in the future must be one that draws on the capability that whānau have, not placing social services at the heart of the solution. [Hui 1]

The organisations demonstrated a willingness to engage in the difficult conversations needed to move towards meaningful change. However, the ability for organisations to advocate for policy change is constrained by the amount of time the organisations can devote, given other more immediate responsibilities of emergency food provision. Wakefield et al. (2013) participants' reported "finding time" was a problem and born out of having to prioritise serving clients over advocacy. Organisations described a willingness to engage in difficult conversations and action needed to move towards meaningful change. Sanders (2021) argues that by challenging the root-causes of food insecurity, food aid organisations have the power to reduce acute and long-term hardship. However, the ability for organisations to advocate for policy and structural-level change is constrained by the amount of time the organisations can devote, given other more immediate responsibilities of emergency food provision.

One community food initiative discussed how all sectors (central and local government, community, private and philanthropy) can do more to support local sustainable food resilience. For example, unlocking underutilised public land and facilities for community use, enabling local food production, smoothing regulatory paths, providing incentives and subsidies, supporting the establishment of community food groups and helping to build community engagement and leadership. The next section speaks further to how all sectors, but particularly central and local government, can implement changes towards resilience. The following section speaks further about how all sectors, particularly central and local government, can implement changes towards resilience.

5.4.4 A lack of definition, measurement and plan: an opportunity to build resilience

A literature review conducted by Cooper & Kennerley (2019) indicated that currently, no standard definitions for food security or insecurity are being used in NZ. This reinforces that food security is an ever-changing and flexible concept. The Ministry of Health has previously defined food security as “access to adequate, safe, affordable and acceptable food” and conversely, food insecurity as “when the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the ability to acquire such foods, is limited or uncertain” (University of Otago & Ministry of Health, 2011). Other government-initiated research and policy documents use various definitions (Bowers et al., 2009; Parnell et al., 2003). However, concepts of affordability and accessibility to appropriate food are incorporated in defining food security and food insecurity in most instances (Cooper & Kennerley, 2019). The lack of a consistent definition of food insecurity at a national level has a number of implications, including a lack of common understanding as to what food insecurity is and, therefore, a lack of focus on how to respond and address the issue. It would be beneficial for food insecurity to be defined at the national level so that this definition can be consistently used and applied at the regional and local levels (Cooper & Kennerley, 2019).

Despite persistent food insecurity in NZ, there is a lack of evidence and data, which restricts possibilities for solutions (Robinson et al., 2021). Since the last nationally representative assessment on food insecurity in 2008/09 by the University of Otago and the Ministry of Health, most of the discussion in policy and research in recent years has focused on the impact of food insecurity on children and health and nutritional responses. While interest in food insecurity is growing (particularly with the impact of COVID-19), there is insufficient data available to get a complete picture of the food insecurity problem. There are substantial gaps

in primary data sources used to measure and describe food insecurity, including no regular dataset developed to capture the social and health impact. Further, there has been no formal establishment of a measurement to understand the impact of COVID-19 on food insecurity in NZ (Tanielu, 2021). National and place-based measures of food insecurity in NZ are required to inform better policy and intervention initiatives. This can, in turn, highlight the need for more just economic systems in NZ and ensure all have access to enough, appropriate food (Robinson et al., 2021). A lack of measurement creates a policy void and, therefore, a lack of ownership of the issue (Lambie-Mumford, 2017). Establishing effective policy interventions and action is impossible without an accurate and clear idea of how many people are experiencing food insecurity now or identifying who may be vulnerable in the future.

Creswell Riol (2021) argues that a lack of data is one of the ways that inaction toward food insecurity in high-income countries is justified. This problem is summed up in the article's title by Friel et al. (2011) "No Data, No Problem, No Action." Food insecurity in high-income countries is not reported because it is not routinely measured using comparable measurements. As Riches (2018) has asserted, the first move that governments must make is the implementation of an assessment to determine how many people are affected. Instead of doing this, governments have favoured estimations calculated using proxy measurements e.g., national poverty statistics, or worse, food bank use. Consequently, food insecurity is not an issue because it is not measured and not measured because certain actors do not want it to be regarded as an issue.

An opportunity for food security and food resilience thinking (identified by participants and scholars) is establishing a national food strategy that sits clearly with one or several government ministries. Many participants commented on the need for a nation-wide, coordinated action to address issues within NZ food systems, whether through a strategy, roadmap, plan, or one participant even called for a Ministry of Food. A community food organisations member commented:

One of the things that we think is our biggest opportunity in NZ is that we do not have a domestic food policy or framework that sits in any single government, ministry, or any single council right now. [Hui 1]

Developing coordinated action around food security, through a food strategy, roadmap or plan was a topic of discussion at both hui. However, Hui 1's attention was paid to developing a national-level strategy whereas Hui 2 aimed to build local food strategies that enable a community of practitioners who support and sustain each other through growing and sharing food.

As it currently stands, the NZ government does not approach food in a coordinated way, despite food being one of NZ's primary economic revenues. The governmental approach to food insecurity has been labelled 'confusing' with a range of programmes operated by different departments. For example, The Ministry of Health facilitates various nutritional initiatives such as Healthy Families NZ, the Ministry of Education coordinates Lunches in Schools, MSD provides support through WINZ, the Ministry for the Environment spearheads food waste reduction and the Ministry for Primary Industries focuses food production and safety (Miller, 2021). None of these various groups have an explicit role or responsibility to ensure New Zealander's have access to a food supply that meets the food-based dietary guidelines of the Ministry of Health. The interconnected components of food security (access, availability, stability, utilisation) are not considered by the government in a coordinated way. Instead, an assortment of government ministries, community groups, social service providers, social enterprises, and businesses respond to different aspects of food security. When examining food insecurity in NZ, Huang et al. (2020) found minimal inter-ministry coordination on food insecurity which is necessary to address food insecurity as a nested problem. They note that ministries have specific and different focuses and agendas, which impede efforts to address food insecurity in a unified way.

Participant calls for a national strategy or plan on food insecurity align with academic calls for a more coordinated approach to food in NZ (Graham et al, 2019; Huang et al., 2020; Miller, 2021; Robinson, 2019). In a report by CPAG, Rush (2019, p. 3) comments "New Zealand needs a national food strategy – a food revolution so that the population is not malnourished and all our children are nurtured". She highlights the importance of ensuring adequate incomes to lifting New Zealander's out of food poverty and the need for a strategy to target this. Similarly, in a report on bettering NZ's food systems, Miller (2021) recommends creating a national food strategy that involves enabling and facilitating the creation of local food systems. Miller maintains that we need to acknowledge the faults in our current food system, which has led to our place today, with people in our communities struggling to access food. In the absence of a

food security strategy and policy, the burden for addressing food insecurity falls upon charitable organisations (Graham et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2020). Other than providing funding for food banks, food rescue and other community food organisations in the wake of COVID-19, there has been no concerted, coordinated nationwide government response to food insecurity implemented to date. A lack of food security policy means that most activity to address food insecurity is largely focused at the local level, through regional and local-scale non-profit and volunteer organisations. While many of these organisations are making strides to move beyond the charitable model of food provision, they cannot always be reliable, suitable, and appropriate (Cooper & Kennerley, 2019; Graham et al., 2019), particularly in times of crisis and unexpected events.

Participants raised concern over the uncoordinated, ad hoc approach to food insecurity by the NZ government. One participant said:

If we were to ask ourselves how have we gone to date and what goals are we trying to achieve? We don't have any. And where are we, even from the pandemic, how did respond to food system challenges, right from food security and sovereignty to food insecurity across the last twelve months? There's no measures, there's no goals, there's no frameworks, there's no real way to track how much money is coming in. [Hui 1]

Food insecurity has not been addressed by government at a comprehensive level and very little government guidance is currently available regarding how to address food insecurity in NZ. There is an absence of formal guidance available at a national level regarding how to identify and address food insecurity for New Zealanders (Stevenson, 2011). Cooper and Kennerley (2019) point to the 'wicked' nature and complexity of food insecurity as a possible reason for this. As Riches (2016) notes, the collection of national food insecurity data is essential to inform evidenced based policy making. Other high-income countries, such as Australia, France and the UK have allocated funding to food aid organisations for some time, however, little evidence is collected as to their effectiveness. While there is no guarantee that official national data on food insecurity will translate into comprehensive and coordinated poverty reduction or food security policies (both Canada and the USA have excellent national food security statistics, yet their governments over the years continue to ignore it) (Riches, 2016), it is necessary to inform national and regional responses to the growing rates of food insecurity in NZ. Tāmaki Makaurau's community food organisations and academics have been calling for

the state to intervene and assume greater responsibility for addressing this issue (Graham et al., 2019; Robinson, 2019).

Through the data collection period of this thesis, it became apparent that a national food strategy framework (and what is now known as a roadmap) was in development by The Aotearoa Circle – a think tank with public and private sector partners and DNA and KMPG as the secretariat. Known as the Mana Kai Initiative, the roadmap is an initiative to create dialogue and collaboration between all parts of NZ’s national food system and co-create solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing NZ’s food systems, such as food insecurity. Instead of a static, prescriptive strategy, the initiative has moved to a values-based approach grounded in Te Ao Māori wisdom. While this is a hopeful step towards establishing a national framework for addressing issues within NZ food systems, one might question the appropriateness of consultancy (where particular interests are often concentrated) in developing this. Additionally, during the write-up of this thesis, it became apparent that Auckland Council has taken a greater interest in addressing food insecurity in the region and has employed staff with this specific focus. However, limited information was found about this. Regardless, this signals a pivotal local government policy and one that could be beneficial as opportunities exist for local governments to take a greater role in addressing food insecurity in their areas.

5.5.1 Resilience and dependency on the duopoly

Groceries are an essential purchase and a significant expense for most households. Concern about the unaffordability of food in NZ has been growing and has been a topic of public discussion, particularly with the impact of COVID-19 over the past two years. Since COVID-19 entered NZ, the cost of healthy food has continued to rise (Martin-Neuninger, 2021). For example, vegetable prices, which have been on the rise in NZ for some time, saw courgettes and cucumbers reach record high prices (Stats NZ, 2022). In August 2021, food prices in NZ were the highest seen in the past ten years, with the cost of milk reaching an all-time high. Stats NZ (2022) reported that food prices had risen for the sixth consecutive month in a year marked by COVID-19. At the same time, profits for NZ’s supermarket chains have grown exponentially, with Countdowns’ online sales jumping 28% in the previous year and a consolidated profit increase of 10%.

A lack of competition between the two major supermarket companies comes at a direct cost to New Zealanders in the form of higher food prices. While New Zealanders are continuously paying more, profits for these companies continue to rise. The cost of food constitutes a high proportion of a household's budget. NZ-based research by Smith et al. (2010) estimated food expenditure to be more than 30% of net income for low-income households (less than 35k). Evidence shows that diets for low-income households are low in vegetables, fruits, lean red meat and dairy products and tend to be too high in fat, salt and sugar (Miller, 2021). It is important to note; this imbalance is not due to ignorance but a lack of purchasing power. The ever-increasing high prices charged to consumers by supermarkets add to the increasing strains on vulnerable communities already marginalised across a range of social and health capacities (Kore Hiakai, 2021a). A food insecurity study from October 2020 found nearly 80% of respondents (from a sample of people who use food banks) said their food insecurity was due to the costs of living exceeding their income. In Miller's (2021) study on the experiences of food insecurity, participants described dissatisfaction with the high price of healthy food and its widespread prevalence.

Moving away from a food system that is dominated by a unregulated, profit-hungry supermarket duopoly is an important step in diversifying NZ's food systems. During lockdowns, shutting down alternative food outlets like butchers, bakeries, fruit and vegetable stores and markets solidifies the retail power of supermarkets, inflates their profits, and places a financial burden on the smaller retailers who are unable to open (Miller, 2021). However, Kore Hiakai (2021a) acknowledges that more robust competition in the supermarket sector is not a game-changer alone. Rather, multi-faceted solutions are required to achieve improvements in our food systems, and in particular to improve food accessibility and affordability so that food insecurity is reduced. Achieving a food-secure NZ requires tackling the over-inflated food prices and the adoption of a broad suite of solutions in response to the current competitive constraints and inequities in our retail food system. Because food insecurity has been found to be higher in places with higher food prices, policies to lower food prices should be considered. When considering opportunities for resilience in food systems, we cannot keep falling back on old, capitalist models that concentrate wealth in particular places – this does not allow for resilience to be built.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

The following chapter will provide the conclusions from this research, identify areas of future research, and offer concluding remarks. This thesis has explored the actually existing constructions and performances of food security, by organisations that ‘do’ food provisioning as their core work. Specifically, it has engaged with community food providers in Tāmaki Makaurau, NZ, through conducting seven semi-structured key informant interviews with employers/managers, employees and volunteers. Insights from community food providers were also obtained by observing and participating in community-led events pertaining to food (in)security and food systems resilience. This research intended to shine a light on the important and humane work that community food providers do in responding to the needs of those seeking support and to find out how these organisations can be supported in their efforts to alleviate food insecurity for food-insecure New Zealanders and build resilience. Taking together the concepts of food security, food charity and food resilience, this thesis contributes to a literature gap that explores the actually existing performances of community-based food provisioning on the ground, to include the models, framings and practices of ensuring appropriate food access.

The first research objective sought to examine the challenges and barriers associated with actually existing performances of community food provisioning for food security. In engaging with this research objective, Section 5.2 (Re)acting in the ‘meantime’ explains how community-led food aid organisations can be largely constrained within a charitable model of food provision because of a massive demand for their services and the need to alleviate the immediate food insecurity of recipients. Further, Section 5.3 (In)stability describes how this is compounded by many challenges organisations encounter in their-day-to-day operations. These challenges create a state of instability, whereby these organisations are constantly in flux or are subject to ad hoc resources and relationships.

The second research objective sought to identify the goals and aspirations of community-based food aid organisations. Despite the challenges they grapple with, organisations appear to be employing diverse strategies in their actually existing food provisioning, contributing towards local food system resilience. In addressing this research objective, Section 5.4 Towards resilience describes a desire by organisations to see more resilience within NZ’s food systems.

While not every participant nor organisation referred to ‘resilience’ directly, the concept was found to be representative of the shared goals and aspirations they expressed. Organisations described an acute awareness that the current system was not creating resilient local food systems. In attempting to create more resilient local food systems, community food providers not only respond to recipients immediate food-needs, but also advocate and seek to address the underlying structural causes of food insecurity and poverty. Moreover, organisations described a deep awareness of the stigma, shame and lack of autonomy in the charitable food system and seek to address this by moving beyond simple food access to incorporate additional dimensions of food security. Providing a humanising experience where nourishing, culturally appropriate and nutritious food is available was one of the central goals of multiple participants.

In answering the aforementioned research objectives, this thesis has contributed to a previously under-researched area by looking at the actually existing constructions and performances of food security conducted by community food providers. My study researchers the perspectives of the food providers rather than the more well-researched recipients of food charity, using rich qualitative data, instead of population-level quantitative data. Furthermore, this thesis adopts a strengths-based model of food security as opposed to the more common, deficit-based model. Using a strengths-based approach acknowledges the positive tangible work of these organisations in creating more food-secure, food resilient communities. Without discounting the shortcomings of food charity, this thesis highlights how community food providers can deliver a humanising experience of food that places importance on providing nutritionally adequate and culturally appropriate food for all. Moreover, beyond a theoretical contribution, this thesis has highlighted the on-the-ground experiences of community food providers who are witnessing and hearing the lived realities of food-insecure New Zealanders first-hand and have a lot of wisdom to offer. Based on this research, I am able to put forward three recommendations which I believe are crucial to achieving food-secure communities in NZ. Progress towards the ideal of food-secure communities would be greatly enhanced by: 1) improved collaboration between (in particular) multi-sectoral and community food actors, 2) a comprehensive national food strategy, and, 3) a holistic, systems-based approach to food security.

Recommendation 1: An environment that creates the conditions to enable collaboration between actors

The current climate of food organisation in this space is one of competition and isolation. The first recommendation is that more conversation, connection and collaboration between different actors and stakeholders working on improving access to food is necessary. Further, there are many individuals and groups working on food security and food resilience, but this work is happening in isolation from one another. Additionally, there was evidence that food-insecure people would seek food support from multiple sectors, including from more than one community provider, and from the government in the form of special needs grants for food. Evidence from the COVID-19 response shows that sectors were able to come together to create shared, core infrastructure and acknowledge shared problems to improve outcomes for those most in need. For community food providers, working together has the benefit of reducing competition (perceived and actual competition) for funding, food donations and access to community resources and space.

Recommendation 2: A comprehensive national food strategy

As discussed in Section 5.4.4, creating a national food strategy is crucial to addressing food insecurity in NZ, and this is advocated for by communities and academics alike. As it stands, food security is not clearly defined, measured or approached in a coordinated way. Organisations expressed wanting to see national food strategy that includes a clear definition of the problem, regular measurements, and a plan. This would give vision, direction, cohesion and coordination to the question – how does NZ ensure all its citizens have access to enough, appropriate food? (Robinson, 2019). Creating a national food strategy is the first step in acknowledging the faults in our current food system, which have led to such a large number of New Zealanders struggling to meet their basic food needs. Moreover, establishing an appropriate measurement of food insecurity will help us identify food-insecure individuals, families, communities and regions. This strategy requires a collaborative input from communities, industry and government.

Recommendation 3: A holistic, systems-based approach

The third and final recommendation is that NZ approach the issue of food insecurity holistically – food security is not just about feeding people. Most importantly, food insecurity is driven and set in a context of lack of income (Robinson, 2019) and adequate wages and benefits are key to creating food-secure communities. Any community-based approach to food security

should be joined-up to the addressing the structural drivers of poverty. Given that food insecure households are more likely to have insecurity of tenure and live in rented homes (Carter et al., 2010; Ministry of Health, 2019), achieving food security in NZ will require addressing the high cost and security of housing.

The temporary respite that community food providers give to food-insecure people cannot be considered a remedy for the poverty and inequality being experienced by vulnerable people and households in NZ. Food security needs to be considered as a complex system, relational to other aspects of community liveability. While community food providers have demonstrated an ability to address some of the common criticisms posited against food charity, these organisations encounter structural constraints that curtail progress in this space. Strengthening community food providers and empowering volunteers and supporters so that they are able to continue to respond to these criticism and take the next steps towards political action are key.

Appendix A: Participant Information Statement



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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project title: Exploring Local Practices of Community Food Security in Auckland

Research team:

Principal investigator: Dr Emma Sharp

Student researcher: Sophie Richardson

This research is being carried out for the fulfilment of a Master of Science in Geography and is being supervised by Dr Emma Sharp and Dr Tom Baker (School of Environment, University of Auckland).

What does the study involve?

This project is interested in collaborating with community food groups in Auckland, New Zealand to understand how they contribute to the food security of the communities they serve. This will involve an exploration of the groups practices and future goals and aspirations. The project intends to identify what barriers curb progress in achieving community food security and what supports their practices.

Approximately 3-5 organisations will be involved in the project approximately 3-5 participants from each organisation will be sought. Organisations will be deidentified in research outputs. Each participant will be given a \$30 GiftPay voucher to recognise their contribution.

Data collection would involve taking part in a semi-structured interview lasting 60 minutes. If you consent, an audio recording for the interview may be used. You will have the opportunity to view and amend any associated transcripts.

The period of data collection will be August – October 2021. Data collected from the one-to-one interviews will be analysed by the researcher. A copy of the study results can be requested on the consent form. Māori participants and their communities will be given the opportunity to review conclusions and will be offered co-authorship of publications (as a community practitioner) if they wish.

Recordings:

Participants can review and edit transcriptions of their one-to-one audio recordings at their request, within two weeks after receipt of the transcript.

Benefits and risks:

A benefit of participation includes having a place to share work and experiences, including the experiences of food insecure New Zealanders. Contributing to research in this area could have potential to inform change.

Other benefits includes the collection and sharing of information between organisations who are working towards common goals. This has potential to foster partnerships and collaboration between organisations.

Executive summary could be shared between food organisations to offer ideas of best practice, observations and understandings.

Risks will be managed through a number of research techniques, however, given the small network of community food organisations in Auckland there is potential that participants might be identified despite efforts to de-identify participation.

Who pays for the study?

Participants will not incur costs.

Rights of the participant(s)

Participation is voluntary:

Participation is voluntary and participation will not result in any disadvantage. As the employer/manager you will provide assurance that employers and volunteers will not be disadvantaged for participating or not.

Withdrawal from participation and withdrawal of data:

Participation in this research is voluntary and you have the right to refuse to participate. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time and request the withdrawal of your data from the research for up to two weeks after an interview is conducted without providing a reason.

Confidentiality and anonymity:

Participation in this study is confidential and no material which could identify the participant personally will be used in this study unless otherwise requested. It is possible that participants might be identified despite efforts to de-identify participation.

What will happen after the study:

Digital data will be stored on a password protected computer in a secure room at the University of Auckland. Electronic data will be backed up and stored on the University of Auckland server. Hard copy consent forms will be stored in a secure room at the University of Auckland. Data will be stored indefinitely, and accessible by the Principal Investigator.

If you have an questions or concerns about the project or your participation in it, or if you would like to see the results once completed, please feel free to contact me any time at sophie.richardson@auckland.ac.nz.

Supervisor contact details

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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Ethics and Integrity Team, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 20/08/2021 for three years, Reference number UAHPEC22594.

Appendix B: Consent Form



SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT

Te Kura Mātai Taiao/ School of Environment
Science Centre,
23 Symonds Street
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau/ The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142,
Aotearoa/ New Zealand

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

CONSENT FORM

This consent form will be held indefinitely.

Project title:

Exploring Local Practices of Community Food Security in Auckland

Research team:

Principal investigator: Dr Emma Sharp

Student researcher: Sophie Richardson

I have read, or have had read to me in my first language, the Participant Information Sheet. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether or not to participate in this study and to ask questions, and was offered support from whānau/family or a friend to help me understand what the study involves. I am satisfied with the answers given to me, I understand the nature of the research and why I have been invited to participate.

I agree to take part in this research.

- I understand my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that the time needed is 1 hour for a one-on-one interview.
- I understand I am free to withdraw any data traceable to me up to two weeks after an interview without giving a reason.
- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that no material which could identify me personally will be used in any reports on this study.

- I have the authority to consent on behalf of the organisation to participate and engage in the research.
 - I agree / do not agree to be recorded in the one-on-one interview (please circle one).
 - Even if I agree to be recorded for the one-on-one interview, I understand that I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time without giving a reason.
 - I wish / do not wish to have my recordings returned to me (please circle one).
 - I understand that data will be kept indefinitely and separate from the Consent Forms.
 - I agree / do not agree that information collected about me up to the point when I withdraw may continue to be processed if I decide to withdraw from the study (please circle one).
 - I understand that data from this research will be used to inform a masters thesis.
 - I identify / do not identify as Māori and wish for the interview to be conducted in accordance with Tikanga Māori (please circle one).
 - I identify / do not identify as Māori and would like to be consulted on the study conclusions before publication (please circle one).
 - I identify / do not identify as Māori and would like to be offered co-authorship (as a community practitioner) for publications (please circle one).
 - I agree / do not agree that employees participation in this project will not result in adverse consequences (please circle one).
 - I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of findings (please circle one).
- Email/postal address: _____
- I know who to contact if I have any questions about the study in general.

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on
20/08/2021 for three years, Reference number UAHPEC22594.

Appendix C: Generic Interview Schedule

- What does the term ‘food security’ mean to you?

- What are the practices of the organisation that work towards realising food security for the community?

- Does the organisation rely on the support of volunteers?

- In the event of a crisis or emergency are there conditions in place to ensure continued access to food for service users?

- In what ways does the organisation provide a dignified experience of food?

- What are the barriers the organisation encounters in its practices of food security?

- What helps/supports/enables practices of food security?

- What are the short-term and long-term goals and aspirations of the organisation?

- What support has the organisation received from central and/or local government (if any)?

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