



**FEED THE HUNGRY NOT THE LANDFILL**

23rd March 2020

### **REQUEST FOR DONATION IN LIGHT OF COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

During Covid-19, our collections of food have been negatively impacted by the control movement order. In order to continue our work as a foodbank and providing to our most critical charities with food, we have launched an emergency appeal to corporates and the general public.

Please allow me the chance to explain what we do and why we are fundraising for additional support during Covid-19 to continue our work in feeding those most in need.

**The Lost Food Project (TLFP)** can be considered an umbrella charity as our foodbank operations provide many other charities with essential foods and goods. In fact, we have 56 charities that are registered to receive weekly provisions from TLFP. This caters for approximately 6,668 beneficiaries. We also have programmes with two low-cost housing projects (PPRs), which reach around 15-20 thousand people.

Our recipients are men, women, children, babies, disabled and refugees of different backgrounds, race and religion with one common denominator: food insecurity.

The food that we source and redistribute is mostly surplus food which is perfectly edible but would otherwise go to the landfill. TLFP operations can cater for about 40,000 meals weekly, with most of the food sourced being fresh nutritious vegetables from the large wholesalers, Pasar Borong Kuala Lumpur (PBKL). This fresh food is of high quality, much valued by our recipients, providing good nutrition which they would otherwise not receive.

We deliberately select and support the charities that are most in need. Many of our charities do incredibly important and noble work but lack the funding or personnel to be able to provide enough food to the people under their care. Often they have limited resources and budgets to run their homes or pay for other related expenses. By TLFP providing weekly food supplies which we rescue and redistribute, it allows them to use their funds on other necessary expenses.

But now due to Covid-19, we have had to halt our PBKL pickups and focus mainly on dried packaged food items received through our food donation drive. This has put a huge dent in our collections and essentially means that we are not able to provide for all our charities and other beneficiaries as we usually do.

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However, we are adjusting our procurement and processes to ensure TLFP continues to operate during the crisis and beyond. We have identified different solutions to continue providing sustenance to our most critical charities which are heavily reliant on our provisions. These are self-run charities with very little money to spend. We have prioritised eight of our most vulnerable charities, with a total of 295 pax. For many of them, and especially the refugee children, a meal cooked with food donated by TLFP is often their only meal for the day.

We look at this critical time to focus on providing food for the needy first and foremost, as food source becomes scarce especially for the B40 group. We will also have to look into buying food and supplies to serve their most essential needs, and provide the goods to them with greater frequency. We know that with additional funding we would be able to expand our coverage to more than eight of our most vulnerable charities as we aim to cover at least 1000-2000 people, or one-third of our total charities' beneficiaries.

In delivering our services for these charities, and hopefully many others, we are relying on a core group of people. In any normal month, our operations cost approximately RM30,000 to run TLFP with just three staff and a large group of dedicated volunteers and relying on surplus food. However during this period of uncertainty, the number of volunteers willing to work has scaled down and understandably so as they are not provided any safety net to encounter the risk. Furthermore our staff are fully stretched having to work over long periods and weekends without any breaks. We have also lost a very large chunk (almost 10 tonnes per week) of our surplus food supply.

Truly we are grateful to our volunteers who would brave all kinds of weather and conditions to do the good work of delivering food to the needy. During these difficult times, we will begin provisioning critical allowance to our volunteer drivers.

That being said, the ability to engage a specific hire for periods like this (and this looks like it will prolong) and beyond is of utmost importance as we should have some form of protection for the people who are put at risk to provide for the needy and ensure consistency in our operations.

TLFP is also looking at ways to collaborate with food delivery service to provide cooked meals to some of our charities. These meals will also incur some cost for preparation, and a platform will also be launched soon to allow people to also contribute to this initiative.

All these efforts will of course be conducted within the guidelines of the restricted movement order. We have also tailored our operational procedures to suit health and safety standards during this time of unprecedented global crisis.



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Our Covid-19 operations is a testament of how efficient we can be as an organisation with limited resources, but it also exemplifies our limitations. We truly believe that being able receive better funding means that we are able to further expand our beneficiary base and prepare the kind of infrastructure and systems needed to ensure sustainable operations and support our values whether in times of crisis or not.

This is because the value of our donated food goes beyond daily sustenance. We hope to tackle issues of malnutrition, anemia, maternal health and stunted growth, among others, as well as help with community development and environmental sustainability. Even during this time of distress, our main priority is for the beneficiaries to receive good, nutritious food so that they can continue their life without worry and improve on its quality. These are after all issues of national interest, and we are on the frontline making a change for the better.

Beyond this crisis, TLFP is determined to continue and grow our operations, work with more partners and stakeholders to ensure that we are able to provide to more underprivileged communities. We are already in talks to provide to other PPRs, and are coordinating efforts with other food banks through the National Foodbank Foundation to ensure the needs of the B40 community are strategically met.

We are genuinely thankful for the generosity shown by all parties during this time of crisis and can guarantee your donations will be fully optimised to meet the needs of our beneficiaries.

Thank you

Mohd Syazwan  
General Manager, The Lost Food Project