

PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience:	Social Canteen Program : Community Kitchens Modality	
Name of the city/region:	Mexico City	
Country:	Mexico	
Institution presenting the candidacy:	Secretaría de Inclusión y Bienestar Social (SIBISO) del Gobierno de la Ciudad de México (<i>Secretariat of Inclusion and Social Welfare (SIBISO) of the Government of Mexico City</i>)	
Start date of the experience:	2009	
End date of the experience:	Ongoing	
Type of candidacy	Innovation on an existing experience	X
Type of experience	Other (specify): Citizen co-management of public social services	X
Objective of the experience	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion	X
	Community empowerment	X
Territorial area	All the territory	X
Thematic area	Urban management	X
	Job creation	X
	Local development	X
	Social inclusion	X

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience:

Strengthen citizen participation through co-management between the Mexico City government and neighbors, to manage a network of community kitchens that produce economic rations (USD \$0.50) for the population that resides or transits in the city, contributing to the right to food.

How have you achieved this objective?

Through the operation of community kitchens in neighborhoods and towns with high and very high marginalization, operated by management committees composed of residents preferably from these areas, and with the support of economic resources from the Government of Mexico City and the resources obtained from the recovery fee (USD \$0.50) per ration, it has been possible to produce food rations at low cost.

In 2020 during the pandemic **394 community kitchens** have remained in operation, thanks to the commitment of the management committees of each community kitchen (formed by neighbors interested in providing this service) to continue offering low-cost food services to

the population whose income has been affected by the effects of the closure of activities. Each management committee decides the number of meals they are able to prepare; the rations offered per dining room range from 150-350 meals from Monday to Friday.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

In 2020, the community kitchens operated and managed in co-management by the Secretariat of Inclusion and Social Welfare (SIBISO) of Mexico City and the neighbors offered **14.4 million low-cost food rations**.

The offer of low-cost food rations contributes to a certain extent to guarantee the right to food of the population residing or transiting in Mexico City.

In addition, community kitchens at the local level encourage: community integration, employment generation and economic activity. It is estimated that the community kitchens generated a monetary spill in the local economy of **USD \$5 million**.

Dimensions of the experience

Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

In the context of the pandemic and with the objective of contributing to the local economy, in June 2020 the support model in the community kitchens changed from an in-kind subsidy of non-perishable supplies for the preparation of food, to the direct granting of an economic subsidy.

The management committees that operate and administer the community kitchens (made up of the residents of each area) directly purchase perishable and non-perishable supplies, encouraging consumption in local businesses.

In addition, the introduction of technological tools for the management and monitoring of the allocated subsidy has allowed greater efficiency and monitoring of spending, achieving **a 12% increase in the number of rations without increasing the cost of the program**, promoting innovation in citizen participation and co-management of social services in favor of economic recovery and the guarantee of the right to food.

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

The program's characteristics of operational agility and neighborhood participation allow the co-management model to be adapted to different urban contexts. The government provides a monthly economic subsidy per meal through an electronic purse. The neighbors responsible for each dining room are in charge of purchasing the supplies to prepare at least **150 meals a day** and provide the service to the population in need. This public-social alliance for the provision of a service would not be possible without joint participation.

Program documentation can be consulted at: Social Development Information System (SIDESO): www.sideso.cdmx.gob.mx

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

The community kitchens were created in 2009 to support the family economy in response to the 2008 crisis, offering low-cost food rations (USD \$0.50 per ration) to help guarantee the right to food of the vulnerable population. In order to achieve this, a participatory and co-management model was designed with the neighbors of the neighborhoods and colonies with high rates of marginalization. The adaptation and innovations that have been made to

this Program allowed that, in 2020, during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the Government of the CDMX had the capacity of coverage and human and material resources to continue operating the Program. Thus, the interested neighbors have committed to operate and manage the resources received from the government grant and the recovery fee for each meal to provide the food service. This is a real and sustainable example of co-responsibility in the management of a public program, which has made it possible to offer complete and nutritious meals at a very low cost for more than 10 years in the face of different contexts, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?

The program works with the participation of citizens interested in installing, operating and managing community kitchens (neighbors), who are the key to its operation. In addition to the low-cost food service, it works in alliance with other public (Central de Abastos de la Ciudad de México) and private (civil society organizations and producers) actors for the permanent improvement of the program, which includes, among other things, guaranteeing healthy food based on Mexican culinary tradition, preferential discounts on the purchase of supplies and community cohesion processes based on the dynamics of coexistence around the common table.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

Each of the aforementioned actors assumes the commitment to contribute knowledge and experience for the operation of the dining halls through advice for the preparation of balanced meals, preferential prices for the purchase of inputs that allow maintaining an accessible quota to the public, coordinated community work between different public actors from the existing neighborhood organization, which has as a meeting point each dining hall.

Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

Article 42 of the Federal District's Social Development Law establishes that evaluations will be carried out to know, explain and assess at least the design, operation, results and impact of the Social Development policy and programs. The annual internal evaluation of the immediately preceding fiscal year is published every year no later than June 30. The program also has a Matrix of Indicators for Results (MIR), published in the current operating rules, which allows for permanent monitoring (these evaluations can be consulted at: <http://www.sideso.cdmx.gob.mx/?id=745>).

As a complement, an evaluation process is carried out on the service provided in the community kitchens through a satisfaction survey of the users that covers the following aspects: quality service, good treatment of the users of the community kitchens and the neighboring partners that operate them, hygiene and maintenance of the facilities, quality of the food, use and benefit of the subsidy provided, prompt and efficient attention to requests, proposals, non-conformities or complaints presented by the people and by the management committees.

Summary of the experience

The community kitchens are part of Mexico City's Social Kitchens programme and are an example of co-management of social services, in which the government and neighbours in areas of high and very high marginalisation work in public-social partnership to provide low-cost meals.

With the start of the 2018-2024 administration, a series of transformations began in the community kitchens. The first step was to design a strategy at the beginning of 2019 to make

the daily operation more effective and use the allocated resources efficiently. A thorough review of compliance with the programme's guidelines by the Management Committees (made up of at least 3 neighbours responsible for operating each canteen) was undertaken to ensure the provision of a quality public service. This review resulted in maintaining only those canteens with positive results and functioning in accordance with their operating rules. The increase in the efficiency of the programme's operation meant that with a smaller number of canteens the number of meals and territorial coverage could be increased. Currently, 20% more people are benefiting from the programme than in 2018.

During the second half of 2019, a community strengthening exercise was carried out that focused on life around the canteens. Community integration processes were encouraged that allowed the dining halls to be revalued as privileged spaces for the confluence of local urban dynamics, with the potential to become hubs for neighbourhood socio-economic development.

In addition, a process of technological and digital updating was initiated to better monitor spending and the service provided. Each canteen now has a digital device (tablet) that allows them to be in permanent communication with the programme monitors and the dynamics of paper reports were transformed into a digital one, generating greater efficiency in communication and daily operations.

In 2020, the community kitchens had to adapt to the operation in the context of the pandemic in order to maintain their operation, considering it essential for the care of the population, and reinforcing health protection measures, including providing food only to take away.

In mid-2020, a substantive part of the programme's operation was modified. Initially, the government provided the non-perishable inputs for the preparation of food rations by contracting a company for their procurement and distribution; in June 2020, economic support began to be provided directly, seeking to boost local consumption of the inputs used by the community kitchens.

In the medium term, it is planned to consolidate the use of technological tools by the staff who monitor the programme and the management committees, in order to improve the processes of control, monitoring and data generation for decision-making, the constant improvement of the quality of service and accountability to the public.