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## SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS

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Under this project, food is distributed to people who are deprived, in a dignified way, ensuring that individual choices and needs are respected.

**Background:** Since the 2008 economic crisis, the number of people requiring food assistance in the Nou Barris district of Barcelona has increased. Food products are provided by the Food Bank, as part of the European Program of Food Aid to the Most Deprived.

To deal with this increased demand, the social supermarket (DISA) was established in 2012 and is run by Caritas, which works together with the city authorities to supply food to people most in need.

**Activities:** the neighbourhood social services assess the family or an individual and allocate a number of points (depending on the size of the family). People can then spend these points in the social supermarket by choosing products which they and their family need for next month. The supermarket is thus a dignified way of distributing food. The social supermarket also distributes hygiene products and so it collaborates with cosmetics companies.

**Outcomes:** the project ensures basic nutrition among both adults and children. Therefore, it is likely to prevent a range of problems. For example, educational outcomes, employment performance and health are heavily affected by diet. The project greatly reduces the stigmatising effect of social assistance thus is more likely to ensure that people who need help will come forward (rather than avoiding assistance). In these ways, the project contributes to social inclusion and allows the beneficiaries to move forward with their lives once their basic needs are provided for.



The project eliminated queuing to get charity food in the area where the supermarket has been opened. It also increased the engagement of the local community through volunteering and it decreased work load of social services.

**Transferability:** The project has a large transferability potential. As the pilot project was successful, the city authorities decided now to open solidarity supermarkets in each of Barcelona's ten districts. The project was inspired by the French 'Epicerie Sociales'.

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