

Ideation Phase

Empathize & Discover

Empathy Map Canvas

PROJECT INFORMATION

Field	Details
Date	November 1, 2025
Team ID	NM2025TMID08527
Project Name	To Supply Leftover Food to the Poor
Maximum Marks	4 Marks

EMPATHY MAP CANVAS INTRODUCTION

Overview of Empathize & Discover Phase:

In the Empathize & Discover phase, the team observes how food donors, food collectors, and beneficiaries interact with the current food waste and food insecurity crisis. Through direct observation and interviews, the team learns that:

- **Food Donors** feel frustrated because they want to help but lack a convenient donation mechanism
- **Beneficiaries** experience anxiety from uncertain access to meals despite visible food abundance nearby
- **Volunteers/Collectors** feel overwhelmed trying to organize food redistribution without proper systems
- **Community Members** recognize the contradiction but feel powerless to address it systematically

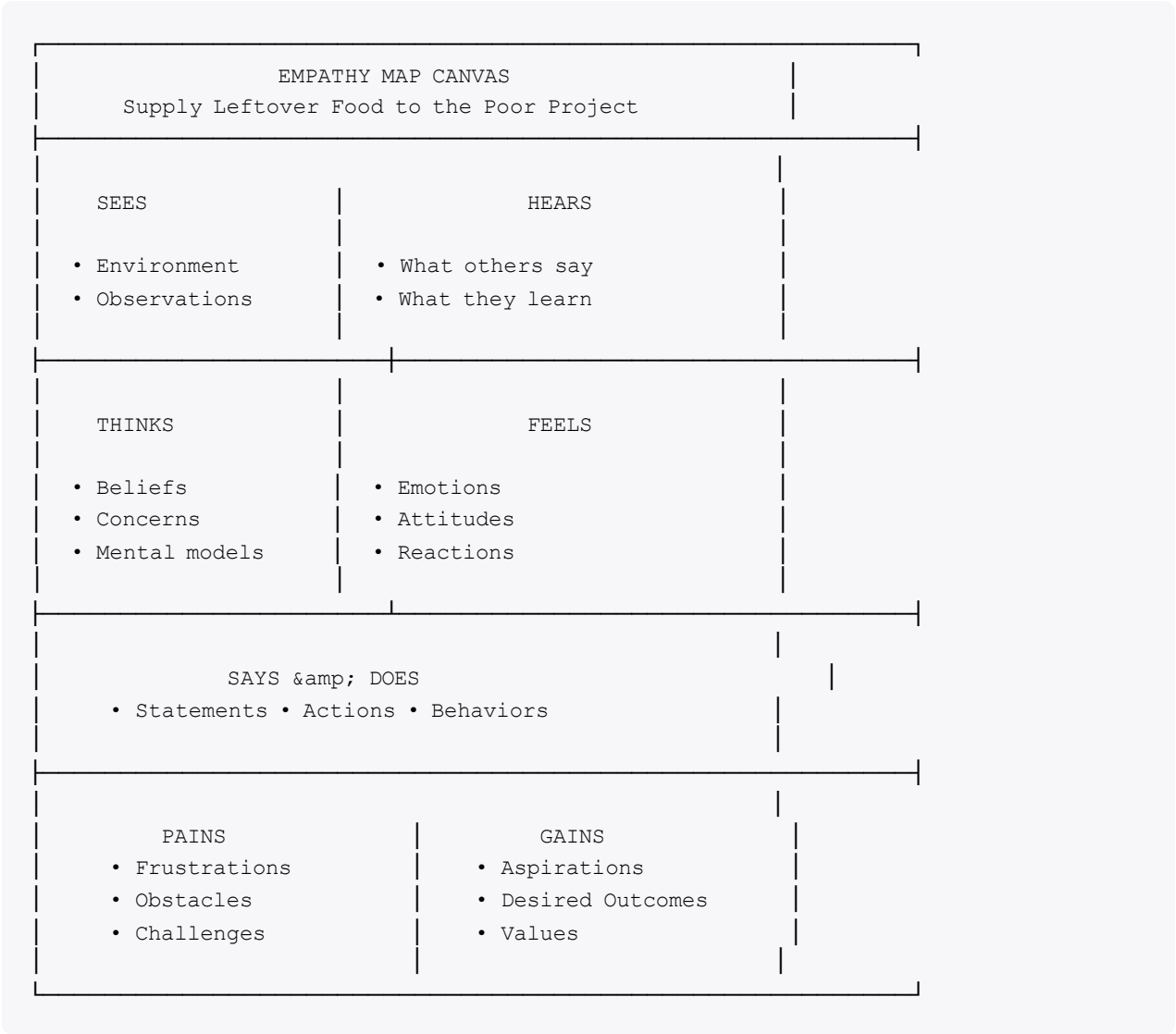
By interviewing stakeholders across all groups, the team uncovers that this issue causes:

- Environmental damage from food waste
- Continued hunger despite available food
- Missed social impact opportunities
- Lost economic value
- Community disengagement

Gathering these insights helps the team see the real impact on lives, communities, and the environment. Understanding the daily challenges of all stakeholders makes it clear that better coordination, safety assurance, dignity preservation, and systematic processes are needed. These discoveries will shape solutions that are practical, respectful, sustainable, and user-friendly.

EMPATHY MAP CANVAS STRUCTURE

The Empathy Map Canvas is divided into key sections that capture stakeholder experiences:



EMPATHY MAP: FOOD DONORS (Restaurants, Hotels, Caterers)

STAKEHOLDER PROFILE:

Business owners and managers of food establishments generating daily surplus food through buffets, events, and over-preparation.

SEES

In Their Environment:

- Large quantities of perfectly edible, untouched food at end of service
- Full serving trays and buffet displays that must be discarded by policy
- Overflowing garbage bins and waste containers throughout operations
- Staff spending time and effort on waste disposal procedures
- Hungry individuals and beggars gathering near establishment entrances
- Other businesses in media receiving praise for food donation programs
- Government inspectors checking waste management compliance
- Customer feedback comments about portion sizes and waste

Market Observations:

- Growing consumer interest in sustainability and social responsibility
- Competitors implementing food donation programs gaining positive publicity
- Media coverage highlighting restaurant food waste statistics
- Corporate clients asking about environmental practices
- Rating platforms mentioning business sustainability

Community Context:

- Visible poverty in nearby neighborhoods and areas
- Food insecurity visible despite business success
- Charitable organizations seeking food donations
- NGO representatives approaching for partnerships
- Contrast between business abundance and community scarcity

HEARS

From Customers:

- "I appreciate businesses that care about food waste"
- "Do you donate your extra food somewhere?"
- "Too much waste for a responsible company"
- "We prefer businesses doing social good"
- "Why can't restaurants feed the poor instead of throwing away?"

From Staff:

- "We throw away so much good food every day"
- "Seems wasteful and wrong"

- "My family sometimes struggles with food, this feels unfair"
- "Why don't we give this to people who need it?"
- "How much does waste disposal cost us?"

From Business Networks:

- "Food donation is becoming a CSR trend"
- "We've started a donation program and it's great for our brand"
- "There are liability concerns you need to understand"
- "Tax benefits available for charitable donations"
- "Some cities passing food donation incentive laws"

From Government/NGOs:

- "We're looking for food donation partners"
- "There are protections for donors under Good Samaritan laws"
- "Food safety regulations allow for donation of properly handled food"
- "We can help coordinate collection from your location"
- "Your contribution could feed hundreds of people monthly"

From Media:

- Reports on food waste statistics and environmental impact
- Features on restaurants making social impact
- Environmental consequences of landfill food waste
- Stories of hunger affecting local communities
- Corporate sustainability being valued by consumers

THINKS

About Their Business:

- "We produce way more food than necessary"
- "We could be more efficient in preparation"
- "What if we could reduce waste costs?"
- "How would donation affect our bottom line?"

About Social Responsibility:

- "We should do more for the community"
- "Food donation aligns with our values"
- "We have capacity to help but lack mechanism"
- "Corporate social responsibility is important"

- "Our business should benefit society, not just shareholders"

About Donation:

- "We want to help but how do we ensure it's safe?"
- "What if someone gets sick from our donated food?"
- "Are we liable if something goes wrong?"
- "Will the donation process disrupt our operations?"
- "How much effort is required to participate?"

About Risk and Concerns:

- "What are the legal implications?"
- "Could this create liability issues?"
- "Will our insurance cover this?"
- "How do we ensure food safety?"
- "Can we verify the food is used appropriately?"

About Recognition:

- "Will this enhance our brand image?"
- "Would customers appreciate our efforts?"
- "Could this help us attract better staff?"
- "What are the tax benefits?"
- "Will we get media coverage or recognition?"

FEELS

Positive Emotions:

- **Guilt:** About wasting food while others go hungry
- **Desire:** Genuine wish to contribute to community
- **Pride:** Imagined feeling from helping vulnerable people
- **Hope:** That food can make real difference in someone's life
- **Satisfaction:** From fulfilling social responsibility

Negative Emotions:

- **Anxiety:** About liability and legal consequences
- **Fear:** Of food safety incidents and blame
- **Uncertainty:** About how to proceed safely
- **Frustration:** At lack of simple solution
- **Hesitation:** From information gaps and unknown risks

Conflicting Emotions:

- Want to help vs. fear of consequences
- Desire for social impact vs. business risk aversion
- Pride in contribution vs. worry about being sued
- Enthusiasm vs. paralysis from unclear procedures

SAYS & DOES

What Donors Say:

- "We want to reduce our waste and help the community"
- "The donation process should be simple and quick for us"
- "We need assurance about liability and safety"
- "We need documentation for tax purposes"
- "We appreciate transparent processes"
- "Tell us exactly what we need to do"
- "We're willing to help if it's convenient"

What Donors Do:

- Prepare food in bulk quantities to avoid shortages
- Throw away leftover food at end of service
- Ask staff about donation possibilities
- Research local food donation regulations
- Contact NGOs sporadically asking about donations
- Calculate waste disposal costs
- Monitor customer feedback about waste
- Track competitor CSR activities
- Seek tax deduction information
- Review liability insurance coverage

PAINS (Obstacles & Challenges)

Operational Pains:

- No convenient, reliable food pickup system
- Uncertainty about timing and coordination
- Time constraints in fast-paced operations
- Need to arrange alternative waste disposal if donating

- Disruption to normal end-of-day procedures
- Training staff on donation procedures
- Storage space for holding surplus until pickup

Legal and Liability Pains:

- Fear of foodborne illness lawsuits
- Uncertainty about legal protections
- Concerns about insurance coverage gaps
- Confusion about food safety regulations
- Lack of clear liability responsibility
- No standardized safety protocols
- Documentation requirements unclear

Information and Knowledge Pains:

- Limited knowledge about donation options
- Uncertainty about food quality standards
- Lack of guidance on best practices
- Difficulty finding reliable partners
- No data on actual liability risks
- Unknown tax deduction values
- Unclear regulatory compliance requirements

Business and Administrative Pains:

- Skepticism about real demand (will food be actually used?)
- Cost of setup and ongoing coordination
- Record-keeping and documentation burden
- Impact on efficiency metrics
- Competitive concerns (why us and not competitors?)
- Staff training requirements
- Monitoring and verification challenges

GAINS (Aspirations & Desired Outcomes)

Brand and Reputation Gains:

- Enhanced brand image and positive reputation
- Differentiation from competitors
- Positive media coverage and public relations

- Increased customer loyalty and preference
- Attraction of socially-conscious clientele
- Social media engagement opportunities
- Public recognition and awards

Business Benefits:

- Reduced waste disposal costs
- Waste reduction improving operational efficiency
- Employee satisfaction and morale improvement
- Better staff retention through meaningful work
- Customer preference for socially responsible business
- Positive rating platform reviews
- Attraction of corporate clients valuing sustainability

Financial Gains:

- Tax deductions for charitable donations
- Potential cost savings from optimized preparation
- Grant opportunities for sustainable businesses
- Sponsorship possibilities from organizations
- Reduced operational waste costs
- Potential equipment/service discounts

Social and Ethical Gains:

- Fulfillment from contributing to community welfare
- Alignment of business practices with personal values
- Satisfaction of knowing food helps real people
- Relationship building with NGOs and community
- Contributing to solving social problem
- Creating positive legacy beyond profit

Regulatory and Compliance Gains:

- Compliance with future sustainability regulations
- Positioning ahead of stricter waste regulations
- Contributing to municipal waste reduction goals
- Support from local government initiatives
- Alignment with environmental targets

EMPATHY MAP: FOOD BENEFICIARIES (Poor & Hungry Individuals)

STAKEHOLDER PROFILE:

Low-income individuals, daily wage workers, homeless persons, and families struggling with food insecurity in urban areas.

SEES

In Their Daily Environment:

- Others eating meals while they experience hunger
- Food being discarded in trash and dumpsters
- Expensive food in shops they cannot afford
- Abundance in wealthy areas contrasting with their scarcity
- Their own children showing signs of malnutrition
- Limited job opportunities available
- Difficult working conditions with minimal pay
- Others living in similar poverty conditions

Community Context:

- Slum and informal housing areas lacking services
- Inadequate sanitation and health facilities
- Children out of school due to need to work/hunger
- Elderly without family support struggling daily
- Visible inequality between rich and poor areas
- Community members sharing survival strategies
- NGO workers trying to help with limited resources
- Children on streets without family support

Food Landscape:

- Restaurants and hotels with visible abundance
- Food waste from establishments near them
- Market food prices beyond their budget
- Government ration shops with limited/poor quality
- Charity meals sporadic and unreliable
- Food scarcity as daily stress

HEARS

From Media and News:

- Food waste statistics and reports
- News about hunger and malnutrition
- Stories about charity and help programs
- Government welfare scheme announcements
- Food prices increasing constantly
- Stories of others getting help
- Information about locations of food programs

From NGOs and Social Workers:

- Information about where free meals available
- When and where to go for food assistance
- Requirements for receiving help
- Stories of others helped by programs
- Words of encouragement and care
- Contact information for resources

From Community:

- "There's free food distribution at [location]"
- "You should try the community kitchen"
- "NGO X provides meals on Tuesday/Thursday"
- Tips about best places to get help
- Warnings about scams or unsafe situations
- Stories of people helped by programs
- Information shared among those facing similar hardship

From Family and Others:

- Parents worrying about food for family
- Children asking for food
- Relatives unable to help
- Friends sharing survival information
- Elders talking about better times
- Advice to find work regardless of pay

From Society (often judgmental):

- Stereotypes about poor people

- Blame for their circumstances
- Suggestions to "work harder"
- Concerns about dependency
- Suspicion about need verification
- Dismissive attitudes

THINKS

About Their Survival:

- "Where will my next meal come from?"
- "How can I feed my family today?"
- "Will we have enough for tomorrow?"
- "I must prioritize food over other needs"
- "I'll do whatever work is available"

About Food:

- "Even basic food would be so valuable"
- "I can't remember when I last had full meal"
- "My children need nutritious food to grow healthy"
- "I'm weak and tired from hunger"
- "Food must be affordable or free"

About Help and Assistance:

- "Will anyone actually help me?"
- "Can I trust this assistance?"
- "Is this food safe to eat?"
- "Will they judge me for needing help?"
- "Will I be treated with respect?"
- "Is help reliable or just one-time?"
- "Do I qualify for this program?"

About Future:

- "If I had regular food, I could focus on work"
- "My children deserve better than this"
- "I want to be self-sufficient, not dependent"
- "Can education help break this cycle?"
- "Will my children have better opportunities?"

- "Is this situation permanent or temporary?"

About Self-Worth:

- "I'm a failure for not providing"
- "People look down on me"
- "I'm embarrassed about my situation"
- "I should be ashamed to accept help"
- "But I have no choice—it's survival"

FEELS

Physical Sensations:

- **Hunger:** Constant pain and weakness
- **Tiredness:** Low energy from inadequate nutrition
- **Weakness:** Difficulty working or moving
- **Illness:** Increased susceptibility to diseases
- **Desperation:** Acute urgency for food

Emotional States:

- **Anxiety:** Daily worry about survival
- **Hopelessness:** Feeling trapped in situation
- **Shame:** Embarrassment about poverty and need
- **Gratitude:** Deep appreciation for any help
- **Fear:** Worry about tomorrow, about children
- **Frustration:** Anger at unfairness and inequality
- **Relief:** When food is available

Complex Emotions:

- Grateful but ashamed when receiving help
- Hopeful but often disappointed
- Determined but exhausted
- Proud but in desperate circumstances
- Love for family but unable to provide
- Desire to work but limited opportunities

SAYS & DOES

What Beneficiaries Say:

- "We need food to survive"
- "Please treat us with respect"
- "We don't want to beg, we want dignity"
- "Thank you for helping us"
- "Will there be food tomorrow too?"
- "We want to work but opportunities are limited"
- "Please don't judge us"
- "We're human beings deserving respect"

What Beneficiaries Do:

- Wake early looking for day labor
- Walk long distances seeking food sources
- Skip meals to feed children
- Accept any available work regardless of conditions
- Join queues at charity distribution centers
- Ration food to make it last longer
- Search in waste areas for edible food
- Visit religious institutions for free meals
- Register with NGOs for assistance
- Network to learn about food availability
- Work hard despite low pay and conditions
- Prioritize children's food over their own

PAINS (Obstacles & Challenges)

Nutritional and Health Pains:

- Chronic hunger and malnutrition
- Weakness affecting work capacity
- Health problems worsened by poor nutrition
- Children's growth stunted by malnutrition
- Increased disease susceptibility
- Inability to concentrate or study
- Mental health issues from stress

Emotional and Psychological Pains:

- Daily anxiety about food availability
- Psychological distress from inability to provide
- Depression from seemingly hopeless circumstances
- Trauma from experiences of extreme poverty
- Loss of self-esteem and confidence
- Shame and social stigma
- Feeling invisible or unwanted by society

Social and Systemic Pains:

- Discrimination and stigma
- Social exclusion and isolation
- Limited access to services
- Bureaucratic barriers to assistance
- Unreliable help availability
- Geographic gaps in service coverage
- Complex requirements for assistance

Practical and Logistical Pains:

- Uncertain about where to find food
- Transportation costs to reach food sources
- Time conflicts between work and food seeking
- Long wait times at distribution points
- Food availability doesn't match their schedule
- Concerns about food quality and safety
- Lack of information about programs

Dignity and Respect Pains:

- Fear of judgment and discrimination
- Humiliation when seeking help
- Disrespectful treatment from others
- Loss of agency and choice
- Visible marking as poor/needy
- Being treated as charity cases
- Lack of privacy in assistance processes

GAINS (Aspirations & Desired Outcomes)

Immediate and Essential:

- Access to nutritious, safe food
- Relief from hunger and physical weakness
- Energy to work and support family
- Children fed and healthy
- Peace of mind about next meal
- Reduced anxiety about survival

Health and Wellbeing:

- Improved nutrition and physical health
- Better immune function and disease resistance
- Enhanced cognitive function and concentration
- Children's healthy growth and development
- Mental health improvement from reduced stress
- Ability to work productively
- Reduced healthcare costs from prevention

Emotional and Social:

- Dignity and respectful treatment
- Sense of being valued by society
- Connection with community support
- Reduced social isolation
- Hope for better circumstances
- Pride in maintaining family
- Sense of belonging and inclusion

Practical and Functional:

- Reliable, consistent food access
- Convenient collection/distribution
- Money saved on food for other needs
- Flexibility in timing and options
- Information about available programs
- Access without bureaucratic barriers
- Quick, efficient process

Long-term and Developmental:

- Stability enabling focus on improvement
- Opportunity to save money
- Better life prospects for children
- Capacity to eventually help others
- Breaking poverty cycle
- Children's education opportunities
- Employment and self-sufficiency

KEY INSIGHTS FROM EMPATHY MAPPING

Common Themes Across Both Groups:

1. Gap Between Intention and Action

- Donors want to help but lack convenient mechanism
- Beneficiaries need help but lack reliable access
- Problem is connection, not willingness or need

2. Trust and Safety Concerns

- Donors fear legal/safety consequences
- Beneficiaries uncertain about food safety
- Both need verification and assurance

3. Dignity and Respect

- Donors want recognition for contribution
- Beneficiaries want respectful treatment
- Both need to feel valued, not inferior

4. Reliability and Predictability

- Donors want clear, predictable process
- Beneficiaries want consistent access
- Both need dependable system

5. Impact and Meaning

- Donors want to see outcome of contribution
- Beneficiaries want acknowledgment of humanity
- Both seek meaningful connection

Critical Insights for Solution Design:

From Donor Perspective:

- Simplicity and convenience are paramount for participation
- Legal protection and safety assurance eliminate hesitation
- Recognition and impact visibility enhance engagement
- Minimal operational disruption essential for buy-in

From Beneficiary Perspective:

- Dignity preservation affects willingness to participate
- Consistency and reliability build trust
- Respectful treatment supersedes food quantity
- Empowerment through choice matters

System-Level Insights:

- Solution must address both supply (donors) and demand (beneficiaries)
- Trust and verification critical at all levels
- Human respect must be embedded in design
- Transparency enables all stakeholders to feel secure

APPLICATION TO PROJECT DESIGN

How Empathy Map Shapes Solution:

The empathy map helped us understand stakeholder challenges, emotions, and needs when food is abundant yet inaccessible. It reveals:

Pain Points Identified:

- Donor hesitation: Lack of convenient, safe donation process
- Beneficiary suffering: Unpredictable access to meals despite visible surplus
- System failure: No mechanism connecting supply with demand
- Trust deficit: Safety, liability, and dignity concerns

User Needs Revealed:

- Donors need: Safety, simplicity, recognition, compliance
- Beneficiaries need: Consistency, dignity, access, respect
- Volunteers need: Organization, training, coordination
- System needs: Trust, transparency, reliability, impact tracking

Design Implications:

The solution should:

1. **For Donors:** Create one-click donation, provide legal protection, ensure food safety, deliver impact visibility, enable tax documentation
2. **For Beneficiaries:** Enable dignified service, ensure consistent access, maintain privacy, provide choice, guarantee respect
3. **For Operations:** Build organized systems, implement verification, establish protocols, measure impact, maintain transparency
4. **For Society:** Reduce waste, alleviate hunger, build community, create systemic change

CONCLUSION

By deeply understanding food donors and beneficiaries through empathy mapping, we identified the critical frustrations, hopes, and barriers in the current system. These insights reveal:

The Core Problem is Not Food Scarcity

It's a **disconnection problem**: Food abundance exists alongside food need, but no bridge connects them.

The Solution Must Address Human Needs

Beyond logistics, the system must:

- ✓ Preserve donor confidence through safety and legal clarity
- ✓ Preserve beneficiary dignity through respectful service
- ✓ Build trust through transparency and verification
- ✓ Create meaning through visible impact
- ✓ Enable sustainable participation through convenience

Empathy Drives Better Design

Understanding stakeholder emotions, fears, hopes, and daily realities ensures the solution addresses real needs, not just surface problems. The result: a system where donors feel secure contributing, beneficiaries feel respected receiving, and communities benefit from meaningful food redistribution.

This empathy foundation shapes every aspect of the "Supply Leftover Food to the Poor" project—from technology design to service protocols to community engagement strategies.