

CASE STUDY

Choice Based, Urban Food Distribution in Athens, Greece

PREPARED BY BOXTRIBUTE · 2026

PARTNER

Human Aid Collective

LOCATION

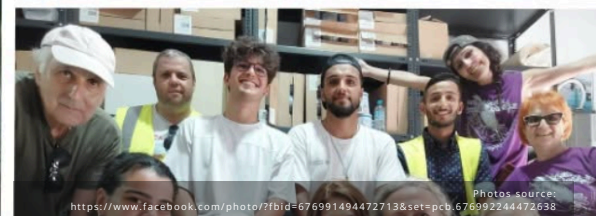
Athens, Greece

PROJECT CYCLE

15 months

MODALITY

Token-based vouchers



01 / OVERVIEW

Human Aid Collective (HAC) is a humanitarian organisation providing NFI, food assistance and essential support to refugees, asylum seekers and homeless populations in Europe. HAC started a consortium with Just Human and other NGOs for aid delivery in Athens, Greece, to support in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to 40,000 refugees.

Athens hosts a significant population of refugees and asylum seekers living outside formal camp settings with many households facing barriers to accessing support. Further to this, there is limited space for warehousing or large-scale distributions in the city and a need to avoid parallel supply chains that duplicate local markets.

A partnership with Boxtribute was established to transition from a paper-based voucher system to a **new digital model for market-based food assistance using Boxtribute's 'free shop' system.**

Prior to digitalisation, HAC delivered food assistance using paper vouchers, which were exchanged at selected food outlets, however they faced with increasing challenges as the programme grew, including reconciliation gaps, delayed reporting, and financial and reputational risk.

02 / THE CHALLENGE

HAC needed to adapt its food assistance model to address several **intersecting operational challenges**:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>01 Delivering food assistance in an urban environment without creating in-kind distribution infrastructure</p> | <p>02 Replacing paper vouchers with a secure and accountable system capable of tracking allocations and redemptions</p> |
| <p>03 Maintaining low operational overhead, avoiding warehousing, transport, and storage costs</p> | <p>04 Enabling remote oversight and monitoring by the partner organisation</p> |
| <p>05 Preserving dignity, choice, and normalcy for beneficiaries</p> | <p>06 A system that could support compliance and transparency while remaining accessible to a small, volunteer team</p> |
- 07** Targeting and supporting domestic violence / gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, female head of households (FHH) and young families not receiving basic assistance with a system to manage beneficiary vulnerabilities in line with consortium goals

PAPER VOUCHERS → DIGITAL VOUCHERS

Before PAPER-BASED SYSTEM

Reconciliation gaps
Delayed reporting
Financial and reputational risk
No insight on repeat beneficiaries

After DIGITALLY MANAGED VOUCHERS

Timely reconciliation
Real-time tracking and reporting
Clear audit and reporting trails
Full insight on beneficiary use



ONE REGISTRATION, ONE ACCOUNT, ONE CARD VOUCHER





03 / DISTRIBUTION MODEL AND SYSTEM DESIGN

The programme enabled beneficiaries to access fresh food through local shops and restaurants, supporting local markets while reducing logistical complexity.

The model aligned with core Cash and Voucher (CVA) principles, prioritising market engagement, flexibility, and accountability while remaining feasible for a small operational team. Elements of the chosen modality included:

- 01 Digital beneficiary registration, including consent capture
- 02 Token-based vouchers, with a fixed conversion (€1 = 1 token), allocated monthly based on household size
- 03 Plastic ID cards linked to individual beneficiary accounts
- 04 Restricted vendor access, allowing shop staff to process redemptions without visibility on data
- 05 Real-time tracking of issued, redeemed, and remaining balances
- 06 Remote management of allocations, corrections, and adjustments

HOW THE MODEL WORKS, STEP BY STEP

01

Register

Household registered digitally, with consent captured.

02

ID card

A plastic card is linked to the beneficiary account.

03

Allocate

Monthly tokens by household size. €1 = 1 token.

04

Redeem

Food bought at a local shop or restaurant, freely chosen.

05

Track

Issued, redeemed and remaining balances, visible in real time.

SEPARATION OF DUTIES — WHO SEES WHAT

	Beneficiary	Shop staff	HAC team	Remote partner
Process a redemption	■	■	■	
See beneficiary data			■	■
Allocate, block or edit balances			■	■

■ ACCESS GRANTED □ NO VISIBILITY

WHY IT SUITS A CITY — NO PARALLEL SUPPLY CHAIN

IN-KIND DISTRIBUTION

WAREHOUSE TRANSPORT DISTRIBUTION POINT

Warehousing, transport and storage costs, staff-intensive distributions, and a supply chain parallel to the local market.

CHOICE BASED, MARKET BASED

■ LOCAL SHOP OR RESTAURANT □ HOUSEHOLD

Flexible access across multiple locations, suitable for mobile populations, with minimal physical infrastructure — beneficiaries shop where they already live.

04 / OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

Accountable Distributions

The digital voucher system introduced continuous visibility into programme funds and usage, enabling:

- Clear audit and reporting trails
- Timely reconciliation of issued and redeemed vouchers
- The ability to block, reallocate, or edit balances
- Reduced risk of fraud and misuse compared to paper-based systems
- Program design led to trust-building between beneficiaries, vendors, and staff
- Separation of duties, with the system allowing for different roles with varying levels of access

Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness

By using Boxtribute to track digital vouchers, program supported cost efficiency by reducing:

- In-kind logistics, warehousing, transport, and storage costs
- Staff-intensive food distributions
- Utilisation of local markets rather than parallel procurement and supply chains
- Lengthy set-up in favor of a quick-to-implement model

Administrative Workload

This was reduced through bulk actions and automated reporting, allowing the team to focus on beneficiary engagement and programme oversight. Unspent balances could be efficiently reallocated, improving overall resource utilisation.

Programming adaptations

Programme adaptations were informed by needs assessments and beneficiary feedback, supporting a do no harm approach and contextual relevance.

Urban Suitability

The model adapted well to an urban context:

- Flexible access across multiple locations
- Suitable for mobile populations
- Compatible with small and volunteer-led teams
- Minimal physical infrastructure requirements

Vulnerability and Beneficiary support

Teams on site were able to identify through needs assessment a vulnerability prioritisation for female heads of households, survivors of gender-based violence, and children. This information was shared through Boxtribute, leading to coordinated aid delivery, beneficiary case management and psychosocial support (PSS).

05 / RESULTS

Over the 15 month project cycle implemented with Boxtribute:

1,008

BENEFICIARIES SUPPORTED

2,133

VISITS RECORDED

€74,874

REDEEMED THROUGH
LOCAL FOOD PARTNERS

+12%

INCREASE IN VOUCHER
USAGE · ≈ €9,000 MORE AID
DELIVERED

BASELINE → AFTER TRANSITION

Reconciliation of funds

0% → 100%

Voucher redemption trackable in real time

0% → 100%

Insight on repeat beneficiaries

0% → 100%

81%

Female head of households

38%

Registered as children under 12

- 1,008 beneficiaries were supported with a total of 2,133 visits recorded.
- Vulnerability targeted response with: 81% female head of households and 38% registered as children under 12.
- €74,874 was redeemed through local food partners.
- Voucher redemption and compliance became 100% trackable in real time after the transition: This visibility revealed a 12% increase in voucher usage which is equivalent to €9,000 in additional aid reaching beneficiaries.
- A baseline of 0% reconciliation of funds, after the transition they reached 100% traceability.
- Beneficiary data: Baseline of 0% insight on repeat beneficiaries. After the transition had 100% insight on beneficiary voucher use, including total amount redeemed per beneficiary and number of repeat visits.
- Beneficiaries retained dignity and a sense of normalcy by purchasing food through regular market channels rather than queuing for distributions.

Vulnerability-Led Targeting

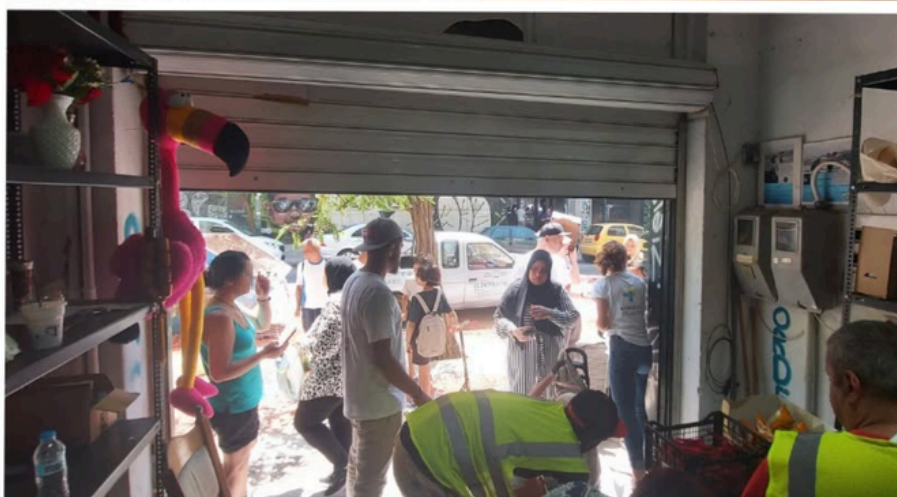
Needs assessments and vulnerability tagging in Boxtribute allowed the consortium to prioritise female headed households, survivors of gender based violence, and young families not receiving basic assistance. Of those supported, 81% were female headed households and 38% were children under 12, receiving assistance in a form that fits into an ordinary shopping trip.

More Aid, Fully Tracked

Reconciliation moved from no visibility under the paper voucher system to 100% traceability of issued and redeemed vouchers. The transition also produced a 12% increase in voucher usage, equivalent to €9,000 of additional assistance reaching beneficiaries, alongside full insight into repeat visits and total redemption per beneficiary.

Complementing Local Markets

In a city with limited warehousing space and functioning food markets already in place, HAC delivered food assistance through local shops and restaurants rather than establishing parallel supply chains. €74,874 was redeemed through local food partners, supporting existing markets while removing the need for transport, storage and in-kind logistics.



CONCLUSION

The Human Aid Collective case shows how a consortium of small, local organisations can deliver compliant, transparent and dignified food assistance in an urban environment without heavy infrastructure. By working through existing food markets and eateries, the programme complemented local trade rather than duplicating it, and reached households often missed by formal assistance more effectively, including female-headed households and survivors of gender based violence. **Shifting to Boxtribute enabled digital infrastructure to carry the compliance burden, reducing costs and allowing the local team to concentrate on beneficiary protection and case management.**