

## MANO FRATERNA | Ottavo Giorno

Faced with many types of vulnerability, some of them new, and worsened by the recent economic crisis, the Caritas of the Diocese of Brescia, strengthening the traditional responses to poverty and testing creative forms of charity, offered its support, extending a “fraternal hand”.

The symbolic logo representing the five initiatives (Micro Loan, Ottavo Giorno, Mensa Menni-soup kitchen, Employment Support) put forward in order to tackle the economic financial crisis, is the shape of hand containing a red thread which becomes a spiral on the palm. “Mano Fraterna” (Fraternal Hand) means the totality of the five answers to the economic financial crisis, but most of all the relational style of this response; a “fraternal hand” that

becomes an effective action through the actual collaboration of several social and institutional actors as well as through the contribution of hundreds of volunteers who strive, on a daily basis, to generate and foster situations of reciprocity.

The Mano Fraterna initiatives, as they try to alleviate the harmful effects of the economic financial crisis, have understood and acknowledged the proximity role of the individual Caritas associations who are making it possible to better respond to concrete, precise and actual needs. In this prospective, the relationship which the Brescia Diocesan Caritas has tried to establish with the various Caritas associations (parish, pastoral unit and zonal) is no one of “service”, but rather one of “co-participation”.



Mano Fraterna | **OTTAVO GIORNO** is a logistical platform for gathering, storage and distribution of basic foodstuffs to parish Caritas associations and to other Church-based organizations involved in combatting poverty and in supporting persons in dire need of food.

### Synthetic Description of the Project

Ottavo Giorno (Italian for “Eighth Day”) is designed to be a collection and storage warehouse which serves as a logistical platform forming part of a collection and distribution network meant for entities which help persons in need, with the aim of allowing the zonal and parish Caritas associations as well as other entities (communities for the disabled, for recovering drug addicts, charities for minors, Vol.Ca., emergency camper vehicles, etc.) to respond to the primary needs of people (efficiency), but also to have the time needed in create with those persons paths of accompaniment and listening (efficacy).

One could summarize the aims of the project by saying that it wishes to support persons in difficulty in a process which should lead to avoiding the entrenchment of their hardships.

If, in the short term, the project aims to respond to the actual crisis situation, in the medium and long term, its aim is to reduce the waste of food by recuperating foodstuffs that are no longer marketable but still perfectly edible (up to now destined to go to waste) and to offer concrete support to the many volunteer organizations in the city which are involved in the struggle against poverty and social suffering.

Given the aim of the project, the capacity of creating synergy and networks with all those who are active in the same field on our territory (Food Bank, Red Cross, cooperatives ...) will have a pivotal role.

## BECOMING PART OF THE PROJECT | CO-PARTICIPATION

Each parish Caritas participating in the Ottavo Giorno project may retrieve the available products in accordance with the needs of the assisted community, territorial size, the number of persons assisted, and the economic participation of their own community. Moreover, the warehouse makes it possible to put together and share what every individual Caritas, by activating its own independent supply channels, would have collected in excess of its own capacities of distribution.

<b>ECONOMIC VALUE OF DISTRIBUTED PRODUCTS</b>	<b>from 2010 to 2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Market value of distributed products (€)	10.769.060	1.696.697
Economic value (costs) of distributed products (€)	4.339.394	678.679

  

<b>CONTRIBUTION OF PARTNER CARITAS ASSOCIATIONS</b>	<b>from 2010 to 2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Contribution of Ottavo Giorno partner Caritas associations (€)	1.112.342	225.174

## EXPANSION

<b>EXPANSION</b>	<b>from 2010 to 2016</b>
Total partner parishes	122

## CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

The OTTAVO GIORNO project strives to act in synergy with the parishes, for the supply and distribution to parish Caritas associations of prime necessity foodstuffs, in order to spare them the daily painstaking effort to locate food that would be distributed to persons in dire need of it and, in this way, free time and energy which the parishes could devote to listening and to interpersonal relationships.

DISTRIBUTED PRODUCTS		from 2010 to2015	2016
Milk	lt	743.744	143.688
Pasta and rice	Kg	728.959	84.525
Canned pealed fruit and vegetables	Kg	448.768	90.528
Oil	lt	237.146	44.151
Baked goods	Kg	238.244	37.282
Sugar	Kg	231.692	24.480
Vegetables and fruit	Kg	191.384	15.010
“oo” flour	Kg	181.314	32.850
Meat and tuna	Kg	107.657	19.966
Diapers (nappies)	Unit	77.417	11.234
Butter and cheese	Kg	69.869	4.712
Jam	Kg	53.903	9.892
Baby food	Kg	22.095	1.882
Coffee/cocoa	Kg	14.145	4.040
Baby formula	Kg	5.760	27
Canned soup	Kg	34.301	1.148

## INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKING

Apart from the Caritas associations (parish, pastoral unit, zonal) for which “being networked” is also a way of “being Church”, that is to say of building and promoting a witness to Christian charity at the level of the community, the Brescia Diocesan Caritas has also tried to be “a face turned towards the poor, the frail, the vulnerable, striving to activate synergies with subjects of the civil society, of the industrial sector, of the financial sector and with Government institutions.

## PROXIMITY NETWORK

There are 15 volunteers directly involved in the administration of Ottavo Giorno, a network of volunteers helping with the food handouts of the parish Caritas association, as well as some other volunteer associations already active on the territory of the Diocese of Brescia who support us especially in the activity of transporting foodstuffs.

The model character of this initiative, which started on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 in a warehouse situated at Buffalora – Brescia, was also appreciated by the Brescia Vegetable Market Consortium, which, as of January 2011 allowed the project free use of a logistical base located within the premises of the vegetable market.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEk7B4gQotM>

<sup>1</sup> Translator’s note: the original uses a pun which can’t be rendered in English; the word “contesto” (context) is separated graphically into its component syllables, resulting in the sentence “Con te sto” (I am with you).