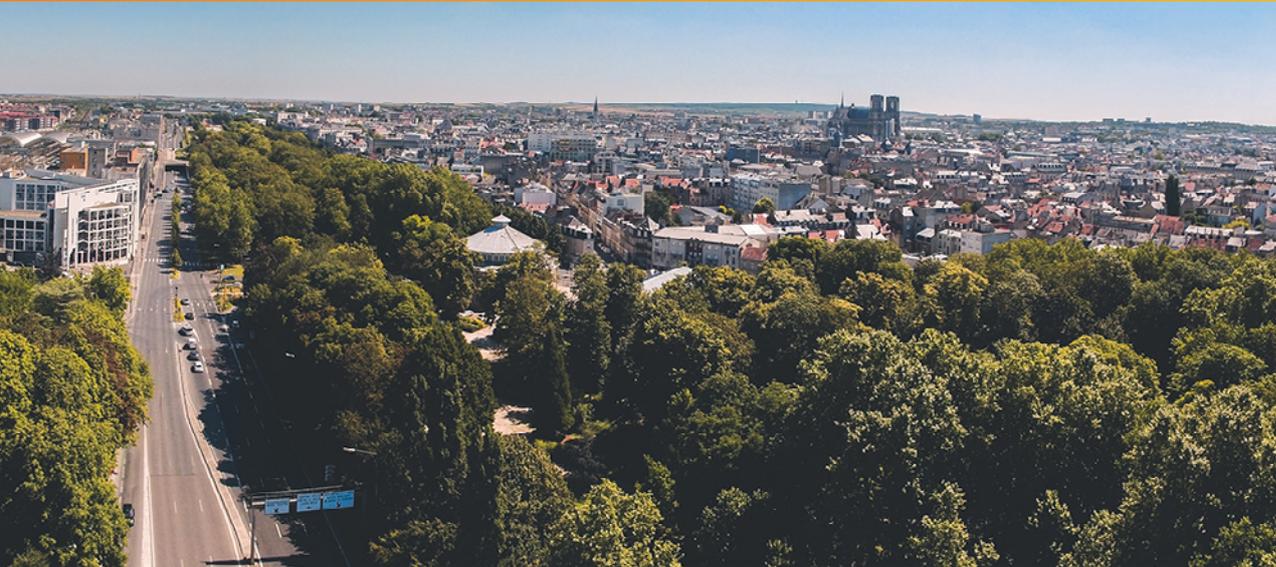




# REIMS



## A COORDINATED FOOD DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

Prior to 2011, 3,000 people were receiving food aid from a multitude of charity organizations in the Reims territory. Given this situation and in order to provide appropriate assistance to households, which went beyond food aid, it proved necessary to create a project to bring together local organizations and to refer vulnerable and disadvantaged families to social workers.

In this regard, the community grocery store has been a useful tool for encouraging a joint approach.

### KEY FIGURES FOR THE TERRITORY

#### REIMS

- 183,113 inhabitants
- Population living below the poverty threshold: 23% (INSEE 2016)
- Access to the Community and Solidarity Grocery Store: 2,854 households in 2018, corresponding to 6,072 people
- Food distributed in 2018: 308 tons

#### GREATER REIMS

- France's largest rural urban community, created on 1 January 2017
- Grand Reims (Greater Reims) is a territory made up of 143 municipalities, the heart of which is structured around a unique symbiotic relationship between the rural and urban environments, providing the springboard for the future of its ecosystem

Food aid is only one of the aspects through which social organizations can help the most disadvantaged since it is part of an individualized social support process.

The assisted populations are either exposed to the risk of social exclusion due to the insecurity of their situation in relation to employment, income, housing or health, or are already being neglected or marginalized. It is therefore essential, beyond the provision of ad hoc aid, to encourage the restoration of social cohesion around a project, using a structuring tool which favours educational aspects and support.

At the same time and in general, the distribution of aid in the form of packages implies a total absence of choice of products received, and a certain loss of dignity for the people concerned. Conversely, the community grocery allows a choice from the products available with a modest financial participation.

In February 2009, the City of Reims and the CCAS (Municipal Social Action Centre) organized a meeting with community associations with regard to this project. As a result, the decision to create the community grocery store was taken by the associations present: Food Bank, Red Cross, Entraide Protestante (Protestant Mutual Assistance), Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, SOS Bébés (SOS Babies), ASERCA (Student association).

The following principle for its organization was adopted:

- Legal and financial management to be provided by the CCAS;
- Operation by the associations coordinated by the CCAS's grocery store manager.

Because of this joint CCAS/association organization, Reims's community grocery store has been referred to as an *Epicierie Sociale et Solidaire* (Community and Solidarity Grocery Store).

The difference between a solidarity grocery store and a community grocery store is that the former is created by a group of associations, while the latter is set up by a legal entity such as a public authority or a public institution.

## FOOD DISTRIBUTION BEFORE 2011 IN REIMS

*In addition to the Secours Populaire (charity) and Restos du Cœur (charity providing food for the homeless during the winter) which maintained their own mode of operation, the distribution of food aid was carried out by the Food Bank in partnership with a network of community associations as follows:*

- *Associations focused on emergency aid or vulnerable populations (Armée du Salut (Salvation Army), Foyer Princet Ozanam, Equilibre, SAMU Social (mobile emergency medical service for homeless people), Saint Vincent de Paul (in part), SOS Bébés, etc.)*
- *Associations distributing packages (Red Cross, Entraide Protestante, St Vincent de Paul (in part), ASERCA, the student Chaplaincy, etc.)*

*This last category represented nearly 2,000 volunteers for 900 families. The community and solidarity grocery store directly impacts this population, since it has been organized on the above basis.*

## HOPES: a shared ethical charter for community solidarity-based grocery stores

It was agreed that the partners would be brought together in a network called the *Epicierie Sociale et solidaire Pour l'Orientation l'Insertion et la Réinsertion Sociale* (Community and Solidarity Grocery Store for Employment Orientation and Social Reintegration). The partners then signed a charter setting out the principles for the creation of the community and solidarity grocery store. Beyond each association's specific statutory provisions, the Charter provides a shared ethical framework for all the participants.

### COMMUNITY AND SOLIDARITY GROCERY STORE PARTNERS

- CCAS
- Departmental Council
- Food Bank
- The French Red Cross
- Entraide Protestante
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
- ASERCA
- SOS Bébés

### SHARED OBJECTIVES

Since the steering committee's first meeting on 7 January 2010, the **objectives** in opening a community grocery store in Reims have been defined as follows by all of the partners:

- To add educational and convivial dimensions to the food aid distribution operation.
- To use food aid not as an end in itself but as a means to establish relationships with disadvantaged families, thereby supporting them in the resolution of their problems and identifying and developing their potential.
- To create better coordination of food aid in Reims.
- To closely involve partner associations in the grocery store's operation.
- To organize the grocery store with the legal and financial aspects being managed by the CCAS and daily operation by the associations.
- To equip the City of Reims with a modern food distribution



facility, the like of which has already been set up in France's major cities and in other large towns in the département.

- Enabling personalized support, facilitated by a friendly reception and a social environment with shared activities; with a view to developing social cohesion and going beyond the food aid dimension by providing a place where people can receive support with social integration and where human dignity is respected.

The community grocery store meets the **following objectives**:

- Providing food aid that enables the people receiving it to obtain better quality food, with a choice of foods (thereby respecting their wishes and tastes) and a modest financial participation.
- Enabling personalized support, facilitated by a friendly reception and a social environment with shared activities; with a view to developing social cohesion and going beyond the food aid dimension by providing a place where people can receive support with social integration and where human dignity is respected.

**On this basis, the philosophy of a community grocery store is to go beyond assistance and help people achieve independence by proposing a variety of collective and educational actions.**

Since the creation of this grocery store in 2011, other projects in the Greater Reims area are being studied, such as support for the *maraudes rémoises* (mobile units), to provide food aid in an appropriate, safe environment for those most at risk. There is also a project for a mobile community grocery store in rural areas, in order to be closer to disadvantaged people in such areas.