

Warsaw, 26/09/2023

**The Olsztyn Food Bank wins the *Global Innovation Challenge*, a competition organized by the Citi Foundation. It received \$500,000 to support food security among low-income communities.**

The Citi Foundation announced the winners of the first-ever Global Innovation Challenge - a new program to support community organizations that develop innovative solutions for social and economic problems.

The Olsztyn Food Bank is one of the **50 charity organizations** from around the world that will receive a total of \$25 million in the first edition of this program. The aim of the first edition was to increase the effectiveness of activities initiated to improve food security.

*"Food security is one of the most urgent problems in our world. This is a problem for all of us. Therefore, we should engage in solving it jointly, regardless of where we are or what kind of business we run. So we start with ourselves,"* said **Elżbieta**

**Czetwertyńska, President of Citi Handlowy and Citi Country Officer in Poland.**

*"We are glad that the Citi Foundation's funds to combat food shortages will go to a Polish non-governmental organization. The Olsztyn Food Bank helps people in need, but it also educates and creates comprehensive solutions to prevent poverty. We consider it particularly relevant because Olsztyn is the second Citi center, after Warsaw, where we develop our business and are involved in solving issues important to the local community."*

The Food Bank has been operating for 25 years and its mission is to obtain food for the benefit of the people in need in the Warmia and Mazury region, in line with the concept of sustainable development and smart helping. The Food Bank supports people in a difficult situation: it builds a network of partners involved in the transfers of food, educates about food management, gets young people involved in volunteering activities and, as a result, creates communities that can independently act for people in need.

To accomplish its mission, the Food Bank takes into account the sustainable development goals and it joined the Agenda 2030 Partnership in 2021. It implements the program taking into account the complexity of global economic, social and environmental challenges. <https://olsztyn.bankizywnosci.pl>

**Marek Borowski, President of the Olsztyn Food Bank** – *“Our approach is to act responsibly but also boldly. We want other organizations to be able to follow our example and increase the effectiveness and scale of their activities. With the funds from the Citi Foundation’s, we will be able to expand our aid programs and innovative projects to improve food security, and in particular to support NGOs that implement the social economy concept, and to continue our activities to create three-sector partnerships that enable communities with the lowest incomes to benefit from affordable and healthy food. It is worth adding here that this year we obtained accreditation from the Minister of Family and Social Policy as a Social Economy Support Center.”*

“Philanthropic capital plays a key role in the community solutions market, and the Citi Foundation’s *Global Innovation Challenge* helps promote and develop new ideas,” said **Brandee McHale, President of the Citi Foundation and Head of Citi Community Investing & Development**. “From providing immediate assistance to people in crisis to long-term interventions, various organizations supported under the first edition of the *Global Innovation Challenge* provide solutions that improve the quality of life, primarily by improving the health of low-income communities.

Each of the beneficiaries of the first *Global Innovation Challenge* was awarded USD 500,000 to support program activities in four key areas: access to food, food availability, food affordability, and community resilience. Innovations include activities such as software applications that will connect food suppliers and recipients, distribution of new technologies and promotion of sustainable agriculture practices, or establishment of urban gardens.

More information about the *Global Innovation Challenge* and the list of grant beneficiaries can be found here: [citifoundation.com/challenge](https://citifoundation.com/challenge).

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