



Sustainable Food Plan Rennes

A MUNICIPAL SYSTEM OF AGRO-ECOLOGICAL, FAIR AND LOCAL COLLECTIVE CATERING

Summary

With the aim of promoting a balanced diet, consistent with the principles of sustainable development and based on a strong link between producers and consumers, the City of Rennes is committed to a municipal catering model that is underpinned by local agro-ecological production, the prevention of food waste and the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Since 1999, Rennes' municipal kitchen has centralised the preparation of meals served by various municipal services. Around 12,500 meals are prepared every day, 10,000 of which are allocated to its 48 municipal schools. Thanks to a firm commitment to foster short supply chains, the city has managed to ensure that around 80% of suppliers are local producers (15% of which are BIO

certified). However, a national law passed in 2018 establishes that, as of January 2022, 50% of the food products used in collective catering must be sustainably produced.

Within this context, several difficulties have been identified with regard to the achievement of the required sustainability indicators, such as: the legitimate cost overrun of sustainable and organic food production, the imbalance between the needs of the municipality and those of producers, and the detection of practices that generate food waste.

In order to address this situation, since 2016 the local government has promoted the formulation of a Sustainable Food Plan, developed through a participatory approach among

different municipal departments, agricultural producers, distributors, social institutions and citizens. The aim of the Plan is to foster the necessary actions to ensure that, by the end of 2020, the municipal catering system guarantees: 20% of products procured from sustainable agriculture, 20% of products with a BIO certification, and a 50% reduction in food waste.

City:
Rennes
Country:
France
Inhabitants:
221.272

Topics:
Environment, Policy and administration, Socioeconomic development, Welfare

Rennes was one of the founding cities of the IAEC and has been a key player in the Educating Cities movement since 1990



Context

The French city of Rennes is the capital of Brittany, France's most agricultural region. It has a population of 221,272 and its metropolitan area reaches 450,000 inhabitants. The three main economic sectors are: the automotive industry, the food industry and digital technologies.

For 30 years, Rennes has seen education as a driver for development, a way of responding to the challenges of local democracy and fighting all forms of inequality. Sustainability and care for the environment are viewed as another key area of priority development for the municipal institutions.

Goals

- ▶ Support, within municipal competences, the transition towards an agro-ecological model of food production based on environmental, economic and social sustainability, that is linked to the territory.
- ▶ Develop a food supply policy for the municipal catering system to accompany the transition to the new model.
- ▶ Raise awareness and involve citizens in favour of a sustainable, agro-ecological and local food model.
- ▶ Implement measures that facilitate access to sustainable food for all citizens.

Methodology

The Sustainable Food Plan was initiated in 2016 with analyses of the situation and the functioning of the municipal collective catering system, focusing on the school environment. Drawing on co-construction workshops and meetings with the different actors involved (in the production, supply, preparation and consumption of food), four areas of intervention were articulated:

1. Local purchasing policy to prioritise sustainably produced food. Includes the identification of actions to be implemented, such as: the creation of a municipal purchasing centre for fresh fruit and vegetables, support for strategies to optimise processing and logistics processes (especially



for dairy, meat and tinned products), formalisation of the commitment to use food products that are free from GMOs and palm oil, etc. In addition, the city of Rennes is participating in the creation of the territorial brand "Terres de Sources" with the local authority responsible for the management of drinking water, with the aim of introducing local and sustainable products into school catering.

2. Preparation and distribution of meals. Focuses on: studying the nutritional quality of the menus and improving their sustainability (for example: providing vegetarian alternatives and proposing a day of the week when neither meat nor fish is consumed, adapting the quantities of the portions, etc.); setting up specialised training programmes for the actors involved in collective catering and optimising the

system to re-distribute any surplus to groups facing situations of social vulnerability.

Children are empowered to serve themselves directly, being provided with a choice of large or small dishes (depending on their level of hunger), and to go back for second helpings if necessary. Playful campaigns are also carried out to raise awareness and educate pupils about the prevention of food waste through games, adapted educational materials, cooking competitions, etc. Additionally, the implementation of and care for kitchen gardens within schools is encouraged.

3. Awareness raising and advocacy. Surveys to gauge satisfaction and studies on the nutritional status of children and other users of the system are conducted. It is also ensured that pedagogical teams and support

services are involved during mealtimes (through the exchange of good practices and specialised support and guidance), and to ensure that more families are aware of and have access to the school catering service (especially those in situations of social vulnerability).

4. Sustainable Food Council. A space to develop a global and strategic vision for sustainable food in the city. It includes the participation of the municipal technical teams involved (education and purchasing) and volunteers (food professionals, producers, agri-food companies, distributors, professional chambers, trade unions, local and regional authorities, children, families and citizens in general), who meet quarterly to reflect, share knowledge on and collectively co-construct solutions to the different issues and/or problems observed.



★ Evaluation

Since its inception, the project has made positive progress in achieving the objectives set. During the year 2019, the results obtained were materialised in:

- ▶ A 55% reduction in food waste (8.56 kg/year per child).
- ▶ 36% of food products obtained through sustainable production.
- ▶ 23% of food products with BIO certification.
- ▶ 85% satisfaction among children benefiting from the school catering system.
- ▶ An 11% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in the production and distribution of menus.
- ▶ Around 50 education actors have participated in training sessions to encourage education in sustainable eating habits with children during school meals.
- ▶ Publication of educational awareness-raising games based on the 'nudge' methodology, which encourage the acquisition of sustainable eating habits in a playful way (the monster of food waste, small/large hunger, etc.) and the publication of a magazine compiling articles produced by schools.

With regard to purchasing policy, it is important to highlight the implementation of a mechanism to protect and promote sustainable local food production, which is used by 13 municipalities in the region. Given that, in public procurement, the criterion of proximity cannot legally be considered as a criterion of positive discrimination,

the municipality and the public institution responsible for water management have created their own label (Terres de Sources) through which associated producers certify their production as environmentally friendly, efficient in the use of water and free of certain pesticides. This certification has made it possible to set up a local food supply chain that meets the values of social justice (fair remuneration for producers, greater accessibility to sustainable food products), the valorisation and preservation of natural resources (particularly drinking water) and territorial cohesion.



Additionally, links have also been set up with various associations that work with people facing situations of vulnerability so that surplus food from school canteens, as well as products that would be thrown away by supermarkets, can be taken advantage of. A "free shop" equipped with a refrigeration system has also been set up, enabling university students to take away surplus food produced.

Future proposals

In terms of the future, the 2020-2026 Plan foresees work with other municipal services that also offer collective catering services (preschools, households of dependent persons, retirement homes, restaurants for civil servants, etc.), to reduce food waste and increase the percentage of sustainable products on their menus. The commitment to urban agriculture and awareness-raising will also continue, in a bid to promote citizen engagement towards sustainable and local food, and strengthen universal access to sustainable food production.

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