

Collective restoration. Opportunities from Gastronomy.

Collective catering: where are we at?

In recent years and decades, there has been a growing awareness of the need to reorient and promote the sustainability of food systems. Mass catering, both public and private, can and must be a driver of social, environmental, and economic change, promote responsible consumption and transform territorial food System.

Innovative practices have multiplied and expanded in recent years in various geographical and cultural contexts from different entry points. These approaches have required a holistic approach and a combination of interventions at the supply, demand, policy, institutional and legislative levels. Cross- sectoral coordination and synergies between agriculture, nutrition, health, education, and public procurement have been crucial for implementation.

The reorientation of collective catering towards sustainable diets and food systems requires a pragmatic process of action-learning based on the territory and the participation of local farmers, which ends up generating a combination of interventions within a systemic approach. We need to move beyond narrowly defined organic food towards regenerative food and support circular approaches at the local level. This will also contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The outcomes can belong to a variety of fields, such as:

- the protection of local biodiversity and the promotion of the transition from conventional to agro-ecological production (rehabilitation of traditional ecosystems, endangered species support, protection of areas of high environmental value).
- support for small scale food producers (including neo-rurals and artisanal fisheries) and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and income and employment generation (including processing and distribution)
- improving governance and cross-sectoral coordination and synergies at local level, establishing urban-rural dialogue and partnerships on issues of common interest, involving and training institutions and agencies, reviewing existing procedures and regulations

Collective catering is proving essential for the promotion of sustainable diets and territorial development and is therefore a driving force for the transformation of food systems and the improvement of the social, environmental, and economic environment.

Public procurement, in particular, is now acknowledged as a powerful tool that governments, and in particular municipalities, can use to ensure that public institutional feeding programmes (such as school or hospital canteens) provide healthy, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible food.

- on the one hand, taxpayers' money should not contribute to the epidemic of Non Communicable Diseases but instead support individual and community health.
- on the other, promoting procurement of locally produced healthy foods can generate benefits for local farmers and economies

The aim of this paper is to build on the experiences presented at SCWC BCN 2023 to guide interested institutions in the implementation of sustainable collective catering.

Several lines of action emerge from these experiences:

in terms of food:

- prioritise the purchase and promotion of local and artisanal production, supporting the transition from conventional to agro-ecological production (sustainable environmental practices, rehabilitation of traditional ecosystems, protection of endangered species), the conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and the use of traditional practices and knowledge.
- build on traditional practices, culture, and knowledge. Indigenous Peoples, including in cities, can contribute to the discussions with researchers and planners on ingredients and ecosystems

management.

- involve chefs in the preparation and preservation of seasonal foods, raising awareness and appreciation of traditions, flavours and knowledge based on local foods and sustainable and healthy agricultural and processing practices.
- give more attention to flavours and taste (which in practice ends up facilitating convergence of consumer satisfaction with culture and demand for local, seasonal and organic foods).

in terms of social equity:

- ensure decent working conditions and wages for employees, with special attention to women
- promote the economic inclusion of smallholder food suppliers and vulnerable suppliers' groups, including small and medium food enterprises, women and youth, as well as minority entrepreneurs
- encourage the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services organised in a participatory and cooperative manner
- remove architectural barriers and provide food options adapted to biological needs and cultural preferences.

in terms of resource management

- limit water stress all along the food chain (crop selection and planning, sustainable harvesting, collection and processing practices, limited consumption and reuse).
- reduce energy consumption and promote the use of renewable energy in food preparation and serving
- design strategies to prevent food waste and facilitate food recycling and reuse, such as promoting the circular economy, limiting the use of packaging, eliminating single-use plastic packaging and replacing it with biodegradable materials
- train food system actors and develop processes to ensure sustainability and consumer safety.

It is essential that the actors of collective catering are aware and assume their social, environmental and territorial responsibility and work in partnership with local bodies and institutions (governmental, non-governmental, academic, private sector) in different sectors (agriculture, health, environment, education, social protection, procurement...).

Several strategies can facilitate this transition:

- development of partnerships and networks at territorial, national and international level, including a dialogue between innovative actors in the private and public sectors.
- offer technical assistance to catering structures, whether public or private
- design and implement a communication and training strategy involving both actors of food production and distribution (restaurants, bars, markets, retail shops, etc.) and from social sectors (health, education, social protection)
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- for food services actors in relevant topics and develop didactic material for schools, institutes and universities.

- for the other actors of the food system, with a view to enable farmers and SMEs to supply a given quantity of safe and good quality foods at the right time

- for consumers, on the importance of a healthy and sustainable diet, of responsible consumption and sustainable management of nature and biodiversity; urban agriculture for example has proven very efficient in raising awareness of urbanites on agriculture, food chains and nature.

The present legislative and regulatory context is a challenge for reorienting collective catering and until now actors have concentrated on avoiding or bypassing obstacles. This matter should be brought up to the attention of Parliamentarians (for example contacting the European Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition...).

Round Table 13/11/23

- Facilitator: Ms. Florence Egal, Participants:
- Mr. Senen Barral, Inditex Mr. Pablo Gómez, Inditex
- Mr. Soren Buhl Steiniche, EAT Copenhagen
- Ms. Milagros de Hoz, New York City Food Policy Office
- Ms. Pepa Aymamí i Aymemí, Institut del Patrimoni Culinari Català Mr. Reyes García Pizarro, gerente del Proyecto Llotges de Proximitat

Mr. Llorenç Llop, Verifruit

Ms. Ana Turón Maderuelo, Restauración colectiva Mr. Josep Bernabeu Mestre, Universitat de Barcelona

The one-hour session led to the following conclusions:

- mass catering must make the best use of local food resources
- short food chains are essential to keep prices low and provide better incomes for local farmers and food producers, reduce transport and middlemen, and contribute to more resilient and equitable food systems.
- the establishment of local producer platforms is essential to facilitate the purchase of part of the mass catering industry. 1
 - producers cannot also take care of distribution
 - it is in their interest to work in networks or cooperatives that allow for collective bargaining
 - small farmers must be paid in 30 days; contracts with large distributors have proven to be too unbalanced
- synergy between the private sector and the administration would be mutually beneficial and would enhance sustainable territorial development;
 - but procedures and deadlines are very different
 - the private sector is looking for quick results and is open to risk and innovation
 - timetables and political agendas are five-year and the institutional culture is very different.
- The current context in Catalonia offers an excellent opportunity to explore a joint action-learning process.
- The Generalitat supports the Llotges2 project in which the Institut del Patrimoni Culinari Català participates. This project works in the four provinces of Catalonia to facilitate the purchase of local products for collective catering, based on a responsible, fair and sustainable purchasing approach that links local producers with the managers of collective catering programmes.
- Inditex, for its part, plans to reorient its company's restaurants in Catalonia and needs to better understand the local context. They bring their experience in the creation of local farmers' platforms in Galicia that supply their restaurants as well as public institutions (schools, nurseries, hospital...).

and can benefit from exchanges with Copenhagen and New York.

Mass catering can contribute to the sustainability of local food systems (e.g. 100 km around Copenhagen, which is a de facto cross-border area). This issue requires further attention. The possibility of accessing European funding should be explored in order to share relevant experiences.