

Title

Leverage projects to make healthy foods available for all

Short description

This project aims to realize innovative collaborations between the social and regular economy to canalize qualitative food surpluses in the direction of the social redistribution to disadvantaged people.

In an earlier project, two business plans were developed focused on social solutions for food waste: one business plan targeted auctions, another supermarkets. In the current project, the implementation of these business plans were realized and tested. Business plan 1 focused on the integration of food surpluses from a supermarket into the working of a social restaurant. Business plan 2 focused on a collaboration between Flemish auctions for vegetables, food aid organizations, and social economy companies.

Currently, only preliminary results of these practices are available. The final report will be ready by the summer of 2017. Based on the provisional report, it was affirmed that it is an interesting challenge to bring together two worlds, i.e., the social and regular economy. Self-evidences such as the uniformity of social restaurants and that food surpluses always have a positive financial effect on an organization, were questioned and the project brought many new insights. However, the aim to reach disadvantaged people through these kind of efforts stands firm.

Topic

Consuming – food

Characteristics (type, level)

National
Policy

Country/Countries of implementation

Belgium

Aims and Objectives

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1. Business plan 1 focused on the integration of food surpluses from a supermarket into the working of a social restaurant
2. Business plan 2 focused on a collaboration between Flemish auctions for vegetables, food aid organizations, and social economy companies.

Below the main activities of this project are presented, including the specific targets per business plan.

Target Group

This project targets the social/regular economy as an intermediate to reach the disadvantaged people

Status

Ongoing

Start and Completion dates

In 2014, the business plans were developed. Implementation of the plans started in 2015. The current project ends in December 2017 but Komosie is already searching for new funding to continue these practices.

Lifestyle and Behavior Change

This project aims to bring qualitative food surpluses to disadvantaged people via social organizations, with a main focus on fruit and vegetables. Consequently, the accessibility of fruit and vegetables will increase via this initiative and might also improve the dietary patterns of the target group.

In 2017, an evaluation is planned to assess if the initiative actually increases the availability and accessibility of these food products for the low SES groups.

Effects on:

<p>Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>The initiative could improve the dietary patterns of the disadvantaged people, and might subsequently improve their general health.</p>
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<p>Vulnerable populations</p>	<p>This project aims to bring qualitative food surpluses to disadvantaged people via social organizations, with a main focus on fruit and vegetables. Consequently, the accessibility of fruit and vegetables will increase via this initiative and might also improve the dietary patterns of the target group.</p>
<p>Environment</p>	<p>The practice is focused on waste management.</p>

Initiated and/or implemented by

vzw Komosie, an umbrella organization for environmental entrepreneurs in the social economy, was the initiator of this practice.

The idea was initiated based on the following. In Belgium, 15% lives in poverty. More and more Belgians need to make use of food aid organizations. In 2013, 122 135 people were helped by the food aid. Social restaurants and groceries see an increase in the users. Moreover, the food supply to these social organizations was declining in the last years, especially for fruit and vegetables. Consequently, a broad initiative was necessary to curb this in Flanders. This reason, together with the need to add to the worldwide trend of putting climate change on the agenda, created this initiative. Moreover, as some social organizations were already trying to implement similar practices (on a smaller scale), it was easy to team up for this project.

Stakeholders and sectors involved

- Komosie is the initiator of this practice = an umbrella organization for environmental entrepreneurs in the social economy
- Social partners: Goed gevoel, Levanto, Rimo Limburg, Voedselbank, Sociaal winkelpunt, custom companies Sense, WEBO, RIMO Limburg, De Waak and many others
- Government: Flemish Government, Flanders logistics, Federal Agency for Food Safety (FAVV),
- Private partners: auction house BelOrta, supermarket Makro

Financial support

Flemish government provides support for this three year project.

Evidence-base

The standpoint of KOMOSIE is to fight against poverty via an emancipatory approach, based on the standpoint of the Netwerk against poverty in Belgium and the ANDES model in France.

Main activities

As mentioned above, this project aims to realize innovative collaborations between the social and regular economy to canalize qualitative food surpluses in the direction of the social redistribution to disadvantaged people. Two business plans were developed to provide social solutions for food waste in Flanders: one in collaboration with supermarkets, another in collaboration with auctions for mainly vegetables.

- **Collaboration with supermarkets**

The first part of the project is focused on realizing collaborations between social organizations and supermarkets. This part constitutes of 3 components/tasks/operational goals:

1.1 To provide guidance/advice regarding the implementation of the business plan in the social organization.

Social restaurants or other social/food aid organizations with interest in integration of food surpluses in their working, receive guidance/advice regarding the organization and technical aspects of such a collaboration. The aim is to valorize as many food surpluses as possible from supermarkets to social restaurants/organizations in order to reach disadvantaged people. The project has set to support around 40 social restaurants in their collaboration with supermarkets.

1.2 To conduct a pilot study on logistic cooperation between social organizations and supermarkets

The project aims to create structural collaborations between supermarkets, logistic partners from the social economy and social organizations. This pilot will evaluate the feasibility of this initiative and develop a concept based on the outcomes.

1.3 To provide guidance with the implementation of regional logistic cooperation to transport food surpluses

Based on the business plan and the developed concept in 1.2 regional logistic collaborations will be started between social organizations and supermarkets.

- **Collaboration with auction house**

This second part includes the guidance of two pilot projects to create structural collaborations based on the ANDES-model between two auctions (BelOrta in Sint-Katelijne-Waver and REO-auction in Roeselare) and two or more social organizations and logistic partners. The aim is to help at least 120 food aid initiatives in Flanders that did not receive vegetables surpluses from auctions before; to reach at least 22 000 disadvantaged people who are dependent of food aid; and to create social employment for at least 25 disadvantaged people

Evaluation

Currently, Komosie is working on an evaluation report of the planned initiatives. They included surveys and interviews in their evaluation. The report will be ready by the summer of 2017.

Main results

The following preliminary results (based on a provisional report end of 2015), 56 social organizations were involved in the guidance/advice sessions of 1.1. Several organizations (>20) subsequently started with initiatives based on this input (results of provisional report). One of the conclusions was that it is more difficult for larger social restaurants (with more than 75 daily mails) to use the food surpluses than smaller social restaurants, as they often get only a limited amount of food surpluses of the same foods from the supermarkets. In 2016-2017, initiatives will be organized to link these larger social restaurants to auctions that often have a higher amount of the same food surpluses. The 'schenkingsbeurs' (www.schenkingsbeurs.be), an online platform that helps to link supermarkets/auctions and social organizations also helped to create collaborations.

The pilot project (1.2) encountered a difficult start. The involved supermarket postponed the start several times because of several administrative tasks that still needed to be figured out (for example what about refund for the taxes – there is fiscal law in Belgium that stated that taxes are only refunded when food waste is provided for free but social restaurants still ask a small fee from their users).

In the framework of part two, several initiatives were started. Preliminary results are only available for one practice, namely an initiative that produces soup with the vegetable surpluses for distribution and sale to social and food aid organizations. Both social organizations and consumers were positive about this initiative but given the limited demand, the initiative is not cost-effective.

Key success factors and barriers

- Bringing two very different worlds together: social and regular economy. A good communication between those two was important, as well as a clear task description for all involved actors;
- Financial barriers were the case. The developed initiatives are often not cost-effective, there should be more focus on the societal value instead. Both Belgian and European laws regarding food safety issues, reimbursement of taxes, rules for auctions made it sometimes difficult to implement the practices.

INHERIT Perspective

This project aims to realize innovative collaborations between social and regular economy to canalize qualitative food surpluses in the direction of the social redistribution to disadvantaged people. Although only preliminary results are currently available, this project has a high potential to create a triple win on equity, health and climate. By creating a good transfer of food surpluses from 1) supermarket to social restaurants, and 2) vegetable auctions to food aid organizations and social economy companies, disadvantaged individuals have more EXPOSURE to healthy and sustainable foods. This project will also change the PHYSICAL FOOD ENVIRONMENT for these low SES individuals.

[More information](#)

http://www.komosie.be/ko/themas/foodsavers/hefboomprojecten_170.aspx

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