CULTiVATE

CULTIVATE PROJECT - EIP AGRI PRACTICE ABSTRACTS

MILAN'S FOOD WASTE HUBS NETWORK

The Food Waste Hubs is an **urban-scale model of food recovery** aiming to reduce food waste and promote social equity by redistributing it to people in need. The City of Milan partnered with Polytechnic University, Assolombarda, Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Snam, and some 25 civil society organisations to provide the city with a polycentric and capillary logistic system able to cover diverse types of **food donors** and reach recipients in every district. The programme leveraged a combination of favourable elements like a robust legal framework, a favourable policy environment and a committed public engagement.

Key challenges included coordinating among diverse stakeholders and ensuring efficient logistics. Opportunities involved enhancing community engagement and establishing sustainable models for other cities. In 2024, the network expanded from five to eight hubs, **recovering 795.3 tons of food**—a 25% increase from 615 tons. In 2023 this effort reached 14,973 households, benefiting over 126,000 individuals, including 3,867 minors, equating to approximately 1.59 million meals and serving 176 associations. The Foody Zero Waste Hub at the Sogemi food market was particularly effective, collecting over 440 tons of food through collaborations with 99 wholesalers, benefiting over 100 third-sector organizations.

Milan's approach showcases the **effectiveness of localized food waste interventions** and highlighted some recommendations for replicating:

- Forge **partnerships** among municipal authorities, private entities, and non-profits to enhance resource sharing and coordinated efforts.
- Implement **volunteer programs** and **awareness campaigns** to foster a culture of sustainability and collective responsibility.
- Introduce **supportive policies**, such as tax incentives for businesses donating surplus food, to encourage broader participation and investment in food recovery initiatives.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Milan's Food Waste Hubs have significantly advanced efforts to reduce food waste and promote social equity. However, **challenges persist**:

1. **Data Sharing Reluctance**: Stakeholders—including food companies, retailers, NGOs, and public entities—often hesitate to share data, hindering transparency and collaboration.
2. **Political Dependence:** The success of these initiatives relies heavily on political support; shifts in leadership could impact funding and priorities.
3. **Resource Constraints**: Potential issues like reduced food supply, volunteer shortages, and fluctuating demand threaten the sustainability of food recovery efforts.

Suggested Actions:

a. Enhance Data Transparency:

- Standardize Reporting: Develop uniform metrics to facilitate consistent data collection and sharing.
- Implement Digital Platforms: Create secure systems for real-time data exchange among stakeholders.
- Provide Training: Educate stakeholders on the benefits and methods of effective data sharing.

b. Address Resource Challenges:

- Diversify Funding: Explore various funding sources to ensure financial stability.
- Recruit Volunteers: Develop incentive programs to attract and retain volunteers.
- Utilize Forecasting: Employ data analytics to anticipate and manage fluctuations in food demand and supply.

c. Messages to End Users:

- Embrace Sharing: Recognize the impact of sharing surplus food, understanding that small contributions can significantly aid community well-being.
- Participate Actively: Engage with local food recovery programs, volunteer, and support initiatives aimed at reducing food waste.
- Advocate for Change: Stay informed about food waste challenges and promote policies and practices that foster sustainability and equity.

By addressing these challenges and implementing the proposed actions, Milan can enhance the effectiveness of its Food Waste Hubs, ensuring a sustainable and equitable food system.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Food policy. The Food Aid Hub network consolidates: in 2024, over 795 tons of food recovered, 25% more than in 2023: comune.milano.it/en/

Food Sharing Governance Landscape Analysis in CULTIVATE hub locations: Milan: zenodo.org/records/12528607

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