



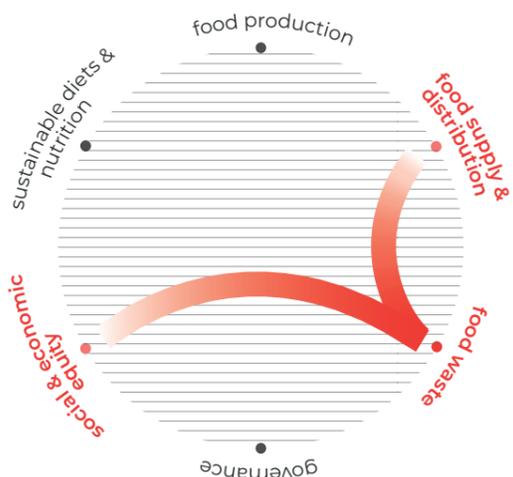
GHENT BELGIUM

Title of Practice

GHENT: FOODSAVERS PLATFORM

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category
FOOD WASTE

Main impacts on other MUFPP categories



Contact
WOUTER VERSTRAETE
Staff-Policy Support for Social Services

Context

At the city level there are significant volumes of **excess food** available through conventional wholesale distribution and retail systems. At the same time, cities are facing rising levels of food poverty and malnourishment. The City of Ghent further researched the situation and noticed that there was a higher volume of excess food than what was being recovered and redistributed by social organizations. As a response, the Municipality led a two-year process of discussion and research with the involvement of many stakeholders. The outcome has been the launch of a **logistics and information platform** to better match volume and demand for excess food, reducing food waste and fostering social inclusion.

Overview of the food practice

In March 2017, the Foodsavers platform was launched. It brings together excess food from the wholesale market and the local retailers and redistributes them to social organizations in Ghent. The organizations involved are a mix of food banks, social restaurants and social supermarkets. The goal is threefold:

- **climate target:** CO₂ emissions are reduced through food waste saving. According to the FAO, 100 tonnes of food waste in Ghent would be equivalent to 254 tonnes of CO₂ emissions. The goal is to avoid at least 100 tonnes of food being wasted in 2017;
- **social employment:** the Foodsavers platform is being operated by long-term unemployed people. The project trains them in logistics skills and prepares them for the regular labour market. The goal is to employ 10 to 12 unemployed people who face difficult access to the labour market; and
- **fighting poverty:** the excess food is being distributed to people in need. It prioritizes access to fresh and healthy food, improving the diets of disadvantaged groups.

Results and lessons learned

After ten months of operation, the results achieved by the Foodsavers platform have surpassed all expectations. The first achievements are the following:

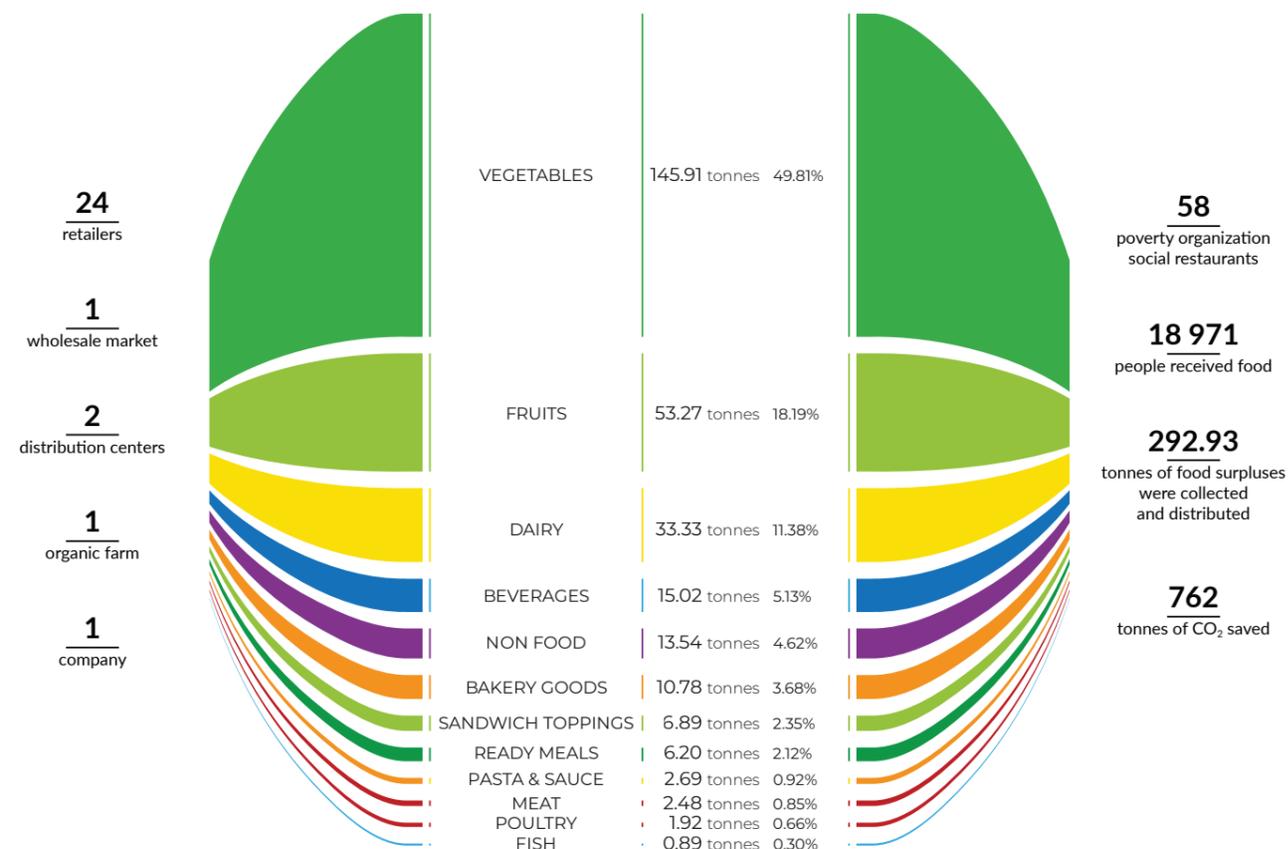
- 300.34 tonnes of food redistributed composed of 64 395 items;
- 24 retailers, one wholesale market, two distribution centers of retailers, one organic farm and one company provided food products;
- 58 local charity organisations and social restaurants based in Ghent distributed food to people in need;
- 18 971 people in need received products or food baskets.
- 68 percent of fresh fruit and vegetables on total amount of products redistributed;
- reduction of 762 tonnes of CO₂; and
- employment of 19 people coming from long-term unemployment.

The practice of Ghent highlights the role of cities within the food system. Lots of initiatives happen at a very local, small-scale level. The role of the city can be of importance in creating bigger volumes and bigger impact. For example, it provides professionalization for local volunteering initiatives. This also implies that the role of a city does not remain limited to policy work and legislation but that it takes up an important **operational role** focused on building societal value. Another innovative aspect is the systemic approach in tackling food waste. Many cities start to tackle food waste in different ways. The system developed in Ghent has the advantage to address different strategic issues: reducing food waste, fighting poverty and strengthening employment capacities. This has been possible Thanks to an extensive thematic and **multi-stakeholders inclusion**. The project is the result of a structural collaboration between different departments within the city: the climate and environmental department, the department of work and social welfare. The project responds to the objectives of those three departments involved and is also the result of bringing together their respective budgets in order to make it possible. The project had to go through several approval procedures within the city management system.



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FOOD COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION PROCESS



Source: Ghent Public Centres for Social Welfare and the City of Ghent.



- <https://bit.ly/2J9qa2L>