



EDE NETHERLANDS

Title of Practice

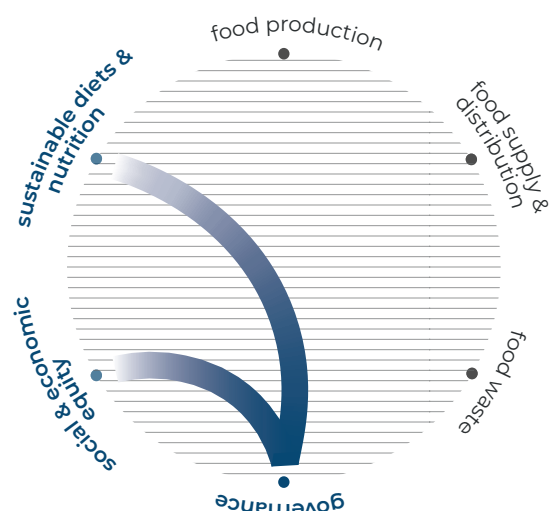
EDE: A PROMISING SHIFT IN FOOD GOVERNANCE

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category
GOVERNANCE



*Special Mention
2017*

*Main impacts on other
MUFPP categories*



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Context

The City of Ede, located in the Province of Gelderland, adopted its first integrated food strategy in 2015. This is the result of a general vision document from 2012 whereby the municipality stated its commitment to “choose for food”. Consequently, many different stakeholders from local society were consulted to create a **bottom-up food policy**. Whereas many municipalities develop their strategy as a voluntary tool that provides guidance, Ede’s food strategy was officially **adopted by the city council**, which gives it a very strong status. The city council showed that the strategy was not to remain a paper strategy by allocating a large budget upon adoption. Through this integrated food strategy, the City of Ede is working to achieve healthy and sustainable food for all its citizens by focusing on improving and strengthening both the economic and social conditions of Ede.

Overview of the food practice

Ede is the first municipality in the Netherlands that has truly achieved a **food governance shift** towards healthy and sustainable food for all its citizens. Through its integrated food strategy food issues are addressed in a systemic and coherent way. More importantly, Ede goes even further by having a food program to operationalize this strategy, a budget to implement the strategy, a municipal food team of **five full-time staff**, and the first **municipal food councilor** in the Netherlands with food as the primary subject in his portfolio. The political and administrative commitment is in fact rooted in the municipal organization, which works closely with a wide range of societal actors.

Several key elements to create political and administrative commitment in Ede included:

- ensuring that food as a specific theme was added to the covenant after elections and ensuring food was assigned as a **specific policy area** to one councilor;
- developing a food strategy together **with social actors** to realize a strategy that finds resonance in society;
- having an integrated food strategy officially adopted by the municipal council, to ensure political commitment and backup;
- ensuring that upon adoption of the strategy a **budget** was allocated, making a difference between the food strategy remaining a paper reality or actually being put into practice;
- **raising awareness** about food issues and the importance of the food strategy among colleagues and institutions as a first step to involve them in implementing the food strategy (by inviting a speaker from Wageningen University for example);
- using a “**what can food do for your** work/initiative” rather than a “what should I do for food” approach;

- finding **ambassadors** between experts from different policy fields that can help implement your food strategy to ensure that food becomes embedded in city government’s existing structures/policies, such as an ecologist, a communications official or a subsidies advisor;
- organizing **lunch lectures/excursions** with other departments so they feel ownership such as a field trip organized by the spatial planning department to a foodforest; and
- making best use of the energy of citizens initiatives to ensure **institutional embeddedness** of food in the city government and connecting the food initiative to other policy areas in the municipality.

The Municipality of Ede is also in close contact with other cities through the “Dutch City deal: Food on the Urban Agenda”, the provincial government of Gelderland (regional level) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Internal Affairs (national level). Together with these partners, the city is integrating its own role as a local government within the food system in coordination with the province and the national government.

Results and lessons learned

By using an integrated food strategy Ede connects several elements of the food system: food education, public health, food waste, short food chains, sustainable and innovative food production and integrated governance. As mentioned earlier, Ede applies a multilevel approach, focused on **territorial and social inclusion**. This is a central aspect of the city’s food governance. The best example of this is the “foodfloor”: a concept developed by several citizens groups. Citizens can pitch an idea for healthy/sustainable food in Ede and apply for a small subsidy to bring their project to the next level. **Subsidies for winning ideas** are provided by the municipality. The foodfloor is one example of innovative collaboration between societal groups and the municipality as a new way to promote food initiatives. Ede is a pioneer in shaping a **new role for local governments** in the food system. Local governments are considered active players with responsibility and hence take action, generating political and administrative commitment to introducing the new policy field of healthy and sustainable food.

However, the most important lesson we can learn from Ede is twofold: getting food issues on the political agenda is a complex journey, for which a specific food team can be an important catalyst. However, ensuring that food issues become part of the entire community of municipal and social organizations’ shared belief system is a much more challenging task. Even with achieved positive results the Ede food team and its partners may actually run the **risk of seeing this process slowed down**, or they may experience new challenges as other departments or ministries (such as agriculture, health or spatial planning) consider the issues to be “already covered” and therefore decide to remain inactive.



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