

| City Bergamo | |
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| Country | Italy |
| Population | 120,923 |
| Title of policy or practice | Food for meet |
| Subtitle (optional) | Food: exchange and culture |
| URL video | |
| Category | Social and Economic Equity |
| SDGs | <p>SDGs: 11,12,16,17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. 11: As most of European cities, Bergamo has been facing the challenges of demographic transformations related to migration. In order to deal with the issue of social inclusion of asylum seekers hosted in the local territory, the city promoted food as a means to enable people – especially the vulnerable groups – to advance socially and economically; • No. 12: Since sustainable consumption and production aim at doing more and better with less, the project promotes and enhances local, green and sustainable realities; • No. 16: The project aims at enhancing social inclusion of asylum seekers within the local community facing cultural prejudices considering food as an element of union and individual empowerment; • No. 17: This practice is characterized by an inclusive approach involving the Municipality, a relevant international actor such as “Slow Food”, local agricultural producers, non-profit organizations and citizenship. |
| Brief description | <p>As one of the first action to implement the food policy, the Food Policy Council of the Municipality of Bergamo designed the international project “Food for Meet” with the aim of linking the themes of food enhancement and intercultural sharing.</p> <p>The main idea is that food is an element of cohesion among different cultures as it represents a cultural and universal key factor that characterizes people and places and could become a vehicle for meeting and integration.</p> <p>The project therefore proposes a concrete path of knowledge and tasting where food is intended as an opportunity for mutual understanding between different cultures, starting from the best cuisine of different countries' traditions and food products protected by Slow Food Presidium.</p> <p>The proposal is to make the “Land Market” a contact point between different cultures involving the asylum seekers of Bergamo “Academy of Integration” in the organization of a cooking workshop managed by them. During the “Land Market” events they are in charge of preparing a typical dish of one of their countries of origin - previously selected by Slow Food Bergamo - offering then it to the citizens. The possibility of sharing gastronomic, cultural and social practices related to food of one's own country thus becomes an opportunity for mutual knowledge, community growth and social inclusion.</p> <p>During the usual weekly lessons, the students of the “Academy” follow a training course designed by the educators so that they are able, on the occasion of the “Land Markets”, to provide information and advices on the preparation of dishes.</p> <p>The project started in January and it will continue until June 2019, involving 9 different nationalities (Senegal, Gambia, Pakistan, Ivory Coast, Mali, Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Guinea) with a typical dish and a typical food for the 6 events scheduled.</p> |

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| Date of start and state (ongoing/completed) | 01/2019 - 06/2019 Ongoing |
| Actors and stakeholders involvement | The project is led by the Municipality of Bergamo and Slow Food Bergamo. It is carried out by the “Academy of Integration”, an experimental project promoted by the Municipality and managed by Ruah Social Cooperative and Caritas Bergamo. “Biodistretto” and “Strada del vino e della Val Calepio” - associations of small local producers - cover the cost of raw materials and compostable tableware. Ubi Bank provides free indoor space for the events. |
| Approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Bergamo signed the MUFPP in January 2019 and designed “Food for Meet” project in collaboration with Slow Food Bergamo; • The “Academy for Integration” collaborates through the preparation of the dishes to be tasted; • Selected traditional recipes, belonging to the countries of origin of the migrants, have been identified in order to respect the criteria of Slow Food Presidium; • Local stakeholders are involved; • Every two weeks the “Land Market” events take place. |
| Innovation | <p>“Food for Meet” project combines the social aspects of food - as a means to share migrants own baggage and cultural traditions - and the theme of sustainable valorisation of products that are part of the gastronomic cultural heritage of Bergamo and its hinterland.</p> <p>The relevance of the project lies in the fact that this practice is not designed by a single association but it is developed and supported by the Municipality of Bergamo within a broader and structured framework of food policy actions.</p> <p>To summarise, the practice provides an innovative approach and solution mainly concerning these two elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At every step (from the preparation to the sharing of dishes and the exchange of culinary advice) food is considered not just an object that we ingest but as an element that helps to bring people and cultures closer; • A learning process is achieved for all the citizens and tourists that attend that event. The taste of ethnic recipes offers the chance to extend our food concept: the way we use it, how to valorise particular ingredients, how it can be reused. <p>This is in line with the vision of cities promoted in the New Urban Agenda that assumes cultural diversity as a source of enrichment that provides an important contribution to the sustainable development of resilient and sustainable cities. It is thus important to underline that this practice, thanks to its linear and simple approach, is widely replicable in other contexts and situations.</p> |
| Impact | <p>The project has a social and cultural impact.</p> <p>Regarding the first aspect the “Food for Meet” project addresses the issue of migrant’s integration through a simple idea - offering the food of one’s own country of origin - allowing the group of the asylum seekers to present themselves to the local community through an aspect common to all humankind but also full of specific cultural connotations.</p> <p>In this way the 30 asylum seekers of the “Academy of Integration” are directly involved in the project having the opportunity to increase language and cooking skills that can be useful for their job search.</p> <p>Encouraging cultural exchange from a simple element of daily experience can help to reduce cultural distances between the group considered most vulnerable, such as migrants and asylum seekers, and the citizenship. In each of the events organized about 200 portions of typical dishes were served involving an audience of about 1,000 people.</p> |

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| | <p>Offering a piece of one's own culture through the preparation of a typical dish also gives symbolic meanings. Through food every culture acquires value and is considered equal to the others. At the same time, every migrant feels that his/her cultural diversity is appreciated.</p> <p>The impact becomes therefore cultural since the project aims at tackling the negative perception towards migrants and asylum seekers which is currently widespread in European cities.</p> |
| <p>Inclusion</p> | <p>About thematic inclusion the project takes into account MUFPP's categories, in particular "Social and Economic Equity" and "Food Production". In fact, it refers to the goal of promoting networks and support grassroots activities that create social inclusion, such as involving asylum seekers in the alternative food market. Moreover, it supports short food chains, producer organisations, producer-to-consumer networks and platforms that integrate the social and economic infrastructure of urban food system that links urban and rural areas.</p> <p>Focusing on methods and partnership, the project aims to strengthen the community bonds among local public entities, third sector and several realities and associations involved in sustainable food production and distribution, which represent dozens of producers of our territory.</p> <p>The project is also connected to the international network of Slow Food Presidium through the traditional recipes of the countries that will be hosted at "Mother Earth" 2020 event in Turin.</p> <p>The citizenship is also another important actor involved as target of the initiative and object of informal learning approach. Within the project the migrants are not the passive receivers of assistance services aimed at their integration in the territory, but they are those who actively put their culture and skills into practice to become part of the local community.</p> |
| <p>Adversity coefficient</p> | <p>The project is part of a broad framework of actions defined by the Municipality of Bergamo with the aim of generating impacts on the city's food system. This means considering the contribution of the civil society (the world of the third sector and non-profit organizations) as an integral part of a multi-level governance to address the current challenges of the urban areas.</p> <p>It also means directly involving those who are often identified as mere recipients of public assistance services and bringing them to the scene to contribute to public discussion on food issues.</p> <p>For this reason, in the project, around the theme of food, different actors are questioned: from small agricultural producers to the non-profit world, to the asylum seekers hosted in the city.</p> <p>The administration thus does not elaborate solutions inside its offices but opens itself to the citizenship participation collaborating with all the subjects of the territory to face common urban challenges.</p> <p>This operational mode of the public administration - as in the case of Bergamo - allows a greater degree of consensus to be obtained because the solution doesn't "fall" from above but is thought and realized together with its beneficiaries.</p> <p>Since it is created on the streets and opened to the citizens, the "Food for Meet" project is for everyone and can create a strong cultural impact to mitigate the conflicts that often crosses the European cities. These cities are in fact very often unprepared to manage the extent of migration flows, especially with regard to the way of integrated welcome approaches. Instead of just providing goods and assistance, projects like "Food for Meet" try to promote the development of individual programmes and socioeconomic inclusion and integration.</p> |