

TRANSITION TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE FOOD NETWORK: THE CASE OF THE POLYTECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF VIANA DO CASTELO

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Abstract

Food Public procurement at schools has the potential to influence both consumption and food production patterns, contributing to more sustainable and healthier diets. Procurement schemes should promote food and nutrition appropriate to the specificities of each territorial context, considering proximity schemes (i.e. family farms, local and seasonal production, short supply chains, and various types of certified quality schemes, e.g. organic production - Law no . 34/2019, Official Gazette no. 98/, 2019) (Schebesta, 2018). A study conducted by Smith, McNeil and Ali (2020) apply a survey to 685 students and determine the students' perceptions of an on-campus foodservice operation at an identified historically black college and university (HBCU) and its effect on their satisfaction and dining frequency. They concluded that on-campus foodservice operators should focus on quality of food, ambience, value for money, food and beverage options and service quality to achieve student satisfaction."

This study aims to understand what kind of attributes in food the Institute Politechnique of Viana do Castelo (IPVC) students value the most in order to be considered for introduction in the canteens/bars, as well as to analyze and study the sustainable food public procurement made in the IPVC, in order to improve the link between the producers of sustainable food proximity and the collective restoration in public universities.

For this purpose, a questionnaire will be applied to those responsible for the canteen service, responsible for the preparation of specifications for contracting companies related to the university canteen and vending service, administrative and university services staff, teaching staff, students, catering companies, producers and processors of food that supply the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo.

Based on the answers of the survey applied, using the statistical analysis, the profile of the respondents will be analyzed, the use of food services and an evaluation of the food services and effects of the food system will be done. With this work we intend to raise awareness among the university population for the adoption of a healthier and sustainable diet, through public purchases of ecological food and made to short chain sustainable food producers. We conclude that it is necessary to include sustainability criteria in the technical specifications, in accordance with the law, and accompany the catering companies in this transition. It is suggested that in future work pilot projects are developed in the IPVC, in which they work on the introduction of local and seasonal products, especially fruit and fresh produce in the menu offerings. It is also suggested the development of proximity actions with local producers, inside the campus, as for example marketplaces, to promote the offer of local, seasonal and healthy products to the university population. On the one hand, training work is needed for all actors in the different stages of the agrifood chain, from production, to distribution and consumption. On the other hand, it is important to be close to the companies and school communities in the change processes, and to update the public purchasing criteria.

For the transition of the agri-food model, it is necessary to integrate new concepts and tools in the daily professional activity, as well as to facilitate the processes and tasks, both in production and logistics and in the definition of public procurement requirements and work on menus. At each stage of the process, key players should be involved to ensure that changes are decided and designed taking into account the needs and proposals of different sectors, especially those that are not normally represented: small production. More accessible public policies are needed, and above all a change in regulation and a clear commitment to these processes.

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