

Italy - LIFE FOSTER

Title of inspiring practice	LIFE FOSTER - Training, education and communication to reduce food waste in the food service industry
Geographical area	Italy, France, Spain and Malta. The project was implemented at national and international level
Period of implementation	The project started on 1 September 2018 and ended on 31 August 2022.
Rationale	<p>LIFE FOSTER is an inspiring practice on the topics of “Towards greener programmes and curricula” and “Equipping teachers & trainers to be green multipliers and mediators (professional development)”.</p> <p>The initiative focused on food waste as a major global challenge and proposed a multi-stakeholder approach along with the development of vocational training programmes as effective solutions to this challenge.</p> <p>In particular, the vocational training programme can be taken as an example because it was based on a training model combined with a solution kit that were based on scientific evidence and tested in various geographical contexts with both iVET and cVET target groups.</p>
Scope of the practice	<p>The practice was implemented in both iVET and cVET training programmes.</p> <p>It involved over 350 trainers and teachers in both VET organisations and secondary schools, as well as nearly 7 000 including young people aged between 14 and 21 years old in iVET and adults attending upskilling / reskilling courses in cVET.</p>
Educational level	<p>The practice was implemented according to the educational levels which are specific to each national educational system.</p> <p>In Italy, a 10-hour training on food waste was delivered in iVET courses preparing for the restaurant sector. In this case, students could enrich their preparation with an additional topic – <i>i.e.</i> food waste prevention – thus developing specific skills. Besides the training delivered to students of restaurant courses, 2-hour lessons on food waste were also held for students attending other professional courses (e.g. on wellness, sales, mechanics etc.) as part of their programme on education to citizenship. In Italy, the VET system is governed by relevant Regional Authorities and can have a duration of 3 to 4 years, leading to a professional qualification corresponding to EQF level 3 and EQF level 4, respectively.</p> <p>In Spain, a 25-hour training is delivered to both young and adult students. Normally, to attend the training, students need to have completed at least their secondary compulsory education which corresponds to an EQF level 3 qualification.</p> <p>In France, the training is delivered in both cVET and iVET centres (Centre de formation des Apprentis). In iVET, LIFE FOSTER’s training was delivered in the framework of an apprenticeship training course. Apprenticeship training centres (CFA) provide apprentices with general and technical training which complements the training received in companies. Apprenticeship programmes are delivered to both young people aged 16-29 or young people who are at least 15 years old and have completed secondary school (cycle 2).</p>

	<p>In Malta, the training was delivered to students attending the college for tourist professional curricula, which delivers a national qualification level 6.</p>
<p>Introduction and context</p>	<p>The key stakeholders involved in the practice were the organisations forming the partnership, such as ENAIP NET (private non-profit organisation, VET provider), AFPA (Agence nationale pour la formation professionnelle del adultes, public agency of the French government, VET provider), CECE (Confederación Española de Centros de Enseñanza, private non-profit organisation, Spanish Confederation Schools representing private and subsidised education in Spain), ITS (Institute of Tourism Studies, public organisation, VET provider), FIC (private organisation, federation of local associations of food service professional), MBB (Malta Business Bureau, private organisation representing the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA) in Brussels and Malta), UNISG (University of Gastronomic Sciences, private university legally recognised by the national authority).</p> <p>LIFE FOSTER was funded by the LIFE Programme under the Environmental Governance and Information sub-programme, since it aims at reducing food waste. More specifically, LIFE FOSTER focused on the prevention of food waste through concrete solutions that can be applied in the food service industry and in households.</p> <p>The focus on food waste was chosen because this was perceived to be a major global challenge with environmental, economic, and social effects. It was therefore considered key to raise people’s awareness about the importance of adopting virtuous behaviours to reduce the problem.</p> <p>Furthermore, it was noted that the food service industry could effectively contribute to food waste reduction through the adoption of prevention solutions, and it could concurrently be a good example to be followed by their customers. In this context, the development of food waste prevention competences and the provision of relevant vocational training were deemed to be crucial in helping companies increasing their sustainability.</p> <p>Furthermore, the project was found coherent with the mission of VET providers of contributing to local sustainable development.</p> <p>The project was also an opportunity to demonstrate that vocational training was a powerful lever to activate sustainable behaviours with environmental, economic, and social effects. As a result, the project contributed to adopt more environmentally conscious lifestyles and sustainable consumption patterns as envisaged in UN SDG 12.</p> <p>More specifically, the project’s initial assumption was that the development of food waste prevention competences helped companies reduce their environmental impact, produced positive effects on the costs related to saved food and brought social benefits, as employees were formed to contribute to the green transition.</p> <p>On the other hand, the project also gave VET providers the opportunity to set the basis for updating vocational training programmes for the food service industry.</p> <p>Moreover, LIFE FOSTER facilitated collaboration with organisations from outside the VET system, as it envisaged a joint work of VET providers with university and business representatives. This was also coherent with the mentioned Council recommendation, as learning for the green transition and sustainable development needs the involvement of “all relevant parties in the education and training system, and stakeholders from other relevant sectors.”</p> <p>The main expected impact included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food waste reduction and its related costs by approx. 10-14% • Increase of target groups’ awareness of the importance of preventing food waste while pushing to more sustainable behaviours and lifestyles.

	<p>The project aimed at raising awareness on food waste as a major problem in the food service industry, and on the possibility of preventing and reducing it through the application of more sustainable practices. Vocational training was deemed to be the main instrument to achieve this result.</p> <p>Another important goal of the initiative was the training of teachers and students, as well as professionals (back and front of house), in the food service industry and the adoption of more sustainable practices.</p> <p>Finally, the project pursued at raising policy makers' awareness on the need for measures and instruments that favour food waste prevention and reduction.</p> <p>The total project budget was EUR 1 676 566, of which EUR 997 460 is provided by EU funding.</p>
<p>Key activities and outcomes</p>	<p>The training was specifically focused on food waste, to develop the necessary food waste prevention competences.</p> <p>The project strategy envisaged six complementary steps.</p> <p>The first step was the preparation of a training model based on scientific evidence, which consisted of four stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing knowledge on food waste challenge and definition of this problem. It envisaged an analysis of the causes of waste both globally and locally. • Development of a strategy to fix the problem in one's own organisation. This meant mapping the actors, searching for causes and connections and creating feedback loops from the context. • Adoption and implementation of an action plan which defined the solutions to be implemented. This meant searching for the best solutions for preventing waste and prioritising them so, to move from a waste management to a waste prevention approach. • Monitoring of progress and results, with a view to continuous improvement, based on the principle that "what can be measured can also be managed." <p>The second step of the strategy was a 40-hour programme to trainers. Trainers' professional preparation was key in the project, as it set the ground for the following student training. Additionally, it favoured continuity and sustainability to project results, since it ensured that the partners' training programmes were enriched with a focus on food waste prevention.</p> <p>The third step of the strategy involved the training of students based on the LIFE FOSTER model. The programme for students varied according to the specific geographic context and target group as well as VET system. Since VET systems and vocational training programmes differ from country to country, it was necessary to ensure some flexibility in the delivery of the student training, so that it complemented and enriched the "traditional" programmes. To enlarge the number of trainers, students, and professionals reached, the project also offered online courses in Italian, French and Spanish.</p> <p>The fourth step involved food service companies through both the work placements envisaged as part of the vocational training pathways attended by the students and the events aiming at raising companies' awareness about food waste prevention solutions.</p> <p>The fifth step focused on the monitoring of food waste and its costs through a web application specifically implemented by the project and used by trainers and students in specifically dedicated laboratories. The application was also a useful didactical tool to increase students' awareness of their effectiveness in reducing food waste and stimulated them to improve in their work.</p>

	<p>The final step of the strategy concentrated on transferring the lessons learnt to policy makers with the goal of providing concrete examples of what can be done to prevent food waste if supported by appropriate strategies and policy measures.</p> <p>The effects on the target groups of the training – both trainers and students – were measured through specific questionnaires, which gave positive results.</p> <p>Regarding the trainers, the collected results revealed that they considered the course as very relevant to their professional development. The course had a direct impact on the trainers’ activities. For example, the importance of food waste prevention and reduction in their usual lectures increased after attending the course. Additionally, the courses increased the level of collaboration between colleagues.</p> <p>Regarding students, their increased awareness was also measured via a specific questionnaire that was administered before and after their training in food waste prevention. The results confirmed the effectiveness of the training.</p> <p>The effects of the training on the target groups were also indirectly assessed through the monitoring of food waste and related costs, which revealed a reduction by 9.1%.</p> <p>The results achieved with the initiative were particularly remarkable, also on consideration of COVID-19 pandemic, which was very challenging for the training delivery. During the lockdown phase of the pandemic, therefore, training was delivered in online classes. When lockdown was released, social distancing was still affecting the group composition as it limited the number of people. Therefore, to enlarge the learning opportunities, e-learning courses were additionally offered.</p> <p>Work placements were also strongly affected by COVID-19, which were partially replaced with project works on business ideas which set a specific focus on food waste.</p> <p>The most important success factor of the initiative related to the strong motivation and engagement of the involved organisations and their teams, based on shared vision and values. Secondly, the strategy consistency was a success factor, as it allowed enlarging the number of individuals reached by the initiative, with a ripple effect. Finally, the adoption of a holistic approach to the problem, involving relevant stakeholders and change makers ensured wide outreach and sustainability.</p>
Other information	<p>The project totally involved 353 and 6 565 students in the training.</p> <p>The project is a best practice for circular economy recognised by the Italian circular economy Stakeholder Platform, which included it in its best practice database.</p> <p>Also, the UNI (the Italian organisation for norms on standards) considered LIFE FOSTER in norm UNI/TR 11821 on the “Analysis of Circular Economy best practice cases with the aim of assessing their performance and favour their replicability”, which is currently being prepared.</p> <p>Furthermore, the LIFE FOSTER model has been adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture in France to train on food waste prevention.</p> <p>Through the cooperation with VET umbrella associations, the LIFE FOSTER training model has been transferred to some VET organisations who are interested in incorporating sustainability topics into their training.</p>
Contacts and sources	https://www.lifefoster.eu
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