

## BERLINS CANTEEN OF THE FUTURE

# KANTINE ZUKUNFT

### Introduction

#### Abstract

Kantine Zukunft Berlin, funded by the Berlin Senate Administration for Justice, Consumer Protection and Anti-Discrimination, facilitates the sustainable transformation of Berlin's public communal gastronomy. Through active and long-term consultation in canteen kitchens, with seminars, workshops as well as networking events, and most importantly, in collaboration with canteen stakeholders, the project refines, or rather redefines, the urban canteen landscape towards more quality and appreciation.

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### Best practice details

#### Topics

[➤ Organic](#) [➤ Reduce food waste](#) [➤ Reduce waste](#) [➤ Health & wellbeing](#) [➤ Caterers competences](#)

#### Original Situation

Berlin eats in canteens! From day-care centers to retirement homes, from companies to leisure facilities, from prisons to hospitals all over the city, citizens of Berlin eat in canteens. Millions of public meals are cooked and served every day, but the number of organic, fresh and regionally-sourced produce used is insignificant. In Germany, the

organic share of the out-of-home-food industry is 1.3%. At the same time, 16.5 million people are being catered for on a daily basis in staff canteens, education- and healthcare establishments. The quality of food served on those “public plates” is often more that poor. The current situation leaves a lot of room for improvement. This is exactly where "Kantine Zukunft Berlin" comes into play and refines the food, together with the kitchen teams! Copenhagen serves as an inspiration: For the past 14 years, the Danish capital has constantly been raising the quality of community catering. A strong indicator of Copenhagen's success is the fact that today on average 90 % of the food used in community canteens comes from organic farming – without higher costs but with really delicious food. Kantine Zukunfts' aim is, in short, that the canteens of Berlin provide tasty, sustainable food at no extra cost.

We acknowledge the great untapped potential regarding sustainable public procurement and communal catering, in Berlin and elsewhere. Procurement is a powerful tool to promote the uptake of healthy and sustainable food. Millions of meals are served and eaten in public canteens on a daily basis, by children, students, patients, prisoners and pensioners. Only a fraction of those meals is prepared with fresh, regional and organic produce – only a fraction is what we would call good food. Yet it is good food that helps maintain greater health, promotes healing rates, improves concentration and behaviour. Good food for us does not merely mean nutritious though, it includes much more: where food comes from, how it is produced, transported, prepared and discarded. When we speak of a sustainable transformation of the cities' public plate, we take into account all of these steps along the food supply chain while targeting the kitchen teams of Berlin's canteens.

## Implementation

The mission includes bringing the region, the season and craftsmanship back into community catering. With a Berlin-specific method for transforming the city's community catering, the team of Kantine Zukunft works together with various day-care centers, staff canteens, social institutions and canteens of state-owned companies. The key is an **active and long-term coaching** of the kitchen teams by the project team's trainers, a group of experienced chefs. This program is called the “Canteen Workshop”. Our goals are manifold but our mission is to support kitchen teams to improve the quality of their food and work and to help them reach a **minimum ratio of 60% organic** produce in their canteens. This is not just a random number – it is a tipping point. When aiming for a cost-neutral transformation, such a high organic share means that a simple replacement of convenience products (which are the norm in public catering) with organic products of the same kind, is impossible. To stay within budget, **processes and attitudes have to change**. The basis of the cooperation is an agreement on objectives and an initial assessment of the situation on site with a check of the key figures, the existing technology, the potential for savings (water consumption, energy, etc.) and also the existing approaches for more sustainability. Subsequently, the individual fields of action and the desired organic target are determined. Communication within the company - the eaters should be aware and understand what is happening - is just as much a building block as test phases with modified offers, interim status analyses, adjustments and further changes as well as a final evaluation. Training, education and seminars take place at the same time, and an e-learning platform will soon provide additional input for the participants. The "canteen meetings", a format for the exchange of information between the players in the companies, takes place four times a year. This program is complemented with seminars and workshops aimed at e.g. re-introducing creativity,

intuitive and taste-focussed cooking and cooking from scratch into the canteens processes.

At the moment, the training kitchen of the Kantine Zukunft is being built. The premises will accommodate a kitchen and a seminar area – a meeting place for the employees of the Berlin community catering businesses. In this space, cooks, cooking assistants and kitchen managers will come together to exchange ideas on cooking and canteen kitchen topics and try out new ingredients and recipes in seminars. The staff members of the Berlin school catering will acquire new know-how about food and communication. Stakeholders from the various Berlin canteen institutions will take part in workshops to challenge their taste buds and to discuss the future of community catering. Furthermore, a big campaign is currently in the making, a campaign with the goal of creating more appreciation for the people behind the plates of the Berlin community catering. The campaign is intended to show that good food is available in canteens and that the people behind it are doing their job with heart and mind.

## What was outstanding?

This project is the first publicly funded attempt to change public community catering in a German city together with its key actors – the kitchen staff – within existing budgets and without the mere goal of achieving a certification. The length and intensity of the consultancy as well as the diversity of competences of the project's team is also new in this field. The project not only aims to improve the environmental impacts of public catering, but also the perception and appreciation of the canteens, of the food and the staff. It thus considers economic, environmental and social sustainability factors.

The project is still going on and will continue until the end of 2023. Already now it is clear that the trainings and growing canteen network provided by the project are an important element of the food system transformation of Berlin-Brandenburg from which many Berliners will be able to benefit every day: from lunches in kindergartens to dinners in retirement homes, from breakfasts in hospitals to snacks in company canteens. The proportion of organic food used to prepare the meals will be increased to an average of 60% – without incurring additional costs. The effects will be felt on the plates, in the kitchen teams, by the eaters as well as by Berliners and the metropolitan region, with expected changes in the cities food culture and the regional organic sector.

**Catering Service Type:** All

**Started/Starts at:** 2019

## Notes / further reading

For an English outline of the project, please see:

<https://kantine-zukunft.de/english-outline>



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