

Thematic Output:

Policy Action Plan: Molėtai

March, 2015

Background

The long term goal of the Diet for a Green Planet project is that each city will adopt a Diet Policy. This project aims at helping to get the process started and for some important steps to be taken in that direction.

The purpose of this Policy Action Plan is to outline (for each receiving city) the steps taken and the steps that remain to be taken in this area. The finalization of this report was planned for January 2015, but since the project was still ongoing then, it made more sense to write this report in March, after the project activities. It is now that we can overview and analyze what has been achieved and what remains.

This document can be seen as a brief summary status when it comes to the policy work being done in this project. It will not attempt to provide a fully detailed account of the policy transfer – for that we have produced on-going reports from bilateral meetings and transnational conferences. It will rather be a “temperature check” at the time of project end.

The situation for the three receiving cities was very different from the start, and the preconditions along the way have also differed substantially. This report will account for the work in Molėtai according to the following structure:

- Background
- Steps taken during the project
- Remaining steps

Molėtai

Background

In Lithuania, the heads of the educational institutions are responsible for the organization of students’ meals. The canteen services may be organized by the municipality itself or purchased from private companies via the public procurement process.

The diet policy is regulated by national laws and these laws leave little room for local creativity. However, local authorities have the possibility to decide whether the catering organization should be centralized or decentralized.

What a meal should contain and how it should be prepared is specified by orders from the Minister of Health. Lists of recommended and prohibited groups of food



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are provided. The dishes must correspond to the age of the students and to the nutrition recommendations. Each kitchen has a dietician who decides the menus for 15 days and orders the food deliveries according to the contracts of procured goods. The menus have to be approved by the state controlling institution.

Local public health specialists at schools and kindergartens perform internal quality control on meals' quality once a week. Control of the canteens' organization and menus' approval is performed by the State Public Health Center. Food hygiene safety is monitored by The State Food and Veterinary Service.

The regulatory framework was one important factor for Molétai entering the Diet for a Green Planet project. Another one was the somewhat wavering political support for the project. The city of Molétai has a history of participating in many EU projects, but they have mostly been "hard projects" focusing on constructions and infrastructure, which are easier to see and measure.

Steps taken

Although the political support was hesitant during the main part of the project, the project team worked hard and did accomplish quite a lot. And, in the last bilateral exchange meeting, in January 2015, the vice mayor did participate a full day in meetings and discussions. This represented a breakthrough in the policy related work of the project. After this the level of awareness and interest from the political sphere was considerably higher than previously.

As explained above, all menu decisions are taken by dieticians and approved by the state control organism. This gives very little freedom for different interpretations of the detailed state regulations, and the municipalities are not authorized to develop their own diet policies. These preconditions of course implied that no real diet policy work was possible in Molétai. Nevertheless, this situation led to a very interesting initiative which should be highlighted.

At a local Diet for a Green Planet conference in January, which was combined with a bilateral exchange for kitchen staff, the state food control institution was invited to participate and discuss how the Diet for a Green Planet concept could influence the Lithuanian regulations. The representatives for the control institution were very pleased to be invited to a dialogue – this had never happened before.

The outcome was – instead of a municipal diet policy – that the Local Support Group in Molétai agreed on, and created, a set of written recommendations ("Recommendations for the improvement of legal acts on children's nutrition") on how the Diet for a Green Planet concept could influence the state regulation system. It includes recommendations to the State Public Health Centre on how legislation and regulations could be changed to let the Diet for a Green Planet concept influence policies, and it also includes recommendations on how the local level can contribute. The set of recommendations has been presented to the municipal health committee during the course of the project.



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Remaining steps

It is during the final three months of the project that the wind has turned when it comes to political awareness. The written set of recommendations was an immensely important step. However, much work remains. In March, 2015, local elections were held in Molėtai. Upon the installation of the new government, the well-functioning Local Support Group will invite the new politicians to have a round-table discussion about what is needed to create an environmentally friendly region – one of the components should be healthy diets, taking the concept of Diet for a Green Planet into consideration.

Another important step will be actively applying for EU projects that will allow further development and deepening of the Diet for a Green planet concept in Molėtai.

Document related to this report

The following document is directly connected with this report:

- A set of written recommendations produced in Molėtai (“Recommendations for the improvement of legal acts on childrens’ nutrition”) on how the Diet for a Green Planet concept could influence the state regulation system in Lithuania.

We also recommend the reports made throughout the project in order to get a more complete picture. The reports from the bilateral meetings, the transnational conferences and the Roadmap for Applications provide a more detailed account of the transfer process.

Download the reports on <http://urbact.eu/diet-for-a-green-planet>.

Report author: Daniel Dworetsky, support to LP.



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