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Inter-Municipal Food Policies Plan

“Creating a food policy is an inescapable first step towards a civilization that cares about each and everyone’s well-being and health in everyday life, the needle’s eye through which a new ethics of work can come to realization: a daily exercise in democracy”

Considering that food, like other natural resources, such as air and water, is a fundamental asset for human life, the reasons for a community, consisting of both citizens and administrators, to specifically and consciously tackle the question of food, are obvious.

In our “rich” western countries, good quality food is not accessible to everybody. This results in malnutrition on one hand, and a constant increase in the incidence of chronic-degenerative diseases on the other. Indeed, diabetes and cardio-vascular diseases are known to be related for more than 50% to unhealthy eating habits.

Food is since a long time one of the major concerns of international institutions: suffice it to notice that profound global imbalances in access to healthy food result in a world-wide population of almost one billion malnourished people and over one billion obese. This, in spite of widespread food wastage, with about 30% of all food apt for consumption turned into waste due to inefficient distribution.

For all these reasons, food has been chosen as the key subject of Milan’s Expo 2015 ‘Feeding the Planet - Energy for Life’, where a network of cities confirmed their commitment for a future without food wastage by signing the “Carta di Milano” and the “Milan Urban Food Policy Pact”.

Seen that on 11 May 2018 the municipalities of Lucca and Capannori, and the Provincial Administration of Lucca joined the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact – a network of 180 cities worldwide – to develop sustainable food systems based on inclusion, resilience, safety and diversity;

Noted that with a memorandum of understanding signed in April 2018, the municipalities of Altopascio, Capannori, Lucca, Porcari, Villa Basilica agreed to launch a participative project, called Circularifood, co-financed by the Tuscany Regional Authority for Participation. This project, in collaboration with the province of Lucca, the *Laboratorio di studi rurali Sismondi*, and *Slowfood Lucca Compitese Orti lucchesi*, is aimed at defining an integrated action plan for food and involves all the relevant actors in the field: local administrations, farmers, distributors and processors, associations and other economic interests, as well as citizens at large;

Considering that a first mapping of the stakeholders, the implementation of focus groups on specific themes and of operational workshops, have all revealed a wealth of projects and

positive/proactive actions, as well as a widespread specific sensitivity on strategic themes such as lifestyles, food wastage, social gardens, local production and nutritional education in schools;

Having verified that the administrations consider of fundamental importance the promotion of the different positive experiences emerged in the five municipalities thanks to the concrete commitment of local communities, as well as a further expansion of the network of actors and actions already in place on themes related to food and sustainable food systems;

Considering that local administrations believe it essential to develop integrated and coordinated policies among the different municipalities, to guarantee to all local actors the possibility to realize concrete initiatives on the theme of food;

Taking into account that citizens of the Piana di Lucca municipalities adhering to Circularifood have chosen, through the said project, to attest their intention to build a local food system:

- Sustainable, to safeguard resources (land, water, air, biodiversity) and minimize surplus and waste, by promoting its reuse through a well-organized and effective recovery chain;
- Based on the protection of everyone's right to food and the promotion of its social and cultural value, in such a way as to permit universal access to an appropriate, healthy and safe nutrition, respectful of individual ethical and religious choices;
- Recognising the unique role of farmers as custodians and keepers of the territory who, at the same time, must be supported through consumer awareness;
- Rooted in collective and individual responsibility as citizens-consumers, since food choices have an effect on the entire production-distribution system, driving the evolution of the territory and the future of the community.

Considering that all the subjects involved in the process of collecting input and generating proposals for the territory realise the need to develop a local food system where the norms concerning the different phases (production, distribution, purchase and consumption, recuperation and redistribution of surplus) are simplified and made understandable to citizens;

Considering furthermore that the construction of the food strategy for the Piana di Lucca foresees that functions and decision-making processes relevant to the food policies be shared among the local administrations, these projects represent a unique chance to re-organize competences and responsibilities currently scattered over many different sector and services of the administrations. This re-organization will make it possible to build coordinated policies for agriculture, health and social services, education, environment, economic and urban planning, etc., which would have the realization of a sustainable food system as their main goal;

This is at the same time a challenge and a great opportunity to re-design, not only in the physical sense, spaces and relationships of the food system.

In consideration of all the above

The citizens of the Piana di Lucca, represented by the city councils of Altopascio, Capannori, Lucca, Porcari, Villa Basilica, believe that any policy or project on food should be inspired by the following **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**

Food is circularity: the different methods of organization providing access to food embody numerous values and have different significance to multiple actors. Each activity, conceived for a specific area, immediately reflects onto several further areas. These interconnections, spontaneously developing in the territory, can, if adequately organized and steered, stimulate virtuous circles, favoring an informed approach to food systems which is at the same time sustainable, equitable, inclusive and resilient

Food is Knowledge and Consciousness: understanding the food supply chain- from production to distribution, purchase and consumption – and the role and value of local production, is a basic tool for each and every citizen to help guide individual day-to-day choice. Citizens thus become agents of change, conscious of the positive or negative consequences of their choices on the local food system

Food is Education: a correct approach to food, and the acquisition by future generations of a new consciousness of the value of food, depend on the actions of the educating community including schools, families, administrations, as well as all the other educational players accompanying children in their development

Food is inclusion: as an expression of the cultural identity of a community, people, nation, food is a fundamental stimulus of mutual recognition, cultural exchange, integration and social cohesion and, as such, a basic element of sustainable development

Food is Territory: local food production promotes the historical value of the land, reinforces tourism, helps preserving and putting into value rural and peri-urban agricultural areas, and is fundamental for the recuperation of abandoned agricultural land. All these aspects must be carefully taken into account in the planning

Food is Health: eating well guarantees a longer, healthier life. The golden rules for a healthy and varied diet should be considered at all stages of life, from growing to growing old. Healthy nutrition is a fundamental component of an individual's well-being, both physical and psychological, a precious defense against chronic illnesses and many different pathologies.

Recognising these **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**,
the citizens of the Piana di Lucca, represented by the administrations of Altopascio, Capannori,
Lucca, Porcari, Villa Basilica,

COMMIT to promote

The knowledge of the food production and consumption system in the Piana di Lucca: continuing the systematic survey of activities in the territory, promoting the extension of the network of actors and projects, the exchange of experiences and the birth of new projects

The development of a free giving system: supporting the collaboration among food aid organization, both by rationalizing the recovery of surplus, and stimulating new initiatives of self-production and distribution inspired to solidarity principles

A widespread consciousness of food and nutrition lifestyles: based on the wealth of knowledge rooted in local production, and intended to put in place educational pathways adapted to the different sections of the population, developed in coordination with schools, parents, associations and whoever is ready and willing to share knowledge

Access to food produced locally for all citizens: by creating the necessary conditions to make locally-produced food available for purchase on a daily basis in shops, restaurants, mass catering, school and company canteens; by encouraging the coordination of production planning among consumers and farmers; by favouring the creation of common gardens on public or private land, through their recognition in urban planning and public programs.

The work on common rules: by stimulating and organizing multi-disciplinary working groups to mitigate the impact of complex norms and bureaucracy on projects devoted to free giving, sharing of products from social gardens, reuse of surplus, promotion of local products in the awarding of public contracts for restaurant services, thus simplifying their realization. These actions should reinforce the trust and collaboration between producers and consumers, simplifying the access to markets for local products while at the same time educating the citizen-consumer (e.g. through a system of participation).

The reinforcement of sustainable, local farming: as a fundamental tool to protect the environment and the landscape, to promote ecosystem services and land remediation, offering job and business opportunities in multifunctional agriculture, exploiting farming biodiversity and leveraging innovative policies and planning tools.

The municipalities that participated in the Circularifood project are ready, with resources, competencies and understanding of the needs of their population, to take up the challenge and adopt the Piano del cibo per la Piana di Lucca 2019-2023.

To meet the objectives set by the plan, they promote the creation of a “**Consiglio del cibo unitario della Piana di Lucca**”, meant as an innovative governing body to coordinate the actions of local administrations, promote common planning with other actors on the territory, and guarantee a central role to the citizens, associations and the voluntary sector through their participation in the design of food policy and the monitoring of their implementation.



