

CITIES AND THE CHALLENGES OF FOOD INSECURITY

How can access to healthy food be guaranteed for everyone? Beyond responses to emergency food insecurity situations, what sustainable measures can be implemented at a local level? What levers are available to the elected representatives of large towns and cities to provide answers on a long-term basis, that respect social, health and environmental criteria?

These issues are all the more serious, given that, according to the INSEE, 8.8 million people are currently living below the poverty threshold in France, and 5 million people receive food aid. Furthermore, according to the *Ipsos-Secours Populaire* survey published on 11 September 2018, more than a fifth of the people questioned (21%) declared they were unable to obtain a healthy diet that included three meals per day, and 27% said they did not afford to purchase fruit and vegetables every day.

While many initiatives have been implemented in recent years to help deal with this problem, including the *Loi Garot* or Law against Food Waste, the *Etats généraux de l'alimentation* (National food symposium), the *Loi EGALIM* (law for equitable relations with producers and sustainable, healthy food), the *Plan Pauvreté* (Poverty Plan) of September 2018, and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, there can be no doubt that food insecurity remains a major problem that affects many families on a daily basis.

To fight against food insecurity requires taking concrete action, on a territorial, local level, involving citizens directly. Extending the commitments adopted in February 2019 by the 75 territories that are members of France Urbaine, "For a solidarity-based, responsible, sustainable food transition", the elected representatives of large towns and cities

are continuing their mobilization at a local level. The challenge consists of providing new solutions to the fight against food insecurity, responses envisaged in this publication, such as "the means of guaranteeing the financial and geographical access of everyone to healthy food in sufficient quantity, while also ensuring the sustainability of food production methods".

Numerous organizations are committed to this fight against food insecurity, especially national and local charitable associations, and volunteers who contribute, through their involvement, to bringing a human, solidarity dimension to food aid action. This fight is an integral part of our objective of encouraging the transition towards a solidarity-based, responsible, sustainable food supply, an objective that we pursue through a multiple-actor, inter-territorial approach.

With the support of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and in partnership with RESOLIS (Research and Evaluation of Innovative and Social Solutions), France Urbaine has assembled 21 contributions in this publication from cities and agglomerations which describe, through concrete examples, the ways in which they are combating food insecurity. These contributions are accompanied by the views of three experts who, each in their own way, identify contextual elements that are essential for a better understanding of this complex subject.

School meals, community grocery stores, public procurement contracts, the evolution of eating habits, the development of short supply chains, etc. France Urbaine is proud to be able to illustrate the diversity of the actions carried out in France's major cities and inter-municipalities, all of which offer solutions for a transition to a more solidarity-based, responsible, sustainable food supply. ■

CITIES HAVE RISEN TO THE CHALLENGES OF FOOD INSECURITY WHAT LESSONS CAN BE DRAWN?



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What initiatives are cities taking to provide solutions to the 5 million people affected on a daily basis by food security? What can be learned from the examples presented from each territory? What are the main themes that emerge, and what conclusions can be drawn?

While there are similarities in the general strategies in the fight against food insecurity adopted by the 21 cities that responded to our request for contributions, there is also diversity in the initiatives they chose to present. The 21 reports assembled in our publication offer a panorama of the actions undertaken in these French cities, enabling us to appreciate the current landscape of the "French food aid system". We will not go into the major effects of the *Loi Garot* (Law against Food Waste) and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) which, upstream of this system and in collaboration with several large charitable associations, provide the bulk of the food that is distributed to the majority of the 5 million recipients of food aid. We will review the actions that are presented, not forgetting that the cities were obliged to select just two initiatives among many other local actions that they support. Our goal is not to give an exhaustive account of all the initiatives, but rather to communicate the vitality of cities with regard to this issue and the diversity of their actions.

CITIES ARE AT THE HEART OF THE FOOD AID SYSTEM

Today, it is recognized that all the territories produce food, but that, naturally, cities consume much more than they produce. The food and agricultural system must therefore be built on an alliance between urban and rural territories with a specific role played by the peri-urban territories. In the food system, cities occupy a strategic position, since the entire system is governed by consumers' behaviour, in terms of their purchases. It was for this reason that France Urbaine and 75 mayors of France's largest towns and metropolises affirmed in the "France Urbaine Declaration" of February 2019 – "For a solidarity-based, responsible, sustainable food transition" - their responsibility with regard to consumers and their commitment to food issues: "Guaranteeing access to a healthy diet for all,... promoting the diversity of food crops and encouraging the French gastronomic tradition,... contributing to the structuring of short supply chains and the promotion of local food products,... encouraging collective catering operations to source local, good quality products,... reducing food waste while supporting actions aimed at fighting against food insecurity."

Cities are centres for growth that concentrate economic activity and attract migration, but they also tend to develop zones that suffer from poverty. In the cities that responded to our survey, between 15 and 25% of their populations are living below the poverty threshold, however, there are concentrated areas where this can rise to 40%, for example in "social priority districts". Note also that all the cities have poverty rates higher than the national average, which was 14.7% in 2018. This is why the fight against insecurity and against food waste, which have gone hand in hand since the *Loi Garot* of 3 February 2016, are a priority for cities.

5 million of our fellow citizens receive some form of food aid, which is organized and developed on a non-commercial basis, since it concerns consumers who have little or no financial resources. For these consumers, we thus have in the food system a strong component which is based on a combination of public and private solidarity. The French "food aid system" depends on the actions of numerous public and private organizations, including some very large charitable associations and a large number of small community associations.

TOWARDS A MORE TERRITORIAL-BASED FOOD AID SYSTEM

If one wanted to present this food aid system in a very schematic fashion, one could highlight two components, the first larger one consisting of an essentially distribution-oriented approach and the second, more centralized, smaller component consisting of a territorial approach. Furthermore, one finds "short supply chains" in the provision of food aid in various urban initiatives and regional planning strategies, and often in the *Projets Alimentaires Territoriaux* (PAT) (Territorial Food Projects) proposed by cities (such as Caen, Dijon, Lille, Metz, Nancy and Nantes). There is no reason for these two components to be mutually exclusive, even if the territorial approach might be considered to offer more potential for recipients in terms of integration into a community and a greater opportunity for the expression of citizenship and solidarity in a local democracy that addresses food issues. During the *Etats Généraux de l'alimentation* (National Food Symposium) (September-December 2017), Workshop 12 "Combating food insecurity, ensuring that everyone can have access to sufficient, good-quality food in France and in the world", focused its work and discussions on the territorial approach. Given the magnitude of food aid, this approach remains necessary, especially since

the two channels need each other, and both have possibilities for qualitative improvement.

But whatever the nature of the initiatives in the fight against food insecurity, the key question is how they affect the user's situation, i.e. that of people living below the poverty threshold in temporary or long-term insecurity. Does it enable them to obtain their rights and to satisfy their needs? Does it give them any choices? Is their citizenship somehow compromised by this dependency on food aid? Does it enable them to take a proactive role in their food supply, to participate in its production, its distribution, and its governance, or are they confined to the role of recipient? Does the food aid offer an opportunity for social or employment integration? It is with these issues in mind that actions must be planned and reviewed.

IN THEIR TERRITORIES, CITIES ARE COMMITTED...

... to the coordination of the fight against food insecurity

There are numerous and diverse organizations involved in the food aid system in France. Large cities generally take on a coordinating role in the fight against food insecurity. To do this, they implement a range of tools. In terms of their own initiatives, they usually operate through *Centres Communaux d'Action Sociale* (CCAS) (Municipal Social Action Centres), Food Banks (Aix-Marseille), and sometimes community grocery stores, which also act as social centres (Brest). They integrate the fight against insecurity into urban strategy documents and regional planning initiatives, and frequently include it *Projets Alimentaires Territoriaux* (Territorial Food Projects) (Aix-Marseille, Caen, Rouen, Nancy). They develop charters with their partners which define shared rules and values, in particular those which should guide their relations with users (Strasbourg), several cities organise inclusive food governance bodies (Rouen), publish guides, for example the *vade-mecum* (handbook) on Public Procurement Contracts (Saint-Étienne), and directories of places and/or organisations involved in the fight against insecurity (Nice). They sometimes organise groups on a more operational basis (Tours set up the *G3A - Groupement d'Amélioration d'Aide Alimentaire* (Food Aid Improvement Group)). Some cities have identified the various organisations involved and produced atlases of local initiatives (Caen, Saint-Etienne).

... to funding and support for community associations

Cities also provide substantial funding in various direct and indirect forms: grants to associations providing food aid, support for investment (e.g. *Fonds de dotation territoriale* (Territorial Endowment Fund), *Metz Mécènes Solidaires* (private-public charity fund), distribution of food vouchers to families in difficulty (e.g. the *Cartes Blanches* in Nantes and fruit and vegetable vouchers in Dijon), and sometimes invitations for projects targeting a priority issue are launched (e.g. in Paris, the "Food for all, sharing the food supply and kitchens" project, voted in the context of the Participatory Budget, was granted €1.5m with a view to opening kitchens in social housing facilities to families without access to a kitchen because they are living on the street or in temporary hotel accommodation). However, cities also often provide indirect support in diverse ways, for example, in canteens which offer social pricing based on families' incomes (Grenoble, Tours and Paris with prices starting at €0.78, €0.64, and €0.13, and also Dijon), and a similar approach to pricing in community and solidarity grocery stores, supported by municipalities.

... to activities managed by the municipality

Cities play a more direct role in operations managed by the municipality, such as central kitchens. Cities can thereby implement policies across all public canteens (e.g. Amiens, with 31 schools or Clermont-Ferrand, with 56 satellite schools, and Montpellier). In Grenoble, the central kitchen provides 8,000 meals per day and once a year prepares the "Great Feast" for 1,000 partners of its CCAS (Municipal Social Action centre). Central kitchens enable the scale of collective catering operations to be broadened, and above all a high level of quality in the food supply to be ensured, through the use of fresh, local, seasonal produce, often with organic certification. Thanks to the central kitchens the cities in the sample are already close to the objectives set by the ÉGALIM law of 2018 (French law for equitable relations with producers and sustainable, healthy food)¹. Through their purchases, the kitchens encourage good quality, local agricultural production. Given the volumes involved, they enable investment in the associated production (e.g. Grenoble has built 1,500 m² of greenhouses), processing (e.g. Amiens has invested in a vegetable preparation facility which can process the vegetables for 6,800 meals in one morning) and storage (as in Nice with its cannery or in Orléans, which

has a cannery and a ripening room). In Nantes and elsewhere, composters are used to treat organic waste.

... to reinforced actions dedicated to priority territories

In association with the city's policy, large municipalities focus their actions on districts in difficulty, the city's social priority districts. Nancy supports a food aid distribution network in the heart of the city's social priority districts. In the framework of its local health contract, the city launched an action entitled "Eating on a low budget", supported by the "Food supply and insecurity" roundtable. Montpellier supports a collective of 14 associations, making available 9 municipal sites for food aid distribution and the organization of preventive activities and nutrition education, the city also supports activities in the 27 schools in social priority districts. In Nantes, a project supports the creation of "eating areas" in green spaces and outside apartment buildings, and the creation of urban micro-farms... There are numerous initiatives in these disadvantaged territories, which are also proving to be reservoirs of solidarity and creativity.

... and to the support of multipurpose platforms

There is also a willingness to support platforms which become multipurpose. In several cities, the MINs (wholesale markets of national interest), which bring together agricultural producers and retailers, offer a concentration of activities and resources, which integrate associations involved in food aid distribution. In Grenoble, Montpellier, Nice, Toulouse, the MINs are ready to accommodate economic activities - employment integration agencies and SMEs - which enable more efficient use of the food products to be distributed. In Caen, the *Bande de Sauvages* ("Band of Savages") association has created the *Sauvage sur un plateau* restaurant, with a pay-what-you-like policy, that provides an open community platform for the organization of a variety of initiatives such as the "gleaning" of surplus crops, employment integration, preserving of surplus food, workshops, etc. There are also the EHPADs (residences for dependent elderly people), such as the one in Tours, where various food supply-related activities have been coordinated in the "Culinary Values" project. Finally, as a reminder there are areas lacking food-shopping facilities, there is the EPISOL project in Grenoble, which, among other activities, organizes "La Mobile", a small truck which travels around offering people the possibility of purchasing food locally.

... to awareness-raising, communication, and educational initiatives

Numerous educational initiatives exist targeting various categories of the population. Children in a school or extracurricular environment receive particular attention: numerous activities centre on the canteen, especially the fight against food waste with “waste-meters” (Nice) that raise awareness of the value of food and the tragedy of wasting it, which will often be linked to the unmet needs of part of the municipal population, or on a larger scale, the world population. In Tours, breakfasts are prepared for school children in some districts. There are numerous school kitchen garden and micro-garden initiatives. In Nantes, partnerships between schools and farms go further, enabling urban kids to visit the countryside, and learn about how the land is worked and the growing cycle.

For families, cities also support *Famille à alimentation positive* (Positive Food Family) projects (as in Brest, Nantes and Rouen) and “Zero Waste” projects (Lille, Nantes). Other cities organise cooking workshops to encourage the exchange of knowledge and expertise (for example in Clermont-Ferrand, which distributes cooking kits). Slogans, and even official certification (such as *Ici, je mange local* (“I eat local here”) in Lille, or *Ma cantine autrement* (“My alternative canteen”) in Montpellier) and consumer challenge initiatives have been created, such as the CROC challenge in Lille (*Consommer Responsable Oui mais Comment* - Consume Responsibly Yes But How).

Initiatives are organized with shops, which are not concerned by the *Loi Garot* (Law against Food Waste), for the collection by associations of products that do not meet standards or best before dates. For example, Aix-Marseille and Metz have the ProxiDons projects to enable short food aid supply chains through the creation of digital platforms.

... and finally, to initiatives combining the food supply with the social integration of vulnerable populations

Food insecurity is neither the beginning nor the end of situations of vulnerability. It is rather a manifestation of poverty (whether this is long or short term) and hence of exclusion. The question therefore arises of social and economic (re)integration. Many territorial-based food aid initiatives endeavour to help people challenged by food insecurity to join social or employment integration programmes. In Caen, the city provided a 7-hectare plot of land for market-gardening activities, which enabled the creation of 13 jobs in a training and workplace integration scheme in the context of the *Territoires zéro chômeurs de longue durée* (Zero long-term unemployed territories) project. In Metz, the FAUVE Association, through a range of discussion and awareness-raising activities, aims to create “Communities of equals”, providing fertile soil for the reintegration of the economically or socially excluded, and the emergence of a food democracy. ■

¹ Article 24 sets supply objectives for high quality, sustainable products in the composition of the meals served by collective catering operations, to be achieved by 1 January 2022 at the latest. These goals are set at 50% of total supplies, including at least 20% products from organic farming, or farming in organic conversion. They apply to establishments managed by public or private companies, whenever they are responsible for a public service mission. The implementation decree for this provision no. 2019-351 was published on 24 April 2019..

RECOMMANDATIONS AND PROSPECTS

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As will be noted, the cities in the sample are fully committed to the fight against food insecurity. Beyond a distribution model, which is always necessary, they support local initiatives rooted in their territories; territories that are geographically defined, socialized and governed. These initiatives open up new directions, often bringing with them the hope of social and employment integration. They are at the heart of the food systems in their territories and constitute pioneering initiatives in the transition from food aid to more territorial-based solutions.

The cities thus have reason to support these territorial initiatives, to help them grow and/or disseminate them so that territories can proclaim "0 hunger, 0 unemployment, and 0 waste". These approaches could also be useful and serve as a model, especially if Europe decreases its support for food aid, in particular through funding of the FEAD. In view of the positive outlook of the initiatives in the cities that we documented, it seems necessary to work in two complementary directions: pursuing a collective dynamic between cities, to the benefit of all of them, and strengthening their common voice in the fight against food insecurity, represented by associations, like France Urbaine, in national, European and international forums. In short, this means continuing to implement the France Urbaine declaration co-signed in February 2019 by 75 major French cities.

It is essential that the major cities continue to make progress, in their own territory, and together, at a nationally coordinated level. The "Territorial Food Strategies" project group, set up by France Urbaine in 2018, in partnership with RESOLIS (Research and Evaluation of Innovative and Social Solutions), thus offers an appropriate work environment to complement the inventory of local initiatives and follow the general evolution of urban policies that are contributing to the transition of the food system

that we would like to see. This will involve constructing a "forum for learning, based on examples and solutions" for the benefit of all the major cities and their agglomerations.

Several topics emerge in the analysis of our sample of 21 major French cities as keys to the improvement of the French food aid system and a rebalancing between the distribution and territorial components. Among the lessons learned, the publication produced by France Urbaine enables the identification of a number of levers that contribute to the fight against food insecurity while also representing directions for improvement for cities wishing to undertake or accelerate this type of approach. There are ten such levers:

1. Including the fight against food insecurity in the *Projets Alimentaires Territoriaux* (PAT) (Territorial Food Projects) as a component of these projects, with a charter and a *modus operandi*;
2. Bringing together the distribution and territorial elements of food aid and working for a better balance between these two elements;
3. Prioritizing good quality, local, seasonal products in the supply of canteens and the distri-

bution of food aid, thereby benefiting consumers and the development of local food economies and using the possibilities offered by the public procurement code;

4. Undertaking a nutrition education improvement programme involving school canteens and kitchen gardens (definition of a school or class contract with for example, when possible, the sharing of breakfasts, the proposal of teaching time and resources, an increase in actions in the fight against food waste, in particular through the use of "waste-meters" and partnerships between schools and farms and any other action that contributes to improving dietary habits);
5. Organizing, alongside the central kitchens, educational centres (training of cooks, nutrition messages for consumers), integration initiatives (storage or processing of products for food aid), circular economy actions (composters, zero waste initiatives);
6. Building multipurpose platforms within the MINs (wholesale markets of national interest) that collaborate with community associations, with equipment for processing products for distribution, (processing, storage, distribution, if possible using job insertion agencies), and logistical resources facilitating the organization of distribution;
7. Integrating the fight against food insecurity into policy for social priority districts (territorial dimension and organization of food aid distribution, link between fight against food insecurity and integration - *Territoires zéro chômeurs de longue durée* (Zero long-term unemployed territories) project, awareness

raising and educational actions - *Famille à alimentation positive* (Positive Food Family) projects, zero waste actions, shared gardens and green spaces/eating areas, etc.);

8. Linking the fight against food insecurity with employment and social integration (collaborating with integration agencies for the jobs involved in the various links in the food aid chain);
9. Comparing and promoting social pricing initiatives based on families' incomes, comparing ways and approaches that avoid stigmatization;
10. Comparing and promoting the different ways that people can participate in providing food aid (participation in the production, distribution, governance) and helping people to no longer need to receive food aid;

Large French cities are playing a positive, innovative, concrete role in the fight against food insecurity and in its qualitative improvement. They bring a strong territorial dimension to the fight against insecurity. Beyond local actions, they are well placed to be a driving force in this transition from food aid to more territorial-based solutions and thus to play an important role at the national, European and international level. In accordance with the commitments of their Declaration in December 2018, they will make every effort to intensify their advocacy actions in the national, European and international public debate, and in international negotiation processes in collaboration with government authorities and the other stakeholders and bodies involved in the food aid system.

France Urbaine, as a relay, can make their voices heard by defending the safety, diversity and quality of the food supply and its link with the integration of vulnerable populations and territorial development. ■

FOOD INSECURITY: GUARANTEEING THE RIGHT TO A FOOD SUPPLY FOR ALL IN FRANCE'S TERRITORIES



By Guillaume Garot
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FOOD AID, A TOOL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

In 2019, nearly 5 million French people received food aid. This disturbing figure serves as a reminder that access to food is a vital and structuring aspect of daily life. Systematic and simple for many, it can become a source of concern and even distress, as soon as incomes falter: in households, food spending is the first item in the family budget to be reduced in the event of financial difficulty.

According to a CSA (Consumer Science and Analytics) study conducted in 2018 for French food banks, food insecurity is affecting increasing numbers of people who are already in socially vulnerable situations: 71% of applicants for food aid live on less than 1,000 euros net income per month, per household, and 61% have at least one dependent child. Single-parent families (8% of the French population) constitute 33% of the beneficiaries of food aid.

Like subsidized housing, family allowances and the reimbursement of health care, the fight against food insecurity is a social justice issue. Furthermore, food insecurity is linked to other problems, especially health-related: the above-mentioned study highlighted that 36% of the beneficiaries of food aid suffered from dental problems, and that 19% were overweight.

Concerns about food insecurity are consistent with those relating to overproduction and overcon-

sumption: it is no longer acceptable, as we become increasingly aware of the limitations of our resources, for nearly a third of the world's agricultural and food production to be wasted. This need to actively fight against waste and insecurity is the subject of the Garot law, which was unanimously voted by the French National Assembly in 2016.

THE NECESSARY DEVELOPMENT OF FOOD DONATIONS

The Garot law laid down a clear framework for donations - the mainstay of the fight against food insecurity - enabling food banks to help more than 2 million beneficiaries.

Since this law came into force, supermarkets have been obliged to give unsold produce to associations who have made a formal request, through a donation agreement. The destruction of food that is still edible is punishable by a fine. Moreover, food donations are tax deductible for businesses.

The law also establishes a hierarchy in the fight against food waste, making it a legal requirement to prioritize food donations over other modes of consumption or recycling of unsold produce.

An initial assessment of this law was carried out in 2019 in a parliamentary information report, co-authored by members Guillaume Garot and Graziella

Melchior. Some data remains difficult to obtain, but the impact of the Garot law on food donations is undeniably positive. Two thirds of stores over 400m² made donations in 2016, compared to nearly 95% in 2019. *Restos du cœur* (charity providing food for the homeless during the winter) and the food banks have recorded a 24% increase in collections from supermarkets for the last three years.

The EGALIM law (French law for equitable relations with producers and sustainable, healthy food), voted by Parliament in 2018, further reinforced measures to fight against food waste. It is now necessary to continue in this direction by extending the obligation to make donations to a wider variety of food operations, increasing the presence of charitable associations all over the country, and helping them to acquire the necessary means to transport and store food.

LARGE CITIES AND AGGLOMERATIONS: ENSURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW RIGHT TO FOOD

Municipalities and inter-municipalities, especially those with large populations, have both the tools and the scale to fight effectively against food insecurity.

The most important aspect of this fight is healthy food for children, especially very young children,

in nursery and primary schools. In managing large-scale collective catering operations, big cities have to provide balanced meals at reasonable prices (sometimes lunch and breakfast). The requirements are increasingly stringent, and there are a variety of potential obstacles: lack of funds for a progressive scale of subsidized prices, lack of staff for the distribution of breakfasts, complexity in supply chains. These are real problems for which it will be necessary to find innovative solutions in order to move forward with a fair, long-term food transition.

Beyond their traditional functions, large public authorities have a vital role in terms of communication and encouragement in the fight against food insecurity. The Garot law laid down a national framework, but initiatives for food donations must come from local structures if the spirit of the law is to be fully upheld. The facilitation of food donations is an opportunity for cities to develop this tool, which benefits everyone, in association with supermarkets and community networks.

Finally, developing food aid also requires making it consistent on a territorial scale, across all aspects. The EGAlim law has relaunched the w (Territorial Food Projects) - one of the elements of which is the fight against insecurity - and encourages the development of short supply chains. Territorial authorities have a real opportunity to play a primary role in supporting a new right to food for all, based on equality and a healthy diet. ■

THE RIGHT TO FOOD FOR ALL: WHERE DO WE STAND?



By **Bertrand Hervieu**
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The Right to Food is a component of human rights and has a legal basis. In 1999, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights formulated the content of this right as follows: "the availability of food in a quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substances, and acceptable within a given culture; ...and the accessibility of such food in ways that are sustainable..."

Public policies implemented by governments, including within regional contexts as is the case, for example, for the Member States of the European Union, which frequently involve international trade agreements, are mainly aimed at ensuring the quantitative security, or in other words the availability of food for the population. They are also intended to ensure the health safety of products on the market. There can be no doubt that quantitative objectives are broadly achieved on a planetary scale; we can even say, taking into account the losses recorded after harvests and waste generated after processing and consumption, that the planet produces more food than the current human population can consume; something of a paradox when we know that 850 million human beings suffer from malnutrition. With respect to health requirements, these are still far from being respected everywhere in the world although some progress has definitely been made. Consequently, for the human right to food to be respected, the main issue becomes access to food for all: a crucial question for displaced populations, refugees, countries at war, and also for impoverished populations who are deprived, in countries at peace, of access to food for economic reasons. This is a

question of acute political and moral concern, given that the resources exist.

Some governments have developed public policies to encourage agricultural production while at the same time facilitating the access of populations to the food supply, this is the case in the United States, but most often- and particularly in Europe- agricultural policies focus exclusively on the development of production and its quality.

In these conditions it is then up to other institutions, in addition to the government, to support the right of accessibility, a necessary component of the human right to food.

The European Union made the decision, through the creation of an "aid fund for the most disadvantaged", to delegate the organization of access to food for vulnerable populations to charitable associations. For France, four main associations are registered to receive these European funds: the *Restos du Cœur* (charity providing food for the homeless during the winter), the Food Banks network, the *Secours Populaire* charity and the Red Cross.

It is estimated that 8.8 million people live below the poverty threshold in France and that 4.8 million receive food aid. For example, the *Restos du Cœur* served 130 million meals last year, helping 860,000 people; the Food Banks network served 226 million meals, providing aid for approximately two million people via 5,400 partner associations and CCASs (Municipal Social Action Centres).

While these figures show that substantial aid is provided by these large national associations and their local networks, not everyone receives appropriate aid, and there are still populations whose access to food needs to be improved. Local authorities, due to their presence throughout the territory, and especially because of their fundamental role of supporting the daily lives of their citizens, need to be involved: they are in a position to be well-informed about the degree of food insecurity in their territory and have the means to access populations by age, location, family situation, etc.

In this way, cities have been able to implement highly targeted actions for the elderly, children, low-income single-parent families, the homeless, immigrants, etc.

These actions may be implemented through school canteens, home delivery of meals, shared gardens, and canteens run by the municipality or by appointed management. They may be organized solely by the municipality or through a range of partnerships, in particular with charitable associations. It appears that without action by municipalities, two thirds of

the populations affected by difficulties of access to food would not be reached.

Two other issues are closely linked to food access: the first relates to poor diet, which is increasingly widespread and the source of numerous public health problems. Respect of the right to food therefore needs to be accompanied by an effort to educate the population to consume a balanced, healthy diet. Again, public authorities can play a vital role, and some already do, in providing information and training that complements their actions in the field.

The second emerging issue is development of the awareness of the need to reduce geographical and cultural distances between consumers and producers. It is in this spirit that the *Programmes Alimentaires Territoriaux* (Territorial Food Programmes) are created, with a view to giving priority to local supply chains, reducing waste as much as possible, encouraging dialogue and partnerships between all those involved, and making collective catering operations a lever for economic development and also a vector for education about nutrition and the importance of eating a healthy diet.

It is clear that respect for the Right to Food is a powerful vector for territorial development which combines economic, solidarity, public health, education and employment integration objectives. At a time when social integration through the workplace is decreasing, improvement of access to the food supply would seem to offer another route to reinforcing the social and territorial cohesion desired by communities. ■

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT FOOD INSUFFICIENCY, FOOD INSECURITY, AND FOOD DEMOCRACY?



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The fight against insufficient food being available to vulnerable populations, today embodied in the EGALIM law (French law for equitable relations with producers and sustainable, healthy food), goes back to what this notion means in terms of food insecurity.

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The various aspects of food insecurity are defined in counterpoint to those of food security. Food security exists, "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". This definition produced by the FAO at the World Food Summit in 1996 sparked debate and generated two other notions: that of food sovereignty proposed by regions of agricultural production (in particular those in the south) at the time of the World Summit, and that of food democracy proposed by public health research in northern countries in 1998 (Lang, 1999). These two concepts emerged because food security was then essentially reflected in terms of quantity and calories. It was the outcome of a productivist approach to the agri-food system, and not at all concerned with environmental issues. We know today that intensive productivism has caused and still causes public health problems (obesity,

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, etc.). The facts have demonstrated that access to food, in terms of quantity, has an impact on food production, in particular a reduction in qualitative terms (nutrition, taste, sustainability) and also in relation to the agricultural model adopted.

Food insecurity, stated concisely, is when all the conditions in the definition of food security are lacking; it is therefore based on data about nutrition, usually in terms of calories and nutrients. Furthermore, in France, it is a term used by researchers and health professionals. However, when this term is used by charities and public authorities implementing social policy it takes on a social dimension. Food insufficiency (quantity, nutrition) is not synonymous with food insecurity, in particular it does not include the importance of the social aspects of access to a food supply. This socially-oriented approach is a reference to what has been the basis of French social policies since the creation of the *Revenu Minimum d'Insertion* ("minimum income for inclusion in society") in 1988.

"Insecurity is the absence of one or more of the factors enabling individuals and families to take on their professional, family and social responsibilities, and to

enjoy their fundamental rights. The resulting insecurity may have varying degrees of severity and varying degrees of seriousness in terms of consequences and the possibility of recovery. Extreme poverty results when this affects several aspects of people's lives, when it becomes prolonged, and compromises people's chances of reassuming their responsibilities and regaining their rights unaided, in the foreseeable future." (Wresinski, 1987).

In this way insecurity both through the aspect of social exclusion (Castel, 1991) and the link between recognition and social protection, namely to be able to say "who can I count on?" and "do I count for someone?" (Paugam, 1991) emerged over the years in relation to the various activities necessary for human life: economic insecurity of course, but also energy insecurity, digital insecurity and food insecurity.

The causes of food insecurity are well identified today (Rastoin and Ghersi, 2010). They can be summarized as follows:

- Poverty, by obliging families and people in difficulty to use their resources to meet their vital needs (shelter, food, caring for themselves) as adjustment variables in the management of their daily lives.
- The food consumption model that mainly depends on access to an industrial food supply, of doubtful nutritional quality, and that weakens local independent food production.
- The choice of public policies that have supported mass consumption for 50 years with supply side responses.

For us, food insecurity is more than a question of social links: *"It is the combination of economic poverty with a series of socio-cultural and political impediments to access to a sustainable food supply: the obligation to have recourse to assistance with compulsory procedures implemented by supervisory frameworks, constraints on the power to act, assignation to the distribution of food products, and assignation to the consumption of unsustainable food products"* (Paturel, 2019).

On the basis of this approach to food insecurity, it is no longer just a matter of providing food aid for disadvantaged populations but of constructing modes of access to a sustainable food supply as elements of citizenship. In this context, the concept of food democracy becomes very useful in terms of new social rights and collective action.

Food democracy is based on the notion that the food supply has been taken over by a globalized market in which the decision-makers are multinational agri-food companies and that as a result individual governments have little control. One of the modes of action is to give public authorities and civil society the possibility of taking back control of the food system on national territory through different, complementary scales. The food system can be defined as the way in which people organize themselves in space and time in order to produce, process, distribute, and consume the food they need (Malassis, 1993), not forgetting to incorporate sustainability for future generations. This definition presents these four activities as systemic elements that cannot be treated independently: however, food aid is also one of the elements and it must be reconnected with the other elements of the system.

In conclusion, cities have the possibility of implementing a food policy that takes into account families with low incomes and people challenged by insecurity. Over the last ten years we have carried out several trials all of which had a significant impact not only for the recipients but also for the stakeholders (supply of the *Restos du Cœur* (charity providing food for the homeless during the winter) with local fruit and vegetables, supply of community grocery stores by buying food directly from small producers, group purchases, etc.). Furthermore, most cities offer a collective catering service which is a powerful lever for reorienting food practices on condition that the towns take a systemic approach, not only focusing on the food supply issue; they can also direct part of their social budget for the provision of food aid to already existing proposals such as open-air markets, distribution of food baskets and grouped local purchasing. ■

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