

CASE STUDY TITLE: SOCIAL COOPERATIVE POWRÓCISZ TU (COME BACK)

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THEME: SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

Case study (350 - 500 words in total divided in the following elements)

Case study description:

The Social Cooperative "COME BACK" was established in 2014 by 5 municipalities: Kawęczyn, Przykona, Brudzew, Turek and the City of Turek. One of the goals of creating the Cooperative was the need of have its own local supplier of meals for schools to support a feeding program for children. The cooperative cooks for 9 schools, kindergartens and a nursery. In addition, it runs a milk bar that also offers food delivery and a shop with its own products.

In the individual in-depth interview the Cooperative stated that the greatest challenge nowadays to facing is inflation and a sharp increase in products and energy prices. At the same time, its leader indicated that the answer to this challenge may be to increase the scale of cooperation with local, small food producers. In the context of the energy crisis that followed Russia's attack on Ukraine, close cooperation within the local community makes the effective saving of resources possible (e.g. costs of transport, maintaining warehouses).

The cooperative co-works with local suppliers, from whom it buys food that is not subject to chemical preservation processes. Food is not frozen, but prepared and produced directly on the spot. Preparing always fresh, seasonal meals is related to reducing the costs of storage and re-thermal processing, including those associated with high energy consumption, such as heating in a microwave oven. The cooperative uses more and more food that it produces, such as preserves of seasoning vegetables and fruits, its own jam, tea blends and infusions from self-dried local plants, compote, own bread and cakes baked on the spot, fresh juices from local fruits and vegetables, own pickles, dried fruits, soups from nearby herbs such as sage, dandelion or nettle, own sauces and ketchup, tomato puree. Traditional recipes passed down from generation to generation are used. Flour from a local mill is used for baking.

Applying this type of approach to the services provided would not be possible if it were not



the educational activities run by the Cooperative. The Cooperative implements educational projects promoting the use of local plants in the kitchen, independently collected in the surrounding meadows and forests. Changing the environmental awareness of customers is not an easy process, but the Cooperative achieves its first successes in this field. In schools where it prepares meals, parents' reaction to the slogan "healthy food" was initially negative. It was associated with tasteless food, in small amounts and not very diversified. The tasty, fresh and colorful offer of meals provided by the Cooperative makes an effective fight against this stereotype possible and changed the parents' approach. What's more the green menu also takes into account the special needs of some children thanks to the inclusion of vegetarian, gluten-free and lactose-free dishes in the offer. The cooperative cares about developing healthy eating habits since childhood. To make it possible, the Cooperative employs two dieticians on a permanent basis. Thanks to the approach of the Cooperative, which does not use processed, high-calorie products with a lot of sugar, it has been possible to reduce the growing problem of obesity and high cholesterol level among children. By producing its own juices and desserts, the Cooperative can effectively control the amount of sugar and fat in its meals. Self-production of food also enables the creative use of food that was previously viewed as waste. When the apples are pressed for juice, the peelings are used to make apple cider vinegar and the remaining apple pomace is composted. The menu for schools, kindergartens and nurseries is constructed in such a way as to maximize the use of a given product and not waste anything. Potential waste finds a new use or is processed into compost, thanks to which the Cooperative creates a closed cycle.

The activity of the Cooperative is a good practice in the field of strengthening cooperation in the local community for the benefit of consumers, local farms and small businesses. In times of crisis, this approach brings measurable social and environmental benefits.

Environmental and/or social effects (preferably in bullet points):

- creating new jobs in small, local companies and reducing the level of unemployment in the region
- development of entrepreneurship in the region

- reducing the negative impact of food production on the environment
- reducing food waste thanks to the use of the zero waste idea
- strengthening circular economy
- increasing access to healthy, unprocessed food
- increasing environmental awareness and green skills in the local community

The following factors constitute important environmental and social effects for... :

- local communities
- consumers
- social cooperatives
- small farms
- small local production companies

Closure, with focus questions arising from the case / problem:

- Could the sustainable food system be a real alternative for massive food production?
- How the sustainable food system influence on reducing food waste?
- How can social cooperatives develop the idea of sustainable food production in local communities?
- What is the problematic situation the SE is trying to solve? (problem)
- Why did they decide to solve it? What drives them? (purpose)
- What are the SE's activities? What do they do to solve it/them? What other steps would you take to solve the problem? (solution)
- What is their target group? Who are their clients? Who are their customers? (customer segments)
- How will the SE's activities change the world or the situation for the better? (impact)
- And how will they know that they achieved that? (key metrics)
- So what does de SE do differently? What do their customers perceive as the biggest value? (unique value proposition)
- In which ways do they deliver their products or services (channels)
- What are their main costs and what is the main source of their revenue? (revenue)

STAKEHOLDERS: (1) LOCAL COMMUNITIES, (2) CONSUMERS, (3) SOCIAL COOPERATIVES, (4) SMALL



FARMS, (5) SMALL LOCAL PRODUCTION COMPANIES

ETHICAL ISSUES (POSITIVE, NEGATIVE) IN RELATION TO THE SCENARIO:

- Vocational activation of people at risk of exclusion
- Sustainable food systems (cooperative as a supplier of healthy, local food – closing the loop)

GREEN SKILLS ADDRESSED: LEADERSHIP SKILLS, MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL SKILLS, PROCUREMENT SKILLS, WASTE MANAGEMENT SKILLS, COMMUNICATION SKILLS

SDGS ADDRESSED: 2. ZERO HUNGER, 8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH , 10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES 12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 17. PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS

