

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

CASE STUDIES: Social Innovations in food provisioning

Direct (Food) Purchase Groups

Activist-volunteer groups that organise and operate local organic food provision directly from farmers and artisan food producers to members of the group

Establish a direct relationship between local producers and consumers, aim to create shorter local food supply chains

Maintained by members of the group voluntarily managing the food procurement

Description

Direct purchase groups (DPG) represent a movement of socially active consumers who voluntarily manage each group's food procurement by purchasing food directly from local farmers. The first direct purchase group in Latvia was established in 2010 by an enthusiast who wanted to implement principles of direct purchasing practices observed in France. The direct purchase group movement in Latvia has created a digital platform that contains a list of direct purchase groups in Latvia, as well as guidelines and suggestions for creating new groups. Most of the groups are located in Riga but the exact number of groups in Latvia is unknown because some dissolve and new ones are forming.

Issues addressed

DPG address three main issues. They aim to avoid environmental costs of industrial food production and distribution by providing access to fresh, local, seasonal, organic food. Moreover, they tackle the high prices of organic food available in supermarkets by managing direct purchase of organic, local food from the producers and challenge the alienation of the products and production process that many consumers experience. DPG attempt to bring together food consumers and producers into a collaborative community.

Impacts on sustainability

Environmental: Reduced food waste and packaging, shorter supply chains, increased consumption of locally grown organic produce instead of mainstream products available in supermarkets.

Social: Community building, healthy diets, strengthened ties between food producers and consumers.

Economic: Support and consistent demand for local, organic farmers, reduced price for consumers due to minimised number of intermediaries.

Full report (available in Latvian):

http://www.bscresearch.lv/uploads/files/SINFO_TPP_pielikums_Nr1.pdf

