

Application Form submitted by the initiatives to participate in the Transformative Cities People`s Choice Award

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Location:	Mouans-Sartoux, FRANCE
Title of the Transformative Initiative:	Maison d'Éducation à l'Alimentation Durable (MEAD)
Name of organization:	Ville de Mouans-Sartoux
Type of organization:	Collectivité publique
Website:	http://mouans-sartoux.net/ http://mead-mouans-sartoux.fr/en/
Category and Edition:	FOOD. Transformative Cities Award 3er edition (2020).
STORYTELLING	
Summary	
<p>The Maison d'Éducation à l'Alimentation durable (MEAD) – The Education and Sustainable Food House – is a structure that implements an integrated public policy for sustainable food that respects health and the environment. It is situated in the Mouans-Sartoux region, and shares its knowledge with many other territories, both near and far.</p>	
Context and problem definition	
<p>The trigger for this project was the Mad Cow crisis in 1998 that led the elected members of the Town Hall to serve organic beef in the school canteens. Listening closely to scientists, the town then decided to opt for a 100% organic canteen in 2012, as well as providing all the inhabitants with sustainable food.</p>	

Mouans-Sartoux is on the French Côte d'Azur, situated close to three towns that are well known tourist attractions: Cannes, Grasse and Antibes; together they represent a population of 450,000 inhabitants. Mouans-Sartoux accounts for 10,000 people. This region is characterized by severe pressure on land use, suffers from a lot of urban sprawl, and a deficit of agricultural activities. The key challenges facing the MEAD are how to preserve agricultural land, support the establishment of farms, and build local food chains, as well as ensuring access for all to sustainable food that respects peoples' health and the environment.

The MEAD accompanies many different territories on the road towards transition and food resilience. It carries out many actions aimed at different populations: children, families, the elderly, professionals, companies, students, researchers and public authorities. The town has been awarded the label "Fair Trade Territory" for its ethical and responsible support of economic exchange.

Design and Implementation

The last 20 years have shown how the Town Hall has remained steadfastly committed to the preservation of health and the environment through its territorial food policies. The town's school canteens have been serving 100% organic food since 2012, with 96% of the vegetables produced locally in Mouans-Sartoux by the Town Hall itself. The town has also reduced the food loss and waste in the canteens by 80%, and includes two vegetarian meals in their menus every week. There is also a vast educational project as well as a threefold multiplication of agricultural land to support the installation of additional farmers. The school canteens were also the trigger element for overall reflection on sustainable territorial food policy.

The success story has generated much interest in both France and from abroad. This is what motivated the creation of the MEAD in 2016, to continue working with projects on sustainable food systems and work with a broader public audience. The MEAD is composed of six to eight people who all work on the town's food system. It is led by a steering committee, composed of elected officials, scientists, institutions and local actors. They meet twice yearly to evaluate the existing actions and propose new ideas. There is also a local sustainable food group made up of local actors and citizens that meets regularly to make new proposals and enrich the project. The economic actors are represented via the Local Business peoples' club.

The MEAD is supported by the territorial club *Un plus Bio* at national level, and also by the European UBBACT programme.

The key challenges to date in implementing the project is the support for installation of farmers, as there are many different obstacles to overcome: the specifics of the geographical situation (heavy pressure on landed property, issues of access to accommodation for neo-farmers, private interests holding on to agricultural land, access to water and electricity, land that has been left lying fallow, small surface area of available land, financial support...)

To overcome these challenges, an agricultural action plan was drafted by the local group. It proposes concrete actions including the creation of an agricultural atlas and an awareness-raising programme for local landowners. Furthermore, the MEAD is studying the possibility of creating an agricultural village to overcome the issue of access to housing for farmers, and supporting them in their local installation. Fund-raising is also a crucial point to ensure the follow up of these projects.

Results achieved and Evaluation

Education and awareness-raising:

There are workshops for children on the theme of sustainable food; 36 families are being supported in changing their behavior to more sustainable food habits (Families and positive food challenge); 100 families are being supported through a social grocery store, 21 companies have been contacted on the subject of sustainable food in companies, several thousand people have participated in large events organized by the Town Hall on sustainable food, including the Spring Festival of Possibilities, the Fortnight of Fair Trade, the Science Festival, and the Book Festival. This has been done through public talks and shows.

Research:

Over 200 students have worked on the Mouans-Sartoux project, together with 13 university researchers from 11 different universities who have co-operated with the MEAD. One student is currently writing a PhD on the subject.

Dissemination:

The initiatives have been identified and showcased by the Ministries for Ecological Transition (CGDD), Agriculture and food (DGAL), Territorial Equality (CGET) and Health. There have been visits from Local Governments that have helped establish food systems projects in other regions, including 200 French Local Government Authorities, 50 from around Europe and 5 international missions from Morocco, Togo, Democratic Republic of Congo and Australia.

There have been articles in the local, national and international press in 2019 as well as over 200 programmes that covered the Mouans-Sartoux food project. The town has also been involved in creating a University diploma that has accompanied 47 territories in designing an audit and building a sustainable food systems territorial project.

3 surveys, carried out in 2013, 2016 and 2019 respectively by the Observatory for sustainable catering that was created in 2012 has demonstrated the evolution towards increasingly sustainable food habits. In 2019, 87% of parents replied that they had changed their habits to include more sustainable local, organic healthy food.

Labels:

Observatory for sustainable catering: Regional Health Plan
 Ecocert catering, 'excellent' rating
 National Food Plan: Territorial Food Plan -PAT 2017
 Regional Capital of biodiversity and Nature City 2017
 Fair Trade Territory since 200
 Urbact Good Practice 2017

Political Strategies

The food project is inspired by and feeds into the Municipal policy framework documents: Local Educational Project; Urban planning policy; Agenda 21...

Key dates in building the sustainable food project into the town's strategic policy:

1999: Introduction of organic beef in public procurement for canteens, following the Mad Cow crisis.

2010: Creation of a municipal agricultural governance structure that produced 85% of vegetables needed locally.

2011: Introduction of the programme to fight food loss and waste

2012: 100% organic food served in canteens. This was achieved without any additional costs, and the finances remained stable thanks to the efficiency of the fight against food loss and waste (a decrease of 80% over a 5-year period).

2012: The local town planning became linked to Agenda 21 tripled the land classified as agricultural in the electoral area.

2012: Creation of the Observatory for sustainable catering.

2016: Creation of the MEAD

2016: AGRI-URBAN European project (sustainable food systems)

2017: Creation of the university diploma "Sustainable food systems project manager" in partnership with the Côte d'Azur University

2017: Awarded URBACT Good Practice label for organic canteens, which launched a new phase of the international project

2018: Lead organization in the European project BioCanteens

2018: Signatory of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and the OFSP programme

2019: Host of the national meeting of Fair Trade Territories

2019 : Prize winner in the 2nd National Food Plan call.

The strategy of a multi-actor holistic approach supports a strong territorial anchoring for food policy. Furthermore, the deliberate membership of different networks (Organic Food System Program, Milan Urban Food Policy Pac, Club des Territoires, Un plus Bio, URBACT, MA-DRE...) is an essential aspect in enriching and sharing the project.

Communication and Cultural Strategies

The MEAD strategy is one of wide dissemination of the method and vision; this aims to inspire other territories and bring about positive change towards sustainable food systems around the world. The communications' strategy uses different media and is aimed at all different segments of the public.

The web site includes a lot of information linked to the strategic axes of the MEAD: production, processing, education, research and dissemination. (<http://mead-mouans-sartoux.fr>) A "Resources" section allows those who are interested to pursue their interest further and find tools that are open and free to use to support the transition towards sustainable food policies (such as "how to create an agricultural governance structure" or "how to end food loss and waste")

The MEAD has created a YouTube channel with interviews with actors in the food sector and videos that give simple explanations aimed at the general public of what is at stake in food systems, the way the agricultural governance system works and the way the MEAD works... The MEAD is present on social media: there is a Facebook page that regularly publishes articles and videos on sustainable food, respect for the environment and social equity. There is also a regularly updated Twitter account. <https://www.facebook.com/meadmouans/>, https://twitter.com/MEAD_Mouans

The MEAD communicates with other government bodies by holding webinars and meeting with those who are interested in establishing territorial food projects. They share their experience through action plans and practical descriptions that can be reproduced elsewhere. Finally, the town is often quoted in other media and local newspapers, which also allows the wider public to be aware of what it does. The members of the project regularly accept interviews. The town recently appeared in a televised report called "Recipes for a better world: eating better to change the future".

Resources, Financing and Transformative Economy

Financial sustainability of the MEAD and the structure of the team is a major challenge for moving the territorial food systems project forward. Although the MEAd is partially funded by the town budget, most of the funding comes from external project sources.

MEAD financial partners:

- The Daniel et Nina Carasso Foundation: 150 000€ over a 3-year period (2016-2019) to launch the MEAD. The breakdown of this was 50 000€/year plus 240 000€ over 3 years (2020-2022) to continue the project.
- The National Food Plan Programme (PNA) (Ministry for Agriculture, CGET (General Commission for Territorial Equality), ADEME (French Environment and Energy Agency) at national and regional levels): 155 000€ over a 5-year period (2016-2021), paid as 31 000€/year
- URBACT : 320 000€ over a 5-year period (2016-2021) paid as 64 000€/year for 2 programmes: (AgriUrban and BioCanteens)
- Sustainable Canteens – Committed Territories (CDTE) (this project is funded by CGET and ADEME 2019-2021)

At present the town is waiting for two replies to project submissions: “Feeding the Future” submitted to the Carasso Foundation and “Food Transition” submitted to the Fondation de France. The MEAD has also submitted a FEADER project to the Business Club in Grasse and Agribio06, linked to a project of sustainable food in companies. There are also currently plans to create an endowment fund with partners and citizens to support some of the town’s actions in the sustainable food project. Project staff salaries account for the highest budget line in the MEAD.

Related legislations

The official granting of the label of Territorial Food Project for the town in 2007 in the framework of the National Food Programme conferred the highest level of legitimacy. This led the Ministry for Food and Agriculture to including Mouans-Sartoux in the national working group on Territorial Food Projects; this also led to being included in Workshop 2 (developing local initiatives and synergies) in the National Congress on Food as well as in workshop 9 (supporting access for all to healthy food). The National Congress then led to a law on equal food rights (Loi Egalim), that strengthened the choices of cities in opting for sustainable food systems, especially in the choices made in public procurement for school canteens.

The National Health and Nutrition Programme: The High Commission on Public Health established 9 key indicators on the National Programme for Health and Nutrition. These are the foundational aspect upon which the town has built the nutritional quality of its meals since 2005, (as an active member of the cities actively involved in the National Health and Nutrition Programme. Mouans-Sartoux has been an early adopter of the diversification of proteins, including more vegetable protein in meals, as well as in terms of health and safety of the produce (organic food to limit the residue of pesticides, endocrine disrupters etc.) The new indicators in the NHNP4 now include these elements.

Ecological Transitions

Mouans-Sartoux is deeply committed to the social and ecological transition.

The promotion of local organic agriculture addresses many different issues.

Organic agriculture implies that it is forbidden to use and chemical pesticides or fertilizers; this means that there is less pollution of the air, water and soils; it also protects the local population from problems linked to chemical products, and preserves biodiversity and soils.

Local production means that there are fewer exports of food, which in turn reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

The policies that are implemented are also social: in spite of converting to 100% organic food in the school canteen, the cost per meal has not been increased, and the price is adapted to families' incomes. The objective is to enable everyone to have access to healthy food and a balanced diet as well as respecting the environment.

The political actions are developed by the steering committee that brings together many different local actors (local associations; citizens, local companies, universities...). This ensures the democratic aspect of policies adopted by the town are respected.

Food issues are a good lever for reconsidering political actions and committing to the ecological transition.

Lessons learned

With over 20 years of experience, the Mouans-Sartoux sustainable food systems project has demonstrated that canteen catering is an excellent lever for building territorial food systems. It provides a specific orientation in developing economic activities in a given circumscription as well as influencing citizens' food habits.

The label of URBACT Good Practice that was awarded in 2017 to the town's food project demonstrates that the model is transferrable to almost all sizes of cities. The various European projects in which the town is involved have also highlighted this fact.

Other lessons learnt:

- The need to work in a cross-cutting manner and adopt a systemic approach that includes all aspects of sustainable development from the outset: town planning, agriculture, food systems, economy, social, environmental and health aspects as well as education...
- Building a long-term political project that is shared is indispensable to ensure effective collective support for projects. It is necessary to think in terms of territorial food sovereignty in order to implement coherent and sustainable policies that meet these challenges.
- The importance of communication and awareness-raising on the project: the introduction of communication tools, capitalization of initiatives, training, visits, events, conferences, networking... The sharing aspects of the project both in France and at international level are central to the mission of the MEAD.

It is essential to also learn from others, via the steering committee, the Book Festival, the debates (researchers and scientists...), specialized networks, experience-sharing and training.

The town has thus been a forerunner in introducing certain nutritional policies, learning from the Nutrinet study and staying abreast of the latest information, studies such as the recommendations published by the High Council on Public Health.

Conclusion

The Mouans-Sartous project is ahead of its time and deals with issues of major planetary importance.

Food is a cross-cutting issue that concerns many different fields: ecology, economy, governance, education, biodiversity. The introduction of alternative policies based on food issues is a means of finding solutions to preserve the environment and human health and enable the territory to address climate change.

A town where all children have access the local food and a balanced diet that respects the health of the environment is a Utopia that Mouans-Sartoux made a reality.