

Foodsharing

A huge amount of food is wasted in the European Union every year - as much as 88 million tons. This equates to an average of 173 kg per person. This waste takes place at various stages of production and distribution, from farms to processors, stores to homes. Consumers account for the largest share (53 percent) of the production of this "waste," but also processors (19 percent). A consequence of this is also the loss of raw materials that are necessary for its production, such as water, soil, but also energy, or at least the expenditure of time. This in turn contributes to the greenhouse effect and global warming. Statistics show that food waste accounts for 8% of greenhouse gas emissions produced by human activity, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In practice, for every kilogram of food produced, about 4.5 kilograms of carbon dioxide are emitted into the atmosphere.

In today's world, where the problem of food waste is increasingly acute, one interesting prevention idea is a German initiative called Foodsharing.de. The ultimate goal is not only to prevent food waste, but also to shape a culture of more responsible and conscious consumerism. In December 2012, an online platform called "foodsharing.de" was created to prevent food waste by redistributing food to the needy or willing. It allows unsold food to be shared between users of the platform. This initiative is open to both companies and individuals. Individuals, stores, bakeries, manufacturers, or restaurants can offer excess food on this platform, which is then available for other users to pick up for free. In addition, properly trained "Food Rescue Workers" (Foodsavers) are in operation. These are volunteers who regularly visit stores and food producers to pick up unsold goods. Such an arrangement helps companies in the industry to get more actively involved in the process, as often a lot of food was wasted for lack of people to take care of it.

The foodsharing.de platform works on the basis of a system of stationary points called "Foodsharing Points," (German "Fair-Teiler"). These points are public or semi-public locations/places where food "exchanges" take place. They are universities, churches, stores, or other spaces accessible to the community where a "Fair-Teiler" can be placed. In these places, cabinets, racks, containers, refrigerators are placed to store food.

Foodsharing.de is teaming up with other organizations and initiatives in Germany to combat food waste and promote sustainable lifestyles. Volunteers, known as "Ambassadors," act as intermediaries between grocery stores, supermarkets, bakeries, etc. and the community. Their job is to coordinate the collection of unsold food from companies and distribute it to community members. People who leave food at a "Fair-Teiler" point can report this availability through the foodsharing.de platform.

An important factor contributing to the achievements of foodsharing.de is the strong community of participants and users. The service is not limited to food sharing, but also becomes an organizer of meetings, workshops and other events aimed at promoting a sustainable approach to food consumption and production.

Sharing food brings together people from different backgrounds inspiring them to act together, think creatively and use our planet's resources responsibly. This wonderful activity motivates cooperation, bonding and concern for a shared future, where everyone can actively participate and contribute their part for the good of our planet.

The activities of foodsharing.de have inspired the implementation of analogous initiatives in other countries. This is an example of how technology and community can work synergistically to effectively address a significant social problem.



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