



## FOOD POLICY

### La Mimosa, an inclusive experience in an agroecological consumer cooperative

#### KEY WORDS

Empowering food aid, food access for all, inclusion, agroecology

## ✓ OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate access to agroecological and healthy food for citizens in positions of vulnerability.
- To involve them and to take joint responsibility about their food choices.
- To enable their participation in collective projects.
- To reduce stigma within food aid initiatives.
- To support organised agroecological consumer cooperatives and groups, involving them in food access policies, and contributing to diversify their members and partners.
- To support agroecological production.
- To increase the demand for agroecological products.

## 📄 POLICY DESCRIPTION

While recent crises have increased the number of families depending on external aid to access basic rights such as food; existing food aid initiatives mostly offer processed industrial food products from large distribution chains while excluding agroecological products and small-scale local producers and retailers, and also stigmatise the beneficiaries.

This pilot project proposes a new way for families in positions of vulnerability to access healthy food, avoiding the stigmatising situations that conventional food banks generate and the industrial and highly processed food that they supply.

The City Council Social Services in collaboration with the Red Cross selected 6 households in vulnerable situations that were not benefitting from food aid programs (and avoided those families in the most vulnerable situations).

The selected beneficiary households became members of a local agroecological consumers' cooperative called La magrana vallesana (composed of 400 member families) and had their membership fee waived. Their beneficiary status remained anonymous in order to avoid stigmatisation and facilitate their integration in the group. The City Council gives them a monthly amount in euros and three additional payments per year (in July, August and December) through a card-wallet-type credit system, to be spent in food products. The monthly amount depends on the household size and ranges from 65 € per month for one person, to 100 € per month for a four member household. They can also buy additional products if they so wish by paying for them.

In the future, the City Council plans to organise specific training and events on sustainable diets for the consumers' cooperative members, in collaboration with the Public Health Department.

## CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

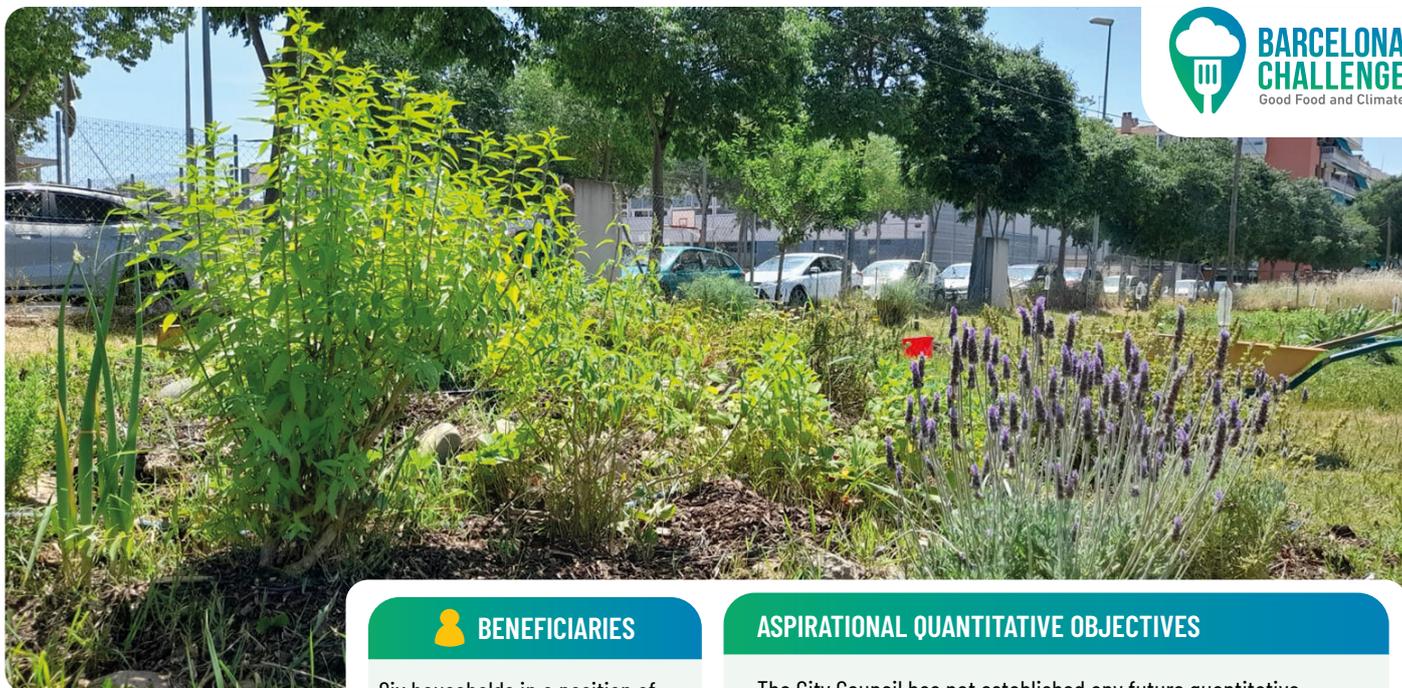


The project started in November 2021 and it will run for 2 years, as a pilot. This 24-month test period enables beneficiaries to get acquainted with a full cycle of product seasonality.

## 🏠 DEPARTMENTS IN CHARGE

Economic promotion department  
Social services and elderly department  
Public health and consumption department  
Environment and green spaces department





**BENEFICIARIES**

Six households in a position of vulnerability (14 people).

**ASPIRATIONAL QUANTITATIVE OBJECTIVES**

The City Council has not established any future quantitative targets. The current goal is just to understand the elements of success of this type of initiative and to attain them, the City Council is organising bimonthly monitoring meetings with the consumption cooperative and the Red Cross.

Overall aspiration of the food policies committed to The Barcelona Challenge:

<https://toolkit.thebcnchallenge.org/challenges/report/220>

**KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

The Red Cross

The members of *La magrana vallesana*: 400 member families, of which 15 are producers.


**BUDGET**

6,500 € yearly in food vouchers from the City Council for the six selected families.

**STRENGTHS AND SUCCESS POINTS**

This initiative allows households in vulnerable situations to access healthy and quality food and to have the possibility to improve their eating habits. In addition, it promotes the increase of the demand for agroecological products and it contributes to strengthen local retail initiatives. The beneficiary families and the consumer group members can diversify their social and cultural contacts, contributing to strengthen community relationships. It adds humanity to the project, by facilitating the integration of beneficiaries in the cooperative without any stigmatisation.

A particular added value of the policy is the transversality of the involved stakeholders: public bodies, private initiatives and different City Council services and its potential to be scaled and replicated.

**CRITICAL POINTS**

Privacy of the beneficiaries; it is necessary to be very cautious to guarantee it. That is why only the staff of the cooperative shop and some members of the board of directors know who they are.

**OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS**

The risk that interaction between beneficiaries and the consumers' cooperative members is reduced to the mere shopping act. In order to avoid this situation, the cooperative should organise activities enhancing interaction between all members.

The possibility that beneficiaries give more importance to food quantity than quality for the same amount of money is high. In order to avoid so, the selection process has tried to reach households that value healthy food and who can commit to the project.


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**FURTHER INFORMATION**

*Mimosa, an inclusive agroecological project*