

# The Power of Public Canteens

## Political & Educational Paths for Better Public Health and Planetary Health

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### **Overall Relevance**

- > Vegan/vegetarian diets are becoming increasingly popular, especially among younger generations (1)
- > Ethical, ecological and health reasons play a central role in the decision to adopt more sustainable diets
- > This aligns with the latest guidelines of leading nutrition organizations such as the AND (2,3), DGE (4), and ÖGE
- > A whole-food plant-dominant diet is the most effective and cost-efficient measure for reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions (5)

**Environmental impact** of different diets

Food offerings in public institutions don't align with established recommendations

Implement changes through legal frameworks

## Problem - Need - Challenge

Eating is a social act that brings people together - at home, and in public institutions such as schools, universities, hospitals, nursing homes/facilities, etc.

The shared dining table plays a key role in promoting public health and well-being, as well as ecosystem health

Given the increasing number of vegans and vegetarians, individual preferences must be reflected in public cafeterias



Our food system is one of the main emitters of greenhouse gases (5.6.7), but is often overlooked as such

Animal foods alone cause 14.5% of all GHG emissions (6)

Animal food production uses 83% of all global arable land, but provides only 18% of all calories consumed worldwide

Additionally, an unhealthy diet, poor in plant-based foods, is responsible for more deaths than all other risk factors. including smoking tobacco (8)

# From Science to Practice **Problem Detection** 1. Ecological destruction 2. Inefficient food production 3. Increased risk for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) Solution through HiAP -Health in All Policies (9) Win-win-situation Reduction of Improving Planetary and GHG-emissons and

## Possible Solutions & Key Examples

### Universities and other Educational Institutions

- Should teach, at all levels, about health-promoting foods and their connection to climate change
   Ease the access to such foods in their campus dining facilities
- > Could, e.g. offer cooking classes or elective courses to further support the transition to sustainable diets

The University of Oxford's Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which encourages the provision of ethically sound, animal- and environmental-friendly (i.e. whole food plant-predominant, at best vegan) meals in its dining halls (11)

### Public Cafeterias and Canteens

- > Canteens, public buffets, vending machines, etc. should offer a wide range of sustainable and healthy options.
- Healthy plant-based options should be strategically presented, i.e. at first sight, highly delicious, and colorful
   Environmental friendly offerings should be labeled as such, e.g. green-food, sustainable choice or eco-friendly meal
- > Vegan choices should be the default option

### Key examples:

- In Portugal, it is mandatory for public institutions (e.g. hospitals, schools, etc.) to offer vegan options since 2017 (12)
- New York City Public Schools serve vegetarian Mondays, vegan Fridays, with daily vegan options available for all (13)
   Jails, senior centers, and community events promote plant-based food throughout New York City (13)
- Denmark's 2023 action plan advances plant-based foods in institutions, education, research, and production (14)

### Food Offerings in the Health-related Sector

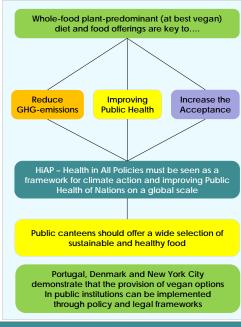
- > Hospitals should not offer foods that contribute to illness, but instead provide nourishing, health-promoting options.
- ➤ Nursing homes/facilities should add more healthy food choices to their menu

- The American Medical Association recommends plant-predominant meals in all US-hospitals, for patients, visitors, and
- ♦ Since 2022 New York City Health and Hospital facilities have served plant-based meals as the default (13)

### Recommendations

environmental destruction

Public Health



A Whole-food Plant-predominant - at best Vegan - Diet tackles Climate Change, and improves Individual Health, thus shaping better Public Health of Nations.



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