



UNCONFERENCE 2016 - INSIGHTS
Workstudio 6 | #ws_foodwaste

Food for thought (and action!) – the waste(d) value of food



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Value chain insights and market of solutions

Wasted food is just too good to be true. What are the opportunities behind food waste, from prevention to new business opportunities, based on what we throw away? The workshop participants gathered at a real food value chain setting, in the restaurant where many of the CSCP members have their daily lunch.

After a welcome and opening of the workstudio where all the participants introduced themselves, the first presentation offered insights into retailers' food waste challenges and strategies faced by a big discount supermarket chain. This perspective was followed by two others: the restaurant manager of the venue itself presented how the restaurant deals with their food waste along with preventive approaches in the hospitality sector. The third perspective by a CSCP expert illustrated the consumers' point of view, the reasons behind wasting food in households, and how to raise consumers' appreciation of food.

Following the presentations, the participants found vast inspiration from a market of solutions where different initiatives and startups presented how they contribute to reduce food waste. Subsequently, different solutions were discussed and new ideas were formed to link several actors of the value chain to work collaboratively on solutions and opportunities.



photos by Mona Schulzek

From food waste hotspots to key leverage points

To fulfil UN Sustainable Development Goal 2 on achieving zero hunger, solutions must be found to change the fact that one third of the food produced globally is wasted. The workstudio aimed at taking a closer look at the hotspots of food waste and the reasons behind them, exploring the key leverage points to change wasteful behaviours in various sectors, from households and the hospitality to the producing industries and the retailer sector.

Taking stock and planning for a better future

Bringing actors from various areas to the table, this workstudio contributed to sharing experiences and building consensus on a number of fundamental questions:

- **Which future solutions to food waste are needed?**

The complexity of the issue gives rise to the need of bringing change-makers from various sectors together to work hand in hand. Combatting the amount of food waste means looking at all stages of its value chain. A network of companies, startups, and social initiatives including the producers', the retailers', and the consumers' point of view could bring different perspectives and interests on one table to jointly find holistic solutions.



photos by Mona Schulzek

- **Which ideas are worth replicating and scaling and how?**
Social initiatives and startups as well as pioneers in the retail and hospitality sectors showed good examples to be replicated and scaled up. Among them were education initiatives in schools and kindergartens who either form part of the fixed curricula or act as a complementary option or show children the value of the food they consume (www.gemüseackerdemie.de). Also cooperation between supermarkets or restaurants and initiatives that make food leftovers available for consumers have shown to be very effective, including innovative examples such as Foodsharing (<https://foodsharing.de>), League of Urban Cannors (www.leagueofurbancanners.org), the German food banks (“Die Tafeln”, www.tafel.de) or the app Too Good To Go (<http://toogoodtogo.de>).
- **Where should change happen and who is in charge of initiating it?**
The responsibility for food waste lies not with one person or one organisation alone – every actor in the food value chain across different sectors is responsible. The good news is there are many small steps that can help a lot. Examples are good planning in the purchase and kitchen, the offering of misfits – imperfectly shaped fruits and vegetables – in the retail sector, inventing new recipes from leftovers or composting kitchen waste.

Quotes

“We reach out to our consumers with information about food waste but also still have to look at what we can do in our own processes” was the quote of an employee of a big discount supermarket chain, admitting that a lot remains to be done in the retail sector.

“We should not begin with thinking about what to do with the leftovers but give back the value to our food. Since I started growing vegetables myself, I have understood what it takes to produce them. If children experience to grow their own food, they will not only like the taste of each vegetable they harvested but also know its value”, commented one participant.

What's next?

We are happy to see that this Workstudio initiated the cooperation between Naba's Café and Foodsharing to reduce foodwaste in Wuppertal - one small step that can create huge impact.

Another starting point to reduce food waste is to rethink the marketing of food, either in supermarkets with more information at the point of sale, or to invent new marketing strategies directly linking producers to consumers. The need for more consumer education and awareness was pointed out as another solution alongside the request for networks and exchange between initiatives, start-ups, companies, and other actors engaged in the field of food waste reduction.

In the project Refresh (<http://eu-refresh.org>), the CSCP brings all relevant actors from businesses, civil society, political institutions, and science together. We will discuss all the good ideas and try to find ways to implement them. Please contact Patrik Eisenhauer (Patrik.eisenhauer@scp-centre.org) if you want to have more information and be part of the process to decrease food loss and waste along the entire food chain.

Quotes

"The highlight of the studio was the interactive "market of solution" featuring representatives from various start ups and initiatives. We came away from the workstudio excited by the diversity of food sharing and food waste reduction strategies in our midst, questioning the legitimacy of the expiration date label, and wondering how and where we might intervene in the cycle of food production, distribution, and consumption." wrote one participant in a blog about the workstudio.