



## **Belgium, Waremme – Food distribution and sustainable development actions**

Recipe for quality food distribution that respects the environment: encourage a balanced diet, offer seasonal vegetables and fruit every week, allow beneficiaries to be involved and take part, develop individual capabilities through specific actions, create a welcoming, respectful and friendly atmosphere. This is what the volunteers from the AIC group in Waremme, Belgium do every week.



### **Location of the project**

Waremme in Belgium, Liège region, a town of around 10,000 inhabitants, semi-rural. The AIC group consists of around thirty members, women and men.

### **Analysis of the current situation**

Deprivation and poverty have increased in recent years.

Causes:

- Lack of jobs and loss of industry
- Lack of training, especially among young people
- Reduced unemployment benefits
- Separation and divorce and their consequences
- Workers and pensioners on low incomes

### **Beneficiaries**

Single people, one-parent families and large families to some extent.

Strengths among the beneficiaries: Accepting and getting through a “difficult” time. Recovering their abilities, especially by undertaking training or some other help in finding employment.

Dreams: Standing on their own two feet and taking on their role within the family and society.

### **Aims of the action**

- Encourage a balanced diet, offering seasonal vegetables and fruit every week.
- Allow beneficiaries to be involved and take part.
- Develop individual capabilities through specific actions
- Create a welcoming, respectful and friendly atmosphere.

### **Actions taken**

The project began in 2012. Initially the group used its own funds to buy the food, but in 2015, it began receiving unsold fruit/vegetables from a big supermarket, every Thursday. On the other 2 distribution days, the volunteers receive fruit/vegetables from another small shop and add to this by buying seasonal vegetables.

During the distribution:

- Distribution of fruits and vegetables, according to what comes in.
- The seasonal fruits and vegetables and the nutrition pyramid diagram are shown on display panels.
- Easy and economical recipes are distributed regularly.
- The volunteers explain what the fruit and vegetables are, their source, how to prepare and cook them, and what to serve with them.
- Sometimes they cut up certain exotic fruits so people can taste them.

The volunteers have completely refitted the premises to make it more attractive. There is a big counter so that the vegetables are easy to see. Each beneficiary can see and choose what suits them, their choices are respected.

The volunteers bear in mind as best they can the diet, religion and culture of the beneficiaries and the composition of their family.

It is a time for sharing between beneficiaries and volunteers, or among the beneficiaries. Each person shares their own knowledge. This allows active participation and a time for friendship.

### **Future prospects and assessment of the impact on sustainable development**

The beneficiaries taste and use new products, and make requests.

The volunteers notice that doing it this way allows the beneficiaries to plan options for meals for themselves and their family in the short term.

In a small way this action also meets a health objective: it reduces the proportion of fats and sugars in their diet, giving preference to other items in the nutrition pyramid.

The local health promotion centre of Huy-Warenne also provides useful support: it helps the volunteers to maintain a methodological rigour and to improve their work.

The volunteers are continuing the project in 2017, with a mind to its sustainability, encouraging the consumption of seasonal products, which often have more flavour and are cheaper. They also work to reduce rubbish and avoid waste.

The food project is one aspect of the work of this AIC group. The volunteers also offer clothing and work on well-being, being careful to welcome and listen attentively to everyone they meet.

