

## Hospital Catering Services Project and Promotion of Health within Bologna Local Health Authority

Lesi, C., Beltrami, P., Guberti, E., Chirico, M. C., Pesci, P., Orsi, W., Riboldi, F.,<sup>1</sup>  
Giannone, C.,<sup>2</sup> Vignali, L., & Bolognesi, M.<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

*Rationalization of its Hospital Catering Services presented Bologna Local Health Authority (LHA) (Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale di Bologna) with a unique opportunity not only to improve the overall quality of catering and encourage a healthy eating habit, but also to provide support to local food producers and adopt environmentally responsible practices.*

*The project contributes to enhancing business prospects within the local farming and food production sector and acts as a mechanism for resisting the centralizing trend of employment toward large urban areas. Furthermore, the project supports the spread of social-environmental sustainability in a simple and direct manner.*

*The main characteristics of the Catering Services Tender are as follows:*

#### *1. Nutritional aspects*

*Traditional, biological, and "fair-trade" foodstuffs were favored, subject to their local availability, in accordance with the Regional Law n. 29/2002 requiring 70% of meals to be prepared using products taken from these sources. So we introduced fresh and frozen vegetables, dried legumes (beans, lentils, chick peas); parboiled rice, dried cereals (barley, spelt, millet), wheat meal type 0 and type 00, maize meal, flour "pasta," grated bread, fresh herbs, butter, milk, yogurt, fruit juices, jams, chicken meat. At the time of writing, the project is still in progress. Anyway, we believe that a change in quality of the service is going to be achieved, for example, through an increased use of biological goods. LHA dieticians modified and standardized menus for inpatients and employees in all LHA hospitals. Multichoice menus were created for both categories. Other than the constraint of using dietetic products in meals for specific cases, a series of standard diets were provided for different pathologies. Most menu items were traditional gastronomic preparations from the region. Fixed menus were provided for the schools of the nearby councils, with some religious-ethica; and diet constraints.*

#### *2. Environmental aspects*

*Equipment and procedures used in the transformation of foodstuffs into meals favored the application of environment-friendly technologies and methods for all activities.*

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1 Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale di Bologna, [www.ausl.bologna.it](http://www.ausl.bologna.it)

2 Conal S.c.r.l, [www.conal.it](http://www.conal.it)

3 CIR Food s.c, [www.cir-food.it](http://www.cir-food.it)

### 3. Health promotion aspects

*The Tender was written to assist in the promotion of health education and information initiatives. Bologna LHA believes that a thorough knowledge of gastronomic culture is fundamental to providing a high-quality catering service. In particular, the knowledge of traditional and specialty products, together with their nutritional qualities, would encourage the use of local quality foodstuffs and promote a healthy lifestyle.*

### 4. Social responsibility aspects

*An objective of the project was that the new catering service would operate in a socially responsible manner. To this end, Bologna LHA joined the Last Minute Market project, which collects and redirects freely donated damaged or excess goods to organizations that distribute food to the poor.*

### 5. Local economy development

*In order to contribute to growth of local economy, Bologna LHA included a specific criterion in the Tender: a requirement giving preference to local products whenever practicable.*

*The rationalization project forms part of the World Health Organization Program "Health Promoting Hospitals," which sponsors the idea of hospitals not just as places of health care and illness curing, but as institutions with a role to play alongside other health and social organizations in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.*