

EkoLogik: Organic food as a tool for education for sustainable development in school

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Abstract

Introducing organic food into school is important from two perspectives. First, organic food can be used as a pedagogical tool to teach sustainable development and thereby effectively integrate these issues into school subjects. Second, being part of the public sector, organic meals in school is an important driver for the development of the organic market. Public sector demand means large and stable volumes.

Introduction of organic food in school meals requires changes in menus, receipts, and routines. In order to support these changes, students, teachers, kitchen and canteen staff, as well as parents need to understand why these changes are necessary. Knowledge and motivation therefore become key factors of success. However, lack of material and methods is often a barrier.

In response to this, Organic Marketing Centre (EMC) has created the educational material and method EkoLogik. It is a tool that integrates sustainable development into education by using organic food as an example. The purpose is to increase knowledge and motivation for sustainable food consumption and production, in order to support the introduction of organic school meals.

EkoLogik was created in collaboration with a reference group of teachers. The material consists of a teaching guide, posters for the canteen, brochures for the parents, etc. The teaching guide has a multidisciplinary structure; it focuses on different "problem areas," such as Climate and Energy, Developing countries, Health.

Support from directors and headmasters is a key factor of success when introducing organic food. Another success factor is collaboration among teachers and between the different units: teachers and kitchen/canteen staff. There need to be joint activities in school; organic food should be on the agenda in both classroom and canteen at the same time, so that students can see the connection between theory and practice. There is a need for further training and relevant material in order to establish collaboration and motivate teachers to integrate sustainable development into their subjects.

Apart from increased awareness and knowledge among students, teachers, and parents, the EkoLogik method may lead to collaboration between the different units at school, more motivated staff, and a better atmosphere in the canteen. It may even bring publicity that contributes to a positive image of the school.

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