

Promoting food waste prevention competencies among employees in the food craft and industry - a contribution of vocational training to sustainable transformation

¹Christina Strotmann, ²Julia Kastrup, ³Marc Casper, ⁴Werner Kuhlmeier, ²Marie Nölle-Krug and ⁴Anna-Franziska Kähler

¹*Muenster University of Applied Sciences, Institute of Sustainable Nutrition, Germany*

²*Muenster University of Applied Sciences, Münster School of Vocational Education, Germany*

³*Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany*

⁴*University of Hamburg, Professional Education and Life-Long Learning, Germany*

Abstract

The reduction of food waste is an important aspect in terms of the sustainable transformation of our society. Education is given a key role in changing private and professional actions so that they are intra- and intergenerationally equitable. To this end, educational institutions should increasingly impart sustainability-oriented knowledge and enable people to learn lifelong learning and to think systemically (WBGU, 2011, p. 341). In particular, the daily work routine offers scope for experience and design for one's own sustainable actions, which can then be carried from the workplace into society. Thus, vocational education and training can make its important contribution to the "great transformation towards sustainability" (WBGU 2011, p. 89) (cf. Hemkes et al., 2013, p. 31). This also includes the contribution to SDG 12.3 to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses by 2030. Since each occupational field of action is characterized by specific work processes, procedures, products or services, there is no general educational goal of "sustainability". Rather, it is necessary to concretize this for each occupational field and to formulate didactically justified focal points without permanently omitting a sustainability dimension (cf. Hemkes et al., 2013, p. 31). Taking these requirements into account, this paper derives a model for describing sustainability competencies in food processing professions. The authors address the question of which aspects of sustainability are relevant in the working environment of the food trade and industry. From this, they derive skills, abilities and knowledge that employees must have in order to be able to act in an ecologically, economically and socially responsible manner in the professional, but also in the private context. The model presented comprises 15 sustainability-related topic areas. They are backed up by competence targets which can

provide impetus for curricular and didactic vocational training work or for the reorganization of training occupations. With regard to the avoidance and reduction of food waste, three thematic fields of the matrix play an important role: firstly, selecting and providing raw materials according to demand, secondly, valorising raw materials and optimizing work processes, and thirdly, producing resource- and climate-efficiently. The work presented in this work includes associated knowledge, skills and competences which should be acquired by trainees in the food craft and industry.

Keywords: Food waste reduction, sustainability competencies, Vocational education and training, competence targets

References

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