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# The Challenge of Sustainable Development

- The consequences of development as “growth” and productivity...
  - 1.1 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water
  - 3 billion people live on less than \$ 2/day
  - basic health care and nutrition for the world’s poor would cost about \$ 13 billion/year; in Europe and the US we spend \$ 17 billion/year on pet food (Chasek et al., 2006)

# The Challenge of Sustainable Development

- Development must be linked to notions of *equity* across time and space
- *Limits to growth* must be recognized
- Need for development strategies that *emphasize*, rather than undermine, the interdependence of economy, society and nature

# School Food and the Challenge of Sustainable Development

- Need for a radical shift in production and consumption patterns
- School food as a measure of our collective progress towards
  - Economic development
  - Environmental sustainability
  - Democracy and social justice

# Sustainable Development: The Power of the Public Sector

- Public procurement as one of the most powerful instruments governments have at their disposal to fashion sustainable economies
  - 16% of the EU's gross domestic product
  - \$ 350 billion/year spent annually in the US
- Public procurement as a somewhat neglected function
  - The paradox of public food

# Sustainable Development: The Power of the Public Sector

*If we are what we eat, then public sector food purchasers help shape the lives of millions of people. In hospitals, schools, prisons, and canteens [...], good food helps maintain good health, promote healing rates and improve concentration and behaviour. But sustainable food procurement isn't just about better nutrition. It's about where the food comes from, how it's produced and transported, and where it ends up. It's about food quality, safety and choice. Most of all, it's about defining best value in its broadest sense (Defra, 2003).*

# School Food and Social Justice

- School food in South Gloucestershire

- home-made school meals cooked with fresh ingredients
- additives, salt, fat and sugar eliminated or reduced
- GM-foods banned from the school menus
- local beef, pork, turkey, lamb, ice cream
- Fair Trade tea, coffee, sugar and bananas
- organic potatoes and carrots



# School Food and Social Justice

*You cannot manage the resources unless the staff own the service, because what difference does it make to them if they tip ten tons of beef into the bin? Why should they bother? [...] If they don't have an ownership, a value, an understanding, what are you trying to achieve?*



# School Food and Social Justice

- Training kitchen staff on nutrition and customer care
- Consulting kitchen staff about the work needed in the schools to enhance the dining rooms and kitchens
- Kitchen staff chose new “white” uniforms to signal that...

*This wasn't a fast food service. This was a service that needed cooks, needed chefs, needed innovation* --South Gloucestershire Head of Catering

# School Food and Social Justice

- Returning dignity to the often forgotten and underpaid school workers

*If somebody is having a difficult time in the kitchen, we send out a box of chocolates to them or something. It's not going to be a mega box, because I have to be accountable for public money. But we do try, in our ways, to say "Thank you. Thank you very much"*  
(Head of Catering)

# The School Food Revolution in Rome



## The Quality Revolution in Rome

# The School Food Revolution in Rome



- 2001-2004 bidding process:
  - GM-foods and most frozen vegetables banned
  - Nutritionally-balanced meals based on seasonal and organic fruit and vegetables
  - Catering companies rewarded for
    - environmental certifications
    - environmental friendliness of their transportation system
    - initiatives to reduce noise in the school canteens
    - capacity to supply additional organic products

# The School Food Revolution in Rome

- 2004-2007 bidding process:
  - Range of organic products required increased
  - “Bio-dedicated” food chains
- 2007-2012 bidding process:
  - Biodegradable plates, recycling schemes, low environmental impact detergents
  - “Guaranteed freshness”
  - Food miles



# The School Food Revolution in Rome

*There is no real development without social quality [...] No single action can meet its objectives unless it takes place within a context in which the priority is [...] a strong sense of community, a type of development that becomes real because the level of social inclusion increases -- Walter Veltroni, ex-Mayor of Rome, 2006*



# Taking the Initiative...

- The School Food Revolution is about:
  - new ways of thinking and feeling about food
  - A public ethic of care that embraces society *and* nature
- The school food revolution has its own heroes:
  - *Public authorities and NGOs* fighting against the costs of poor diet
  - *Quality food producers* constructing alternative markets
  - *Dinner ladies* as public health and resource manager
  - *Caterers* who have gained the competence and confidence to design innovative bidding documents
  - *Consumers* who want to build their capacity to eat healthily
  - *Legislators* who have acknowledged that food should no longer be treated as if it were just another tradeable product