



Slow Food®

Improving Daily Food through Sensory Education Food Education Project in Brest, Belarus

A project in public secondary schools to improve daily food choices among students and promote local consumption through sensory education and hands-on experience





Food & Taste Education Projects

Slow Food's education projects assist both adults and children to make daily food choices that combine pleasure and responsibility, by creating awareness about where food comes from, how it is produced and by whom. We place the education of children as a top priority as they are most at risk of losing contact with agriculture and regional food traditions, and they can also play a crucial role in persuading their families to eat locally cultivated 'good, clean and fair' food.

www.slowfood.com



The Context

Brest region, Belarus

More so than any other successor Soviet Union state, Belarus was devastated by the Chernobyl disaster of 1986, with 70% of the accident's radiation falling on domestic territory. These repercussions have not only seriously harmed its environment, but have led to more subsequent damages to the health of the Belarusian economy and cultural valor.

Berioza is a small town of 30,000 inhabitants, located in the southwestern region of Brest. Although primarily an agrarian land that produces around one third of the country's milk and meat, the region is also home to around 300 industrial enterprises and some of the largest industries in the country.

The great food traditions of local artisans can still be found, but the daily reality of families making a living through industry has undoubtedly led to a drastic shift in eating habits.

The Project

Berioza Secondary School N°3, with more than 1,400 students, educates the majority of the town's youth. Together with the Slow Food Berioza Convivium (local Slow Food chapter), the school is now offering Taste Education courses to 120 students between the ages of 9 to 15 in order to promote healthier and more sustainable food choices. Students participating in the project study the origin and production methods of local and natural foods, their organoleptic and quality characteristics, as well as their social and economic importance within the Belarusian culture.

The project aims to reinforce knowledge and awareness of the region's local culture, and to empower young people to play a conscious role in the future direction of the local food system. It also aims to improve daily eating habits in the children's families.

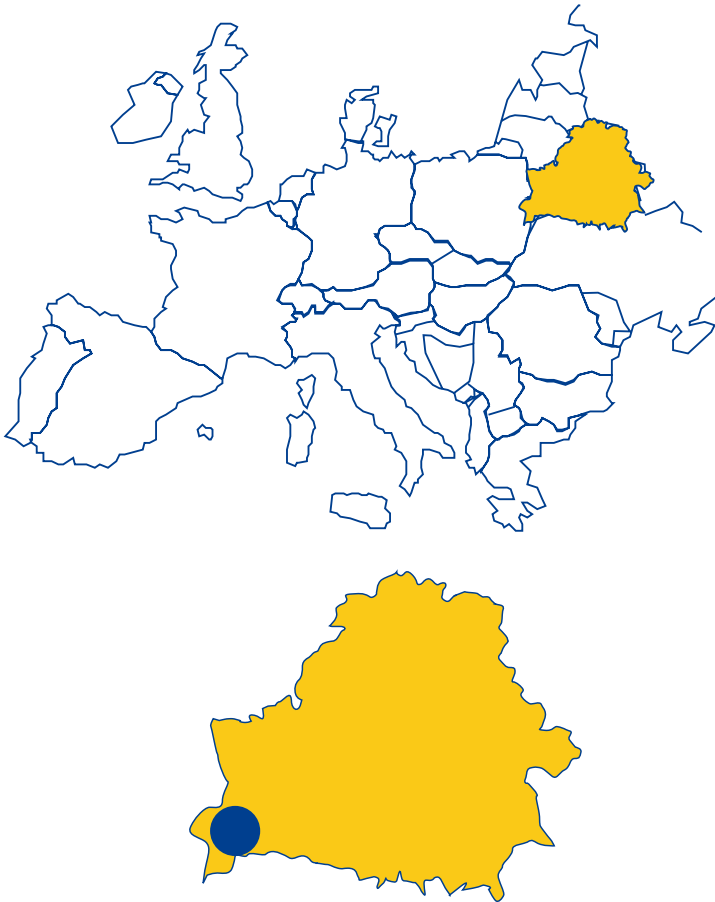
Project Coordinator

Lidzya Vistunova, Slow Food Berioza convivium leader

Project Stages

The project was launched in January 2008 at Berioza Secondary School N° 3 on the initiative of the Slow Food Berioza convivium leader, Lidzya Vistunova and the school director, Marina Nikonuk.

The first phase of the project involved transforming conventional home-economics classes into comparative Taste





Workshops with a simple, effective format. The students were asked to produce two identical dishes, using raw materials from different sources (i.e. farmed fish and wild fish), and then do a sensory analysis of the results.

During the second phase from January until May 2009, the project delivered a curriculum of 20 lessons to seven classes, for a total of 140 lessons on the following themes:

Sensory Education

Food and Alimentary Education

- Meetings with Terra Madre food communities (a global network that unites small-scale producers and facilitates integrity through knowledge sharing). This included cheese producers, local fishermen, beekeepers, bread makers and herbal tea producers
- Workshops and cooking classes with chefs
- Lectures with experts on the history of food production
- Visits to farms (Terra Madre community of Kobrin vegetable growers)

School Garden (a vegetable garden where the students grow their own crops)

Student Projects and Communications

- Photo exhibition of the first phase of the project
- Art competition

To assess the effectiveness of the program, the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of California, Berkeley developed a research study to evaluate any changes in the students' perceptions and eating habits. The data will be used to examine the role of Taste Education in influencing children and their families' relationships with sustainable food systems.

Social Impact

The students have been very receptive to the project and all of the 120 students completed the full course. Teachers and parents have noted a marked change in the attitude of the young students to the local food culture and increased desire to eat traditional, healthy dishes. The qualitative and quantitative research carried out by the University of California will be presented in the near future to provide more a detailed overview of the extent to which the project has fostered an increased awareness of the benefits of local food production and consumption among students and families.

The broader community has learnt about the project and its aims through significant coverage in regional press. The project has also been used as an example for the development of similar activities not only in Belarus, but also in Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

Current Beneficiaries

120 students at Berioza Public Secondary School N°3
500/600 indirect beneficiaries (families and community)



Current Partners

Slow Food Berioza Convivium
Berioza Public Secondary School N°3
12 Terra Madre producers (Kobrin producers)
2 Terra Madre chefs
Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at
the University of Berkeley, California

In their words...

Students from 10G on the cooking lesson:

"I have never tried a stuffed fish like that before. Now I usually ask my mom to cook it with me at home. Thank you for this great recipe"; "The fish cooking lesson was very interesting as we not only watched but also participated in the preparation of the dish. I would like to have more lessons like that as we get to know how to cook not only tasty but also healthy food".

Roma Yanushko from 5E shares his impressions after meeting with the producer:

"The meeting with the honey producer was very interesting. I got to learn a lot about different types of honey and the way it is produced. Thank you".

Svetlana, one of the students' parents, speaks of her 6th grade son:

"Anton used to buy potato chips secretly, and there was nothing I could do to stop him. I would often find chip crumbs in his pockets. After the third lesson of the project he told me he understood that he shouldn't eat so many potato chips anymore. The day after he proposed to prepare home made sausage, something they learned about in class. This is the most important achievement for me as a parent during the last years".



Goals for 2010

To develop the project further at Berioza Public Secondary School N°3 and increase the number of participating students

To involve more schools across the Brest Region in the project.

The long-term goal is to introduce the project to schools across Belarus.



Activities for 2010

Develop and deliver 20 new lessons for the 120 students already involved in the project by May 2010.

Increase the number of students studying the curriculum at Berioza Public Secondary School N°3 by 20.



Extend the project to three schools: one in Berioza, one in Kobrin and one in villane Batchi in the Kobrin region.

Introduce excursions to producers and food communities in the surrounding rural area into the curriculum.

Expected Outcomes in 2010

Three more schools in the Brest region to join the project, and the number of participating students to increase from 120 to 400.

Increased awareness of the benefits of local food production and consumption among students, families and broader communities connected to each participating school.

Completion of The University of California mid-evaluation research report and presentation to participating schools.

Beneficiaries in 2010

400 students
1500/2000 indirect beneficiaries (families and community)

Partners in 2010

Slow Food Berioza and Slow Food Minsk Convivia
4 schools: Berioza Public Secondary School N° 3, Berioza Public Secondary School N° 2, Kobrin Public Secondary School N° 7, Batchi Public Secondary School
40 Terra Madre producers – (Kobrin, Berioza and Stolin producers)
8 Terra Madre chefs
Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Berkeley, California

Project Budget

The cost of delivering the project to 4 schools in 2010 is 13,600 euro according to the following breakdown:

Activity	Cost
Products and supplies	€ 3,600
Cookery, classroom and school garden teachers	€ 3,000
Field trips for children including transportation	€ 2,000
Equipment and educational materials	€ 2,800
Personnel costs	€ 400
Community awareness-raising activities	€ 800
Project Coordination	€ 1,000
Total	€ 13,600



Help us continue this project in 2010!

By donating 13,600 euro you can adopt this project.

With 3,400 euro you can adopt the project in one school.

With 700 euro you can provide all the materials and equipment needed at one school.

Donations of any amount are welcome and very appreciated.

All donors will be acknowledged on the website.

To donate, please visit: www.slowfood.com/donate

Please contact us for further information:
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Slow Food envisions a world in which everyone has access to good, clean and fair food



Through the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity we build the capacity of food producers and defend biodiversity and food traditions by creating new economic models that are being put into practice all around the world: 300 Presidia – sustainable food production – projects, 800 Ark of Taste products and Earth Markets.

www.slowfoodfoundation.com

Terra
madre

Through the worldwide Terra Madre network we give a voice to small-scale farmers and food producers and bring them together with cooks, academics and youth to discuss how to improve the food system collaboratively. Meetings are held at the global, regional and local level and resulting projects are promoting knowledge exchange around the globe.

www.terramadre.org



Our pioneering food and taste education projects help people to understand where food comes from, how it is produced and by whom, creating awareness, new markets, and positive social change. With our membership we organize events and programs from the international to the local level that showcase sustainable agriculture and artisan food production, and connect producers with consumers.

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