



## **Plant based cuisine in vocational trainings for future chefs**

The multinational project Vegucation improves the current vocational training for future chefs. Furthermore an additional training is to be conceptualized to educate skilled “vegan-vegetarian” chefs. The consortium consists of different NGOs and gastronomical schools from four different countries; Germany, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands. The main goals of the project are providing and implementing a professional job training with contemporary and appealing contents together with an additional training for people who already operate in the gastronomical sector to develop a European syllabus including teaching materials for plant based cuisine.

## **Some facts on the enormous trend of plant based cuisine**

Plant-based cuisine is currently experiencing an unprecedented growth. Healthy, sustainable and meat-reduced menus are in vogue. Not least because more and more food safety scandals occur, which lead consumers to rethink their diets. The estimated number of vegetarians worldwide amounts to 1 billion already, while the highest percentage can be found in India.

The vegetarian diet has become extremely popular; sales of cooking books and lifestyle magazines have been booming and the range of plant based products in supermarkets has been growing. On top of that, the number of vegetarian and vegan dishes offered in restaurants, cafes and cafeterias is increasing steadily.

## **Benefits of a vegetarian diet**

*“Nothing will benefit human health and increase chances for survival of life on Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet.”*

This quote from Albert Einstein is most remarkable as it summarises the complex coherences and impacts our diet has on health, environment, climate, human- and animal rights. As for example many dietary-related diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, obesity, gout and certain types of cancer can be prevented through a healthy, plant based diet. Furthermore, people who live on a meat-free diet mostly have better blood values (pressure, fat, etc.), a healthier body weight and a higher average life expectancy. Additionally it can be said, that plant based cooking can be easily combined with special needs of customers suffering from certain food allergies and intolerances. Moreover, a plant based diet has a very positive effect on climate and environment. For instance livestock farming is seen as the major reason behind global warming through greenhouse gases. A research study carried out by the agricultural sector of the UN in 2006 has proven, that livestock farming causes approximately 20 percent

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of greenhouse gases. Thus livestock farming is even more harmful to the climate than all emissions of the whole transport sector added together.

It should be added that a plant based diet benefits both humans and animals. As 7 – 16 kilograms of grains or soya beans are needed to produce one single kilogram of meat. The crop area needed to grow enough animal feed to produce 1 kilogram of meat could be used to grow 160 kilograms of potatoes. Every year around 50 percent of grains and 90 percent of soya worldwide are being used to feed farm animals. Thus edible food goes to the feeding of animals rather than to direct consumption by humans.

## **Plant based cooking in gastronomy**

Fresh ingredients such as herbs, vegetables and salads have become more and more popular again during the past few years. People have become more sensitive and susceptible for health-, ecologically- and socially-related aspects of our food. This consciousness keeps on growing steadily. However, chefs have not been prepared for this progressive change in their customers' needs so far. Personnel which is skilled on the field of plant based cooking is rare. European vegetarian organisations receive numerous requests for skilled personnel on the field of plant based cooking from managers of various gastronomical fields, such as e.g. system catering, hotels and spas.

## **Different ways of plant based cuisine**

Generally it can be said, that plant based cuisine is a new, trendy and creative way of cooking which opens up a variety of new possibilities. Different ways to prepare food from different countries all over the world are applied to create tasteful dishes. Furthermore plant based dishes and baked goods can be prepared without saturated fatty acids and cholesterol. By using new recipes and innovative ways of preparation un- or lesser-known vegetables are being discovered as well as plant based meat and cheese alternatives.

## **The aims of Vegucation**

So far vocational training for future chefs lacks impartation of specialised knowledge concerning plant based ingredients and how they can be used. Especially alternatives to milk, eggs and meat are not being covered in the syllabus. Vegucation will help extending the field of plant based cooking for basic vocational training and develop an additional distance learning course for trained cooks. Furthermore the project targets decision makers such as the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and social partners, who are intended to disseminate and market the product.



## **Vegucation – the first big step**

Vegucation reacts to the urgent demand for a Europe-wide gastronomical vocational training, which is specialized in the field of vegetable-based cooking. Vegucation closes the gap between labour market needs and the current contents in the gastronomical vocational education, so that new skills for the new Europe-wide profession of the modern Chef were developed. The main objective of Vegucation is the development and implementation of a specific gastronomical initial education and further education to prepare chefs to the changing requirements of their guests.

The project Vegucation is being coordinated by European vegetarian organisations from Germany, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands. Furthermore four hotel- and gastronomical schools complete this consortium. The project was launched in October 2012 and will be supported by the European „Lifelong Learning“ programme until March 2015. The project's funds amount to a total of 470.000 Euros.

## **Achievements of Vegucation**

In course of the project, teaching materials and concepts have been developed. The Vegucation-team will support the schools during the implementation of the project. The materials are available in English, French, German, Dutch and Czech, thus more than half of the European population is reached. Furthermore the materials will be available on our web portal for free.

## **Vegucation in a nutshell**

### **1. Basics**

- The project team consists of four vegetarian organisations from four European countries (VEBU from Germany, EVA from Belgium, NVB from the Netherlands and VGÖ from Austria) and four gastronomical schools from Belgium and Germany (German Hotel Academy, Syntra West, Campus Wemmel, OSZ Gastgewerbe). VEBU is the coordinator of the project.
- The project began in October 2012 and will go on until March 2015.
- Vegucation is part of the European Union's "Life Long Learning" programme.



## 2. Current situation

- Plant based cuisine is currently experiencing unprecedented growth.
- Plant based eating has a positive effect on health, environment, climate, animal- and human rights.
- Current VETs for future chefs only cover plant based cuisine with a relatively narrow amount of time.
- Cooks currently receive insufficient training concerning competencies for the preparation of plant based meals.
- Vegucation supports the creation of a new vocational training for plant based cooking

## 3. Goals

- to improve vocational trainings for future cooks in terms of knowledge and skills on plant based cooking for chefs to be able to cater for their guests' needs
- developing an additional training for already apprenticed personnel

## 4. Results

- a framework curriculum designed for 100 hours in five languages and learning materials for teaching, containing:
  - teacher's handbook on plant based cuisine
  - student's handbook on plant based cuisine divided into four chapters:
    1. Background of the Vegetarian Diet
    2. Materials and Basic Preparation
    3. Specialization
    4. Business and Marketing
  - educational clips
  - E-learning modules, climate calculator and other ICT materials
- improvement of the initial vocational training by:
  - revision of the 60-hours-module on plant based cuisine
  - offering a three-day advanced vocational training on plant based cuisine
  - developing a one-week extra course for high-performance classes
- enabling an additional qualification for trained cooks within the frame of a distance learning course (in-service training)

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