



**CIRCULAR BUSINESS**

**FOCUS ON FOOD WASTE IN ITALY**

New sense of things

# CAUTO to generate circular economy of proximity

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May 2019

**CAUTO "Cantiere Autolimitazione"** has been operating in Brescia (Italy) since 1995, but was originally founded in 1991 as an association committed to coping with marginalization, through the recovery and distribution of unsold or discarded food for social purpose, at the city market.

**CAUTO answer to the relevant issue of food waste, transforming consumption into resources by reducing waste and developing social inclusion, in a Circular Economy perspective.**

In a country famous for food and its cooking as Italy, where the attention for the food issues has always been relevant and of public interest, the topic of food waste is crucial. The food waste is a relevant issue linked with the agri-food chain production that, with the limelight of the Circular Economy where reducing waste, reusing resources, sharing, create a network of work and services are the milestones of this new approach, it has become of fundamental interest for today's society. In order to answer to all these new opportunities created by the Circular Economy,





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CAUTO has always been for year an important player in the food sector to fight against the food waste problem. **CAUTO “Cantiere Autolimitazione”** has been operating in Brescia (Italy) since 1995, but was originally founded in 1991 as an association committed to coping with marginalization, through the recovery and distribution of unsold or discarded food for social purpose, at the city market. The name of the cooperative combines the industriousness and the possibility of generating social inclusion through work. A work, however, made of enhancing the environment and the surrounding nature. The prevention and reduction of waste becomes the opportunity to exploit otherwise discarded goods, and the management of recovery activities are an opportunity for social redemption for people with severe fragility, rejected and marginalized by competitive and exclusive job market logic.

**15%** of food in Italy is annually thrown away in all the.

**3.000.000** kg of food is recovered in a year by the Dispensa Sociale and selected to enhance the quality of the products.

**10.000** people every week get recovered-food with a social purpose thanks to CAUTO's Dispensa Sociale.

## The CAUTO's Dispensa Sociale for the circular economy

Precisely, CAUTO brought his twenty years of experience in the reducing waste into the Circe project. The cooperative shows, as a stakeholder of Regione Lombardia, how it is actually possible to think of a circular economy based on the recycling and reuse of everything that would normally be "discarded", in favour of the environment and the community. This entire recovery sector corresponds to a CAUTO area called **New Sense of Things**, which aims to intercept discarded materials and recover them, through different channels of redistribution such as social donations or retail sale through the CAUTO's second-hand shop. In this sector there is a service called **Dispensa Sociale** (social-food pantry) where CAUTO recover foodstuffs discarded by the large-scale retail trade and by the agriculture-market, to distribute them for social purposes. Food companies and supermarkets can donate unsold goods/no longer tradable

of recovered food. The service reduces the costs of disposal for companies that donate goods, preventing waste production and offering a truly and continuative answer to the food needs of thousands of people. Today CAUTO, with the voluntary association Maremosso, thanks to the **Dispensa Sociale** service, collecting more or less 3.000.000 kg of food surpluses, can offer to about 10.000 people through 122 charities association, to receive various foodstuffs for their daily needs. The distribution is carried out in 61 municipalities in Brescia province, thanks to the donations of a network of food factories and large-scale distribution companies (there are agreements signed with 6 food factories and 6 large-scale distribution companies – 54 retail stores) and others una tantum donations based on their food surpluses. The service generate benefits on the territory with environmental, social and economic advantages:

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## The CAUTO's Dispensa Sociale network in the territory of Brescia



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- Recovery of the organic fraction from the large-scale retail trade, which is today disposed of as undifferentiated waste;
- Reduction of the 85% of the undifferentiated waste produced by each retail stores;
- Re-use of discarded food goods through social redistribution that responds to the food needs of indigent people;
- Employment and social inclusion thanks to the job insertions and to protected voluntary paths realized by CAUTO.

In 2018 the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies have also financed Dispensa Sociale thanks to the project called "Scarto Bene" Call "Innovative projects to reduce food waste" in order to develop a better modelling of the selection of the food

excesses, a level up of the selection phases, a better coordination and involvement of volunteers and environmental education and communication across all stakeholders involved.

The service is based on the principles of waste reduction, social sharing, the creation of a network of collaboration and sharing that are important indicators of circularity, which allow identifying the work of CAUTO as a best practice of Circular Economy in Italy and in Europe.

With over twenty years of experience in recovery, Dispensa Sociale is today a virtuous model, in line with the regulations in force and therefore replicable in any other territorial context. ■

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