

‘Stop Spild af Mad’ / ‘Stop Wasting Food’

Consumer movement in Denmark

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1. Introduction

1.1 Description of the initiative

The initiative was started by a (frustrated) consumer named Selina Juul in 2008 and is today Denmark’s largest movement of private consumers against food waste. It is a private and non-profit NGO, which is created by consumers for consumers in order to raise awareness and prevent food waste nationwide (Stop Spild af Mad, 2011). This is done through campaigns, stories in the media, debates and events – all with the mission of informing and preventing food waste by providing the Danish populations with concrete tools to better use of their household shopping.

The movement started in 2008 and has for the last couple of year fought actively with prevention of food waste. They work constructive with the problem and try to advise solutions to the consumer and industry/producer. The support from thousands of Danish consumers and politicians are numerous. All work done for the movement is voluntary and it is free to be a member. The movement does not receive any financial support from the Danish government and are neither influence nor effected by the Danish waste politics – their concern is food waste and how we can prevent it!

1.2 Research methodology

My research was conducted at the Internet started by looking at an initiative in Denmark and ‘Stop Spild af Mad’ came up in one of the first searches. Initially, I had heard of it before but did not really know what the true meaning behind the movement was. By glancing further through their website I grasped the true sense of this and what interesting validity it has had and still has.

After choosing this initiative I decided to look more into the Danish waste prevention model and waste policies and at the webpages of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries and as well the Danish Ministry of Environment to see that ‘Stop Spild af Mad’ was co-operating and working with different initiates within the ministries. My research also relied upon a phone interview with Selina Juul.

1.3 Results of the initiative

The results of the initiative can be measured in many ways and particular what has happened due to the active involvement of the movement. Since the start in 2008 the movement has collaborated with the Danish government and participates in waste prevention campaign “Use more –waste less” under the Advisory Board of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency and Selina Juul advises the Danish Ministry of Environment on less food waste.

‘Stop Spild af Mad’ has recently started a co-operation with the Danish ‘Forbrugerrådet’ and the Danish Agriculture and Food Council with a large campaign about the prevention of food waste (Stop Spild af Mad, 2011). The figures from a report done by Denmark’s green think tank CONCITO also shows the results of the movement as the number of people minimizing their people has increased to 62,3 % from 52,6 % since February 2011 (CONCITO, 2012).

The following listed is additionally what ‘Stop Spild af Mad’ has accomplished:

- Signed the Danish Ministry of Environments ‘Charter Against Food Waste’
- The Danish supermarket chain Rema 100 has dropped quantity discount in their 200 stores due to active initiative from ‘Stop Spild af Mad’
- Published a ‘left-over-cookbook’ with renowned gourmet chefs
- A part of the Danish Ministry of Environment Waste Strategy
- A member of the Danish Ministry of Environment Initiative Group against food waste (a group of decision makers, organisations, food producers, NGO’s and scientists). The goal is to create a binding effort toward food waste.
- Co-developer of the Joint Declaration Against Food (an international document which is handed over to the European Parliament and the United Nations)
- Selina Juul guest speaker at: COP15, European Parliament, FAO congress, 3rc Bonn Conference on International Development Policy January 2012

1.4 Reflections and recommendations

What ‘Stop Spild af ‘Mad’ wants to achieve is to inspirer the Danish population in preventing food waste and I believe that they have come a long way with their active work in waste prevention, clearly seen from all above accomplishments. This type of consumer movement creates a lot of focus and gets people involved and aware of the problem with food waste.

Selina Juul herself says that everything that has been written in the press about food waste since 2008 is because of ‘Stop Spild af Mad’ and its effective attention towards it and a survey done in coherence with a food waste prevention campaign (Ministry of Environment) showed that almost half of the Danish population know about this consumer movement (Miljøministeriet/Miljøstyrelsen, 2011). According to Selina keeping in mind the true values of the movement is important and that I find quite unique when thinking of the influences outside parties can take towards the movement.

Based on my interview with Selina Juul and what I have read at their webpage, it appears that the movement has created a quite unique awareness around the whole problem of food waste and moreover initiatives to how we can prevent it by getting people involved and engaged – both the public and the policy makers! Based on my research about this movement I would say that there is still a long way to go but continuous active work is of course one way to go but future financial support from the Danish government could give the funds to more campaigning and realization of initiatives towards both private and public actors and thereby create greater awareness and results.

2. The Research Process

2.1. Role of the interviewee

As mentioned earlier I organised an interview with the founder of the movement. A woman called Selina Juul. She has actively work with the movement since the start in 2008 and still do entirely voluntary and at almost full time including speaking at different conferences around the world. Besides that she owns and operates her own business as an independent illustrator and graphic designer (Juul, 2011).

2.2. Description of how interview was conducted & structured

Firstly, I started to type down a small research plan what I wanted to find out and who to get in contact with. Secondly, I wanted to get in contact with the founder of the movement, Selina Juul and get a telephone interview with her. I wrote an email to a general information email address inquiring asking some questions to her and luckily I get a reply from her an hour later, saying that I could call her the same Friday. Though she is a very busy woman she was very much wanted to answer my questions.

Before the interview more in-depth research about the movement was prepared through their own website which has a lot of information and links to articles, interviews etc. After gaining more knowledge about the movement I started to type down some possible questions to ask Selina. Who, what, when, where, how & why was my core focus in the questions. My plan for the interview was to go more in depth with the different initiatives that was mentioned on the webpage and also to understand how actively the organisation actually was. The questions were not provided in advance to Selina.

The telephone interview was conducted Friday 27th of January in the afternoon and it was a very informal and pleasant interview/phone conversation we had. Selina is a very engaged person and that truly showed off in her answers and her humility. My questions were very 'flowing' in the conversation and other questions and comments also came up during the interview inspired from her answers. During the interview I took small notes to use for this paper.

What I could have done better was to prepare more questions because she was very much willing to answer all my questions and had more time to it than I had expected. See the interview questions in appendix 1.

2.3. Main sources of information

A main source of information about 'Stop Spild af Mad' is from their webpage that has a lot of valid information. From their webpage there is also links to the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries and the Danish Ministry of Environment, which was also very useful sources of information regarding initiatives of prevention of food waste. See reference list.

3. References

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4. Appendix 1: Interview questions

- How does the movement work in practice? Just suggested initiatives or real active work?
- How do you look at the Danish waste prevention policies and is this something you work after?
- Regarding 'Charter Against Food Waste' – who has initiated this? What happens if you do not report your initiatives? How can these initiatives make a difference?
- At your webpage several waste prevention initiatives are mentioned. What do you do actively to realize these?
- Why do you think the movement has gained large support and awareness in the media and public?
- Where is 'Stop Spild af Mad' moving in terms of goals and future projects?
- When do you think the Danes will commit and engage more in waste prevention? What will do the 'push'?