



# Atlantic Social Lab

Cooperation for the promotion of Social Innovation

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## ATLANTIC SOCIAL LAB STUDY VISIT REPORT - STUDY VISITS HELD IN AVILÉS

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The project Atlantic Social Lab is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the INTERREG Atlantic Area Cooperation Program (EAPA\_246 / 2016).



<b>A. GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Date</b>	15 – 06 – 2022
<b>Location:</b>	Avilés
<b>Name</b>	Decuchara Restauración Social LTD
<b>Legal Status</b>	Social Insertion Company
<b>Contact Details</b>	Adress: Decuchara Restauración Social, S.L. c/ Cabruñana, nº 22 Bajo Phone: 676 897 683 Email: <a href="mailto:decucharaynatural@adeipa.org">decucharaynatural@adeipa.org</a>

<b>B. SHORT DESCRIPTION</b>	
<b>Objectives</b> <i>(identify the main goals of the project and target groups addressed)</i>	<p>Founded in March 2010, Decuchara Restauración Social LTD. is a social insertion company owned by the LATRÉBEDE Women's Association, an entity aimed at the social and labour integration of women at risk of exclusion. One of the founding objectives of the company is to promote equal opportunities, as it pursues the incorporation of women in vulnerable situations into the labour market.</p>
<b>Methodology</b> <i>(identify the methodological principles, mode of operation and level of intervention)</i>	<p>Decuchara's main audience are women at risk of social exclusion. Subsequently, it directs its actions toward food services in public kindergartens, restaurants, and catering services.</p> <p>It is a professional project based on a double methodology: on one hand, to provide on-the-job training developed in schools and restaurants and, on the other hand, to invest in the development of other essential skills for the social inclusion of these women, such as individual rights and obligations, personal care, etc., thus promoting their social participation.</p> <p>All their actions are governed by the principle of providing a better quality of life to users, particularly ones that result in a social improvement in the territory in which they operate: the community kitchen is aimed primarily at the most vulnerable (elderly, ill, children, who cannot fend for themselves...), can have a decent quality of life and, in turn, help caregivers to have time and more opportunities for job development, training or leisure, and social participation.</p> <p>Given the characteristics of the women associated with this project, the organization looked for a job opening where they can take advantage of the rudiments of the knowledge of these occupations that they already have in their possession, so that, in a relatively simple way, the step from informal to professionalization in these tasks can be taken. Their users find themselves in a "real" work environment where they are committed and strive to comply with the tasks entrusted to them, the deadlines and times imposed by the activity, as well as all the hygienic and quality measures necessary to guarantee the service in the standardized market.</p>

## C. MAIN FINDINGS

<p><b>Social Needs</b> <i>(identify the social needs the organisation intends to fill)</i></p>	<p>This project seeks to respond to various social needs that can be divided into three dimensions: social and labour inclusion, environmental sustainability, and the improvement of food quality offered to children.</p> <p><b>Social and labour inclusion needs:</b> To develop job skills for women at risk of exclusion; To develop social skills for women at risk of exclusion; To promote the social inclusion of vulnerable women.</p> <p><b>Environmental sustainability needs:</b> To promote circular economy (by using products from small-scale local producers, eliminating intermediary agents); To use organic products; To promote food quality.</p> <p><b>Food quality needs:</b> To promote food quality during childhood (through cooking meals without fat, processed foods, sugar and pre-cooked foods); To respond to different dietary restrictions and needs (through the development of specific menus adapted to each child, reviewed, and approved by paediatric nurses).</p>
<p><b>Social Innovative Practices</b> <i>(identify the main social innovative practices developed and the extent to which the work developed responds to those needs)</i></p>	<p>Kitchen services of the public pre-schools of the municipality. This service manages and deals with everything related to the kitchen and dining room of the Avilés Nursery Schools. Their main activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of all kitchen and dining room staff;</li> <li>• Planning healthy menus for the children;</li> <li>• Preparing all meals in situ (in each one of the schools);</li> <li>• Cleaning the kitchen and dining room;</li> <li>• Supplying raw materials and cleaning products.</li> </ul> <p>Decuchara introduces, within its scope, innovations in this service that promote the development of social awareness and the importance of sustainable food growth through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No stocking in intermediate warehouses, as all products are delivered directly from the supplier;</li> <li>• Purchases from local businesses and producers;</li> <li>• No use of precooked products or processed foods;</li> <li>• Preference for organic products produced locally by small producers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaboration and Networks</b> <i>(identify the main connections of the organisation)</i></p>	<p>One of the central concerns of this project is to develop synergies between the different stakeholders. In this sense, it maintains a collaborative relationship with the municipality of Avilés, with the municipal health services (mainly in the paediatric area), with the association of social insertion companies of the Principality of Asturias, with the kindergartens of the municipality, and with local organic farmers and producers.</p>

## D. MAIN CONSTRAINTS TO SUCCESS

<p><b>Challenges and Barriers</b> (<i>identify the main problems that the organisation faces: financial resources, human resources, networks, innovative environment...</i>)</p>	<p>Funding is one of the main difficulties of this social insertion company. Currently, its main funding comes from a public contract with the municipality of Avilés, which devotes about 5% of its budget to social initiatives of this kind. With the pandemic, this difficulty has become more evident. Besides the work they do in kindergartens, this company runs a restaurant and has catering services, which acts as a significant source of revenue. However, with its closure during the pandemic period, this income stream was largely compromised.</p>
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<b>E. CONCLUSIONS</b>	
<p><b>Key Concluding Lines</b></p>	<p>The Decuchara project develops social innovation practices that respond to social needs in various domains, from environmental sustainability to social inclusion.</p> <p>The practices developed imply a transformation of social relations, in the sense that the work conducted by these women within the project functions as an intermediate state. After the process is over, they are prepared to look for work independently and enter the job market. Furthermore, the relationships they promote with governance bodies, local producers, and customers are based on an individualized logic that seeks to meet the specific needs of each of the interested parties.</p> <p>In addition, they also shape power relations, since Decuchara is a project associated with a social insertion company 100% owned by women in a state of vulnerability, giving them power and responsibility. This contributes to their empowerment and so that they can also transform their social practices.</p>
<p><b>Other information considered relevant</b></p>	<p>Nothing to be added</p>

## Study Visit Photos



*Figure 1 e 2 - Entrance of kindergarten visited where all the meals are prepared by Decuchara. Due to ethical privacy issues, no photos were taken inside the kindergarten.*

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**Review:** Hugo Pinto and Atlantic Social Lab Partners