EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RETHINKING FOOD CONSUMPTION.

SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES FOR BARCELONA

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Rethinking Food Consumption. Sustainable Alternatives for Barcelona

This report, prepared by Opcions, is part of the project "Rethinking food consumption: sustainable alternatives for Barcelona," promoted by Eco-union and funded by the Barcelona City Council. Its objective is to raise citizen awareness about the serious social, environmental, and economic impacts of the current agrifood system, and to promote ***real and viable alternatives*** *based on the* ***Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) and agroecology****. The transition requires coordinated action across the entire chain: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management.*

1. Diagnosis of the global and urban food model: impacts and vulnerabilities

The dominant agrifood system is based on powerful industrial agriculture, governed by a logic of **extractivism** of natural resources (water, fertile soils), high dependence on fossil fuels, and marked **oligopolization** of the sector.

Global impacts of the agro-industrial model:

- **Environmental**: the agro-industry is estimated to generate **one-third of global emissions**. Agriculture consumes **two-thirds of global water resources**. The expansion of monocultures contributes to soil degradation and the loss of biodiversity.
- **Social and labor**: the model perpetuates colonial dynamics and relies on cheap labor. Labor precariousness is detected in the Global South (low wages, lack of social protection) and the Global North, where the sector often depends on migrant temporary workers with limited rights.
- **Health**: industrialization is linked to the increased consumption of ultra-processed foods, rising sugars, and pesticide contamination (fitosanitaris). Inadequate nutrition is the main cause of "non-communicable diseases," accounting for **71% of deaths worldwide**. In Spain, poor nutrition is the primary factor contributing to loss of health.

Characterization of the Barcelona food system:
Barcelona's food metabolism is mostly **linear, highly dependent on external sources**, and vulnerable to global shocks.

- **Loss of proximity**: the city only has **0.7% of its land dedicated to cultivation**. At Mercabarna, the proportion of Catalan product has significantly decreased, and currently, only **15% of the product is of Catalan origin**, while imports have increased. Currently, **85% of the food consumed in Barcelona travels more than 100 kilometers**.

- **Shopping habits: s**upermarkets and large surfaces **dominate food purchases** (between 60% and 70% of household purchases).
- **Inequality in access (food environments)**: access to healthy food is inequitable and conditional on income. Food Swamps (areas with a high concentration of unhealthy offerings) are increasingly common.
- **Food insecurety: more than 8% of households in Barcelona** suffer from some form of food insecurity.

2. Sustainable alternatives: driving the agroecological transition

The transition towards a fair and sustainable system must conceptualize food as a **right** that guarantees food sovereignty and creates dignified conditions for farmers.

Key public policies:

Local administrations must create stable frameworks to guarantee the right to healthy and accessible food. Barcelona has adopted initiatives like the Milan Pact and the **Barcelona 2030 Sustainable and Healthy Food Strategy (EASSB2030)**.

- **EASSB 2030 Goals**: one of the main goals is to **double the consumption of local and organic products and reduce food waste by 50% before 2030.**
- **Food guarantee**: the Food Social Security is proposed to guarantee a basic basket of healthy foods, independent of household income.
- **Infrastructure**: promote **public food stores** in vulnerable neighborhoods to offer local and affordable products, and revalue municipal markets as key spaces for fresh food access.

Economic alternatives from the Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS):

The ESS is a crucial instrument for driving the agroecological transition, with replicable models across the entire supply chain.

- **Production and processing**: Catalonia already has over **200,000 certified hectares** in agroecological production. Agrarian cooperativism is deeply rooted in the territory (30.8% of cooperatives are centennial). Shared workshops (like L'obradora or El tall) facilitate food transformation with sanitary registration.
- **Distribution**: agroecological Distribution Centers (CAD), such as La Diligència, coordinate logistics to connect small producers with consumers and collective catering.
- **Cooperative consumption**: collective consumption is growing, with over **150 consumer groups in Catalonia** (more than 50 in Barcelona) and cooperative supermarkets (FoodCoop Barcelona).

Consumption alternatives for citizens:
Although individual agency is conditioned by the socioeconomic environment, daily decisions can support the sustainable model.

- **Shopping habits**: prioritize **local and specialized physical commerce** (bakeries, greengrocers) and markets to counter the impulsive purchases typical of large surfaces.
- **Sustainable basket**: choose **local, seasonal, and agroecological foods**. For unavoidable imported products, opt for fair trade.
- **Responsible diet**: reduce consumption of meat (especially red) and ultra-processed foods, and increase consumption of plant proteins (Mediterranean legumes).
- **Waste reduction**: plan meals, buy the right amount, and use leftovers through optimization cooking.

The transformation of the food system requires concerted action where public impetus, the social economic model, and consumer awareness mutually reinforce each other, breaking the logic of merchandise and guaranteeing food as a right and common good.

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