

Thirty Successful Experiences of Redistribution, Reduction,
Recognition, Remuneration and Representation in Care Work

Xantar na Casa program, Galicia, Spain



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Country and/or location of implementation: Galicia, Spain

Instances and/or legal framework responsible for its implementation: Galician Consortium of Equality and Welfare Services in collaboration with the Department of Labor and Welfare and the municipalities of Galicia adhered to the program; Regional Government of Galicia, Spain.

Specific issue covered and beneficiaries of the action or policy

The Lunch at Home program (Xantar na Casa) was conceived as a social program of nutritional care and is aimed at the elderly and people in situations of dependency. Its main purpose is to provide support at home, to those who need and demand it, through meal services and personal monitoring, to improve the quality of life and autonomy of its users. It is a service that consists of providing meals at the users' homes. These consist of a first course, a second course, dessert, and bread, in a single weekly delivery. In each delivery, 14 different trays with food for each day of the week are received. The meals are distributed in individual thermo-sealed polypropylene trays, suitable for microwave heating.¹⁵ Users may request any diet, as long as it is prescribed by their physician. These diets are generic, although in the case of more specific needs, they can be personalized diets, according to medical guidelines (Xunta de Galicia, 2004).

From an integrated perspective, this service offers the possibility of complementing the home help service and attending to the food-related needs of the elderly and other groups and users who need it. At the same time, this service aims to help users maintain their independence and autonomy to the fullest extent possible, and to enable them to remain in their own homes in acceptable conditions. And, at the family level, it is intended to contribute to the process of equality and reconciliation of family and work life. Caregivers have greater peace of mind, knowing that their family members are receiving proper nutrition according to their needs, as well as personalized follow-ups from the professionals in charge of meal distribution. Eligible users of this service are people residing in the municipalities of the Autonomous Community of Galicia who have signed a collaboration agreement with the

¹⁵ In the event that users do not have a microwave and/or refrigerator adapted to the service's needs, the Galician Consortium of Equality and Welfare Services has household appliances available for users to borrow for the duration of the service.

Galician Consortium of Equality and Welfare Services and who meet the following requirements:

- People over 60 years of age with limited capacity for personal autonomy, and who do not have a support network that can compensate for this situation.
- People under 60 years of age in a situation of social exclusion, technically evaluated by the social services department of the corresponding municipality. (Xunta de Galicia, 2004).

It is important to emphasize that this is a social program that not only distributes meals in the home, but also aims to improve the quality of life of the people in the program. Once the service has been commissioned, an identification and assessment of the users' needs is conducted.

The professionals in charge of intervention in homes are specifically trained to work in the field of care for the elderly and/or dependent persons. They have specific training in the field of social services and care for the elderly or people in need (Galician Consortium of Equality and Welfare Services, n.d.).

They collect information and identify different social problems, as well as report any incidents that occur during their weekly home visits. This information reaches the program manager on a daily basis and, once analyzed, all the information regarding the cases is transmitted to the municipalities to plan necessary interventions. The Galician Consortium of Equality and Welfare Services supervises in collaboration with the Municipality in order to improve the situation as much as possible, with a special interest in those cases that are at risk or in a situation of social exclusion/marginalization. In this sense, the staff visits are essential because, in addition to being able to make a weekly individual follow-up of the users, they provide support to the elderly by staying with them and discussing their week and physical and emotional well-being. These are people who, often without direct family, do not have any fixed visits per week, other than those from distributors. All this helps improve their communication with their community and environment (Nieto Fernández, 2016).

Results expected from and obtained with the action or policy

According to data published by the Galician Regional Government, in March 2021, a total of 188 municipalities throughout Galicia had joined the program,

and nearly 1,700 people were benefiting from it. This regional initiative has a cost of 2.3 million euros per year, including the contributions of the municipalities and, since the Xunta finances 50% of the menus, local entities contribute 25%, while the other 25% is paid by the users. Specifically, the price of each daily menu is 6.60 euros, of which the Xunta finances 3.08 euros; the local entities contribute 1.76 euros, and the beneficiaries the remaining 1.76 euros (Xunta de Galicia, 2021).

Obstacles and challenges in the implementation of these policies and actions

This program was evaluated through satisfaction surveys completed by users, family members, and social workers from the municipalities. Regarding the users' responses, 98% stated it was easy for them to access the program as beneficiaries; the handling of the appliances (refrigerator and microwave) necessary for meal preparation does not pose any obstacle to their satisfaction; they value the program because it is a respite for them, since they do not have to prepare meals, shop for groceries, etc. In addition, the presence of the delivery agent in the homes makes them feel cared for and looked after by someone. 52% do not feel any aspect requires improvement; those who say that possible improvements could be made, point to menus that are personalized to their tastes, have more variety or larger quantities, among other aspects. They gave an overall service evaluation of 4.05 out of 5. As to the family members group, most of them stated that the service is totally adapted to the needs and particular characteristics of the users. Family members point out greater freedom for families, more convenience when preparing meals, and more varied and healthier meals as the main benefits of the program. They point out, to a lesser extent, their mood also improved.

They give an overall evaluation of 4.29 out of 5 points. As for the opinion of the social workers of the municipalities that are members of the program, practically all of them consider it either necessary or very necessary to have this service available for their neighbors. They point out the main challenge to overcome for the full implementation of the program is meeting the substantial dissemination of information required to make this service known to the entire population. In addition, it is necessary to break myths about the preparation and preservation of the food. They state that the existing coverage is smaller than what they need for their population. Other elements they suggest could be improved are: more personalized diets, more frequent

deliveries, charging for the service according to the users' income, and promoting greater awareness of a balanced diet. (Nieto Fernández, 2016).

Justification of compliance with the inclusion criteria

This program contributes to defamiliarizing the indirect care of dependent persons and relieving the burden of care for families. It also constitutes a comprehensive care policy for dependent persons, since it not only provides them with meals, but also monitors their health, physical and emotional needs, and other matters, on a weekly basis, through the supervision of trained professionals. The proper coordination of the areas involved allows the impact of this program to be more far-reaching in the welfare of dependent persons.

For more information, visit www.concellodeames.gal/es/tramites/solicitud-do-programa-xantar-na-casa