



## **CUBIK\_ HUB OF SUSTAINABLE RESTAURANTS IN BARCELONA**

[www.cubikhub.com](http://www.cubikhub.com)

### **Idea and Project Management: Gastropologia With the Support of Restaurants Sostenibles and Barcelona City Council**

Cubik is an initiative born with the main objective of finding solutions for the economic reactivation of Bar and Restaurants in the city of Barcelona.

This project is conceived from the commitment and co-responsibility of all the operators and agents involved: bars, restaurants, suppliers, researchers, architects, sociologists, gastronomists, IT professionals and Public Administration. Cubik wants to become a participative tool that allows a multifaceted perspective towards Foodservice, through professionals who are at the forefront and who are committed to quality and sustainability.

Cubik is a tool that can make possible the interpretation of a phenomenon with multiple dimensions such as our gastronomy, which treasures heritage; promotes socio-economic dynamism; backbones our model of socialization, and embrace other productive segments.

Cubik wants to be a driver of sustainability as an unequivocal engine of avant-garde and citizen commitment for Barcelona.

Bars and Restaurants are a strategic sector for the city, as it is a key part of economic activity, of the social tissue and demands to be recognized as an active interlocutor.

One of the many negative effects of the emergency produced by Covid-19 has been the drastic weakening of the sector. This contingency has generated the mobilization of the restaurant sector proactively, from a critical analysis of the situation from which to formulate present and future solutions articulated in sustainability.

Cubik is an active network to share knowledge through a virtual forum with the aim of designing the guidelines for the future of bars and restaurants in the city of Barcelona.

This forum gathers mainly two factors. On the one hand, there is the human and personal component that is identified with “empathy”. The owners of bars and restaurants needs to be listened, endorsed and share their situation. On the other hand, there is the intellectual component that is reflected in the ability to unite talents for analysis, reflection and the elaboration of meaningful conclusions that help to rethink the entire sector to face of current circumstances with an impact that reverts to the economic revival of the entire city.

CUBIK forges a collective spirit that transcends individual actions and promotes dialogue with institutions by opening a channel for direct dialogue and fostering public-private relations. The first edition of Cubik takes place in June 2020 in six round tables, lasting 2 hours each, in which they participate:

1. Young entrepreneurs (under 35 years) from different neighborhood of the city.
2. Restaurateurs of the Haute Cuisine of Barcelona.
3. Local entrepreneurs of independent restaurants.
4. Suppliers committed to Sustainability.
5. Influential voices (from research, universities and education)
6. Professionals linked to the sector (from different fields: design, architecture, food, urban mobility, etc.).

With a total of more than a hundred participants.

This first edition of Cubik closes with a final round table where a pooling of proposals, initiatives and action plans elaborated according to a transversal perspective.

All Cubik participants point out that in order to make progress in sustainability, to boost an alliance with local producers; to improve education and awareness regarding food; to recognize the importance of gastronomy in the city, to understand social and convivial gastronomy as a point of reference for the whole community. There is a specific demand to the public administration for measures that make possible the survival of bars and restaurants:

- to keep the activity, not to lose customer trust, to bear wage costs
- to improve a culture of sustainability - as it's included in the SDGs with which the city of Barcelona is clearly committed to, especially the global values of sustainability, social responsibility and humanity (SDGs 11, 12, 17 in the specific case of the project).

At the round table of young entrepreneurs, it's possible to appreciate the ability to give answers with greater agility: the strategic commitment to local and seasonal product, quality and profitability; generation of the minimum waste and the optimization of resources are some highlights. Young people give a great vigor to R+D: improving processes and margins, more control over

food cost and staff costs, direct connection with suppliers, work teams and neighborhoods, reduction of the environmental impact of their activity are common features. These entrepreneurs face the current situation with intelligence and realism, enough ductility and creativity to diversify the business without renouncing to the identity of their gastronomic concept. They are trained entrepreneurs, with resilient responses to current challenges. There is a clear will to form a solid core of a *city-hospitality* that keeps sustainability in its DNA.

These values also appear in the haute cuisine round table, with a representation of 13 Michelin-starred chefs and international awards. These chefs highlight how quality is made compatible with sustainability and profitability. In general terms, the interventions emphasize the importance of working on sustainability on a day-to-day basis. There is even a very specific definition: "Sustainability is not just about making the customer happy but about working responsibly." Clearly, sustainability begins "at home" - in terms of economic sustainability - as individuals and as an organization. Without this assumption, no additional approach is feasible. A binomial is affirmed that is now becoming evident: "Gastronomy", understood as cuisine with knowledge and awareness and "Catering", understood as business management of the restaurant, which includes the management of resources and sustainability.

The alliance with suppliers is a key piece in analyzing and implementing significant improvement actions. They themselves emphasize that they need to be more allies rather than partners. The commitment must be mutual with a certain availability to be made more flexible by suppliers, in order to build future relationships with restaurant operators. This is possible only by developing a collective awareness of the present moment. This issue comes to the other tables as well: being sustainable means being aware of the importance of one's own choices and their impact: building synergies versus atomizing the sector. Previously this disintegration was understood as an internal diversification but able to connect with the community. Now the risk is that the threat of a "desertification" (if bars and restaurants disappear, it's also a loss of social relationships because bars and restaurants are socialization points). It could happen that a few companies stand out in this "desert" as mercantile agents. In both cases, these threads put in danger our city and our system of life. The sectors close to foodservice are urged to make a kind of pressure in an intelligent way, so that the sector, the administration and the citizens become aware of it. No company can face the current economic contingencies alone.

Bars and Restaurants reaffirm its own identity and take the co—responsibility and commit to a model of city based on quality, proximity, optimization of resources, social values. Restaurants are transmitters of a change in the model of production and consumption and are configured as the key piece in this general movement of Change led by cities at all levels.

Barcelona cannot be alien to this. Bars and Restaurants are part of its economy, but above all it represents a wide range of areas of knowledge and growth that must be addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective: research, health, economics, social sciences, education, culture, etc. The story of the city-brand must be fed by meaningful content based on sustainable practices and this is a such a constant and collective challenge.

Spain, July 2020