Resilience and Responsible Eating: A New Framework for Catering Professionals



When the Nordic Wellbeing Academy talks about resilience, we tend to mean something specific. Not the resilience of a system that simply bounces back to where it was — but the resilience of one that adapts, learns, and comes back stronger and more connected than before. It is this kind of resilience that we see at the heart of the Forgotten Fish project.

Coastal communities across Europe are under extraordinary pressure. Climate change is altering the distribution and availability of marine species. Economic pressures are squeezing the margins of small-scale fisheries and independent restaurants alike. And the knowledge systems that connected artisanal fishers to local cooks - the informal networks, the seasonal rhythms, the shared understanding of what was in the water and how to prepare it - have been disrupted by decades of industrialisation and global supply chains.

What does it take to rebuild these connections? At the Nordic Wellbeing Academy, we believe it starts with education - not just the transmission of technical skills, but a deeper kind of learning that changes how people see the world around them and their place in it. This is the philosophy underpinning our contribution to the Forgotten Fish project.

Working with vocational education providers and catering professionals across three countries, the project is developing training resources that do more than teach people how to fillet an unfamiliar fish. They invite professionals to ask bigger questions: Where does this species live? How does it reproduce? Who catches it? What happens to it if nobody buys it? What does it mean for a restaurant to take responsibility not just for the quality of its dishes, but for the ecological and economic systems its sourcing decisions affect?

These are not abstract questions. They have direct practical implications for procurement decisions, menu design, and the relationships that restaurants build with local suppliers. And they connect, in ways we find genuinely exciting, to the broader work that the Nordic Wellbeing Academy does around health-literate organisations - institutions that take their

responsibilities to the communities they serve seriously, not as an add-on, but as a core part of how they operate.

A catering professional who understands the forgotten fish in front of them – its biology, its provenance, its cultural significance, and its culinary potential - is a more resilient professional. They are better equipped to adapt when supply chains shift, better positioned to build relationships with local producers, and better placed to lead their team and their customers toward more sustainable choices. That, for us, is what resilience looks like.

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