

Has the issue of responsible consumption evolved over the last 10 years?

Elements of answers with an awareness raising activity in Switzerland

CLEVER is an awareness-raising activity on sustainable consumption developed by Biovision and aimed particularly at the younger generation in Switzerland. For the past 10 years, a fictitious travelling mini-supermarket has been welcoming the public and in particular teenagers and allowing them to familiarise themselves with the impact of their purchases. Although supermarkets are not a panacea for responsible consumption, they nevertheless centralise the majority of food purchases and thus constitute a central place in our society. In this way, the aim of CLEVER is to immerse the participants in their daily reality and to guide them towards products that are likely to be more sustainable. The class visits are also accompanied by Biovision-trained mediators who engage in conversation on consumer issues: origin of products, production methods, etc.

Consumer products that are representative of the actual supply of supermarkets in Switzerland are evaluated in CLEVER with 6 criteria including both environmental and social aspects. How were these criteria chosen? Are they relevant for assessing how "sustainable" or "responsible" a product is? Selected in 2011, are these criteria still relevant and are they representative of the concerns of today's consumers as well as rigorous from a scientific point of view? The last decade has been rich in questions and debates concerning the sustainability of the food chain as a whole, i.e. from field to plate.

The presentation will highlight changes in the perception of what constitutes responsible consumption in Switzerland, such as emerging issues related to palm oil or health aspects, and will highlight the difficulty of accurately assessing the sustainability of a product.

This retrospective presentation of the activity will also provide some clues as to the extent to which teenage boys and girls, at the age when first purchases are often made independently, should be chosen as the target audience. Is it possible to quantify the effect of CLEVER on these young people? Are they more receptive in 2020 given the media coverage of climate change than they were at the beginning of the previous decade? Do they represent an audience of choice for awareness-raising action?

Finally, critical feedback on the CLEVER activity will be conducive to in-depth reflection on how to develop a practical activity with a sufficiently broad scope of action while ensuring scientific relevance based on recent research in line with societal concerns. Awareness-raising activities can take many different forms, is the CLEVER approach sound and effective? All these different questions will ultimately lead us to question the thorny balance between collective and individual responsibility in the context of responsible consumption.

Main organizers



Co-organizers

