



# CAFÉ GERMAINE

A mobile café designed to strengthen social ties and promote access to rights and digital technology



## FACT SHEET 4



### PRESENTATION

Café Germaine, created in 2017, is a **mobile digital café** that travels the roads of Vendée to **meet residents in towns and villages**. Its main objective is to **create social connections between residents** by encouraging exchanges and supporting local initiatives. The project is led by the Federation of Social Centers of Vendée.



**Germaine** is a converted, easily identifiable, and user-friendly **truck** equipped with various digital tools such as computers, tablets, video game consoles, robots, virtual reality headsets, and a 3D printer. Its mission is to reach out to the residents of Vendée by traveling through towns and villages in a friendly, easily recognizable, mobile vehicle designed to foster entertainment and interaction. Café Germaine adopts an "**outreach**" approach, directly meeting residents in their daily environments. This approach allows it to reach a wider audience, including those who do not usually frequent social or community centers. In 2021, a "small-format" version of Café Germaine was launched with fewer technical constraints and can be booked free of charge by organizations that are members of the Fédération des Centres Sociaux (Fédération of Social Centers).

**A traveling meeting space where everyone finds their place**

## CAFÉ GERMAINE

### IN A FEW WORDS

Café Germaine is a traveling mobile café designed to strengthen social ties, combat isolation, and promote access to rights and digital technology, while bringing life to local communities. Whether it's a skate park to engage young people, a school drop-off point, a busy square, or a convenience store for families or the elderly, the truck stations itself directly in the heart of spaces frequented by the population, with whom it seeks to engage and foster social connection.

### IN A FEW NUMBERS

Created in 2017

Over 3,000 meetings



At the heart of this project is the goal of strengthening ties between residents of the same area, supporting their initiatives, and encouraging their daily commitment to building a more united community.

Its action is rooted locally and concretely, with the aim of breaking the isolation faced by many people, particularly seniors, and combating inequalities in access to social rights and digital tools.

Café Germaine takes the form of a specially designed vehicle, both identifiable and user-friendly, equipped to meet the diverse needs of the population. This mobile space offers:

- A café space for discussion and sharing a friendly moment.
- Digital workshops to introduce residents to new technologies and bridge the digital divide.
- Support with administrative procedures to help those who encounter difficulties accessing social rights.
- Activities and discussion times to encourage intergenerational interaction and boost local life.

Each intervention is tailor-made, in collaboration with residents and local stakeholders, in order to adapt actions to the specific needs of each territory.



## OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

One of Café Germaine's main challenges is **reaching the most isolated audiences, particularly in rural areas**. To address this challenge, the project relies on local stakeholders and attractive events. Its visibility has been enhanced through **effective communication and a recognizable vehicle**. Its sustainability relies on a **mixed-funding model combining grants and partnerships**. Finally, to ensure a participatory dynamic, the involvement of residents and partners is encouraged **through discussions, co-developed activities, and volunteer commitment**.

Furthermore, to remain attractive and relevant, the project must constantly innovate and keep abreast of digital developments. Maintaining the machines and vehicles and improving the layout are also essential actions to keep the project alive.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The project relies on a strong network of partnerships and collaborations that allow it to amplify its impact and ensure its sustainability. Local authorities (town halls, **inter-municipal authorities**, Departmental Council) play a key role in supporting the project financially and facilitating its implementation in the regions.

**The Community Social Action Centers (CCAS) and the Social Living Spaces (EVS) collaborate closely** with the Café Germaine team to identify residents' needs and organize targeted actions.

Finally, **volunteers and committed residents actively contribute** to the life of the project by helping with animation and relaying information within their community.



## Want to know more?

<http://cafegermaine.fr/>  
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## RESULTS AND IMPACTS

Since its launch, Café Germaine has helped **strengthen social ties in many Vendée communities**.

Digital workshops have enabled many residents to **familiarize themselves with new technologies**, thus bridging the digital divide.

Friendly moments spent over coffee have fostered **intergenerational exchanges** and the **development of local initiatives**.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE

Café Germaine's experience highlights the **importance of mobility and flexibility in reaching diverse audiences**. **Adapting to the specific characteristics** of each region and **co-developing initiatives with local stakeholders** is essential to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of interventions. Furthermore, **using digital technology** as an **outreach tool** has proven to be an effective lever for **building social connections**.

## VISION OF THE FUTURE

The project continues to evolve! Café Germaine aims to expand its reach by covering more Vendée municipalities and increasing the frequency of its activities. It plans to diversify its activities, particularly by strengthening digital support and intergenerational exchanges.

The project also aims to consolidate its network of partners to ensure its sustainability and experiment with new formats, such as thematic events or collaborations with other traveling organizations. Finally, Café Germaine is looking to undergo a makeover and will, in the future, take on a completely new look!

