

Cities and food - Sustainable urban food systems

Large cities are growing all over the world. This growth creates a paradox, particularly in terms of food quality and supply, as people seek a better life but are exposed to a worse one. Therefore, we need to rethink our food systems to ensure their sustainability.

Urban areas are major food consumers and exert significant pressure on natural resources and food systems. There is an urgent need to educate urban consumers to make informed food choices that promote individual health and respect the limits of the planet's resources.

Urban food systems therefore need to be designed around the principles of health, sustainability, but also equity. It's about ensuring access to healthy food, as well as its production and fair distribution. Scarcity can be a problem in urban centres, but waste is tragic, especially when some families and individuals don't have access to food for economic reasons when there is excess to throw away.

Circular food systems have the potential to radically change the way food is produced and consumed in cities. Valuing the local production of healthy food not only reduces the carbon footprint associated with transporting food, for example. It also strengthens local economies and promotes growth. The circular food economy is important to combat the traditional linear model of 'production, use and disposal', minimise waste and maximise resource value throughout the food lifecycle.



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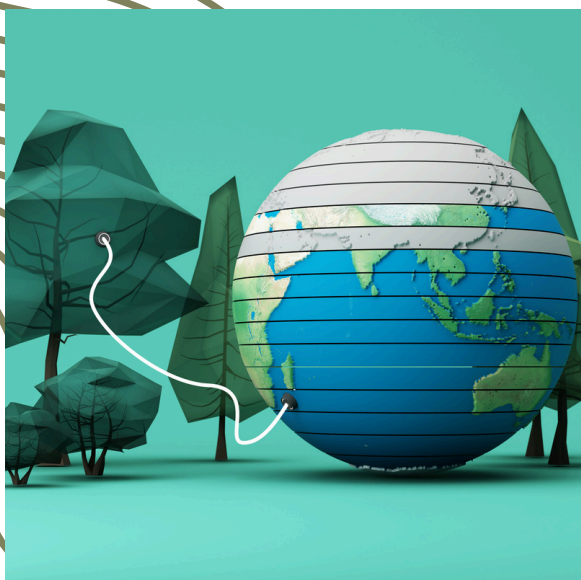


There has been a decline in the amount of agricultural land available and food production is known to cause significant damage to the environment and the depletion of resources. Ideas and practices such as urban gardens, edible gardens and innovative restaurants are based on the careful selection of local products from short supply chains, high-quality raw materials, and seasonal fruit and vegetables, prepared using mainly manual craft methods. Initiatives such as these play a vital role in promoting food security and building sustainable communities. It is essential to strengthen and expand these initiatives, to communicate the changes in favour of better habits, and to explore ways to ensure that these efforts don't collapse due to a lack of financial support and adequate infrastructure.



A significant proportion of greenhouse gas emissions and waste generated in cities comes from food production and distribution. Thus, in addition to the local production mentioned above, sustainable agricultural practices, efficient recycling and composting systems and food waste prevention are essential.

In the fight against food waste, cities must become vectors of change. Only by raising awareness of the impact of food waste on sustainability will good practices such as donating surplus food and food recovery be effective.



The creation and promotion of sustainable urban food systems is a complex task that requires the collaboration of governments, businesses, civil society organisations and individual citizens. By taking a holistic approach that prioritises people's health, social equity and the preservation of the environment, we can create healthier and more sustainable cities for future generations.

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