

London, United Kingdom

Feeding the 5K: the case of linking food producers and retailers for the efficient management of surplus harvest

Feeding the 5K aims to tackle the global issue of food waste through the creation of a platform which empowers communities to reduce waste at every stage of the commercial food production and distribution cycle, spearheaded by an international flagship event.

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The project in brief

In order to minimise the generation of food waste, Feeding the 5K provides a platform for cooperation between food producers, retailers, and organisations handling different kinds of food waste. Measures range from increasing food security through the redistribution of surplus food to the poor, to improving waste management via composting organic waste and the production of biofuels.

The flagship event 'Feeding the 5K' organises free lunches for 5000 people in different cities, made entirely from ingredients that would have otherwise gone to waste. The event has been held in over 15 cities worldwide, including Nairobi and Sydney. In addition, the team behind Feeding the 5K runs two other programs, The Gleaning Network and the Pig Idea. The former coordinates volunteer teams, local farmers and food redistribution charities to salvage the surplus, un-harvested produce from local farms. In 2013, 48 tonnes of produce were gleaned. The Pig Idea initiative seeks to promote the use of legally permissible food waste to feed pigs and thereby lift the EU ban on feeding catering waste to pigs.

What makes it "Urban NEXUS"?

In the UK, up to 30% of vegetable crops are not harvested due to failing to meet retail standards on physical appearance, while up to half of the food that is purchased in Europe and the US is thrown away by consumers (Smithers, 2013). Feeding the 5K endeavours to maximize resource-efficiency by offering new synergies of food waste use through a well-connected institutional NEXUS network of organisations working in different spheres of the food sector. The steering group of the campaign includes the Mayor's Waste Strategy team which helps formulate a comprehensive waste strategy for the metropolitan region of London, the London Food board which is an advisory group of independent food policy organisations and experts and Recycle for London which is a communications program funded by the London Waste and Recycling Board. This NEXUS integrating different silos benefits food distributors and retailers through scaled up delivery models, giving them multiple options to re-route their food wastes and achieve zero-waste status. Retail partners of the Feeding 5K campaign have shown significant reductions in their food waste. For example, Thornton's Budgens, a London-based supermarket, no longer sends waste to landfills, sells produce which fail to match physical standards at lowered prices (along with the UK chain, Waitrose), allocates surplus products to charities and remaining waste is processed to generate electricity. The New Covent Garden Market, the largest



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|--------------------------|---|
| Date | 2009-ongoing |
| NEXUS Sectors | Food-Waste-Health |
| NEXUS Innovations | Institutions; Communications + User behavior, Delivery Models |
| Scale | City-wide (8.174 million inhabitants) |
| Budget | n/a |

Urban NEXUS Definition

The Urban NEXUS is an approach to the design of sustainable urban development solutions. The approach guides stakeholders to identify and pursue possible synergies between sectors, jurisdictions, and technical domains, so as to increase institutional performance, optimize resource management, and service quality.

It counters traditional sectoral thinking, trade-offs, and divided responsibilities that often result in poorly coordinated investments, increased costs, and underutilized infrastructures and facilities. The ultimate goal of the Urban NEXUS approach is to accelerate access to services, and to increase service quality and the quality of life within our planetary boundaries.

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Further Reading

Feeding the 5000 official website: <http://www.feeding5k.org/>

London Food Board official website: <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/business-economy/working-in-partnership/london-food-board>

Thornton's Budgens Supermarket official website "<http://www.thorntonsbudgens.com/environment/>"

Smithers, R., 2013, Almost half of the world's food thrown away, report finds. The Guardian, 10 January: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jan/10/half-world-food-waste> (20 Aug 2014)

Stuart, Tristram (2012). Food redistribution is a win-win solution for food waste. The Guardian, 11 May: <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/food-waste-redistribution-sustainable-solution> (20 Aug 2014)

GIZ and ICLEI, 2014, Operationalizing the Urban NEXUS: towards resource efficient and integrated cities and metropolitan regions, GIZ Study: www.iclei.org/urbannexus

fresh produce market in the UK, installed a materials recycling facility (MRF) which led to a 70% reduction in its landfill wastes, from 1000 tonnes per month, to 250-300 tonnes (Stuart, 2012).

The campaign's international partners like the United Nations Environment Program's Think.Eat.Save Reduce Your Footprint campaign, and EU Fusions, a four year project to tackle food waste across the European Union, give greater global traction to Feeding the 5K, enhanced by its interactive online platform. The campaign's flagship lunch event creates social awareness and promotes collective gains through scalar integration by promoting individual participation in the movement, reflected in the 13000+ signatures which pledge to reduce food waste. Through its many initiatives, Feeding the 5K mobilizes previously untapped sources of food waste, for greater resource productivity.

Scope for improvement

In the UK, the Groceries Code Adjudicator Bill, which protects small suppliers from unfair trading practices by obliging supermarkets to bear some of the costs of their wasteful policies, is under discussion (Stuart, 2012). Legislation to institutionalize the fight against food waste can also aid current efforts in different ways: financial incentives in the form of differential penalties on different-sized corporations for excess food waste, and simultaneous tax rebates for reduced food waste can greatly enhance participation; a scalar re-organisation by further decentralizing food waste reduction networks to the borough level in London, will also ensure greater local extraction of resources; infrastructural and systemic frameworks which place greater emphasis on institutional implementation, rather than personal initiative, will help formalize the Feeding the 5K's cross-sectoral, network.

Replication

Feeding the 5K is working with local governments and international organisations to address food waste as a resource. While civil society initiatives can also ameliorate the issue of food waste, the involvement of local governments and bodies working at the city or neighbourhood level can greatly enhance the collective gains of food waste prevention

Acknowledgements

Authors: Angèle Cauchois, Martin Abbot, Chaitanya Kanury, Louise Cousyn, and Victoria Vital Estrada (Master GLM, Sciences Po - ICLEI Capstone Project)

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On behalf of:



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ICLEI World Secretariat, Kaiser-Friedrich-Straße 7, 53113 Bonn, Email: urban.research@iclei.org © GIZ and ICLEI August 2014