Food and Cities: Local Actions for Global Issues.

The role of local governments in buiding more sustainbale food systems - Insights from 5 french cities.

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a cura della
Redazione

Anna e Louison sono due giovani professioniste che hanno deciso di fondare "Let's food", un' Organizzazione non governativa con sede in Francia. La volontà di iniziare questo progetto nasce dalla consapevolezza delle due fondatrici del ruolo chiave che le città e gli attori locai sono chiamati a svolgere nel raggiungimento degli obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile, tra i quali: lotta alla fame e alla povertà, cambiamento climatico, consumo e produzioni sostenibili. Il loro progetto prevede la promozione di meccanismi di cooperazione decentralizzata tra città francesi e città gemellate su tematiche quali: lotta allo spreco alimentare, promozione di diete sostenibili, rafforzamento della catene produttori-consumatori e promozione di processi di governance locale partecipata. Un nuovo ambito in costante crescita che potrebbe interessare anche noi dietisti.

Today, the planet is supporting more and more people. While there were 3 billion people in 1950, today this number has grown to 7.5 billion, and should reach 9.7 billion by 2050[1]. This demographic growth is associated with different transformations, such as the changes of lifestyles toward massive urbanization, with increasingly numerous and populated urban areas, and a concentration of economic and political power in cities. Whereas 30% of the population lived in cities in 1950, this proportion is now 54% globally and is expected to reach 66% by 2050[1].

Growing cities mean growing needs in terms of housing and energy, but also food and jobs. The negative economic, social and environmental consequences can already be seen and are likely to increase. In the face of scarcity, some find themselves excluded: the rising price of land makes it inaccessible, housing and business areas are expanding at the detriment of agricultural land, quality products are not accessible for a large proportion of the population, particularly the poorest[2]. To ensure a sustainable and equitable shift to sustainability and inclusiveness, cities must rethink their spatial and social planning, as well as their food supply and distribution strategies.

Cities have growing needs for food, requiring substantial production and involving a great deal of agricultural land. The production potential being limited in urban areas, cities are extremely dependent on neighboring but also sometimes very remote rural areas. In France for example, 3 million hectares of agricultural land are needed to feed the 11 million inhabitants of the Ile-de-France region, i.e. 6 times the existing agricultural area in that region[2]. Our food consumption is increasingly dependent on a globalized and industrialized system that has emerged as the only solution to population growth. This globalized food system is characterized by a standardization and diversification of the food demand coming from the consumers[3]. The specialization of territories and the evolution of transport has made it possible to meet this changing consumer demand for food, and at low prices. But this implies greater distance between the producer and the consumer, with a stronger dependence on imports at the cost of local producers and actors[4]. Today, the average distance traveled by a food item to reach our plates often exceeds 2000 km. These increasing food miles and the multiplication of intermediaries are associated with a growing lack of much-needed trust between the consumer and the food on his plate.

The race for high levels of production and low prices, over 30% of the food produced is lost and wasted along the food value chain from production to consumption phases[5]. If alternatives such as organically or locally grown products exist, they remain a niche and remains unaffordable for a large part of the urban population. When they do not live in food deserts where the food supply is limited and not diversified, the most vulnerable part of the population does not always have access to the knowledge to choose and cook nutritious meals[6]. Today it is estimated that more than 1/3 of the world's population lives in slums, which raises real public health challenges[2].

The globalization of the food system today seems to be facing its own contradictions. 795 million undernourished people are living alongside 600 million obese[7]. 795 million people are undernourished when 30% of agricultural production is lost or wasted[5]. 30% of the total greenhouse gases are emitted by our current food system, contributing to climate change[8].

Cities are at the centre of tomorrow's challenges,

and there is an urgent need to start an ecological and human transition towards a new model. Food is one of the key levers of this transition[9]. Fostering a different and sustainable food system for urban and rural areas means allowing their inhabitants to benefit from a pleasant living environment and better food, but also developing a territorial economy based exploring new links and collaborations between urban and rural areas and actors, between farmers and consumers, while preserving resources and landscapes[10]. By choosing to rethink our system from an environmental and social perspective rather than a strictly economic one, the localization of agricultural and food is part of the solution[11]. It implies that in a given territory, all actors in the food system (cities, farmers, processors, consumers, health workers, members of civil society, environmental institutions, local and regional governments, etc.) are involved in the decision making process.

Today, certain issues are already being addressed by public, private or associative actors in the territories. Actions to supply local and/or organic products to school canteens, or the fight against food waste are good examples. Undertaken separately and without the ambition to upscale, these initiatives remain limited and involve only a small part of the population. The collective construction of a new food system implies that all actors influencing the local food system need to define sustainability goals together and commit to achieving them in their respective activities[12]. Food must no longer simply be seen as an agriculture related issue[13]; it is now necessary to broaden the fora for such dialogue, integrating urban planners, environmentalists, geographers, experts from the health sector along with dietitians and social actors[14]. The food issue, which affects all of us, must enable us to build a new vision of the territory, a new model of society in which the agricultural sector is recognized and valued for its vital functions, where consumers are able to make the best choice of products for their health and environment, and where the wealth of the territory is distributed equitably for the well-being of all.

Nowadays, French cities are beginning to build sustainable food policy, which can be inspiring examples both for their successes and failures.

Defining a project with such a diversity of actors is undoubtedly a long process. Since 2014, Bordeaux Metropolis has started to reflect on a new model of territorial food governance. It was only in May 2017 that it formalized a Council bringing together more than 200 food actors with the aim of building a common plan of action. The role of the local authority is essential to facilitating this group's work and to providing a legal and financial framework. It took 3 years of meetings and exchanges with all the stakeholders to build solid trust. The group sometimes gathers actors with competing activities and contradictory interests or values. These three years of preparation allowed the local government to establish the political legitimacy of the city as guarantor of the interests of everyone, and above all of the general interest[15].

Other cities such as Nantes Metropolis have developed projects to rehabilitate abandonned areas on their peri-urban areas in order to install new farmers producing food to meet the local demand[16].

The town of Mouans Sartoux even bought land so that a farmer, now hired by the city, could produce fresh products for the school canteens[17].

Lyon has set up more than 60 community garden plots to enable its inhabitants to have greater access to fresh horticultural products and, in doing so, increase their autonomy. It represents a real source of financial savings for low-income families[18].

Grenoble offers additional financial assistance to producers wishing to convert to organic farming. Today, substantial budgets are allocated to sustainable land-use objectives.

In order to promote transparency and rebuild trust between producers and consumers, one of the municipalities of the metropolis of Montpellier, Grabels, has developed a farmers' market at which the number of miles travels and intermediaries are indicated for each product[19].

Regarding the prevention of food waste and reuse of food and organic waste, the City of Paris as well as the metropolis of Montpellier have introduced collective composting in urban areas to reduce the quantity of food products in the waste stream and to raise awareness about the battle against food waste[20].

Procurement policies for catering facilities also represents a real lever to restructure local agricultural sectors: following the objectives of the French Grenelle de l'Environnement, as from 2020 French local authorities will have to offer at least 40% local and seasonal food as well as 20% or more organic food in their catering facilities[21].

Many cities around the world are committed to developing more sustainable and resilient territories, thanks to a reflective and inclusive dialogue on the future of their food system. Different local initiatives are being launched and are starting to upscale, thanks to increasing awareness among all actors on these issues and the emergence of frameworks for cooperation and sharing of good practices, such as the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact[22]. Through this Pact, over 144 cities have committed to work together towards a more humane and more intentional food systems. Nevertheless, much still needs to be achieved, and the awareness on importance of participatory decision making processes for addressing food issues in cities is not universal and should not be taken for granted. We must continue

to raise awareness and facilitate exchanges to inspire and, together, to live up to the challenges of a sustainable and equitable food transition.

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Supplementi nutrizionali orali

Oral Nutritional Supplements

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Le Linee Guida ESPEN (European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism) definiscono gli Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) come prodotti a formulazione definita da utilizzare come supporto nutrizionale dell'alimentazione comune.

I prodotti ONS sono AFMS (a fini medici speciali) destinati alla prevenzione o al trattamento della malnutrizione calorico-proteica, presentati in forma liquida, cremosa o in polvere per soggetti ancora in grado di alimentarsi per via naturale.

Vengono suddivisi in ONS nutrizionalmente completi da utilizzare come unica fonte di nutrizione o ad integrazione della normale alimentazione insufficiente a coprire i fabbisogni nutrizionali e ONS nutrizionalmente incompleti da utilizzare come tali o in aggiunta a cibi e bevande, quando l'alimentazione orale necessiti di essere integrata.

Questa strategia ha la finalità di fornire, a pazienti ancora in grado di alimentarsi per via naturale, una quota aggiuntiva di nutrienti sufficiente a coprire i fabbisogni nutritivi, impedendo il ricorso a tecniche di supporto nutrizionale più invasive quali la nutri-