

## Slow Food and Municipalities: Promoting Plant Rich and Agroecological Food in Urban Areas

In an era where the sustainability of animal products is one of the most pressing issues, Slow Food is exploring how we can rebalance our diets—transitioning away from factory farming and intensive fishing. The current trajectory of industrial products is rapidly becoming unsustainable. Food systems are responsible for [a third](#) of global anthropogenic GHG emissions; intensive animal farming and fishing account for a major part.

The excessive consumption of meat and dairy, eggs and fish, and other products of animal origins brings a range of adverse consequences. Some are more immediate, such as the harmful effects on health and intensive exploitation of animals, while others are more gradual, such as damage to the environment, the loss of biodiversity and the acceleration of climate change. Governments at all levels have a responsibility to act upon these crises and to include an explicit target to transition away from industrially produced animal food and towards more diverse and sustainable proteins in their food strategies. Given the urgency of the climate and ecological crises and growing health concerns over production and over consumption of animal-based foods, changes to our food system cannot be left to consumer choice alone.

### What can municipalities do?

Slow Food believes that local governments can and should play a central role in addressing issues related to overconsumption and overproduction of animal-based foods, even more so because it is predicted that two thirds of the global population will be living in cities by 2050. “Building sustainable, healthy and resilient food systems will be increasingly dependent on actions at the city level to recon-

nect urban markets to sustainable food production in their hinterland, and to ensure access to decent food, mitigate climate change and combat obesity” (IPES food). Cities can act on a number of different fronts when it comes to food policies: public canteens, advertising, food waste, markets, education, food aid are just some examples. More broadly, cities have a great deal in shaping their urban **food environments**, as they are the level of government which is closest to citizens, and have resources and tools to promote change.

**Food environments** can be defined as the “physical, economic, political and socio-cultural context in which consumers engage with the food system to make their decisions about acquiring, preparing and consuming food” (1). They can be seen as the spaces in which people make decisions about food: what food to pick, where to buy it, where to cook it and when, where and with whom to eat it. Food prices, labelling, advertisements, urban planning, markets, retail outlets and the accessibility of food are examples of elements that shape food environments, and therefore [shape the decisions](#) made by consumers.

### About Slow Food

Slow Food is a global network of local communities which was founded in 1989. From its very beginnings, Slow Food’s aim was to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions and to counteract the rise of fast-food culture. It has since gathered millions of supporters passionate about good, clean, and fair food for all. Today, the network is made up of cooks, educators, youth, activists, farmers, fishers, members, consumers, and academics, all woven together in many ways. All around the world, activities and events are being organized by local groups of people organized in communities.

## Join forces with Slow Food

For over 30 years, Slow Food has been working on the topic of agrobiodiversity and resilient food systems. Today, the movement carries a powerful and proven message, thanks largely to its strong, well-established, and widespread grassroots base, active through tested methodologies and tools. Slow Food has implemented several initiatives to encourage a shift towards a reduced and more aware consumption of all animal proteins, including meat, fish, eggs and dairy, from sustainable farming and fishing. We are always looking to collaborate further with local governments to support them in the transition towards sustainable diets, with more legumes, whole grains, vegetables and fruits, nuts, supporting agroecological farming and artisanal fisheries that respect animals and the drastic reduction of industrial animal-based foods.

**What is agroecology?** Agroecology is a holistic and integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agriculture and food systems. It seeks to optimize the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment while also addressing the need for socially equitable food systems within which people can exercise choice over what they eat and how and where it is produced. (FAO)

## Concrete actions to carry out with the support of Slow Food:



### Development of agroecological production, valorization of local plant varieties and enhancement of healthy and environmentally-friendly food to make sustainable diets more accessible

- Map local agroecological producers who work on protecting biodiversity and producing legumes and plant varieties in order to identify the virtuous actors in your local food system and to establish a dialogue to assess challenges and opportunities.
- Support agroecological training for local producers to increase the production of healthy and environmental-friendly food.
- Promote training for public canteens

cooks on how to make best use of local plant varieties to increase the offer of tasty and plant rich food in public settings.



### Education on the impact of food production and promotion of consumption of healthy and environmentally friendly food (more plant-rich & sustainable animal-sourced foods)

- Develop a local campaign to inform the general public about the benefits of agroecological farming and artisanal fishery along with the importance of supporting and valorizing local producers to benefit the whole community.
- Deliver targeted education for youth as activists to promote sustainable individual behaviours.
- Provide legume-based tastings and cooking trainings for inhabitants (locations can be markets/community centres/homes...) to integrate them as part of daily diet.



### Implementation of participatory policy tools that enable a transition towards an increased consumption of healthy and environmentally friendly food

- Set up policy dialogues/consultations/roundtables/food councils about sustainable food to gather inputs, ideas and concerns from citizens and stakeholders to facilitate participatory implementation.
- Identify place-based measures which, through municipal regulation, can improve food environments to facilitate citizens' access to healthy and sustainable food. Measures can span from regulating advertisements to canteens, urban planning, economic incentives, dietary guidelines etc.
- Support the establishment of local farmers markets (framework and implementation facilitation) to boost local supply chains and increase local production and consumption of agroecological food.

For more information, reach out to:  
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