
12 ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION – Karoline Zirngast

The SDG number 12 called “Ensure sustainable consumption and production” is about improving energy efficiency, making sure there is good use of our resources, having a sustainable infrastructure and ensuring a better quality of life for all. We must make changes in the way that our society produces and consumes goods and services. What most people are not aware of is that most of the food that is produced is being lost or wasted every day all around the world. In total 15% of the food is lost after harvesting before even reaching retail markets and 17% of the food that we buy is being wasted every day. The food that we produce every day would be enough to end world hunger. The main problem we must fix is being less wasteful with our resources than we are right now. The goal of SDG number 12 is also to reduce plastic waste. If we do not fix that it will have serious consequences like damaging the ocean and our groundwater sources. Changes in consumption and production can help to promote the decoupling of economic growth and human well-being from resource use and environmental impact. But the big question is, why are we so wasteful with our resources? Our reliance on natural resources has increased about 65% globally from 2000-2009. A reason for this major increase can be transportation because almost all types of transportation use oil or non-renewable resources. Another reason could be utilities. All of our utilities receive their energy primarily from natural gas, which is causing the depletion of this natural resource around the globe. It is often not about what we do, it is about how we do it.

So, what can we do to help reach SDG 12 by 2030? Simple things everyone can do are bringing your own bags for grocery shopping. It would be even better if those bags were made from paper so they can be reused, that way you don't have to buy unnecessary plastic bags. Also try to only buy the resources you need and don't overbuy and do not just throw away food because it has expired. Most of the time we just throw food away because it has expired but often the food we throw away is still good and doesn't have to be disposed of. Another important thing we have to change is how we throw away our electronic things. The majority of the world's electronic waste is not being safely managed. In Europe and North America that equals about 47% of all the electronic waste. My idea for a bigger project is a kind of charity program. My thoughts are to give away the food from restaurants, grocery shops, bakeries to people who need it, like homeless shelters or orphanages. That way there would be less food waste and the people who can't afford food would get something to eat. For example, Dunkin Donuts throws away a big amount of their donuts every day. Wouldn't it be better if those donuts were given to orphanages or homeless people? My main idea is to open up little charity kitchen were about 50% of the food that is still good but can't be sold anymore from different corporations comes to us at the end of the day. In those kitchens people can either prepare meals for themselves or get preprepared food for a much lower price. The other 50% are given away to people who can't afford food or orphanages for free. With help from this project, there would be much less food waste and the people that get the food would have a big benefit. I think if we all help together and try to make changes in consumption and production, we can reach the goal by 2030.
