

"Faced with a food and energy crisis, how can society improve its well-being?"

Summary

Currently the global is rushing at the higher speed towards the levels of food crisis and energy crisis, which will not be solved if not prudently dealt with jointly by governmental departments, NGOs, institutions, private sector and individual household. First huge initiatives need to be reversed to small, managed, simple processes. Second, toppling the underlying causes of these crises. Then all actors in the entire process brought together to the round table. Best practices from the past, known by their simplicity, small size should be adopted and promoted. More support should be offered to processes, which are sustainable.

Small in not only beautiful, but also sustainable

Globally we are coming from a background of big things; big houses, farms, cars, tractors, machines... the list continues. Somehow, success was wrongly attributed to the size of the property or asset one possesses. Sadly, focus was on quantity than quality, which eventually has led into this predicament.

The boom of insatiable appetite to big things made its case in this century due to the so-called success industrialization. Family farms were converted to large-scale farmers. Family factories were merged into co-operatives. Small industries were fused into large regional and multinational industries. Transportation system crisscrossed the country borders. Construction industries were considered successful in view of the height of the building and the sophisticated of the technology being used.

As the industries, farms, transportation and all other systems started growing, they in return caught the attention of politicians, economists, scientists. Power, money and politics came into the game. Seeking of recognition grew so strong that more resources were pushed to increase the sizes of many ventures. Though the nations were considered developing because of the size of their development initiative, sadly they overlooked to consider controlling and monitoring of these development initiatives. The development was let free at the expense of sustainability.

Food crisis and energy crisis are both understood in terms of availability, access and utilization. These are interconnected crises. In some cases, food crisis can be explained by the energy crisis. They both have strong and direct impact on the wellbeing of people. Governments, institutions, NGOs, private sectors all work together to improve the wellbeing of people. And they are puzzled, affected and in most cases disoriented this looming double dangers, which is approaching so fast, hitting so hard and not missing the target. Adding to the complexity, the crisis is multifaceted and its expression in different circumstances is different. This may call for new methods, concerted efforts, multidisciplinary approaches and doing business not as usual. Underlying causes need to be uncovered, and there should be a starting point in trying to reverse the situation.

The questions to be answered therefore are as follows: Is this crisis man made or natural? How exactly is the wellbeing of people being affected? And which people? Under what circumstances? What have we tried so far but without good results? How

willing are we to move from unsustainable, greedy ways of producing food and energy to sustainable and efficient methods?

We need to move back and think critically and differently on ways, which we have so far taught to believe that they do not work. Difficult decisions should be made. Bigger things should be abandoned and we should go back to the old-fashioned small things. Small cars, small farms, small houses.... Etc. Small is not only beautiful but it is also sustainable. We should revert to simple ways from complicated and complex systems. It is easy to monitor small thing and small initiatives. It is easy to be objective and focused since the power struggles and politics is rarely present. It is easy to make hard decision against small initiatives when doing contrary to sustainable rule of life.

Recently we have seen this type of change taking its course. In Europe, we have seen more small cars being promoted than old cars, heavy feeders, which were always connected to the development in Europe. Furthermore, small computer are taking their ways into the society and of course several small electronic equipment.

Good start! That is to say, however, we need to go beyond that. Imagine if every household could own a solar panel in areas where solar energy could be tapped and utilized. There can be more savings on the energy. When we think of windmills, the first thought is about huge windmills, which require more budget and high technical knowhow. Now we need to reduce that to small which can be managed at household level or practically at community level. Imagine if each community could have a communal storehouse of food. Access would have been easy and proper utilization follows.

The society today should be willing to sacrifice some of the things we hold so dear to come out of this crisis. Most cities or communities should be declared green cities. Where the number of vehicles used should be reduced. More resources should be allocated toward communal systems of transportation, which environmentally friendly. Bicycles should be encouraged than vehicles. In addition, big vehicles (heavy feeders) should not be allowed in those designated areas.

Farming should be reverted to small farming. In areas like Africa where big cooperation are now busy buying land for high technology investment, concerted effort should be enforced to avoid tragedy of the commons. More support and promotion should go to the small farmers than big estates. Family factories should be encouraged rather than waiting for investors from developing countries to plant their heavy machinery.

The problem with bigger intervention is that it makes food and energy available but not accessible and eventually not utilized. When all households take part in this adventure of redeeming the world through small, simple and manageable technologies, it will easily translate to complete access and efficient utilization. Thus, in return will improve the wellbeing and at the same time sustaining the natural resources for continued use for time unbounded.