

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

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Summary:

Although there are more solutions to this upcoming crisis, not all of them are as good as the next. We are used to a certain way of live, and it is not possible to give this up all at once. It is possible, however, to change our way of live so we use less energy and less food. Therefore, what should be done is making the present and the future leaders aware of the problems they will have to face if they do not start thinking now on how to solve the problems.

Essay:

With the decreasing availability of energy resources and food per person, and the increasing demand for it, the world at large is faced with a serious crisis. As emerging economies like China and India are increasing their energy demand, and the world population keeps on growing, we are faced with the biggest challenge in the upcoming years: how to supply sufficient food and energy for the whole society, with as little loss of well being as possible.

The easiest, but also least possible, way of solving this problem is not to undertake any travels anymore, ordering solely goods from the own region and eating only products from the region one lives in. This would much resemble the way of living of the time before the industrial revolution, or even before the great exploration travels, and thus mean a total decoupling of all connections between the continents, or maybe even single countries. This, however, is highly impossible, because everything in this world is interconnected with each other. Think only of the economy and financial world; because in one country it went wrong, almost all countries in the world have their own problems now.

Doing nothing, on the other hand, is also not an option. This would mean that the crisis grows and grows, giving way to turmoil and even war. Therefore, to strike the golden mean is the only option. But what is this golden mean? People in highly developed areas have of course a higher standard of living, and they will have problems to give up their way of living. We would still want to be able to go on a holiday overseas, or drive our cars as much as they want. And we want our food from around the globe, our cheese from France, our wines from South America and our spices from Asia.

The people who live in the jungle and feed themselves as their ancestors did for many years, will also have their problems. Because they are already living with nature and do (almost) no harm to it, this seems a contradiction. But they would be no longer allowed to chop down trees in, for example, the Amazon region for crop fields, because it destroys the forest. No soya bean growing or palm oil harvesting to give them an income.

That is why I would suggest two things to be done. First, those who live in highly developed areas should consider to use less. Less energy, less fuel, and even less food, because too much is being thrown away. Put of any apparatus you will not use for a longer time, and do not put them on the standby function. Do not cool the public places in summer so that it is like going from the Sahara to the North Pole and vice versa, or in heat them in the winter time so it feels like stepping into a sauna. Go on holidays closer to home, there is plenty to do and see nearby.

The second thing I would suggest to do, is doing more research into sustainable ways of living. This goes for both the energy supply and the use of resources for food, building and so on. Even if doing research is not economically relevant, because the

prices of crude oil and gas are low, it should be done. There will be a time when we are out of these resources and wish there had been done some more research at an earlier time.

In order to achieve the above mentioned aspects, children at school should be made aware of the difficult task they will be faced with in the upcoming decades and centuries. But they should not only be made aware of the difficulty to find a solution, but also of the gratitude later generations, as well as their own, will have for the sustainable solutions they have found for the challenges they, and we, face.

But we should not only make the children at school aware of the problems and the need for solutions, but also the students at the universities should know that there are challenges ahead they will have to face and solve in their working life. If only the school children are made aware, they will find a wall they will have to tear down as soon as they are going out into the world. Therefore, also the students following higher education should start thinking of solutions, or what they can do to improve the wellbeing of the coming generations.

Why not start with commercials made by the government, Greenpeace or the UN? Because these will have less effect on the every-day behavior of the people. If the leaders of tomorrow start to think today about solutions, the chances are a lot bigger there will be found a sustainable and durable solution.

But even if we start thinking and working on these problems today, we will have to travel a long road before reaching our goal. Everybody's way of live and thinking will have to be changed into using less and recycling more. Most solutions people will come up with will not be suitable to implant directly into everyday live on a big scale, so the development of these solutions, whether it will be for example a different fuel or a different attitude towards the environment, will take long. This, however, must not be a reason to withdraw from seeking an answer or to leave finding the key to solve the problems for later generations. Action is wanted, and rather yesterday than today!