

## Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition Submission Template

**ID number:** 760

### **Summary:**

My essay is about reducing food and energy crises through decreasing peoples comfort and increasing their physical activity. I will explain how in my opinion the food and energy crises are caused by lack of physical exercise, inclining to obesity and getting too comfortable in our everyday lives.

**Essay:** Faced with food and energy crises, how can society improve its well-being?

The last couple of decades have shown that developed countries will move further on the road to comfort, and developing countries are not catching up. It seems to me that we can avoid both the energy and food crises rather simply. My thoughts combine health, energy and diet. In essence, the argument is that people around the world should work out more, because, recent studies show that this decrease their appetite and will improve their health. It also helps to avoid obesity, but above all it will decrease demand for food. Secondly, regarding energy, the most important issue is to reduce the usage of cars in our everyday lives, as this will help society save up on energy. These are the key points for the developed world. If the developed world can manage this, then it will be possible to donate or exchange overproduced food to developing countries.

First, a WHO study<sup>1</sup> shows that obesity and lack of physical activity causes bigger consumption of food and energy. There are about 400 million obese people in the world and this number is expected to grow up to 700 million to the year 2015. Most of these people live in the western world although there have been some exceptions (e.g. Nauru<sup>2</sup>) and now the trend of globalisation is spreading obesity all over the world. This means that the diet of people is not healthy. It also shows that people are not taking enough physical exercise. As people get bigger they tend to consume more food and if there is demand than it is usually met by the suppliers and this makes suppliers consume more energy for production, transport etc. So, the challenge is to make people travel more on foot or by bicycle or promote some alternative way to make them physically more active. So, fighting against obesity and unhealthy diets will give us the opportunity to fight against enormous energy consumption.

Furthermore healthy lifestyles will provide major cuts in energy usage especially fuel consumption. For example in the UK from the total energy consumed fuel for transport makes up to 25 % and has increased to 26% during 1990s, whereas industry counted for 30% but now counts only for 25%<sup>3</sup>. This shows us that industry have made it self more efficient but people get more comfortable (by comfort I mean using cars too much). We have to stop using so much fuel. Lets say an average car which takes one to work

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en/>, 15.01.2009

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2005/pr44/en/>, 15.01.2009

<sup>3</sup> Energy Consumption in United Kingdom (2002), National Statistics

and later back from work on everyday basis and lets say the distance covered daily is about 40 km 10 l of gasoline for two days it will make 150 l per month. Instead moving around by bicycle will take an hour to get to work and hour to get home (this is if the distance covered per day is about 40 km). I agree that it is not suitable for everybody for example busy businessman and politicians etc., but it is manageable for people working from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Also covering 20 km at a time will take approximately an hour and one will benefit from a little physical activity and fresh air thereby gaining a healthier life. Also it is said that cycling is the most effective way to lose weight compared with swimming for example<sup>4</sup>. Although in bigger cities it is harder to get along with only using a bicycle, but even in the biggest cities one should think of covering distances less than 20 km by bicycle. So, using the bicycle more often in our everyday lives will give us the possibility to live a healthier life and, in a wider perspective, will reduce the amount of energy, especially fuels, used for getting around.

Moreover there is the aspect of food crises. On the time that most western people are getting more than enough calories and are consuming more than they need there are also less developed countries which suffer in lack of food. So as Western people get bigger they need more fuel and where do they get it is from less developed countries. As there is not always oil to buy than the new popular thing is biodiesel. This means that people from the West that are hungry for more fuel, for their cars to work properly, will buy fuel made of potential food from developing countries. This shows that the Western World in its laziness is further developing food crises in third world countries. It seems to me that the main reason for this is that developed countries are able to offer more income on agricultural crops. This means that the people suffering because of the food crises will suffer in the future as well because people whom already are consuming too much want to consume on behalf of the poor and hungry ones as well. So if West cuts its fuel consumption and comfort a little it may help the developing countries get over their food crises.

In conclusion I would say that the more comfortable we get, the more serious will the food and energy crises become. So, one should think carefully what to eat and consider taking more exercise (instead of using car using a bike). In my opinion, reducing eating and increasing physical activity among people will reduce the risk of food and energy crises in the World.

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<sup>4</sup> Grant Gwinup(1987), Weight loss without dietary restriction: Efficacy of different forms of aerobic exercise, Am J Sports Med, vol. 15 no. 3 275-279