

THE PLANET CALLS

In association with

Smaackmakers

**10 THINGS THAT
SCREAM
FOR FOOD
ENVIRONMENT
CHANGE IN
YOUR CITY OR
TOWN**



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10 Things that scream for food environment change in your city or town

WE URGENTLY NEED A SYSTEM CHANGE


We are stuck.

At least when it comes to our food system. You may ask: "Why? I can buy anything I want, at any moment I want it, on every corner that I pass and it's all pretty much affordable. It's like a food paradise!"

Indeed the abundance of food around us gives us the impression that "it couldn't get any better". But if you look closer, or actually, if you zoom out a bit, then you see that there are not just flaws in our system. There are huge problems!

For example: in The Netherlands we face a rate of 44% of the population being overweight. The majority of diseases are directly related to obesity and weight problems. We also face a biodiversity loss of around 50% in Europe. Only a few years ago 90% of the vertebrate land animals lived in the wild. Today that has dwindled down to 5%.

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That means that 30% of the population is human and the balance of 65% are farm animals. Moreover our current agricultural model causes soil degradation and negatively impacts climate change. This, in turn, causes water shortages and heavy disturbance on the Nitrogen and Phosphorus cycles.

If we keep producing and consuming like we do now, there will be no fertile soil left to feed the 9 to 11 billion people we expect to have on this planet by 2050.

We need a **SYSTEMS CHANGE**. We need to **RETHINK** the way we produce our food and we need to **RETHINK** the way we eat.

NOW... WHERE DO WE START?

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WE URGENTLY NEED BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

Incidentally, one of the most important changes needed was never really addressed anyway: a more plant based and less animal based diet.

So we need to change how we eat...

For dozens of years governments, NGO's, dieticians, etc. have tried to tell us again and again what we need to eat more of (e.g. fruits and vegetables) and what we need to eat less of (saturated fats, sugar, salt).

In 2020, in The Netherlands, people who actually eat enough fruits and vegetables per day is only 5%.

Not surprisingly : Research shows us that information alone does not lead to behavioural change.

So, to change behaviour we need to change something else first...

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WHY THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT?

We can tell you how you should eat. Even if you agree and intend to follow the advice, your food environment gives you incentives for exactly the opposite behaviour.

What is a food environment?

Let's say all the cues to food you meet when you move from Point A to Point B. On any day, in this environment, you are bombarded with unhealthy food choices with a high footprint. These are usually the cheap(est), most readily available, the most visible, most socially accepted options. The chance that you will choose sustainable and healthy is against all odds.

However, if we were to incentivise your choices of healthy and sustainable, it would be easy to change. We would make healthy and sustainable the default, by making it easy to choose, most common, most visible, the tastiest options, and most affordable. In other words : we would change the food environment to a new normal.

Given this you would, by nature, adapt to a healthy and sustainable diet, whether you are informed or not informed of the health benefits.

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OUR MISSION AT SMAACKMAKERS

Our mission is to make health and sustainability in our food environment the default, so that our "new normal" are food choices that contribute to our overall good health and have a positive impact on our planet.

That means a more plant based diet, less animal based, using locally produced ingredients which are more seasonal, contributing to less food waste and less packaging, with fair prices, and supporting circular produced and processed.

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HOW TO CHANGE OUR FOOD ENVIRONMENT?

What does Smaackmakers do?

At Smaackmakers we help municipalities or cities to make as big an area as possible as healthy and sustainable as possible - area-oriented approach. We start with formulating a vision with the city and the outlets of 'where we want to go'. 'Where we want to go' we decide by targeting the 'food confrontations' in that area. That can be a neighbourhood with a school, a cinema, a supermarket, 20 restaurants, and 6 offices. We analyse them, we set goals of health and sustainability and we start the roadmap to change.

We developed several tools and build upon 6 years of experience in the field:

- 10 Future Proof Food Principles©
- Growth and Impact Framework©
- Roadmap to change©

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So if you walk around your city or town, what needs to be changed? Here are 10 examples that we think should really change. Do you agree ?

1

SCHOOLS

Almost all schools, without exception, have big, shiny vending machines with a variety of chocolates and highly sugary drinks decorating the hallways. And veggies in the school canteen can hardly be found. How does this ever contribute to an idea of what healthy eating is?

2

SUPERMARKETS

Sit down for this. 80% of all offers in our supermarkets are products that are not part of our dietary guidelines. Do we need to say more?

3

WORKPLACES

Employers in The Netherlands work to keep their employees happy and healthy. However, that is not reflected in the catering. Sustainability is not yet on the menu. The default is animal based meals and the chopped pineapple, mango and kiwi found in fruit salads shows there is no grasp of the need to move away from importing products from so far away.



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HOSPITALS & CARE INSTITUTIONS

The very environment where we would expect to see prevention as a high priority is failing miserably. The standard offering - of pastries, pies, cookies, chocolate milk, and fries clogging up your arteries - for the visitors of any hospitals canteen seems to encourage us to become patients ourselves with every bite.

5

EVENTS

You can throw your diet out of the window at an event. Whether it's a dance event or some local gathering or a conference, animal based is the standard meal offering, and options without animal based ingredients are hardly ever available. An event could offer the chance to show people something different.



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RESTAURANTS

Ordering a drink in a restaurant is a perfect opportunity to tick the box of your daily contribution to packaging. Although in The Netherlands we have the finest water, restaurants prefer to let it be produced, bottled, printed, distributed and add the bottles to the pile of plastics or glass. Or try ordering a cup of tea. A packaged teabag, in a package, in a package. A package for the sugar, the milk, the honey and the cookie. Packaging is another war to be fought and restaurants could be a well chosen first battle.

7

STREET ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Did you know that for every euro spent on the marketing of fruits and vegetables, 1000 euros is spent on the marketing of highly processed foods. This seduction mechanism entices us in exactly the opposite direction of where we want our eating habits to go.



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PUBLIC PLACES (LIBRARIES, CINEMAS, ETC.)

Sugary snacks at the library counter or a simple question at the cinema: "Would you like to have a coke with your M&M's for only half the price?" Nudging (a gentle push towards certain behaviour) is THE strategy to get people to adopt an unhealthy diet.

9

SPORTS CLUBS

Once inside, it is hard to decide whether you are in a snackbar or in a canteen of a sports club. Lifestyle wise wouldn't it make sense to combine sports with a healthy diet?



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GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Meetings, catering, lunch or drinks & bites; the national goals on healthy eating, CO2 reduction and ratio of plant versus animal based foods are not aligned at the institutions that set those goals. There is no "leading by example" and instead of one step ahead of the ambitions, usually we face no reflection of policy.

If we would be the ones deciding how our food environments in our cities would look like, or if we could help the ones deciding on that, we could achieve empowerment. We CAN do that. So do you need help on formulating a food vision for your city or municipality? Or are you ready to bring your vision into practice? Our mission is to help you to take steps to come to a more sustainable and healthy food environment.

Together we CAN create a new default



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CONTACT

Interested?

Want to work on your food environment ?
Or do you just want to know more about
what we do or how we can help?

Contact us:

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www.smaackmakers.nl

Please follow **Smaackmakers**
on social media and invite at
least one friend to do the
same.



Want to instigate change in your food
environment?

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STARTED

Listen to our [PODCAST](#) where we talk
about the Food Environment



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Do you want to be part of a more Sustainable World?

If you want to join the **Sustainability Revolution** and help bring lasting change to our planet, then please do these 3 things:

1

Please share this document with at least 2 other people and ask them to pass it along.

2

Make at least one sustainable change in your diet today and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

3

Please follow **The Planet Calls** on social media and invite at least one friend to do the same



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