



Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec
Environmental Health Association of Québec

ECO-JOURNAL

August 2020

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Going Local, Living Local

If the pandemic of COVID-19 taught us anything, it is the inherent flaws of our capitalist globalized economic system. Countries closed their borders and limited movement within them in an unprecedented manner to curb the flow of people and thus slow down the spread of the virus. From this followed a race, an international competition, to import masks, ventilators, and other supplies countries didn't have because they simply didn't produce. Globalization, free markets... these can be good things to enrich states' economy, as some things can only be produced in specific places. However, their abuse can also become a factor for instability: consistently outsourcing the production of goods leads to dependence and lack of autonomy... because in our current system, it is much more profitable to outsource production to many countries scattered across the globe than to do it at home.

Advocating for people to consume locally as much as possible isn't so much about chauvinism as it is about making a political and environmental statement to big corporations and governments as well as it is about gaining more autonomy. Indeed, one of the effects of the COVID-19 crisis was to increase food insecurity around the world. Just take a look at across the border to our powerful neighbor where millions of Americans went hungry and had to rely on food banks, as the crisis hit the economy. And we're talking about the richest and most powerful country in the world here.

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So, practically, what would “going local” look like?

- *Be on the lookout for the blue tag.* This one is pretty easy: in your supermarkets, when you can, always choose the fruits, vegetables, and other products that are identified as “aliment du Québec” or “produit d’ici.” If it is not a Quebec product, always look for the origin: grapes from Ontario are much closer to you than those from California.
- *Respect the seasons.* Seasonal products are more likely to be local! For example, February strawberries will come from US. Wait for June for delicious Quebec ones.
- *Grow things at home.* The more fortunate among us might have a garden or at least a balcony. Whatever you have, try to grow things at home when you can. Readers living in apartment can refer themselves to our article “Gardening in small places.”
- *Let’s demonetize our local economy.* So, now that you are thinking to build a garden, you might think “how can I possibly grow everything if I want to be autonomous?” Well, the answer is that you don’t. Remember that going local is also about creating a tight community. Find a few people with who to coordinate your gardens so that you can start exchanging. I have tomatoes, they have zucchinis; I gave corn that I produced to my neighbor in exchange for fixing my sink: not everything has to be about money! Think of it as the story of the long spoons: it works only if everyone cooperates.
- *Prefer second hand to new.* I could say “buy made in Canada,” but that’s not only difficult to find, it is also very expensive. So, if you do not have the money nor the time, your second-best choice is to buy second hand. It is now clear to all of us that our capitalist system leads to overproduction and mass throw-out. Do your planet a favor and go thrift shopping next time!

Living locally isn’t just great for the environment, as you fight against overproduction, fuel intensive transportation, and high carbon footprint products. It is also better for your health as you consume more vitamin rich seasonal food, it gives you more



autonomy, tightens community bonds and create a stronger social safety net, and support local producers and artisans.

So, start small and live local !

Complementary readings and videos

Greenpeace International. Food sovereignty now and beyond COVID-19,
<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/43662/food-sovereignty-now-and-beyond-covid-19/>

Vox. Coronavirus is exacerbating America's hunger crisis,
<https://www.vox.com/2020/5/9/21251895/food-banks-lines-pandemic>

The New Yorker. Can we have prosperity without growth?
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/02/10/can-we-have-prosperity-without-growth>

Complementary videos and websites

Caritas Internationalis. One Human Family, Food For All,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhU5JEd-XRo> (Allegory of the long spoons)

Kurzgesagt. Is Organic Really Better? Healthy Food or Trendy Scam?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PmM6SUn7Es>

Aliments du Québec. <https://www.alimentsduquebec.com/en/>

Recommended book

Kate Raworth. Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist (2017), Chelsea Green Publishing Company.

TEDx Talks, Kate Raworth, Why it's time for "Doughnut Economics,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BHOflzxPjI>



Interesting and related theory to look up

Degrowth theory

TEDx Talks. *The economics of enough: Dan O'Neill at TEDxOxbridge*,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIG33QtLRyA>

Degrowth. <https://www.degrowth.info/en/>