

HUNGRY ECOCITIES

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Just Transition in Food and Agriculture

Jeffrey David Turk

Hungry Ecocities project presentation, March 2024



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Introduction to Just Transition in Food and Agriculture



Embarking on a **Just Transition** within the **food and agriculture** sectors means integrating **sustainable practices** that ensure **environmental health**, **social equity**, and **economic viability**.

This journey involves embracing **renewable energy**, **eco-friendly farming techniques**, and **inclusive policies** that safeguard both the **planet** and the **people** who nourish it.

Our collective goal: to cultivate a **resilient, sustainable** food system that supports all **communities** and **ecosystems**.

The Environmental Footprint of Agriculture



Food production contributes to **nearly a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions**, driving climate change.

It impacts **biodiversity loss, water usage, and pollution.**

Transforming this sector is crucial for a sustainable future, balancing food security with environmental conservation.

Understanding Social Dialogue in Just Transition



Social dialogue is key for an **equitable transition** in **agriculture**, involving negotiations and actions among **workers**, **employers**, and **governments**.

It ensures all voices are heard, integrating diverse perspectives into **sustainable solutions**.

Benefits include collaborative goal-setting, **equitable solutions**, and **mitigating transition impacts**.

Groundbreaking Examples of Just Transition in Agriculture



Denmark: Leading in **organic farming**, supported by national policy and community engagement.

India: Farmers use **solar-powered irrigation**, merging renewable energy with agriculture.

Brazil: Community-supported **agroecology** promotes **biodiversity** and **local economies**.

Germany: **Rural renewable energy** projects, like wind turbines, empower communities.

Principles of Just Transition



Equity and Inclusivity: Ensuring all stakeholders have a **voice in the transition process**.

Sustainability: Prioritizing long-term environmental health and resource efficiency.

Worker Protection: Safeguarding rights, jobs, and providing training for new opportunities.

Social Dialogue: Facilitating **open communication** between workers, employers, and governments.

Innovation and Adaptation: Embracing new technologies and practices for a **sustainable future**.

Workers' Rights and Conditions



Emphasizes the need for **fair labor practices** and **safe working environments**.

Highlights initiatives for **skill development** and **re-skilling** to meet future agricultural demands.

Advocates for **equitable wages** and **job security** as the industry transitions to greener practices.

Role of Trade Unions



Trade unions as advocates for **workers' rights and safety** in the transition to **sustainable agriculture**.

Their role in facilitating **social dialogue** between workers, employers, and government bodies.

Contributions to policy development for **fair labor practices** and **environmental sustainability**.

Balancing the Green Deal with Social Equity



European **F**ederation of Trade Unions in the **F**ood, **A**griculture, and **T**ourism sectors

29 January 2024

EFFAT recognizes the concerns of farmers regarding the **EU's Green Deal** but insists on **not abandoning it**.

Instead, EFFAT advocates for a **Just Transition** that prioritizes the needs of **farm workers, small farmers, and rural communities**.

Key points include:

- the necessity for environmental policies to undergo **socio-economic impact assessments**,
- the involvement of **social partners**, and
- the conditionality of **public green transition funds** on social criteria.

This approach ensures that the move towards sustainability also advances **social equity and acceptance among all stakeholders**.

Policy and Practice Recommendations



Advocate for policies that ensure **fair wages**, **job security**, and access to **training** for workers in transition.

Promote **sustainable agricultural practices** that minimize environmental impact and enhance biodiversity.

Encourage stakeholder engagement through **social dialogue** to shape inclusive and effective transition strategies.

Sibeg Case Study: Introduction



Sibeg, a leading Sicilian company, aims for **carbon neutrality** in beverage bottling.

Initiatives include **photovoltaic systems** for self-consumption, a **trigeneration plant**, **electric fleet renewal**, and **R-PET** usage.

Emphasizes **worker-union dialogue** for **sustainable growth** and contract stabilization.

Transparent strategy involves all in sustainability, enhancing workplace quality.

Sibeg's Sustainable Initiatives



Renewable Energy: Sibeg installed over 2.3 MW of **solar power** for energy self-sufficiency, with more planned.

Green Operations: Implemented a **trigeneration plant**; moving towards **green hydrogen** or **biomethane**.

Eco-Friendly Fleet: Transitioned to **electric vehicles**, supported by **charging infrastructure**.

Sustainable Packaging: Aiming for all bottles to use **recycled R-PET** by 2024.

Collaboration: **Worker-union** engagement in environmental goals, linking bonuses to **sustainability achievements**.

Workers' Involvement at Sibeg

Collaborative Dialogue: Sibeg and unions engage in productive dialogue at both company and territorial levels.

Employment Stability: Expansion and workforce increase decisions were made in agreement with the union, leading to more stable employment contracts.

Decarbonization Strategy: Workers are actively involved in Sibeg's strategic plan for carbon neutrality, focusing on direct and indirect emissions reduction.

Sustainability Training: Workers receive training on recycling, energy, and resource conservation, fostering a culture of sustainability.

Incentivized Participation: Bonuses for workers are linked to productivity, safety, environmental goals, and quality improvements.

Social Dialogue at Sibeg



Contract Negotiations: Focus on renewing contracts, addressing salary, working hours, and worker benefits.

Union-Company Dialogue: Emphasizes continuous improvement in dialogue, advocating for proximity in developing green supply chains.

Worker Empowerment: Highlights the role of social dialogue in enhancing work conditions and supporting sustainability goals.

Lessons Learned from Sibeg

Strategic Decarbonization: Sibeg's approach to carbon neutrality through direct and indirect emissions reduction sets a precedent for industry-wide sustainability efforts.

Inclusive Dialogue: The productive collaboration between Sibeg and unions highlights the value of engaging workers in strategic decisions, fostering a culture of sustainability.

Economic and Social Integration: Sibeg's initiatives demonstrate how environmental goals can align with economic growth and employment stability, benefiting the broader community.

Adaptation and Innovation: The case underscores the importance of technological adaptation and workforce training in achieving environmental objectives.

Challenges in Implementing Just Transition

Bureaucratic Hurdles: Complex approvals slow down renewable projects.

Infrastructure Gaps: Sicily's outdated infrastructure limits transition.

Workforce Transition: Moving workers to green jobs poses challenges.

Supply Chain Dynamics: Tough negotiations with energy sector players.

Skills Development: Need for training in new, sustainable skills.

Global Success Stories in Just Transition

Organic Farming: Across the globe, farms transitioning to organic practices enhance **biodiversity** and **soil health**, **reducing chemical use**.

Renewable Energy: Farms integrate **solar** and **wind energy**, significantly **lowering carbon emissions** and operational costs.

Community-Supported Agriculture: CSAs empower communities, ensuring **food security** and supporting **local farmers**.

Fair Trade and Worker Engagement: Fair trade initiatives improve farmer incomes, promoting **sustainable livelihoods**.

Water Management: Innovative practices in water use ensure **sustainability amid changing climates**, preserving resources.

Engaging Stakeholders in Just Transition

Inclusive Consultation: engagement of environmental associations, local communities, direct and indirect suppliers, and government entities at various levels in **Just Transition projects**.

Constructive Dialogue: The intensive **dialogue with diverse stakeholders** allows for consideration of various concerns and the proposal of mitigating tools to improve project impacts.

Best Practices: The approach to local territories and stakeholders, emphasizing proactive and **continuous dialogue**, is considered a model for overcoming challenges related to **renewable energy infrastructure acceptance** by communities.

Global Perspectives on Just Transition



Emergence of **Just Transition** principles within trade unions: labour's ability to address environmental challenges.

Global labour movement's advocacy for **integrating social conditions into climate policy**: the potential for **gaps between winners and losers** in the transition.

Innovative and reflective approaches emerging in response to climate change: the relevance of **Just Transition** in current global challenges.

Involvement of **European trade unions** in **Just Transition**: conflict resolution and collaborative strategies.

European Union's Support for Just Transition

The EU's **European Green Deal** and **Just Transition Mechanism** aim for a **climate-neutral economy by 2050**, emphasizing fairness and social equity.

Funding sources like the European Social Fund, Horizon Europe, and the LIFE Programme support **social dialogue** and **green transition** initiatives.

The role of the European Economic and Social Committee and the **European Pillar of Social Rights** in promoting inclusive green policies and safeguarding workers' rights.

Case studies from across Europe illustrate the successful application of **social dialogue** in **renewable energy transition** and **sustainable transportation**, respectively.

EU's Just Transition Mechanism: Ensuring Fairness



The **Just Transition Mechanism** (JTM) is the EU's commitment to a fair **climate-neutral economy transition**, aiming to mobilize **€55 billion** (2021-2027) for the most affected regions.

It focuses on **mitigating socio-economic impacts**, **supporting workers**, industries, and communities facing significant challenges.

The JTM encompasses the **Just Transition Fund**, **InvestEU**, and a **Public Sector Loan Facility**, emphasizing territorial plans, **social inclusion**, and economic diversification, ensuring **no one is left behind in the green transition**.

Conclusion and Call to Action



Unified Effort: need for collaboration among governments, businesses, workers, and communities to drive the **Just Transition** forward.

Sustainability Goals: urgency of achieving **environmental sustainability, social equity,** and **economic viability** through **Just Transition** strategies.

Active Engagement: active engagement in **social dialogue**, policy-making, and the implementation of sustainable practices across all sectors.

Future Commitment: commitment to innovation, education, and the development of **green technologies and skills**.

Thank you for your attention!



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