



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

מרכז האוניברסיטה העברית לקיימות
The Hebrew University Center for Sustainability
مركز الجامعة العبرية للاستدامة



Scientific Progress

Prof. Amir Heiman (Department of Environmental Economics and Management at the Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment) recently published a paper titled “From the laboratory to the consumer: Innovation, supply chain, and adoption with applications to natural resources.” The paper analyzes the transition from innovative ideas to final marketed products through two synergetic supply chains for innovation and products. The researchers present the need for more attention to supply-chain design and function that will improve efforts to mitigate climate change and address food security and health challenges.

The research of Dr. Katia Assaf-Zakharov (Faculty of Law) critically analyzes consumer culture, brand fetishism, and capitalist ideology in her paper “Buying Goods and Doing Good: Trademarks and Social Competition.” In contemporary Western societies, material possessions serve as one of the most important determinants of personal status. This social reality results in consumption being a significant locus for social competition. Using trademark law, Dr. Assaf-Zakharov proposes encouraging “competitive altruism”—competition over good deeds that can yield benefits for its participants as well as society at large, as a partial replacement for competition over wasteful consumption.

Community Impact

The main structural material for the skeleton of buildings in Israel is concrete, bearing a colossal carbon footprint. A groundbreaking development led by Prof. Daniel Mandler (Institute of Chemistry) provides a creative solution to the problem of excess salt from dead-sea factories, and transforms salt from being a by-product with a negative value into building blocks, bearing positive economic value. The salt bricks are engineered to allow stable and sustainable construction, being moisture resistant, up to ten times stronger than concrete blocks of the same size, and fully recyclable by shredding and reshaping.

There is unequivocal consensus among researchers that reducing meat and dairy consumption will have positive effects on greenhouse gas emissions and human health. Prof. Ram Reifen (Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment) at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem has founded ChickP, a protein powder made from chickpeas. As a pure protein, ChickP offers a protein fortification solution and can be used in meat and dairy food alternatives, with minimal effect on taste and texture.

Studies and Learning Initiatives

Many scholars, policymakers, and practitioners have conceptualized notions of prosperity as alternatives to conventional consumer-led economic growth. “Sustainable Consumption” is a Master’s Degree course at the Department of Geography taught by Prof. Maurie Cohen. The course aims to introduce students to the political and scientific origins of sustainable consumption, to recognize the obstacles and challenges of sustainable consumption in high-income and low-income countries, as well as to apprehend both the potentials and limitations of technological innovation as a pathway toward more sustainable consumption.

Students from the Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment are engaged in a number of volunteering activities for communities in need. As part of this initiative, students collect donated clothing and food and distribute them to those in need. In addition, during holidays, they distribute donations of festive food. In this way, they help those in need while mitigating food and clothing waste.

Actions on Campus

As part of the university’s Green Campus Initiative, sustainable consumption practices are being promoted and prioritized. HUJI has decided to eliminate the use of disposable cups throughout campus. The decision was made following research which revealed that over 3.5 million disposable cups and hundreds of thousands of other disposable items were used across the university in previous years. Coffee shops on campus incentivize students to bring their own cups by offering discounts for choosing sustainable options. In addition, to promote reusable packaging and offer convenient solutions, the university is installing basins and dishwashers.

HUJI organized a professional tour for deputy deans and members of the Green Council to the site of the “Granit” plant, which collects, separates, and treats waste from the Jerusalem area. The tour, triggered by the significant decrease in recycling facilities on campuses and in Jerusalem, aimed to promote a better understanding of the challenges of waste separation and treatment, and provided insights into how crucial it is to invest in better management for preventing waste burning and burial. As a result of the tour, the university is expanding its range of recycling facilities on all campuses.