

## **Sustainable consumption in Venezuela: Today is the time to sow the seed**

According to the vision of sustainable development, consumption will be sustainable if it meets the needs of the current generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and choose their lifestyle. This statement, that has already been debated worldwide for several years, raises changes in daily dynamics: our food, our clothes, the vehicles in which we move, the cultural goods we consume.

Although Venezuela, due to its complex current situation, is outside the debate in many aspects of development, there are ideas and initiatives that have sought to keep up with global conversations, turning the challenges that its population faces into opportunities to rethink alternatives and consumption habits.

When Venezuela is in better social conditions, these ideas and initiatives will have been seeds that bear fruit —they will represent an important value to nurture and establish the dynamics of a democracy that respects the environment and promotes sustainability in food provision, as well as in different areas of consumption.

### **Context: What are Venezuela's challenges to promote sustainable consumption?**

Venezuela faces the most complex crisis in the region of the last 50 years. According to the New York Times, economists point out that Venezuela's collapse is the worst outside of war in decades. And its population is severely affected. This year, the GDP will have fallen 62 percent since 2013; while six to eight million people don't have enough to eat<sup>1</sup>. And according to the Worldbank and the EHC National Report Right to Food and Nutrition of December 2018, 64% of Venezuelans have lost 11 kg of weight between 2016 and 2017; 94% of the Venezuelan population does not have enough income to pay the prices of a basic food basket nor basic services, and 80% of Venezuelan households live in food insecurity.<sup>2</sup>

Although the government of Nicolás Maduro has announced its commitment to the sustainable development goals, progress is nowhere to be seen. This is indicated by multiple reports, among which is the report on the situation of Venezuela<sup>3</sup> lead by the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the United Nations Organization, Michelle Bachelet, on March 20th of 2019 with a follow-up made in September. It points out serious human rights violations. And as we know, the respect for the human rights creates the essential conditions for sustainable development<sup>4</sup>. Disregard for the crisis by the authorities, reports of murders during the actions of the Special Actions Forces (FAES, acronym for "Fuerzas de Acciones Especiales), restrictions on freedom of expression and the press, deterioration of the health system, increased school exclusion due to

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1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/17/world/americas/venezuela-economy.html>

2 <http://www.accionsolidaria.info/website/reporte-nacional-sobre-la-ehc-en-el-derecho-a-la-salud/>

3 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24374&LangID=S>

4 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/ManagementPlan/Pages/sustainable-development.aspx>

the crisis, collapse of public services, criminalization of protest, and mass emigration of Venezuelans are some of the aspects that describe the crisis and that represent a clear threat to sustainable development —therefore to sustainable consumption.

Additionally, disrespectful practices with the environment have increased enormously and have aggravated rapidly in recent years. The destruction of the Orinoco Mining Arc is one of the great ecological damages of the country because of illegal mining promoted by presidential decree. According to environmentalists, restoring Amazonian ecosystems decimated by illegal mining in the south of the country will take up to 200 years. Although the cost to nature is high and resources are not renewable, the rise in gold prices (\$ 50 per gram in the context of the economic crisis) unleashes the voracity of extractivism controlled by the mining mafia. Venezuela is not the only country affected by this tragedy —the decree of the Orinoco Mining Arc threatens the ecological biodiversity of the world's most important plant lung. Acid and polluted lagoons, razed forests, poisoned animals and degraded soils are the echo of the devastation that already extends to different regions of the country.<sup>5</sup>

While the sense of urgency to change has been created by multiple international media, Venezuela is also in a national political crisis that has grabbed international attention, particularly since January. At the beginnings of 2019, several Latin American governments, the U.S. partners and progressively many European nations —including Germany— announced that they would recognize Juan Guaidó, the then-35-year-old leader of the National Assembly, as the country's interim president. And this move, the thinking went, would surely, before long, catalyze a military or popular uprising that would drive the dictatorial Maduro from power. When Guaidó, with the support of some military figures, launched a high-stakes attempt to seize power at the end of April, it seemed that Maduro's end might finally have arrived. Except it didn't. The attempt failed, and since April, Venezuela has remained stuck in a purgatorial stalemate. Maduro presides over a collapsing state but remains entrenched in Caracas. Guaidó, the country's most popular political figure, is too powerful to jail but wields little actual authority. And the United States continues to insist on its demands, gambling that “maximum pressure” —diplomatic isolation, intensifying sanctions, and threats of military force—will eventually bring Maduro down, despite its failure so far. Meanwhile, the humanitarian catastrophe in Venezuela goes on.<sup>6</sup>

The situation is so complex that it is easy for sustainable consumption issues to be misplaced and excluded from the political agenda of the leaders. However, this cross-cutting issue cannot be left out of the daily agenda of citizens and there are clear signs that this has not been the case.

### **NGOs and civil society: organization, creativity and solidarity**

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5 <http://cronica.uno/destruccion-del-arco-minero-se-replica-en-aragua-y-carabobo/>

6 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/venezuela/2019-09-03/plan-b-venezuela>

Sustainable consumption is part of a sustainable lifestyle and consumer behavior that, among other things, considers environmental and social aspects in the purchase and use of products and services. Sustainable consumption also affects the behavior of use and the behavior regarding the elimination of resources in everyday life.

In Venezuela, this concept can be related to the day-to-day life of citizens not necessarily by choice and will, but also by necessity and survival. That is to say: In the midst of the crisis —in spite of it, but also because of it— citizens are on fertile ground to establish new dynamics of consumption based on attending fundamental needs (such as food), but also new dynamics in debating and reacting through creativity and solidarity, aspects that generate a lot of value when promoting sustainable behaviors not only for consumption but also for an increasingly responsible conscious for development for current and future generations.

In conversations with Venezuelan activists and experts, the observations and arguments of Liliana Buitrago, representative of the Observatory of Political Ecology of Venezuela<sup>7</sup>, stand out. Buitrago points out the existence of multiple sustainable consumption initiatives, which include alternative forms of distribution proposed with a bottom-up approach —initiatives organized by the people. An example is a project called “La Alpargata Solidaria”, a popular initiative to build an exchange platform between producers and consumers. They are described as “a group of people who are forming a collective system to buy, sell, barter, donate, lend or share goods, knowledge or services in a solidary and cooperative manner, in order to facilitate our consumption, create popular-economic communities beyond the capitalist market, and build other types of social relationships based on common construction.” Their key approaches mentioned in their Facebook page are as follows: a) If you are a small producer of goods, knowledge or services, announce it so that we connect and complement the needs of community members with your products; b) if what you consume is hard to find or very expensive, if you want to buy it in a collective, or if you are looking for a social production alternative, link to and get involved in this community; c) You don’t have money? Look for the possibilities of bartering or exchange without currency existing in the community; d) If you have a product that you no longer use and want to exchange it or offer it in fair trade, advertise it in “La Alpargata Solidaria.”<sup>8</sup>

Buitrago points out that this initiative, made up of 181 families, is an example of how very valuable accomplishments can be achieved from the organization of the people, particularly to cover a very basic need —food. Buitrago lists some achievements of “La Alpargata Solidaria”: “Four tons of food once a month; the 181 families distribute that amount; they established a prepaid system; equitable on-site distribution is carried out for all; among all it is decided what is brought from the network of producers; all families consume the same; they carry a bag of 17 to 21 kilos of food at solidarity prices.”

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7 <http://www.ecopoliticavenezuela.org/>

8 [https://es-la.facebook.com/pg/La-Alpargata-Solidaria-978119258914182/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://es-la.facebook.com/pg/La-Alpargata-Solidaria-978119258914182/about/?ref=page_internal)

This initiative does not work by itself —it is allied with CECOSOLA, an organization created in 1967, whose motto is "building trust in diversity".<sup>9</sup> CECOSOLA has a network of producers from the Venezuelan states Trujillo, Portuguesa, Lara and Yaracuy and its management allows the arrival of food to the city at a solidary price that favors both the consumer and the producer and avoids the intermediaries that make the products more expensive. According to their web page "this network currently serves the commodity needs of some 150,000 families with annual sales of US\$100 million. These sales generate annual savings, through which we acquire our basic food. In hours of greater influx of people, among all our establishments located in the city of Barquisimeto and its surroundings, we work with more than 300 cash registers operating simultaneously. Integrated into this network are 15 organizations made up of more than 250 small farmers who plan their production for sale at fairs. The price received is not determined by the market but agreed by consensus in joint meetings between the cooperative members and associates of the countryside and the city, based on production costs." They affirm that they do not negotiate based on money, but they are organized as a family in the search to build equity relationships. Currently they mobilize in a week more than 800 tons of vegetables and fruits. The same relationship is built with the members of 7 small community production units that supply whole-grain pasta, bran, granola, honey, soybeans, sauces, dressings, fruit pulp, vanilla and a variety of cleaning supplies.

The initiative has the potential to be replicated in other groups and to continue to articulate producers with their communities. However, for both CECOSOLA and "La Alpargata Solidaria", there are pending challenges to get closer to the concept of sustainable consumption. According to Buitrago, "in terms of the quality of food, unfortunately we have not yet managed to have an agroecological production model, so many of these products still do not achieve food sovereignty, which is what the rural method proposes: healthy products. Many of them are still cultivated with pesticides, like most markets in Venezuela."

In this sense, we meet again with a difficult scenario, but with projects that are hopeful and that can represent an important and profound seed for the promotion of sustainable consumption in Venezuela, regardless of the political view of the people, but depending on the will and bottom-up organization.

There is another initiative called "Pueblo a Pueblo", an organization awarded by the United States Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA) for its commitment to cooperate in the food production for Venezuelans and seek alternative mechanisms to the United States economic and financial sanctions against the country.<sup>10</sup>

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9 <http://www.ecopoliticavenezuela.org/2018/12/10/cecosesola-construyendo-aqui-ahora-mundo-queremos/>

10 <https://www.telesurtv.net/news/venezuela-pueblo-pueblo-premio-soberania-alimentaria-20190816-0018.html>

Regardless the political militancy, the organization also works with the Network of Associated Free Producers, who hold assemblies of producers —from the Portuguesa state to the Trujillo state— on the Argimiro Gabaldón route (west of the country). Members have organized assemblies and their own cost structures, calculating the prices of what they will sell guided by solidarity configurations. At this time, they are making a transition to the agroecological model. Together with PROINPA, they established a potato production laboratory in Los Andes<sup>11</sup>, seeking not to depend on anyone with respect to potatoes, thanks to the alliance with some European universities, the IDEA Research Institute and the Universidad de Los Andes (ULA). With the multiplication of native potato seeds and the rescue of many potatoes from Los Andes, along with “Pueblo a Pueblo”, an agroecological transition model is being consolidated.

Continuing the list of consumption and solidarity initiatives, Buitrago explains that once a month for about five years, a “Feria Conuquera<sup>12</sup>” is organized in a park in the city of Caracas (Parque Los Caobos). “It is a totally agroecological fair with producers and training spaces for the agroecological issue and it is also a space for the solidary sale of products in the city of Caracas. As of this, they opened at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Caracas, a small restaurant of conuquera food called “Experimental Workshop of Conuquera Food.” Buitrago also explains that the people who work at the “Feria Conuquera” are also people who worked on the Seed Law, which has been recognized among social movements worldwide, and, that through a politically difficult process, entered the world seed movement, backed by Vandana Shiva.<sup>13</sup>

We must continue to point out Venezuelan initiatives of different types that may relate to the concept of sustainable consumption discussed in different parts of the world. Another key to having appreciations of sustainable consumption in Venezuela is also to highlight initiatives related to alternatives not mediated by currency: the barter system as an instrument of collaborative and sustainable consumption.

An article published by Reuters last year, entitled “Fish for medicines? Barter is the currency of exchange in a Venezuela in crisis”, points out that bartering has become one of the ways that Venezuelans have to receive payments because of the lack of bills and coins and shortage of

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11 <http://proinpameridavenezuela.blogspot.com/2014/02/impulsan-produccion-de-semillas-de-papa.html>

12 The word “Conuquera” refers to local indigenous agroforestry techniques and knowledge

13 Vandana Shiva is a philosopher, ecologist and writer. She is an Indian activist of the movement known as “ecofeminism”. For her intense career fighting for the rights of Indian women farmers and for her work to place women and ecology at the heart of the discourse of modern development, she received the Right Livelihood Award in 1993 (also known as the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize). Other awards she has received are the “Global 500,” from the United Nations Environment Program and the “International Earth Day Award,” also from the United Nations. She authors influential books such as *Ecofeminism* about biotechnology, consumption and reproduction and her the latest —recently published— *Who really feeds the world?*

products, and that some also prefer to receive food, since the money is not enough to acquire it and the prices vary depending on whether the payment is in cash or by credit or debit card.<sup>14</sup>

Barter practices have been promoted by small but important initiatives. For example, in the market of Los Cocos, in Puerto La Cruz, in the northeast of the country, everything is exchanged: fish, food and even medicines<sup>15</sup>. There is also a similar initiative in other coastal areas of the country.<sup>16</sup>

In this sense, these practices have been used in different fields. For example, an event called "Music for Medicines" was held on June 8, which sought to exchange medicines for new records and, in turn, raise awareness about Human Rights through music and culture<sup>17</sup>. This initiative demonstrates once again the use of creativity and solidarity to cope with the crisis and, at the same time, sow a seed of a different way of consumption.

Likewise, culture has served to unite support and promote respect for nature. In July, an event was held in which music and visual arts joined together to raise funds and support for the Botanical Garden of Caracas, "the second lung of the city" (the first is the mountain El Ávila)<sup>18</sup>.

In other countries such as Germany and England, countries with an important movement towards the culture of transition (according to Buitrago, the post-capitalist transition that raises different ways of making exchanges and generating ways of life to foment community spirit), there are many barter spaces, sale of used clothing, reuse of things. In Venezuela, despite the initiatives mentioned, spaces like these are not very usual "because we have a very strong rentier culture due to oil and very high consumption levels: America's way of life," says Buitrago. In Venezuela, it has always existed a culture of consumption that is impossible to sustain (in the 1980s and 1990s there was a popular saying: "tá barato dame dos" ["so cheap, gimme 2"], due to the high purchase power of Venezuelans during those decades). This culture threatens sustainable consumption. The barter initiatives mentioned thrive in Venezuela largely due to need, not choice.

Venezuela, the country with the largest oil reserves in the world (18% according to OPEC), had the greatest oil boom in its history between 2004 and 2012. However, it was not leveraged to structurally overcome poverty but to increase consumption fictitiously through imported goods. This mistake has been made in previous decades with other governments (to a lesser extent) and this level of consumption had been an important part of the Venezuelan identity.

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14 <https://lta.reuters.com/articulo/topNews/idLTAKBN1JT1SD-OUSLT>

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

16 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7BqbhMb4sk>

17 <http://cronica.uno/musica-por-medicinas-regresa-a-caracas-con-el-lanzamiento-del-disco-de-verbigracia/>

18 <https://contrapunto.com/cultura/eventos/musica-arte-y-fotografia-se-unen-y-donaran-un-rayito-de-luz-para-jardin-botanico/169/>

Oil had been able to supply many needs and tastes so the need to sustainably develop other industries was not considered urgent. Additionally, over the past 20 years the private industries have been openly discouraged by the Chavez' and Maduro's governments. The continued extractive culture of raw material for several decades and the rest of the national production never developing its full potential add up to Venezuelans depending almost solely on this national wealth. Currently, Venezuela is still the country with the largest oil reserves, however, total exports have declined to a third of their level in 2012. This, coupled with a series of erroneous policies, has severely affected the national productive sector, as well as the pockets and stomachs of Venezuela, whose migration amounts to 4 million inhabitants with projections to increase to 8 million, due to the need to survive.<sup>19</sup>

People in Venezuela suffer greatly. In this decline, initiatives such as "La Alpargata Solidaria" have a pragmatic and symbolic value: they represent how citizens can be resilient in the crisis, building different community dynamics and practice solidarity. "I doubt that an initiative like "La Alpargata Solidaria" could have emerged in times of oil bonanza."

Initiatives such as "La Alpargata Solidaria", CECOSOLA, bartering, and awareness with culture towards solidarity and other forms of sustainable consumption need visibility and support because their potential is enormous: they represent very human ways of coping with a crisis, learning from it to form and strengthen communities.

### **Consumption behaviors and awareness**

Sustainable consumption requires collective awareness. In that sense, the observations of Mayra Rincón, co-founder of VerdelaTierra (a nonprofit civil association dedicated to raising awareness, training and innovation in good environmental practices, human rights associated with the environment and to the implementation of the sustainability in organizational, educational and community contexts, based on communication and the human approach that psychology contributes to the conservation of nature stand out).<sup>20</sup>

Rincón highlights the threats to sustainable development and consumption, but also points out the path and potential of Venezuela regarding sustainability. "The lack of institutionality greatly delays our progress. As long as our transition to democracy does not occur first, we are going to make very little progress on these issues. However, we cannot blame the laws. Venezuela has rather an excess of environmental laws that are neither implemented nor enforced. And people say 'no, in this country there's no recycling, we need a law', but when we review the official gazette there is the Law of Environment, the Law of Garbage —as Chávez called it<sup>21</sup>—, even laws

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19 <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/el-mundo/oea-calcula-que-habra-entre-7-y-8-millones-de-migrantes-venezolanos-para-2020-articulo-868247>

20 <http://verdelatierra.com/quienes-somos/mision-1/>

21 <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/ven100048.pdf>

from the 1990s and 1980 with reforms in 2003. As for laws, we have them all. We have a very good legislative advance on the environmental issue. Venezuela was the first country that had a Ministry of Environment in Latin America, in 1972, when no country in the region had it. The region used to ask us for advisory to teach how a Ministry of Environment was supposed to be established. It is not a matter of laws. Currently it is a matter of political will, a lack of institutions that make policies, programs, and systematization of the plans and projects that must be done. Today, when comparing ourselves with neighboring countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama) we see how we are falling behind because they are already taking the Paris Agreement very seriously, which Venezuela signed, but for which nothing has been done so far.”

Rincón, who has led an educational podcast with VerdelaTierra for four years, points out that the tragedies that are being experienced in Venezuela today regarding consumption and disrespectful exploitation of the environment were already coming. “When recording a program about the harsh reality of Congo with the extraction of coltan (civil wars, rape of women, ecological and social disasters because of illegal mining). I contacted the Jane Goodall Institutes of the world, I realize that where we are most threatened with a reality similar to Congo’s is in Venezuela. We saw it coming two years ago, when the issue of the Orinoco Mining Arc was not yet popular on media. A whole similar catastrophe happens in Venezuela: malaria, murders, rapes, prostitution, exploitation of children to get into a mine to extract minerals, etc.”

However, Rincon says that not everything is lost and that she sees an area of opportunity to change these behaviors and empower citizens with information. Informing the common citizen is very important to awaken the interest of thinking about what they want to consume and what not, to empower them. "Citizens are the stakeholders called to tell the company or government that they will not to consume certain things until the way of producing them is changed."

In Venezuela we already know that we are in a permanent state of shortage in which people use what they receive because there is little capacity to decide beyond survival and basic needs. But Rincon and VerdelaTierra are committed to leverage the situation as an opportunity to educate, “to take advantage of this moment in which we can also develop other aspects of the consumer and their behaviors.”

In fact, an effort has already begun to gather information to create a psychological-environmental profile of the Venezuelan. This exists in other parts of the world (Australia, Scotland, Spain are some examples) and serves as a baseline for making public policies. VerdelaTierra seeks to carry out a study that makes the baseline of the Venezuelan profile that will allow to discover what kind of population is to be found in Venezuela regarding the environment. A profile of this style measures beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, emotions.

In this sense, we know that emotions move the world and the environmental scene is no exception. “If we can recognize and understand what this type of Venezuelan psychological-environmental profile is, we can identify where to pay more attention when crafting an



educational plan, where to have to make a direct impact with people to achieve direct participation, and/or work with them in the transformation of certain behavior elements.”

They started the investigation through a private study last year, gathering information from people in Caracas about pro-sustainable behaviors related to saving, recycling, waste separation, and community engagement. “Yes, that’s an aspect of behavior,” explains Rincon highlighting how the development of citizenship is key in promoting sustainable consumption dynamics.

An excerpt from this research, conducted from August to October 2018, gives more information: The population of the key audience is made up of university students aged 18 to 25 years, children and adolescents aged 12 to 17 years and adults over 26 years of age in the metropolitan area of Caracas. The sample of the key audience evaluated is made up of 257 people, mostly university students, who were consulted in public sector institutions in 58.8% (151 people) and private in 41.2% (106 people) during the July and August 2018, all in the city of Caracas, being 130 female (50.6%) and 127 male (49.4%), resulting in a homogeneous and representative sample. One of the variables of the psychological-environmental profile is pro-sustainable behavior, referred to a series of citizen actions aimed at preserving the environment, not damaging the environment, contributing to the preservation of resources in a conscious, deliberate, altruistic and frugal way.

According to the results, pro-sustainable behavior is divided into two factors or components: pro-sustainable behavior I, which groups those behaviors related to recycling and activism, not only of leadership in environmental actions, but also of individual, personal leadership, in the private sphere of the person, with her/his family, with her/his friends. In the results, this behavior has medium-low values. The second factor is pro-sustainable behavior II, which has to do with items or aspects of consumption, savings and reuse. The values of this factor are also medium-low in the sample. No differences were found by sex in the conduct of the behavior.

Prior to this study, there is a report that VerdelaTierra made in conjunction with ProVita<sup>22</sup> called “I change” and applied between February and April 2016. With a sample of 32 people from the city of Barquisimeto (35.2%), 28 from the city of Porlamar (30.8%), 19 from the city of Macanao (20.9%) and 12 from the city of Caracas (13.2%) on pro-environmental behaviors.

The pro-environmental behaviors were measured by means of an instrument designed and adapted to the Venezuelan context, with high precision indicators. The results can be interpreted as a global pro-environmental behavior, as well as four differentiated behaviors (or

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<sup>22</sup> ProVita is a non-profit civil association founded in 1987, as an alternative to combat the loss of the valuable biodiversity of Venezuela, and to demonstrate that human development is compatible with nature conservation. In almost 3 decades, they have implemented hundreds of projects ranging from recovery of iconic endangered species, to trials of development alternatives for rural and indigenous communities. ProVita's action has extended from the islands, Cordillera de la Costa and Andes, to Guyana and Amazonas.

factors) that are: reuse and recycling behaviors (4 items), water saving behaviors (3 items), electric energy saving behaviors (2 items) and citizen participation and responsible consumption behaviors (3 items).

The results indicate that people have average global pro-environmental behaviors. The ones that do the most are the reuse and recycling behaviors and the water saving, and the one that they do the least is the saving of electric energy. There are significant differences in pro-environmental behaviors depending on the city. Global pro-environmental behaviors are greater in people who live in Barquisimeto and Macanao than those who live in Porlamar, significantly. In turn, those of Barquisimeto have more global pro-environmental behaviors than those of Caracas significantly.

Both studies begin to shed light and more precise information on the aspects to work in Venezuelans. And although it might still seem like ambiguous data, if it is well used and deepened in the Venezuelan context, these types of studies can have striking results for European or North American countries. Rincon explains that in Venezuela an advantage can begin to be identified in the transformation of consumer behaviors: "In many countries that have many advances in these issues, many efforts have been directed towards recycling, developing a significant amount of technology to recycle, so they recycle in excess without going through the previous 2 Rs: It is much more important to Reduce and Reuse than to Recycle, because recycling — although it is still a very important strategy for awareness and for decreasing abusive consumption— has a greater ecological footprint with gas emissions and other aspects in the process that do not contribute to the environment. "

Here we meet again with a bite of useful and hopeful information that also adds a seed to sustainable consciousness in a difficult context in need.

And a seed of opportunity.

Some people who only know Venezuela through the media can jump into conclusions very quickly because of the serious situation the country is facing. Some people might think that the sustainability issues are not part of the citizen's daily conscience. I am Venezuelan and a big part of my family continues to live in Venezuela. Although being a hard-working family for decades, the crisis still affects their quality of life, their purchasing power too. And although they often face painful situations in their immediate surroundings —where they see people with worse struggles—, they always try to see opportunities to learn and reinvent their habits and themselves. Through these personal experiences and the opinions and initiatives presented, we have arguments and facts that motivate us to support the discussion of sustainable consumption issues in a country where the priority always seems to be different. Although at the macro level it may not seem like it, Venezuela *is* in a great moment of opportunity to address the issues of sustainable consumption. The need is a fertile ground to learn and to link with others through solidarity and creativity. From this point of view, Venezuela can be a scenario for a different development of consciousness in its citizens, who with hope and actions are already planting the seed to contribute with tangible fruits to this global conversation.