

The importance of sustainable and resilient food systems on small island nations
Jessica Bain
University of Arkansas

Small island countries in the Pacific import about half of the total food consumed per year, while countries in the Caribbean islands import as much 83% of total food consumed. Due to the size and influence of these countries, they are some of the most vulnerable to fluctuations in the global supply chain. This vulnerability will continue to worsen as the global demand for food increases. This is compounded by the likelihood of immediate food insecurity due to the frequency at which they experience hurricanes, monsoons, and other extreme weather events which can impact the ability to import food and goods.

Therefore, to lessen the current fragility of the food systems in small island nations, there must be local, sustainable food production occurring on these islands. Implementing sustainable agricultural techniques which can withstand the weather events and support the local population are imperative to the feasibility of these projects. Large scale greenhouse agriculture, hydroponic technology and other sustainable food production techniques within these communities can help subsidize food imports but also ensure that the country is able to be self-sufficient in the event of a natural disaster which prevents immediate food relief.

In the next 30 years, smaller countries must be able to feed themselves and sustain their local populations. As the global population increases and in turn, the demand for natural resources is strained, it will become far too easy for these populations and its people to be forgotten due to their lack of global influence.