

## **Statement submitted by IDEAS For Us**

IDEAS For Us is an international non-governmental organization that is aiming to advance sustainability by helping people, especially the most vulnerable, to create solutions that increase their quality of life, generate profit, and heal the planet. The mission of the organization is to develop, fund, and scale solutions to the world's most pressing environmental and social challenges.

The organization's Solutions Fund works in Orlando, Florida and its work has provided a wealth of knowledge on the issues and solutions surrounding the advancement of sustainable cities. The advancement of the organization in the field of sustainable cities rests heavily on a close relationship with the city government, urban agriculture, and local discussions.

IDEAS For Us is headquartered in Orlando, Florida and maintains a close relationship with the city government to be continuously working towards a more sustainable city. This past year, the City of Orlando passed its first energy ordinance, created a chapter of sustainability in the city's code, created its first energy benchmark and reporting programme, and has begun to test electric buses. Orlando is considered by some to be presently the most sustainable city in the southeast United States and has committed to use 100 per cent renewable energy by 2050. The city continues to pursue sustainability through a multitude of programmes such as solar farms, green building technology, recycling initiatives, and the IDEAS For Us programs, Fleet Farming and the Hive.

Urban agriculture has the ability to address multiple sustainable development goals within cities. Urban agriculture increases citizen's access to affordable, local, organic produce, which will promote zero hunger (SDG 2) and good health and wellbeing (SDG 3). By utilizing urban agriculture in low income, minority, and food desert areas, the organization will contribute to the reduction of poverty (SDG 1). Additionally, the advancement of urban agriculture can aid cities in climate change mitigation (SDG 13). The organization's Solutions Fund has sponsored multiple urban agriculture programmes including a sustainable agriculture programme in Kasese, Uganda and a vertical micro gardening programme at the Multitech Business School in Uganda. The vertical micro gardening programme addresses the issues of limited space in urban areas by growing more food using less soil. This will allow for more food to be grown in heavily urbanized areas and will increase access to food insecure areas. The sustainable agriculture programme in Uganda is also bringing food to a food-insecure location while additionally training local women on gardening and nutrition, and diverting waste.

The IDEAS For Us programme Fleet Farming is a bike-pedalled urban agriculture programme. Underutilized land in urban settings is transformed into productive micro-farms. This programme is designed to positively impact communities socially and environmentally. Socially, this model increases resident's accessibility to fresh produce, provides free urban agriculture education, and creates safe spaces for communities to collect. Environmentally, Fleet Farming micro-farms use less water than the typical lawn, eliminates harmful chemicals, increases micro biodiversity, and utilizes nearly zero emission transportation. Fleet is a comprehensive agricultural programme which offers many benefits to the city of Orlando, its citizens, and the environment. Fleet Farming recently introduced a branch of their programme in the food desert neighbourhood of Parramore. Through this new branch, the organization is developing Fleet Farming as a possible solution to food desert crisis in America. With a \$250,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture, the City of Orlando will be creating 10-15 Fleet Farming farmlettes, a farmer's

market at Orlando City Soccer Club's new stadium, and partnering with Hebni Nutrition to teach residents about healthy eating and cooking, all in the neighbourhood of Parramore.

In addition to its work in Orlando, Florida to implement solutions such as Fleet Farming and a community awareness and action model called the Hive, Ideas For Us funds localized sustainability projects in communities worldwide through the Solutions Fund. IDEAS for Us commits to helping develop solutions that respond to the unique needs of communities where the organization operates, and also commits to tracking the impact of programmes implemented by gathering data concerning outcomes and contributions to the SDGs.

IDEAS For Us calls on NGOs and governments to:

- Work collaboratively with their local governments on sustainability projects within cities.
- Advance the development of urban agriculture within cities especially in low income, minority, and food insecure locations.
- Foster local discussions surrounding the cities specific sustainability needs.

IDEAS For Us strongly supports the notion that these actions can further the development of sustainable cities.