



zusammen leben e.V.

Sustainability Impact Assessment Report

2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) report presents the impacts of zusammen leben e.V.. This report was created using SHARING SOLUTIONS – the SHARING SOLUTIONS Impact Assessment Toolkit.

SHARING SOLUTIONS was designed to illustrate the broad spectrum of impacts that food sharing initiatives have on the sustainability of food systems. Any initiative engaged in such activities around food can be classed as a food sharing initiative. Food sharing can be growing, cooking and eating together or redistributing surplus food to others.

The SHARING SOLUTIONS framework contains 34 sustainability indicators that initiatives can select from as relevant to their specific activities. An indicator can be a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable. An indicator provides a simple and reliable means to capture information at a particular point and which can be used over time to identify changes. The indicators cover four pillars of sustainability for our food systems – Social, Environmental, Economic and Governance. Within these pillars, indicators are organised into 13 impact areas. For each indicator, initiatives are provided with several options to demonstrate their impact using quantitative and/or qualitative evidence.

For more information about the SHARING SOLUTIONS tool including the SIA framework please refer to the SHARING SOLUTIONS webpage: <https://app.sharingsolutions.eu>

2. IMPACT SUMMARY REPORT



WHO WE ARE

Name: zusammen leben e.V.

Location: Freiburg



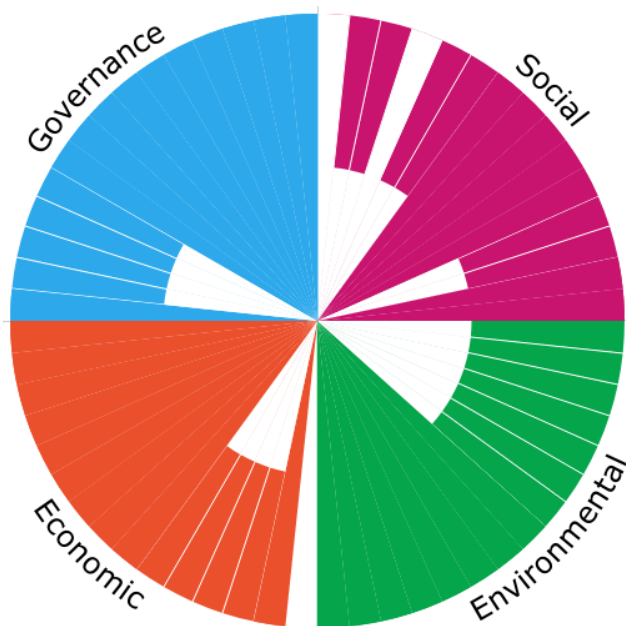
GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Goals: We open up civic spaces of encounter.

Activities: Multifunctional



IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



► Our key areas of significant impact are

- Increasing appreciation of different cultures across and within communities
- Increased access to and consumption of fruit and vegetables
- Training and jobs



KEY IMPACTS



43.000

people attended our events
designed to increase
community integration



10.000

participants showed
increased appreciation of
other groups in their
community



130

people use our facilities to
grow food

We actively contribute to shifting the discourse around inclusion and discrimination by promoting respectful and empowering language and we provide inclusive spaces of encounter that foster dialogue, mutual understanding, and social participation.

The zuka solicafé, located in the foyer of the Haus der Jugend, is an inclusive meeting place that combines community-building with sustainable gastronomy. From Monday to Friday, it offers a socially and ecologically conscious vegetarian lunch between 12:00 and 14:30, based on a solidarity-based pricing model. Many of the meals are vegan, and all dishes are prepared with seasonal, locally sourced vegetables. The weekly menu is publicly available. Guests can choose from three price tiers: a social price (€6.50), a cost-covering price (€13.50), or a supporter price (€17.50). The café also implements the Sospeso principle: guests can pre-pay for a meal or beverage at the cost-covering rate, which is then made available as a voucher for individuals in financial need.

zusammen leben e.V. collectively explores, develops, and experiences future-oriented topics related to ecology, biodiversity, and sustainable nutrition. The community garden, opened in summer 2016 at the foot of the Schönberg mountain and covering 3,500 square meters, serves as an intercultural space for encounter and exchange. Around 250 people from 16 different countries regularly garden together here. Whether through monthly action days, tending individual plots, participating in working groups, workshops, holiday programs, or educational projects in collaboration with schools and independent organizations—the garden offers a wide range of activities for people of all ages, regardless of origin, religion, or socio-cultural background. A particular focus lies on training and further education in organic horticulture and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles.



FOOD SHARING BENEFITS

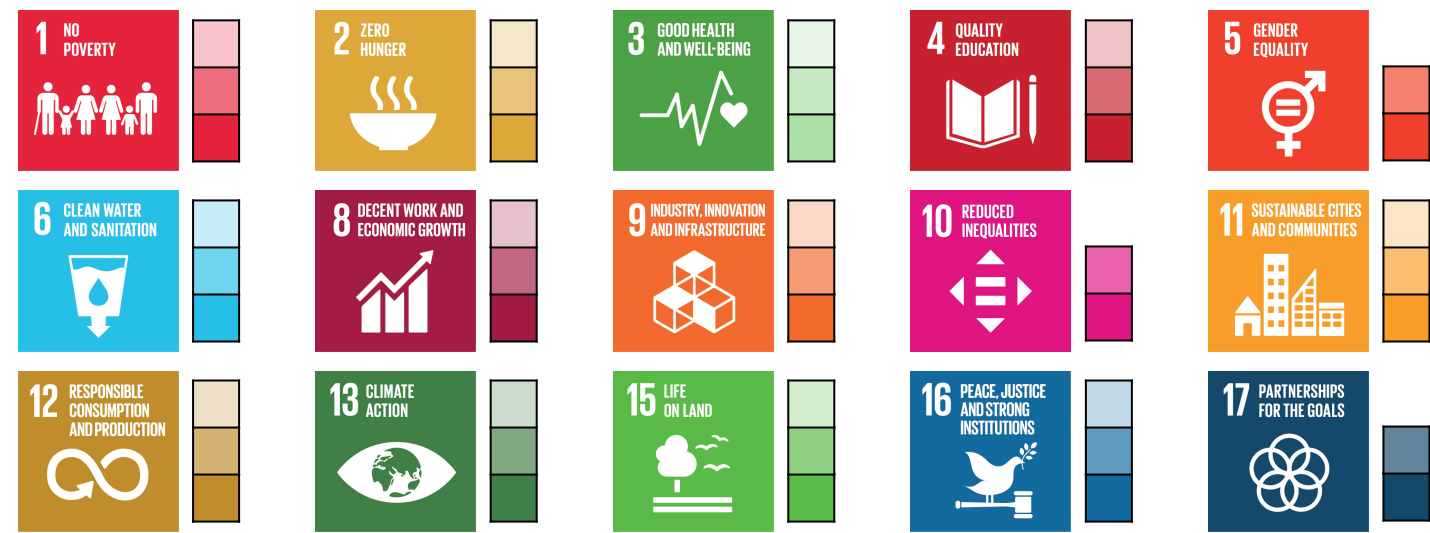
The sharing element of food sharing creates unique positive benefits like fostering social cohesion and reducing loneliness. The direct and indirect benefits our food sharing generates are indicated below.





HOW WE CONTRIBUTE TO THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations uses a range of impact areas and indicators to measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The following graphic shows how our activities are contributing to these goals at three levels by: (1) Contributing to the general ethos of a goal (2) Making a direct impact to an impact area; and (3) Making a major impact by contributing to an indicator.



Legend:

- Making a major direct impact towards this goal
- Making a direct impact towards this goal
- Contributing to the ethos of this goal

3. SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SOCIAL

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AND SHARING

Increasing appreciation of different cultures across and within communities

How many people had the opportunity to mix and gain a greater understanding of other groups of people in their community (e.g. people of different ages, genders, abilities, race, ethnicity, origin, religion and/or socio-economic status) through your initiative?

43.000

How many people report or were observed having gained greater knowledge and understanding of other groups of people in their community through your initiative?

10.000

Do any of your activities specifically aim to empower and promote the inclusion of any vulnerable or marginalized groups of people (e.g. youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, women, etc)?

Yes, all of our activities

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative helps empower and promote the inclusion of vulnerable or marginalised groups (e.g. youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, women, etc)

If annually is not specified then it is the timeframe of 10 years. All of our cultural events are offered free of charge, ensuring open access for individuals regardless of their financial situation. Moreover, several of these events are curated and co-organized by individuals from vulnerable or marginalized groups, including migrants, women, and young people with fewer opportunities. This participatory approach not only promotes cultural inclusion but also empowers these individuals by providing a platform for expression, visibility, and active community engagement.

Improving communication skills

How many people report or were observed having improved their communication skills because of engagement with your initiative?

5.000

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative supports improving communication skills (e.g. supporting social interaction, improving language skills and/or testimonies from participants)

We actively contribute to shifting the discourse around inclusion and discrimination by promoting respectful and empowering language and we provide inclusive spaces of encounter that foster dialogue, mutual understanding, and social participation.

Fostering a wider food and sharing culture

How many other food sharing initiatives are you in regular contact with to exchange knowledge or collaborate?

25

How many volunteers and/or employees have moved on to join or establish another food sharing initiative?

100

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative helps foster a wider food and sharing culture (e.g. stories from participants, volunteers, employees, and/or other food sharing initiatives that you collaborate with)

The “Climate Kitchen” by zusammen leben e.V. exemplifies the integration of ecological and social goals. It serves as a space for culture, education, enjoyment, and community exchange. Through a participatory process, we collaboratively developed the “Climate Kitchen” project to create delicious vegetarian variations of international dishes tailored to the Freiburg region. These recipes not only help reduce CO₂ emissions but also highlight which foods are currently produced and sold locally – and which could be in the future.

ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY OF FOOD

Increased access to and consumption of fruit and vegetables

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative increases access to and consumption of fruit and vegetables (e.g. an awareness campaign you have run about healthy eating)

In the inclusive community garden *zusammen gärtnern* (3,500 m²), we explore, develop, and experience key future-oriented topics together—such as ecology, biodiversity, and sustainable nutrition. Whether during monthly action days, in individual garden plots, within a dedicated working group, through workshops, holiday programs, or educational projects in cooperation with schools and independent organizations, the garden offers a wide range of activities. It provides access to (infra)structural resources regardless of individual life circumstances, fostering inclusion and participation for all.

Increased access to and consumption of fresh food

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative increases access to and consumption of fresh food and/or freshly prepared meals. (e.g. stories from people who attended events, cooking classes, workshops, etc.)

The *zuka solicafé*, located in the foyer of the Haus der Jugend, is an inclusive meeting place that combines community-building with sustainable gastronomy. From Monday to Friday, it offers a socially and ecologically conscious vegetarian lunch between 12:00 and 14:30, based on a solidarity-based pricing model. Many of the meals are vegan, and all dishes are prepared with seasonal, locally sourced vegetables. The weekly menu is publicly available. Guests can choose from three price tiers: a social price (€6.50), a cost-covering price (€13.50), or a supporter price (€17.50). The café also implements the *Sospeso* principle: guests can pre-pay for a meal or beverage at the cost-covering rate, which is then made available as a voucher for individuals in financial need.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Connecting and creating new support networks within communities

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative supports connecting and creating new support networks within communities (e.g. stories about friendships formed because of engaging with your initiative)

“I feel like I am with my family cooking here. I am not here just to cook for *zusammen kaffee*, but I also speak with fellow guest chefs and volunteers. We speak about our lives and our challenges. To me, that is more than just cooking.” Suhad Ali, Chef at “*zusammen kaffee*”

Thinking about issues beyond price when buying food

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative supports thinking about issues beyond price when buying food

Guests can choose from three price tiers: a social price (€6.50), a cost-covering price (€13.50), or a supporter price (€17.50). The café also implements the Sospeso principle: guests can pre-pay for a meal or beverage at the cost-covering rate, which is then made available as a voucher for individuals in financial need.

Increasing engagement in growing food

How many people grow food at your initiative's location?

130

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative is increasing engagement in growing food

"zusammen gärtnern 2.0" offers vocational orientation and training in ecological gardening for young people with disabilities between the ages of 13 and 27. Participants receive professional, needs-based guidance and support three mornings a week. Th

ENVIRONMENTAL

AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Diverting organic waste from landfill

Select from the following the best description of your composting activities

We collect our own organic material but send it for composting elsewhere.,We collect and compost our organic material and use this material for our own growing operations.

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative diverts organic waste from landfill

We have our own garden and do composting.

Water recovery

How many people attended your events which were at least partially about water recovery?

50

Describe the system you have in place for water recovery

dried hummus toilette, Rainwater containers in the garden

Maintaining and improving soil quality

Share any relevant information about how your initiative maintains and improves soil quality

The garden is cultivated exclusively using an organic approach that fosters biodiversity and supports long-term soil health. Crop rotation (Fruchtfolge) is systematically practiced, and soil quality is regularly monitored. We also offer educational workshops on topics such as pyrolysis. Composting is a key component of our practice, helping to close nutrient cycles and minimize organic waste.

Maintaining and improving biodiversity

Share any relevant information about how your initiative maintains and improves biodiversity

Conservation Restoration Diversification Protection Regeneration

Describe how you improve biodiversity on the land your initiative maintains or owns

Our community garden is dedicated to promoting and preserving biodiversity through exclusively organic farming practices. It hosts a wide variety of plants, supports pollinators with on-site beekeeping, and includes a seed bank to protect and share heirloom and regionally adapted plant varieties. The garden also provides a habitat for various insects and small animals, contributing to a balanced local ecosystem. Through these efforts, we actively maintain and enhance biodiversity in an urban setting.

FOOD WASTE

Food waste reduction

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative reduces food waste

“Taste Foodwaste” was a three-year, intergenerational educational project by zusammen leben e.V., aimed at raising awareness about the value of food and the reduction of food waste. At the heart of the project was the question of how everyday food waste can be reduced and how creative use of leftovers can inspire new culinary ideas. Participants were invited to prepare vegetarian dishes using seasonal, surplus, or imperfect ingredients—based on simple, easily adaptable recipes.

CARBON FOOTPRINT

Reducing the carbon footprint of the food system

How many people attended your events or received educational materials about reducing the carbon footprint of their food choices?

600

Select from the following any carbon footprint reducing activities your initiative does (can select multiple options):

Systematically opting for foods associated with low levels of embodied carbon in recipes, for example by using alternatives to meat

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative reduces its carbon footprint (e.g. stories of your participants being inspired to make changes to reduce their carbon footprint because of your events or programs)

The Klimaküche ("Climate Kitchen") by zusammen leben e.V. celebrated sustainable and future-oriented food practices, serving as a space for culture, education, enjoyment, and community exchange. Under the professional guidance of chef Hannah Huddy, we reimaged 12 favorite international recipes—shared by members of the zusammen leben community—into vegetarian versions using seasonal and regional ingredients sourced from socially and ecologically responsible local producers. This approach not only showcased the diversity of food grown in our region but also helped introduce certain products into mainstream markets through increased demand. Across twelve Klimaküche events with around 600 participants, we successfully saved a total of 678,436 kg CO₂ equivalent emissions.

EDUCATION AND FOOD CHOICES – ENVIRONMENTAL

Increasing preference for vegetarian meals

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative increases preference for vegetarian meals.

We are pleased to offer eco-regional, seasonal, and vegetarian meals. Our commitment to sustainable food remains central to our delicious lunches, workshops, events and catering services. Each season, we create eco-regional dishes that can be enjoyed with a clear conscience. We maintain a high standard in food quality, and our strong dedication to seasonality is a statement we aim to make within the food industry.

ECONOMIC

JOBS

Training and jobs

How many people have found work after participating in a training or employment scheme with your initiative?

3

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative supports training and jobs.

Since 2020, the association *zusammen leben e.V. (zlev)* has been addressing a structural gap in the transition from school to employment for young people with disabilities. Through its vocational orientation programs in ecological vegetable farming and gastronomy, zlev actively contributes to shaping an inclusive labor market and locally implements both the Federal Participation Act and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Freiburg. Young people with disabilities aged 13 to 27 receive needs-based support three to five mornings per week during internships or a voluntary social year, either at the Zuka Solicafé or in the community garden *zusammen gärtnern*. Inclusive work facilitators support participants in exploring both vocational fields and in acquiring relevant skills. These vocational programs are characterized by a low-threshold, individualized approach. In the café, participants learn key gastronomic skills through hands-on experience—ranging from guest service and working at the counter to preparing meals in the kitchen—without time pressure. In the community garden, they gain insights into organic gardening, from sowing and cultivation to harvesting and marketing the produce. Both vocational tracks allow participants to learn at their own pace, supported by inclusive professionals. This approach enables the optimal development of individual strengths and interests while providing practical work experience. A special emphasis is placed on the diversity of competencies acquired—from practical and technical skills to social and communication abilities. By selling self-produced items at the local weekly market, participants also gain experience in entrepreneurial thinking. These projects not only support vocational orientation but also strengthen participants' self-confidence, independence, and improve their chances of accessing the primary labor market.

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Contribution to food production

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative contributes to food production.

zusammen leben e.V. collectively explores, develops, and experiences future-oriented topics related to ecology, biodiversity, and sustainable nutrition. The community garden, opened in summer 2016 at the foot of the Schönberg mountain and covering 3,500 square meters, serves as an intercultural space for encounter and exchange. Around 250 people from 16 different countries regularly garden together here. Whether through monthly action days, tending individual plots, participating in working groups, workshops, holiday programs, or educational projects in collaboration with schools and independent organizations—the garden offers a wide range of activities for people of all ages, regardless of origin, religion, or socio-cultural background. A particular focus lies on training and further education in organic horticulture and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles.

AFFORDABILITY OF FOOD

Reducing pressure on food budgets

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative is reducing pressure on food budgets.

Gardeners with individual plots in our community garden can cultivate and harvest their own vegetables year-round.

EDUCATION AND FOOD CHOICES – ECONOMIC

Sharing specific skills and knowledge about the food system

Share any other relevant information about how your initiative shares specific skills and knowledge about food and the food system.

ur initiative recognizes that addressing the current food crisis requires more than just knowledge—it demands empathy, collective awareness, and transformative action. Through community projects and artistic collaborations like those of the Esserinnenkollektiv*, we share specific skills and knowledge about the food system by connecting scientific facts with lived experience and emotional engagement. We focus on raising awareness about the vulnerabilities of our global food system, including risks such as climate-induced crop failures and geopolitical disruptions, while highlighting the urgent need to transition away from fossil-fuel-dependent industrial agriculture toward agroecological practices and food sovereignty. Our educational approach goes beyond traditional methods by integrating cultural activities, workshops, and community rituals that foster empathy between people, nature, and future generations. By involving participants in hands-on food cultivation, cooking with seasonal and surplus ingredients, and creative expressions such as performances and shared rituals, we create spaces for reflection, dialogue, and empowerment. Through this holistic sharing of skills—ranging from ecological gardening and sustainable cooking to critical understanding of food justice and systemic change—we aim to inspire practical action and nurture a collective commitment to regenerating the biosphere and transforming our food systems for a resilient future.

Formal qualifications

How many people gained formal qualifications relating, at least partially, to food because of participating in your initiative?

0

GOVERNANCE

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Sharing knowledge and good practice

Select from the following any activities your initiative does to share knowledge and best practices.

Hosted events to promote and educate about specialist practices your initiative implements.,Advised or assisted other food initiatives in adopting similar practices to your initiative.,Posted online content promoting the use of practices you implement which tackle important issues in the food system.,Participated in relevant region or regional networks for food sharing activities. For example, a community growers network.

Share here any other relevant information about how your initiative shares knowledge and good practice.

Our initiative disseminates knowledge and best practices through a variety of channels, including workshops, informational flyers, and recipe sharing. We organize lectures and cultural performances to engage diverse audiences and foster deeper unders

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning and sustainability

Select from the following the best description of your formal planning processes.

We have a formal plan which does specifically set out goals which relate to sustainability issues.

Stakeholder engagement

Select from the following the best description of your strategy for identifying, engaging, and managing your relationships with stakeholders.

We have identified the relevant stakeholders for our initiative in the past but do not regularly review them

RISK CONTROL

Risk control

Select from the following the best description of your current strategy for identifying and reducing risks facing your initiative.

We have identified the major risks to our initiative but have not yet formed a strategy to reduce them

Provide a summary of any steps you have taken in the last twelve months to minimise the major risks to the viability of your initiative.

We are developing a new finance strategy and organizational structure within Cultivate Action Plan

4. Disclaimer

This report was produced using the SHARING SOLUTIONS Toolkit which was designed as part of the European Research Council (ERC) SHARECITY project (Grant No. 646883) and developed with an ERC PoC Award (No. 101069183). The data entered in this report is the sole responsibility of the initiative entering the data, it was not independently verified by the SHARING SOLUTIONS Team. Any errors therefore remain the responsibility of the initiative.



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