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THE PEOPLE FIXING OUR FUTURE

Case studies of innovation, determination and environmental stewardship

OLIO

Reducing food waste and building community

THE PROBLEM

We produce enough food to feed every single person on Earth, yet a staggering third of all food produced globally is wasted.

Most people assume giant supermarkets or industrial farms are the main culprits. In reality, over 50% of all food waste happens right at home. And when food breaks down in landfills, it releases methane: a greenhouse gas over 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide!

THE SOLUTION

Enter Olio: a free app created to turn local kitchens and businesses into a sharing network.

Instead of throwing away perfectly good leftover groceries or household items, Olio lets you snap a photo, post it in seconds and give it away to a neighbour down the street for free. By connecting people locally through its app, Olio turns potential rubbish into free meals, building community connections at the same time.



TESSA CLARKE is the co-founder and CEO of Olio. Raised on a Yorkshire dairy farm, her early experience with the relentless graft of farm life instilled a lifelong respect for food production and waste prevention. She went on to study Social and Political Sciences at Cambridge University before launching Olio to combat food waste on a global scale.

olio

THE PROBLEM:

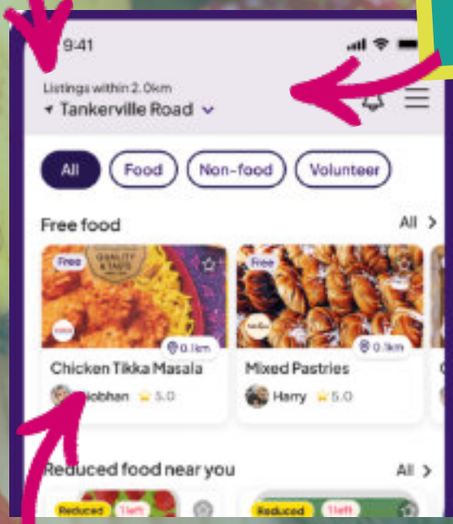
1/3 of the food we produce is wasted

THE SPARK

In 2014, co-founder Tessa Clarke was moving house and had a fridge full of unused food: sweet potatoes, cabbage and yoghurt. Refusing to throw it out, she walked around her neighbourhood trying to give it to strangers. Finding it awkward and unsuccessful, she then realised a local sharing platform like Olio needed to exist!

Olio officially launched on Farmers' Market Week in 2015 as a WhatsApp group created for 12 local neighbours in North London.

THE APP



The app makes sharing as simple as posting on social media:

Snap & Post: Upload a picture, title and short description of your surplus item.

Request & Reserve: Nearby users browse the feed, request an item and set a pickup time via private message.

Pick Up: The neighbour drops by your doorstep or a neutral local spot to collect it -100% free!

"A MAJOR MISCONCEPTION IS THAT MOST FOOD WASTE HAPPENS AT SUPERMARKETS. IN REALITY, OVER HALF OF ALL FOOD WASTE HAPPENS IN THE HOME, WHILE RETAIL ACCOUNTS FOR JUST ABOUT 2%."

TESSA CLARKE, CO-FOUNDER & CEO OF OLIO



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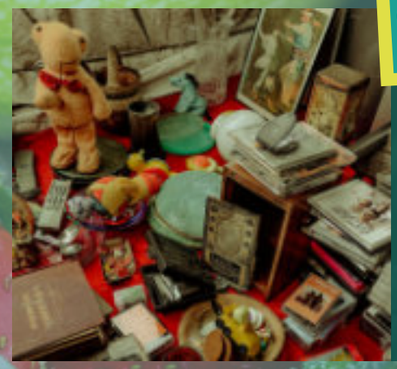
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FOOD WASTE HEROES

Beyond household sharing, Olio runs a huge volunteer program called Food Waste Heroes. Volunteers sign up to collect unsold food at the end of the day from partner businesses like supermarkets, cafes, and bakeries (including major chains like Tesco and Pret A Manger), then upload the items to the app so local people can claim them.



OLIO HAS 100,000+ TRAINED VOLUNTEERS RESCUING UNSOLD FOOD



BEYOND THE FRIDGE

While food remains the core mission, Olio expanded its platform to include non-food items under an Unwanted Goods category. Users regularly share spare toiletries, books, clothes, furniture and kitchen tools, turning the app into a full-scale circular economy hub.

"WE WANT TO LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE NOTHING GOES TO WASTE, AND WHERE NEIGHBORS SHARE WITH EACH OTHER RATHER THAN BUYING NEW."

SAASHA CELESTIAL-ONE, CO-FOUNDER & COO OF OLIO



RESCUING JUST 5 FOOD ITEMS ON OLIO SAVES MORE CARBON THAN IT TAKES TO CHARGE YOUR PHONE EVERY DAY FOR A YEAR!

WHAT CAN I DO?

Fighting climate change can feel overwhelming, but taking small actions inside your own neighbourhood add up fast. Using Olio is a practical and easy way to take direct environmental action, save money on snacks or household goods and keep resources circulating locally.

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