



# COMMUNITY-BASED

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## FOOD SYSTEMS



*Hungry*  
FOR  
**RIGHTS**

Global issues, local solutions

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A COLLECTION OF CASE STUDIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM

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CYPRUS, FRANCE, ITALY, LITHUANIA, SENEGAL, UK-SCOTLAND





Global issues, local solutions

This publication has been produced within the project:

***“Hungry for Rights. Global Learning from Local Solutions in Alternative Food Systems”***

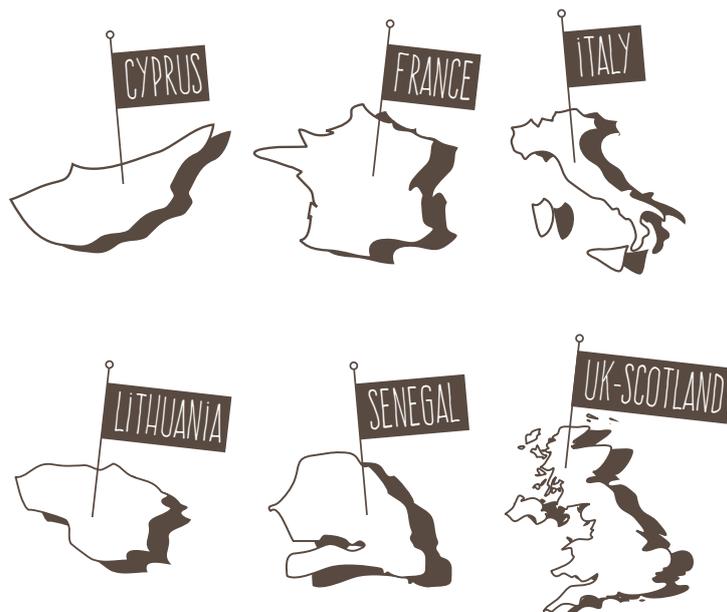
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# COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD SYSTEMS

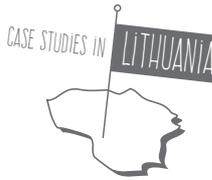
A COLLECTION OF CASE STUDIES  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM





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INNOVATION STRATEGIES				
Integration, coherence and synergies between local administrative policies and citizens' lifestyles				
KEY TOPICS				
Policy	Networking	Ecologic footprint	Knowledge and tradition(s)	Education, citizenship
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**Alternative Food Systems** (AFSs) can be considered as a key element of rural and peri-urban development at global level and as a viable answer to global challenges of food security and food sovereignty. AFSs are community based networks characterized by geographical proximity and a social organization oriented to mutual exchange and they are evidence of new dynamics of socio-economic development.

The engagement of AFS actors at local level in the European Union (EU) is meant as a way to contribute effectively to global processes of food governance, raising the voice of smallholder food producers and consumers on issues which directly concern them, but also and foremost as an occasion to better understand global interdependency of development and environmental challenges. This publication tells the stories of eighteen different alternative food systems in five European countries (Italy, France, Scotland, Lithuania and Cyprus) and in Africa (Senegal). It provides an overview of constraints and bottlenecks for urban and peri-urban food production and local food consumption, both in the North and in the South, gathering best practice from successful experiences of community-based and participatory solutions. The following best practices collection is the result of a participatory assessment led by the partner organizations in each country. Smallholder farmers and food producers, ethical purchase groups, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) staff and volunteers, Local Authority (LA) administrators and/or technical staff, migrant organizations representatives who are engaged in AFSs experiences in Europe and in the South have all been involved during this process of sharing through the use of a multi-stakeholder approach. Different perspectives, experiences and backgrounds have provided added value to the educational process, widening the range of skills and competencies that have been shared.

The participatory assessment took into account many selection criteria. These include the involvement of at least two or three types of actors within the target groups, the environmental sustainability performance of each project, the degree of social innovation, the participation of local communities, the management of short supply chain at local level and the involvement of people from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the constructivist paradigm which put the learner at the centre of the learning process, this best practices collection is an example of a knowledge-sharing methodology where the key actors of local AFSs are a source of skills, competence and experience. This process aims to offer strategies and spaces where it is possible to address problems related to food. To this end, each AFS offers a model of community development where the community is a source of collective solutions identified and implemented from within. The eighteen initiatives in this publication represent an impressive diversity in terms of their actors, their intentions, capacities and strategies, the configuration of their networks, the problems addressed, the goals pursued, the public support received and needed, their level of success and their impact on local development. These best practices do not provide a guarantee of success. They should be seen as a set of strategic guidelines that offer help in outlining activities and approaches that contribute to the successful creation and establishment of a sustainable food supply chain.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFS	Alternative Food Systems
ATTAC	Association for the Taxation on Financial Exchanges and for Citizens' Action
B2B	Business to Business
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GPP	Green Public Procurement
IFOAM EU	International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movement - European Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PGS	Participatory Guarantee Systems
SMEs:	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
WHO	World Health Organisation

### CYPRUS

CTO:	Cyprus Tourism Organisation
JRC	Joint Research Centre
LAGs:	Local Action Groups
MOEC:	Ministry of Education and Culture

### FRANCE

ACSE	National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities
ADEL	Agency for the Development of Local Economy.
AMAP	Association pour le Maintien de l'Agriculture Paysanne [Association for Maintaining Small Scale Family Farming]
CBG	Centre Social Georges Brassens.
DLA	Local Support Mechanism.
ESS	Économie Sociale et Solidaire [Social and Solidarity based Economy]
FACT	Act against Exclusion Foundation.
FNDVA	National Fund for the Development of Community Outreach
INFA	National Training and Implementation Institute.
SCIC	Société Coopérative d'Intérêt Collectif.
SENS	Solidarités Entreprises Nord Sud.
SNCF	Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer [The French National Railway Company]

### ITALY

AINPO	One of the main producers' organizations in Northern Italy
ARP	Agricultori Riuniti Piacentini
CIO	Interregional Consortium Fruit and Vegetables
DES	Solidarity Economy District
GAS	Ethical Purchasing Groups
GDO	Grande Distribuzione Organizzata [large-scale retail channels]
FIBL	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
LCA	Life Cycle Assessment
MDC	Movimento Difesa del Cittadino

### LITHUANIA

LEADER	Links Between the Rural Economy and Development Actions
LAG	Local Action Group
RDP	Rural Development Plan.

### SENEGAL

CFD	Centres on Micro-gardening
DH	Directorate of Horticulture
FONGS	Fédération des organisations non-gouvernementales du Sénégal
ISRA	Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research
ITA	National Institute of Food Technology
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security
UGPM	Union des Groupements Paysans de Mékhé

### UK - SCOTLAND

BVAHA	Barra and Vatersay Agricultural and Horticultural Association
CAN	Community Action Network
CnES	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
CIC	Community Interest Company
REAL Project	Real Education Active Lives Project
TAP	The Ardmere Partnership

# INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the world's urban population outnumbered its rural population. This urbanization process goes together closely with growing urban poverty and food insecurity. Currently, there are at least 20 cities in the world with more than 10 million people. These developments in population demographics add new challenges to public policies on food supply and food distribution. The separation between the places of production and those of consumption does not facilitate the reconciliation between the demand and the supply: issues linked to transportation, conservation and market diminish the nutritional value of food and increase the cost of nourishment. During the last decade, food insecurity for poor urban people appears to have increased, people who live in a megalopolis spend 30 per cent more than people who live in rural area, but their consumption of calories is lower.

In the last decade the European countries have seen worsening gaps in related to the pre-eminent model of production, distribution and consumption of food. In the last forty years, eating habits have radically changed: the consumption of fruit and vegetables has decreased but the purchase of transformed products, already washed, often parboiled has increased.

In an area in which 50% of edible food is wasted in homes, supermarkets and restaurants and along the food supply chain, 79 million EU citizens live below the poverty line and 16 million people depend on food aid. For every 100 euros spent by families in agricultural products intended for fresh consumption, 75 euro represent the so-called contribution margin for the commercial sector, distribution and transport, resulting in the marginalization of farmers in the food chain. Therefore, the price of food is more and more connected to the costs of transport and packaging, is less linked to its social costs and the quality of jobs in agriculture and is completely unrelated to such negative costs as pollution and waste in general.

The sustainability of the food and agriculture system is too often taken for granted in our daily life. The food scandals of recent

years have contributed to the increased need for attention to innovation in the production and distribution of food. Attention to, and management of, environmental concerns such as organic production have not yet been considered as a real alternative to the predominant model of most people in general.

The following case studies show an alternative model of production, distribution and consumption which can create "new spaces and new roads" to the traditional agro-food system. We are witnessing many growing experiences of agriculture and food that are generally identified as "alternative food". Those are both formal and informal experiences supported by local authorities that can diversify the source of food, create job opportunities at the same time keeping intact the rural areas and improving the biodiversity.

*Growing the food and bringing it to the consumer* creates social cohesion in the journey to promote our project "Hungry for Rights".

Short supply chains have developed in response to needs expressed by producers and consumers. By adopting an institutional and community approach, countries like Senegal, Lithuania and France prove it is possible to improve the food chain and social cohesion with an Alternative Food System (AFS). Put into practice the result is an improved diet for children at school, and new income opportunities for people who live in the new suburbs and marginal rural areas. These projects also improve the use of urban space by supporting public canteens and farmers markets that are linked to the territory.

World wide many public authorities are questioning how to promote effective **food policies** aimed at supporting the growth of alternative food system into the globalized food model. Many governments are aware that Alternative Food Systems can be tools for local development because they can hold back the majority of the added value in the territory where the food is produced.

**STRATEGIES THAT EMERGED FROM THE RESEARCH IN  
RELATION TO THIS PROJECT:**

- 1. Promote and improve local food distribution systems through gathering platforms, collective shops and CSA farmers' markets.** A precondition for the sustainability of alternative food systems is to improve the supply chain. The supply chain is the number of steps that a product has to pass through to get to the end user. Shortening this supply chain is a way of reducing the time between the moment when the food is ready for consumption and moment when it is available to the consumer. It can also act to reduce the costs associated with moving the food by train, truck or airplane. Reducing the number of steps in this chain can improve the quality of the product as well as bring less tangible benefits such as jobs and the maintenance of traditional knowledge of biodiversity. AFS offers models to right size food chains to more environmentally sustainable and mixed food economies:
- 2. Design and integrate welfare objectives:** support actions that increase job opportunities for disadvantaged people (such as the unemployed and migrants) and educate new farmers by enhancing abandoned land resources. Initiatives of this sort could also strengthen the network of services in marginal peri-urban and remote rural areas. Including welfare objectives makes food production more multi-functional for example offering training, care, volunteering opportunities, socializing events and tourist attractions. This makes these areas and activities seem more attractive and viable for younger people and help to address the broader trend of urbanisation.
- 3. Support policies that encourage citizens' participation in alternative food systems.** The estrangement of consumers from the world of production has led to a loss of awareness and knowledge, but consumer awareness of issues related to food is ever-increasing often leading to a demand for greater citizen's participation in the food system. It is therefore very important to consider food consumption education as central to the development of policies on food. Food policy should take a food sovereignty rather than a food security approach.

# ONLINE SHOPPING OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

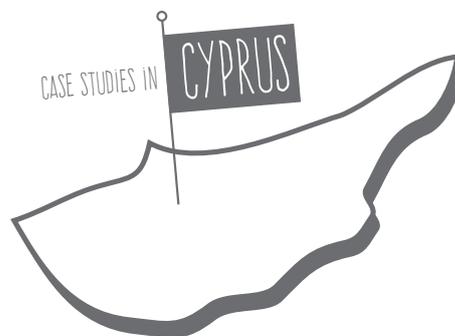
August - September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Organic Farming Association, Organic Superfoods Association, Consumers Association, ethical purchase groups and NGOs participated in the first and third local activation meeting, held on 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

Participants supported the project and in particular the initiative. Their suggestions included online organic shops and online platform to locate farmer's markets. The owner of the online shop facilitated the survey by providing all necessary information.



## CONTEXT

Online shopping for organic products was identified as a best practice to study, since it fulfils the selection criteria and is endorsed by the target groups. Most importantly, it promotes organic farming and products along with local production of food and indirectly influences consumers' health, sustainable agriculture, nature's protection from agrochemicals and GMOs, agricultural biodiversity as well as helping to reduce the carbon footprint.

The internet is increasingly being used to gather information about organics in Cyprus and this is documented from the results of two surveys conducted in 2010 and 2011 by the European University of Cyprus on behalf of the Cyprus Organic Farmers Association. These surveys showed that the use of the internet has risen by 5 per cent. (Cyprus Organic Farmers Association 2011)

For the purpose of this report the two most comprehensive websites identified in Cyprus are '**Bioshop - organic for all**' and '**Cyprus Organics - Healthy LifeStyle**'. Although the website 'Cyprus Organics - Healthy LifeStyle' is a great site to follow for information about organic farmers and products, and for its inventory of shops with organic products in Cyprus, it was not selected. This is because the online shop section is not built yet. The online store 'Bioshop - organic for all' was identified as the best practice to study.

## DESCRIPTION

The website's owner is a member of the Pancyprian Association of Organic Farmers and the IFOAM EU group, with four organic stores in Nicosia and Limassol and ten years experience in the retail market for healthy eating. Based on this experience he recently created the online store 'Bioshop - organic for all'. The online shop offers a wide range of organic products, but the study focuses on those produced and processed in Cyprus by smallholder farmers and producers.

### COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

#### 1. Involvement of target groups

Organic farmers and consumers are involved.

#### 2. Scale

Large scale.

#### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

This criterion is met since the online shop sells only certified organic products that by definition have no chemical inputs and protect biodiversity.



In addition, in order to reduce its footprint and support local production 'Bioshop' is supplied mainly by local producers (60 per cent of its fruit and vegetables, 100 per cent of its olive oil, two per cent of its nuts and 70 per cent of its are from local sources). Its carbon footprint is further reduced as the online shop is a part of an existing structure and so it doesn't create any additional emissions. For packaging it uses recycled paper and produces no packaging waste since it reuses any old packaging as packing material. The use of a courier service decreases carbon footprint because it means consumers can avoid using their car (in Cyprus public transport is very limited).

#### **4. Scale up**

Bearing in mind the limited quantities of Cypriot organic products, the most suitable way to scale up this initiative is to create an online database of local producers (including organic) and local traditional products.

#### **5. Level of social innovation**

##### **(relationships and partnerships, impacts on social attitudes)**

The website supports local producers and promotes cooperation in order to sustain and further develop the organic farming sector in Cyprus. It promotes healthy eating and enables consumers to buy organic products. Online shopping for organic products is relatively new in Cyprus, and the online store 'Bioshop - organic for all' could be considered as an advance.

Online shopping and home delivery of organic food products beyond the

commercial purpose has a social impact since it helps people suffering from certain diseases (for example diabetes), it is convenient for persons with disabilities or very elderly people and provides solutions to specific problems like food intolerances. Furthermore, it helps organic producers distribute their products in areas where there are no organic shops and at the same time enables people in those areas to buy organic products.

'Bioshop' retails only certified organic products. Nevertheless, the owner markets products in transition from conventional farming in his four organic stores, in order to encourage and support local organic farming.

#### **6. Participation of local communities**

'Bioshop' gives priority to local certified organic producers, supporting local production and, indirectly, local communities.

#### **7. Supply chain**

The supply chain in relation to local products is short since the online shop trades local organic products supplied directly from the producers. However, in order to cover its needs, 'Bioshop' has to import certain products due to the limited organic production in Cyprus. The area under organic farming in Cyprus is estimated at 3,970ha corresponding to 3 per cent of the total agricultural land in the free area of Cyprus. (Ministry of Agriculture 2011) As far as product delivery is concerned, 'Bioshop' collaborates with a specific courier service.

#### **8. Focus on rural-urban dynamics of food supply chain**

Through the website the organic products are becoming more accessible to urban areas and internet users. The owner of the online shop plans to encourage, via the website, participation in events promoting organic farming and products which are held in rural areas. This is intended to strengthen the relationship between producers and consumers.

#### **9. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors**

Online shopping enables smallholder organic farmers to retail their products. 'Bioshop' is supplied by sixty local certified organic producers.

#### **FURTHER REQUIREMENTS**

##### **Linked to the active role of local authorities or public policies in general**

'Bioshop' benefited from the 'Plan for the Promotion of Electronic Commerce in Cyprus' which is part of the Programme 'Business Online'. Through this programme, launched by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism as a part of its strategic plan for the acceleration of the growth of e-commerce in Cyprus, SMEs are awarded grants to develop the use of internet and e-commerce.

Organic production is supported by the European Union with a variety of measures included in the Common Agricultural Policy.

# ONLINE SHOPPING OF ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

Online shopping is valued for the freshness of its produce and its convenience, as consumers are able to cut down on the time spent when shopping conventionally. (Kneafsey et al 2013).

Prompted by his passion for organic products and based on the knowledge he has accumulated in the sector, the online shop owner decided to go online. In doing so he is aiming to satisfy consumers' requests for an online store in Cyprus. This alternative form of trade gives advantage to organic products over cheap conventional ones and enables them to survive competition.

### 2. Bottlenecks

A weakness of online shopping is the absence of direct/personal communication between producers and consumers, which is regarded as an advantage of short food chains and direct market. Consumers may use the internet for information on producers, finding local producers and sales outlets, but not actually buying food products due to fears of uncertain delivery and of transport damage (European Commission 2013).

Additionally, the 'Bioshop' owner stressed out that there is some scepticism and suspicion amongst consumers regarding online shopping of organic food products, especially due to

lack of knowledge. They consider organic fruits and vegetables of inferior quality because of their appearance.

Not everyone is familiar with the use of the internet or has access to it, so online shopping is restricted to specific social and age groups. Additionally, in Cyprus ethical consumer groups are not yet as common as they are in other EU countries.

Another restriction is that despite the wide range of organic products produced in Cyprus, the quantities are very limited to cover the needs.

### 3. Sustainability performance

#### Economic sustainability

The site was launched in June 2013, so no precise data are available on its economic viability. However, the owner considers that if it was an autonomous enterprise (not related to his shops) it would be difficult to survive economically because of the limited number of people buying organic in Cyprus (perhaps three to five per cent of the population). 'Bioshop' as an extension of an existing structure/activity most probably will be economically viable.

#### Environmental sustainability

Organic production is environmentally sustainable. A high percentage of the products is locally produced. Further efforts are made to reduce carbon footprint, to recycle and reuse.

#### Social and political sustainability

'Bioshop' encourages, supports and

promotes local organic farming and smallholder organic producers. It is an important marketing and distribution channel for organic farmers and producers in Cyprus, since it collaborates with the 50 per cent of local organic farmers and producers who market their products. Many producers took the initiative and contacted the owner of the website to retail their products through Bioshop. Moreover, by making organic products more widely known, the website has influenced young unemployed people to engage with organic farming. Some young people have already contacted him to propose collaboration.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

Because the owner of the organic online shop has extensive previous experience of the retail market for organic products, he has already developed strong relations with local organic producers and consumers.

Organic food production is strictly regulated. Nevertheless, consumers demand detailed information about organic food production. In order to ensure transparency and reliability, organic products must be certified and labelled, indicating that the product has been produced according to the existing organic standards. The mechanisms of co-ordination are based on the labelling given by organic certification organisations.



## 5. Policies

Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 for Cyprus.

Priority Axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector. Measure 1.6: 'Adding value to agricultural and forestry products. Processing and Marketing': this measure aims for the development of new products with high added value, like traditional and organic products.

Sub-Measure 1.8.1: "Participation of farmers in food quality schemes": this gives support to farmers participating in community or national food quality schemes that are aimed at safeguarding the quality of products or the methods used for production, increasing opportunities to add value to primary agricultural products and increasing marketing opportunities. Organic production is encouraged both

in the animal and plant sector in order to enhance environmental protection and biodiversity, reduce inputs and also increase the quality of the products by the Sub Measure 2.3.7 'Development of Organic Products' Priority Axis 2 Improving the Environment and the Countryside. (No Author. No date: 7f, 13f)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The research recommends creating an online database of local producers (including organic) and local traditional products giving further information of the place of production and ways of purchase, where all will be easily accessible. The website will also promote several agricultural practices of low input farming and provide links to experts such as agronomists and professionals that provide advice to farmers and others interested in farming. The producers chosen to participate in the database should fulfill certain criteria, i.e. that they are producers and not traders, that

they follow all relevant state regulations and agricultural good practices for food production and fulfill their tax obligations. The creation of such a database will overcome the basic limitations of the present initiative which are the low quantities of Cypriot organic products and the related high prices. A dedicated local production dedicated database will encourage increasing participation of Cypriot farmers and consumers alike without the intervention or extra costs of a private company. A further recommendation is to raise public awareness of the value of local and

organic food as well as the disadvantages of conventional long trading food chains, which prevail today.

Local and organic farming must be further encouraged and enhanced in Cyprus to cover the need for the island's food security. The Cypriot Government must set and apply a strategic plan and surveillance for the protection of local production such as will regulate the trade of food products to combat information that misleads consumers about the origin of the food they purchase.

# ORGANIC VEGETABLE SCHOOL GARDEN IN A RURAL AREA

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

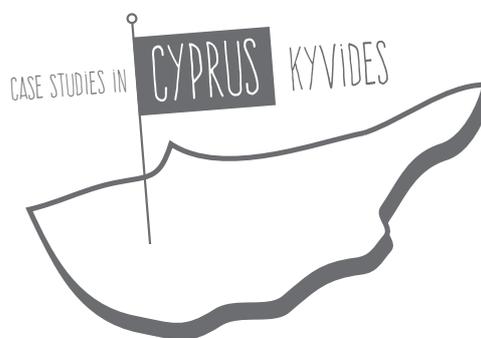
September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Public Authorities (Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), Environment Commissioner), Teachers' Organisation, Parents' Association, students, School Committee, local community, local farmers, organic farmers, private companies.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

Participants in the second local activation meeting (organic farmers, teachers, environmental NGOs, civil society organisations) raised the issues of better nutrition in schools as well as better Education Programmes regarding food and health, leading to the selection of the school garden as a good initiative to study. In addition, interviews were conducted with the person responsible for the environmental education programmes of Primary Education, of the MOEC and the school headmaster.



## CONTEXT

The school garden is an environmentally friendly capacity building educational tool with cross-curriculum activities that takes learning beyond the walls of the classroom. Major objectives of this initiative are to get as many young people as possible familiar with organic farming and sustainable agriculture, expand children's understanding of food production and raise children's awareness of a more varied diet and healthy eating habits. Organic school gardens enable students to restore and strengthen their relation with nature and to familiarise them with key scientific principles through monitoring, recording, researching and understanding various biological cycles and phenomena (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2009, 2013). Moreover, students become aware of the different varieties of vegetables and learnt in which season they are produced, and perceived the link between what they grow and what they eat. Food systems are the unifying concept. "From plot to pot", students learn how to grow, tend, harvest and prepare nutritious seasonal produce (FAO, 2005)

## DESCRIPTION

The garden maintained at the primary school of Kyvides village has been identified as the best practise, based on the MOEC data. It is a small school of 59 students and the village is located in a semi mountainous region 22 kilometres north-west of Limassol.

The school garden was created in fall 2011 and is exclusively maintained by the students during school hours under the supervision of the headmaster, who is an organic farmer in his free time. It covers about 300m<sup>2</sup> and is planted twice a year during the autumn and spring planting seasons. The caretaker and students take care of the garden in their free time during holidays. They grow organic seasonal vegetables. They use exclusively local varieties and they produce their own seedlings. The produce is used by the children either in school or at home and part is given to needy families promoting solidarity.

The teachers are very enthusiastic and most of them contribute in maintaining the garden. The parents and their Association strongly support the school garden and the local community as a whole embrace the initiative. Changes in the students' attitude towards healthy eating, farming and respect for nature have already been recorded.



**COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION****CRITERIA****1. Involvement of target groups**

Organic farmers, teachers, students, School Committee and parents' association are involved with this project.

**2. Scale**

Small.

**3. Environmental sustainability performance**

These requirements are fulfilled since they grow organic local varieties with no chemical inputs. Local varieties are adapted to local climate conditions, with low requirements of water. The produce is consumed in the school or in the village, with no need of packaging or transport. The crops' residues are incorporated into the soil to add nutrients and organic matter (green manure). Biodiversity is highly protected since they grow organic local varieties. As far as energy consumption is concerned the garden is highly sustainable since energy is spent only for the primary tilling which is done by mechanical means. They use water sparingly given that the village experiences water scarcity.

**4. Scale up**

The initiative has already been significantly scaled up, in April 2013 three private companies, as part of their corporate social responsibility and in collaboration with the MOEC and the Environment Commissioner, launched the campaign "Organic vegetable gardens for 100 schools". In the frame of this campaign they offer guidance, compost, irrigation systems and seedlings to a 100 schools (Ministry of Education and Culture 2013). Forty-six schools have already joined the programme. The Ministry plans to upgrade the action and to include specific educational materials in the school curriculum.

**5. Level of social innovation**

The initiative fosters better understanding of food production: of where food comes from; of natural processes and the environment. It promotes healthier eating habits. Organic food growing in schools has a positive impact on everyone involved and the wider community. It further promotes interaction amongst various social and age groups, cooperation and teamwork.

Part of the produce is given to needy families stimulating solidarity amongst the local community.

Children with learning disabilities who are involved in school gardening developed other skills and self esteem.

The headmaster plays a key role in shaping children's attitude towards agriculture and gardening. Some children considered gardening as just a hard, dirty work, but the headmaster's commitment changed their attitude and motivated them.

**6. Participation of local communities**

The parents appreciate the value of the school garden and embraced it. They offer any help needed at personal level or via their Association. The school distributes seeds and seedlings prompting children to create their own garden at home involving their family and thus strengthening school and family relations.

**7. Supply chain**

The supply chain is short. The production is not sold but is consumed in the school or at children's homes. The seeds are supplied by local producers.

**8. Focus on rural-urban dynamics of food supply chain**

Children living in urban and peri-urban areas involved in maintaining an organic school garden are getting familiar with farming, food production and becoming aware of local and seasonal varieties. These children will develop better eating

habits, and will choose to buy organic locally grown and in season vegetables and fruits, and to avoid the imported out-of-season ones.

**9. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors**

Smallholder farmers supply the school with local varieties' seeds. Since the headmaster is an experienced organic farmer there was no need to ask for advice from other farmers. Local smallholder farmers may offer advice and share their expertise and experience with the teachers and students in the future.

**FURTHER REQUIREMENTS****Linked to the active role of local authorities or public policies in general**

The Environmental Education Programme of the MOEC suggests the creation of a school garden in order to be used as an educational tool. It is not a mandatory action and aims to promote environmental education. The Ministry intends to upgrade the program and produce teaching materials, in collaboration with the University of Cyprus.

Healthy nutrition issues and vegetables are included in the Health Education and Science Programmes.

**Information must be accessible/ available**

The MOEC is kept informed, and disseminates information to other schools and interested groups. The School Committee and Parents' Association are kept updated. Families are constantly kept informed regarding all aspects, particularly since the school sends home vegetables, seeds and seedlings. The school organises events (like vegetables eating day) where parents and the community in general are invited. The school garden is visible to the community and visitors, so the action is easily made known.

# ORGANIC VEGETABLE SCHOOL GARDEN IN A RURAL AREA

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

The headmaster being an experienced organic farmer himself decided to create the garden in order to make the children familiar with organic farming and raise environmental awareness and promote healthy eating.

The Ministry of Education encourages the creation of school gardens through the Environmental Education Programme.

The Environment Commissioner and the Ministry of Education endorse the private initiative "Organic vegetable gardens for 100 schools".

### 2. Bottlenecks

There were no negative attitudes towards creating an organic garden in the school. Nevertheless, some reservations were expressed only by few students, reluctant to spend their free time for gardening. Covering the start up costs for setting the garden was an obstacle. The headmaster overcame this difficulty in collaboration with the School Committee, which allocated the necessary funds for fencing and irrigation system. This initiative does not offer any solution to problems related to food distribution or AFS, but only aims to educate children and parents about such systems.

### 3. Sustainability performance

#### Economic sustainability

Maintaining the school garden is economically viable because of the very low running expenses, which are covered by the school budget.

#### Environmental sustainability

As the school garden is organically grown, this contributes to its environmental sustainability. They cultivate local varieties adapted to local climate conditions, able to grow with an appropriate small scale irrigation system. The produce is consumed by the children, no transport or packaging is needed.

#### Social and political sustainability

The involvement of teachers, students, farmers, parents and their associations contributes to community cohesion.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

The action is coordinated via the Environmental Education, Health Education and Science Programmes of the MOEC Programme. The headmaster, as the garden manager, and the teachers play a key role in coordinating the creation and maintenance of the garden. An informal network is formed amongst students, the headmaster, teachers, parents, local organic farmers and the School Committee, that helps with running the garden.

The creation of organic gardens in schools has been particularly publicised with the launching of the campaign 'Organic gardens for 100 schools', in April 2013.

### 5. Policies

The MOEC endorses the creation and maintenance of organic school gardens and the action is included in the Environmental Education Programme, but no funds are allocated for the action. Additionally the organic school garden promotes healthy eating habits and key principles of science by making use of the Health Education and Science Programmes of the MOEC. Both the MOEC and the Environment Commissioner support and promote the organic school gardens (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013).

The Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment implements two European Programmes that encourage the development of good eating and nutritional habits. One is the European School Milk Programme which makes use of EU subsidies so schools can provide their students with selected milk and milk products. The other is the EU School Fruit Scheme, which promotes the consumption of fruits and vegetables at schools.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- All schools in Cyprus should develop and maintain their own organic garden.
- A network of schools with gardens should be set up to facilitate exchange of knowledge, expertise, and social media, internet site with local products.
- The organic school gardens' harvest can be a source of nutritious vegetables and fruits to supplement school feeding programs (canteens and school meals).
- The canteens and the school meals services should be committed to using only organic and local products; for example, the tenders have to provide proofs of local and/or organic purchase products. The online database proposed in Initiative one would be of help, facilitating canteens and school meal services to be supplied by organic and local products.
- Schools in rural areas should adapt their curriculum to allocate more teaching time for school garden care and capacity building in the field of agriculture. This measure could help to address rural depopulation.

# LOCAL AND TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Organic farmers, local farmers and producers, local community, private enterprises, Local Authority.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The participants endorsed the project and shared all information. The researchers have spoken with the manager of Limassol District Local Action Group (LAG), the president and the secretary of the community council and with four local producers (Anagyris Essential Oils Distillery; Oleastro - olive park; Carob museum and factory; Nicolaidis winery).



## CONTEXT

The village of Anogyra was identified as a best practice, because it combines the organic cultivation of very distinctive Cyprus crops and the production of organic and local traditional products of high value, distributed mainly by the producers themselves.

Anogyra is situated about 45 kilometres north-west of Limassol at an altitude of 170 metres above sea level. According to the 2011 census, the population of Anogyra is 287 inhabitants. The history of the village goes back to the Neolithic Era. Archaeological findings from excavations confirm that the settlement was continuously inhabited since at least 3500 BC. The village has a rich cultural heritage and tradition and preserves its original traditional character with narrow cobbled streets and stone-built houses.

Anogyra is one of the twenty villages composing the Network 'Beautiful Villages of Cyprus' which has been established under Axis 4 of the LEADER Rural Development Program 2007-2013, that is implemented through the Local Development Strategies of the approved LAGs. The villages have been selected based on various criteria, i.e. history, tradition, reputation, built and natural environment etc.

## DESCRIPTION

The village has managed to combine in an exemplary way public and private initiative in order to preserve and enhance cultivation of local crops and the production of traditional products. The inhabitants cooperate with each other and with the encouragement and leverage of the Local Authority; the Association of Expatriates and Friends of Anogyra and the Limassol District LAG take further advantage of national and European programs and policies. They exploit new ideas to preserve the local traditional production and to promote their products by direct selling and by develop close relationships with consumers mainly through small museums and thematic parks built in their premises.

The local farmers grow cereal crops for human food and livestock feed, vegetables, fruits, legumes, olive and carob trees and vines. The small local factories produce organic olive oil, wine, dairy products (halloumi-traditional cheese), pasteli (very distinctive local traditional sweet, made from carob syrup) and essential oils produced from organic and wild grown local herbs. Anogyra is the only village in Cyprus where the long lasting tradition of pasteli made by traditional methods, from carob syrup, still goes on.



The village is self-sufficient, in those products that they produce, because the farmers distribute their produce first in the local market, covering the local needs and then sell their products all over Cyprus and/or export them. Most of the produce is processed in the village's small factories and in the same way first is distributed locally and then to other areas and/or exported.

The most representative small enterprises in the village are:

- **Anagyris Essential Oils Distillery:** This enterprise produces essential oils from organically cultivated and wild grown local plant species. Combines a group of activities i.e. distillery, small thematic park, plantation and restaurant. The products are distributed locally, via an online store and exported without any intermediaries.
- Carob museum and factory 'Mavros Chrysos': Traditional workshop that produces pasteli from carob syrup derived from a selected local variety carob tree. The small museum presents the traditional process for making carob syrup and pasteli products. The owners sell the products locally and distribute them to health stores directly without any intermediaries.
- 'To Anoirkatiko': a small dairy factory that produces amongst other dairy products the distinctive Cyprus traditional cheese, called 'halloumi'. The products are sold locally and distributed directly to stores in Cyprus.
- Nicolaidis winery: small family winery that produces wine from indigenous (Xynisteri an indigenous white grape grown in Cyprus) and imported varieties from their own vineyard and selected local ones. Wines are sold locally and distributed either directly or with intermediaries.
- **Oleastro - olive park:** A unique to Cyprus olive theme park which

combines a variety of activities: an organic olive grove, an ecological olive mill where the oil is produced with cold press in millstones, an olive oil museum, a traditional coffee shop and an olive oil gift shop. They distribute their products directly without any intermediaries.

## COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

### 1. Involvement of target groups

Organic farmers/producers, consumers, the local community, Association of Expatriates and Friends of Anogyra, Local Authority, Limassol District LAG and the State through various policies and funding Programmes were all involved in this project.

### 2. Scale

Small and large (due to exports) scale.

### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

As far as the agricultural inputs is concerned, these are reduced because part of the produce is organically grown. Furthermore, due to the financial crisis conventional farmers have reduced their use of agrochemicals. Most of the produce is locally processed and distributed, contributing to carbon footprint decrease. Certain producers run their enterprises in more environmentally friendly way, i.e. they recycle; reuse materials for packaging; use compost and use biomass to heat the water for olive oil extraction.

### 4. Scale up

Suitable for scaling up. The Local Authority plans in collaboration with the neighbouring villages to create a network of 'green' areas. Other villages in Cyprus would be very interested in following Anogyra's success story.

### 5. Level of social innovation

Alongside their commercial activities the small enterprises in the area promote culture and tradition as they house museums and thematic parks. These private initiatives safeguard inherited

traditions that are important for Cyprus like carob processing and production of unique carob based products, and traditional olive oil extraction methods. They create beneficial interactive relationships with the community and the locals, as they strengthen economic activity and create job positions. The population of the village is increasing, after the severe demographic decline of the last century's second half, due to the substantial number of young people and members of the diaspora who return to live and work in the village.

Mutual assistance and cooperation are highly developed among the locals. The essential oils distillery is a brilliant example. Some villagers volunteered to grow herbs for the needs of the distillery and during the harvesting of wild species many locals help, especially women.

### 6. Participation of local communities

The village of Anogyra is a representative example of local community participation. The inhabitants collaborate and share a common vision and efforts to develop their village. They promote local production and safeguard traditional ways of food product processing. The Association of Expatriates and Friends of Anogyra plays an important role in the village development. They promote local production and tradition with various actions, namely the pasteli festival.

### 7. Supply chain

Short supply chain. Most of the producers are self-distributors. Part of the produce is sold through intermediaries.

### 8. Focus on rural-urban dynamics of food supply chain

The thematic parks and the museums related to organic farming and traditional products processing and the food festivals organised in the village, attract visitors from urban areas that buy the local products directly from the producers and getting familiar with long lasting traditions of local products farming and processing.

## LOCAL AND TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

### 9. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors

The majority are smallholder farmers that either process and sell their products in the village or distribute them in the neighbouring villages. Some of the producers sell their products to stores in cities and few export them (organic olive oil, essential oils etc).

### FURTHER REQUIREMENTS

#### Linked to the active role of local authorities or public policies in general

The Local Authority plays a key role in the development of the village in general, to implement new projects and create new job positions. It promotes and supports local producers and local production. The village and a substantial number of the inhabitants have been benefited

from various EU and state funding and grants opportunities, through various Programmes.

In Anogyra village they have successfully matched private initiatives, the Local Authority's plans and vision and state policies and programmes.

#### 1. Motivations and conditions

The Local Authority launched all those actions aiming to revitalize the village and

## ANALYSIS

fight rural depopulation. In the process they have realized the importance of agriculture and local production and to value their own local traditional products.

Locals wanted to preserve and safeguard longstanding local traditions in farming and food processing and some of them also wanted to promote nature protection via organic agriculture.

The return to nature, preservation of tradition, and the combination of technology with environmental friendly and traditional production of local products motivated young people who returned to live and work in the village.

### 2. Bottlenecks

The president of the community council and the locals interviewed, mentioned that they have to cope with financial problems and bureaucracy, mainly during the start up period of the various plans and projects. They don't face any problems with the

produce trade, apart from the local winery due to the small and competitive market in Cyprus in this sector.

### 3. Sustainability performance

#### Economic sustainability

Anogyra combines multiple activities that are mutually supportive, such as agriculture, livestock keeping, agro-tourism, food processing, small thematic parks and museums etc. gaining advantage over other villages. Similarly private enterprises in the area that combine a number of activities like farming, produce processing, self-distribution, small thematic parks and small museums within their land, are more economically viable.

#### Environmental sustainability

Certain activities in the village are environmentally sustainable, i.e. organic farming, short supply chain, lower agricultural inputs, use of biomass, etc.

#### Social and political sustainability

The various activities in the village form an informal network and are mutually supportive, complement each other and work together promoting social cohesion. The local authority collaborates with the locals aiming further progress, and economic, social and environmental sustainability.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

- The local authority fully in line with the locals collaborates both with the Limassol District LAG and, the various government departments to promote the village and their produce.
- The small thematic parks and museums offer the visitors the opportunity to get familiar with local natural environment, production and tradition.
- Local enterprises and associations organize the pasteli festival and the olive event to promote their local traditional products.



- Some of the local enterprises have their own website to promote their products.
- The village is widely promoted through the Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO) brochures and website, particularly for special forms of tourism (Wine Route 4: wine-villages Limassol).
- Anogyra is one of the 20 villages composing the Network 'Beautiful Villages of Cyprus' which has been established under Axis 4 - LEADER Rural Development Program 2007-2013. The village is promoted through the official website of the network ([www.beautifulvillages.com.cy](http://www.beautifulvillages.com.cy)), social networks, the design of thematic routes and integrated proposals for visitors, a tour guide and also through specially organized visits for journalists. (Limassol District Development Agency 2012)

#### 5. Policies

Anogyra villages has successfully matched public and private initiatives, and, as a result, has managed to benefit from

various policies and programmes. Some of the programmes are:

- Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 for Cyprus Priority Axis 4 LEADER, Measure 4.1: Implementation of Local Development Strategies.
- Priority Axis 1, Measure 1.2: 'Setting up of young farmers' which aims to invert the present age pyramid of the farmers and revive the country side; create viable and competitive holdings, provide incentives to young people to remain in rural areas.
- Sub-Measure 1.5.1: 'Modernisation of agricultural holdings'. The measure aims to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and the overall performance of the agricultural holdings via the enhancement of the physical capital.
- CTO. Rural Tourism Promotion Plan 2007-2013 - Special forms of tourism (Wine Route 4: wine-villages Limassol).
- Operational Programme Sustainable

Development and Competitiveness, 2007-2013

- Priority Axis: Productive Environment Incentive scheme for promoting entrepreneurship among women.
- Ministry of Interior, Town Planning Department. Plan for Agrotourism grants 2007-2013. Funded by the Structural and Cohesion Funds
- Ministry of Interior, Town Planning Department. Structural and Cohesion Funds and European Regional Development Fund (2007-2013). Single Programming Document for Objective 2, Measure 1.3. Development of Sustainable Rural Communities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A first recommendation is to establish a network in the village amongst farmers, producers and the local authority in order to further promote organic and local traditional produce. A second is to set up a website

for the village where all activities, farmers, producers, landmarks, archaeological sites etc. would be easily found.

Local farmers and producers could also participate in an online database of local

producers (including organic) and local traditional products to further promote their activities.

LOCAVORIST

CATERING SOCIAL

ENTERPRISE

PERIOD OF SURVEY

July 2013

GROUPS INVOLVED

Food producers and food processors, civil society organisations and state/local authorities were involved in this initiative.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The three case studies were endorsed by twenty participants at the second local activation meeting which was held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013. Some of the information was supplied through and interview with the director and founder of the enterprise Antoine Ferchaud.



CONTEXT

The locavolist catering enterprise Séson is located in the southern part of Oise, a district (*département*) which belongs to the Picardie region. Although the number of producers with organic certification is particularly low in this area, more options for organic produce exist in other parts of the Picardie region. However, Picardie is lagging behind the majority of other French regions in this regard.

A distinctive feature for agriculture in Picardie is its rather large farms: it is the largest producing region in France for beetroot and peas, the second largest for potatoes and wheat, and is also a growing stronghold for colza production. Slightly less than 10 per cent of farms are marketing at least one product through short supply chains (the national average is 15 per cent), and most of them are operating direct sales on the farm. Among these direct selling farms, 7 per cent are organic certified, that is to say 83 farms. Among the others, those which do not operate direct selling, only one per cent are organic certified, that is to say 120 farms. To summarize, from a total of 13,035 farms, about 200 are organic (1.5 per cent), and 83 (0.6 per cent) only are selling at least one product through a short supply chain (AGRESTE 2012). These are very low figures.

In addition, the southern part of Oise is an area affected by the collapse of local industries, where “persons without any diploma are overrepresented, whereas persons with a master degree are very few”, and where “unemployment is well over 18 per cent and some inhabitants are facing a difficult social situation”. (SCOT 2009) Paradoxically, this is what has convinced the social enterprise Séson to settle there.

DESCRIPTION

Séson is a locavolist catering enterprise that was established in December 2010. The enterprise gives priority to those providing local, seasonal and, if possible, organically certified products. Its employees are unemployed youth working on inclusion contracts. In Séson, they learn how to prepare traditional regional meals, which gives them a new skill for the labour market. Séson has been created with support from the City Council of Nogent-sur-Oise, with the intention of providing the basis for the restaurant of an innovation Center for Social and Solidarity based Economy, whose opening is scheduled for the end of 2013.

This small-scale enterprise includes a director who is responsible for management, marketing, the creation of new menus and the monitoring of new products an associate director with responsibility for marketing and the inclusivity agenda, a

chef, a kitchen assistant on an inclusion contract, a delivery man on an inclusion contract, a multifunctional secretary with responsibility for marketing and contract management and also a person in charge of the restaurant expansion who is on a contract supported by the Picardie Region. Séson is working with 25 to thirty suppliers, mostly situated in Picardie.

#### COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

##### 1. Involvement of target groups

The project involves producers and

processors (mostly local, organic certified for the majority); socially challenged populations (unemployed youth); local authorities (City Council of Nogent, Picardie Region); and the State (which is funding the inclusion contracts).

##### 2. Scale

Picardie Region.

##### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

Priority is given to organic certified local suppliers and the project is soon to become a member of the 'One per cent

to the Planet' movement (where one per cent of sales goes towards protection of the environment). There is also event planning to promote local production and respect for the environment.

##### 4. Scale up

Séson is the first locavore catering enterprise in France. It has won several prizes and has been described in several articles/ reports. As a member of the Table de Cana network, it could inspire other organisations as well.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

Antoine Ferchaud, the director of Séson, has worked for twenty years in the restaurant sector. This self-trained man has also been an employee in a large-scale seafood production and retailing company, which experienced strong growth as a result of the large scale commercial development of industrial salmon farming. Thus, he has inside knowledge of conventional agrifood systems (intensive aquaculture, antibiotics, large scale retailing companies...) in which, as he puts it, "what matters is money, humans being only parts of the whole mechanism". After this experience, he left for Lyon to work at the Table de Cana, a catering enterprise which aims at re-integration through economic activity.

An Oise district farmer's son, he decided to move back to his home region in order to set up a similar enterprise.

*"In Southern Oise, I realised that there was a significant need. Creil area has been suffering from a process of de-industrialisation. Those working in the local factories found themselves suddenly unemployed. As it is not far away from Paris, there is an important population of migrants. Thus, there are a lot of social issues and a massive lack of jobs. Catering is precisely a labour intensive sector, which can offer interesting careers to unskilled workers".*

In Oise he adopted the concept of the *Table de Cana*. He also added to this model his own environmental awareness, formed in reaction to productivist farming, to the abuses

of the globalised fresh food supply chains and to the dramatic changes experienced by his own community. As a result, he began by thinking of a supply chain which would have minimal impact on the environment.

*"I went on a tour of Picardie in order to check if my idea could be realised. I noted that almost everything could be found on the spot. To supplement the ingredients, one could go and get products from neighbouring regions (such as water from St Amand, in the Nord County). Regarding other products one cannot get from the region, like olive oil or chocolate, one can get fair trade organic products. I could thus offer an upgraded commercial service while still respecting my core values".*

## LOCAVORIST CATERING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

At the same time, A. Ferchaud managed to present his project to several municipality mayors in the southern part of Oise. Most of them did not understand his project, but the recently elected mayor of Nogent showed him the former Sarcus Hotel, where the municipality is planning to create a social and solidarity based economy center, with a restaurant. Following the *Table de Cana* model, A. Ferchaud created his enterprise (Séson, meaning “Season” in Picard language) and an association, Inserpicardie, whose purpose is to realise the social dimension of the project. At its beginnings, in 2011, Séson was considered as a social integration enterprise providing catering services. Its clients were then associations and local authorities. But it was not able to break even. There was a need to change strategy and image:

*“We rethought our position as a ‘locavore catering enterprise’ using fresh local products, and providing high quality services. Thus, we could reach out for new clients, especially large enterprises like SNCF (the National French railway company), Audi... When it comes to food, we need to reassure, not to do low cost. We are using three different measures of success - economic, social and environmental - but we are first of all an enterprise, and our engine is economic.”*

Supplies for the venture come from diversified sources. The producers and

the processors are local, most often – but not always – organic certified. In fact, following the “small steps’ methodology”, dear to A. Ferchaud, a growing number of local and/or organic products are, year on year, replacing those which are neither local nor organic.

In terms of its personnel, the enterprise is following a path of integration. It is also partnering with associations which are focussed on addiction, on access to housing and on access to a bank account. One of the strongest inspirations for Antoine Ferchaud is Jean-Baptiste Godin, a creative industrial from the 19th century, a utopian socialist, a follower of Fourier but also a man who was extremely pragmatic. From a modest background, Godin made his fortune thanks to the invention of cast iron stoves, but he became famous because of his conception of a “*familistère*”, a social palace which was built in Guise (in Picardie!) in order to relocate his employees’ families (workers, technicians and engineers all living together). The ‘palace’ contains a school, a library, a swimming pool, a theatre, a grocery... A. Ferchaud says there “*were even kitchen gardens so that the workers could get access to less expensive fresh products*”. The forthcoming Séson restaurant will, of course, be heated by a Godin stove and there will be an explanatory sign about the *familistère*. The ‘commitments’ shown in the Séson Charter also reflect his influence (see below).

## 2. Bottlenecks

- Séson is a private company. It is benefiting from public support since it employs staff following an integration path, but **economic viability remains difficult to attain in the rather restrictive frame the enterprise has chosen**: the decisions to provide high-quality services, local supplies (which may be less costly in terms of transportation, but are not always cheaper overall), organic standards and using fair trade produce all tend to lead to higher pricing than other business models.
- **‘Local’ producers are not so numerous**. Picardie is a large region and the southern part, where the headquarters of the enterprise are located, is still sorely lacking producers and processors.
- **There are other drawbacks to the catering activity**, which should be eased somewhat by the expected opening of the restaurant:
  - It depends on orders and is thus a much more irregular activity than restaurant activities.
  - There are far fewer catering businesses than restaurants, which could be a handicap for the integration of youth on the labour market.
  - The restaurant allows a direct relationship with the client, as well as the chance to create events to ‘send a message’ on, for instance, environmental issues or local food production.

De facto, these two activities, catering and restaurant, are complementary and “among the Table de Cava network, the companies which are the most successful are doing both”.

### 3. Sustainability performance

#### Results from a social and political perspective

- **Séson is training persons who are suffering from long-term unemployment and other challenging situations.** Since its creation, the enterprise has received twenty staff on an integration track, with 60 per cent of positive exits from the training.
- Séson is a partner of the **Société Coopérative d’Intérêt Collectif (SCIC) Solidarités Entreprises Nord Sud (SENS)**, an initiative which provides a framework for decentralised international cooperation of the Picardie Region and is supporting solidarity based companies in Benin, including companies working on short food supply chains.
- **It is not easy to find personnel who are aware of the original core values of the enterprise** because the French catering schools are not interested in raising awareness about environmental issues among their trainees.

#### Results from an environmental perspective

- **Apart from the local fresh and organic agricultural products**, Séson is trying to use other regional products (for example, meal trays in recycled boxes) or, if it cannot find them in the region,

from other French regions (Le Creuset pans, Arc crystal etc.).

- **Ancient varieties of vegetables** cultivated in the region are included on the menu list (for example the yellow beetroot).
- **The project website mentions environmental issues urging its visitors to “act everyday to save the Planet”, and engage in “responsible consumption”.**

#### Results from an economic perspective

- **Séson is buying at the price set by producers.** Contrary to large scale retailing companies, there is no pressure to lower the prices. However, given that for the catering company the raw materials account for thirty to forty per cent of the selling price, it is felt there “*should be money-making outlets*” - in other words this model has led the project to prepare high-quality meals for a customer base that is ready to pay a little bit more.
- **The main threat on Séson is economic.** In 2011, Séson had a €280,000 turnover but no profit. In 2012, with a €440,000 turnover, it was making only a slight profit. In 2013, the total turnover will be around €500,000 for the catering company; this figure does not include the restaurant which should be opening before the end of the year, but which still requires funding. The catering and the restaurant activities will thus have to be conducted at the same time, in a difficult context:
 

*“the economic context is not favourable. With the crisis, people are focusing on low prices”.*

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

- **A. Ferchaud’s ‘Tour de Picardie’ during the year before the enterprise opened, helped to create direct links to local producers.** Since then, their relationship with the caterer has allowed some of the producers to produce larger quantities. However, for others it is more difficult because of the catering enterprise’s demand is irregular - the restaurant opening should stabilise this.
- **New producers are regularly listed** by Séson, most often through word of mouth such as a producer referring to another one during a visit. The director is also monitoring the situation to include new products on the menu list.
- **One of the most serious issues is the supply chain and delivery logistics.** Most of the small producers do not have the means to guarantee supplies to Séson. It is thus Séson’s responsibility to look for products from the producers, who are scattered throughout a large territory. The round must be carefully planned, although it is often an urgent and last-minute affair, a tendency which is brought on by the very nature of fresh product catering. The same principle applies to deliveries, which taken place throughout the whole Oise district and even beyond it. It is for this reason that a second delivery van had to be rented, on a temporary and solidarity basis.

## LOCAVORIST CATERING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

- **Relations with the suppliers, the customers and the employees are not only regulated by the market, but also by a seven-commitments-Charter, which can be read on the enterprise's website.** These commitments are not only about products, ensuring, for instance, that they are season sensitive, local, healthy, organic and fair trade. The commitments also extend to: the forging of a closer connection between producer and consumer through encouraging short supply chains and a local economy; environmental protection by encouraging pedagogical activities and field initiatives; employees' professional development; the right to fail as a principle in apprenticeship; the alliance between economic efficiency and solidarity; encouraging innovation and further responsibility through work.

### 5. Policies

- **Séson is benefiting from various forms of public support for the professional integration** of young people. The enterprise is not receiving any funding from the Council of Nogent, but the latter is instead investing in transforming the former Sarcus hotel into a business center where Séson will have its own space.
- **Séson is in charge of the Sarcus Centre restaurant.** In addition to the staff of the organisations which have their office in the centre, the restaurant will attract customers



from Nogent where at present only fast foods are available, and from the wider region. Séson will offer breakfasts, a top guest table and a bar. The business and social innovation centre will include a scene, a 240-seat lecture hall and meeting rooms. Séson is planning to organise events in connection with environmental issues, especially films with associations who will benefit from the 'One per cent for the Planet' initiative participating in the selection of movies.

- **In the same centre, there will be a hall where Séson will sell local products.** Each month, a different producer will be highlighted so that they can gain recognition. This action will be extended to the restaurant where, for example, if a cider producer is 'producer of the month', then a recipe such as cider chicken

will be featured on the menu.

- **In order to disseminate its approach to promoting the quality, seasonality and local supply of food, Séson will partner with the Act against Exclusion Foundation (FACE) and will propose trainings with the National Training and Implementation Institute (INFA).**
- Séson is itself a result of the *Table de Cana* dissemination, and has thus the ambition of **disseminating to other cities in Picardie.**
- **The short supplies chain concept is progressing.**

*"Three years ago, when we started, the locavore concept was clearly not understood. Today, thanks to our example, but also because of the 'Spanghero affair' (horsemeat in the Findus lasagne), people understand better the necessity to build short supply chains".*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The problem of local, organic and diversified supplies is not yet solved. Other structures exist in the southern part of Oise, in particular AMAP (the French version of Community Supported Agriculture, the first of which was formed in 2001), are experiencing the same

difficulties as Saison. There is a need for a concerted action with existing producers and processors, but also (public) efforts on promoting demand and developing the produce on offer. This requires political and financial support to fund strategic analysis, territorial facilitation

and the necessary long term follow-up. A proposed local food council will without any doubt be a crucial institution to formalise these issues and press for their resolution.

# ECOCITIZEN

## MARKET ('MARCHÉ ECOCITOYEN')

### PERIOD OF SURVEY

July 2013

### GROUPS INVOLVED

This project involves consumers, purchase groups (Market, Community Supported Agriculture), civil society organisations (in the fields of development, fair trade and culture, the local authority of Creil City Council and local organic producers.

### LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The twenty people who took part in the local activation meeting of the project Hungry for Rights on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013 confirmed the choice of the three study cases. Information was elicited from an interview with Lise Murré, president of the Quinoa association which is organising the EcoCitizen Market.



## CONTEXT

Although Creil has 34,000 inhabitants, little organic and/or local produce is available. There is only one organic shop and the outdoor markets are mostly attended by retailers, with only a few local producers – none of whom are organic. This can largely be explained by the simple fact that there are almost no organic producers or processors in the surrounding area. If this situation has been improving, it is substantially due to the creation of an AMAP (*Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne*, a French method of Community Supported Agriculture) in 2006. This development has enabled a critical mass of conscious consumers to emerge, which led to the creation of an EcoCitizen Market three years later.

## DESCRIPTION

The EcoCitizen Market in Creil was created in September 2009, under the initiative of a Fair Trade association called La Quinoa, in partnership with the City of Creil, which is in charge of the logistics and communication.

This market takes place every second Thursday of the month (except in January and August), on a square where the weekly pick up of AMAP vegetables is also happening. A café located on the square is used as the meeting point by AMAP members, producers and market customers.

The market is totalling roughly fifty customers per month. There are six local producers and a stand for fair trade products. One can find products like cheese, bread, honey, cakes, vegetables, fruits, fruit juice, jam, terrines, beer, but also cereals, coffee, fair trade chocolate and so on. Other producers (organic cosmetic products, household cleaning products, trout) used to be involved but they didn't stay. The organisers are currently looking for an organic poultry producer.

It is the only market in the city of Creil which gathers organic producers and it is the local market which contains the greatest number of local producers. The market is ruled by a charter calling for transparency on issues such as price visibility, dialogue with the producers on their production models and on price building, and seeking to create opportunities for farm visits. However, it does not request organic certification from the producers. Nevertheless, all products are actually organic certified, except honey and some fair trade products.

Events are frequently organised: tasting contests, concerts, games, Apple Harvest Festival, debates and conferences...



## COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

### 1. Involvement of target groups

Four target groups are represented in this case.

### 2. Scale

Small scale.

### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

The market is mostly organic and the transparency of the fair trade supply chains is also worthy of note.

### 4. Scale up

The EcoCitizen Market in Creilis

the first organic and local market in the southern part of the Oise Department and could inspire others in the region. Contacts are already available to disseminate the development in neighbouring cities.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

When they returned from the alterglobalist gathering on the Larzac in 2003, Lise and Christian Murré contacted the Compiègne based *Artisans du Monde* association which is a well-known and mostly volunteer-based Fair Trade shop network in France. They also met with a representative of the fair trade organisation called Minga. The couple organised a first event in Creil in November 2003 for the Week of International Solidarity. In 2004, Lise Murré decided to create the association La Quinoa with two other women – which explains the feminine name of the association.

La Quinoa developed quickly, reaching forty members. It had to face a large number of requests to make presentations about education for sustainable development and fair trade in high schools and associations. Then came several organisational problems, especially the lack of volunteers who

were prepared to respond to requests of this kind.

The creation of the AMAP in Creil at the beginning of 2006 enabled a reorientation of energies and led to a new balance of activities. La Quinoa members put educational priorities to one side in order to focus on the creation of this AMAP and, during the weekly distribution of vegetables to the AMAP members, La Quinoa sold several fair trade products.

The idea of an EcoCitizen Market came up three years later, at the instigation of La Quinoa. At the same time, the vice-mayor in charge of sustainable development in Creil had the idea of creating an organic market. The EcoCitizen Market thus was generated by the meeting of a community initiative and a political vision. The last step was to convince the producers (especially non-vegetable growers), who were all situated at some distance from Creil, to participate. Once

this had been achieved, a partnership was signed between La Quinoa and the City of Creil. This solidarity based, activist and mostly organic market, is unique in the Southern part of Oise.

### 2. Bottlenecks

- **The market's operations substantially depends on one individual** who is helped by a handful of members and receiving limited support from the municipality.
- **The number of producers is still low.** The market actually relies on a 'core' of three producers (cheese, apples and apple based products, honey and honey based products). If one of these producers decided to quit the market or to retire, the whole system could be jeopardised.
- However, the core group seems quite resilient, **as the producers have a citizen's perspective on the market rather than one that is simply economic.**

## ECOCITIZEN MARKET ('MARCHÉ ECOCITOYEN')

- The number of customers is **just sufficient**.
- The place where the market takes place is **not very frequented** and the communication could be improved (see below).
- The market **does not have any specific budget for events** and has to rely on volunteers such as musicians and speakers.
- Although there is a core of regular customers, the people in charge seem to find it difficult to “**share the EcoCitizen message**”. Those who are buying from the market stay for events only if those are based on festivities, such as music, or tastings, but not when they are related to deeper topics such as sustainable development and recycling.
- The market is complementary to the AMAP and allows a **clear separation of what is distributed** (without money exchange because it is about being a member) **from what is sold** (on the market).

### 3. Sustainability performance

#### Performance in socio-political terms

- The market is a convivial meeting point where direct exchanges between producers and consumers are held. The organisers thus consider their main objective has been reached. However, they reckon that the market is very limited from the **quantitative point of view** and would like more people to be involved.

- The organisers feel that although there has been an improvement because “people are getting more and more interested in the problems faced by the producers, like in the AMAP”, this rarely goes much further: “there is no **political consciousness that would be more global**”.
- There are multiple social and political bottlenecks: limited information about where to find products; higher prices paid for ethical products – at least this is what most of the consumers believe, perhaps because they are used to the discount prices in the large scale retailing hypermarkets.

#### Performance in an environmental perspective

- The market’s charter specifies that products should “as far as possible respect the environment and biodiversity”.
- There is no producer/processor living in the neighbouring of Creil. The ‘local’ producers coming to the market are in fact quite distant (one hour driving or more). From an ecological point of view, this is not ideal.

#### Performance in an economic perspective

- For producers, the sales on a whole year compensate the time spent on the market and transportation costs.
- Fifty customers per month average is a low figure and is generating this vicious circle: “we would need more producers to attract more people and more people to attract more producers.”

- The market itself is continuing thanks to the voluntary work of La Quinoa members and the associations which are supporting it through events, as well as thanks to the efforts of the municipality. But money is still severely lacking for high quality communication and for organising more regular events.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

- A reminder is sent by email every month to potential customers and producers. The city authorities are in charge of the communication material and announce the market days in a booklet that is dispatched in mailboxes. But this is hardly enough.
- The result is that after four years of existence, “it is not absolutely certain that all the Creillois know about the initiative”. There also needs to be more communication in neighbouring towns.
- Apart from emails, there is no other type of specific communication nor any formal meetings between La Quinoa and producers, who are not always easy to get a hold of.
- However, the market has become a convivial meeting place for a certain number of activists.
- The charter is a regulating tool which makes it possible for the market to be “EcoCitizen”: the market operates not merely on the basis of supply and demand, but selects a certain type of producer, who is respectful of certain ethical considerations.



## 5. Policies

- Lise Murré is planning to develop a **purchase group** in order to enlarge the product range. This should increase both the AMAP and the market's range.
- There could also be dissemination of the EcoCitizen Market to other cities.
- One could thus find three supporting legs which would make it possible for alternative food systems to function and

perpetuate themselves: **alternative producers; organised consumers**, who are reclaiming the right to a healthier consumption model; and a **political will** to support the whole mechanism. Other factors are also important: **the charter**, which clearly states the citizen dimension, and the presence of **supporting structures** which are guaranteeing continuity, in particular La Quinoa and the café on the square, which is open later on AMAP distribution

and market days, and which is warmly welcoming customers.

- And there are still reasons for hope:
  - *"We have been happy to create a market but still we were not absolutely naïve about it. We had already seen that for responsible consumption, the economic benefits are not obvious. We should keep on working and developing what we can."*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- On a long term perspective, if the organisers manage to increase the number of people attending the markets, the number of producers and the turn over, the model could become one of **plural economy** based on **reciprocity** (voluntary basis), **redistribution** (public grants and service sharing by the municipality) and **market** (a low percentage of sales could

be invested into events for example). (Laville and Sainsaulieu 2013)

- **Why do people adopt more ecological practices without linking them to an underlying political vision?** Why do they opt for delegating to others the less concrete, more political or theoretical actions? These questions, which those who are responsible for running the EcoCitizen Market are

asking themselves, may also be on the minds of the leaders of other similar initiatives. Sharing these concerns could be beneficial, in order to try to answer these questions and find ways to address the dissatisfaction this situation generates; a dissatisfaction which over time could prove discouraging.

THE MIGRANT

WOMEN COLLECTIVE

'SAVEURS D'AILLEURS'  
[TASTES FROM ELSEWHERE]

AT THE GEORGES

BRASSENS COMMUNITY  
CENTRE

#### PERIOD OF SURVEY

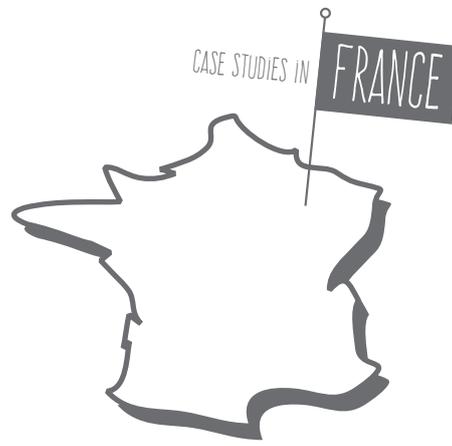
July 2013

#### GROUPS INVOLVED

Migrants, civil society organisations and state and local authorities are involved in this initiative.

#### LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The information in this study has come from a long collective interview (two hours) with the collective's referee and nine women from different countries.



## CONTEXT

The Saveurs d'ailleurs collective is held under the aegis of the Georges Brassens Social Centre (CGB), which employs 14 staff and is situated in Creil, a town of 34,000 inhabitants about fifty kilometres north of Paris. The CGB is in a neighbourhood called the Plateau Rouher, where a third of the population of Creil is living. It has been classified as a "Sensitive Urban Zone" (Zone urbaine sensible). The unemployment rate is extremely high at 27 per cent of the active population, the higher education rate could hardly be lower as 70 per cent of young adults do not even have a high-school diploma, and many of the area's families have recent origins in foreign countries, including 29 per cent of the total population who are not French citizens.

## DESCRIPTION

**Once a month** a collective made up of about 15 women who are migrants from seven different countries - Mauritius, Mali, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey and Portugal - prepares a typical meal from their homelands. The meal is shared with about one hundred customers at the CGB whose staff have been supporting these ladies for many years. The 'customers' are typically teachers, AMAP members, CGB members, migrants' organisation members, businessmen and inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

The collective also takes orders as a catering unit and its members are attending training sessions on hygiene, cooking and other necessary skills in order to get a professional technical diploma, with a view to opening a new restaurant in 2014. This initiative shouldn't be understood solely as an economic concern, but rather as a means of supporting these migrant women's social integration, recognition and emancipation through cooking. They thus learn step-by-step to take the initiative and to valorise what they are doing and who they are.

### COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

#### 1. Involvement of target groups

Migrants of seven nationalities are involved along with associations (CGB, associations which are taking part to meal sharing) and public authorities who fund the centre and training sessions.

#### 2. Scale

Small scale

#### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

There is currently no environmental policy as far as the origin of products is concerned. Nevertheless, a first step in this direction has been realised by a link



with the association *Echanges pour une Terre solidaire*, on education oriented cooking activities in the framework of the '*Bio et Local, c'est Vital*' programme ['Organic and Local, this is Vital'].

#### 4. Scale up

Collectives of migrant women trained through cooking activities have also been launched in other cities in France. The successful experience led by the

Creil collective could thus be useful to other groups.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

Since 1985, the Georges Brassens Centre has been holding a **cooking workshop** for twenty people of migrant origins. This workshop, which actually gave birth to the collective, still exists. There is no specific funding for it, but it is always full. It takes place twice a month, from 2pm to 4pm, and allows for exchanges and socialisation.

In 2008, about fifteen workshop users proposed to cook in order to sell through the CGB. They heard about a similar initiative in a social centre in Lyon. Their **motivation** is not to gain money but rather to share, to "**allow other eaters to travel**", thanks to their know-how in exotic cuisine - this ambition explains the name of the collective: *Saveurs d'ailleurs*, which could be translated as 'Exotic Tastes'.

Another objective is to **discover the country of origin of each participant**. Every year, 60 per cent of the profits from meal selling and orders are used to fund a trip (the 40 per cent remaining

money is used to buy material and for the functioning costs linked to the activity). The women from the collective have already been to Turkey and Tunisia, and they are planning to travel to Morocco. Their trips are not just for tourism but they spend a significant part of their time there to visit local associations, in an approach that can be described as "solidarity based and humanitarian".

In the same solidarity based perspective, each month the collective has been inviting people who are facing particularly challenging social conditions for a free meal. These may be people who are being supported by the Red Cross, Emmaüs or are homeless. The initiative is much broader than a simple restaurant. **Sharing, Generosity and Solidarity** are key values these women - who have been experiencing and are still experiencing times of great difficulty - refer to every day.

The **recognition** they have gained has also given them greater **freedom**, even inside their own families. Almost

every one of them is Muslim and some wear the hijab. In some cases it is their acumen, their invitation to join the trip, their growing fame, the money they have earned and the work of mediation that has been accomplished by the referee which has enabled them to win over their reluctant spouses.

Three years ago, they invited Catherine Clause, assistant director in charge of administrative affairs in the CBG, to prepare a French meal. Following this she stayed in the collective as a voluntary referee. Among other tasks, she has raised funds for a curriculum of training sessions aimed at professionalizing the collective. The first training took place at the beginning of 2013 and focused on food hygiene and security. Others will follow soon. The idea is to take on the forthcoming community supported restaurant in the new CGB space in 2014. To achieve this objective, the migrant women will have to be granted an official diploma, through an accreditation for work experience mechanism.

## THE MIGRANT WOMEN COLLECTIVE 'SAVEURS D'AILLEURS' AT THE GEORGES BRASSENS COMMUNITY CENTRE

### 2. Bottlenecks

- Following a demand from the CGB board, the collective of migrant women is to become **autonomous**. Moreover, assistant director Catherine Clausee will soon not be able to support the collective any more. The autonomy is a true challenge since the presence of this 'referee' has been key to maintaining the balance of the collective from an administrative, organisational and relational point of view.
- Another challenge for these women is to **pass a multifunctional catering diploma** (*Agent polyvalent de Restauration*). Eight of the women are applying: although they are attending training sessions and are assisted by professional specialists, achieving this diploma will be a considerable achievement.
- **The catering work which the collective is starting to undertake requires greater organisation than providing for the restaurant** as the orders are scattered and are often coming in with very tight schedules.
- **The kitchen at the Centre Georges Brassens is not a professional kitchen.** The amount of orders are increasing due to catering activities, and the infrastructure is showing its limits.

### 3. Sustainability performance

#### Results from a socio-political perspective

- **Cooking is an integration and recognition tool** for people from different nationalities as well as for French society. Furthermore, some

women are attending literacy courses to learn recipes. Others are being trained in computer skills so they can develop the Catering website.

- **Until the first part of 2013, funding for the collective has been minimal:** the CBG has been reallocating a share of the functioning grant from the City of Creil to the collective, which is just enough to cover water, electricity and photocopies. There are other grants, but they are extremely limited.

#### Results from an environmental perspective

- Due to the orientation towards 'exotic' cuisine, the **products used are most of the time neither local nor ecological.** Nevertheless, the women from the collective are trying to purchase from the neighbourhood shops, "in order to support small local businesses" and to buy mostly fresh seasonal products. What they are not able to find in the neighbourhood, they buy in supermarkets.

#### Results from an economic perspective

- **The women from the collective are primarily looking for quality and to respect traditional tastes, and this can cost a lot.** They are sometimes trying to alternate preparing more and less expensive meals, and are negotiating gross prices with retailers, by playing on the feeling of solidarity towards a community based project.
- **The €9 price is quite low for a complete, exotic and original meal.** One hundred meals produced each month thus

generates a turnover of around €900 monthly. Once the production and site costs have been deducted, the monthly income for each one of the 16 collective members is only €36, for a full day of work spent preparing the meal – and three days work for the kitchen chef). Although the goal is not to pay the forthcoming community based restaurant's employees only through the income generated by meals sold, there is still a need to improve the margin, so that a larger part of the salaries could be covered this way.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

- **For external communication** flyers were used initially. Nowadays, the collective is well-known and word-of-mouth communication, combined with e-reminders, is the most common means of communication. Leaflets are also provided with each order. The collective is also taking part to many different events: cooking contests, community festivals...
- **There is a monthly meeting about the general organisation** of the group, during which an agenda is established and responsibilities are distributed.
- **At the end of each meal, an assessment is conducted**, then the "page is turned" in order not to dwell on the same problems. Thus, the "group is making progress in terms of exchanges, organisation and meal realisation".
- **The catering activity is changing**



**participants' habits.** Catherine Clause, the current referee, is taking the orders and issuing the invoices. It is often in an atmosphere of urgency that the collective has to get organised and the current system is showing its limits for collective decision-making.

##### 5. Policies

- **As a result of the trust based relationship** that has been built during the years and due to the skills shown by the women from the collective, some customers are calling them to take part in

**other projects** - with children for example.

- **The community based restaurant project for the new CGB** is still in a discussion phase. Beyond the restaurant's catering function, it is a real meeting space that is being created. It could develop into various projects: a tea room, community garden, group events (with children for example).
- **Training and funding support will play a fundamental role** in the future of the collective. Their

funding is programmed from September 2013 onwards, thanks to State grants from the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities (ACSE) and the National Fund for the Development of Community Outreach (FNDVA).

- One of the women from the collective has returned to Turkey, and **initiated a similar project in a social centre**. Another woman is planning to do something similar in Villiers-Saint-Paul, a city neighbouring Creil.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- One of the potential speakers for the training is from the locavore catering company Séson. This link could reorient the collective towards menus that include **ecological and local products**.
- **The collective could liaise with the AMAP** and raise awareness of organic and local products by inviting an AMAP vegetable grower's wife to prepare a meal.

- **In order to increase the level of professionalism, the whole organisation of the collective should be rethought.** In order to do so, apart from technical trainings, the group will need some support **to structure and finalise its project**. Support from the Local Support Mechanism (*Dispositif local d'accompagnement, DLA*) could be a useful first step, but there is probably a need for a

specialised monitoring process like the one proposed by the Agency for the Development of Local Economy (ADEL). ADEL has a long experience in solidarity economy projects and migrant women collectives.

- **A Steering Committee** could take shape with members, as has happened with the catering company Séson and others.

BIOPIACE

CONSORTIUM OF

ORGANIC PRODUCERS

AND PROCESSING

COMPANIES

#### PERIOD OF SURVEY

June - September 2013

#### GROUPS INVOLVED

Consumers (students and their families), public authorities, schools and producers.

#### LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

Through interviews and testimonies the president of the Bioplace consortium and head of commercial Agripace, Dr. Giacomo Sala, participated in drafting the story of their experiences. Additional information was provided by Dr. Roberto Spigarolo, Department of Agricultural Sciences, University of Milan. The subject of school catering was of interest to local administrations that were involved in the early stages of the project.



## CONTEXT

BioPiace was established in 2002<sup>1</sup> with the support of Coldiretti<sup>2</sup>. It is a consortium made up of small organic producers and processing companies from the Piacentino<sup>3</sup> area. It's an important start in Italy, with few equals in Europe<sup>4</sup>, because it initiated a local food system<sup>5</sup> able to satisfy consistent demand and with the ability to match any extra demand. The consortium BioPiace represents excellence in the Italian context because it has been able to create and offer an innovative model of supply chain B2B (business to business), putting together producers of organic products and management services for public concessions. In March 2013, during the Hungry for Rights project 'kick off' meeting, BioPiace hosted the visit and consequent meeting of its international partners.

## DESCRIPTION

BioPiace is a consortium of organic producers and processors. Its goal is to promote and enhance the market for organic and typical products, as well as supporting farms especially in the hills and mountains.

The consortium started with 22 members and a start-up capital of € 2,750.00. All the activities were financed by bank loans obtained from the directors of the consortium and Coldiretti guarantees against goods. Trust from the banks was also obtained by presenting the project along with the long-term supply contracts from public administrations. In order to develop the business, some farms obtained additional financial resources by taking part in competitions funded by the *Piano di Sviluppo Rurale* for the region of Emilia-Romagna.

The first step in its success was to keep a simple internal structure (decision-making structure) in the consortium. Though for the technical, administrative and commercial services it was decided to use the already existing operating structure offered by Coldiretti. Two important advantages were achieved: low initial investment and the union of the activities of the Consortium to the services provided and therefore precise costs. The first goal of BioPiace was to become a supplier of products for school meals in the city of Piacenza.

<sup>1</sup> Since January 2011, the Consortium carries out tasks of promotion and advice; Agripace soc. coop. spa carries out the commercial and organizational activities.

<sup>2</sup> Coldiretti is one of the major Italian organizations of farmers and has about a million and a half members ([www.coldiretti.it](http://www.coldiretti.it)).

<sup>3</sup> As of January 2011, the province of Piacenza had 289,875 inhabitants. In 2002, in the province of Piacenza, Emilia Romagna registered 370 organic farms (of which 160 were in the hills and 185 in the mountains). In 2010 there were 347 organic farms registered in the province by the 6th General Census of Agriculture, data which confirmed the downward trend from the 2002 peak in the number of organic farms at regional level. (Regione Emilia Romagna 2011)

<sup>4</sup> A similar process has started in Andalusia (Spain) with the program 'Organic foods for social consumption'. (Productos Ecológicos 2012)

<sup>5</sup> AISRe (Italian Association of Regional Science) Conference in Sept. 2012, R. Spigarolo intervention: "As a start SALs can be described as the alternative to the globalized food model, they are based on complex relationships between agricultural production, processing, distribution and consumption in a specific area (Dunne et al., 2004). However, it is still unclear what is meant by the term "local" and the characteristics and perceptions that are attributed to it from different people.

The consortium takes advantage of regional law 29/2002 where the region Emilia Romagna regulates public catering, promoting within the refectories the use of organic food as well as typical and traditional products. This was a great opportunity for BioPiac!

In 2003, following the introduction of this regional law, the *Comune di Piacenza* together with the *Assessorato dell'Agricoltura della Provincia* (Agricultural Department of the Province) and CIR, the catering company that holds the contract for food services in school refectories, decided to introduce organic and local products on the menu.

Moreover the city of Piacenza included in the terms of its contracts a rating to reward companies, not only Biopiac, that were able to give quality in their products. What really helped the Consortium, compared to others competitors, was its ability to offer over 400 local suppliers.

At this early stage, dialogue with the local administrations was essential in order to consolidate and strengthen the choice of the local product and to reassure the entire system about the reliability and the certainty of the supplies. It is the first time that an agricultural company has acted as a platform for multi-chain distribution.

Ten years after its establishment, the consortium was able to develop a system in the territory capable of sustaining expert processes in the agricultural sector and food industry.

Savings related to logistics and transportation balanced the major costs of craft production. Therefore, families didn't have any costs increment due to the origin of the products. When the Administration decided to increase the number of organic products on the menu, there was a slight price increase. Only few parents in Piacenza dispute the price or the quality of the catering service.

Today BioPiac counts 55 companies as members and is able to ensure a continuous supply of local and organic products to hospitals and school refectories in 38 municipalities of the province of Piacenza. They provide more than four million meals per year and their total turnover is close to five million euros. BioPiac also serves business and individual catering through a store connected to *Campagna Amica*<sup>6</sup> shops and some joint ethical purchasing groups.

A new goal is emerging from this complex project. This goal is to organise an efficient and inexpensive logistics system that overcomes the limits of ordinary GAS logistics. From the inception of the project GAS logistics has been one of the reasons for making savings. However, it is now becoming a bottleneck.

## COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION

### CRITERIA

#### 1. Involvement of target groups

The target groups involved in this initiative are consumers (students

and their families), public authorities, schools and producers.

#### 2. Scale

Medium scale.

#### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

The initiative enables wider consumption of organically produced food and reduces food miles.

#### 4. Scale up

The conditions that make possible replicability of the project are strictly and directly linked to the territory: public administration skills, people open to networking, farms willing to innovate. One of the prerequisites of replicability is sharing of knowledge: producers have to be aware of refectories' consumption; local administrators have to be acquainted with local productions. The establishment of a new economic way and of new business relationships requires people able to act as a catalysts. These people may not be noticeable, but they are indeed essential.

#### 5. Level of social innovation

Behavioural change has been observed in all target groups and the initiative provides economic incentives for local production.

#### 6. Supply chain

An integrated policy assumes short supply chain and other similar criteria.

<sup>6</sup> This is an initiative by the Campagna Amica Foundation (see [www.campagnamica.it](http://www.campagnamica.it) for more details).

# BIOPIACE CONSORTIUM OF ORGANIC PRODUCERS AND PROCESSING COMPANIES

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

#### *The Italian state of needs (the demand)*

In this time of economic crisis the Italian way of eating has become a little 'schizophrenic'. There is discouraging data on one side: between 2011 and 2012, 63 per cent of households decreased the quality and quantity of food purchased and turned to the heavy discounts (ISTAT 2013: 12-17), 86,7 per cent of Italian families (Eurispes 2013: para. 'Vite low cost') have cut spending on meals outside the home and data relating to health shows incremental growth in overweight or obese children<sup>7</sup>.

On the other side, there are many signs showing the adoption of new lifestyles that care about nutrition and the environment. These include an increase in the demand for organic food; the rise in ethical purchasing groups (GAS); the number of new self-producers (i.e. collective, urban, micro and terrace gardens); and the steady increase of companies using e-commerce to sell their organic products directly.

Although the above examples show how the dimensions<sup>8</sup> of the phenomenon are growing, they represent that small part of the market with a good chance to change their lifestyles in this way; the sum of individual choices makes it a long process.

Schizophrenia is also geographical: the number of organic farms is far higher in southern Italy but the use of organic food is higher in the North.

This situation represents a considerable opportunity. There are enormous public and private markets for food consumption that are available to limit the repercussion of economic difficulties, considering quantity and quality, while at the same time having the potential to satisfy the need for a healthier diet, i.e. 12 million citizens eat outside the home in places of the catering trade (bars, pizzerias and restaurants) (Federazione Italiana pubblici esercizi 2011), 5.5 million in public catering canteens, 2.4 million of which are school children and students. (AIAB 2011)

### 2. Bottlenecks

The consortium's first issue was to ensure production met the sanitary requirements and quality standards required in the terms and conditions of the contract. Members were also provided with advice with regards to labeling, certifications and declarations, thus enriching the producers' skills.

Organising the supply chain of products was the second process and it was broken down in different stages. This was the most innovative element and it

achieved many benefits, especially when it came to being competitive.

Meat was the first supply chain to be organised: from animal farms to locating a slaughterhouse and finally a butcher. From 2005 to today all the organic livestock production from the area of Piacenza is sold through the consortium and the meat processing industry is guaranteed by the Consortium BioPiac, that supervises the complete production cycle.

Milk and dairy products were the next supply chain that was looked at: from production of organic milk to bottling. Three small cheese factories began production of fresh mozzarella and ricotta cheese and in April 2007 a larger dairy farm started to produce organic Grana Padano DOP. The same cheese factory today requires more than 60 tons of milk per day and produces about 300 wheels of cheese per month.

A grain products supply chain was set up following the same lines: from planting cereals to milling and the production of bread. Two bakeries were sourced for the production of baked goods. A tomato supply chain started with the identification of a structure for the production of tomato sauce.

Creating different and specific chains was strategic, enabling the consortium to shorten them and to self-manage the distribution of products.

<sup>7</sup> See the 'Mediterranean Diet' section of the Italian case study.

<sup>8</sup> For the 2008-2012 trend data related to the organic market in Italy, see Mingozzi and Bertino 2013.

Distribution greatly affects the final cost of food products; therefore self-management allows small producers to regain competitiveness margins in comparison with the large-scale production of traditional agriculture and with the products of large retailers, and also to penetrate new markets.

It was also possible to start and subsequently increase supply into the school refectories, showing the consortium's reliability regarding supply continuity and its ability to fully meet the standards required by the contracts in terms of quality, quantity and sanitary criteria.

Another current constraining factor is that competition announcements happen separately: each municipality tends to have its own contract

### 3. Sustainability performance

The consortium's work represents support for all the activities associated with agro-livestock. This is important because in the present financial climate, the general trend is that small farms, weakened by the fall of product prices and the growth of costs for technology, logistics and financial services, are likely to succumb<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, intensive production in the flat areas has several advantages when compared to production in hill and mountainous areas. In these latter areas the activities of small agricultural farms are particularly difficult, due to less favorable conditions of production and transportation. The revitalization of these areas with innovative activities, such as wine tasting tours and educational farms, avoids

their social and cultural impoverishment and the abandonment of "marginal" economic areas. It also helps to protect the land, reducing hydrogeological risks. Finally, strengthening local agriculture also has the potential to bring greater biodiversity to the flat areas, which have been made boring and monotonous by continuous planting of the same products.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

BioPiacè was able to trigger a process that allows small local producers to satisfy the request for healthy and quality food coming from both private and business catering. This ability was achieved through a managing system that favoured, since its inception, dialogue between producers, services supplying companies and public administrations (as contracting subjects).

This process started a multi-product supply structure able to:

- provide a range of foods, even processed ones, thanks to the closure of some links in the supply chains;
- ensure local producers a continuous income thanks to long-term contracts agreed between the participants in the system. It has also created strong trust between the actors. The commitment of the catering service to the City of Piacenza (hospitals account for approximately 700,000 meals per year and school canteens more than 1,000,000) is a contract of nine years. The duration of contracts and the solid quotations not only allow development and investment plans, they also guarantee safety and

confidence in the future of the farms;

- create an added value to the farming land (i.e. to provide a consulting service for changing into organic farming and to obtain product certification that meets the technical requirements of food safety);
- create an added value to the territory by adding new activities.
- facilitate loans from banks more easily.

### 5. Policies: publicly owned canteens and GPP

Given the numbers mentioned above, it becomes apparent that Green Public Procurement (GPP) strategies to purchase green products and to serve them in public administrations could not only serve to promote agricultural sustainability and make the territory more cohesive economically and socially, they could also promote a better food culture and dietary prevention against childhood obesity. School refectories are very important to the development of food and environmental education. They are integral to the scholastic system and as the governance of schools is open to parents, teachers and pupils, their influence can be important.

Since 2012 the use of organic products in school refectories strongly increased as a result of the first regional law<sup>10</sup>. The terms and conditions of this law are that public contracts when in relation to the purchase of products used to prepare meals, should stipulate that meals have a percentage of organic produce and be typical and traditional.

<sup>9</sup> This data is showed in the 6th General Census of Agriculture 2010 by ISTAT: "In northern Italy the decrease amounted to 21%, a substantial figure but significantly lower than the national average (-32.4%). The decrease was even stronger in the livestock sector, where the 33.3% of livestock farms closed in the North, compared to 41.3% in the rest of the country. Arranging the companies by size, however, shows that many small businesses, of less than 20 hectares, were the ones that closed. The agricultural areas of the closed companies have been mostly acquired by medium and large companies who have seen a growth in their UAA. The consequence of this structural dynamics is an increase in average farm size in the North, increased from 8.3 to 11.5 hectares. "(Source: ISTAT - Press Release December 2012). The data is based on the comparison with the 5th General Census of Agriculture 2000.

<sup>10</sup> For a review of the first national and regional laws that promoted organic and quality food in catering in Italy, see. Bocchi et al 2008. A limitation of the regional laws is that they do not contain any sanctions for those who do not fulfill them and therefore they should be considered more as guidelines rather than actual obligations: a situation that is unavoidable because of the need to balance costs and quality. The cost difference between a meal prepared with conventional ingredients and one prepared with 50 per cent organic ingredients is 0,40 €. We should take into consideration that in Italy the cost of the food accounts for approximately 1/3 the total cost of the meal, so the organic food cost increase affects only the total cost for 1/3 of the meal.

## BIOPIACE CONSORTIUM OF ORGANIC PRODUCERS AND PROCESSING COMPANIES

In 2006, while the percentage of organic products that entered the refectories nationally was 40 per cent, there was a huge difference between the North-Central (North-East: 56 per cent; North-West: 44 per cent; Center: 68 per cent) and the South and the Islands

(respectively 25 per cent and 9 per cent) (AIAB 2011). In 2012, 23 per cent of refectories offered meals consisting of 70 per cent or more organic ingredients (275 of the 1196 that deliver meals with organic food)<sup>11</sup>. Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna have the highest proportion

of school refectories using organic products. Emilia Romagna was also the starting point for the process: the first Italian school that served organic was in Cesena in 1986.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

A means to overcome the current constraining factor that each municipality tends to announce its tender separately could be to unite the tender processes between municipalities and thus, potentially, the services of the consortium. If different districts are able to organize themselves to have a single contract for all institutional catering services, it would then be possible to have one centre working a full day and able to serve more canteens rather than having several only working in the morning. This would obviously help the administrations to save, would be logistically easier and add strength to the whole system.

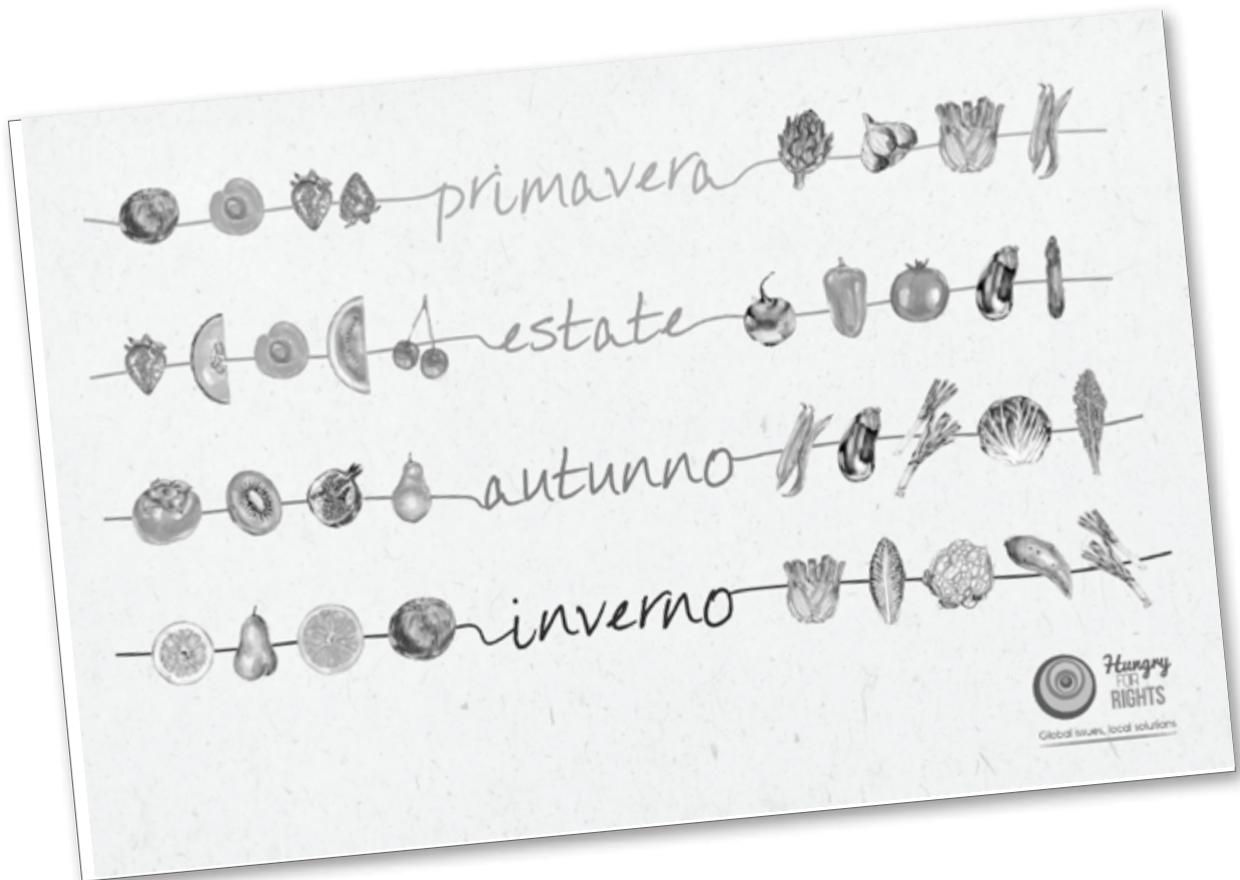
The consortium's multi-product platform has benefitted small farms because of their greater flexibility and ability to respond quickly to the needs of the institutional catering market. The situation outside Piacenza area shows the benefits of the multi-platform companies flexibility. The catering companies buy organic dairy products produced with extra EU (not Italian) fresh milk. The only convenience of the non-Italian milk is the low price, even if traceability and quality are not guaranteed.

This was the justification not to use Italian produce. Even had the Italian produce existed, it had neither the requested properties (quality and/or

quantity) for public catering nor the logistical requirements to be used.

Overcoming this problem was the result of competence, technical experience, knowledge of the area and of the agricultural world and the need to build a link between agricultural production and the world of public administration and the catering companies.

<sup>11</sup> See the 'Mediterranean Diet' section of the Italian case study for more information.



# AEQUOS A NETWORK OF NETWORKS

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

June - September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Small scale producers and consumers.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

An interview with Dr. Tamburini, president of the cooperative and delegated by their board to participate in the drafting of the study, formed the basis of this report on the experiences of Aequos<sup>12</sup>.



## CONTEXT

Varese, Monza and Brianza DES (Solidarity Economy District) pointed to Aequos being best practice in their territory, emphasising the range of the producers and consumers involved and the resulting logistical network.

Aequos is a mutualistic cooperative<sup>13</sup> comprising ethical purchasing groups (GAS), associations and social cooperatives based in northern Lombardy in the province of Varese. Approximately 38 GAS members are located within a range of about thirty kilometres. The cooperative is a GAS solidarity network and each GAS is made up of a single consumer who liaises directly with over 40 organic food producers. Major goals are the sustainable use of resources and the production of healthy food with a “fair price”, which allows both a fair salary for the farmers and a fair cost for the final consumer.

## DESCRIPTION

### What does Aequos do?

Aequos manages services in favour of its members. By eliminating intermediaries in the processes of production, distribution and sale, by offering choice to farmers and by making agreements over quantities, quality and prices it seeks better market conditions for the purchase of fruit and vegetables. For its members and others, in particular for schoolchildren, Aequos provides training and awareness raising of its products, productive processes, rules and laws. Members are asked to get involved in the cooperative’s activities (administration and operations) in proportion to their resources<sup>14</sup>.

### Governance and Operations

The main body is the Members Meeting. This is also open to non-members. However, non-members have no voting rights. The governing body is a board of directors composed of 11 people, proposed by GAS members and voted by the Assembly. They are committed to a three-year term of office. Ordinary operations are run by six working groups: Producers and Logistic (identifying the farmers,

<sup>12</sup> Data and references about Aequos are updated to August 2013. When no source is indicated the information used in the study have been provided by the Cooperative, through its President, Prof. Alberto Tamburini, or taken from the website [www.aequos.eu](http://www.aequos.eu)

<sup>13</sup> Article no. 45 of the Italian Constitution recognizes the mutualistic cooperative companies: ‘The Republic recognises the social function of co-operation of a mutualistic nature and without purposes of private speculation’.

<sup>14</sup> The relationships between the GAS groups associated to Aequos are ruled by Statute which can be downloaded at: <http://urlin.it/4638b>

the products and the supply logistic); Communication (internal and external), Technical and Administrative (digitalising orders and basic administration); Quality (evaluation of the purchased products, spreading information and culture), Control Management and Development, Training (training coordination and proposals).

Key to the initiative's work practice is that GAS members are involved in all the operation processes.

#### **Economic elements**

The cooperative does not retain profits and does not give out dividends against shares (dividends of capital enterprises). In 2012 the turnover was €506,000 of which 88 per cent was from fruit (fifty per cent) and vegetables (fifty per cent). In 2012 € 1.70/kg was the average price paid by GAS members (with 300 tons of product delivered in 2012). Transport was an average of eight per cent of costs, warehousing was four per cent and other costs (such as accountancy fees, Confcooperative enrollment, attendance at fairs, production of information materials, reimbursement for visits to

manufacturers, insurance and bank charges) was 3.5 per cent.

#### **The future**

One of the goals for Aequos is to become a purchasing headquarter for refectories and associations. A first step in this direction has been taken through supplying Scouts' summer camps.

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA**

##### **1. Involvement of target groups**

Consumers and smallscale producers are involved in this initiative.

##### **2. Scale**

Small.

##### **3. Environmental sustainability performance**

The initiative promotes the consumption of bioproducts and contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing transportation emissions.

##### **4. Scale up**

The initiative's model of governance and its modus operandi follow a precise and consolidated method that allows for replication of the project. Among Aequos' objectives is the spread of GAS values and also to provide support

to those who want to create a similar cooperative. The project is totally self-financed and the volumes have increased over time: the first purchases were paid upon presentation of the invoice by the producers. As of today the GAS members pay the cooperative 15 days after receiving the goods and the cooperative pays the producers four to seven days after receiving the invoice which is usually monthly. The initial margin of 7 per cent (later dropped to 4 per cent) was useful at the beginning to guarantee a minimum amount of cash.

##### **5. Level of social innovation**

The initiative has created a network of ethical purchasing groups and developed the capacity to manage this network. It has formed new relationships between the network and producers.

##### **6. Participation of local communities**

Local communities are involved in this initiative.

##### **7. Short supply chain, controlled at local level**

The initiative has created an integrated short supply chain which is controlled at a local level.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

#### What are the values that inspired the cooperative?

The founding value of Aequos is the same that generates a constant growth of GAS groups in Italy (see box): Aequos uses purchase power to create a fairer and more responsible economy which wastes fewer environmental resources and makes people richer in terms of relational goods compared to production and consumption standards that are no longer compatible with high quality lifestyle, globally and locally.

#### First impulse

Traditionally, GAS do not distribute fresh food, such as vegetables and fruits, as their perishability requires a strong organizational and logistical dimension. The difficulty of getting fresh food was the challenge that gave birth to the cooperative. After several attempts to set up inter-GAS purchases, a dozen local GAS groups thought of creating a single entity that would organise purchasing groups for fruit and vegetables in order to optimize transport-logistics-quantities and offering continuity and stability to producers.

### 2. Bottlenecks

The previous establishment of GAS groups meant that the local setting in which Aequos was born in 2010 was

already structured in islands of shared values (see box GAS). Furthermore, these islands were already structured in a network, as since 2005 they had come together with other associations to help establish the Distretto di Economia Solidale di Varese (District of Social Economy of Varese<sup>15</sup>).

#### General

In Italy there is not an even distribution of DES, in fact of just 27 DES in the country nine are in Lombardy. Only two are in southern Italy, in Taranto (Puglia) and in Naples (Campania).

#### Details

One operational challenge that the cooperative has overcome was logistical; learning from their experience a freight logistic framework has been designed, including distribution centres, storage rooms and refrigerated vehicles.

### 3. Sustainability performance

As an alternative food system Aequos' activities directly or indirectly affect the three pillars of sustainability which are: economic, environmental and social. This aspect of the initiative does not represent an innovation itself, as in Italy it is not usual to find practices, activities or projects that take into account all three pillars. Another consideration is that although some aspects of the initiative are typical of any GAS (short supply

chain, shared choices, attention to the environmental impacts of products and to the working conditions), the coordination and planning structure of activities generates multiple effects (the chance to buy perishable fruit and vegetables, to induce different agricultural practices in the producers, to enable communication initiatives to broaden access to healthy and traceable products).

#### Environment and health

Through its actions Aequos supports organic farming and seeks to increase the number of people accessing healthy food and a rich and varied diet.

#### The environmental benefits of organic farming, including soil use

Organic farming produces positive effects on soil fertility, water quality, biodiversity and landscape protection (EU 2013). Generally speaking, we can say that it can help with both the mitigation of and the ability to adapt to climate change. Additionally, it may be said that organic farming is a means of preventing the loss of agricultural land. A profitable agricultural sector enables agricultural land to be competitive compared to the building sector, therefore representing a barrier to the non-agricultural use of this land<sup>16</sup>. Compared to traditional farms, organic farms have the potential to be more profitable because of their higher amount of community contribution

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.des.varese.it>

<sup>16</sup> In Italy urbanized land takes up about the 7 per cent of the whole territory. In Lombardy, however, the percentage is exactly doubled. In addition to this, the increase in urbanized land is not directly related to the increase of the population: between 1999 and 2007 the population increased by 7.5 per cent, while urbanized land increased by 11 per cent (Legambiente NDA)

(40 per cent as against 36 per cent for conventional farms). In Italy organic farms have a higher turnover than traditional farms (+9 per cent), they produce a higher operating income (+21 per cent) and a higher net income (+22 per cent), despite being a high-intensity work organisation. (Rete Rurale Nazionale 2011).

Among the criteria that have been followed by organic farming are restrictions on the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, on antibiotics in animal farming, and on food additives and processing aids. Pesticides are a danger to the environment in general and in particular to human health, dangers that have not yet been fully investigated<sup>17</sup>. As a result of Aequos' work, every person that belongs to the network (approximately 3,500 people) has on their plate more than 85kg per year of 'clean' food<sup>18</sup>.

#### Reduction of food waste and packaging

Although it has not been quantified, it is likely that the network activated by Aequos contributes to reducing food waste (see box: Wasting food) as a result of several factors: the fact that the produce is organic; the operational features of the cooperative, including the personal commitment of the members to bring their food physically to their table; the amount of "handled" quantity and the fewer steps from farm to table<sup>19</sup>. The system does not use disposable packaging: individuals who go to pick up the purchased products are given a box which is then returned and re-used.

#### **4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination**

##### Solidarity Economy

The cooperative has found that social innovation comes not only from a single action or activity in the field but also from a mix of actions and instruments related to each other. One of the activities with the most significant impact is the cooperative's connection with the producer/farmer which allows them to work together to assign a fair price for both work and product; in this way the producer gets the part of the value for his work that would otherwise be consumed by the chain of intermediaries – this can be up to 75 per cent of the retail price. In Italy, because of inefficiencies in the food chain, farms receive only about 18 per cent of the final price that consumers pay at the shelf. (CIA 2013) The producers chosen by Aequos get 80 to 85 per cent of the price at which GAS sells their produce, the price paid by the consumer is approximately 50 per cent of the retail price of a similar organic product in the large-scale retail channel.

This is also possible because the critical mass of orders from different GAS allows a planning that generates a stable price that will benefit both the producer, who is guarded against the ups and downs of the market, and the consumer. This method of affecting prices causes repercussions on both the social and environmental level: the "shortened" cost of products, which are strictly organic, allows a larger amount of people access to healthy food; agreeing to a fair price deletes the distortion that leads to farmers letting their produce rot in the fields or on the trees because market prices are too low and make the harvest uneconomical.

##### Relational goods

The main goods moved by Aequos and

its associates are social relations.

##### The relationship between the members

From the economic point of view the system supports itself thanks to the voluntary participation of GAS members in the various activities needed for the system to function: from participation in working groups, to the weekly distribution (on this activity there are shifts for the workers), to the compilation of quality reports, from promotional activity to cooperative meetings during the fairs. Activities related to logistic require more than 600 hours of volunteer work per month; considering that GAS members are busy in their "self-handling" business, Aequos has calculated that another 1,000 hours per month can be added.

The cooperative's ability to create relational goods can be shown by one data in particular: in 2010 there were 14 members of the GAS network (about 400 families); in 2012 the Aequos network counted 40 GAS (about 1500 families)<sup>20</sup>.

##### Relationships with the producers

The Producers and Logistics group chooses the producers with which the network will work. Factors such as the producer being certified organic and the proximity of the place of production will determine which producers are chosen. There are also other factors. High quality locally produced food is sometimes symbolised in Italian with the term '0km'. Although becoming self-sufficient in this kind of food isn't considered completely viable in a region like Lombardy - this is because the area devoted to organic production is quite low<sup>21</sup> - Aequos does tend to support typical, traditional products.

17 "The current regulations have led to stricter control on the substances used in the production of the formulations [pesticides] and the European harmonization of maximum residue limits allowed (MRL) in food. This occurred in 2008 and was an important step forward, but there is still no specific regulations with respect to the simultaneous use of multiple active ingredients, as well as traceability of more residues in a single food item. The law has not yet ruled on the so-called multi residue issue, meaning the quantity of residues that can be found in food, and the very definition of the MRL is still based on individual residues." (Legambiente 2012)

18 This data was calculated by multiplying the average number of family members in Italy (2.3 people) by the estimated number of families related to Aequos (1,500) and then dividing the total by the amount of food handled (300 tons).

19 For further information about the causes and impacts of food waste see Barilla 2012. EU Bio Intelligence Service and AEA 2010. EU Fusions 2012. UAELS 2013.

20 This information has been provided directly by Aequos.

21 In 2012 there were 1,697 operators in the organic market in Lombardy (producers, trainers, importers). This was 12.7 per cent more than in 2011 and 3.5 per cent of the national total (49,709). Further information is available at SINAB, the National Information System for Organic Agriculture (see www.sinab.it).

CASE STUDIES IN **ITALY**

AEQUOS  
A NETWORK  
OF NETWORKS

Another evaluation made by the Producers group is in keeping the balance between, on the one hand, integrating small producers into the Aequos network and, on the other, the need to maintain the supply of certain quantities and to contain costs associated with storage and transport. In addition to cost containment, because the produce is fresh it is essential that the logistical system is efficient. For this reason many of Aequos suppliers are consortia and/or medium-large companies.

Last but not least, Aequos requests assurances about compliance with the law and attention to the working conditions of those employed by the company.

The cooperative believes that if the business relationship with farmers is to succeed it is important for them to establish a relationship based on trust and understanding. Aequos favours long-term relationships that give the possibility of planning production ahead and for this reason the cooperative

allocates a budget ad hoc for educational opportunities. The relationship is already established with more than forty farms: the highest concentration is in Lombardy (nine) and Emilia Romagna (seven) but most of the Italian regions are present even if with only a single producer.

During the year Aequos lists a total of around 400 products - the most purchased are about 250<sup>22</sup> -, some of which are not available in traditional sales channels. The total amount of products delivered in 2012 was 300 tons.

## GAS

Almost 20 years after the first GAS was established in Italy (Fidenza in Emilia Romagna in 1994), there are actually 945 groups in total registered on [www.reteGAS.org](http://www.reteGAS.org). However, it is estimated that there are approximately 2,000 GAS. This is a constant growth that can no longer simply be considered as a 'trend' but instead needs to be understood as a long-term process which has increasing economic influence.

According to the national research project 'Dentro il capitale delle relazioni' which was led by the Osservatorio Cores of the University of Bergamo in collaboration with the Tavolo Nazionale Res (Italian Solidarity Economy Network), the Lombardy Region of northern Italy counts 249 enrolled GAS. This accounts for 26.3 per cent of the "official" total for the whole country and is much higher than the general population ratio between Lombardy and Italy.



<sup>22</sup> The Aequos website lists all the purchasable products at <http://www.ars-alimentaria.it>. Most of the products listed link to data sheets on the website on food usage, methods of cultivation and nutritional properties. It is intended that every product will soon have its information sheets.

<sup>23</sup> Last Minute Market estimates that in 2011 large-scale retail in Lombardy wasted 46,000 tons in food each year

<sup>24</sup> This information is from the press release issued on July 5, 2013 by SINAB (see footnote 16).



## FOOD WASTE

From farm to fork Italy wastes 10,000 tons of food, 25 per cent of which is from households (Coldiretti). It has been calculated that wasted food costs each household €1,693 every year (Last Minute Market Survey and University of Bologna collaborating with SWG).

Thirty per cent of meat purchased by consumers, 32 per cent of dairy, 28 per cent of bread and pasta, 15 per cent of fish and 17 per cent of fruit and vegetables ends up in the garbage. Food waste is generated along the entire chain of the food system. This wastage starts in the field where products that do not meet the “standards” of the conventional market are discarded or not harvested. In the distribution chain some of the goods decay and some other remains unsold also because of supply mistakes<sup>23</sup>. This is in addition to the 25 per cent of food that is wasted in the home. Coldiretti estimates that in Italy a total of €37 billion is lost along the food chain from farm to table. This is equivalent to 10,000 to 20,000 tons of food. “The amount of fruit and vegetables thrown away during point of sales consumes more than 73 million m<sup>3</sup> of water [Water Footprint], the use of environmental resources equal to about 400 m<sup>2</sup> [Ecological Footprint] and the emission into the atmosphere of over eight million kg of equivalent CO<sub>2</sub> [Carbon Footprint]”. (Barilla 2012: 70)

## THE ORGANIC MARKET IN ITALY

On the demand side, the financial crisis does not seem to have affected consumption of organic products.

The latest outcome of the Panel *famiglie Ismea/GFK-Eurisko* confirms that, in the first quarter of 2013, organic spend is growing (+8.8 per cent compared to the same period in the previous year).

Adding up exports and domestic usage of organic food the total turnover in Italy according to the latest data of FIBL-IFOAM is about €3 billion. This makes Italy the fourth largest consumer of organic food in Europe - behind Germany, France and the United Kingdom - and in sixth position in the world<sup>24</sup>.

However, Italy is the 6<sup>th</sup> country with the largest area of organic agricultural land in the world (2012) with 1.167.000 ha; but it is the 11<sup>th</sup> for shares of organic agricultural land. Source: FIBL-FOAM survey 2014

# HEALTHY DIET: A BENEFIT FOR EVERYONE

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

June - September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

An environmentalism that supports agriculture can create multiple benefits: for citizens' health; for the health of natural services and for a more efficient use of natural resources. This study explores the potential for environmental footprinting to increase sustainability in the food economy and improve the diet of citizens. Environmental footprint projects in Italy are in their early stages and they arise from the engagement of different bodies: public administrations, small businesses, an agro-cultural industrial union, consortium companies and environmental organisations. The contributors to this draft study have been the *'Stili di vita'* area of *Legambiente* and the *Movimento Difesa del Cittadino*<sup>25</sup> Lombardia (Defense of citizenship movement). The latter has long been committed to a sustainable food lifestyle<sup>26</sup>, especially through the *Bando sulle Buone pratiche dell'Agro-Alimentare* which plays an active role in spreading its experiences to its associates.



## CONTEXT

### JUNK FOOD

Junk food is food that, because of the way it has been processed, has lost much of the nutritional elements of minerals and vitamins that are invaluable for good health; their high number of calories is due to a concentration of sugar and saturated fats. Junk foods are typically snacks, hamburgers and French fries (not homemade), and sugar beverages (soft drinks). Alongside sedentary lifestyles, junk food stands accused as a primary cause of the rise in obesity in industrial countries. Another factor is the poverty that for economic reasons can make it difficult for many people to access fresh food – very often working-class districts are classified as 'healthy food deserts'<sup>27</sup>. Laboratory research has demonstrated that some of the food types included in the junk food category, can cause an addiction to those food types. (Johnson and Kenny 2010)

The alternative to junk food exists: It is not only a healthier, more advisable diet but is also better from an environmental point of view.

### MEDITERRANEAN DIET: HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

The Italian word *'dieta'* comes from the Greek word *'diata'* meaning rule and lifestyle; as a matter of fact the Mediterranean diet is a lifestyle. That's how UNESCO describes it in its explanations when registering the Mediterranean diet in the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. (UNESCO nda)

However, in Italy it is also a lifestyle that is losing its appeal; against the positive statistic that the country has one of the lowest obesity rates in Europe (9.6 per cent for women and 11.1 per cent for men), stands data related to children which is worrying: 37.3 of children (ISTAT 2010) between the ages of six and nine are classified as overweight or obese. In order to correct the economic, social and individual costs produced by obesity, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced some nutritional directions typical of the Mediterranean diet into its dietary recommendations. These include: the increase of fruit, vegetables, legumes, whole wheat grains and walnuts; fat intake restriction, a shift from the consumption of saturated fats to unsaturated ones and the elimination of hydrogenated fats.

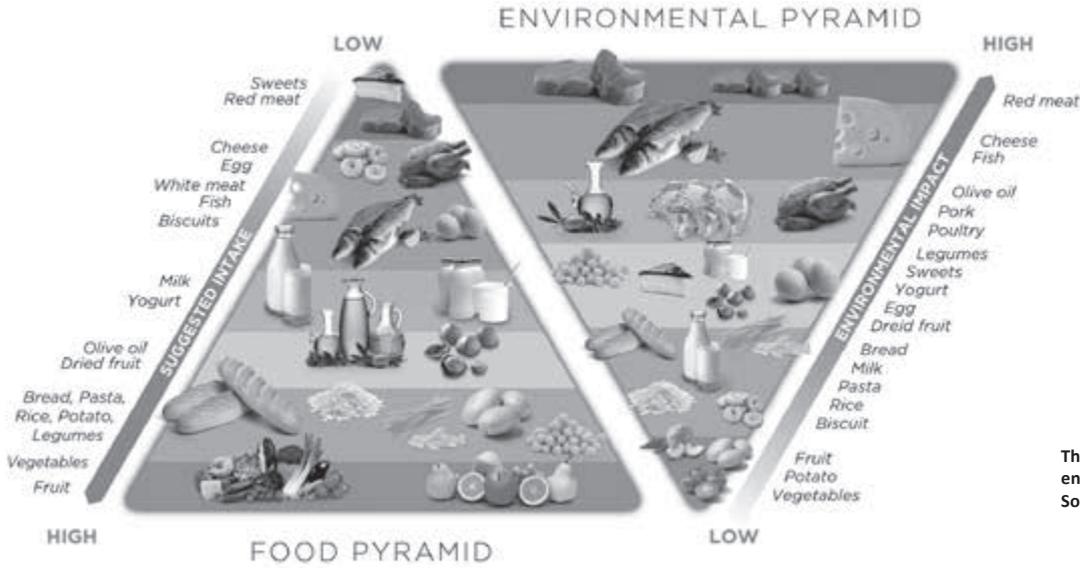
A healthier diet that includes more fruit and vegetables and less red meat is also more sustainable from the environmental point of view (see images)<sup>28</sup>.

25 The Movimento Difesa del Cittadino (MDC) is a citizens and consumers' association. It is independent from parties and unions and its goal is to promote the protection of citizens-consumers' rights, by informing them and giving them legal instruments in order to defend themselves. (<http://www.difesadelcittadino.it/>)

26 The Gazzetta del Gusto Giusto, <http://urlin.it/57a14> and the announcement "Le buone pratiche dell'agroalimentare"

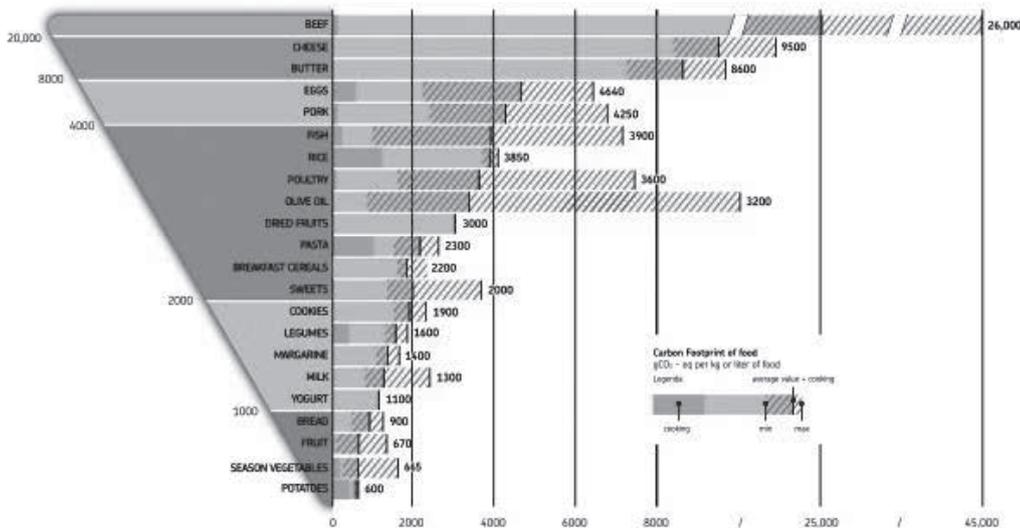
27 Low income inner city areas with insufficient access to fresh food exasperate obesity and other health problems. For instance, in 2008 in New York more than 750,000 people lived more than five blocks away from a shop/supermarket. (Gonzalez 2008. McMillan 2008)

28 For further details see Moresi and Valentini 2010 on the Mediterranean diet and its environmental impact which states: "[...] although the data and their applications are limited, the elaborated evaluations show a greater value than has so far been attributed to the Guidelines for a healthy diet inspired by the so called Mediterranean Diet. ([www.inran.it/INRAN\\_LineeGuida.pdf](http://www.inran.it/INRAN_LineeGuida.pdf)) The nutritional benefits of this diet for human health seem to extend directly and indirectly onto the environment, because the food that is part of the diet requires less energy to be grown, has the potential to have less impact on global warming and because the growth of such foods can actually lead to the improvement of environmental conditions through less harmful emissions into the air, water and soil". (Moresi and Valentini 2010)



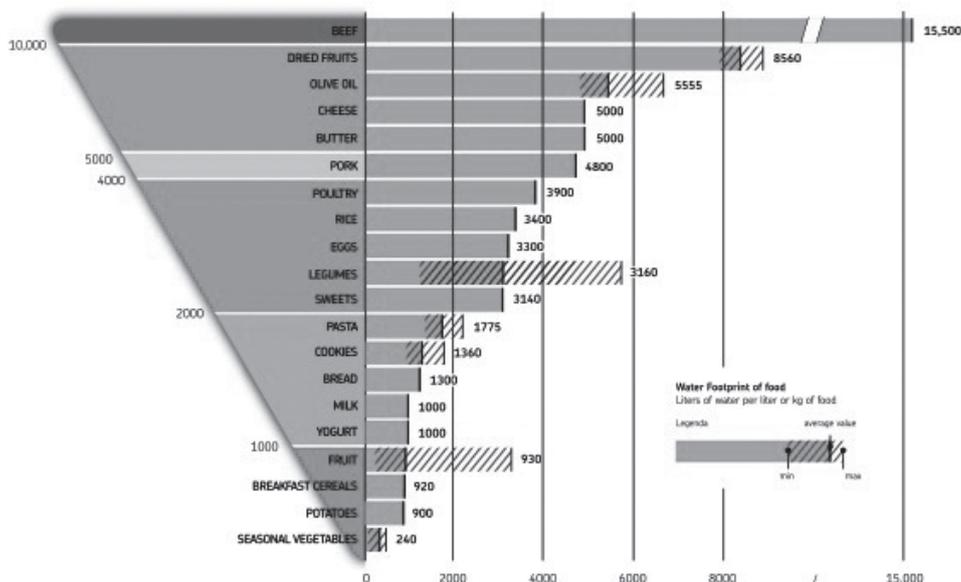
The double food and environmental pyramid model  
Source: BCFN, 2011

#### Carbon Footprint of food



Carbon footprint of food (gCO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per kg or litre of food)  
Source: BCFN, 2011

#### Water Footprint of food

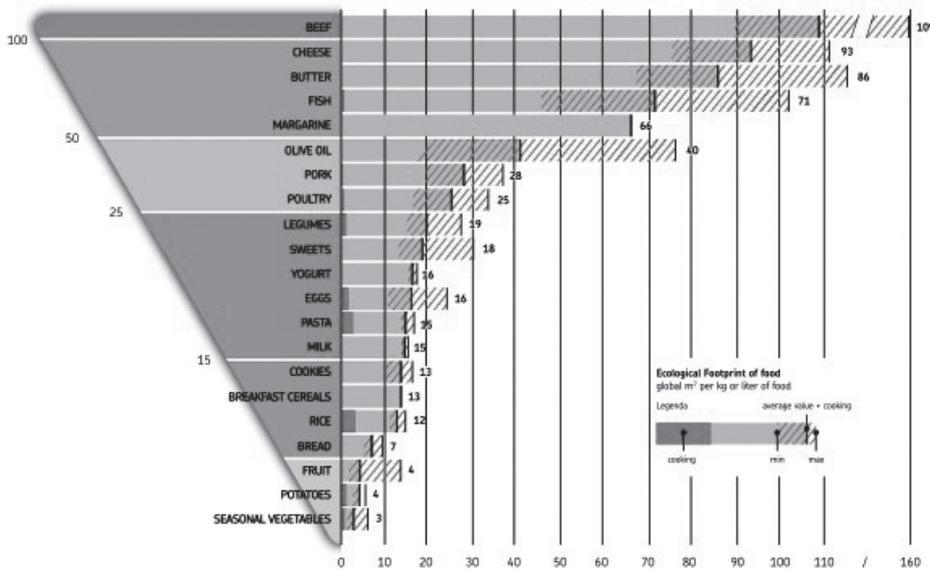


Water footprint of food (litres of water per kg or litre of food)  
Source: BCFN, 2011

CASE STUDIES IN **ITALY**

HEALTHY DIET:  
A BENEFIT FOR  
EVERYONE

Ecological Footprint of food



Ecological footprint of food (global number of m2 per kg or litre of food)  
Source: BCFN, 2011

**THE ITALIAN AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECTOR**

The Italian agricultural and food sector is not particularly energy efficient: it consumes more energy than it produces. The ratio between the energy input to prepare food and the caloric content of food shows a low sustainability. Actually this ratio is 100 or more; in the 70s, it was 9. (Eurispes 2013. Adnkronos nda) In 2010 agriculture is responsible for

33,7 Mt of total Italian greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, a figure equivalent of 6.7 per cent of the country's total emissions<sup>29</sup>. (ISPRA 2012) This figure follows the general European trend of falling emissions from agriculture due to better use of fertilizers and a reduction in livestock numbers. It has been estimated that in 2007 the total GHG emissions of the agricultural and food sector - including production, distribution and

consumption - was 104 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>eq/year. (Castaldi et al 2009 cited in Moresi and Valentini 2010)

To reduce GHG emissions by 20% (1990 baseline) by 2020, is essential that Italian agriculture follows a more sustainable route, which also considers the need to understand how and why the agricultural sector should be protected from the consequences of climate change.

DESCRIPTION

**Environmental footprint: what is it and why is it useful?**

Pro-active studies, policies, actions and tools can be used in order to improve the agricultural and food system's sustainability, while at the same time decreasing the health risks caused by bad diet.

One such tool is the environmental footprint. It represents a useful means of enhancing the knowledge of farmers and consumers. For fifty years environmental economists<sup>30</sup> have tried to find ways to understand links between: the economic and physical world and its limited capacity to absorb pollution and waste;

the limited availability of non-renewable resources; and the need to respect natural cycles in order to let resources renew themselves. Today it is a matter of fact that the economic cost of a product does not reflect its environmental cost, and this fact has a bearing on the global community: who pays for the

<sup>29</sup> The Italian figures can be compared with the general European data at Eurostat 2012 (see: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=aei\\_pr\\_ghg&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=aei_pr_ghg&lang=en)).

<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen was the first to link the laws of thermodynamics to economic processes in his 1971 book 'The Entropy Law and the Economic Process' (Georgescu-Roegen 1971).

damage caused by the extreme events generated by climate change? For this reason it is important to be aware of the environmental costs of products: what CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were needed to produce them; how many renewable and non-renewable resources were used?

Life Cycle Assessment<sup>31</sup> (LCA) is the basic tool for such analyses. However, evaluating an environmental footprint is not simple. To be effective it should be exact as possible and based on a shared and standardised method in order to make possible a comparison between data.

This is why the European Commission<sup>32</sup> recently started a process to define a Europe-wide method of calculating the environmental footprint of products and on how to communicate this information to consumers. From 2014 the identified method will be tested on food products. For the past few years several countries, including the United Kingdom, Sweden, France and Italy, have also been working individually on methods to evaluate the environmental costs of products<sup>33</sup>. In some countries the input came from institutions. For instance, in Italy, *Legambiente*, an environmental organisation, activated the project *Etichetta per il clima*<sup>34</sup>, for the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of goods and services. Also, the competition announcements of the *Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare* (Ministry of the Environment) support companies that calculate environmental footprints.

### **An example of environmental footprint analysis**

A good example of the environmental footprint is the research, entrusted to Éupolis Lombardy<sup>35</sup> by the Lombardy

Region is the “Implementation analysis of the life cycle (LCA)”. This was for two typical traditional products from the Lombardy area. (Martino 2012)

One of the two typical food products analysed was a kilo of tomato sauce. All data for the analysis came from countryside notebooks and from information received from the companies of the *Distretto del Pomodoro da industria* (District of Tomato industry) in Northern Italy. Geographically the produce comes from Emilia-Romagna and Lombardy.

The district brings together 21 private processing companies, 12 producer organizations including CIO (Interregional Association Fruit and Vegetables) and AINPO, five processing cooperative companies (including ARP and *Consorzio Casalasco*<sup>36</sup>), agricultural and processing organizations representatives, provincial governments and some chambers of commerce.

The research measured the impact of the product along its life cycle, except in its use phase.

One of the project's first steps was to create a data base of established experience in tomato production. This was the result of an agreement between *Regione Lombardia* and *Legambiente* regarding development of the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint on Lombardy production. The *Consorzio Casalasco* supported this agreement.

Nine products were labelled with their CO<sub>2</sub> footprint following this project. These food products, with their CO<sub>2</sub> footprint appearing on their packaging, were among the first to arrive on the shelves of supermarkets and smaller stores.

### **The environmental footprint of red meat**

As part of the same project, it was

decided to quantify the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of two different menus offered by a small agri-touristic company; one menu was vegetarian and the other based on red meat. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> of the first one was 1.36 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>eq while the second was 8.35 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>eq!

This finding is supported by wider research: the consumption of meat and dairy products is equivalent to 24 per cent of the total environmental impact created by the consumption patterns of European Union citizens. (Wadema et al 2008)

An individual diet of 2108 kcal per day has a different potential environmental impact depending on which substances are consumed to ensure protein needs; the difference ranges from 3,022 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>eq per year for a diet that includes beef tenderloin to 494 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>eq for one with eggs and/or vegetables. Other lower range protein diets include pork steak (657kg of CO<sub>2</sub>eq per year), roasted skinless chicken (667kg of CO<sub>2</sub>eq) and dried peas (615kg of CO<sub>2</sub>eq). It is not only the usage of CO<sub>2</sub> that is at issue with meat consumption, but also the consumption of water: the production of one kilo of beef meat requires 16,000 liters of water! (Impronta Idrica nda)

## **COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION**

### **CRITERIA**

#### **1. Involvement of target groups**

Small and medium producers, consumers, public authorities, non-profit organisations.

#### **2. Scale**

Medium and large scale.

#### **3. Environmental sustainability performance**

The results of the LCA studies are intended to lead to the improvement of the sustainability performance of food systems.

31 A useful definition of LCA is provided in the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry's 'Guidelines for Life-Cycle Assessment: A Code of Practice'. (SETAC 1993) This definition is now a standard of ISO 14040:2006, that describes the principles and reference frame for LCA.

32 The European Commission project is testing the methodology created for large consumer goods, except food products; these will be tested from 2014. For further details are available on the European Commission's website (EC 2013) (see [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/product\\_footprint.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/product_footprint.htm))

33 In 2008 the British Standard Institute released one of the most widespread methods of calculating CO<sub>2</sub> footprint (Pas 2050).

34 Further details of the project can be found at: [www.viviconstile.org](http://www.viviconstile.org). The website's main objective is to raise awareness of how the lifestyle choices of citizens affect sustainability issues. It is a guide for everyday life, with data sheets on mobility, leisure time and school.

35 Further details can be found at the website of Éupolis Lombardia - Istituto superiore per la ricerca la statistica e la formazione: <http://www.eupolis.regione.lombardia.it>

36 Consorzio Casalasco del Pomodoro consists of more than 300 farm producers, giving their total tomato production to the Consortium's processing plants.

## HEALTHY DIET: A BENEFIT FOR EVERYONE

### 4. Scale up

CO<sub>2</sub> and water footprints are transferable, as a result of standard and international methodologies.

### 5. Level of social innovation

In the long term, the initiative is expected to create behavioural change among a large number of consumers, by

means of raising awareness of how our food choices influence health and the environment.

### 6. Participation of local communities

Small and medium sized farms are involved in the process through associations and consortia.

### 7. Supply chain

Environmental footprints of food chains can be useful for and used by farmers for local control.

### 8. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors

Small and medium sized farmers are involved in initiatives.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

Life cycle assessment allows the producer to identify any major environmental impacts and to intervene in order to reduce and prevent them. A label informing the final consumer or the producer about the product's footprint will become an assumption of responsibility by the company and a green marketing tool based on data and not on "convincing" statements (green washing).

To be an effective tool it is essential that consumers learn the environmental value of their purchases in order to measure and even decrease their lifestyle footprint.

Environmental labels are an important tool for public administrations. It can help guide their policies by enabling them to calculate incentives and disincentives, and to integrate knowledge of the implementation and monitoring of their own actions). In addition it enables them to implement a Green Public

Procurement policy (GPP), focussing their purchasing on better products from the environmental point of view. It's very important, f.i., set up environmental criteria in invitations to tender for the allocation for catering services.

### 2. Bottlenecks

Labelling which explains the nutritional characteristics of foods is already occurring. The environmental footprint label also needs to be easily understandable to consumers in order to become a tool of choice when purchasing. During this stage, still in its infancy in Italy, the role played by the European Commission and its idea of building a common methodology aiming to evaluate impacts and their communication is very important.

### 3. Sustainability performance

See section d) of this study for more details of the initiative's potential to affect the sustainability performance of food systems.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

The environmental footprint label is itself a means of communicating ecological awareness as well as being a mechanism to alter the co-ordination of the public's food purchasing and farmers' production methods.

### 5. Policies

Here are several examples of how the intervention of public authorities at national and regional level can assist with the development of environmental footprinting:

- funding with the purpose of developing new analyses of life cycle that will support their own policies and will improve their own processes;
- promotions and awareness-raising initiatives about lifestyles, eating habits and environment, even at a local level;
- introducing the environmental footprint as a consideration among

the criteria for awarding goods and services contracts;

- including the environmental footprint in other programming tools and/or strategic assessments;
- supporting small producers in the process of analysis and evaluation of their impacts/costs.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Knowledge of the average size of each product's environment footprint**, could be useful not only for the agro-industry, but also for the small farmer.

A prerequisite for each product that comes on the market, could be to compare it with the average size of that generic product's environmental footprint and, consequently, its economic cost (i.e. energy inputs have a significant impact on the costs).

If a company lacks the specific skills and knowledge to initiate changes that can reduce the environmental footprint

of its work, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), could play a crucial role for the construction of creating shared competence and analysis of impacts so that improvements can be made. IFOAM give the following definition of PGS: "Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange." (IFOAM nda)

It would be beneficial if the method of calculating environmental footprint that the European Commission (see note 14) is developing could be used as a criterion in public procurement assessments for the purchase of goods and services, as today there are other environmental labels (European Ecolabel, environmental Product Declaration), based on LCA studies.

# VIVASOL CONSUMERS – PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

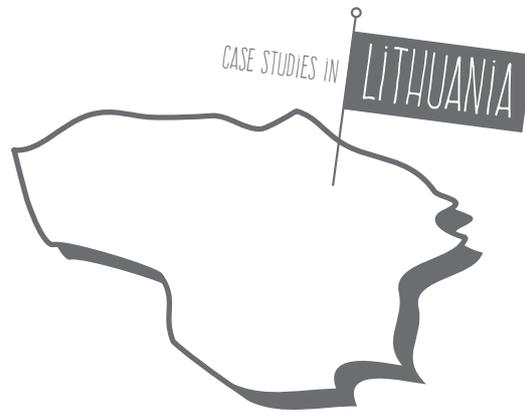
August 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Two environmental non-governmental organisations, 12 farmers/food producers and around 400 consumers are involved in the project.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The project was presented to members of the VivaSol Consumers–Producers’ Association at the association’s annual meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2013 at Radziunai, Varena district. Thirty six representatives attended. Thirty nine participants attended the project’s activation meeting at Darguziai, Varena district, on May 18<sup>th</sup> 2013.



## CONTEXT

In relation to the development of alternative food systems, rural areas in Lithuania suffer from two main problems:

- the population of rural areas is decreasing as a result of the ageing of society and due to particularly high emigration rates from rural areas and small towns. Low income from agricultural activity compared to the amount of work involved can make it appear a less attractive option than working in urban areas. This causes a decline in agricultural activities and an increase in land abandonment.
- a lack of opportunity to buy organic food, because the organic food shops and open markets are concentrated in the main Lithuanian cities.

The association VivaSol tries to tackle both these problems by providing options for farmers get more added value for their products, organising selling points and systems, attracting young people and encouraging these who are originally from the countryside to change their agriculture practices in order to benefit from those changes. Also, the association provides an opportunity to purchase organic food in the countryside, by having established the ‘Cheese house’ in Darguziai village, in the Varena municipality.

## DESCRIPTION

Association Viva Sol was established in 2006 with the main aim of promoting solidary relations between producers and urban citizens (“eaters”). The founders of the association are farmers and consumers, who participate proportionally in the management of the association.

Since 2011 the association Viva Sol has closely cooperated with the following environmental organizations: Baltic Environment Forum; Lithuanian Fund for Nature; BirdLife Lithuania; Heifer Baltic Foundation. The association is a member of the Rural Development Network and the Family Farmers’ Association.

Around 15 farmers and more that 400 consumers participate in association activities. All farmers of the association are considered to be of small and medium size. Geographically, the association is most active in the capital Vilnius, the Klaipeda region and in south-east Lithuania, but also has members in other regions.

The activities of the association are designed to promote a short food supply chain - a direct selling approach - as well as to promote animal welfare and environmental issues, in particular biodiversity friendly farming. The slogan of the association is: ‘Respect for people, animals and environment’.



**Specific activities include:**

- to develop in a positive way the image of and the general public's attitude towards small-scale/family-scale farmers
- to market small-scale farmers' production and promote a direct sale approach
- to provide training for new farmers and self-education opportunities among association members
- to provide assistance for new farmers who require resources, such as animal breeds and equipment
- to run farmers' markets in Vilnius and Klaipeda, and the Cheese shop and coffee house in Dargužiai village

Members of the association take environmental aspects into consideration in many ways. For instance, for travel to the market three farmers share a car,

co-operating to decrease their carbon footprint. At the coffee house disposable single use dishes are strictly forbidden, and dishwasher powders and cleaning chemicals are environmentally friendly.

The association is closely cooperating with local communities in Dargužiai village. Together with local people, the Varena municipality and local entrepreneurs an action plan was developed through Local Agenda 21. It is intended that this be implemented in Autumn 2013. In Kabeliai a farmer from the association is implementing habitat management by bringing in cattle to valuable grassland habitats. In return his products are promoted by the Directorate of Dzūkija National Park. In Klaipeda region, a farmer is working with surrounding communities

and farmers trying to involve them in a direct selling scheme.

**COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA****1. Involvement of target groups**

Small scale producers and consumers are involved in this project.

**2. Scale**

Small Scale.

**3. Environmental sustainability performance**

The project focuses on sustainable farming practices, short food chains, direct selling and social and environmental corporate responsibility.

**4. Scale up**

It is not yet known whether this project can be scaled up.

## ANALYSIS

**1. Motivations and conditions**

In interviews VivaSol members indicated the following motivations for their involvement in the association:

- Ensure food quality
- Solidarity
- Communication with consumers - social motivation
- Sustainable lifestyle
- Stimulate rural development by inspiring examples
- Commitment to the association values

**Ensuring food quality** was mentioned most frequently because - as farmers say - food at the supermarkets does not have a soul: this means that the consumer does not know the story behind the product, they just buy it. The association believes that direct contact between producer and consumer can enable the producer to provide a product which more truly reflects consumers' needs. As well as building trust, farmer and consumer

cooperation provides an opportunity for natural, healthy food which is not produced by blindly following hygienic norms and regulations that influence food quality such that at the final product stage only synthetic and not organic food is available.

**Solidarity** is another important aspect to maintain population in the rural areas. Peoples' organizations and the support of public institutions are essential to maintain the hard working agricultural sector. Solidarity is also a pragmatic dimension: on the one hand to guarantee that the product will find consumers, and on the other to ensure that some people from urban areas take part in the physical work of the farm.

**Communication with consumers:** rural people by living in small and close communities is lacking communication, they have a need to communicate with

others (beside their neighbours) and the market is a perfect forum/place to fulfil this need.

**Sustainable lifestyle** is a key driving force for people who had lived in urban areas and decided to change their lifestyles, looking for inner harmony. For the association's farmers the main sustainability motivation is to have extensive, natural farming with the aim of ensuring financial sustainability but not at the expense of adopting purely profit-led farming practices.

**Stimulate rural development by inspiring examples.** The leaders and founders of the association are active players for promotion of sustainable rural development. Besides political lobbying, by their inspiring example they demonstrate that sustainable living in rural areas is possible, with wellbeing and financial sustainability.

## VIVASOL CONSUMERS – PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

**Be self responsible.** It is also an important factor for ambitious people who have leadership skills, to prove that it is possible to run sustainable business without having a boss looking over their shoulder.

### 2. Bottlenecks

- **Attracting new farmers** to the association was mentioned as an obstacle. Several causes were attributed for why the association's activities are still not very popular. One, regarding urban citizens, was that life and work on the farm requires a lot of physical work and living standards in rural areas are still below average. In addition cultural and social lives can be relatively inactive, social network are poor and in a great majority of places kindergartens are missing. Indeed, young families and young people generally are missing. A second reason regarded small and medium scale farmers. It was suggested that the direct selling is challenging for many farmers because it requires a different set of social skills which are more oriented towards the market than the traditional social sphere of farming families. This challenge is in addition to the extra financial costs they must bear in order to bring the products to the main cities (Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda) which itself could make the effort economically not feasible. In other Lithuanian cities the direct selling and CSA schemes

are not known and not used. Also, in smaller cities people are more closely connected to agriculture, and in many cases they have small gardens next to their homes or in the neighbouring countryside.

- **National agriculture policy** is not favourable yet to sustainable agriculture practice, which contribute to maintenance of ecosystem services (public goods) because the current policy is mainly targeting stimulation of economically beneficial agriculture practice and production, but not addressing impact to public goods. Even the EU Common Agriculture Policy has a weak links between pillars I and II. Where pillar I promotes intensive agriculture practices by direct payments, as pillar II has social cohesion targets as well as maintain public goods through Agri-environmental measures.

### 3. Sustainability performance

#### Outputs from a social and political perspective

- Valdas Kavaliauskas, a leading farmer in the association, in cooperation with the Food Institute of Kaunas technological university, is developing the **Cheese makers' school** concept for the curriculum. The idea behind this school is to consolidate national capacities with the aim of extending the cheese producers' network in Lithuania by bringing experienced cheese producers into training institutions, including

them in the teaching infrastructure. The curriculum should cover the following subjects: cheese production technologies, management of the farm economy, animals care and the legal requirements of making the products.

- The association has initiated a project in **Dargužių village** with the aim of creating a strategy to stimulate the sustainable development of the Dargužiai community. The strategy covered economic, environmental and cultural aspects. The key element of the strategy is to build an action plan based on the local cultural, environmental and economic background. Its ultimate goal is to use existing strengths as a start up for actions where urban people will find products unique to the cultural heritage of Dargužiai and its environment.
- Member of the association Audrius Jokubauskas initiated the transfer of his cattle herd to **Dzukija National Park**. There, the local farming population is elderly and local development has stagnated and so most of the valuable grassland ecosystems are under degradation. The young farmer and his family moved to the national park and this proved a stimulus to other actors to be involved. Today, there is a small agricultural cooperative which helps to share cheese production infrastructure, as well as sharing the selling costs and involving local farmers in selling their products.



- Another active member **Julija Smiškal** of the association moved to **Klaipeda region** to start a horticulture enterprise. In addition to her own farming Julija inspired farmers from the region to cooperate to organise direct selling in Klaipeda city. Today there are seven farmers with a range of products selling directly in Klaipeda. Their work is like a small cooperative where the farmers jointly organise different marketing actions, as well as open days on the farms so that consumers can meet the farmers. Currently Julija is considering the possibility of opening a School of Taste to introduce consumers to cuisine culture and to present the advantages of organic food.

#### Outputs from an environmental perspective

- **Carbon footprint** is always taken into consideration when members of the association evaluate their production and selling processes. They always car share when traveling to selling points, conferences, and meetings. Carbon footprint is also evaluated at the

production processes and premises.

- **Ecological behaviour at production and households.** Sustainable lifestyle is a key ideological aim of the association. The members are not only committed to live in harmony with nature and the environment but also to actively participate in training, creating workshops to promote a sustainable lifestyle.
- **Contribution to biodiversity conservation.** Extensive, natural agriculture is what the members of the association practice. Biodiversity experts have been invited into the farms to evaluate their biodiversity status, as well as to provide training concerning knowledge of biodiversity.

#### Outputs from an economic perspective

- **Annual turnover** per cheese production farm is about €20,800; for vegetable farms it is slightly less at around €18,000. The association operates mainly on a voluntary basis, collecting a symbolic membership fee. However, the association's activities are financed through European projects.

#### **4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination**

The association's main governance body is an annual meeting of members, which has to be organized at least once a year. Every member has one vote. The annual meeting has the right to select and appoint a chairperson for the association, to confirm the budget and expenditures report and to elect members of a revision committee.

The annual meetings are also an opportunity to share and exchange information on the association's achievements and news, and in addition every Sunday in Vilnius there is the association's market where there is a space to share up-to-date information as well as to talk about short term goals and activities. Regarding consumers society, there are annual events organized at some of the association members' farms, where people can not only help the farmer but also meet and talk about common issues.

- **Website.** The association runs a website called [www.vivasol.lt](http://www.vivasol.lt) where they are sharing information

## VIVASOL CONSUMERS – PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

about the association and farmers' activities, including information about association members and their production. Background information is also available about solidarity CSA and other sustainable farming initiatives.

- **Fairs and festivals in cooperation with municipalities.** People from the association attend various agriculture fairs, public events organised either by the association or other organizations, or municipalities. There they present the association's activities and goals.
- **Conferences workshops, seminars.**

The association arranges and attends events of these sorts which are not only on agriculture issues but also on rural development, environment and social issues.

- **Media interviews.** At least eight media interviews about the association or single members of the association appear annually in printed and multimedia media.

### 5. Policies

Current agriculture and rural development policies are not favourable for small and medium farms because:

- Agriculture policy is concentrated on intensive agriculture production, which mainly takes a economical effectiveness criteria into consideration.
- Development of rural communities is mainly stimulated by the LEADER programme and implemented by Local Action Groups (LAG). However, an examination of LAG projects between 2007 and 2013 was unable to find any projects which promote alternative food systems or any initiatives to stimulate distribution of local farmers' products.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The association should strengthen its capacity for promoting its activities and lobbying for alternative food systems. This could be done by employing a professional manager or in cooperation/participation with other appropriate associations.
- More support should be available for education and training activities for association members. These should include farmers' professional training as well as formal and non-formal education opportunities.
- **An ecosystem services approach should be implemented** to agricultural support systems to ensure that produce from environmentally friendly

farms receives a fair price. An analysis of the environmental impacts from conventional farming practices and alternative farming practices should form the basis of support systems. For instance, if the impact to the environment from farming is negative, the cost of these negative factors should be added to the production costs and not mitigated by the use of public funds as it is at present. Meanwhile, farming practices which have a positive impact on the natural world (such as contributing to biodiversity indicators and avoiding the use of agricultural chemicals) should be positively supported through subsidies from the

public funds or by tax exemptions. A support system based on ecological principles would make the produce from small, environmentally friendly farms competitive on the food market.

- **Local authorities should take small and medium farmers more seriously, by purchasing their products.** Local politicians should demonstrate political will and support their farmers by developing favourable political policies to purchase food from local farmers and producers for their schools, hospitals and other municipally owned institutions.



# CONSUMERS – PRODUCERS’ ASSOCIATION: VISKOKO

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

June 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Three Farmers/food producers, twenty consumers, one social NGO and one environmental NGO are involved in this project.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

A meeting was held with the farmers of the association at their market in Vilnius on June 4th 2013 with eight participants.



## CONTEXT

Traditionally, Lithuania is an agricultural country (about 30 per cent of inhabitants are involved in agriculture sector), where small farms, averaging five hectares, predominate. However, at present such small sized farms are not economically viable, and how to find ways to achieve a viable return from small scale production is being investigated and attempted by various associations. One of these is the association Viskoko. Since 2011 Viskoko has joined other initiatives seeking to rebuild the close connection between farmers and consumers, and seeking to assist in establishing new small-scale farms.

## DESCRIPTION

Association Viskoko was established in 2011 with the main aim of promoting small-scale nature-oriented agriculture as well as solidarity between producers and urban citizens (consumers). The founders of the association are four farmers whose approach is similar to VivaSol [see initiative 1].

The association Viskoko closely cooperates with the following organizations: association Viva Sol; the Centre for Attachment Parenting; Baltic Environment Forum; and Heifer Baltic Foundation. The association has three farmers and about twenty consumers, but the consumers' community is increasing and the association hope to attract about 500 consumers as well as involving more farmers. There are farmers who produce milk products, medicinal herbs, eggs, oil, cosmetics and vegetables. All farmers of the association are considered as being small and medium scale. Geographically produce is sold in Vilnius and farming in North-east Lithuania (Svencionys, Moletai, Rokiskis), but also has members in other regions.

The activities of the association are targeted to promote cooperation between urban and rural communities, to encourage a short food supply chain - a direct selling approach - as well as to promote animal welfare and environmental issues, in particular biodiversity friendly farming.

The principles and values underlying the association's activities are: to develop community by connecting responsible farmers with consumers interested in sustainability issues; to promote and sustain healthy ecosystems, healthy products and corporate social responsibility; to provide opportunities for consumers to learn and see how produce is grown and to prepared for their table; to share experiences, failures and lessons learned among members of the association.

Members of the association take environmental issues into consideration in many areas. For instance, when travelling to the market they car share, with the three farmers cooperating to decrease their carbon footprint.

The association is cooperating with different associations/NGOs in Vilnius. Cooperation with local communities

is still limited but there is a plan to be more integrated and to contribute to local sustainable development.

#### COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION

##### CRITERIA

#### 1. Involvement of target groups

Farmers and consumers.

#### 2. Scale

Small Scale.

#### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

Sustainable farming, short food supply chains, direct selling, social and environmental corporate responsibility.

#### 4. Scale up

It is not known whether it will be possible to scale up this initiative.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

The members of the association are “emigrants” from cities who decided to change their lives by coming close to nature, so they could help to create a healthy environment and food. They decided to slow down by changing the hurried lifestyle of urban society for the quiet available in rural areas. Their social links with urban society remain important to them as an encouragement and motivation to continue farming.

**Ensure food quality.** This is where the interests of farmers/producers and consumers meet. The consumers would like know where their produce is coming from while farmers would like to farm in environmentally friendly way. They are open to showing their production methods as well as to get consumers’ support and income for farming. The consumer would like to know the story behind the product.

**Solidarity** is another important aspect to maintain population in the rural areas. Peoples’ organizations and the support of public institutions are essential to maintain the hard working agricultural sector. Solidarity is also a pragmatic dimension: on the one hand to guarantee that the product will find consumers,

and on the other to ensure that some people from urban areas take part in the physical work of the farm.

### 2. Bottlenecks

- A key challenge for new established association is to build long-term and sustainable relationship with consumers to ensure enough consumers, which will buy products of farmers. On another hand the farmers should ensure variety of the products as well as stable products’ supply to consumers.
- A challenge - rather than an obstacle - is to develop a **network of consumers** who would be in solidarity with the farmers, supporting their activities and purchasing their produce.
- National **agriculture policy** is not favourable yet to sustainable agriculture practice, which contribute to maintenance of ecosystem services (public goods) because the current policy is mainly targeting stimulation of economically beneficial agriculture practice and production, but not addressing impact to public goods. Even the EU Common Agriculture Policy has a weak links between pillars I and II. Where pillar I promotes intensive agriculture practices by direct payments, as pillar II has

social cohesion targets as well as maintain public goods through Argi-environmental measures.

- Another obstacle is that in rural areas safe, quality **social services** are lacking: kindergarten, schools, and cultural events where farmers would be able to ensure the fulfilment of family and their own needs. If the municipalities are not able to provide this the farmers believe there are two alternatives: firstly, they could move to farm close to the main/big cities; alternatively they could try to involve more young families in their neighbourhood. However, both options are very difficult and this is one of the reasons that young families won’t move to agriculture.

### 3. Sustainability performance

#### Outputs from a social and political perspective

- On their farms association members organise workshops on ecological gardening, ecological cosmetics and oils production. These are not permanent activities but several workshops per year are organised.
- The association is an active member of the wider nature farming network, which has members from various social groups. These include farmers, urban

## CONSUMERS-PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION: VISKOKO

citizen who have small gardens and do not sell products, environmental and agricultural experts. The association is seeking to lead by example and inspire people to move to the countryside and start professional farming.

### Outputs from an environmental perspective

- **Carbon footprint** is always taken into consideration when members of the association evaluate their production and selling processes. They always care when traveling to selling points, conferences, and meetings. Carbon footprint is also evaluated at the production processes and premises.
- **Ecological behaviour at production and households.** Sustainable lifestyle is a key ideological aim of the association. The members are not only committed to live in harmony with nature and the environment but also to actively participate in training, creating workshops to promote a sustainable lifestyle.

### Outputs from an economic perspective

- **Annual turnover** per farm is about €16,000. The association operates mainly on a voluntary basis with no membership fee.

#### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

Being a small association, the decision-making process is not complicated. Decisions are made using the principle of consensus. There is no need for a dedicated tool for internal communication among

members of the association because the association is so small that it is sufficient to communicate by phone if any new information appears. In addition, every Tuesday members of the association meet in Vilnius at the market where it is possible to share information and the latest news.

- **Website.** The association runs a website called [www.viskoko.lt](http://www.viskoko.lt) where they share information about the association and farmers' activities, including information about association members and their production. Background information about solidarity CSA and other sustainable farming initiatives is also available.
- **Fairs and festivals in cooperation with municipalities.** People from the association attend various agriculture fairs, public events organized either by the association or other organizations, or municipalities. There they present the association's activities and goals.
- **Conferences workshops, seminars.** The association arranges events of these sorts which do not only address agriculture issues but also rural development, environment and social issues.
- **Media interviews.** At least four print or multi-media media interviews appear annually about the association or single members of the association. In 2013 leva and Tomas Malukai participated in a TV show where Lithuanian business leaders provide consultations on business development. The show is broadcast on national TV.



#### 5. Policies

Current agriculture and rural development policies are not favourable for small and medium farms because:

- Agriculture policy is concentrated on intensive agriculture production, which mainly takes economic effectiveness criteria into consideration.
- Development of rural communities is mainly stimulated by the LEADER programme and implemented by Local Action Groups (LAG). However, an examination of LAG projects between 2007 and 2013 was unable to find any projects which promote alternative food systems or any initiatives to stimulate distribution of local farmers' products.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended for the association to develop contacts and partnerships with social, parental and educational NGOs and associations to try to get information from them on what kind of products they would like to have, and to cooperate with environmental NGOs to get their support concerning environmentally friendly farming.
- **An ecosystem services approach should be implemented** to agricultural support systems to ensure that produce from environmentally friendly farms receives a fair price. An analysis of the environmental impacts from conventional farming practices and alternative farming practices

should form the basis of support systems. For instance, if the impact to the environment from farming is negative, the cost of these negative factors should be added to the production costs and not mitigated by the use of public funds as it is at present. Meanwhile, farming practices which have a positive impact on the natural world (such as contributing to biodiversity indicators and avoiding the use of agricultural chemicals) should be positively supported through subsidies from public funds or by tax exemptions. A support system based on ecological principles would make the produce from small,

environmentally friendly farms competitive on the food market.

- **Local authorities should take small and medium farmers more seriously, by purchasing their products.** Local politicians should demonstrate political will and support their farmers by developing favourable political policies to purchase food from local farmers and producers for their schools, hospitals and other municipally owned institutions.

# LITHUANIAN FAMILY FARMERS' UNION

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

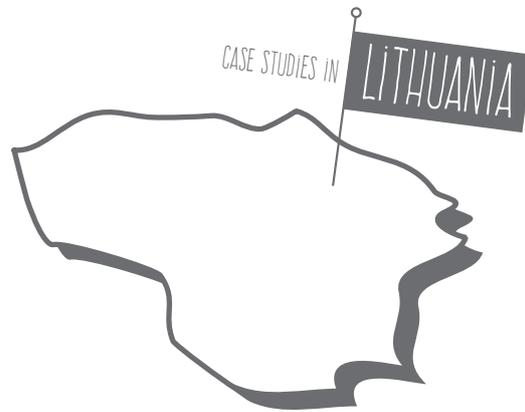
September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

The initiative involves 1,000 farmers/food producers with around 600 participating in direct selling schemes. About 50,000 consumers are involved.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

An interview with Vidas Juodsnukis, chairman of the union, on September 23rd 2013 formed the basis of this analysis.



## CONTEXT

During the Soviet period in Lithuania production from private farming was very limited and strictly regulated because rural people had to work for the state-owned collective farms. However, urban consumers used to get produce from farmers by other means, such as by a direct selling approach. Today after more than twenty years of independence in which Lithuania has turned towards the market economy, alternative food systems, like urban community support agriculture, are quite a new idea in Lithuania because agriculture is still generally considered as a regular business, which does not need support from society. New initiatives like 'Farmers' Markets' are becoming more popular in Lithuanian society. However, the Lithuanian family farmers union does not have a goal of promoting eco-farming and organic food production. The union's main goal is to provide opportunities for family farmers to sell their produce.

## DESCRIPTION

The Lithuanian Family Farmers' Union was established in 2000 with the main aim of acting as an advocate for small and medium farmers within Lithuanian agricultural policy. The union has about 4,000 members who have a farm or agricultural business. Their main criterion for membership is that all labour at the farm/enterprise should be carried out by family members without hired workers. The objectives of the union are to:

- Advocate the interests of its members;
- Develop the professional skills of the members, in particular young members of the families;
- Promote farming culture;
- Advocate for fair and transparent dissemination of national and EU financial support, lobby for non-discriminatory conditions for small and medium farmers;
- Promote the idea of a Chamber of Agriculture, Agriculture consulting service to provide consultations for family farmers on scientific, economic and legal issues;
- Promote and support self-government of rural communities and farmers unions;
- Provide proposals on the development of legislation;
- Establish, develop and maintain farmers markets and other agricultural trading schemes;
- Represent the union at international networks and events.

A recent key activity is in establishing farmers' markets, which are developed in cooperation with local municipalities. The most successful is Pilies market in Kaunas city. The market is organized from mobile vehicles owned by farmers and

then there are no needs for market infrastructure (i.e. pavilions, stalls) and farmers have possibility to migrate among various markets in Lithuania. The idea to shorten food supply chains came after two occurrences: the first – small and medium farmers cannot compete on production's price with big industrial farmers because work input efficiency and because at small farms there is a need for more man-work input; the second was economic deflation. Farmers' markets become popular in Lithuania because change of consumers behaviour – consumers would like to see a farmer and farm to be sure on food products quality as well as social cohesion with small farmers becoming an important aspect. Today the situation has changed again, but the markets remain popular and the direct selling approach has been

brought to the political agenda.

A second quite intensive activity is implementing training for farmers, in particular on direct selling of their produce. The training curricula consists of the following aspects: direct selling of vegetables and fruits; direct selling of milk products and direct selling of meat products; requirements for stationary and mobile selling points and equipment; hygienic requirements; requirements for labelling; risk assessment and management; promotional marketing tools and tips.

For the union, and among its membership, environmental issues are still not the top priority. However, ecological farms comprise one-third of the membership of the union, and in addition the union

is receiving more and more requests to provide training for its members on environmental management of farms. An in-depth assessment of this topic will be done by training needs assessment.

#### COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

##### 1. Involvement of target groups

Small farmers and consumers are involved in the project.

##### 2. Scale

Small Scale.

##### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

Sustainable farming, short food supply chains, direct selling, social and environmental corporate responsibility.

##### 4. Scale up

It is not known whether this project can be scaled up.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

The chairman of the union indicated following motivations and drivers for their work:

- Economic stability
- Ensuring food quality
- Communication with consumers - social motivation
- Stimulate rural development by inspiring examples

Creating opportunities to sell farmers produce and so ensuring **economic stability** is a key driving force for small and medium farmers. In the current economic circumstances they cannot compete at the market because the primary costs of their production are higher in comparison with the intensive farms' production costs. To ensure that the products will sell, the farmers have to do direct selling as well as concentrate on ecological production in order to build trust with the consumer.

**Ensure food quality.** Ecological production has advantages against intensive farms' production. The association believes that direct contact between producer and consumer can enable the producer to provide a product, which more truly reflects consumers' needs. As well as building trust, farmer and consumer cooperation provides an opportunity for natural, healthy food, which is not produced by blindly following hygienic norms and regulations that influence food quality such that at the final product stage only synthetic and not organic food is available.

**Communication with consumers:** rural people living in small and close communities have a need to communicate with others (beside their neighbours) and the market is a perfect forum/place to fulfil this need.

**Stimulate rural development by inspiring examples.** Besides political lobbying, the union believes that inspiring examples from its membership demonstrates that sustainable living in rural areas is possible with good wellbeing and financial sustainability and can contribute to rural development.

### 2. Bottlenecks

- The union indicated that the retirement of a generation of farmers' and the challenge of **attracting new farmers** was a key obstacle. They mentioned that annually about fifty farmers are retiring from the sector and there is nobody replacing them. There are huge levels of migration – in particular of working-age generations – out of the rural areas; people are moving to countries with better economic conditions. Current national social care policy does not favour unemployed people looking for job opportunities.

LITHUANIAN FAMILY  
FARMERS' UNION

- Another factor that impacts on the ageing of rural society is that life and work on the farm requires a lot of physical work and living standards in rural areas are still below average. In addition cultural and social lives can be relatively inactive, schools network are poor and in a great majority of places kindergartens are missing. Indeed, young families and young people generally are missing due intensive emigration to urban areas and abroad from the Country. A further factor regards small and medium scale farmers. It was suggested that the direct selling is challenging for many farmers because it requires a different set of social skills which are more oriented towards the market than the traditional social sphere of farming families. This challenge is in addition to the extra financial costs they must bear in order to bring the products to the main cities (Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda) which itself could make the effort economically not feasible. In other Lithuanian cities the direct selling and CSA schemes are not known and not used. Also, in smaller cities people are more closely connected to agriculture, and in many cases they have small gardens next to their homes or in the neighbouring countryside.
- National **agriculture policy** is not favourable yet to sustainable agriculture practice, which contribute to maintenance of ecosystem services

(public goods) because the current policy is mainly targeting stimulation of economically beneficial agriculture practice and production, but not addressing impact to public goods. Even the EU Common Agriculture Policy has a weak links between pillars I and II. Where pillar I promotes intensive agriculture practices by direct payments, as pillar II has social cohesion targets as well as maintain public goods through Agri-environmental measures.

### 3. Sustainability performance

The union does not explicitly recognise its activities as contributing to sustainable development indicators. However, from the interview it can be concluded that the following activities contribute to sustainable development.

By promoting small and medium scale farmers the union contributes to sustainable rural development, including maintaining working places, stimulating the economy and social development. Specifically regarding environmental performance, it can be said that small and medium farming ensures a variety of agriculture cultivation, and that small plots allow the retention of the agricultural landscape mosaic, which is critical for good biodiversity quality.

Long term training of union members allows knowledge transfer of the best available technologies. These are

developed to mitigate environmental impact as well as to contribute to animal welfare.

A discussion between Mr. Kestutis Navickas, national project manager of the project Hungry for Rights, and Mr. Vidas Juodsnukis, the head of the Family Farmers' Union concluded that more sustainable development aspects will be included in the union's training curricula.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

The highest government body of the union is the annual congress of the representatives; the Congress has the right to elect the union's board, the chairperson of the board, his or her deputies, and a revision committee.

The chairperson manages the union's secretariat which is responsible for daily office duties and communication. He or she hires and fires the secretariat's staff, and has a right to sign formal documents on behalf of the union.

The union has an office, which is open during working hours, where members of the union can get information about the union's activities and new members can get information on membership conditions.

- **Website.** The union runs a website called [www.seimosukis.lt](http://www.seimosukis.lt) where they

share information about the association and farmers' activities, including information about the association's members and production. Background information on solidarity CSA and other sustainable farming initiatives is also available. Another website - [www.ukiai.lt](http://www.ukiai.lt) - is an interactive database of farmers, where consumers can search by region, and by production. This database is a tool for consumers to find and direct purchase products.

- **Fairs and festivals in cooperation with municipalities.** Members of the union present details of their activities and goals during various agriculture fairs, and other public events, which are either organized by the association, or by other organisations, or municipalities.
- **Conferences workshops, seminars,** are organized which are not only on agriculture issues but also on rural development, environment and social issues.
- **Annual trainings** are organized for members of the union, and during these training sessions up-to-date

information on the union's activities and other issues is presented to the participants.

### 5. Policies

Current agriculture and rural development policies are not favourable for small and medium farms because:

- Agriculture policy is concentrated on intensive agriculture production, which mainly takes economical effectiveness criteria into consideration.

- Development of rural communities is mainly stimulated by the LEADER programme and implemented by Local Action Groups (LAG). However, an examination of LAG projects between 2007 and 2013 was unable to find any projects which promote alternative food systems or any initiatives to stimulate distribution of local farmers' products.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The union should be active in lobbying for small and medium size farmers at the national level. They should seek to cooperate with potential partners from other sectors, for instance environmental groups.
- The union should be a proactive NGO promoting AFS. To achieve this its strategic objectives should be revised and appropriate approaches chosen to implement this policy.
- **An ecosystem services approach should be implemented** to agricultural support systems to ensure that produce from environmentally friendly farms receives a fair price. An

analysis of the environmental impacts from conventional farming practices and alternative farming practices should form the basis of support systems. For instance, if the impact to the environment from farming is negative, the cost of these negative factors should be added to the production costs and not mitigated by the use of public funds as it is at present. Meanwhile, farming practices which have a positive impact on the natural world (such as contributing to biodiversity indicators and avoiding the use of agricultural chemicals) should be positively supported

through subsidies from the public funds or by tax exemptions. A support system based on ecological principles would make the produce from small, environmentally friendly farms competitive on the food market.

- **Local authorities should take small and medium farmers more seriously, by purchasing their products.** Local politicians should demonstrate political will and support their farmers by developing favourable political policies to purchase food from local farmers and producers for their schools, hospitals and other municipal owned institutions.

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

August 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Four target groups were involved. These were local authorities, producers, consumers and a variety of associations or small organizations. The initial action was performed by the town and state authorities, and was then taken up by the associations.



## CONTEXT

Dakar became the central hub of the Senegalese population by its geographical position and its strong industrialisation compared to the rest of the country. It is the economic, political, administrative, and cultural capital. All of these factors have contributed to making Dakar the most populous city in the country, with a large concentration of population in the suburban areas. Over the past few decades, this area has expanded greatly, becoming home to many new migrants.

As such, conventional urban family farmers have increased to approximately 3,000 farmers, cultivating over 113 horticultural sites. However, urban farming still remains problematic as its potential for growth faces serious challenges, including acquiring land and finances. Nonetheless, urban gardening offers a major innovation in access to vegetables and the fight against poverty.

This background can be used as a starting point to introduce the development of a micro-gardening programme under the Senegalese FAO Technical Cooperation, through which the Centre for the Development of Horticulture was created in 1999 in Dakar. It was created for training and demonstrational purposes. This was followed by the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), a programme of cooperation shared between the cities of Dakar and Milan, which includes cooperation between the Italian Government and FAO. Between 2006 and the present day this programme has ensured that a significant number of women living in Dakar receive proper training on micro-gardening and its implementation. Following these programmes, grassroots associations, non-profit organizations, and other bodies have taken up the initiative to keep the ball rolling.

The activity is predominately performed by women, who have taken the opportunity to organize themselves into unions, such as the Group of Economic Interest.

We will derive our knowledge from a study carried out in August 2013 of around 45 women who practice micro-gardening in the following urban sites: Camberene 1, Camberene 2, Guédiawaye and Pikine. This study allows us to illustrate how urban micro-gardening, as an alternative food system, can aid in the eradication of hunger.

## DESCRIPTION

**COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA****1. Involvement of target groups**

The project contains multiple actors:

- City of Dakar and Milan/ Suburban populations of Dakar (producers and consumers)

- Multilateral and Italian cooperation
- Local women's associations and groups
- Women producers and consumers
- Non-governmental organisations ACRA, COOPI (Italian cooperation)
- Horticulture Division of the Ministry of Agriculture

## 2. Scale

Small and medium scale: the study focused on micro-gardeners the suburbs of Dakar.

## 3. Environmental sustainability performance

Micro gardening is carried out on manmade tables, (wooden tables, buckets, bottles, plastic containers, used tires) due to the lack of production space. The substrate is made up of local rice husks and peanut shells. In addition to these basic factors, there are several positive environmental impacts. Micro-gardening:

- Creates closed loops systems whereby costs, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and energy requirements are greatly reduced
- Promotes the rapid recycling of certain urban waste (limiting/monitoring the risks of pollution)
- Responds to the current land constraints due to urbanization
- Facilitates access to quality food for all segments of the population

In terms of the health benefits, it improves the health of urban populations as plants reduce the amount of pollution. Similarly, women are able to grow certain products that contribute to the reduction of cesspools that negatively impact health. The quality of vegetables from micro-gardens is now well established among the people who have adopted it.

## 4. Scale up

Two factors favour the replication of micro gardening in other locations:

1. Due to the simplicity and accessibility of materials (they can be recovery wood, tires, rice husks and peanut shells), micro-gardening can be practiced virtually anywhere. This is especially important for congested areas where, in terms of land and space, it appears as an obvious answer.

2. The technology of micro-gardens is simple and inexpensive. Anyone can create a micro-garden: it requires little physical effort; it operates in a closed cycle; it saves water and fertilizer; and its soil fertility or substrate can be enhanced by addition of compost made from garbage.

The necessary conditions are, however, women's access to training and advice as well as support to start the activity, particularly due to its interest for the poorest women (widowed or divorced women and mothers of at least five children).

## 5. Level of social innovation:

Women have adopted this alternative activity for two reasons: it provides them with food security and contributes to their economic and social advancement. Sixty-four per cent of women surveyed say the micro-gardening has a positive impact on their families and a significant socioeconomic impact on themselves, in terms of autonomy.

On the other hand, given the crucial role of cities of Dakar and Milan on an issue that directly concerns the given populations, this process can be considered a major innovation in the context of decentralized cooperation.

## 6. Participation of local communities

Local communities have been determinant in the development of this project. This can be shown by the launch in 2006 of the project 'Consolidation of micro-gardens for improved nutrition and food security of the population of the communes of Dakar' (GDGP/SEN/002/ITA) with the support of the

twin cities of Dakar and Milan and decentralized co-operation between the Italian Government and the FAO. The city of Dakar and the city councils of county boroughs have made available to stakeholders (trainers and producers) some sites for crop development through cultural community centres, schools and health centres.

## 7. Supply chain

The project facilitates a short supply chain, managed locally.

The families consuming the produce are primarily those of women producers. This means that the majority of the produce is for self-consumption. Any surpluses are sold primarily at a local market (district), then if necessary in more distant markets, but in the same town.

The micro-garden project of the city of Dakar plans to install vegetable stands where micro-garden products will be marketed. The kiosks will be installed in public districts which do not yet have production centres: Dakar Plateau, Fann and Dieupeul.

## 8. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors

The role of women producers can be identified at two levels:

- 1) they are clearly the targets of the project for they must acquire the knowledge and practice of micro-gardening;
- 2) based on their groups and women's associations, they were able to sustain their activities to the end of different programmes.

The initiative meets the following requirements:

- It involves disadvantaged people: it is strictly practised by women, but more importantly it provides sustainable solutions for the poorest women. Of 45 randomly selected women practitioners on four different sites, 73

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SENEGAL

per cent are over 50 years old, 40 per cent are widowed or divorced and 51 per cent are not at all educated and have between five and ten children.

In addition to women's groups, some poor women as individuals have developed a

micro-garden as an income-generating activity and are assisted in these tasks by other family members.

- As the local communities, public policy in general play an active role: the role of public programmes such as TCP/

SEN/8823 in 1999 and PSSA in 2003 and through cooperation between the cities of Dakar and Milan in the programme GDCP/SEN/002/ITA, from 2006, were very important in the introduction and development of micro-gardening in Dakar and Senegal.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

The motivations are different depending on the actors:

- Women producers and consumers: food self-sufficiency, income-generating activity, raising their social status with greater autonomy.
- Associations: the needs of their members.
- Dakar and Milan cities: fight against hunger, improve health (with quality vegetables) and promote greener cities.

### 2. Bottlenecks

These are: 1) lack of access to training and consulting, 2) low capacity funding to start the activity, 3) absence of a centre supplying farmers with agricultural inputs, 4) production sites poorly secured.

### 3. Sustainability performance

Beyond the changes brought by

the micro-gardening in terms of empowerment of women and their families and of improving the conditions of the most disadvantaged, it is worth noting the environmental dimension of the project's contribution to improving the quality of life by supporting the existence of plant life in areas of high human concentration.

As the statistics already quoted demonstrate, micro-gardening is actually an opportunity for empowerment of the most disadvantaged urban and peri-urban areas.

The micro-gardening improves the daily menu of urban families and the social position of women. In addition, these production units are involved in supplying the city with fresh agricultural products and provide jobs for thousands of women. This new form of agriculture

provides a healthy, varied and balanced diet. Moreover, our interviews reveal that some of the income earned from this activity is used to change and improve nutrition. Another part can handle unexpected costs, small children's needs, and the cost of telephone and transportation.

Ultimately, this is a big breath of fresh air for families. The results reveal that women who engage in micro-gardening are also involved in children's education through school supplies, school canteen, in providing clothing for children and the well-being of the family, etc. The micro-gardening also limits the need for transport and costly preservation equipment, machinery and fuels, by making people more independent.

#### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

The communication component was taken into account through the introduction of a literate environment to let people know about the sites of vegetable production and marketing in neighbourhoods of Dakar. Posters inform the various segments of the population through powerful images of vegetables and the slogan “Micro Garden fresh and healthy vegetables”. Brochures provide information on places of production (training centres and demonstration centres, community production). They are part of the communication component on the products and benefits of micro-gardening. In addition to the materials produced by the project stakeholders, the city of Dakar will soon

indicate on its website the location of the various centres, including the GPS coordinates of each site.

#### 5. Policies

The micro-gardening has so far been supported by public cooperation programmes as noted before. But it should also be noted that in 2003, the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) negotiated by the Government of Senegal called for the extension of the practice to other regions of Senegal. This reflects the Senegalese government’s desire to promote this alternative food system. Twelve training centres have been set up through twinning between municipalities of Milan and Dakar. These centres offer free training for people wanting to get into the micro-gardening.

The Ministry of Agriculture through the Directorate of Horticulture (DH) coordinates all programmes and projects of micro-gardening. Thus, the DH has a micro-garden programme that develops promotional activities, outreach and action research on technology. This programme plays a crucial role in the sustainability of the sector and its expansion in other parts of Senegal.

The respondents to this study, particularly those around Cambéréne, were identified with the support of officials from the UN Public Garden Centre, near the health centre. All of them have benefited from training through this centre. See appendix for more details.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to spread micro-gardening to other areas of Dakar and other regions of Senegal several factors need to be considered:

- The organisational capacity of women who practice micro-gardening should be strengthened, so that they can themselves mobilise technical advice and funding needed for access to inputs.
- Micro-gardening should be integrated into city policies as revenue generating activity and also for food security.
- Public programmes to support the extension of micro-gardening should be renewed.
- A micro-garden sector should be created and organised.

# PROMOTING THE USE OF LOCAL GRAIN IN BREAD MAKING AND BISCUITS FABRICATION

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

June, July, August, September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Three target groups were involved: communities and peasant organizations; local micro-entrepreneurs (mills, bakers and women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market); consumers.

These three groups of actors are involved, with the greatest participation by producer organisations as they are better organised and have assumed leadership of the project. Bakers are more in the position of project beneficiaries, but they participated in evaluations of implemented actions and outputs. Consumers are the most complex group. They do not participate in the implementation of the project, but their consumption choices are crucial to the outcome of the project. This makes them a target that is also involved in project evaluations.



## CONTEXT

For several centuries, both under colonial rule and since independence, agricultural policies in Senegal have strongly fostered the consumption of bread made from wheat which has replaced the grains traditionally consumed by local populations.

The aim of these policies was to reduce the acreage devoted to grain production in order to promote peanut cultivation, which brought a lot of foreign exchange through export. After so many years, bread made from wheat-flour is rooted in the eating habits of Senegalese families and they don't want to consume the porridge made from local cereals for breakfast.

Senegal consumes large quantities of wheat-flour because of the high consumption of bread and other products that use wheat-flour. However, the country does not produce wheat. It is for this reason that Senegal imports an average of 300,000 tonnes per year of wheat.

In recent years, initiatives have been taken by different actors to promote bread flour from local grains. The success of these initiatives would not only be important for the national economy in terms of improving the balance of trade, but also in terms of developing local cereals and creating opportunities for family farms.

Faced with this challenge, farmers' organisations, such as the 'Union des Groupements Paysans de Mékhé' (UGPM) initiated processes for the development of two distinct value chains: the first from grain producers to consumers of bread baked with composite flour (wheat + millet); the second from intermediate processing units (mills) to the bakers.

The UGPM initiative covers Mékhé town and the rural communities of Koul, Merina Dakkhar and Méouane. It is located about 120 km from Dakar.

## DESCRIPTION

### COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

#### 1. Involvement of target groups

The initiative directly involves:

- A farmers' association (UGPM)
- Local micro-entrepreneurs: mills service, bakers (three trained by UGPM with the support of 'Fédération des organisations non-gouvernementales du Sénégal' (FONGS) and women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market (five enterprises trained by UGPM with the support of FONGS)
- Rural and urban consumers (fifty respondents).

## 2. Scale

Small and medium scale.

The initiative covers Tivaouane department whose population living in three towns and 14 rural communities was estimated in 2005 at about 350,000 persons. The actors in the value chain are located in this department.

## 3. Environmental sustainability performance

The initiative helps to fight against a number of threats to biodiversity and the environment both locally and globally. Indeed, the increasing importation of wheat to Senegal (90 per cent of it for the production of bread), poses a threat to local biodiversity: traditional consumption is unstructured, which results in the collapse of the traditional production of local cereals.

Generally, food imports are a disaster in ecological terms. Note in particular the environmental impact of transport: studies on the 'ecological footprint' teach us that the international exchange of goods and services now accounts for nearly 50 per cent of the global ecological footprint.

In addition there are negative environmental impacts associated with wheat exporting countries: in Europe (including France which is the largest exporter of wheat in Europe) production of wheat is often monoculture with low crop rotation (in some areas) and intensive chemical inputs. The impact of such systems in terms of loss of biodiversity must be added to the direct environmental impacts of intensive cultivation of wheat, such as soil degradation, proliferation of parasites, etc. Indeed, in France sunflower, barley and soybeans have substantially disappeared from crop rotations as a direct result of the revaluation of special aid for durum wheat introduced in 1992, and also because of the comparative price

changes in durum wheat and oilseeds.

It is truly a vicious circle.

Moreover, imported wheat receives an average of seven pesticide treatments, including one in the storage silos, and two to three inputs of chemical fertiliser. This has created strong concerns over public health.

## 4. Scale up

Seven other peasant association members of FONGS also carry out such initiatives in their respective localities. The production of local cereals concerns almost all agricultural regions of Senegal. Modern as well as traditional bakeries as well as women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market thrive in all rural and urban areas. Three major factors will shape the success and development of this initiative and its potential for scaling-up in other jurisdictions:

- Technological mastery by bakers in incorporating local cereals in bread, and culinary innovations by women operating small restaurants
- Political will and, as desired by the farmers' organisations, the adoption of a law requiring the incorporation in bread of at least 30 per cent of local cereals by all bakers
- The promotion of traditional Senegalese dishes (Thiéré, thiackri, fondé, etc.).

## 5. Level of social innovation:

The partnership between producers through their organisations and private entrepreneurs is quite new. Bakers and women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market benefit from training on the part of the farmers' association.

The project also helps to preserve culinary knowledge by promoting traditional Senegalese dishes made from local cereals.

The partnership between the association and consumers is more complex, because they are not organised. Their opinions have been collected and taken into account only through eliciting their opinions during tasting events and through studies by the association.

## 6. Participation of local communities

The dynamics of participation are endogenous and fully supported by a local association.

## 7. Supply chain

There is a short supply chain, managed locally.

Two value chains can be distinguished:

- For bread grain: cereal producers > mills > bakers > women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market > consumers;
- For the pancakes: grain producers > mills > women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market > consumers.

In both cases, the chains are short and involve local stakeholders.

## 8. Focus on rural-urban dynamics of food supply chain

The initiative is focussed on three villages (Ndeckou Lamane, Payenne and Thiaréne) around the town of Mékhé. Bakers and women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market sell their products in their villages, some surrounding villages and also in the town of Mékhé, ensuring a link between city and countryside through food.

## 9. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors

The initiative is supported by the local farmers' association (UGPM, which is a member of FONGS) which

## PROMOTING THE USE OF LOCAL GRAIN IN BREAD MAKING AND BISCUITS FABRICATION

mobilises actors (bakers, women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market, mills, consumers) and develops the services they need, such as training, awareness-raising and tastings, design projects, mobilisation of technical and financial partners.

The initiative meets the following requirements:

a. it involves disadvantaged people: producers are members of family farms

with high deficit and insufficient incomes. Similarly, the initiative targets rural bakers characterized by exclusion from funding systems. The initiative provides them services in training, but in the medium term the goal is to modernise their production units.

b. local communities and public policy in general have an active role in the initiative: in the framework of a public programme for 2013-2015 the State of Senegal agreed funding for a larger project that will involve UGPM and

seven other associations which are also members of FONGS as well as two federations of producers. This project will be conducted in partnership with the National Association of Senegal bakers and the National Institute of Food Technology (ITA) with the objective of developing the incorporation of local cereals in bread at the national level.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

- Producers: research market opportunities
- Women who run small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market and bakers: income diversification
- Farmers' Associations: building a vision of the economy based on developing local products and local value creation.
- At this stage, each actor takes its activity independently, and the association runs the process with the means and support of FONGS and the French NGO Solidarity.

### 2. Bottlenecks

These are: 1) the seasonality of local grain production and variability of grain prices; 2) low control of techniques for incorporating local cereals in bread making; 3) low capacity for investment to upgrade their production among bakers and women operating small restaurants.

### 3. Sustainability performance

As was previously stated, food import is a disaster in ecological terms, in particular the environmental impact of transport. The success of an initiative such as this one can have beneficial impacts on biodiversity in the country of implementation (Senegal) and also on wheat exporting countries. Moreover, it

is worth noting the effects on Senegalese agriculture in general in terms of developing local industries, on profitable products for farmers and job creation. This is a matter of significant social sustainability in view of the interests and immediate gains for neighbouring actors: opportunities and income for farmers, jobs and income for bakers and women operating small restaurants, support of sovereign functions and of the balance of trade for the State of Senegal.

#### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

At the local level, communication is provided by community radio stations. For its part, FONGS did much to raise awareness at the national and regional levels, both in the public media and

on its website and in its social media (Facebook and YouTube).

#### 5. Policies

Policymakers are following initiatives in this direction and public programmes are being negotiated and implemented

to develop and sustain what is already going on. However, a strong political will in terms of decision-making, such as the imposition on bakers of an incorporating rate of local cereals for bread making remains an important issue and a priority for peasant organisations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Associations involved in this project have put forward five recommendations:

1. Focus on consumer awareness for local products, but also a strong involvement of consumer associations
2. Invest more in technical training (one major weakness relates to the quality of bread, including elasticity... it is

related to the competition of bread made only with wheat flour)

3. Improve access to finance for bakers to improve their productivity by allowing them to upgrade their equipment
4. Strengthen the alliance between consumers' groups and advocacy organisation in lobbying government

for proactive policy measures for the incorporation of local cereals in bread making.

5. Improve yields and promote healthy agriculture without the use of chemical fertilisers or pesticides.

# INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COWPEA PRODUCTION SYSTEMS AND CONSUMPTION AROUND MÉKHÉ AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

August, September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

Family farms, producer associations and village communities and consumers are involved in this project.



## CONTEXT

Mékhé is located in an area of the groundnut basin where groundnut monoculture has been practiced for decades. It is an area marked by strong deforestation, soil depletion and a significant decline in crop yields for farmers whose families often fail to live for more than six months of the year from their produce and farm incomes. With food shortages that follow from one year to another, families fall into a vicious cycle of spiralling debt, “they borrow to feed, grow and harvest but are never allowed to settle accounts”.

To support these families in their fight against shortage and spiralling debt the farmers’ association UGPM is involved at several levels:

- introducing products and crop varieties adapted to new agro-ecological conditions: cowpea is a short cycle product for the family who can have food stocks as soon as 45 days after the first rain, as against three months from other cultivations
- supporting families in family consultation to improve governance and good decision-making in relation to their food production and consumption;
- supporting village communities for collective management during periods of food shortage (cereal banks, common dinners).

## DESCRIPTION

### COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

#### 1. Involvement of target groups

Family farms, producers’ association, village communities and consumers are involved. The project is driven by the UGPM association with the interviews also revealing strong participation from families and village communities. Their commitment is demonstrated by the effective implementation of collective decision-making in terms of production and consumption choices.

#### 2. Scale

This is a small to medium scale project based around Mékhé town and surrounding rural communities (Méouane, Koul and Merina Dakkar).

#### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

In recent years cowpea has been developed as a crop in the north of the groundnut basin as an appropriate response to soil depletion and the general decline in performance of family farms after decades of peanut monoculture. Cowpea has become a product of agricultural diversification and is allowing a large number of families in rural communities around Mékhé town to move from two or three types of agricultural production to three or four types each year. This diversification has reaped immediate benefits in terms of farm income. Beyond this, it is also



beneficial for the renewal of natural resources.

From an agronomic point of view, cowpea is well adapted to the soil, climatic, technological and socio-economic conditions of sub-Saharan Africa. Its particular usefulness in this area of Africa is due to six factors: (1) an adaptation to drought because of very short cycle varieties; (2) a high potential for biological nitrogen fixing in areas of traditional cultures where the soil is poor (low organic matter content [ $<0.2\%$ ], high sand component [ $> 85\%$ ], and an adaptation to a wide pH range [4.5 - 9.0]); (3) tolerance to high temperatures during the vegetative stage; (4) a good behaviour under shady conditions; (5) rapid vegetative growth; (6) multiple uses as greens (leaves and pods), dry seeds and fodder. Cowpea's adaptability to drought is essential for dry savannah areas of West and East Africa. Therefore, the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research (ISRA) recommends cowpea in the northern part of the country where the soil is sandy with a low capacity to retain water, and where the rainfall is low (isohyet 300) and the rainy season very short compared to the south.

#### 4. Scale up

Cowpea farming was supported because it is a product that contributes significantly to crop diversification and to reduce food shortage in arid areas. Thus its introduction was particularly easy throughout northern groundnut basin (Thiès, Louga, and to a lesser extent Diourbel). This introduction was facilitated because cowpea helps to facilitate many appropriate responses to the deterioration of natural resources, to the reduction of rainfall and to the urgent need for families to have each year's first crop as soon as possible. Communities in all areas which are in such a situation welcomed cowpea as a lifeline, especially

because the cultivation technique is easy and quite similar to that of more traditional products.

It is also worthy of note that in recent years the cowpea has been introduced into less arid areas in Eastern Senegal by family farms seeking to diversify their diet or income. It has also been adopted by livestock areas in the forestry pastoral zone for its double intake as a human food and as fodder for livestock feed. Its strength as a food, and also the techniques required to grow it, are factors that promote scaling-up and replication of cowpea as an agricultural crop.

#### 5. Level of social innovation

The innovation lies in eating behaviour and the important role played by the cowpea in the national dynamics of promoting local food systems. Indeed, several campaigns promoting "local eating" habits were based on dishes designed and prepared from this product: Nambé, thiacy, cowpea, etc.

Regarding gender, it should be noted that all actors in the downstream production value chains are women who are traders or operating small restaurants and who earn significant income and improve their social situations (autonomy).

#### 6. Participation of local communities

The project's dynamics are endogenous and fully supported by a local association.

#### 7. Supply chain

This is a short supply chain, managed locally. Value chains are very short. Self-consumption is the most important part. However there are a few other types of chain:

- a. Family farms > women traders of the town > women who operate small food shops (or restaurants) on the street or in the market in the town of Mékhé (particularly on the national road);
- b. Family farms > women traders of the locality > buyers (local households and travellers using the highway).

#### 8. Focus on rural-urban dynamics of food supply chain

The food chain includes the rural communities of Méouane, Koul, Merina Dakkar, and the town of Mékhé. It shows a strong connection between the production areas of the district and the city where a series of food outlets and restaurants exists along the national road.

#### 9. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors

Beyond the fact that producers are members of local family farms, it should especially be noted that the initiative is supported by the local farmers' association UGPM (the farmers' union group of Mékhé) which brings together more than forty groups. Through this the villagers carry the momentum in their respective villages.

The initiative meets the following requirements:

- a. It involves disadvantaged peoples: Producers are family farmers who operate on average ten hectares per family, in which ten people are active on average and who have 15 people to feed. These families' farms are mostly unprofitable. They live an average of six months of the year from their products and farm incomes. They are the main consumers of their products. In addition they sell to the local markets with the women traders who live in the same villages as producers.
- b. Local government and public policy in general have an active role: It is particularly worth noting the role of government which has resulted in two important developments: 1) the continued mobilization of research to develop early varieties that are more adapted to climate change; 2) the implementation of a subsidy system for inputs at the beginning of the agricultural season.

# INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COWPEA PRODUCTION SYSTEMS AND CONSUMPTION AROUND MÉKHÉ AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

CASE STUDIES IN  
**SENEGAL**

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

These vary according to the actors:

- Family farms: reducing food shortage; income diversification; fertilisation of soil.
- Village communities and consumers: reducing shortage and the power of traders who are frequently usurers.
- Farmers' association (UGPM): sustainable management of local natural resources, fight against shortage and debt.

### 2. Bottlenecks

- Low knowledge of conservation techniques of the product;
- Short production period (limited to rainy season).

### 3. Sustainability performance

Cowpea is a popular staple in Africa for its leaves, green pods and dry seeds can be sold and consumed. Indeed, during the dry season in parts of West Africa and Central Africa, the monetary value of cowpea tops that have been stored becomes very high). The dry seed is commonly ground and consumed in many traditional African dishes such as porridge, bread and weaning food

for children or turned into doughnuts (Akara).

In this area, this new culture has led to agricultural diversification: each family farm grows an average of three types of culture, which involve crop rotation. This system allows the soil to rest and, eventually, to be fertilised.

Some short-season varieties mature early. This enables the production of good quality food during periods of shortage. In the Sahel region of Africa, this period when food is scarce corresponds to the months of August and September. If a family has food during this period, they have less need to take loans from loan sharks.

Beyond cowpea's dual function as an important source of food and income, the nutritional potential of this food product is very important. The mature seed contains 23-25 per cent protein and 50-67 per cent starch as well as B vitamins such as folic acid which is important in preventing malformations in newborn children. The seed is also rich in essential micronutrients, such as iron, calcium and zinc. Cowpea plays an important role in

the livelihoods of many rural families in Africa, Latin America and Asia, providing nutrients that are deficient in cereals. An additional advantage is that its vines are a worthy fodder for livestock because of their high protein content.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

The UGPM association play a lead role in communication and co-ordinating activities by monitoring family farms and arranging sharing sessions such as village assemblies and common dinners at the village level.

### 5. Policies

The development of cowpea, particularly its shorter production cycle, reflects the desire of the Senegalese government through ISRA, to stimulate suitable crops in the northern part of the country where growing conditions are in some ways more challenging than in the south of the country.

For several years, cowpea has been one of the crops whose inputs have been subsidised by the State of Senegal during the agricultural season.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

They are essentially threefold:

1. Encourage the emergence of modern micro-food industries capable of stimulating production and supplying more urban markets;
2. Disseminate and popularise dishes designed and prepared from the product;
3. Develop techniques for conserving fresh produce as well as dry seeds.

## APPENDIX

List of training and demonstration centres on the micro-gardening (cfd) and their location

N°	Name of the center	Location
01	<b>Derklé</b>	Centre socio culturel de Derklé, près de l'école primaire de Derklé
02	<b>Grand Yoff</b>	Centre socio culturel de Grand Yoff, près de la mairie d'arrondissement
03	<b>Cambérène</b>	Jardin Public cité Nations Unies, près du centre de santé
04	<b>HLM</b>	Centre socio culturel des HLM, près de la mairie de la commune d'arrondissement
05	<b>Ouakam</b>	Centre socio culturel Oukam, près de la mairie de la commune d'arrondissement
06	<b>Parcelle Assainies</b>	Ecole Primaire unité 8 des parcelles assainies
07	<b>Grand Dakar</b>	Centre de formation du personnel municipal de Dakar, près du centre d'Etat civil de Grand Dakar
08	<b>Dela fosse</b>	Jardin public Cité des enseignants du lycée Maurice De la Fosse
09	<b>Sacré cœur</b>	Centre socio culturel de sacré cœur, près du centre de formation IPG
10	<b>Patte d'Oie</b>	Centre socio culturel de la patte d'oie, face de la tribune découverte du stand Léopold Sédar Senghor
11	<b>Fass</b>	Centre socio culturel de la Fasse, près du terrain de foot
12	<b>Hann Bel Air</b>	Centre socio culturel de Hann Bel Air, derrière de la cafétéria de Hann

# THE REAL PROJECT

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

August - September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

The initiative involves young people, producers and public authorities.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The REAL Project was suggested by a local authority education office. The information in this case study was drawn from a report written by the initiators of the project and was written in consultation with them.



## CONTEXT

The overall focus of the Scottish part of the 'Hungry for Rights' project is on the present state of food production and consumption in the Outer Hebrides island archipelago which lies off the north west coast of Scotland.

However, the REAL Project is actually taking place on the mainland of Scotland - and this is also true of a substantial proportion of the activity of the third initiative examined in this case study, which is on public procurement policy. The reason for the inclusion of these projects in this study is that it was felt on the islands that these two projects may be replicable there and information about them was requested.

Accordingly, this introductory section will first of all detail the general condition of food production and consumption in the Outer Hebrides, and in this respect it will act as a general introduction to the whole case study. It will then focus more closely on the REAL Project itself.

### **THE CONDITION OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN THE OUTER HEBRIDES**

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland can be summarised as being at the furthest end of the food chain in Great Britain. The islands in particular have high dependence on industrial food, high food miles and carbon emissions. The archipelago of the Outer Hebrides with a population of almost 30,000 people has no dairy production, no commercial fruit or vegetable producers, no fresh fish auctions and markets and few small-scale butchers. This is despite the fact that six per cent of the population are active in fishery and over 70 per cent of the land is croft land holding many thousands of sheep and cattle. (CnES 2013a)

There is a 95 per cent dependence on imported food (often from southern England, continental Europe and further afield). An infrastructure supporting local food producers is lacking or fragmented and underfunded (including for abattoirs, butchers, auctions and markets, local vocational training and research and development supporting local food production and development). In addition, there is a large dependency on public sector employment and resources in the Highland and Islands (over 30 per cent of employment in The Outer Hebrides is in the public sector). This raises the importance of local authorities in promoting alternative food systems.



Sustainable food systems in the Highland and Island context imply not only shortening food chains to reduce carbon footprints considerably, but should also consider: healthy lifestyles in a population rife with obesity and diabetes; economic sustainability in risky environments and fragile or absent markets; cultural heritage and the retention or revitalisation of traditional alternative food systems; and demographic sustainability – maintaining populations and communities in remote areas and securing future generations of growers and farmers.

A section of recommendations that relate to all three of the initiatives analysed can be found at the conclusion of the third initiative in this case study. In summary, this exploratory research has found that initiatives which begin in a modest way and build slowly, generating trust and confidence among core actors and the wider food community, have shown measurable levels of success. Accordingly, it recommends this

approach to developing an alternative food economy. Of particular importance is the need to build trust and confidence among the core team who are committed to the project (what is sometimes called ‘bonding capital’) and to reach out and engage the broader community on the project (sometimes called ‘bridging capital’). (Woolcock 2001) These processes takes time and commitment.

The research also suggests that developments which meet the targets of major Government policy initiatives may find that their rapid expansion as a result of Government support could hamper their project’s potential. As a result caution is recommended in engaging closely with large-scale Government initiatives.

#### THE REAL PROJECT

The first initiative is ‘The REAL Project’ to develop a food production and distribution social enterprise based at an inner city high school. The school’s catchment area contains some of the

most socially deprived areas in the Highlands and Islands. The project emerged from a complaint among the city’s business community that many young people in Inverness were leaving school unprepared for a working environment and an acknowledgement among the school’s leadership that they could do more for these young people. A farming social enterprise was the result.

The purpose of current projects run on the islands such as ‘Enterprising Young People’ and ‘Include Us’ (CnES 2013b. Include Us 2013) is to create opportunities for young people to find employment on the islands so that they do not have to leave to the mainland for employment. This is crucial to sustain island populations. The REAL Project was mentioned as a good example of a project that not only encourages growing within a school but also aims to scale up horticultural production and distribution as part of a social enterprise run by students.

## DESCRIPTION

The ‘REAL Project’ – Real Education, Active Lives – is a farming social enterprise at Inverness High School in the city of Inverness, the largest population centre in the Highlands. The project has developed a food production and distribution social enterprise based at the school.

According to ‘*Inverness High School - the REAL story*’<sup>37</sup>, a report which charts the project’s development, its origins were in discussions that began in 2002 between Ritchie Cunningham, the school’s rector,

Iain Clyne, a youth-worker and part time geography teacher there, and Dennis Overton, the managing director of AquaScot, a local company that markets organic seafood.

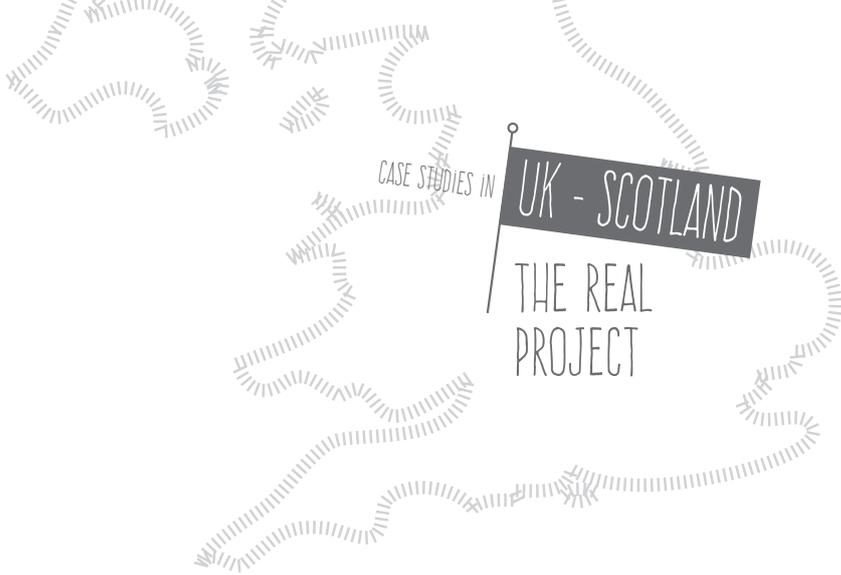
They were joined in a project steering group by members of the voluntary sector, including Lorna Campbell who was working at that time for Community Action Network (CAN).

Scottish Government statistics show that Inverness High serves the most deprived

localities in the Highlands. (Scottish Government 2005) Some parts of its catchment area have high rates of long term illness as well as rates of long term unemployment and deprivation that are almost twice the Highland average. (Highland Council 2013)

Beyond the staff and pupils themselves, the school considers its community to be the people who live within its catchment area, and reaching out to the wider community around the school became one of the project’s main aims.

<sup>37</sup> The present study draws on this detailed report to describe the REAL Project initiative and any quotes in the study which are unreferenced are drawn from it. It is available on the Inverness High School website at: [www.inverness.highland.sch.uk/The%20Real%20Story%20%20Inverness%20High.pdf](http://www.inverness.highland.sch.uk/The%20Real%20Story%20%20Inverness%20High.pdf)



These aims emerged during a visioning exercise in 2003 involving a group of 26 representatives of the school, including staff and pupils as well as members of the project steering group. The main aims were:

1. to create a shared vision for Inverness High School
2. to create an action plan for term one of the project
3. reach out to the wider community

The team felt that key to their work would be to “tell a positive story about the school and involve the entire community in the school’s development”.

In 2005 the project formed a charity called ‘REAL Inverness’ to serve the pupils in Inverness High School, and a youth worker was appointed with a remit to help pupils organise their own events “or shape their ideas into something practical - anything from running a talent show to environmental projects”.

The following year the project steering group became a community interest company (CIC) made up of the rector and deputy rector as well as members of the business and voluntary sectors. A CIC is a company which by law has to fulfil a community purpose and whose assets are ‘locked’ into the achievement of that purpose. However, unlike charities, whose directors must be volunteers, a CIC is able to retain paid directors. According to an article posted on the

website of the Social Enterprise Network for Scotland:

*...the raison d’etre of a CIC is to strike a balance between the need to protect the social purpose while allowing reasonable remuneration for directors and a limited return for investors. (SENSCOT 2013)*

In 2006 the REAL CIC contracted ‘The Ardmore Partnership’, made up of Dennis Overton, Iain Clyne and chartered accountant Robert Murray, to manage social enterprises emerging from the school and to set up partnerships and management teams with the appropriate experience to run them. Lorna Campbell, who had become a member of the CIC, said they believed that, given the innovative idea of linking social enterprises to a secondary school, contracting out the management of the proposed enterprises would give the CIC access to a broader range of expertise.

She said: “We felt that the traditional management solution of employing a chief executive or project manager would not be the best approach for developing long-term sustainability. This creates heavy reliance on a single person who is expected to fulfil a wide range of roles and to bring the full range of skills required.”

Dennis Overton envisaged that over time the school could act as a seedbed for social enterprise businesses and projects. He said: “We are determined that these businesses we are building

up are sustainable, they must be self financing over time or we stop, and find something else.”

Developing a range of social enterprises was foundational to establishing a sustainable cash-flow. The first of these became ‘REAL Organics’ which created an organic farm at the school to produce vegetables for sale in a variety of outlets.

This information shows that the ‘REAL Project’ did not specifically set out to be a farming social enterprise. **The school did not have a particular focus on organic agriculture before the project began. Rather, the steering group identified a food and farming business as having the potential to be a successful first social enterprise for the school.** Their farming enterprise emerged as a way of realising a much broader set of aims which had social inclusion and sustainability [economic and environmental] at their core.

In order to take the enterprise forward, the CIC went into partnership with a commercial organic grower and began to sell at local markets with pupils among those staffing the stalls. Eventually the initial farming project split into two parts, ‘REAL Organics’, which concentrated on production, and ‘REAL FOODS’, which concentrated on retail.

By 2009 the organic farm was operating three polytunnels on a plot of around one acre. In their first years they

produced mainly root vegetables and brassicas, such as leeks, swedes and potatoes. However, it became clear that the small returns from these crops was economically **unsustainable**. In response the farm also moved onto higher value produce such as salads, tomatoes and sprouting beans.

The farm's first produce in 2006 was sold through the school and at the Inverness Farmers Market. In the years that followed the produce was sold at a number of village markets and more than half a dozen outlets, including a full-time stall for ten months at an Inverness shopping centre. They also kept stalls on weekdays in large establishments such as the regional hospital and the headquarters of a government agency.

By setting up a local production and distribution system, supplying shops and hotels in the area as well as their own stalls, the project sought to tackle the issue of the energy used in transporting food from its agricultural source to its consumption destination. In addition to cutting down on food miles, the project also made use of local organic inputs: for fertiliser the pupils grew their own comfrey and took seaweed from the Beaully Firth coastline just a few miles from the school. The food was taken to market and sold from recycleable plastic boxes which reduced packaging and waste.

The CIC realised that for much of the year they would be unable to stock a stall using only their own produce and so they developed a relationship with other

local farmers and producers, selling those growers' produce - including soft cheeses, soft fruits, free-range chickens and eggs - alongside their own.

The project quickly secured extensive Government backing (see section e.5 for more details). However, despite these rapid early developments, in 2010 the 'REAL Project' was scaled back to ensure its financial integrity. At the time, the school's rector explained that the retail arm was being closed down as it was becoming too "complex to run and more difficult to ensure we broke even". The power of supermarkets and the effects of the wider economic downturn on the not-for-profit sector were mentioned as factors in the decision. (Inverness Courier 2010)

However, on the other hand, the wholesale business was a success and has been retained. The project has also achieved broader social aims, with the school introducing courses in rural skills and community involvement as well as initiating an eco-schools project and work on pupil leadership and business skills. Pupils are also able to participate in the farm through other classes, a gardening club and some former pupils have returned as volunteers.

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA**

##### **1. Involvement of target groups**

The initiative involves young people, producers, consumers and central and local authorities.

##### **2. Scale**

Medium scale.

##### **3. Environmental sustainability performance**

The produce is organic and grown using locally sourced fertilisers. The distribution system is also local.

##### **4. Scale up**

Yes, with careful consideration this project has the potential to be replicated.

##### **5. Level of social innovation:**

Using a school as the basis of a social enterprise network is a highly innovative idea, and the partnership and structures that formed to facilitate that idea are also innovative. Pupils say the project has helped their personal development.

##### **6. Participation of local communities**

The school and CIC actively sought the participation of the local community. Former pupils have returned to volunteer at the project.

##### **7. Supply chain**

The supply chain was highly localised and controlled by local actors.

##### **8. Focus on rural-urban dynamics of food supply chain**

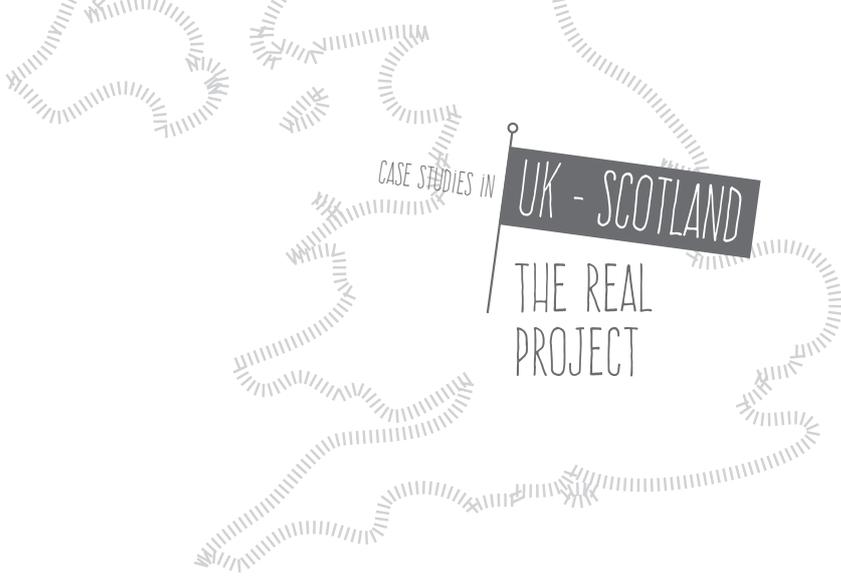
The project makes use of natural resources near to Inverness and the stall made use of the produce of local rural farmers.

##### **9. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors**

A local organic farmer assisted with developing the project. Local farmers sold produce through the project's stall.

##### **10. Further criteria**

- The project was based in and involved communities that have been described as the most deprived in the Highlands.
- The project served the mass market through supplying shops and restaurants.



## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

The project was **motivated** by local businesses' frustration that young people often lacked confidence in workplace situations. Dennis Overton expressed concerns that some young folk were leaving school so unprepared for work that they would "effectively disappear, and perhaps develop problems later on".

From an educational perspective, Ritchie Cunningham felt that the **condition** of the school's curriculum was over-rigid and out-dated and did not fully meet the needs of society or of pupils.

He was keen to include more vocational training and allow teachers to be more creative.

Lorna Campbell of CAN explained another key **motivation** for the project: "We wanted to explore how entrepreneurial action can be used to tackle deep-rooted social issues and move away from heavy [*reliance*] on grants and short-term funding. Experience shows that traditional public sector or charitable approaches, working in isolation, are clearly not resolving these issues. The voluntary sector can be quite insular and we wanted to build strong working relationships between enterprise, charitable work and education."



## 2. Bottlenecks

Lorna Campbell of CAN acknowledged that one challenge the project faced was the “different cultures, language and ways of working” existing in the business, charitable and statutory sectors that they sought to integrate. She said that this was a **bottleneck** as it took considerable time to translate the steering group’s ideas into language which the different sectors could understand.

## 3. Sustainability performance

In order to reduce its ecological footprint, the project sought to make use of local and natural inputs such as seaweed from the coast near the school and locally grown comfrey.

It developed a quite sophisticated local distribution system. In an effort to achieve a better financial return on their goods, the business moved from growing basic staple vegetables to higher value produce.

## 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

As Lorna Campbell stated, a key part of the project’s preparation was to develop a means of **communication** and **mechanisms of co-ordination** so that the different partners could work more efficiently together.

## 5. Policies

Highland Council, the area’s local authority, supported the project. The

council was the lead body in distributing the Scottish Government’s ‘City Growth Fund’ for Inverness and by including the REAL Project in the ‘City Vision’ the council helped enable the project to obtain £60,000 of funding.

The project was also accepted into the Government’s ‘Schools of Ambition’ programme [which was disbanded by a later administration]. For three years this brought £50,000 a year into the REAL CIC. Indeed the project quickly attracted a total of £270,000 of public funding as it addressed key elements of the Government’s **policy environment**, such as issues of sustainable economic growth and social inclusion. (Scottish Executive 2007: 13)

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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See the recommendations section of Scotland initiative 3 for an integrated set of recommendations pertaining to all three initiatives in this case study.

# BARRA AND VATERSAY GROWERS – BUTH BHARRAIGH

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

August - September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

This initiative involves the target groups of producers, consumers and civil society organisations. Young people are involved in the wider project and the local authority have also become involved.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The issue of food marketing and distribution on small remote islands is frequently mentioned in meetings with producers and in discussions in the Outer Hebrides by civil society organisations such as Sustainable Uist as well as individual producers, consumers and local authorities. The information is drawn from an interview with Sarah MacLean who is one of the initiators of the project.



## CONTEXT

'Buth Bharraigh' (which means 'Barra Shop' in the indigenous Gaelic language of the north-west of Scotland) is a project to create a community owned shop which will help develop the market for locally produced food in remote island communities in the Outer Hebrides. A 2011 report on agricultural production in these islands noted that in recent decades their food economy "has been transformed from one of 90 per cent self-sufficiency to one of 95 per cent dependence on imports. Because of the islands' remote location, the resulting food miles and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are amongst the highest in Britain." (Newman 2011: 3) The intention of 'Buth Bharraigh' is to reduce that level of external dependency.

## DESCRIPTION

'Buth Bharraigh' is setting out to develop the market for local food on the Hebridean islands of Barra and Vatersay. The islands are linked by a causeway and have a population of just over 1,000 people. They are the southernmost inhabited Hebridean islands and are a five hour journey by ferry from the mainland of Scotland.

Traditionally, the islands have been home to a fishing and crofting economy. Crofting - a special form of land tenure which supports small-scale collective agriculture - has been in decline on the islands for many years and although there is still a fish processing factory on the island, the fishing industry has also declined in recent decades.

This is the background to a statistic already mentioned which questions the **sustainability** of the islands' present food economy. This is the fact that in recent decades the islands have gone from being 90 per cent self-sufficient in food to 95 per cent dependent on external supplies. (Newman 2011: 3)

One organisation which is acting against this trend is Barra and Vatersay Agricultural and Horticultural Association (BVAHA). Their project to develop a community shop for the islands demonstrates that if the strong social networks still found in these island communities can be harnessed they offer effective **mechanisms of co-ordination** for development work. This initiative also shows how modest support from the **policy environment** (in this case by the local health board) can prove highly beneficial to small local projects by offering them vital support for key areas of their development. However, the initial attitude of the local authority for the



islands demonstrates that while in some instances public bodies can support the development of alternative food systems, in other situations these public bodies may act as a **constraint**.

Barra and Watersay Agricultural and Horticultural Association was set up in 2000 and began to hold markets selling vegetables from eight producers. Initially the markets took place irregularly but in 2009 the events became more structured, with a market occurring each month.

This led to more producers becoming involved, and more people attending and buying. In this way people began to get used to buying local produce. The markets are held in local schools and halls and in addition to vegetables also sell local meat, homebaking, jams and chutneys, and the cockles which can be found in great abundance on the sandy shores. The market also has teas for sale, which is a chance for a local charity to make some money.

In the process of regularising the markets, the BVAHA conducted a questionnaire to find out if there would be interest on the islands for more of them. The response was a resounding 'yes' and so, with funding support of £10,000 from the 'Big Lottery', they began to look at ways of developing local markets on the islands, and in particular the idea of creating a community shop, known as 'Buth Bharraigh'.

Sarah Maclean, who is one of the BVAHA's committee members, said their attitude was to experiment with the idea and so they began with a pilot venture in 2012. The issue of the local market's **sustainability** at this early stage had been carefully considered. As a result it was decided to hold it in the small village of Northbay rather than Castlebay which

is the main settlement on Barra. This was because it was felt that producers weren't geared up to supply the demand the shop would have met in Castlebay. That pilot venture ran from July through until September 2012. However, the questionnaire had clearly demonstrated that Castlebay was the preferred location for the shop.

Because of this, in 2012 the BVAHA decided to open a Christmas shop in Castlebay from 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> November and from 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> December. The two weeks went so well that they kept the shop running right through until Christmas Eve, and took in £10,000 during the period, mainly through the sale of crafts.

The BVAHA used the £10,000 lottery support to pay for a business plan, research and for architects' fees. Sarah MacLean said: "We didn't use any of it for equipping the shop itself. We didn't want it supported in any way. All the shop equipment and services needed to come from the profits in order to show that the model works." She said that between April and September 2013 the shop took in £44,000 and as of September 2013 had a reserve of around £7,000.

The shop is a company limited by guarantee and will be run on a co-operative basis. It will be constitutionally separate from the BVAHA but affiliated – the directors of the co-op will be BVAHA members. The producers fix the price of their goods and the shop keeps 20 per cent of any sales. Only BVAHA members can sell from the shop and the shop currently has 66 producers, the majority of whom are from Barra. It is staffed by volunteers. Sarah MacLean said that some volunteers come because they enjoy volunteering and being involved in the community around the shop. She added: "It is supposed to be the

producers themselves who volunteer because they get the benefits. However, some producers will not take part in the selling and others are reluctant. Next year we will be moving to a new building and we can make a fresh start." She suggests they could employ a membership banding system which would mean that producing members who do not wish to volunteer at the shop pay a higher rate to stock their produce in the shop than those producers who do volunteer. She said: "Running things by volunteers helps make them much more sustainable and likely to succeed rather than always relying on paid positions. However, now we have one person on a Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations community jobs scheme we are able to devote much more time to it. There is still loads to do and it is long hours at the moment but it will be worth it in the long run!"

A community garden project on Barra provides tomatoes, salads and carrots for the shop, while other growers provide cabbage, potatoes, beetroot and other vegetables. The growers are able to sell their produce as long as they make it explicit with each sale that the produce is sold dirty and that the consumer must wash and prepare the vegetables.

Each vegetable sold that has been grown on the island is one that has not been transported in by boat and lorry to the supermarket in Castlebay, the island's main food outlet. "At the moment we need much more of everything," said Sarah MacLean. "There is plenty land to grow more but it needs to be brought back into production and that depends on the motivation of the crofters. What we are trying to do is to provide an incentive for them." The shop will also stock the fruits of the sea. Once the shop is formally constituted Sarah says they intend to apply for a fish buyer's



licence so they can buy direct from local fishermen. As some of the supermarket's fish is imported from all over the UK and beyond this could also significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the island's seafood consumption.

Installing a phone line and wi-fi internet access will provide an extra service in the shop where it is intended there will be a small café, workshop space and a laundrette facility, which is likely to be used by some summer visitors to the island as well as accommodation providers, restaurant trade and local residents in the winter months. A later phase of the shop involves creating a community bakery to supply the shop, and also a kitchen for hire.

The tender to provide 'meals on wheels' supplying meals to older people on the islands has come up and Buth Bharraigh are considering taking the service on, particularly if they have a kitchen area in the shop building. At present 14 people in the area use 'meals on wheels'. Sarah MacLean points out that it could be a way of using up 'gluts' of produce from the growers. The meals would be cooked in batches, then blast frozen and stored in a freezer from where they would be picked up by a delivery service and taken to the older people in their homes once a fortnight. She added: "Those receiving the service would get traditional foods, made with fresh local produce and food they would recognise."

On the production side of the business BVAHA run a machinery ring with a rotovator, forks and spades. This equipment is owned by the Association. There is £20 per day charge for the rotovator to pay for its maintenance although this can be flexible according to the user's income.

Another key aspect of the production side of the local food economy on Barra and Vatersay is the local produce show which started in 2007. It is separate from the BVAHA, although in practice some people are on both committees. While BVAHA is focussed on the needs of producers, the Barra and Vatersay Show has an educational remit. It was led initially by a group of three people who had a vision for the islanders to share and develop agricultural and craft skills, to grow more produce, to showcase the islands and to have some fun. There are competitions for the best examples of a wide variety of produce and crafts.

On the islands some of the children are not particularly interested in school but do want to learn about about fishing or crofting. In some cases these children don't have crofting or fishing in their own family background. Croitear Òg (which means 'Young Crofters') has been set up to support them. Sarah said: "We are following the 'four H' model ['Head, Hand, Heart, Health' – a rural youth organisation in Europe and America] and we have an attachment age from age eight until their twenties." Although

many young people leave the islands at age eighteen, this format will give those young people the chance to be connected with Croitear Òg for a decade of their youth.

There are two Croitear Òg clubs on Barra. Their work fits well with the school curriculum and as well as having people with experience going into school to work with children, the children themselves are also participating at the markets and shows – Sarah takes pride in the fact that five of the six biggest winners at the Barra Show in early September 2013 were young people, one of whom is now making cakes for the shop from her mother's kitchen (fully certified by Health and Safety!).

She said: "We are trying to get the kids access to land so they can grow. One model is that the children grow their own potatoes in the first year. Parents can come along to see what they are doing and to help them – that draws them in too. In the second year they can grow two crops. I think that taking home your own produce to your family is very satisfying for a young person."

Sarah MacLean believes key qualities in trying to strengthen the local food economy are patience and resilience. She said: "You've got to take the hits – dust yourself off and keep going! If it's meant to happen, with a lot of hard work, it will!"

“For us it has been important to build things up over a long period of time. This all started in 2000 and it has taken 13 years to get to where it is now. Now we are hoping that having developed to where we are we can start to have a bigger impact and target people at different levels. But the key to it is that this has grown up gradually.”

#### COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA

##### 1. Involvement of target groups

The project involves young people, producers and consumers and the local authority also appears to be becoming more actively involved in the project.

##### 2. Scale

Small/Medium scale.

##### 3. Environmental sustainability performance

The project may have the effect of lowering the amount of food that needs to be imported to the islands.

##### 4. Scale up

The initiative may take on a public contract for supplying meals.

##### 5. Level of social innovation:

The educational aspect of the project has focussed on encouraging inter-generational dialogue and fostering food production and preparation skills among younger people. It has established a strong volunteering network.

The initiative hopes to take on the local authority’s contract for supplying meals to older people.

##### 6. Participation of local communities

The project is driven by and relies upon members of the two island communities. It has an extensive network of local volunteers.

##### 7. Supply chain

The supply chain is short and controlled by the island people.

##### 9. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors

Local producers and fishermen are being encouraged to supply to the shop.

##### 10. Further criteria

- The islands’ distance from the mainland can be thought of as a form of social exclusion. However, the project’s role in maintaining the strong social bonds and relationships that already exist there mean that the islands’ ‘exclusivity’ need not be considered a matter of deprivation.
- The project has benefitted from policies on community inclusion.

## ANALYSIS

##### 1. Motivations and conditions

The amount of food consumed in the Outer Hebrides which has been grown in the islands has declined dramatically over the last half century. There are very few opportunities to buy local produce. The project hopes to encourage more food production on the islands and to support young people to practice the two main traditional livelihoods on the islands: crofting and fishing.

##### 2. Bottlenecks

The two other initiatives in this case study show a local authority helping to initiate the development of alternative food systems. However, in the islands it was felt that bureaucracy within their local authority, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES), was initially a **constraint** to their plans.

The Christmas shop venture ran into problems with the council which told the person that had kindly let the group use the space (a tenant of CnES) that

he had not followed proper procedures for allowing use of the space as a shop. However, the group were not deterred by this and, fuelled by the success of the two earlier retail efforts, they decided to set up a shop in Castlebay during the summer of 2013. They had tried to negotiate space with CnES since January 2013. However, nothing was forthcoming and as there were no other spaces available they moved back into the unused council-owned building in Castlebay that they had used prior to Christmas. The shop opened in April 2013.



By opening in April the shop was open at the start of the busy summer tourist season which was important as losing those crucial summer months might also have threatened the producers' motivation. Now that the shop has had a successful summer under its belt, the council appears to have had a change of heart and has supported the venture strongly - opening the prospect of a more permanent home for the shop.

### 3. Sustainability performance

The amount of energy required to ship food to the islands gives them a

particularly high ecological footprint. The project will enable more produce grown on the islands to be consumed on the islands, thus reducing the overall ecological footprint.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

The project has built on relationships formed in existing organisations. Barra and Vatersay are known as strong, traditional Gaelic speaking communities. The project has benefitted from the social networks and voluntary ethos that exist in them, so that the shop has had

limited staffing costs in its early stages.

### 5. Policies

While insisting that the shop must be able to maintain itself without grant support, the group are making use of funding where this is available in the broader policy environment, such as the Western Isles Health Board's 'Living it up' scheme to help people who have had illnesses to return to community life. This scheme will help pay for the shop's phone set up and to install wi-fi internet access.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

See the recommendations section of Scotland initiative 3 for an integrated set of recommendations pertaining to all three initiatives in this case study.





# HIGHLAND COUNCIL FOOD PROCUREMENT POLICY

## PERIOD OF SURVEY

August - September 2013

## GROUPS INVOLVED

This initiative involves the target groups of local authorities and producers.

## LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The role of local authorities in promoting alternative food systems came up during several meetings, but was especially suggested by a representative of the islands' local authority who requested more information on public procurement. Indeed, examples of local authorities actively engaged in alternative food systems would be useful and timely as a new local food policy for the Outer Hebrides is due for development imminently. Representatives of consumer organisations also expressed an interest in this topic. The information in this initiative is based on an interview with Marion Ross, the principal resources officer of Highland Council's Cleaning, Catering and Facilities Management Services, as well as subsequent research. Had it focussed on the perceptions of producers rather than the local authority it may have led to different findings.



## CONTEXT

Highland Council's 'Green procurement policy' has enabled local growers to supply herbs, lettuce and salad leaves to the council's catering outlets. This development should be understood in the broader Scottish context where studies have repeatedly shown the nutritional poverty of children's diets. (Scottish Government 2008: 5) Meanwhile, the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering to the school meal service in 1988 led to a situation in which, according to a Government review on school meals, "In essence, caterers were encouraged to reduce cost wherever possible and this may have led to a reduced focus on approaches to health, diet, choice, portions, etc." (Scottish Executive 2002: 23f)

The country is therefore coming from a low baseline, and it needs to be emphasised that the fact that schools in the Highlands and Islands are now able to provide their pupils with locally sourced salad leaves is in itself something of an achievement.

## DESCRIPTION

The Highland Council is the largest local authority area in Scotland; it is roughly the size of Belgium. It spends around £3 million each year on foodstuffs for its internal catering outlets, providing around 15,000 meals a day. In 2012 two Highland crofters, Jo Hunt and Maggie Sutherland, won the local authority's tender to supply around two hundred council catering outlets in the area with lettuce, herbs and salad leaves for at least the next four years.

In particular, this study examines developments in the Scottish Government and Highland Council **policy environments** which helped enable the growers' bid to succeed.

The McLelland Report of 2006 was the result of a Scottish Government initiated investigation into how procurement of goods was carried out by the public sector in Scotland. As well as ensuring that the country was meeting European legislative requirements, the report aimed to improve public sector procurement efficiency. It led to the creation of a national procurement body which is now in charge of all local authority procurement which happens at a national level. The report argued that other areas of procurement would be more effective at a local level. These are called Category 'C' processes for which individual authorities have responsibility.

(McLelland 2006: 40ff) Although some food procurement, such as for dried goods, is carried out at national level, other types of foodstuffs are procured as Category 'C' processes. These include fresh fruit and vegetables, bakery and fresh fish. Category 'C' procurement responsibilities require councils to create and enforce an official procurement policy.

Because of its rurality Highland Council finds that fewer national companies come to tender for Category 'C': there are demanding logistics in supplying such a large area in which many parts are remote from centralised distribution depots. However, this apparent **constraint** may in fact open the way for more local bidders to succeed, especially when combined with the focus of the council's new procurement policy. The policy locks environmental sustainability and short supply chain requirements into the council's food purchasing processes in a way that would be more difficult without it. Marion Ross says this means that "organisations coming to tender are made aware that the council will evaluate their bid by quality factors as well as by price".

Procurement tenders are evaluated on a mixture of 'price', 'quality' and 'service' considerations. Marion Ross added that while on a national level there is greater focus on 'price' issues (usually between 60 and 70 per cent), the Highland Council's rebalancing of priorities means that 'price' forms only 50 per cent of their evaluation with greater weight given to 'quality', 'service' and 'sustainability'.

The issue of environmental **sustainability** is implicit in several of their food procurement evaluation criteria. For instance, the criteria include a 10 per cent weighting to "proposals for ensuring fresh/seasonal/organic produce

appropriate to the specific business you are bidding for, and minimisation of timescales from production to delivery". There are also weightings given to minimising pollution and waste in terms of vehicle use and packaging.

Although no specific data has yet been collected on the environmental effectiveness of Highland Council's green procurement policy, an assessment of the policy contributed to the council's ongoing attainment of the Carbon Trust Standard Certification which it first won in 2008. The Carbon Trust is an organisation dedicated to moving societies to a towards a low carbon economy. Research on a similar project elsewhere in Scotland suggests a likely reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. (Bowden, Holmes and MacKenzie 2006: 5)

Jo Hunt, one of the partners in the successful salad leaf producers, has said that it was the change in evaluation criteria that enabled the partnership "to get a foot in the door". (Hunt n.d.)

Jo Hunt and Maggie Sutherland had been part of a consortium of 17 local producers who had applied to Highland Council in the previous tendering process in 2008 to supply fruit and vegetables, meat and fish. On that occasion they were unsuccessful. One of the constraining factors for smaller local producers who are seeking council tenders is that, as well as supplying goods, they must also be able to distribute them to the council's outlets. In an area that is the size of Belgium this is a daunting task and may have acted as a **bottleneck** for some local producers in the past. For their successful 2012 bid, Jo Hunt and Maggie Sutherland reached an agreement with Swansons, an Inverness food wholesaler who is the council's main fruit and vegetable supplier and distributor.

While produce from the Highlands is in season, Swansons will supply and distribute Jo Hunt and Maggie Sutherland's salads to the council outlets.

The distributors are asked to quote an 'add-on cost' to store and distribute produce that comes from elsewhere, such as from smaller producers. This means that the salad partnership will receive a smaller return than they would receive if they also distributed the lettuce. The extra money instead goes to the distributor to cover their additional costs.

The council's procurement policy has enabled **mechanisms of co-ordination and communication** so that smaller producers can reach such agreements with larger distributors. This encourages local producers and companies to get involved in the tendering process and so increases the possibility that local food will be available in council outlets.

Other Highland producers are also involved in supplying the council. For instance, meat is supplied by a Highland based butcher, while free-range eggs sourced in the area are also distributed by Swansons, the fruit and vegetable supplier. Another of Swansons suppliers is a large organic carrot producer based near Inverness.

Although the procurement policy was a legislative requirement stemming from the McLelland Report, according to Marion Ross the particular focus on sustainability issues within the council's policy was **motivated** by a passion within the catering department for good quality local food and a desire for that passion to be translated into procurement policies which would support the area's economy. She added that the council had an involvement with the Slow Food



movement which led to ongoing relations with the Soil Association and the council has already achieved the bronze award in the Soil Association's 'Food for Life' sustainability scheme.

National legislation reinforces the Highland Council procurement policy. This include the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Scotland Act 2007 which dictates reducing the amount of fat, sugar and salty foods in school meals and promotes the use of bread, cereals and fruit and vegetables. Also of relevance is the Climate Change (Scotland) Act of 2009 which commits Scotland to deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in the coming years.

The salad leaves partnership initiative has the potential to be transferred to other local authority areas. Indeed Jo Hunt says they have been visited by three groups from elsewhere in Scotland, two of whom are now pursuing public sector contracts. (Hunt n.d.)

The procurement contract is important to the producers as it has the potential to give them a more stable basis for their business. The transactions are larger than their incomes from farmers' markets. To be supplying food for local schools is not only satisfying to them as producers; it is also good for the image of their business.

It is still early in the contract to make strong claims about changes in habits. However, some changes in attitudes among canteen staff and students have been observed. The canteen staff, who had been used to receiving uniform, clean iceberg lettuce shipped in from Spain, had to get used to receiving a more diverse variety of salad leaves which need to be washed. They appear to have risen to the challenge and in some cases are now asking for specific leaves from the producers to be made available for their menus.

The contract is part of a wider process by which school pupils can gain more awareness of where and how their food is produced, and of why there is now more of a variety of greens available to them at their school meals. This is a huge added-value for the education system. As Jo Hunt put it, their crofts are "part of the curriculum now, and you can't get that with produce from Spain". (Hunt n.d.)

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH SELECTION CRITERIA**

##### **1. Involvement of target groups**

The initiative involves producers, young people and a local authority.

##### **2. Scale**

Medium/large scale.

##### **3. Environmental sustainability performance**

Although no specific data is available, the council's initiative is likely to have

led to a decrease in carbon emissions associated with their catering system.

##### **4. Scale up**

Already other groups are investigating the possibility of replicating the initiative in other parts of Scotland.

##### **5. Level of social innovation:**

The policy encourages partnership working between local growers and distributors. The partnership between the local authority and local growers also appears to be helping to bring young people to a greater awareness of where their food comes from and how it is produced.

##### **6. Participation of local communities**

Not directly.

##### **7. Supply chain**

The supply chain is regional and is the responsibility of the producer and of the distributor who is local to the Highland Council area.

##### **8. Focus on rural-urban dynamics of food supply chain**

Yes, these are growers living in the vicinity of a city who are not only supplying outlets in that city but to many parts of the rural Highland Council area as well.

##### **9. Relevant role of smallholder farmers or small food supply chain actors**

Yes, highly relevant

##### **10. Further criteria**

- By enacting the policy, the local authority has actively sought this initiative.
- This initiative serves a mass market.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Motivations and conditions

Public procurement policy generally put great emphasis on price factors and cost savings. The distance of rural local authorities from distribution centres can result in limited competition and limit the ability of authorities' to cut costs associated with the provision of catering supplies. The new policy's greater focus on non-price factors opens up a new potential for local growers and suppliers. Additionally, a desire among key council staff and councillors to support local food also emerges as a key **motivation** for the new policy and the local growers' successful tender.

### 2. Bottlenecks

In the past the fact that the many Highlands and Islands communities are distant from commercial centres has been perceived as a **constraint** for larger tenderers. Highland Council's new procurement policy, which also deals directly with broader **sustainability** issues, may therefore open up a new market for local producers.

### 3. Sustainability performance

Although precise data is not available, the policy makes environmental sustainability performance indicators an integral part of the tendering process and thus the initiative is likely to have reduced the carbon emissions associated

with the council's catering services.

### 4. Communication and mechanisms of co-ordination

The procurement policy has enabled **mechanisms of co-ordination and communication** between smaller producers and larger distributors to help ensure that local food will be available in council outlets.

### 5. Policies

It is the Highland Council's decision to implement a policy which enhances the potential for local food to be served in their catering outlets that is the reason for this initiative being included in the case study.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations apply to all three initiatives which are a part of this case study.

### SMALL STEPS

The Barra and Vatersay initiative demonstrates the benefits of beginning an initiative in a small way and working to build knowledge and skills, as well as confidence and trust, among the various actors involved. Now, more than a decade after the islanders began to develop the idea of a market, they have a number of potentially transformative projects that could help to constitute an alternative food economy for the islands.

It also appears that meeting the objectives of the national policy environment may cause an initiative difficulties. The REAL Project in Inverness ticked many of the Scottish Government's policy boxes and soon attracted a lot of funding which allowed it to expand very quickly. However, some of the directions of expansion turned

out to be financially unsustainable. This may have contributed to the subsequent contraction of the project.

The lesson of starting small may also be taken from the Highland Council's food procurement policy. An initial larger-scale bid by local producers to meet many of the council's fruit and vegetable needs was unsuccessful. However, a smaller-scale partnership, focussing on one area of the fruit and vegetable requirements, has been able to succeed and its proponents are picking up and sharing useful skills and knowledge about the requirements of the local authority, as well as developing their relationships with key people in the council. This may stand them in good stead in the future.

### BUILD TRUST

Another recurring feature of the case study is the importance of building good relationships among those who are involved with an initiative.

In the early stages of its work, the REAL Project prioritised relationship building among the core team, in particular the search for a common vocabulary and semantic base to work from.

Sarah Maclean from Barra and Vatersay Agricultural and Horticultural Association emphasised the importance of having clear lines of communication among the organisers of their initiatives, as well as the good-will that comes from having a dedicated and supportive team of volunteers who have their own understandings of the importance of the initiative as part of a broader communal setting.

Given the distributional complexity of supplying food within the Highland Council area, establishing strong relationships among growers and distributors, and between them and the staff responsible for the local authority catering logistics, will be a key factor in successfully creating alternative food systems in contexts that cross the rural-urban divide.

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