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The Barn

stories
of collective
action

THE FUTURE OF EUROPE'S **FOODS & LANDSCAPES**



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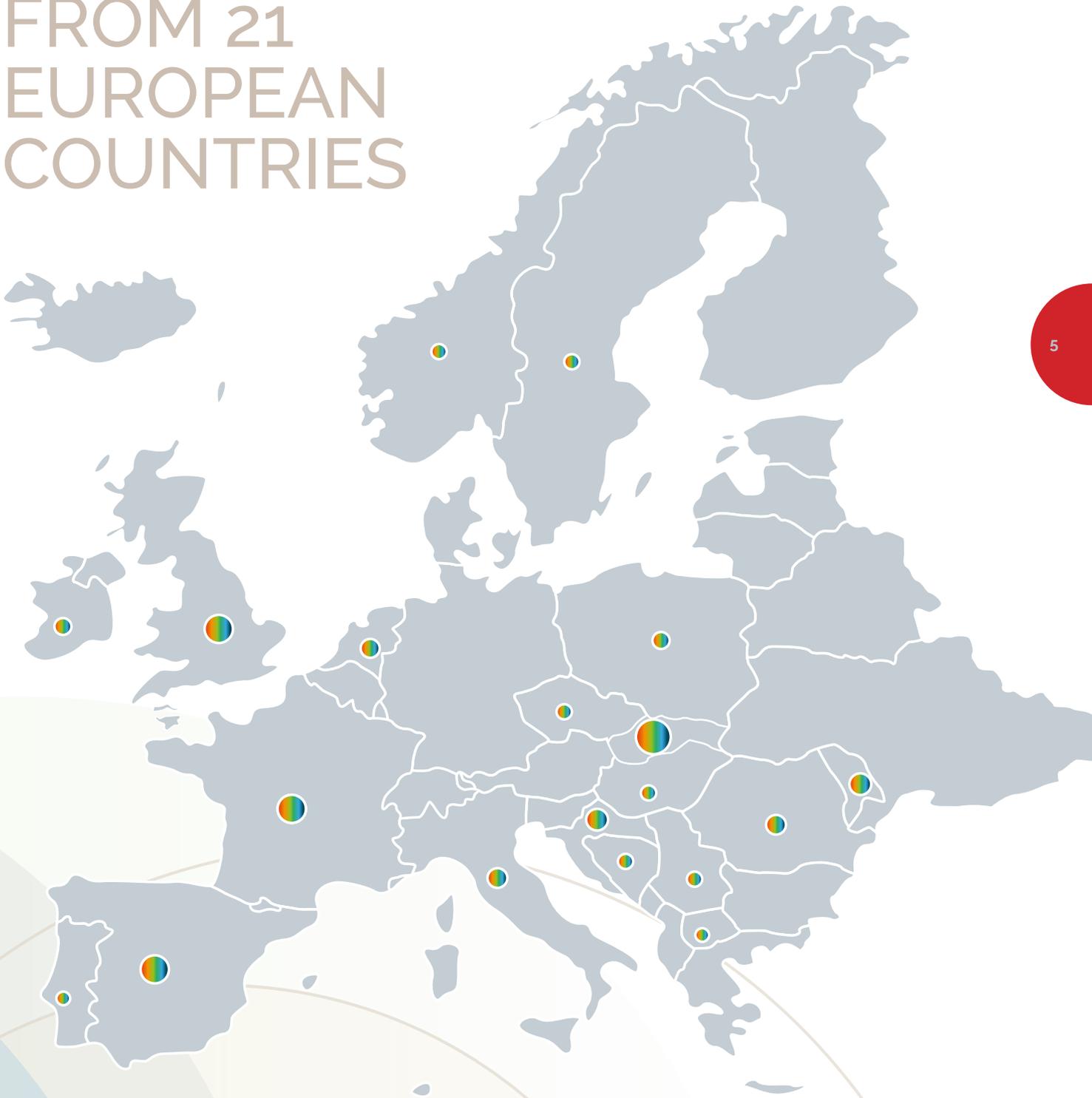
The BARN - A Repository of Collective Action Stories

Inside the Barn you'll find different examples of collective action in sustainable agriculture, marketing and the environment.

These stories were collected via online and in-person interviews, typically with the initiator of the project, and their diversity demonstrates the imagination, commitment and creativity of those seeking to make a positive difference for Europe's food and farming sectors.

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54 STORIES
FROM 21
EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES





Summary:

A seed library and knowledge resource to protect and nurture heirloom plant varieties and relearn traditional farming methods for Bosnian food and seed sovereignty.

THE STORY:

Since the end of the war in 1995, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina produced less food themselves and used more chemicals in food production. As the market became more open, we could import what we couldn't produce and export some of our products too. This is good. What is not so good is that our market has been flooded with foods and other products full of chemicals. Bosnian food and seed sovereignty as well as the natural practices of food production and home seed production has been dramatically eroded.

“As we lose traditional methods of farming, many heirloom plant varieties produced by our ancestors have disappeared forever.”

As we lose traditional methods of farming, many heirloom plant varieties produced by our ancestors have disappeared forever.

Heirloom plants are open-pollinated; they have grown for at least 50 years in the same environment and have retained all the 'parental' characteristics, remaining stable from one year to the next. They have developed strong defence mechanisms, making them highly resistant to climate change, potential diseases and parasites so they can be cultivated without chemicals. Cultivating them in the traditional ways regenerates and rebuilds the richness of our soils, strengthens our pure food sovereignty and contributes to the sustainability of peasants' households. They are also more nutritious: traditional heirloom corn has on average 20-30% more protein than a typical modern variety of corn grown on the same soil. Preserving and protecting our nature isn't enough, we need to nurture and develop it. Heirlooms are so important for this – so restoring and disseminating these varieties has become my urgent mission.

“Preserving and protecting our nature isn't enough, we need to nurture and develop it. Heirlooms are so important for this – so restoring and disseminating these varieties has become my urgent mission.”

I visited Croatia and USA learning from established heirloom seed initiatives, then returned to Čelinac, a small town near Banja Luka in northern Bosnia and Herzegovina and spent four years working on the land. This became Factory of Joy.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/factory-of-joy/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.factoryofjoy.org/ - www.facebook.com/bibliotekasjemena/

<http://thelocalshakers.com/en/environment/vojin-environmental-activist-and-creator-of-factory-of-joy/>

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LAND-IN-SIGHT (TERRE-EN-VUE)

Country: Belgium

Region: Brussels and Walloon region

Key words: Legitimacy, speculation, land management, agroecology

Summary:

An NGO whose mission is to free land from speculation and render it for the common good. We become owners or managers of land that we rent to farmers who will farm agroecologically, ensuring the land remains designated farmland. We are inspired by Elinor Ostrom when it comes to the commons.

THE STORY:

In Belgium farmers typically own 30% of the land they farm and rent the rest. Often when a landowner dies, the beneficiary chooses to sell. So, the farmer may lose a few hectares which means they no longer have enough to be autonomous, it is harder to be profitable, so they stop farming. Price of land is a real problem and there is no real land policy or land policy institutions in Belgium. There were 43 farms disappearing every week. People realised if we do nothing now, there will be only a handful of big farms in a few years' time.

“...20 citizens with 70 000 euros but no idea how to buy farmland...”

In 2012 a farmer in the Ardennes lost 5 hectares and was talking to a friend about having to give up his farm. At the same time, a network of about 15 NGOs and cooperative companies were reflecting on setting up an initiative that would free land from speculation to help farmers continue farming there organically. The friend got in contact with one of the members of this reflection group and they started working together. They were 20 citizens with 70 000 euros but no idea how to buy farmland. Our cooperative company very quickly became operational in a very pragmatic way: we bought this land for the farmer and now rent it to him. We have since helped 15 other farms.

“In Belgium it isn't difficult to set up an NGO or a cooperative company. The biggest challenge is social governance...”

In Belgium it isn't difficult to set up an NGO or a cooperative company. The biggest challenge is social governance – how to mobilise citizens, how to convince them to invest. We wrote our statutes with eighty people; all gave their opinion on every article. It was a long process, but it gave a lot of legitimacy to the statutes. You can do it on your own – it's quite simple – if you do it with a large group, it becomes more complex, but you gain legitimacy, and all the rules are respected. We edit our leasing contracts together with our farmers, so everyone respects their content. We have a basic rule to work together to make rules with those who will have to apply them. It may explain why we are a little bit slow in our growth.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/terre-en-vue/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: <https://terre-en-vue.be/>
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ASSOCIATION OF THE CROATIAN FAMILY FARMERS' LIFE

Country: Croatia

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Family farming, Knowledge exchange

Summary:

The biggest association representing family farmers in Croatia .

THE STORY:

About a third of all agricultural land is state owned. Over the last 25 years the land policy has changed from centralised to decentralised – agricultural land law has changed 18 times in the last 25 years – so farmers don't know what changes will come and when. It's risky to invest money when you don't have the long-term contract for that land. In some regions we are seeing big companies taking land from small family farmers, causing depopulation of those areas. In the last six or seven years we lost over fifty thousand family farmers. When we tried to speak to the government and influence the rural development programme for Croatia, we found the bigger companies who do industrial farming always prevail.

“...we are seeing big companies taking land from small family farmers, causing depopulation of those areas.”

Croatian farmers faced a lot of problems when we entered the European Union in 2013: we had a lot of small farmers with average land parcels of 5.6 hectares. (Now it's about 7.5).

In 2014 we founded an association to fight for the family farmers in Croatia, to strengthen the position of family farms.

Our association connects all the sectors; livestock, fruit growing, wine growing, crop production and so on. Most people were already connected in some way through other existing alliances or associations but there was not a group that combined all the family farms. Having all family farmers in a single association makes their questions more present in the public and in the media. Right away we had 450 members.

We organised workshops and meetings to bring people together and set up a Facebook group.

We have developed really good contacts with the media – they like us because we are always speaking about the problems from the ground. Our experienced producers are able to ask knowledgeable questions.

In 2019 we became a member of Via Campesina and at the end of the year we organised one of the conferences at the Agricultural Fayre in Zagreb. Our topic was Family Farming and Sustainable Development Goals.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/association-of-the-croatian-family-farmers-life/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

[www.facebook.com/pages/category/Agriculture/Udruga-OPG-a-Hrvatske -%C5%BDivot-672231586147156/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Agriculture/Udruga-OPG-a-Hrvatske-%C5%BDivot-672231586147156/)

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STUDENT GARDEN

Country: Croatia

Region: Zagreb

Key words: University, student garden, urban agriculture

Summary:

A garden for student volunteers from the University of Zagreb to grow and produce organic vegetables.

THE STORY:

During the final year of my master's degree in horticulture I felt there was a huge need for students to have a place where they could put all the theory they had learned into practice. Not everybody in the Faculty of Agriculture was from a rural area. Not everybody lived in a house with a garden. I lived in a flat. I didn't come from an agricultural background, my family doesn't own any land, so it was for selfish reasons – I wanted a place to garden – but I also wanted to do something that would benefit others like me. During my studies, I met a younger colleague who was as interested in this idea as I was so her and I formed the core duo needed to kick off the project. We started in the spring of 2018.

“I didn't come from an agricultural background, my family doesn't own any land, so it was for selfish reasons – I wanted a place to garden – but I also wanted to do something that would benefit others like me.”

First, I spoke to one of the professors in my university department (vegetable production) about the idea to start a student garden. ‘Wouldn't it be great if we had a place to garden in an organic way? Perhaps we could offer the produce at faculty events or student meetings?’ She really loved the idea and then it was up to her to find us a piece of land. After we got the green light from the department, I spoke to the vice dean of the faculty and presented her with the idea. All doors were open to us and we got full support. They were very happy for this initiative to exist; they just didn't have the capacity to run something like this themselves – and it doesn't make much sense for the faculty to organise something for the students that really should be led by the students.

“They were very happy for this initiative to exist; they just didn't have the capacity to run something like this themselves – and it doesn't make much sense for the faculty to organise something for the students that really should be led by the students.”

We were given a plot of land of approximately 300 square metres. My colleague made a poster to advertise, we printed them and stuck them up on the agricultural faculty buildings. 30 people came to our first meeting.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/studentgar/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
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Summary:

A cooperative of five farms that deliver their products to the customers' doorsteps; establishing a Croatian holistic management hub with approval of the Savory Institute for holistic management.

THE STORY:

We are small cooperative in development (five farms) all from same area. Two are biodynamic vegetable producers, one has pasture milking cows and produces milk connected products, one has various poultry (1000/month) using Joel Salatin's method of chicken tractors and one (I and my family) have a mixed farm (two separated farms) with small number of cows, poultry, pigs, sheep and quails. All animals are free range. Our properties are not big, 2-5 ha each and we have more land elsewhere for hay and grain production. We produce and sell lots of primary and secondary products and we have developed a very good market in half of our country, selling our products through a web app and delivering fresh to customers' doors once a week, depending on their address. That is quite challenging because farmers are doing everything by themselves for now. Our intention is to educate on Savory institute and to become full regenerative producers and we are in process of becoming the Croatian hub for holistic management. That kind of regenerative agricultural production has a very positive impact on rural area restoration together with soil restoration. It is the only possible way for agriculture in the future. Although we are constant promoters of regenerative agriculture, but we are aware that we need to become part of the Savory network in the full meaning of the word to be really on track. We are also aware that we must become an example of good and sustainable practice and then other people would get interested in accepting our vision of regenerative agriculture.

Our first goal is giving our customers the possibility to buy healthy food produced in a method which is good for the soil. Second is implementing a method of holistic management. The method uses different animals in rotational planned grazing for developing good grass cover which can sequester lots of carbon from the atmosphere and put it back in the soil where it belongs, also enlarging soil capacity to retain the moisture to help reverse climate change. This method can be applied to all kind of soil and property size.



ASSOCIATION DEMETER CZECH & SLOVAK

Country: Czech Republic, Slovakia

Region: Cross-border

Key words: Biodynamics, BIO, farming, winemaking

Summary:

We are a brand new association established in 2020. Our aim is to promote a biodynamic way of farming in the Czech and Slovak Republics, organise seminars and education in this field and, in the future, establish a national Demeter branch for Czech Republic and Slovakia. The main purpose of our activities is to spread information and on hand practices for natural friendly, healthy and sustainable farming as an alternative to the widespread conventional way.

THE STORY:

The idea has been here for a few years now. It was in late 2019 though, when local farmers, winemakers and biodynamic enthusiasts got together in the right constellation. Our Association was officially registered basically just few weeks ago with accordance to the Czech laws.

Demeter's goal is to lead the digital transformation of Europe's agri-food sector through the rapid adoption of advanced IoT (Internet of Things) technologies, data science and smart farming, ensuring its long-term viability and sustainability.

We are in close cooperation with Demeter International and Demeter national branches in neighbouring countries, mainly Austria and Germany. We are also in touch with biodynamic and anthroposophic (alternative medicine) magazines, trying to establish close contact to other Bio and biodynamic organisations in Europe.

We are a group of different people with different backgrounds, experiences, professions... We got together having a similar vision and aim, ready to share and learn.

We are a group of different people with different backgrounds, experiences, professions... We got together having a similar vision and aim, ready to share and learn. This has helped collaboration.

We are basically starting with our activities and we are looking forward to the challenges to come.





Summary:

Gathering together those interested in modern horse-powered farming throughout the Czech Republic to share knowledge and experience.

THE STORY:

Working horses are still used in logging and these loggers have some organisation, but there are now not many horse-powered farms, and we didn't have a group or any organisation.

In September 2018, I attended a BOND Project training in Cordoba, Spain, where I learned some methodology on how to collaborate. So, in February 2019 I organised a meeting in the Czech Republic for anyone involved or interested in modern horse-powered farming.

I've been interested in this area for a long time and the Czech Republic is not so big, so I already had some phone numbers, emails and Facebook contacts of people with a connection to horse-powered farming. These people had contacts of their own, so the word spread.

Two months after the first meeting, we opened our farm for a field day. A few people brought their own horses and ploughs, so there was an opportunity for everybody who came to put their hand on a horse-drawn plough. We had a formal meeting focused on ploughing to share knowledge and experience, but the main outcome was people making connections between themselves.

In May 2019 we organised a meeting in a research centre in Prague to consider how farming with horses benefits soil health. After the initial meeting in February 2019 we launched a Facebook group – it now has 800 members.

I think you have a desire to be connected with people facing the same challenges as you. I was hoping for 25 people to attend our first meeting in February – I couldn't believe we ended up with 63! The hall was full.

“I think you have a desire to be connected with people facing the same challenges as you.”

We've not created a formal group so far. We are just organising meetings and activities and finding they are well attended. Most of the horse-powered farmers are lonely tough guys from the mountains. They aren't used to going out in public and getting to know others. They are used to competing against each other. I kept trying to stress how important collaboration is – working with rather than against each other. Some people were open, but others won't change their mindset after just a few meetings. We will keep on trying and see what happens.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/farma-lukava/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.facebook.com/pg/farmalukava/ads/?ref=page_internal
www.lukava.net/ - www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmlruhnUu3o

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COMPLEMENTARY COLLECTIVE CATERING

Country: France

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Local, reduced waste, sustainability

Summary:

The necessary complementarity of different commercial outlets, to introduce more organic products in collective catering and offer potential new channels for local farmers.

THE STORY:

When a farmer is going to kill a cow, he needs a commercial outlet for the cheapest part – which might be the schools, and the more expensive part – which will likely be restaurants.

The idea is putting together producers with possible markets and seeing how they complement each other and how they might be able to work together beneficially.

If a school wants to have organic meat and approaches a farmer, it won't be an entire cow they are interested in. It's not going to work that way. The farmer needs to see how different actors and different commercial outlets can help him sell the entire cow and give an appropriate value for every part of the cow.

“We facilitate and encourage farmers to form networks so they can sell their products sustainably all year round. We have to think of the whole agricultural chain.”

We facilitate and encourage farmers to form networks so they can sell their products sustainably all year round. We have to think of the whole agricultural chain.

France's National Federation of Organic Agriculture (FNAB) started to work on collective catering 20 years ago. Sometimes we are approached by our farmers looking for new local markets. Perhaps a farmer's child attends a local school and he wants to change the food offered there with some of his products. There are constraints for producers selling to schools, for example they can sell their vegetables from September to June, but the months of July and August, the schools are closed, and this is a problem because it's when most of the products are available. (Historically children were off school in the months of July and August because they were needed to work in the family's fields.) If the farmer talks to hospitals, though, they need vegetables all year round.

Lately, because a new law in France that wants every school to have 20% organic products by 2022, schools have approached us to find local suppliers of organic food. A lot of schools, hospitals and even the French army came to us to not only to source the products but to show them the way to cook it.

“Collaboration can work when we understand a single segment of collective catering won't really be interesting by itself for a farmer.”



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/collective-catering-2/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.fnab.org/ - www.territoiresbio.fr
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Summary:

A kind of labour union, we represent member organic farmers and defend their interests politically, and make sure that organic farming develops and spreads in France.

THE STORY:

It started 40 years ago as a necessity to have one voice for all the organic farmers and to speak louder than if every organic farmer had to speak for themselves. Different local groups had emerged or were created in different parts of France. They were talking to each other and sharing ideas and practices and realised that there were things they wanted to address and promote collectively. Step by step the different local organisations made connections, and the FNAB was formed.

“It started 40 years ago as a necessity to have one voice for all the organic farmers and to speak louder than if every organic farmer had to speak for themselves.”

Organic farmers are members of units at the very local department level. Departments are members of the regional level, and the regions are members of FNAB in Paris. Membership is by yearly subscription.

“The local departments rule our national organisation so the decision and strategy are based on collective thinking from all around the country.”

The local departments rule our national organisation so the decision and strategy are based on collective thinking from all around the country. We are trying to create it from the bottom to the top. Our organisation is designed so that we are constantly in touch with local groups. Every two months farmers from different regions come to Paris to discuss the next moves and design the strategy. We can really have a feeling and a sense of what organic farmers need locally everywhere in France. Even within a small country there are very different situations for organic farmers and farmers generally, say the south of France compared to the north of France. Because we very much engage at the local level, I think our model could be adapted for other countries.

“It’s always more complicated to have a decision when it’s bottom up rather than top down. You have to feel the consensus and find a place where no one is really unhappy about the overall thinking.”



SÉRONAIS CENTRAL KITCHEN

Country: France

Region: Ariège, Community of Communes Couserans-Pyrénées

Key words: Green public catering, school canteens, farmer association

Summary:

Bringing green public catering to a central kitchen for school kindergarten and portage of meals for the elderly with the involvement of farmers, chefs, families, teachers, animators and local policymakers.

THE STORY:

It began during 2000 with a demand from the parents to improve the food at the school. The school was making 350 meals a day. Parents wanted their children to eat healthy, more organic meals.

“Parents wanted their children to eat healthy, more organic meals.”

CIVAM Bio 09 (my organisation), a part of Bio Occitaine, supported the parents to construct a group with all the actors of the food: the farmers, the teachers, the children, the chef and the mayor. They started by visiting an example of a school canteen in another region where a green catering project had already been done – parents, teachers, chef, elected members and farmers all went to learn what was possible.

After this the initial group defined their objectives (maximum of organic food, especially from the region), then conducted a diagnostic on what was available and what could be done to improve things, for example they found out what the local farmers could produce, and how the menu might be changed. They organised a group of farmers who could supply different organic meat for the school on different days of the month. One might supply the school with beef, another lamb, another pork. This meant the municipality would adapt the school menu to introduce a particular meat to fit with that particular farmer’s slaughtering schedule. The supply is regular and traceable, and the farmers can rely on a regular order. The farmers also adapt to fit around each other. The animal farmers formed an association ‘La Source’ to sell the meat in this way and this association now provides other canteens in the region.

Working together with all the different actors right from the beginning was key for collaboration. We needed them all to be at the table.

“If the first organic item a farm could produce for us was carrots, we’d start with carrots.”

The project was made step by step. If the first organic item a farm could produce for us was carrots, we’d start with carrots. The following year we might add the meat – we didn’t start with that. Doing it step by step was more structured for the farmers and allowed the project to be sustainable.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/seronais-central-kitchen/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.bioariego.fr - FNAB: www.repasbio.org/ and www.restaurationbio.org/

Video of the experience (in French): vimeo.com/23256689 (from 36:38)

Experience sheet of the canteen (in French):

www.bioariego.fr/site/pages/uploads/documentstelecharger/documentation/Resto%20Co/Retours%20xp%C3%Ag/Fiche%20CUI-SINE%20CENTRALE%20SERONNAIS.pdf

Global presentation of the CIVAM Bio 09: www.bioariego.fr/article/nos-actions-2

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THE GREEN BASKET

Country: France

Region: Near Lille

Key words: Organic, local, farm shop

Summary:

An Organic Farm shop managed and run directly by local producers in Northern France

THE STORY:

2006 found me in a dilemma: I was considering opening a shop on my farm to sell my milk products directly, but it felt like a burden on top of the work I was already doing. My children were young and knowing that customers might arrive at any time would be disruptive to the way we lived... It seemed far better to join an established group.

I was fortunate. Au Panier Vert (The Green Basket) had just moved to larger premises and was able to accommodate another producer of yoghurt and ice cream.

Au Panier Vert farm shop was birthed in 1986 just outside Lille. After a local co-operative went bankrupt and was no longer able to pay farmers for their vegetables, Sabine Catteau, a cattle breeder and potato farmer who already sold her products on her farm, reached out to her neighbours proposing a new form of co-operative. She'd seen a shop outside Paris where farmers came together to sell their produce. Already used to working together, the local farmers agreed.

“...there was no precedent in French economic and tax law...”

As there was no precedent in French economic and tax law, they enlisted a lawyer to help them create a new legal entity allowing them to farm and sell their produce directly. Their next problem was finding and funding a shop that could accommodate them all. Undaunted, they cleared out one of Sabine's barns that had been used for cows, and this became Au Panier Vert. There wasn't a lot of money but by buying second-hand materials and taking advice from marketing experts they were able to furnish it and make it an attractive place for customers. Finally, they came up with rules that have been key to success:

New farmers can join the collective only if they are bringing something that is not already supplied. This stops competition from within. Only if a farmer is struggling to meet demand, can a second producer become part of the collective and a suitable arrangement is made. It was this that enabled me to join: the new shop was much larger and allowed for my contribution of local yoghurt and ice cream.



THE ORCHARDS OF SAINT SULPICE

Country: France

Region: Nouvelle Aquitaine

Key words: Fruit, orchards, fair price

Summary:

The development of a tool to neutralise distortions of price competition in the European market.

THE STORY:

can speak about my personal experience. I'm a tree and orchard food producer and I can talk about the problems I've encountered. I became a member of Confederation Paysanne in order to propose political solutions. I used to produce summer fruits: apricots, cherries, nectarines. These fruits are under crisis due to cheap imports from the South of Europe where salaries are lower. There is an artificial comparative advantage, which means that they take bigger shares of market against the local production. More and more they are invading the market and there is no space for the French farmers' produce.

“More and more [imports] are invading the market and there is no space for the French farmers' produce.”

I started in 2000. Since 2010 there have been more and more problems in the South of France. Due to the climate deregulation we would have late frosts, more and more insects coming from warmer regions, and a change of behaviour in some animals. For example, the pigeon: usually it is a migratory bird, but every year it is migrating less, so there is an increasing population now staying in the area I live instead of going to West Africa, when it is the end of winter. Because they are here, they adjust their eating habits, eating the fruits while they are still small in April and May which cause gigantic destruction.

For all these problems, like the frost, the new insects, we have new techniques which do not pollute: nets against the birds and systems to fight against the frosts. Everything exists. The problem to adjust to climate change is not technical, the problem to adjust to climate change is economical.

“The problem to adjust to climate change is not technical, the problem to adjust to climate change is economical. “

Because of the situation of unfair competition and my economic situation (which is the result of the imports I have described before) I was not able to save money to be able to adapt to these climate changes. So I was forced slowly slowly, actually not so slowly: in two or three years, to abandon all my productions of nectarines apricots and cherries.



Photo credit: Clem Onojehuo of Pexels



THE CHILLI FACTOR ORGANIC FARM

Country: Greece

Region: Thessaloniki

Key words: Organic, chillies, microgreens, edible flowers, farmers market

Summary:

A very small organic farm producing speciality vegetables, microgreens, edible flowers and chutneys. We engage with local farmers markets and chefs, educating, supporting and always learning. We organise the biodiversity of the farm to create a self-regulating and renewable ecosystem.

THE STORY:

We had been running a comic-bookstore in Thessaloniki city centre for 20 years, when economic crisis hit the USA in 2007 radically affecting our importation of comic books. We already owned a small piece of land, less than an acre, in the village of Nei Epivates near the city, and decided to certify it as organic. In 2009 the crisis arrived in Greece. With no knowledge of farming or agricultural business, we gave up our shop and instead started planting lesser-known vegetables and lost heirloom varieties: yellow, green and orange tomatoes, black, orange and white carrots, orange and bicolored beets, Asian vegetables, mustard greens, purple and orange cauliflowers, baby leaves and petite vegetables, and many more. We did lots of reading: two people from the city transforming to farmers.

“We did lots of reading: two people from the city transforming to farmers.”

We started making sauces from chilli peppers and black tomatoes, pestos with various herbs, pickled vegetables, chutneys under the name of The Chilli Factor Organic Farm and started our weekly participation to a local organic farmer’s market in Thessaloniki.

And then we read about microgreens: the first true leaves of a vegetable or herb are cleaner, stronger and more flavourful than their traditional counterparts and feature 4-40 times the vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, with 100% bioavailability and healing benefits. Chefs in Greece were just becoming aware of this superfood when we started growing it. Microgreens are an excellent food dressing. We were able to deliver them within a day of harvest, in a packaging system designed to maximize freshness and nutrient retention. We also started cultivating edible flowers. The magic world of flowers brought to the plate, to a salad, a dessert.

Because our plot is small, we don’t use machinery, but the manual tools are hard to get in Greece. We had to pay a lot of money to import them from France and Japan.

“Everything was new to us. We had to learn quickly. The legal requirements to become farmers were complicated and there wasn’t much help.”



ALLIANCE OF SMALL-SCALE COMMUNITY FARMS

Country: Hungary

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Organic farming, community supported agriculture, peer-group, experience sharing

Summary:

An informal alliance of small-scale community farms for knowledge and experience sharing in Hungary.

THE STORY:

CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) have only existed in Hungary for the last ten years. In 2013 there were several meetings particularly for CSA farmers funded by EU projects. Out of these a group of us began meeting informally but quickly we realised we needed some kind of alliance with a name and framework if we wanted to put on experience-sharing events. We didn't want something official, but informal.

“...quickly we realised we needed some kind of alliance with a name and framework if we wanted to put on experience-sharing events.”

We meet together two or three times a year to exchange ideas, experiences and challenges. Regularly we purchase farm inputs (e.g. seed potato, growing medium for transplants) together to share the logistic costs.

We still have the core group – the original six founding members – but we have other CSA farmers who regularly attend the meetings and workshops. To start with we were a group of six farmers who had become friends. We built up trust and a real connection with each other.

“We built up trust and a real connection with each other.”

One of the founding members was Conscious Consumers Association, an NGO located in Budapest. They regularly run projects with CSAs funded by EU (Gruntivig, Erasmus+). Those interested in starting CSAs attended workshops or had a connection with the Conscious Consumers Association, so they found out about our alliance there.

Meeting together in the same room with other people in the same role experiencing a lot of the same things creates a very good feeling. We can share challenges and hopefully share some solutions. Our core group already had a bond of trust.

“Meeting together in the same room with other people in the same role experiencing a lot of the same things creates a very good feeling.”

CSA farmers are much more open-minded than the average farmer population, so it was relatively easy to establish this kind of cooperation.





BRICK OVEN ASSOCIATION (KEMENCE EGYESÜLET)

Country: Hungary

Region: Komárom

Key words: Open farm, gastro-cultural, traditional, family-friendly, supporting women

Summary:

A community farm with a focus on tradition – traditional cooking, traditional arts and crafts. We employ people with various special needs and disabilities, and we serve kindergartens, schools and anyone else. Kemence Egyesület offers activity programmes, but people are also welcome to just come and walk around the farm – many people live in flats so they want to spend their free time in nature. The door is (almost) always open.

THE STORY:

We already had a sports organisation since 2011 that focuses on experiences with horses, but we couldn't serve all the demand from our community. Many kindergartens have a small vegetable garden but the one in our street couldn't, so they have their garden on our farm. Our farm is open six days a week and we host birthday parties, and team buildings. In 2016 we made this new traditional cooking and craft organisation so the two organisations work together and support each other as a team.

We had connections with people who had used Szőnyi Lovas Sportegyesület (our horse organisation). We also spoke to the local government who knew that we had helped the community through Szőnyi Lovas Sportegyesület. We also advertise what we offer on social media, but it takes time for people to realise we have potential.

“...it takes time for people to realise we have potential.”

We started with birthday parties and team building but we've kept adding new projects including a real-life history class, environmental protection, training, a biological class so the kids can come out of the classroom and learn about seed life. We run summer camps for children during the holidays. We've become an official place that supports women by looking after children; and have begun networking with twelve other local providers.

At Christmas we hosted a fayre with other local organisations: a fishing organisation, the church etc. We wanted to give everybody who came to the event a chimney cake to take home and bake themselves. To make the cakes we used 40 kilograms of flour! – and it wasn't enough!

It's grown big in a very short time.

It's a family-friendly workplace. We have already achieved a lot. We don't have a website; we have a Facebook profile and people who come talk to their friends about us. They have trust in us.

There are many big challenges. Sometimes time is the biggest challenge – the pressure to finish some paperwork by two o'clock tomorrow, but it's Christmas eve tomorrow! There are always other people who want to break you. It's very hard work.

“It's so important to show kids that a chicken doesn't grow in a plastic bag in the shop.”



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/the-brick-oven-association-kemence-egyesulet/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Facebook – Kemence Egyesület www.facebook.com/kemence.egyesulet

Facebook – Szőnyi Lovas Sportegyesület: www.facebook.com/szonyilovassportegyesulet

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FOUNDATION FOR SCHOOL GARDENS

Country: Hungary

Region: Countrywide (including parts of neighbouring countries of the Carpathian Basin)

Key words: School gardens, kindergarten gardens, education for sustainability, environmental awareness, organic farming

Summary:

A foundation that supports cooperation and networking of organisers of school and kindergarten gardens in Hungary. As part of the network, school gardens will no longer be isolated. They will not lack information and the members will be represented by the Foundation for School Gardens.

THE STORY:

In the footsteps of their predecessors – educators and gardeners – the founders believe a school garden offers opportunities in the search for sustainable solutions, in educational work, and for public good. The initiative was started by private individuals out of professional vocation from Szent István University in 2014.

The issue of school gardens is a very complex topic, relating to pedagogy, agriculture, environmental education, environmental protection, food safety, health preservation, therapeutic options, etc. In order to create school gardens that best meet the needs of the present age the school garden movement needed to think together and develop a coordinated strategy. They connected experts of the different relevant fields at the first forum of The School Garden Professional Workshop in the autumn of 2014, where approximately 40 participants (teachers, civilians, municipal representatives, etc.) were able to share their experiences on school gardens and receive some initial impetus and encouragement to start one.

The Hungarian Foundation for School Gardens was registered in March 2015 and put together a charter, with the following goals:

Make school gardens as widely available as possible and help them spread as a setting for sustainability and environmental awareness for children and, through them, for the widest possible sections of society.

Encourage activity-based teaching of children in school gardens so that they can experience a sense of responsibility for their future through their work; experience our natural environment as the foundation of our lives; the need for and effectiveness of cooperation, feel the importance of intergenerational knowledge; the honour of labour. Present the garden as a medium of experience, relaxation, discovery, joy for children and adults alike, making children more open to nature, promoting gardening and methods and approaches of organic farming.

Show teachers and children that, due to the complexity of activities in the garden, it is an excellent opportunity for the harmonious development of the personality.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/foundation-for-school-gardens/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: https://eionet.kormany.hu/download/a/e8/62000/Schoolgardens_arcicle_2019_05_24_02.pdf

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KISPIAC QUARANTINE MARKET

Country: Hungary

Region: Pest

Key words: COVID-19, drive-in service, farmers' market, best practice

Summary:

The farmers' market in Dunakeszi has adapted to enable drive-in collections during the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE STORY:

The farmers' market in Dunakeszi (a city in the agglomeration of the capital) is a good example of the creativity and the adaptability of human nature. When the crisis caused by COVID-19 broke out, in March, organisers of the market tried to find the perfect way for the short food supply chain to operate during this period. We* came up with a way for the farmers to sell their products and the consumers buy those without taking any health risk. Thanks to the contactless way of purchase everyone is safe.

“The market was popular in the region before the restrictions too but nowadays it's becoming famous for its drive-in system.”

The market was popular in the region before the restrictions too but nowadays it's becoming famous for its drive-in system. We have created a well-functioning quarantine-market which is now complete with drive-in service. The consumers can pre-order through the Kispiac's website with an online shopping list, and they can get their order and pay for it from their own cars. The consumer only needs to stop at a zone where the employees of the market put their ordered items in the luggage rack or boot and the driver gives them the money in a transparent packet. This way we minimise personal contact but those consumers who would like to purchase directly from the farmers can also participate in the market every Friday besides the strict hygiene regulations.

It was a real logistical challenge to establish this system and it causes a lot of extra work, but the organisers and the farmers are really intent to operate this system, because this way they can still sell their products.

It was an urgent situation which needed a fast response. We had to find a place to be able to operate the drive-in service. The market moved to a school's carpark because the original spot is under restoration.

“Every challenge can teach something about the adaptability of human nature. If it is needed the food supply can be solved during crisis like the one that COVID-19 caused. “



SEEDHOUSE (MAGHÁZ)

Country: Hungary

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Sustainable seed systems, low input agriculture, agrobiodiversity conservation, heirloom

Summary:

A seed saving network to educate and motivate others across Hungary to grow and preserve open pollinated heirloom plants and not only buy seeds from the shop.

THE STORY:

In 2011 the Let's Liberate Diversity meeting took place in Hungary and included a huge international seed swap. It was the first big seed swap in the country. Here and during other events I met some other Hungarian seed savers who became friends and in 2012 two of us visited Arche Noah in Austria. We were impressed with how professional it was and wanted to do something similar in Hungary. We were already involved in maintaining landraces and traditional varieties of plants whether we collected them from the countryside ourselves, inherited them from our ancestors or requested them from the National Gene Bank. During the summer of this same year six of us gathered to discuss and establish the frame of the future Magház (Seedhouse).

In Autumn 2012 we joined the 10 year anniversary of French movement 'Réseau Semences Paysannes' – a 3 day international, inspiring event in the South of France. It was remarkable to experience how the French network organises itself and how local groups work.

“People abandoned the traditional ways quite early in our country because the seed industry is so strong.”

Although heirloom seeds are maintained in the Gene Bank, the knowledge is not – people abandoned the traditional ways quite early in our country because the seed industry is so strong.

Inspired by our visits to community seed banks in Austria and France we set up our organisation with a website for knowledge and seed sharing and at the next Let's Liberate Diversity meeting in Switzerland in 2013 we were able to announce our new organisation 'Magház' to the European network.

Early on we established our website so people could find information. We made guidelines for home gardeners – how to save seeds and why it's important. We now publish locations of seed swaps so people can find one near them. We try and be present at the swaps as much as possible, giving presentations and workshops and bringing our own seeds, motivating people to join our national network as well as establishing local ones.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: <https://www.bondproject.eu/seedhouse-maghaz/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.maghaz.hu/ - www.communityseedbanks.org/ - [https://liberatediversity.org/](http://liberatediversity.org/)
www.prospecierara.ch/ - www.arche-noah.at/

CONTACT DETAILS: Judit Fehér - maghazinfo@gmail.com



Summary:

The aim of the Nyíregyháza Basket Community is to organise, reorganise and restructure the local economy. Producers of real local products are connected to customers who strive to consume with sustainability in mind, strengthening the local economy, creating real jobs and enriching the community in the local economy cycle.

THE STORY:

In Hungary, the vast majority of people consume non-local food, so money is migrating out of communities and local economies are declining. An initiative like The Basket can provide an answer to these problems.

“...the vast majority of people consume non-local food, so money is migrating out of communities and local economies are declining”

It started as discussions about the situation in the world during the 2008 crisis in Nyíregyháza. In 2012, the idea of a shopping community grew out of a series of friendly conversations between local cultural creatives. Cultural creatives do not want to belong to any of the political camps, but they are active, socially sensitive, and many of them feel alone. After a few meetings, it turned out that food was the issue that preoccupied everyone. The idea of the shopping community was just a step away. In 2013, several individuals and one of the engines of the local community, the ‘Our Future is Local’ Association (Helyben a Jövőnk Egyesület), began to act and became the core of the shopping community.

Producers receive community members at their farms or sites and showcase their production processes. The Basket Community is committed to environmentally friendly and healthy food, and such products are favoured in purchasing.

40-60 producers deliver products for the Basket (the number varies seasonally). At the start, volunteers from the Basket were looking for farmers who could be involved, but now typically producers come and indicate that they want to join the system. Now, the Basket can't even take everyone in, a new producer can only enter, if one of the products is just in short supply.

As it started, the first five refrigerators operating at the distribution point were obtained from people offering devices they no longer used. Locations were also acquired several times through offerings. The Basket needs a new centre relatively often: due to continuous growth. Now they're renting a small former grocery store, but even this is starting to get small again.



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LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/nyiregyhaza-basket-community/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.nyiregyhazikosar.hu/ - <https://kosarkozosseg.hu/> - www.facebook.com/nyiregyhazikosar/ - <https://shop.nyiregyhazikosar.hu/> - Sources: <https://444.hu/2019/10/26/bevasarlo-kozossegekent-in-dultak-de-az-egesz-gazdasagot-megvaltoztatnak> - <https://444.hu/2020/03/20/a-bevasarlokozossegek-peldaja-mutathatja-meg-hogy-miert-a-kozelben-termelt-elelmiszer-sokszor-a-legbiztonsagosabb>

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NETWORK OF ORCHARDISTS OF THE CARPATHIAN BASIN

Country: Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia

Region: Carpathian Basin/Central Europe

Key words: Adaptive orchard management, fruit landraces

Summary:

A network of volunteers sharing information and organising local regional and national programmes to train, provide study tours map old species and organise meetings of orchardists of the Carpathian Basin.

THE STORY:

Adaptive orchard management means adapting to the landscape and the natural endowment. An orchard managed this way is mosaic structured and has multiple levels, like natural ecosystems. The fruit trees in it are of diverse races, species and ages.

The adaptive orchard management is not only about fruits, but a lot of activities of small farmers, which are organically connected to the orchard. It is an interconnected system, an 'ancient pattern', in which animals have their places too, no matter whether they are livestock (poultry, pigs, cattle, horses, sheep etc.), or wild animals (hedgehogs, badgers, deer etc.), insects (e.g. bees, ants), reptiles (frogs, snakes etc.). Places, which are connected to the house of the family, like the kitchen garden, or even a lake can be parts of the orchard. The variety of food products (from raw fruits through processed fruits to meat products), and handcraft objects for storing, carrying (baskets, cases, felt objects etc.) produced here make it nearly a self-sufficient system. The primary aim is not commodity production, but ensuring self-sufficiency for the family or the community.

It is important that wood from the orchard (e.g. cut off branches from pruning) provides material for heating, helping to create energy-security of a small farm. It is a complex system working like old patterns, therefore it has a role in heritage preservation too.

The reanimation and promotion of this system is one of the most important part of our mission.

Thanks to the excellent natural features of the Carpathian Basin, it used to be a paradise on earth. The diversity of fruit races was an integral part of the diversity of wildlife. Today our old fruit landraces are endangered. 'Adaptive Orchard Management' means adapting to the landscape. It strives not only to save old species, but to reanimate and to propagate the approach based on cultivating landraces as well.

“We intend to save fruit landraces of the Carpathian Basin in situ or on farm.”



Summary:

A network of 15 producers of high value added food products and rural service providers opening their farm and food processing plant for customers to visit on a regular, transparent basis.

THE STORY:

The aim of the initiative was to build up a local network with local stakeholders to attract visitors from nearby tourist attractions such as Héviz (thermal bath) and Lake Balaton. The network implemented its own quality assurance system (with internal governance and decision making) for creating adequate environment at the farm to be able to accept visitors (toilets, hygiene, aesthetics, etc.). In that way the network can guarantee the high-level services for Hungarian and foreign tourists. The initiative is a possibility for social learning, networking, and building regional identity for producers.

The OPEN FARM Association is facilitated by the local LEADER group and was elaborated due to 2 international research projects. The Zala Thermal Valley LEADER group is a civil organisation that was established in 2008 in the western part of Hungary, in the northeast part of Zala County. The undeveloped part, long-ago decisively an agricultural area, underprivileged in social and economic aspect with high rate of unemployment, is Zalaszentgrót and the surrounding settlements. The main purposes of the local action group are: improvement the quality of life by renewing and utilising art relic buildings, preservation of natural and cultural heritage, enhancement of the local economy by motivating the preparation of local product, development of tourism activities; support of establishment and development of SME's.

The network of farmers provides common marketing image (logo, roll-ups, signs, image films, website etc.); a well-designed internet platform and smart phone app. including push notification.

“The stakeholders learnt together and shared their notions about common activities.”

For three years the LEADER group built up a working group with farmers and service providers. During this period stakeholders had regular meetings on invention of common activities, goals and intern rules for a quality assurance system. The stakeholders learnt together and shared their notions about common activities.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/open-farms-in-zala-thermal-valley-2/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: <http://nyitottportak.hu/downloads/33/> - <http://nyitottportak.hu/> - www.facebook.com/nyitottportak/ - www.agrishort.eu

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RENDEK ECO FARM (RENDEK OKOGAIDASAG)

Country: Hungary

Region: Kiskunság National Park

Key words: Eco farm, Heritage, Tradition, Slow Food, Alliance

Summary:

An ecological family farm that has led to a local alliance and partnerships with The Slow Food Movement internationally.

THE STORY:

I grew up on a farm, but during the socialist period, the Communists took my grandparents' land to become part of a Soviet type of forced cooperative. My family was chased to the city and my husband and I ended up working in an office. In 1989 when the system changed in Hungary we returned to the country and bought back our ancestors' land. My husband and I, together with our three children, began to renovate the ruined farmhouse with our own hands.

“...the Communists took my grandparents' land to become part of a Soviet type of forced cooperative. My family was chased to the city and my husband and I ended up working in an office.”

Around us, everyone was moving to the city so no one understood why we would want to leave and come to a derelict meadow house in the countryside where it's sandy and hard to farm. It wasn't easy. We farmed our twenty hectares without pesticides or chemicals, and we had ancient Hungarian species; we strived to revive the old peasants' culture. Although many people didn't understand us, some friends told us of a cultural heritage tender available from an Agri university in Hungary. This grant was specifically for the renovation of the traditional remote ranch-style farms with a farmhouse at the centre, just like ours.

With the help of an architect friend we applied for this tender in 1997 and we won first prize! This gave us huge power to continue with the farm. We were very proud. The following year a friend who worked for the National Museum of Hungary told us of a Henry Ford Award for the conservation of traditional national culture and ecological farming. We entered this award and we won that too!

“We appeared in the headlines and on TV. It was all very new for us!”

When we received the award at the Hungary Academy of Sciences, there were a lot of international journalists interested in our story. We appeared in the headlines and on TV. It was all very new for us! But it was good because it showed the people who laughed at us for leaving the city that we had done something to be proud of.



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LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/rendek-eco-farm/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.okomuzeum.hu - www.kiskunhagyomany.hu

CONTACT DETAILS: Olga Rendek - olga.rendek@gmail.com



CAVOLI NOSTRI SOCIAL AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE

Country: Italy

Region: Piedmont (near Turin)

Key words: Social farming, organic, mushrooms, vegetables, cooperative

Summary:

An agricultural social cooperative company growing, selling and preserving organic vegetables and providing job opportunities for disadvantaged workers near Turin. We have recently focused on growing shiitake mushrooms (which are not widely known in Italy). They have been greatly appreciated by local restaurants and customers, so we aim to increase our production in the future.

THE STORY:

We began in April 2011 with a dozen people from different backgrounds. Two were monks living in a religious house outside of Turin. They had land and some agricultural equipment, because traditionally they involved the persons with intellectual disabilities living at the religious house in agricultural activity. They wanted to continue this activity in a way that was legalised and recognised by the state. Most of the rest of us were consultants and until then we had an idea of social farming, but no practical experience in the field. Three of our core workers were people with intellectual challenges living at the religious house, but when they reached retirement age, they were replaced by younger people living with their families.

“...we had an idea of social farming, but no practical experience in the field.”

Over time the group changed as this was voluntary for many of us and we had to devote time to our paying job. Currently the company is mainly managed by three of us (women). A fourth member is a licensed mycologist who gives us precious advice about mushrooms. We currently have three disadvantaged workers, two with intellectual disabilities (one of them is temporarily not employed, because of difficulties connected with the COVID-19 pandemic) and one who is recovering from addiction.

In addition to cultivation and processing for sale, since the beginning of our activity we also designed and managed several social farming projects. Since 2016, two of these became especially relevant for us: the first is hosting people on the farm who have been referred to us by social services with a variety of social challenges. They take care of a small plot of land and everything that is produced on it is donated to the social services for local families in need (this project is temporarily not active, because of restrictions connected with the COVID-19 pandemic, but it will most likely resume as soon as the health situation allows it).



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/cavoli-nostri/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.facebook.com/CavoliNostri - www.cavolinostri.it/
CONTACT DETAILS: Elena Micheletti - elena.micheletti@cavolinostri.it

PAPPA FISH

Country: Italy

Region: Marche region

Key words: Fresh fish, reduced waste, local product

Summary:

An initiative to increase the consumption of local fresh fish, bringing lesser known fish varieties onto into school meals with the objective to diversify what children eat and reduce fishery waste.

THE STORY:

A lot of kids mainly eat only three things: potatoes, pasta and meat. Such a limited diet can cause growth problems. One of the foods they rarely eat is fish. The fish available in the canteens was typically frozen, imported from other countries and often preserved with polyphosphate – such a fish starts off big but when you cook it, it becomes very little. The day before serving it had to be defrosted, and the children don't like the smell so they wouldn't choose it. Fresh fish smells better so children are more inclined to eat it. In Rome more than 160 000 kids eat a meal every day in their school, so it was a big market.

In Rome more than 160 000 kids eat a meal every day in their school so it was a big market.

I also wanted to explore using a fish that was under-utilised – fishermen tend to catch as many as twenty species of fish in their nets, but in reality, there are only three or four types that are requested in restaurants, so the rest are often waste. I designed meals using some of these lesser used fish.

The first project, called SANPEI, I made in the canteens of Rome with CNR (Italy's National Research Council) in 2011

We organised cooking lessons for the children within the school that motivated them to taste the fish they'd never tried before. Not only this, but we raised awareness on maritime and small fishery traditions, which are part of our cultural and socio-economic heritage.

Pappa Fish is based on a programme for fisheries from the European Union. I approached the Marche region (my region) to include more fish on the menu in school canteens. Once I had their buy-in I started visiting the different municipalities, inviting them to participate with two goals: to produce fresh fish in school canteens and to provide education activities to the children. The first edition of Pappa Fish was produced in 2013. As of 2020 we have produced five editions.

The other people I connected with were the fishermen. It was a negotiation with them because I wasn't asking simply for raw fish, I needed it to be filleted.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/pappa-fish/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.alberts.it

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SAN LIDANO

Country: Italy

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Cooperative, fresh cut salad

Summary:

A fresh cut salad cooperative that grew from a small family business in the 1990s to become one of the top ten players in the fresh cut salad market in Italy.

THE STORY:

In the 1990's, the Di Pastina family had an idea to develop fresh packaged ready-to-eat salads from their vegetable farm in Agro Pontino. Nobody was doing this in the Latina region, so not many people believed in it – packaged salads were produced mainly in the North, near Bergamo. It was impossible to do alone, but the entrepreneurial Di Pastina family knew the farmers of Agro Pontino had a great heritage and knowledge of growing vegetables, so they reached out to their neighbours to start a cooperative: San Lidano.

“It was hard investing a lot of money in something that was not sure...”

It was hard investing a lot of money in something that was not sure, but with financial support from the European Union, Lazio being considered a disadvantaged area, the ten-farm collective were able to buy a small factory for packing their salads.

Business increased quickly, membership of the cooperative grew to fifty, and a larger factory was needed. This was built in 2010, and four years later a second factory was built in Bergamo. With a third of produce going to Bergamo, farmers are still able to pick salad early in the morning and it can arrive packaged to a customer in the North of Italy in the evening of the same day.

Membership has been stable since 2010, adding only one or two each year. We now have 68 members and we also have agreements with external farmers in other areas of Italy where the climate is different to ensure we have a constant supply of fresh salad throughout the year. Most vegetable farmers in our region wanting to join San Lidano already have. Fresh-cut isn't for everyone. New members need a to have a medium/large farm no less than 5-10 hectares.

In the beginning there was a large profit margin of 8% but there were a lot of costs. Over the last 10 years, the margin has decreased to 4% but we are more established. Members are guaranteed a minimum amount from the coop. At the end of the year, there is part of the benefit that stays in the coop, but the rest is shared between the members.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/san-lidano/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.sanlidano.it/ - www.sanlidanogroup.it/

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FARMERS

Country: Macedonia

Region: Marche region

Key words: Women, federation, rural development

Summary:

A unit of Macedonian farmers who work to solve the problems in agriculture and raise the voice of small-scale farmers, marginalised groups and the rural population within the society. Although small, the Federation is the biggest group NGO of its kind in Macedonia.

THE STORY:

I work as a project manager in the National Federation of Farmers (NFF). This small organisation in the Republic of Macedonia started in 2002. I'm in the department of advocacy and development, working as a lobbyist and project manager of project 'Institutional support of NFF', supported by Swedish development organisation 'We Effect'. I work a lot in the field with farmers. Our mission is 'Profitable agriculture, stable village,' we create our attitudes taking the problems from the fields, analyse them, make recommendations, and start the lobbying process in front of the institutions. One of the main problems (which I think is true for many countries, not only Macedonia) is selling the products, especially from the small-scale farmers. They often don't have a standard product and they want to sell individually. They give a lot of space to the buyers, so there is a lot of manipulation on price. The buyers get the products very cheaply and sell them for a much bigger price, but the farmer doesn't get this profit.

“Our mission is ‘Profitable agriculture, stable village,’ we create our attitudes taking the problems from the fields, analyse them, make recommendations, and start the lobbying process in front of the institutions.”

The present state of the corona crisis implications to agriculture approves this situation. Projections of NFF in May 2020 in the Analysis 'Agriculture and the Corona crisis,' supported by 'We Effect', anticipate increased uncertainty, increased unemployment, limited availability of seasonal workforce and absence of direct measures to support the small-scale farmers from the path of poverty and devastation of agriculture households.

The farmers stressed the neglecting and the inappropriate government COVID measures for support of agriculture. The concerns for the old and poorly maintained agriculture infrastructure, especially the irrigation systems, the potential for increasing the prices of agriculture inputs had been reported as 'critical' for the production season.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/national-federation-of-farmers-macedonia/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: NFF website <https://www.nff.org.mk/en/>
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Summary:

A group of six Green Care farmers formed a cooperative, which grew into a regional cooperative, inspiring other regional cooperatives, which joined into a national cooperative representing 170 Green Care farmers across Norway.

THE STORY:

We began our cooperative back in 2006 because we wanted to be seen. I've been opening up my farm in central Norway to school children since 2001. I love the concept of Green Care – where ordinary farms can offer quality assured welfare services for participants with mental health problems, addiction, truancy, dementia, integration difficulties etc. We receive money from the government and in return our users benefit from our animals, plants and nature – learning coping skills, well-being and development. It's rewarding but it's a lot of work. As a Green Care farmer, you have to run the farm; take care of the animals; deliver good services – sometimes there are customers on the farm as well as Green Care participants. On top of that you must market your produce and advertise your Green Care services – it's hard to do it all. You don't have the time and you need other knowledge – you might be good at farming, but this is a different kind of work.

“We began our cooperative back in 2006 because we wanted to be seen.”

In 2006 six Green Care farmers in my area decided we would work together to make ourselves more visible; alone it's difficult to make the municipality and users see us. We wanted laws and regulations to govern our working together, so it made sense to form a small cooperative. We'd each still have our independent Green Care contracts with the government, but we could hire somebody to market and sell our products and services on behalf of the six of us – me! I'd never worked with coops or organisations before, so it was very much 'learning by doing'. My parents were able to help on my farm so I could spend a few hours each week working out the best direction for our six farms. We considered tourism and other avenues, but in the end, we decided no – this was just going to be a Green Care cooperative. It worked well. Other farmers saw what we were doing and wanted to join. By 2012 our cooperative: Inn på tunet Trøndelag had grown to fifty farmers.

The bigger we became, the more hours I had to give to the cooperative.



Photo credit: Karoline O A Pettersen

LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/green-care-inn-pa-tunet-norge/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.innpatunet.no - www.facebook.com/innpatunetnorge.no/

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JURASSIC FOOD COOPERATIVE

Country: Poland

Region: Śląskie

Key words: Food cooperative, local, community

Summary:

A food cooperative for farmers and consumers, as well as a community spreading agroecological values, connecting the city with the village.

THE STORY:

I initiated this food cooperative in 2017 to be able to buy food from good farmers and to be able to sell products from my farm.

I connected with farmers and consumers who shared my need for access to healthy and local food. The food cooperative was established with hard work and a lot of time, cooperation, relationships based on trust. I was inspired by good practices from Europe.

The challenge is the amount of volunteer work, building a community based on trust, exchanging knowledge and skills. We had challenges with offices, and restrictive legal regulations make our work difficult. We develop our social skills, cooperate with offices and educate ourselves.

We learned to work together collectively despite the difficulties.

The community and cooperative experience strengthened me and taught me a lot.

The community and cooperative experience strengthened me and taught me a lot. As a community, we have a sense of value that comes from working together and sharing our resources.





Summary:

An organic family farm providing a seasonal fruits and vegetables box to CSA customers in Warsaw and another town.

THE STORY:

I was working with the Social Ecological Institute and was an assistant in a project where I met a lot of ecological farmers. I was inspired by them. I discovered it was possible to live as an organic farmer and have some profit with this kind of farming.

I'd grown up on a family farm, but I left to go to university in the city. I lived in Warsaw for around twenty years but in 2011, I decided to come back to my village. I wanted to completely change my style of life – to be in the farm and work with the soil was exactly what I needed. At that time my family and I converted our conventional farm into an organic farm. We had just three or four cows, and some vegetables to feed our own family.

“I wanted to completely change my style of life – to be in the farm and work with the soil was exactly what I needed.”

I had good friends, who owned a CSA farm 120km north east of Warsaw, supplying organic vegetables to customers in the capital. In 2014 they decided it would be their last season because of family commitments. I'd seen their system and the way they ran their farm and liked the CSA model. With their advice, I contacted their coordinator and asked if she would like to help me to set my CSA with that group. Although my farm is 80km South of Warsaw, accessibility is good via the motorway. We started in 2015 with ten customers. My new coordinator took over the mailing and was responsible for all communications between me and the customers. I started the deliveries for my group in early June and finished in late October. It was a success, so I decided to continue in the following year. I was happy working on my farm, growing the green and fresh food and the customers were pleased that they would still have access to organic vegetables.

I now have thirty-five customers from Warsaw and another five from a nearby town.

“...we have direct contact with our customers. They know us.”

The model works because we have direct contact with our customers. They know us. All money is paid up front, so it's possible to plan expenses for the whole season.



THE TRIBE OF BARBELA

Country: Portugal

Region: Extremadura

Key words: Bread making, seed saving, ancient wheat, local

Summary:

A group of farmers, seed savers, millers and bread makers who preserve, grow and produce the ancient variety of Portuguese wheat: Barbela.

THE STORY:

I never accepted the fact of losing our traditional seeds and in this case, I'm speaking about the ancient Portuguese varieties of wheat, in particular from Extremadura, a region near Lisbon. This area has always been producing a lot of wheat, but due to the appearing of modern dwarf varieties, the ancient wheats (which produce less per hectare) were slowly abandoned.

“I never accepted the fact of losing our traditional seeds... “

I have taken a position of resistance to this situation. I preserved the seeds that were still available and I made some colleagues share my ideas so that they also preserved and multiplied these seeds. We have made an informal group called The Tribe. The Tribe of Barbela.

We started in 2019. The name of the wheat variety is Barbela, its Latin name is *Triticum aestivum* and it was cultivated in Portugal for centuries. In 1935 this variety covered 90% of the Portuguese land. It had almost gone extinct and this is why I attributed to myself the mission of saving it and letting it be known that it is good on the agro-economic level, the nutritional level, the ecological level.

“It had almost gone extinct and this is why I attributed to myself the mission of saving it and letting it be known... “

Why? It is a very rich wheat with natural oil; vitamin D and vitamin E and resists particularly well in poor soils and difficult conditions. It is particularly well adapted to Portugal because our country has poor soils. In contrast modern wheats don't adjust and I attribute this to Barbela wheat having a long stalk that stops the sun reaching the ground which stops weeds developing.

In The Tribe, we show the consumer we make the flour, we make the bread, then they can see the quality of the bread. It has special characteristics that are good for those who are celiac or diabetic, this wheat has nothing against it for the health. This is why there is such advantages to consume it – ecological, nutritional and agrological advantages.

“It had almost gone extinct and this is why I attributed to myself the mission of saving it and letting it be known... “





LEITRIM ORGANIC FARMER'S CO-OP

Country: Republic of Ireland

Region: North West

Key words: organic agriculture, biodiversity, livestock, quality livestock products, authentic, cooperative, ethical

Summary:

An organic selling cooperative in Ireland that has expanded to include training, agricultural advice, activism and influencing policy.

THE STORY:

This cooperative came together in 1998 because we had many new organic producers with no route to market. I was involved in marketing in the IT sector and I was also still farming. In 2001, one of the guys in the newly formed co-op said, 'We need a manager, will you do it?'

"...I thought well, I'm kind of bored with what I'm doing, so I said, 'Yes. I'll give it a go and see what happens.'"

And I thought well, I'm kind of bored with what I'm doing, so I said, 'Yes. I'll give it a go and see what happens.' I had to set up the infrastructure of offices. I also had to look for funding and I had to set out a programme for how the cooperative would develop and what it would do.

We're in an area of Ireland which is quite rural and poor because the land is poor quality, there are small scale farms and difficult soils. The challenges were really big, but the main goal was that we could find outlets for our organic produce. I developed markets in different ways. I looked first of all at the kind of produce we had locally: the meat, the beef, the vegetables, etc. We set up one of the first Farmers' markets in the country and that's still going. It's very successful.

"I looked first of all at the kind of produce we had locally: the meat, the beef, the vegetables, etc. We set up one of the first Farmers' markets in the country and that's still going."

We also collaborated with larger processors. We worked with them to supply products outside of Ireland – in the Netherlands and the UK. And those contracts are still in place today.

We then devised educational programmes for our members. At that time there was no place you could go for education on organic systems. We found streams of funding that run year on year to allow organic producers to be trained in a whole range of things from food safety to growing techniques to biological farming techniques to agroforestry. It's all demand-driven, driven by the farmers and producers themselves.

"...we have been a catalyst for many other activities and organisations that have sprung up in our area."



GARDEN OF MOLDOVA

Country: Republic of Moldova

Region: Rn Ialoveni

Key words: Agroecology, seed bank

Summary:

An NGO with an experimental garden offering training, workshops and events sharing the practices of agroecology and creating an open Moldovan seed bank.

THE STORY:

In Moldova, ‘Garden’ can have a double meaning: edible or decorative garden. I founded Garden of Moldova with my husband and some friends almost five years ago in October 2015, on the back of attending some workshops at an Eco Village. We organised several workshops arounds seeds and planting for people from the city (who were interested to move to the countryside or just to learn agriculture). Each seminar attracted more and more people, especially young people looking for alternative agriculture. We realised in Moldova we didn’t have a seed bank and most of our seeds come from abroad and can be very bad quality or from places with a very different environment from Moldova. So, we decided to create an NGO with an objective to create a seed bank open to every citizen as our only existing national one is just for scientific research.

“When my husband and I started the NGO, we were living in Chisinau in a flat without a garden. It seemed confusing we’d be speaking about agroecology and seeds from a place like that.”

I’d lived as a landscape architect in Belgium for fifteen years. When I came back to Moldova seven years ago, I didn’t find a suitable job. When my husband and I started the NGO, we were living in Chisinau in a flat without a garden. It seemed confusing we’d be speaking about agroecology and seeds from a place like that. It took eight months to find a house.

It was hard at the beginning – the administration of starting something new is very complicated in Moldova. It’s not transparent. You cannot find a website with an official procedure. I’d recommend taking advice from existing NGOs – several because sometimes you get contradictions. Thanks to an accountant friend and support from Eco Village we managed to navigate the process.

“...the administration of starting something new is very complicated in Moldova. It’s not transparent. You cannot find a website with an official procedure.”



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/garden-of-moldova/
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STRENGTHENING IMMUNE SYSTEMS OF MEDICS

Country: Republic of Moldova

Region: Chişinău

Key words: Charity, immune system, health workers, COVID-19, honey, tea

Summary:

As a response to the global pandemic, three producers and processor associations of bee and medicinal products provided care packages for medical persons working on the frontline in the fight against COVID-19.

THE STORY:

On 18th March 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Republic of Moldova declared a state of emergency for a period of 60 days. We believe the health of the nation should not only fall into the hands of our doctors or government – it is the duty of each and every citizen, in a crisis situation such as the one we are facing now, to do everything possible to help save humanity. The doctors are our troops in the front line. We simply couldn't turn a blind eye to this situation, our responsibility towards our country simply didn't let us.

“... The health of the nation should not only fall into the hands of our doctors or government – it is the duty of each and every citizen, in a crisis situation such as the one we are facing now, to do everything possible to help save humanity.”

We are three associations from the agro sector: AROMEDA (The Association of Medicinal, Aromatic and Tea Plant Producers of the Republic of Moldova), APIS Codru (The Association of Beekeepers from Calarasi district) and APIS Melifera (The Association of Beekeepers from the Republic of Moldova). In the past we have participated at different meetings and activities organised by Proentranse within the BOND project. We decided to join forces again this time with our own initiative: to provide health packages consisting of teas, honey and hetero-oils for doctors and health workers working at hospitals in the Chisinau municipality. We asked our colleagues to join this charitable common action to support the medical personnel directly involved in the fight against COVID-19 because the fate of the entire nation depends on the condition of the doctors. Our health packages are designed to strengthen the immune systems of the medical workers.

“We decided to join forces again this time with our own initiative”



THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ORCHARD PROJECT

Country: Republic of Moldova

Region: Chişinău

Key words: Eatable city, sustainable future, resilient ecosystem, vibrant communities

Summary:

Urban communities planting fruitful trees and bushes in public spaces for the common good.

THE STORY:

I moved from my birth town in Cimislia to Chisinau six years ago to study anthropology at the State University, and last year I became very curious about how cities can transform themselves to cope with the growing climatic crisis – about how the municipality, the civil society and other actors might work together for resilience particularly food resilience: how the city can produce at least part of its own food and cooperate with nearby farmers so it isn't totally dependent on global supply chains. I was frustrated because there was no public discussion about it in my country. Chisinau isn't really liveable – 70% of the constructed infrastructure hasn't been renovated since the Soviet period and everything since 1991 was built without any thought to infrastructure or ecosystems. You don't feel like going out for a walk. All our public spaces are copy-pasted structures. With only copy-pasted public space, the interactions between people are also somehow copy-pasted. They don't encourage creativity. We now have several islands of skyscrapers that are enclosed on themselves like urban ghettos, generating traffic and not connected to the social and cultural functions of the city. I want it to be a liveable city, an eatable city. Eatable places in our public gardens could contribute to social cohesion, so, in October 2019, our organisation 'Active Communities for Participatory Democracy in the City' together with 'Seed It Forward' launched a fruitful tree campaign in the city.

“All our public spaces are copy-pasted structures. With only copy-pasted public space, the interactions between people are also somehow copy-pasted. They don't encourage creativity.”

In 2018 I received a small research and development grant from the European Cultural Foundation for the research project 'Urban food resilience: models of interventions in Posta Veche'. The grant had a small amount of money for launching the study.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/the-neighbourhood-orchard-project/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Comunitati Active pentru Democratie Participativa: <https://cadp.md/www.facebook.com/ComunitatiActive/> - Seed it Forward: <http://seeditforward.org/ro/www.facebook.com/seeditforward/>
 The study "Urban food resilience: models of interventions in Posta Veche": - www.platzforma.md/arhive/387949
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VERIFRUCT BUSINESS COOPERATIVE

Country: Republic of Moldova

Region: Hâncești

Key words: Apples, plums, cooperative, value chains

Summary:

A seven-year-old fruit and arable cooperative finding ways to overcome various challenges including those posed by COVID-19.

THE STORY:

In 2013 we joined four other peasant households to form a cooperative, C. I. Verifrukt. Together we manage 121 hectares of agricultural land around the city Hâncești: 68 hectares of apple and plum orchards and 50 hectares of arable land. (Three hectares are secondary roads.)

In the agricultural year 2020-2021, the Spring works started in February, a month earlier than usual. It had been a warm winter, so the vegetation period came much earlier. We cut the dried trees and collected branches for chopping. It was 15th March. We had finished cutting the branches, when the COVID-19 pandemic meant that a quarantine status was decreed in the Hâncești district.

“We had finished cutting the branches, when the COVID-19 pandemic meant that a quarantine status was decreed in the Hâncești district.”

This brought a new challenge for the group of fruit producers and for the whole economy, as we expect disruptions in the activity and the commercialisation of fruits (a decrease in consumption and difficulties in sales).

As a result of this quarantine it was impossible to mobilise workers to complete all the Spring works we needed to do. A decisive role was provided by the founding members of the cooperative: through collective actions we mobilised the efforts of our family members to carry out all the works and to prepare the orchard for the flowering period.

“A decisive role was provided by the founding members of the cooperative”

Insufficient moisture at the beginning of this year in the Republic of Moldova, including the Hâncești area, has meant a yellow drought code. A success of the Verifrukt Cooperative under these difficult conditions is the implementation of conservative agriculture for the entire orchard area. By using a permanent soil cover of vegetable debris, we've reduced the direct impact of raindrops, thus reducing soil erosion. It stops a crust forming on the surface and prevents the appearance of weeds.



CHARMING LOAF

Country: Romania

Region: Hunedoara

Key words: Sour dough, wild yeast, traditional

Summary:

An artisan baker of sourdough breads and pastries. I have explored different types of collective action with varying degrees of success.

THE STORY:

I started baking ten years ago as a challenge to myself. It seemed everybody was cooking, but very few were baking. I made my first bread with yeast, but from searching on the internet I discovered sourdough – or wild yeast, and fermented fruit to use as a raising agent instead. In 2010 I went to a small village in France and to volunteer with an English baker – baking 100kg of bread per day three days a week. There was no mixer, it was done entirely by hand and cooked in a wood-fired oven as it would have been hundreds of years ago. I came home with the idea to do the same thing in rural Romania. My wife and I bought two acres of land and lived in a caravan for three months with our two young children while the ruin of a house was repaired. Thankfully it was not a cold winter that year! In 2012 I became the first producer of a new collective project called ‘The Peasants Box’ delivering my breads to households in Cluj every Friday for four years. Alongside I started workshops to teach others how to bake bread or pizza. I felt it worked better for me to teach people how to bake their own bread rather than me baking it and delivering it for them.

I also use a small part of my land for multiplying the ancient seeds of wheat and rye from all over the world.

I have a connection with Eco Ruralis since we moved to the countryside. In 2016 they hosted the Nyeleni Forum Summer Camp. We baked for 800 people in four days, using our methods. Events like this where people can taste my breads, are very useful. My main helper for this event was from Wales. He has since set up his own bakery. We also exchange seeds with each other. Basically, whoever I meet I try and exchange a handful of seeds with them!

We do a lot of workshops locally in the summer because where we live: Rau Alb at the base of the Retezat mountains, is a tourist area. In the autumn and spring, I train people and even other bakeries in other cities in Romania.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/charming-loaf-turtita-fermecata/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: <https://youtu.be/27GTgTeyWNo> - <http://turtitafermecata.blogspot.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010975871688> - <https://www.facebook.com/herrbrownie/>
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THE PEASANT'S BOX

Country: Romania

Region: Cluj

Key words: Peasant, food, local, village-city relationship

Summary:

A CSA project creating a direct relationship between local peasant producers and people in the city through a delivered food box scheme.

THE STORY:

Ronen Hirsch; an Israeli in Romania, noticed all the beautiful produce in the peasants' gardens, but that the people in the cities were not in touch with them. In 2012 following a meeting with Eco Ruralis, he was walking his dogs when he met one of his neighbours who was a peasant producer. They sat down together to discuss how they could get the produce to the city. The peasant didn't believe it would work but was prepared to try. When they launched the first box, all the places were taken up in two days. They couldn't believe it. Some years later after the peasants had grown confident in the resilience of their relationship with their members, they made a brave decision to leave the physical market.

“The peasant didn't believe it would work but was prepared to try”

There are now 26 peasant producers in Cutia Taranului. We not only serve Cluj, but other cities. Members can agree to have boxes delivered weekly, fortnightly, monthly or even every six weeks. Their commitment is to be there when the box is delivered to pay for it then. In Cluj we have a waiting list of a hundred families wanting a Peasant Box, but we don't have enough producers yet to supply them all. When a new peasant producer joins Cutia Taranului we first offer their box to our existing members (if the produce is different from what they already receive) then we offer it to those on the waiting list. Then we go to the Facebook page. Peasants are paid on delivery. They receive all the money.

Initially we (as coordinators) reach out to potential members (customers), but ultimately this is about a direct relationship with the grower and the family they deliver to.

“Relationship is the basis of our project.”

Relationship is the basis of our project. The first relationship is between us as organisers and the producers – we work with them to produce relevant and valuable boxes and help them appreciate the value of what they are producing. This takes a lot of communication and collaboration, but it is very important.



FARMERS ASSOCIATION SUBOTICA

Country: Serbia

Region: Subotica

Key words: Peasant farmers, flower festival, association

Summary:

A peasant association of Subotica working within the province of Vojvodina in Northern Serbia. We have been going 30 years while all the other associations have gone. We take the interests of the peasants to those in power. Our role is advocacy.

THE STORY:

In 1989 there was a transition from a communist to a democratic regime which meant a change to the associations. Under Milosevic, most of the basic unions of peasants were destroyed but although we were no longer a formally registered group, our association in Subotica continued to work through the nineties. Essentially, we were illegal.

“...although we were no longer a formally registered group, our association in Subotica continued to work through the nineties. Essentially, we were illegal.”

After the bombing in 2000 we reregistered our organisation. In 2001 we put on some conferences, meetings and workshops with peasants. In 2003 we organised our biggest action, which was a protest for peasant rights. Demonstrating and rebelling and blocking the roads involved the whole country and lasted for two months. We initiated it but peasant farmers throughout Serbia got behind it. It was successful, and after this, I started a new line: education. Peasants always have fewer opportunities. They need support constantly so in 2004 we formed an agro-information centre and small associated centres around the north of Vojvodina to help farmers with their legal forms and paperwork. We published books and studies and helped explain the legislations of the European Union and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Perhaps most importantly we were part of the local and regional politics during the government process of land-sharing among the peasant farmers.

We started a programme for small-scale stock breeders. It's a quality management system mainly for pigs and cattle. We did this for eight years. There were six full time employees without any governmental support. We had around 4200 members paying ten euros per year, so we were able to fund it entirely with member fees.

We then started and managed a rural development programme supported by EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and the World Bank. We continued to have a lot of smaller programmes financed by member fees. Our members include gardeners, arable farmers, stock breeders and flower growers.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/farmers-association-subotica/
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ECOLLAURES PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM

Country: Spain

Region: Valencia

Key words: Guarantee, Trust Group management, Local market, consumption, agroecology

Summary:

Quality guarantee systems that operate locally. Producers are certified based on the active participation of actors and are built on trust, social networking, and knowledge sharing.

THE STORY:

As a group of organic farmers, Ecollaures was born in 2009. Initially we united with the intention of sharing products, agreeing on common prices, and mutually supporting each other – betting on collaboration rather than competition.

“Initially we united with the intention of sharing products, agreeing on common prices, and mutually supporting each other – betting on collaboration rather than competition.”

After The Food Sovereignty Platform in 2011 and learning about examples of PGS (Participatory Guarantee System) in Andalusia, a group emerged motivated to build something similar in Valencia. Coming from a sensitised and politicised group, the agro-ecological and holistic component of the PGS-Ecollaures was to be expected.

“Coming from a sensitised and politicised group, the agro-ecological and holistic component of the PGS-Ecollaures was to be expected.”

Initially we connected with experts and other PGS collectives, who advised us on operating protocols and criteria that we could adapt to our needs. Next with other people who helped us in matters of facilitation and internal relations, at the same time we connected with new channels of supply and administrations in order to have recognition and visibility in our territory.

Some of the members of the Ecollaures collective, with other non-members, joined in an initiative where the producers themselves organise, visit and collectively credit the quality of their products. This initiative has been around for a while, but the incorporation and participation of consumers in the process and, more specifically, the existing organised consumer groups in Valencia, was something new. It's an important addition because it provides greater transparency and seriousness to the certification mechanism. It has increased the quality of the associated profiles, with the incorporation of social organisations and NGOs related to Food Sovereignty, sustainability and justice in food matters.



FEEDING CORDOBA IN COVID-19

Country: Spain

Region: Andalusia

Key words: Agroecology, Local supply chains, Food aid, Peasants, Multi-actor networks, Activist research, Food sovereignty

Summary:

The sanitary crisis due to COVID-19 is affecting local peasants (places to sell are closed, short food supply chains are at stake), and socially excluded families. Through a collective process we have organised a home distribution system of local food from agroecological peasants, and a solidarity fund from consumers' donations to provide local agroecological food aid to families.

THE STORY:

As a result of the pandemic lockdown, places where local peasants typically sold their produce closed, putting their livelihoods and short food supply chains at stake. It also made it harder for socially excluded families to access food. Although these concerns and some collaboration already existed, this crisis led us to a more concrete system in mid-March 2020.

“Leaning on our long-term relationships, long-term networking work and support and long-term facilitation processes towards collective organisation of local agri-food system, we were able, very quickly to set up a network system”

Leaning on our long-term relationships, long-term networking work and support and long-term facilitation processes towards collective organisation of local agri-food system, we were able, very quickly to set up a network system based on the active collaboration of all partners, assuming weekly tasks such as food supply updating; food offer communication; order collection; order organisation by consumer and by peasant/processor; baskets organisation; distribution; solidarity fund management; solidarity basket organisation and distribution. All has been organised with strong support of virtual tools based on open software.

The groups involved are: Agroecological peasants network Alimentando Cordoba, Ecomercado (an association of peasants that develop a local peasants' market), social market La Tejedora, Ecocórdoba (an articulation of local organic retailers), other local farmers and local food processors, food aid social and solidarity initiatives around schools located in socially excluded areas in the city and a local distribution cooperative.

There have been challenges: the speed needed to give answer to the urgent situations, to agree with different actors about the strategy, the governance and the commitment. We have a shared vision about the need for collective action and a real need coming from an unknown crisis that unites us.

“When real needs arise, people give their best to support collective initiatives. But these are not spontaneous processes”



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/feeding-cordoba-in-covid-19-alimentando-cordoba-covid-19/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Website: www.osala-agroecologia.org/category/noticias/

twitter: [@AlimentandoCor](https://twitter.com/AlimentandoCor) - instagram: www.instagram.com/alimentandocordoba/

facebook: www.facebook.com/alimentandocordoba - telegram channel: <https://t.me/alimentandocordoba>

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Summary:

A Platform that brings organisation to the producers, distributors and consumers of food, to give them a voice and a measure of control in the food system rather than it being done entirely by the corporations and market institutions.

THE STORY:

At the Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali in February 2007, Spain was one of more than 80 countries that adopted the Declaration of Nyéléni, which ‘puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations’. Following the Forum, regions of Spain began to work in this line, attempting to bring co-ordination at a local level.

“We began with a meeting to find out who we are and shared our desires to create something wonderful.”

We began with a meeting to find out who we are and shared our desires to create something wonderful. The Food Sovereignty Platform, Valencia, was the result.

Our new Platform organised fairs and an annual meeting and made links with local governmental administration.

Certain regions, such as Catalonia, already had strong organisation, but for Valencia, working together like this was relatively new. This made us work hard. As we had little in place already, we could start from the beginning. We all had a shared belief in Food Sovereignty: a movement growing from the bottom up, empowering the farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples and those that work the land but don’t own it. Those most impacted by global hunger and poverty: a movement where distribution and consumption are based on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Five years ago, there was a policy change. This saw some of the people who had been working inside the platform move to working inside the local administration instead or, at least, start a new work supporting local administration’s proposals. Initially this was a real benefit as they were able to exert more of an influence over policy.

The power balance has definitely shifted from our Platform to the local government. They hold more resources and have taken on much of what we were doing, which leaves us less able to influence, but I’m confident that as a result of our Food Sovereignty Platform Valencia’s rural farmers and ecology are in a much better position than they would otherwise have been.



LAND BANKS

Country: Spain

Region: Valencia Province

Key words: Farmland, Land Bank, agriculture, land abandonment

Summary:

The creation of a municipal administrated website that connects landowners and those interested in land cultivation in Valencia county and supports the development of contracts between them.

THE STORY:

Aging farmers and a decrease in new farmers has led to agricultural land in Valencia Country being abandoned, leaving it at risk of fire, environmental degradation or pest proliferation. In 2015 The Department of the Environment of the Provincial Council piloted Land Banks in three municipalities, not only to protect against abandonment, but generate a positive impact in the environmental, economic and social spheres. The Land Bank website displays available land, and the needs and desires of both the owner and the potential tenant are considered for compatibility – much like a dating site! Once matched, it is up to the owner and tenant to develop a contract, which might include a profit share, produce share, rental payment, or simply a goodwill gesture from the tenant to the owner.

“The Land Bank website displays available land, and the needs and desires of both the owner and the potential tenant are considered for compatibility – much like a dating site!”

To start with The Department of the Environment sent a letter to all the mayors of the municipalities of the province of Valencia about the help that could be provided by the Diputación de Valencia.

The Diputación de Valencia provided the City Councils of the Valencia province, among others, printed brochures and personalised information posters about the Land Bank.

We designed a computer platform for landowners and potential tenants to register their interest and provided technical assistance and training to municipalities on Land Banks and the web platform. A working group was set up of the different municipalities that wanted to participate, dealing with the various issues related to the development of the Land Bank programme.

We organised a day on the Land Banks in the province of Valencia and we publicised Land Banks in the province of Valencia in different local, regional and state forums. For example, a presentation of technical communications in the National Congress of the Environment (CONAMA).



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/land-banks/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: <http://bancdeterras.dival.es/>

<http://webs.lapobladevallbona.es/bancdeterras/> - www.dival.es/medio-ambiente/content/portada-bancs-de-terres

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Summary:

A five-year strategy to protect and promote a sustainable local food system that uses seasonal, healthy produce, reduces waste and encourages collaboration across all administrations involved in food policy on the island of Menorca.

THE STORY:

Beginning 2015, stakeholders around food met together to give some recommendations to the local government in Menorca. In April 2015, there was a change of government to a centre-left alliance that valued adhering to the Milan Pact, which took place finally in 2017. The purpose of this adhesion was to demonstrate its commitment to developing sustainable, inclusive, resilient, safe and diversified food systems to ensure healthy and accessible nutrition for society.

“...an opportunity to link the production and consumption of food into any new policy...”

After this, my society (Justicia Alimentaria) saw an opportunity to link the production and consumption of food into any new policy that ended up resulting in the food strategy of Menorca and an important action in it was the realisation a diagnostic study of ‘the Production Potential and Food Flows on the island of Menorca’.

We led a democratic and participatory process with the government, asking for stakeholders. Our diagnostic involved not only the Island Council but also the eight municipalities in Menorca as well as private sector stakeholders.

Based on our diagnostic, we developed a food strategy. The different actors agreed to meet once per year, to reflect on the previous year and to plan for the next one. They worked with food buyers in nursery schools and the private sector, so for example the private sector has taken the initiative to market (and even use in its business) products from Menorca. One action that stands out is the creation of the Menorca Biosphere Reserve label, which is still in use today. We trained different levels within the municipalities so they could understand the key points of this food strategy in order to implement it. We also tried to raise social awareness about the importance of local food systems.

“It was a good time politically. The new government were ready to do something new...”

It was a good time politically. The new government were ready to do something new and of the three Balearic Islands, Menorca has always given priority to protecting the rural areas from tourism.



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LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/menorcas-food-strategy/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.islandbiosphere.org/contingut.aspx?idpub=1035 - <https://justicialimentaria.org/www.biosferamenorca.org/Contingut.aspx?IDIOMA=3&idpub=1789> - www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQI1TAGQgBM

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REGULATION FOR PROCESSING & SALE OF LOCAL FARM PRODUCTS

Country: Spain

Region: Valencia Country

Key words: Processing, local, artisan, small-scale, tradition

Summary:

Creating a framework within the regional administrations that allows certain exceptions and flexibility in the regulation of production, processing and sale of food products.

THE STORY:

The Food Sovereignty Platform of the Valencian Country carried out an advocacy campaign to encourage policy makers to include and develop a new regulation framework. The Agrarian administration and the Department of Public Health of the Valencian government eventually agreed and allocated personnel and resources for it. They negotiated with small producers and published a new regulation to enable production and sale through Short Food Supply Chains beginning in the summer of 2015.

Small and local producers were organised within the Platform for Food Sovereignty of the Valencian Country. We held periodic meetings, and had direct contact, organising visits to artisan producers and processors.

Collaboration worked due to the organisation of producers, the political impact and the decision of the political decision makers.

The most difficult thing was finding and validating small-scale production and processing methods that ensure food safety.

“We learned that coordination and availability of small-scale producers is complicated...”

We learned that coordination and availability of small-scale producers is complicated, but worth it. Small-scale producers and processors will be able to maintain traditional productions. Selling over shorter distances improves the economic viability of their projects and generates less environmental impact. They can afford to stay in the rural area.



Photo credit: Engin Akyurt of Pexels

LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/regulation-for-processing-and-sale/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.dogv.gva.es/porta/ficha_disposicion.jsp?L=1&sig=001766%2F2018
www.dogv.gva.es/porta/ficha_disposicion.jsp?L=1&sig=001826%2F2018
CONTACT DETAILS: Carmen Chinillach Andreu - chinillachandreu@gmail.com



Summary:

The creation of a menu within the public food sector for a tasty and healthy diet that the earth can sustainably produce. Using a holistic approach to the food system of a particular location, meals are cooked mainly from raw organic ingredients sourced from ecological regenerative agriculture. Most of the food is seasonal and locally sourced and very little is processed. The menus typically feature highly nutritious vegetables, wholegrain and legumes, and fewer animal products. Another aspect is reducing waste within food production, especially wholesale – for example using meat from formally egg-laying hens

THE STORY:

The Baltic Sea is one of the most polluted in the world, mainly from phosphorus and nitrogen deposits leaking into connecting waterways from agricultural use of pesticides and fertilisers. Sweden also imports a lot of anonymous meat and other food. When it comes to our national food supply, we are very vulnerable. In 2001 a Green Party majority in Södertälje Municipality formulated some food goals to reduce pollution and improve sustainability in the public food sector. Initially they set a goal for all milk potatoes bread and eggs to be organic. The municipality also allocated a budget for a new Diet Unit that could devise a regional food policy focusing on nutrition, sustainability and quality. I became head of the Diet Unit in 2004 and oversaw this document.

“I collaborated with the politicians asking what we can do with existing resources. I made suggestions: some they liked, some they didn’t! Some ideas we created and developed together.”

Since then I collaborated with the politicians asking what we can do with existing resources. I made suggestions: some they liked, some they didn’t! Some ideas we created and developed together. Over the years we have come up with a number of activities connected to how we can support sustainable food production and consumption. I spent three years putting together a policy document they were happy with.

Once the policy was accepted, we educated the catering staff in the various canteens and restored a lot of kitchens.

We brought the organisation of all the meals under one roof. This gave me control over the purchase and quality of food production.

I worked with local food producers, with the staff of the various public catering units and I worked closely with the Environmental office that regulate hygiene in kitchens. They advised me what improvements were necessary to make kitchens fit to produce safe food.

Copenhagen helped us create a concept of Diet for a Green Planet specifically for our municipality, and we worked closely with them for a time.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/diet-for-a-green-planet/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: <https://dietforagreenplanet.se/en/> - www.matlust.eu

Facebook: projektMatLust - Instagram: projektMatLust

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COUNTRY-SHOP COOPERATION

Country: The Netherlands

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Farmers' cooperative, collective marketing model, short supply chains, regional products

Summary:

A cooperative of farm shops: 87 dairy and fruit farmers and 2 garden centres focusing on purchase and sale of farm-products for the members, logistics and promotional support.

THE STORY:

The Country-shop is a cooperative of 89 farm shops: 87 of farmers (esp. dairy farmers [$\pm 40\%$ of the members] and fruit growers [$\pm 55\%$ of the members]) and 2 of garden centres. The main activities are: purchase and sale of farm-products for the members, logistics (from and to the country shops through its own distribution centre) and promotional support. It is a cooperative franchise organisation where the owners (the participating country shops) are also the buyers. The products mainly are produced (and processed) by the affiliated farmers (particularly cheese, processed fruits and juices); in addition, some products are purchased elsewhere.

“The advantage and strength are in the short chain.”

The advantage and strength are in the short chain. Because it is a little organisation (compared to e.g. supermarket chains), the margins must be higher than in these chains. The margin for the cooperative is between 15 and 20 % (we keep this margin as low as possible) and in the farm shops it is $\pm 35\%$ (much higher than in supermarkets). The target for country shops is to have at least ± 300 customers per week (because of logistic efficiency) and must meet certain quality standards. The initial investment for a new country shop is $\pm \text{€}75,000$ (for farmers with an already existing shop this investment can be lower). Many country shops combine farming and the shop with other activities such as catering or care. The trade turnover of the cooperation is $\pm \text{€}5$ million; the consumer turnover in the shops is $\pm \text{€}25 - \text{€}30$ million.

The following mission has been formulated: the Country shop cooperation wants to improve the quality of life in the countryside by offering a wide range of traditional farm and regional products, and creating citizen involvement in the landscape, farm and its products. The Country Shop cooperative also strives for cooperation with consumer and social organisations.





FEDERATION OF AGROECOLOGICAL FARMERS

Country: The Netherlands

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Federation, permaculture, agroecology

Summary:

A federation of groups of agroecological and permaculture farmers who didn't feel represented by existing farmers' unions in agricultural debates in the Netherlands.

THE STORY:

I'm from the city so as a child I didn't really have a link to farming. I liked being outside in nature and when I was 8 or 9, I used to do a little gardening at a friend's house or when my family visited the countryside at the weekend.

As a young adult living in Amsterdam, surrounded by pavements, I experimented with vertical gardening on my balcony. Tomatoes mostly.

“Being an environmental and social issues activist you're often against stuff so it was great to do something positive – and to show it can be fun”

After a local school was demolished, building plans got stuck, and the area turned into the neighbourhood garbage belt, myself and some others tidied up the space and started to use it as a community garden. Being an environmental and social issues activist you're often against stuff so it was great to do something positive – and to show it can be fun. Transition is a movement helping people make a positive difference in their communities wherever they might be.

“When you start looking into climate change and environmental problems you soon arrive at agriculture: it is one of the first sectors to suffer from climate change but it's also one of the main ones causing it.”

When you start looking into climate change and environmental problems you soon arrive at agriculture: it is one of the first sectors to suffer from climate change but it's also one of the main ones causing it. Working in the community garden I got interested in permaculture – it seemed like a possible solution for the problems we encounter in agriculture. But it's one thing presenting permaculture as a solution and another actually doing it, so I felt challenged to put my money where my mouth is and actually try to show it as a solution because at that time there weren't any permaculture farms in the Netherlands.

So, I took some permaculture courses and enrolled in agricultural school for two years.



photo credit: Liza Zewuster

LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/federation-of-agroecological-farmers/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.federatieagroecologischeboeren.nl/ - <http://devoedselketen.nl>

CONTACT DETAILS: Alex Schreiner - tuinderij@devoedselketen.nl

NORTHERN FRIESIAN WOODLANDS ASSOCIATION (NFW)

Country: The Netherlands

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Dairy farms, farmer association, bottom-up

Summary:

A dairy farmer association in the Friesland province of the Netherlands comprising of 800 members. The association holds a single contract with the government and many smaller contracts with each individual member farmer. It undertakes scientific research and offers various support to benefit its members, the environment and landscape.

THE STORY:

In the early nineties, following growing concerns around groundwater pollution and acid rain, The Hague imposed new regulations on farmers to protect the landscape and reduce emissions of ammonia and nitrogen. These regulations posed a serious threat to small peasant farms. Injecting manure into the soil instead of spreading it on top would not only bring an increased cost, but more importantly, some farmers suspected the heavy machines necessary would have a detrimental effect on the condition of the soil and the quality of groundwater. In 1992 four men in the northern part of Friesland came together to fight for their farms and their way of life. They were Fokke Benedictus, Pieter de Jong, Geale Atsma and Taeke Hoeksma.

Their message to The Hague was ‘we want to take care of the environment – you have to help us.’ As farmers they wanted to look after the landscape as much as anyone, but they realised that to convince the government, they needed to understand the environmental issues better. They reached out to stakeholders specialising in soil, water, nature, landscape, biodiversity and food so they could present a viable, well researched proposal to The Hague. When they reached out to other farmers they were initially met with opposition, but over the next four years these men were able to win many farmers round and, in 1996 with a membership of 60, the Northern Friesian Woodlands Association (NFW) took their solution to the government. Because they had the scientific backing from universities and nature organizations the government was willing to make a deal with certain exemptions.

“Although there had been agricultural associations before, the NFW was different.”

Although there had been agricultural associations before, the NFW was different. Where previously each farmer had his or her own contract directly with the government, we were able to have one on behalf of all.





Summary:

A small-scale market garden supplying salads and high value vegetables to the restaurant trade with a mini CSA scheme providing weekly salad bags to about 50 local members.

THE STORY:

I came from a political environmental perspective rather than being into gardening or having land skills. I believe in changing our food system.

I started in 2010 on a very small smallholding with an edible perennial nursery. The plan was not only to sell plants but do edible landscaping around Bristol in schools and parks. As we had some spare land, I began cropping some annual plants and selling them too. Over time the latter became the focus and the former waned. The access to the land was poor and it was the wrong end of town so in 2013 I moved to the current larger site and set up as a market garden.

Initially I visited restaurants and talked to the chefs and a high-end grocer – most of them are really clued up – interested in the farming and agroecology behind the produce.

I've massively benefitted from being a member of the Landworkers' Alliance. Being involved in their different campaigns and actions, I've got to know other people doing horticultural projects and those with various skills in agroecology who can recommend different techniques, books to read, even inviting me to their farms. This has been a very influential social network for me as a grower.

The project received several small grants to help with infrastructure such as putting up polytunnels and building a packing shed that we co-use with Sims Hill (a local permaculture vegetable grower). Once I was supplying around ten friendly local restaurants with salad, I began incorporating a CSA style salad drop directly for households. It makes my economic system more resilient. The restaurant trade has a big spike in the summer followed by a lull in August, which is problematic. They wouldn't support the project when I'm not producing. With the salad drop, members pay monthly for twelve months and receive salad 44 weeks of the year.

The salad drop is mainly to friends and friends of friends. In 2016 I did a talk in Triodos Bank (a big employer of alternative-minded people in Bristol).



FORDHALL FARM

Country: United Kingdom

Region: Market Drayton, North Shropshire

Key words: Market Drayton, North Shropshire

Summary:

A community coming together to save their local organic family farm.

THE STORY:

My family has farmed Fordhall for many generations as tenant farmers. Dad took over the farm in 1929 when his dad died. He was only 14 years old. It was a mixed farm, they used fertilisers on the lands – they didn't know any other way at the time. The soil was very sandy, so each year ploughing caused natural nutrients to be washed out of the soil. They replaced them with chemical fertilisers, but each year, more fertiliser was needed to maintain the yield, and eventually, the crops became weak and the farm began a spiral into debt.

“...each year, more fertiliser was needed to maintain the yield, and eventually, the crops became weak and the farm began a spiral into debt.”

Dad had to find a way out of it. On his side, he was a great observer and lover of the natural world. Every time he walked in the woods, he considered the soil, how it was so full of worms, insects and small animals compared to the land right next door that he was cultivating. This piqued his interest into nutrient cycling – he began researching into the living organisms you can't see that benefit the soil and discovered they do the job of a fertiliser for free!

So, after the second world war, he began farming organically – devoting years to encouraging the life back into the soil again. He turned the 148 acres over to pastureland and focused on dairy. Dad was one of England's first commercial yoghurt producers in the 1950s and continued with this right up until the mid-seventies when there was an increase in sugared yoghurts from other producers. The dairy farm then moved over to beef, which it has been ever since, incorporating a restaurant for visitors to sample the organic produce. The restaurant closed in the mid-nineties when the landowners wanted to sell up which meant forcing our family to leave. Dad resisted this, taking money from the farm to pay for legal expenses. Animal numbers declined and the farm deteriorated. By 2003, after the Foot and Mouth crisis, Fordhall was producing very little, and Dad was worn down.

“...the landowners wanted to sell up which meant forcing our family to leave.”



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/fordhall-farm/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.fordhallfarm.com/

To order the book of the full story: https://shop.fordhallfarm.com/p/The_Fight_for_Fordhall_Farm_signed_Paper_Back/c1ab-2473f3764f8891916eddcfa0f86a/297283d734094369a1b089b270683873/

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Summary:

An organisation that supports communities to grow food in spaces that are lost and unloved within their locality in Bristol.

THE STORY:

The Incredible Edible movement started in West Yorkshire in 2008. There are around 140 groups in the UK, and 600 worldwide. I'd been watching it begin and spread and when I moved to Bristol seven or eight years ago, I had expected Incredible Edible to have already arrived. I must have googled it a million times and it wasn't here. That surprised me: it's a Bristol-type thing. When people think about Bristol, they think about the green capital of the UK, but when you drive into Bristol, it very much isn't like that. It was time Bristol looked like it said it looked.

“When people think about Bristol, they think about the green capital of the UK, but when you drive into Bristol, it very much isn't like that. It was time Bristol looked like it said it looked.”

I'm a horticulturalist by trade. I've run nurseries. I'm a grower and I'm also really keen we make gardening and growing properly inclusive, because I don't think it always is. I could see there was a space for an Incredible Edible project. I connected with a few people who were on the same page as me, so I knew there would be some interest.

“...I wonder what would happen if I asked out on Twitter, if anybody would be interested in a community garden.”

I was really bored one Sunday, and I'd been mulling the idea over and I thought I wonder what would happen if I asked out on Twitter, if anybody would be interested in a community garden. I'm glad I did it on Twitter because I think if I'd done it in real life, I'd have been bowled over by the number of people who responded 'Yes! Do it now!'.
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Incredible Edible has a pattern to follow for new startups. We held a big meeting. I thought no one would come, but it ended up manic: they had to shut the doors because the room was full. Very quickly a steering group came together. This group has always been fluid: the people in the group back then are not the same we see on the steering group today. Not for any other reason than people ebb and flow. What they have in common is they care about system change.



JUBILEE COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY

Country: United Kingdom

Region: Larne, Northern Ireland

Key words: Care farm, asylum seekers, conservation, church

Summary:

A community benefit farm, supported by churches and individuals, offering care farming to vulnerable adults and asylum seekers, vegetable boxes and a pig club, as well as education about environmental and animal welfare issues. It covers two communities: the geographical community of Larne which is people of all backgrounds and beliefs; and the community of interest – churches across Northern Ireland as a whole.

THE STORY:

I had always wanted to be a farmer and a conservationist, but I didn't have a farm. I dipped my fingers into a lot of pies over the years, but I wanted to set up something that mixes both agriculture and environmental and has community aspects as well. I was acutely aware, growing up in the church, that there was very limited focus on environmental issues. And while that may be changing now, there is still a lot of talk, with only a limited number of churches putting it into practice. I wanted to engage Christians with issues around farming and the environment, as well as people of other faiths and no faith.

“I was acutely aware, growing up in the church, that there was very limited focus on environmental issues. And while that may be changing now, there is still a lot of talk, with only a limited number of churches putting it into practice.”

I was studying in Cambridge and was part of a community farm there, when my wife had a relapse of ME. So, we returned home in December 2013. The silver lining in that cloud was I knew by coming back to Northern Ireland the process of realising my grand agricultural vision was going to be set in motion, and from January 2014 I started to formally put flesh on the bones of that idea. All I'd learned from the community farm in Cambridgeshire, both what to do and what not to do, blossomed into a vision document. We started talking to others, having consultation meetings, and by August 2017 we were formally registered as a Community Benefit Society.

“We were left with vision, funding and support but with nowhere to put it.”

We were interested in the Community Benefit Society model particularly because of the community share method of it for raising capital. Originally, we were going to rent a beautiful walled garden with plans to run a café and restore the greenhouses. That fell apart for various reasons and we were left with a vision, some seed funding, lots of interest and support, because we'd done all the consultation based around this site.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/jubilee/
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: www.jubilee.coop/ - www.facebook.com/jubilee.coop/
www.instagram.com/jubilee.coop/ - https://twitter.com/jubilee_coop
CONTACT DETAILS: Jonny Hanson- mail@jubilee.coop



Summary:

A union of farmers, growers, foresters and land-based workers creating a better food and land-use system, building skills and knowledge in agroecology, working for food sovereignty, sustainable forestry and the right to food.

THE STORY:

I started as a new entrant to farming 20 years ago, with no money, little governmental support and lots of barriers. During a working group at a Food Sovereignty gathering in 2012, Adam Payne, myself, and Olly Rodker, realised there wasn't a UK farmer's union that represented the interests of smaller-scale farms, agroecological food perspectives, or the ideas of food sovereignty. Although the existing union had a very broad membership – including smaller farms – it never seemed to represent their interests on a policy level, instead holding positions of pro-GM, technology and export markets. We felt there needed to be an alternative farmers' union representing agroecology with more democracy in the decision making.

It was important for us to be part of Via Campesina – there was no UK branch of that. The three of us wrote introduction to our ideas for a farmers union and emailed it around asking if anyone was interested. Twelve people replied, so we held a meeting, and we needed a board of twelve, so we just elected everybody there! The Landworkers' Alliance (LWA). We started with a few policy positions amongst ourselves and did a demonstration in front of the agriculture department bringing food from local farmers' markets, trying to lure them out of the building and have some fun – we wanted to approach it with a sense of humour. We launched a policy document there. Our perspective started attracting others, so we created a membership and formed a bank account. As we put on gatherings, and via word of mouth, LWA's membership grew.

“At first, you're a little marginal, it takes time to get the policy lobbying work started when you are talking on an equal level to big organisations with policy staff.”

At first, you're a little marginal, it takes time to get the policy lobbying work started when you are talking on an equal level to big organisations with policy staff. Ed Hamer and I were the first policy team and we analysed the policy contexts to figure out where the decision-making was within the agricultural department and which specific politicians to approach.



THE CSA NETWORK

Country: United Kingdom

Region: Countrywide

Key words: Community, CSA, agroecology

Summary:

We link up the 75 member CSAs across the UK, providing mentoring, training, awareness-raising, and representing them to policy makers, and support new CSAs start up.

THE STORY:

The first UK CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture farms) formed in the early 2000s in an effort to bring back the link between the farmer and the community they were feeding. In 2012 The Soil Association ran a program – Making Local Food Work – which was instrumental in sharing stories and skills. There followed an upsurge of CSAs. These small associations didn't feel supported by the larger agricultural system, and it became clear they needed to come together to support each other.

“These small associations didn't feel supported by the larger agricultural system, and it became clear they needed to come together to support each other.”

In December 2013, a group of CSAs wrote a charter to agree the goals of cooperatives and legally went through the process of registering as a cooperative. Originally it was envisioned small networks of CSAs would have regional hubs and the local network would eventually be self-sustaining. Each hub would host an annual event and act as a learning place for that region. But in the first couple of years it was hard to get any of those CSAs to work as that hub. For this reason, the network has continued to function as a national organisation with a paid coordinator working 2 days a week and in 2018 a second staff member was brought on for another 2 days a week.

A network member pays a tiered yearly fee – £25 if you have fewer than 50 members in your CSA, £50 for 50-100 members, £100 for over 100 members. In return we provide training and support including one-day mentoring for existing CSAs or for an individual exploring whether to set up a new one. Our regional events are free to members – there is usually a small fee for non-members. Members can get discounts for certain agricultural suppliers.

Some CSA connections were already there when the national network began. We represent CSAs at farming events and spread the word about CSAs via social media, farming networks and elsewhere.



LINK TO THE FULL STORY ON THE BOND WEB: www.bondproject.eu/the-csa-network/

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: <https://communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk> - <https://urgenci.net> - www.sustainweb.org
www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=XDy4gt-mR8U&feature=emb_logo

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