



*Local and Solidarity-
Based Partnerships for
Agroecology (LSPA)*

AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN



URGENCI

BE PART OF LSPA!

*Training Supporting booklet for
Local and Solidarity -based
Partnerships for Agroecology*

This booklet has been edited and tailored by farmers, food activists, organizers of farmers' markets, agronomists, agroecologists, permaculture trainers, Food Sovereignty activists, civil society actors from 15 different countries of the Mediterranean Basin. Contributors are from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Bosnia, Croatia, Italy, France and Spain. Over and above the current extraordinary social and economic challenges, Mediterranean Sea Basin societies are all confronted by the realities of climate change and increased food insecurity, and are facing situations of extreme vulnerability. At the very moment when we are confronted by these shared issues, and in need of greater exchange, resource sharing and mutual support, the borders are closing, and the Mediterranean Basin is becoming a space of division, haunted by hundreds of thousands of refugees.

The editors, as committed grassroots civil society actors and members of civil society share the vision of the Mediterranean as a space that brings peoples together. They are working on a daily basis to craft new solutions based on food sovereignty and solidarity economy on all its shores, in all their respective communities,. Caring for and nourishing the Earth, and the humans it feeds lies at the heart of their concerns. They continue to demonstrate on a daily basis that agroecology, implemented by family farmers and supported by committed consumers provides more effective answers to the environmental challenges than those promoted by agribusiness.

The initiatives presented here contribute to strengthening peasant agriculture, its capacity to

feed cities, to recreating social cohesion both by linking rural to urban areas and at urban level, and to restoring farmers' dignity throughout the whole Mediterranean region.

In order to achieve this goal, best practices need to be disseminated. Exchanging field practices and knowledge is key to all those who are mobilizing, in all their diversity, to preserve peasant agriculture and build sustainable food systems.

LSPA initiatives are blossoming around the Mediterranean Basin. Based on the data collected in 16 different countries around the Mediterranean Basin, there were at least 2300 LSPA groups in 2016, involving nearly 500,000 consumers and 3,700 farms. But this total includes 2,000 groups, 440,000 consumers and 3,000 farms located in Italy. On the "Southern shore", we have thus far identified only 24 initiatives, supported by a total of 2,020 consumers and working with at least 25 farms¹. URGENCI and its partners promote LSPA as a cross-border and context-sensitive concept rather than a one-size-fits-all model. Several learning journeys and experience-sharing meetings have taken place in the region since March 2016. The first event was the mapping meeting organized in Marseilles. It was important as it contributed to creating trust and mutual exchange within the Mediterranean LSPA community. The current priority is to strengthen

the movement. If many strands can be connected to make the Mediterranean LSPA community grow stronger, then it is clear to us that training is a core issue.

This acknowledgement was the starting point of the "Building a Common Training Framework for the LSPA around the Mediterranean" -project, which aims to facilitate the spread of LSPA initiatives throughout this region of the world by providing knowledge, skills and competences to local communities, and disseminating the outcomes around the Mediterranean Basin.

These project partners jointly decided to develop an innovative Mediterranean training programme. The topics they have explored are based on an agreed needs assessment that was conducted during the workshops as well as through an online questionnaire completed by network representatives in February, March and April 2018. The shared conclusion was that a joint training frame should be designed for the spread and development of LSPAs. Partners could then implement this in their own countries, adapting it to their specific contexts and needs.

Rather than designing a totally new training programme and writing new training support documents, the group agreed to edit and adapt existing materials to the Mediterranean context. The materials produced in the Be Part of CSA! project have been used as the

working basis, albeit with some additions. Chapters on Agroecology and on the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) were specifically created for the Mediterranean edition. Case studies have also been added to reflect the reality of Mediterranean conditions.

The booklet you are now reading is the main support for the training programme; it summarises the basic learning outlined in the 4 modules. It is accompanied by case studies from the partner countries. It is the result of collaborative work and reflects the specificity of the partner countries. We are strongly convinced that the flexibility of LSPA allows for many inventive and meaningful combinations, building sustainable local food systems and communities and constructive alliances that strengthen social cohesion and bring together aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals. Transposing LSPA to other cultures, other landscapes and mentalities and other contexts where

the movement differs in scale and available resources is a certainly a challenge, but it is one we are happy to take up.

LSPA models have certain core principles based on agroecological practices. It is largely a learning process, highly adaptable to local constraints and group specificities.

The Mediterranean LSPA network members believe that a learning process is also a community-building process; their role is therefore to facilitate cross-fertilisation within the partnerships they develop. Some have been working together with farmers and local communities on building LSPA schemes for several years now. They know how friendly relationships are strong (truly organic) fertilisers for sound community projects. They would like to continue with this approach and increasingly involve adult learners in the development, testing and dissemination of the common training



programme.

*May LSPA flourish around the Mediterranean Sea!
Agroecology now!*

Training module 1: What is a LSPA?

Training Module 2: Creating a LSPA

Training module 3: Fundamentals of Agroecology
Defined by the Mediterranean LSPA Network

Training Module 4: Participatory Guarantee
Systems for LSPA

We hope you'll find it useful, practical, adequately illustrated with motivating stories, best practices and easy-to-use templates.

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INTRODUCTION

Local and Solidarity-based Partnerships for Agroecology are based on direct relationships between consumers and producers. They enable consumers to have direct access to locally produced, healthy, often organically certified food. These partnerships also aim to help producers to make a decent dignified living, sustain themselves and their families and care for the landscapes, preserve the quality of their produce.

CSA, Community Supported Agriculture, is one of the most clearly models of LSPA. CSA is a partnership between local producers and consumers in which the responsibilities, risks and rewards of farming are shared. The CSA model has been independently developed and implemented by active citizens who have committed to local farms in many countries. CSA and other LSPA models (including some farmers' markets and food co-ops) provide access to markets for family farmers, and have already proved to be effective in creating interesting and motivating conditions for new opportunities in rural areas, in close connection with local communities. This booklet sums up and shares the basics and essential knowledge for those who would like to start their own LSPA scheme. The first chapters familiarise readers with the principles and background of LSPA values, scheme, how

to develop and practical aspects. The booklet's focus then moves on to the first steps of starting a local partnership. It continues by explaining how existing initiatives can grow stronger through communication, community-building and experience-sharing field visits. The final section approaches Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) as a way to provide the partnerships with an even more solid base.

So let's set out on an inspiring journey through the Mediterranean world of LSPA!





PART 1

*What is a Local and
Solidarity-based Partnership
for Agroecology
(LSPA)*



1.1. LSPA BASICS

REMINDER

Local Solidarity-based Partnerships for Agroecology are based on direct relationships between consumers and producers. They allow consumers access to fresh healthy, agroecologically grown produce. These partnerships help farmers to care for the environment, preserve the quality of their products and make a decent livelihood from their work. Community Supported Agriculture is one form of LSPA; it is characterised by direct, contractualised sales. Participatory Guarantee Systems is another (see below), as are certain other kinds of short food circuits.

Community Supported Agriculture takes the form of direct partnerships between local producers and consumers. It involves sharing both risks and benefits that are inherent to the activity. CSA is part of the wider family of LSPAs.

PGS (Participatory Guarantee Systems): *“These are quality insurance systems that are locally centred. They certify the producers on the basis of active participation that is the basis for trust and networks.”* (IFOAM).

1.1.1. LSPA origins

The term Local and Solidarity-based Partnerships for Agroecology (LSPA) is derived from a term that was coined by the participants of URGENCI’s early international symposia that were held between 2004 and 2008: Local and Solidarity-based Partnerships between Producers and Consumers.

Teikei was defined by the Japanese Organic Agriculture Association as follows: “An idea to create an alternative distribution system that does not depend on the conventional market. Though forms of Teikei vary, it is basically a direct distribution system. To practice Teikei, the producer(s) and the consumer(s) have talks and contacts to deepen their mutual understanding: both of them provide labour and capital to support their own delivery system. Teikei is not only a practical idea but also a dynamic philosophy to make people think of a better way of life either as a producer or as a consumer through their interaction”³.

This was initially a way to describe the diversity and creativity of a movement centred on Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA). The centrality of CSA in the LSPA movement is important, and this is why we have outlined its origins in the following paragraph.

The concept of CSA originates in Japan. In 1971, Teruo Ichiraku (1906–1994), a philosopher and the leader of agricultural cooperatives, alerted consumers to the dangers of the chemicals used in agriculture.

He founded the Japanese organic farming movement. Three years later, housewives concerned with food quality, joined organic farmers to form the first farmer–consumer agreement, considered the only way to provide safe food – consumers were sure who, how and where their food is produced. These agreements are called Teikei in Japan - which means “*cooperation*” in Japanese².

ACCORDING TO URGENCI ESTIMATES THERE WERE 4.792 CSA GROUPS OPERATING IN EUROPE IN 2015, PRODUCING FOOD FOR ALMOST ONE MILLION (969.255) EATERS. IT IS ACTUALLY IN THE EUROPEAN PART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN, ESPECIALLY IN ITALY, AND IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN REGIONS OF FRANCE, THAT THE MOVEMENT APPEARS TO BE STRONGEST. IN THIS REGION WE CAN INDEED

SPEAK OF A MASS MOVEMENT. IN SPAIN AND CROATIA, THE RIGHT TERM WOULD PROBABLY BE “CONSOLIDATED MOVEMENT”. IN THE NON-EUROPEAN PARTS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN, LSPAs ARE STILL ISOLATED INITIATIVES, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN ACCUMULATING A SOLID EXPERIENCE THAT IS NOW WORTH SHARING. IT IS STILL CONSIDERED EXPERIMENTAL IN MOROCCO, TURKEY OR ALGERIA; ELSEWHERE IT IS EMBRYONIC; THE LSPA MOVEMENT IS STILL FLEDGLING AND THUS NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED IF IT IS TO SPREAD AND DEVELOP AS IT SHOULD AND COULD.

1.1.2. LSPA principles

Simply put: LSPA is a partnership between producers and consumers, characterized by mutual commitment over a short or a longer period. It also includes risk-sharing mechanisms.

Four fundamental principles represent a shared basis for the global concept⁴. LSPA is based on a partnership, usually formalised as an individual contract between each consumer and the producer, and characterised by a mutual commitment to supply one another (with resources – usually money and food) over an extended period of time, beyond any single act of exchange. The contracts last for several months, a season or a year. LSPA is based on localisation – local producers should be well-integrated in their surrounding areas and

their work should benefit the communities which support them. LSPAs are based on solidarity between producers and consumers. The overall functioning of the groups is designed on a human scale – paying a sufficient, fair price up-front and in advance to enable farmers and their families to maintain their farms and live in a dignified manner, with a price structure that also respects

the needs and abilities of consumers. A key element is sharing both the risks and the rewards of healthy production. The producer/consumer tandem is based on direct person-to-person contact and trust, with neither middlemen nor hierarchy.

1.1.3. The three pillars of LSPA

Food Sovereignty, Solidarity Economy and agroecological small-scale family farming/peasant agriculture are the key foundations of LSPA. All three contribute to a common goal: develop a sustainable local food system that respects people’s needs and the limits of the natural or environment. The close partnership between consumers and producers without any middlemen or intermediaries, is only possible on a small scale.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations”⁵.

In establishing direct and trusting relationships between farmers and consumers, people have access to fresh food from an accountable source: organic and agroecological farmers produce healthy, safe, nutritious and minimally processed food without the use of chemical pesticides or various unhealthy

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*“Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations”<sup>5</sup>.*  
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additives, at an affordable price and equally important, – they are empowered and can influence the future of how to protect our planet and feed humanity.

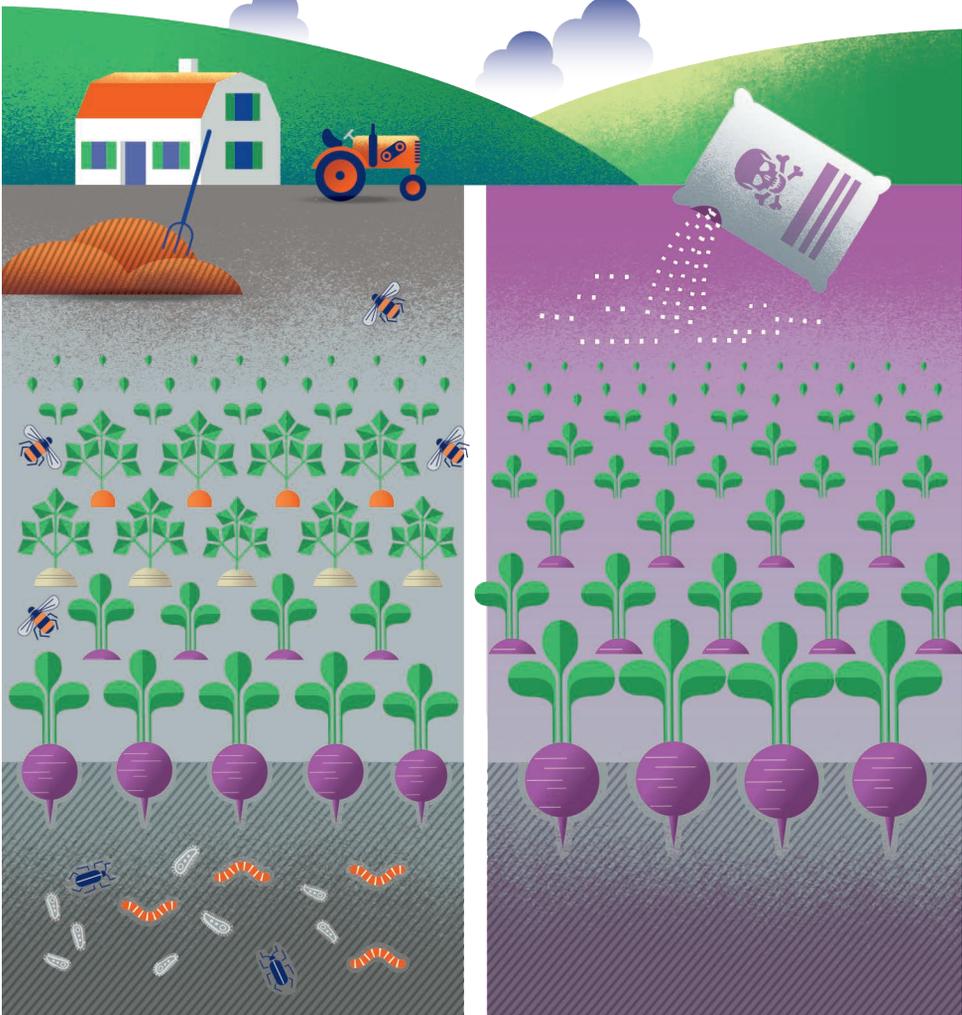
Food Sovereignty also means the decentralisation of food chains, promoting diversified markets based on solidarity and fair prices, short supply chains and closer relationships between producers and consumers in local food webs to counter the expansion and power of agribusiness corporations and supermarkets⁶.

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY. For many centuries people made their living through cooperation. This has recently been replaced by unbridled competition. The time has now come to resurrect the cooperative approach based on solidarity in rebuilding sustainable local food systems. LSPA are more than just another direct marketing scheme: growers and eaters, as they sometimes call themselves, need to work together to relocalise social and economic models, based on trust and equitably shared wealth rather than benefiting just the few⁷.

Solidarity refers to a two-way relationship where consumers and farmers are not separate, rather they are transformed into co-producers or pro-sumers – both groups cooperate, producers are close to consumers, and consumers more actively select their own and reflected way of accessing healthy, local food. In solidarity-based communities, producers are supported through longer commitments, both parties also share the risks and rewards of farming together, and, in some cases, solidarity also refers to the inclusion of low-income individuals and food justice⁸.



AGROECOLOGICAL FARMING. Encompasses many practices of soil cultivation based on cooperation with natural elements and local conditions, thus excluding artificial fertilizers and synthetic pesticides. The soil is perceived as a partner that has to be kept healthy and treated with care. If not treated appropriately, the soil cannot produce healthy food. This way of production helps maintain biodiversity, respects the limits of the landscape, and aims for better animal welfare in agriculture (more below). It also includes the aspects of social dimensions as is clear in the Nyéléni Declaration on Agroecology 2015 and the FAO 10 principles of Agroecology published in 2018.



AGROECOLOGICAL

INTENSIVE

CLOSED NUTRIENT CHAIN AND THE LIVING SOIL

Soil is our partner. In a handful of soil, there are more living creatures than there are humans in the world. Every second, these creatures build soil fertility which man cannot replace. Chemical treatments, like easily soluble mineral fertilisers, synthetic pesticides, kill these living elements. Agroecology therefore avoids these kinds of treatments.

RETURN WHAT WE TOOK AWAY

In order to live, we need nutrients that our body cannot synthesise. We obtain these nutrients from food and water. Every living creature is an important part of what we call the “closed nutrient circle”. We need to return to the soil what we have taken from it. In agroecology, the circle is closed, and the nutrients in our food are more complex and valuable. It is truly an excellent example of circular economy. In industrial agriculture, the nutrients are taken away but not returned, which is why there is a need for artificial fertilisers – these, however, cannot replace the natural ones and destroy our “soil fellows”.

Additionally, the exposition of the soil is minimised in organic farming. The roots of diverse vegetation retain the humidity and soil fellows, which produce valuable nutrients and create better soil structure. Did you know that dandelions have roots as long as the height of an adult?

DIVERSITY

No monoculture exists in nature. The greater the diversification of the landscape, the better the chances for spontaneous natural processes to address disruption. Fragmented fields of agroecological growers are accompanied by spots of diversity, like herb strips, forests, meadows, brooks that all contribute to enriching the diversity of plants and animals in the agro-ecosystem.

The landscape diversity in agroecology goes hand-in-hand with a diversity of cultivated crops and animal species and their varieties. For example, there are hundreds of different varieties of tomatoes, potatoes, etc., far more than you could ever find on a shelf in the supermarket. This is true agro-biodiversity and also contributes to a richer nutritional value.

COOPERATION

Emphasis on creating more cooperative relationships is the key in agroecology and helps to achieve better integration in the agro-ecosystem. Mutually beneficial partner combinations and crop rotation and synergies with animal used to help fertilize, all have mutually beneficial and supportive effects without the need for adding synthetic inputs of any kind.

1.2. CLOSER TO LSPA

1.2.1. What challenges do LSPA address?

The development of LSPA has been a spontaneous reaction to the problems of a globalised world. Gigantic system structures have reached a point where they tend to become too rigid to ensure peoples' basic needs. LSPA by contrast support social and cultural diversity and self-sufficiency. Below, you can find the most frequent impacts of the trends addressed by LSPA:

- » *Loss of small-scale farms and the infrastructure they need.*
- » *Control by large corporations that use the food system to increase shareholder profits.*
- » *Increasing food scandals in the industrial food system.*
- » *Loss of food security as people become dependent on a small number of large fossil fuel dependant food systems. These large systems lack diversity and may be more prone to collapse in times of crisis. They are also dependant on seeds produced by big agro-chemical companies that can not be saved or reused: hybrids, patented and genetically modified seeds and increasingly the risk of the use of CRISPR synthetic biology techniques...*
- » *Irreversible degradation and pollution of soil and water – the basis of our food.*
- » *Loss of biodiversity caused by large-scale factory farming.*
- » *Poor animal welfare in industrial farms.*
- » *Huge environmental impacts of long-distance food transport.*
- » *Health problems and non-communicable diseases caused by over-processed food and unhealthy eating habits.*
- » *Loss of creative, meaningful and self-directed work (eg. family farms) as farm work is increasingly mechanised and controlled by large companies.*
- » *Lack of access to agroecological and local food by low-income households.*
- » *Loss of cultural identity and social connection and community in both rural and urban areas.*
- » *Rural exodus.*
- » *Lack of trust and understanding between consumers and farmers..*

CHART 1 FOOD SYSTEM MATRIX »

For an easier understanding of how LSPA differ from the dominant industrial food system and also food systems in transition, see the matrix of transition from industrial food provision to LSPA in Chart 1.

ASPECT	MARKET-ORIENTED MODEL (SUPER-MARKET/SHOP/ SMALL SHOP/ SOUK)	URBAN SOUK	RURAL SOUK
Farming method	Industrial	Industrial	Local (organic and non-organic) and industrial
Frequency	Daily	Daily	Weekly
Decision-making	Market led	Based on supply and demand	Based on supply and demand (retailer) and according to the season (local producers)
Origin of food	Global	Global	Global and local
Payment method	Indirect payment to the retailing company after purchase	Direct payment to the retailer	Direct payment to retailer or to the producer
Relationship between producer and consumer	No relationship	No relationship	Consumers may know the name of the producer, can meet him/her at distribution point
Freedom of choice	Consumer choice is limited by supply by the middlemen (trader), usually with no respect of seasonality and localisation	Consumer choice is limited by supply by the middlemen (trader), usually with no respect of seasonality and localisation	Consumer choice is divided between (1) retailers on the one hand (no local nor seasonal food), (2) local seasonal food provided by local producers
Distribution place	Store or home-delivery	At the souk	At the souk
Commitment	Consumer is not committed to the producer	Consumer is not committed to the producer	Consumer is not committed to the producer
Distribution method	Producer sells to wholesaler	Producer packs and distributes on his/her own or through middlemen	(1) Producer sells to retailer; (2) retailer sells his / her products
System organisation	Entrepreneur or company with no connection to farming	The middleman sets the price according to the rule of supply and demand	(1) Intermediaries set the price according to supply and demand (2) The producer sets the price himself
Other commitments	No other activities	No other activities	No other activities

ASPECT	ONLINE ORGANIC BOX SCHEME	LSPA	COMMUNITY GARDEN
Farming method	Diversified	Agroecological / small-scale	Agroecological/ micro scale
Frequency	Weekly	Weekly	Permanent
Decision-making	Market led	Collective discussion of needs and options among actors	Collective discussion on needs and options among gardeners
Origin of food	Local	Local	Local
Payment method	Indirect online payment, to the box scheme operator	In advance for whole/part of season/ barter/ alternative currency/ work	No payment (Barter/ Self production)
Relationship between producer and consumer	No relationship	They usually know each other personally and recognise their mutual needs	Producers and consumers are often the same
Freedom of choice	Limited choice, based on the availability of local products	Consumer accepts what is produced on the farm according to the season and farm's possibilities	Gardeners decide together what shall be produced in the shared gardens
Distribution place	Home delivery or pick up point	Farmyard or negotiated distribution place	Self harvesting
Commitment	No commitment from the consumers' side	Consumer is committed to the producer for a whole season's produce and shares the risks and rewards of farming	Gardeners are part of the project, full commitment
Distribution method	A facilitator collects the products from the producers	Consumers organise distribution by themselves	The principle of self- harvesting also encompasses self-distribution
System organisation	Start-up, shareholding facilitates the operation	Self-organisation by the community	Association of gardeners, but most gardeners actually farm for themselves. Only exceptionally some overproduction can be sold by the association
Other commitments	Usually, no other activities. Sometimes farm visits or meetings with farmers	Consumers support producer in the case of a bad season or other difficulties; they might help with farming, planning and other community activities	Gardeners usually commit to a charter of principles describing the allowed and prohibited farming techniques

1.2. 2. LSPA as a solution

The conventional food system is based on the industrial model of production. It is dominated by a few corporations and retailers who use food to increase shareholders' profits. This model does not aim to improve the well-being of people, but is designed solely to generate profit for the few. Instead of producing healthy, affordable food for the many from sustainable resources, the contemporary dominant farming model focuses increasingly on the production of raw materials such as agrifuels, animal feed or commodity plantations.

LSPAs on the other hand, seek to create a food system controlled by communities, and aimed at serving social wellbeing and the environment.

LSPA REPRESENTS A MODEL OF SOCIAL INNOVATION WITH MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONSEQUENCES⁹:

AT MICRO LEVEL: for consumers, it generates a sense of participatory ownership of the scheme, and contributes to the reshaping of the vision of food practices. For farmers, it represents a direct way of selling with a predictable/secure income;

AT MIDDLE LEVEL: it encourages the circulation of money in local economies, provides employment opportunities and creates a sense of community and mutual support;

AT MACRO LEVEL: it rebalances the power relations in the food sector, contributing to food sovereignty worldwide.

As Elizabeth Henderson has described for CSA, one could say that farmers, consumers and organisations create solid local initiatives through the equation: "food producer + food consumers + annual commitment to one another = LSPA and untold possibilities"¹⁰.

LSPA producers can decide how they want to work. They are not forced to compromise on their attitude to nature and animals through the pressure of price or the regulation of contractors. Consumers support the farm during a whole season, so the producer's income is secured and independent from the global market. This is the true decommodification of food.



1.2. 3. Actors and terms of LSPA

MEMBERSHIP...

producers and consumers are typically both considered equal members.

PRODUCER /FARMER /GROWER...

vegetable grower, peasant baker or butcher who produces food or other products for the community of members in a LSPA.

EATER/CONSUMER/MEMBERS..

a member of a LSPA group who shares risks and benefits with the farmer, usually is involved in planning the growing season including vegetable varieties, prices, etc. He or she also commits to the farm for the whole season, and pays in advance or on a regular basis – depending on the needs of farmers and agreement of the group. This can be especially helpful for farmers starting their enterprise and farmers converting from conventional farming to agroecology.

A member can be a coordinator of the group, or can share coordination with other members or a producer; he/she can also help on the farm.

PARTNERSHIP CONTRACT / AGREEMENT...

The reciprocal relationship is stated in a (oral or written) contract which contains the agreed rules and principles. It can contain details about risk sharing, commitment, type of farming, amount of vegetables, price, distribution point, days and hours, length of the season.

SHARE (“BASKET”)...

The share is the content of the regularly-distributed amount of food. Producers share the weekly crop or products between all the consumers. It can be distributed once a week, twice a week, etc. One share usually contains vegetables/food for one family, but

CASE BOX: THE BASKET EXCHANGE PAGE AT TAFAS, IN ALGERIA

Faced by the occasional absence of members supposed to pick up their weekly shares, the Tafas LSPA coordination team is now offering the possibility to pass the share to other families registered on the waiting list. The management committee has created a Facebook page specifically dedicated to the exchange of shares. The beneficiary announces her/his absence and her/his willingness to give up her/his share. Following the post, anybody who is registered on that page can express his/her interest in taking the share. To make accounting easier, the payment is managed directly between the initial beneficiary and the person buying the share.

there can also be the possibility to get half of the share. The size of the share will also vary from season to season.

COORDINATOR / CORE GROUP...

It is very important not to underestimate the role of communication in the smooth running of the group. It is crucial to decide who is responsible for what – communication, administration, care for the distribution point, planning meetings and farm visits/work days on the farm, etc. It is better if the coordination tasks are shared between

consumers. If there is one main coordinator, the group can reward his/her work by covering his/her share collectively.

DISTRIBUTION / DELIVERY PLACE / COLLECTION POINT...

Place where the food from the farm is regularly distributed. It should be easily accessible for members. There are various possibilities: it can be on the farm, in a café, school, workplace, garage... it depends on the possibilities and members' creativity.

1.2. 4. Modes of operation

Initiatives based on the LSPA scheme can take many different forms. The most widespread is when a group of members connects with one or more existing farms. But a community can also start its own farm from scratch, although agricultural expertise is necessary. LSPA does not describe an end-product, it is more about how to develop a new local food system that reflects the character and needs of a locality, members and farmers. No two LSPAs are identical: they all have their own dynamics in time and space.

Experience shows that a LSPA can be initiated either by producers or potential consumers. Both groups have different motivations to create local and alternative food networks. Consumers can organise themselves as informal groups or, later, can opt for a legal status such as a non-profit organisation. It can sometimes be helpful to cooperate with existing NGOs.

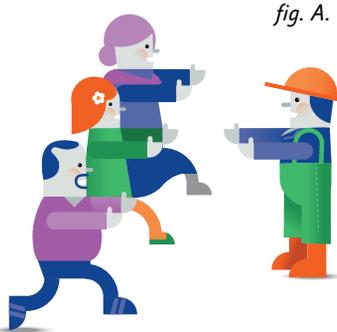


fig. A.

LSPAs can be categorised according to who organises them and the underlying motivation:

COORDINATION/ ORGANISATION

Farmer-led

Organised by the farmer, to whom the members financially subscribe. This scheme was the initial model developed in Southern France.

Core group-led

Consumers are coordinators or facilitators (one or more). They participate in, or may even run, the scheme working closely with the farmer who produces what they prefer. The degree of consumer involvement is variable. This scheme is the most common in Turkey and Morocco for example.

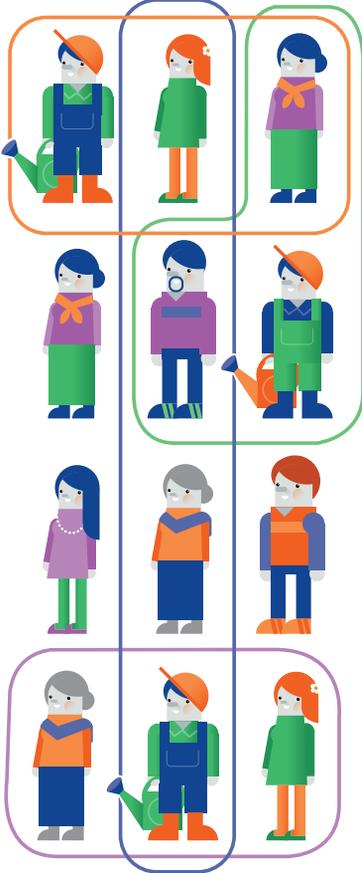
SCHEME SET-UP

Group of members connected with an existing farm

Consumers form a group and then form a partnership with a local farmer. The farm is owned and organised by the farmer. Members sign a partnership contract with the farmer and pay the whole costs of the production in advance for a certain amount of time (a season or half). This kind of CSA is probably the most common.

Community farm

A group of people start and maintain their own farm, they share the costs of production and work as farmers or they eventually employ a farmer or farmers. We can find examples in Germany, UK, the Czech Republic.



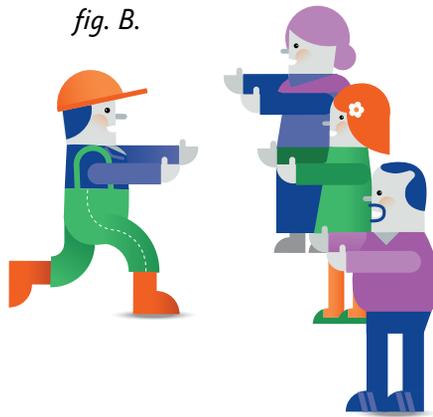
Farmer–consumer cooperative

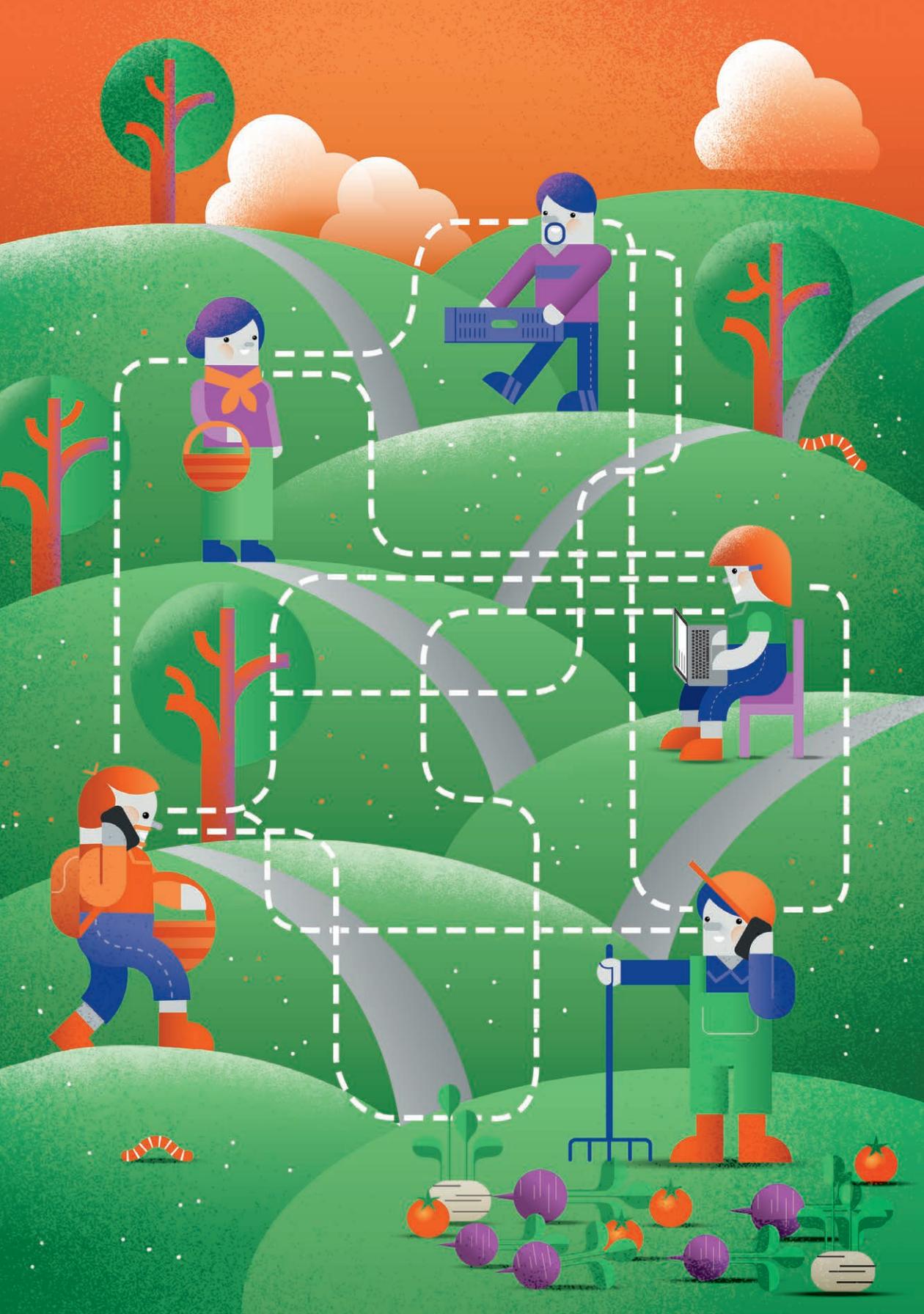
Farmers develop co-operative networks to access a variety of products. Consumers may co-own land and other resources with the participating farmers and work together to produce and distribute food. Arvaia in Italy or Alter Conso in France are pioneering models where the co-op is jointly owned by both producer and consumer members. Co-operatives might be a good solution in Eastern Europe as one of the few legal forms for collective enterprises.

Farmer cooperative

Farmer-driven CSAs where two or more farms co-operate to supply their members with a greater variety of produce. This model allows individual farms to specialise in the most appropriate farming for that holding (larger farms may concentrate on field-scale production, smaller farms on specialist crops and upland farms on rearing livestock). There are several examples in France, Italy and Spain.

fig. B.







PART 2

*How to create
an LSPA*



2.1. BEFORE STARTING AN LSPA

Actors interested in starting an LSPA first need to understand the complexity of benefits of participation as well as the challenges, and the changes that need to be made by those involved.

REMINDER

Local Solidarity-based Partnerships for Agroecology are based on direct relationships between consumers and producers. They allow consumers access to fresh, healthy, agroecologically grown produce. These partnerships help farmers to care for the environment, preserve the quality of their products and make a decent livelihood from their work. Community Supported Agriculture is one form of LSPA; it is characterised by direct, contractualised sales. Participatory Guarantee Systems is another (see below), as are certain other kinds of short food circuits.

Community Supported Agriculture takes the form of direct partnerships between local producers and consumers. It involves sharing both risks and benefits that are inherent to the activity. CSA is part of the wider family of LSPAs.

PGS Participatory Guarantee Systems:

“These are quality insurance systems that are locally centred. They certify the producers on the basis of active participation that is the basis for trust and networks.” (IFOAM).

1.2.1. Benefits of creating an LSPA

BENEFITS FOR THE PRODUCER

SMALL-SCALE AGROECOLOGICAL FARMING FACES COMPETITION FROM AGRIBUSINESS AND MARKET PRESSURE DESPITE THE FACT THAT IT IS FAR MORE DEPENDENT ON UNPREDICTABLE NATURAL CONDITIONS. PRODUCERS MOSTLY SHOULDER THE FULL BURDEN OF UNCERTAINTY ALONE. IN AN LSPA, MEMBERS SHARE THE RISKS. SOLIDARITY AND RECIPROCAL HELP IS VERY IMPORTANT.

» **LSPA improve the economic viability:** As mentioned above, small-scale farmers have difficulties in the market due to fierce competition. Another challenge is associated with wholesaling to retailers: low prices, uncertainty and time lag between delivery and payments¹¹. The LSPA models provide solutions to these issues. Farmers receive payments in advance or at agreed

intervals, which provides a reasonable and guaranteed income with a stable group of consumers. It means sharing the risks of farming with the community. Thanks to the close relationship, members understand if some products could not be harvested because of the weather or some other issue. The producer can thus rely on a more secure income. This improves business planning and encourages people to farm in an environmentally friendly, agroecological way and removes the market pressure. LSPA farmers can focus on farming.

In some cases, part of the harvest can be produced to sell to the classical market and another part for a partnership¹². Thanks to members, small investments can be achieved – for example, the farm can be equipped with an irrigation system and solar power plant². It is important that producers should not be shy about asking to have the real costs of production covered¹³.

» **LSPA reconnects farmers with the local community:** The global food system is characterised by a ‘disconnect’ between food production and food consumption which leads to a lack of transparency and fair relationships¹⁵. Through LSPA, farmers reconnect with people by showing them the process and values of proper food production and they also get direct feedback from the eaters, and thus have

the opportunity to respond to their needs. Producers may also teach their members important aspects of growing vegetables and fruit. If the farmer feels confident, he/she can also offer training opportunities on their farms¹⁶. Furthermore, better involvement with the local community may help producers to tackle various challenges of small-scale farming as indicated in Chart 2, depicting GSA (a particular type of LSPA).

~~~~~  
*In Spain or Turkey, farmers may be embarrassed to ask for money from people who are actually prepared to pay more. In other cases, it can lead to a situation where farmers have to take extra jobs, which amounts to self-exploitation, because their expenses are not fully covered<sup>14</sup>.*  
~~~~~

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES FOR FARMERS ¹⁵	CSA HELP
Low crop output (for example because of pests, severe weather, diseases)	Members accept the share: even if it is smaller, the price is the same. The farmer can compensate members with a larger share later.
Unpredictable market; incapability of sale	Members pay for long period (season) for a negotiated amount of food.
Risk of unstable prices	At the beginning of the season, a meeting should be organised where the price of the share is discussed.
	The price reflects the needs of members and covers all costs of farming at the same time.
Illness of the farmer or poor social insurance	Members can support the farmer during hard times.
Small amount of capital for farm development, risk of fluctuating loan conditions and high interest rates	Members can offer an interest-free loan, donate to the farm or can buy a share in the farm.
CHART 2 LSPA SOLUTION TO CHALLENGES FACED BY PPRODUCERS	

LSPA, GENERALLY SPEAKING, MAY ALSO BRING FARMERS OTHER BENEFITS:

- » help with labour and planning and less administration.
- » more time for themselves and family, as there is no need to spend days at a farmers’ market.
- » freedom to decide the way of production and the crop varieties, not compromised by market pressure and requirements of traders or retailers.



Furthermore the benefits of LSPA for the producers can be identified in all areas of life as shown in Chart 3 below.

PERSONAL	SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reputation within rural community » Fair remuneration » No need for off-farm employment » Networking with CSA producers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Creation of solidarity » Community around the farm » Decent pay for seasonal workers » Maintain family farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access to a stable market resulting in a steady income » Avoid middle-men » Lower production risk » If the trust is strong, no need for organic certification » Circumvent competition » Plan production according to a known demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Maintain soil fertility » Maintain biodiversity » Possibility of using traditional species » Less transport » Less packaging

CHART 3 BENEFITS FOR CSAs MAY PRESENT THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS FOR THE PRODUCERS¹⁷

BENEFITS FOR THE MEMBERS

Partnership members benefit from their involvement in the scheme in many different ways; however in many countries, surveys identified these major reported benefits:

» **Accessing healthy and nutritionally rich local food.**

» **Freshness and taste:** Number of varieties and crops is usually broad and brings new tastes. “The quality and the flavour of the products is the first argument to convince people to subscribe to AMAPs. It’s so fresh and appetizing!”¹⁸

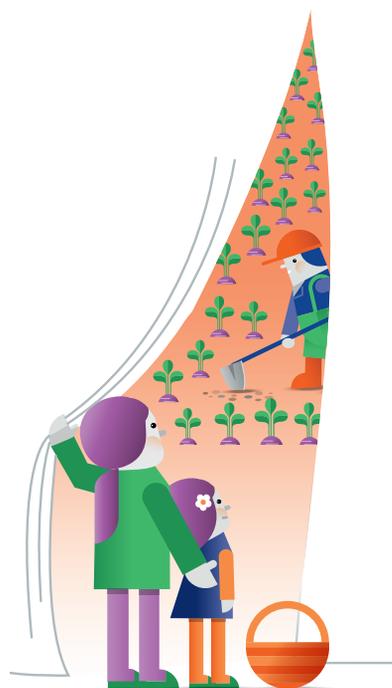
» **Transparency:** access to complex information regarding the content of the scheme represents one of the important features for which LSPA systems are preferred¹⁹. LSPA members have a say in the amount, content and price of the food and the means of production and distribution. “I can see behind the curtain of food production methods and their costs. And I can visit the farm where my food is produced.”

» **Affordable prices:** in some countries the production can be certified by the community, so the prices may be lower than the standard market prices²⁰. Because of the direct relationship between farmers and consumers, the middleman is eliminated. The producer makes more and the food is affordable for consumers.

» **Knowledge/friendship with farmer:** eaters can get to know the farmer personally and possibly become friends with him/her, support him/her and know how he/she farms and even might have a right to co-decide what farming methods could be used.

A study conducted among Romanian CSA shareholders in 2014²¹ revealed the following reasons to subscribe to the system:

- » *Access to organic vegetables* **83.6%**
- » *Supporting local farmers* **13%**
- » *Concern for the protection of local and traditional seeds* **2.3%**
- » *Healthy food for their children* **0.6%**
- » *The idea of fair economic relations with small producers* **0.6%**



» **Investing in local communities:** enhancement of local economy through higher employment, more local processing, local consumption and a re-circulation of money through ‘local spend’ and even local currencies.

» **Less food loss and waste and true circular economy:** eaters value the food more when they know the producer. There is less loss or waste at consumer level. As all on-farm waste gets used as compost and returned to the soil, this means genuine circular economy.

» **Reconnection with local communities:** subscription can establish shared responsibility among members and strengthen a local affiliation.

» **Environmental protection and animal welfare:** small-scale, often organic, farming which cares for the quality of the landscape and animal well-being with fewer food-miles and less packaging saves on the consumption of raw materials and fossil fuel-based energy.

» **Reconnection with land and nature:** members reconnect with the land and nature through subscription, generating the “feeling of belonging and property” and through farm visits, members have the opportunity to be in contact with the growers’ environment, land, vegetables and fruit²¹.

These benefits cover all different areas of society as described in Chart 4 on the page 32.

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF LSPA

LSPAs support social life and enliven it. Food is related to many topics and activities, and LSPAs enable us to share inspiration and experiences with people we may otherwise not have met. It brings together people of different ages, thus overcoming generation gaps, and it is a great way of developing ourselves and our relationships with others.

LSPA farms also offer many opportunities for city people to relax and learn – members have the chance to visit a farm, sink their hand in soil and wonder at the beauty of farming. LSPAs are also a perfect way to raise children’s awareness of the origins of food and its consequences. They rebuild urban-rural linkages at all levels and for all ages.

From the perspective of LSPA farmers, it is really motivating to be part of a community, as they get much positive feedback from their consumers. It helps them to continue and improve their work, because they know that their products are appreciated.

PERSONAL	SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Traceability and agroecological or organic quality of food » Freshness, seasonality » Healthy diets » Higher nutritional values » Farm visits » Connection with like-minded individuals » Changes in consumption patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Connection with rural areas/agriculture. » Trust-based solidarity relationships with a community farmer. » Feeling of belonging to a community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lower prices for agroecological and organic products » Fixed price for weekly share for the whole season » Fair price for both consumer and producer negotiated with the producer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Production methods linked to environmental concerns
CHART 4 BENEFITS OF LSPA MEMBERSHIP			

1. 2. Obstacles to starting a partnership²²

There are a few challenges associated with LSPAs. These partnerships are more than everyday farming or ordinary buying. The level of commitment is quite different from just going to a shop and buying anonymous food. It is thus crucial to think about whether or not you – as a farmer or as a consumer – are able to get involved in this model.

FOR PRODUCERS

» In countries with a lack of relational and social capital, producers can find it difficult to trust a group of future consumers. *Once the model has been experimented with and “people talk about it”, the level of trust rises.*

» Producers must “wear more than one hat”²³: they are in charge of complex tasks: making the offer, getting the subscribers, connecting with them, being in charge of their money, sometimes contributing to the newsletter and last, but not least, doing the farming. Communication requires time. At the same time, not all producers have the necessary skills to sustain these activities in an adequate manner. *Get in touch with the first members: they usually help the farmer with the organisation of the group (the coordinator can be one of the consumers), because they have engaged with the model. The farmer should not be shy about asking for help. Also, producers who develop their scheme together with non-profit organisations or work with volunteers are at an advantage, because they can hand over these tasks.*

» At the beginning, it can be difficult to build the knowledge and experience necessary to grow diversified produce in a planned manner. It can also be difficult to gain knowledge and experience in agroecology or organic agriculture and in financial planning. *Connect with existing LSPA farms, share experiences, and get inspired by their way of farming, functioning and problem-solving.*

FOR MEMBERS

» Low income can be the most significant barrier to joining a CSA for potential members. *However, there are several strategies to enable people with limited*

*financial resources to join the scheme*²⁴.

› Offering work-shares to reduce the price: *people can work on the farm and receive shares at a lower price.*

› Selling shares at a lower price: *although the producer must always seek to cover all costs, some members could pay a lower price for the share if others are ready to pay more.*

› Payment plan: *instead of one fixed payment, producers can provide the opportunity for multiple payments or instalments.*

› Solidarity fund: *an allocated extra part of the budget can be dedicated to those who are unable to pay their share for a while. They should repay the back-payments at a later date.*

› Subsidized low income shares: *sliding scale of share prices allows those who earn less to pay less for a share and requires those who earn more to pay more; producers offer different sized shares.*

› Programmes that target seniors and students on limited resources: *programmes that are sponsored by donations seniors or students can buy shares with fresh vegetables at reduced prices.*

› Voluntary contribution: *each member can contribute a voluntary amount to the budget, however the costs of the season need to be covered.*

› Shares subsidized by Local Authorities for some low income members: *in some cities, food stamps or direct subsidy schemes enable a certain number of socially excluded people to participate in a LSPA.*

» Limited choice of produce, acceptance of non-standard “ugly” products, unpredictability of quality and quantity, don’t know what to do with “strange” produce. *Consumers are aware that appearance is not related to nutritional value. Producers or other members might provide recipes and some basic knowledge about the not-so-well-known species.*

» Inconvenience of picking up the LSPA share at a given time and place every week. *Regular deliveries might be beneficial for long term planning and you can share these tasks with other consumers if they live close to you.*

» Time invested in picking up and preparing food from raw vegetables. Find and share easy-to-make recipes and eat as much raw food as possible: *it’s not only healthy but also saves time.*

» Change in lifestyle and inconvenience of preparing the vegetables. *Core group members might provide you with experience how they got used to LSPA and what their tips are for preparing and home-processing the veggies.*

» Obligation of advance payment, higher prices compared to conventional products, shared risk of production. *Negotiate the most suitable payment system. If you cannot pay for the whole season in advance, try out the monthly system.*

» Obligation to volunteer for farm work and/or distribution of the shares. *Volunteering is not an expectation at all LSPA farms. Nevertheless at certain key moments in the season and in cases of emergency, voluntary work is highly recommended or even essential.*



2.2. STARTING A LSPA PARTNERSHIP

A LSPA INITIATIVE CAN BE STARTED BY PRODUCERS, CONSUMERS OR EVEN BY NGOs. NO MATTER WHAT YOUR BACKGROUND IS, YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR THE FIRST YEAR TO ALWAYS BE VERY COMPLICATED WHEN YOU START SUCH A COMPLEX SYSTEM. PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS NEED TO LEARN HOW TO COOPERATE, BUILD TRUST AND PLAN THE SEASON CAREFULLY. BUT YOU SHOULD NOT STEP BACK BECAUSE OF THESE CHALLENGES; THE MOTIVATION OF CONSUMERS AND THE COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE WILL HELP YOU TO ENJOY THIS EXPERIMENT. THE FOLLOWING SECTION PROVIDES THE NECESSARY FIRST STEPS.

2.2.1. Setting up a LSPA

Regardless of whether the LSPA are community/organisation or farmer-initiated, the following steps are recommended²⁵:

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT

It is important to understand what kind of production will have to be realised (diversity of products, agroecological or organic practices, continuity of production, etc.), what the estimated revenue for a year could or needs to be, what kind of relationships you need to develop within a LSPA. It is worth contacting other LSPAs in your region or country, finding an NGO that works on this topic, and, of course, you can get more information from the Internet.

As a consumer, you should be prepared for the commitments, so it is really important to think about whether or not you are able to undertake these:

- » To pay in advance for your food (whether by season, month or another agreed schedule) regardless of quantity and quality of food due to weather conditions.
- » In the case of a community-based LSPA, the members also commit to take part in the distribution, management aspects etc.

PLANNING

As a producer it is important to estimate your capacity and possibilities.

Plan what kind of products you can provide during the first year: you should list those vegetables that you already grow or that you could produce for your consumers. Do you have a good idea of how many consumers you could supply with your products? Can you estimate how much working time is needed? Do you have the capacity or would you need to employ some workers?

LET'S FIND MEMBERS

To start a partnership it is key to find some consumers who could become your partners.

» If you already sell on the market, you may have some clients who are very happy with your products and could be interested in joining your LSPA.

» Ask your friends or neighbours; you won't have to start building trust from zero if you have personal relationships with your members.

» Search for existing groups: day cares, environmental or other organisations, civic groups, churches, workplaces, alternative schools, yoga centres are all good places to find people who are interested in healthy food and community-based partnerships. You can try to contact existing partnerships, including CSAs: they may know some potential consumers from your region who are already familiar with the idea.

» Contact your national CSA network

or any NGO working on this issue or any other that is close to the concept of LSPA (traditional agriculture, healthy food, solidarity economy, sustainable development, etc.).

To find members, you might try to use these communication channels:

Use flyers

Organise meetings

Spread the idea to friends

Find a friendly journalist to write a story

Use social media

ORGANISE MEETINGS

Together with your first allies, you should be prepared to participate in public meetings where you can find new consumers. For future cooperation, it is key to be honest and transparent at these meetings. Do not be afraid if you don't have a lot of experience or you have some concerns. CSA is a partnership, try to involve the consumers in finding solutions.

Possible agenda:

What is a LSPA?

Why eat locally grown food?

Why do small farmers need your support?

What are the risks of industrial agriculture?

What are the advantages of becoming a member?

Assess the level of commitment of participants and if interest is high enough, create a core group.

If you are a group of consumers or an

organisation and would like to start a LSPA

In this case it is recommended you find a farmer interested in starting a partnership with a group of consumers and find land if the farmer does not have any. It is necessary to check the following criteria.

Farmer should have:

- » farming and gardening background
- » training in or knowledge of agroecological, organic or biodynamic gardening
- » knowledge of the function,

operation and maintenance of equipment

- » the desire to communicate transparently with consumers
- » experience in growing vegetable in a comparable climate and weather conditions. You can use also the questionnaire for potential farmers in Chart 5.

If you do not know where to find a farmer, it is useful to build contacts at a local farmers' market or ask for a list of agroecological and organic farmers

IF YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR A POTENTIAL CSA FARMER, ONE RELIABLE INSTRUMENT FOR EVALUATION MAY BE A QUESTIONNAIRE THAT PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT A PRODUCER'S BACKGROUND. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MAY BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT: (VETAN AND FLOREAN, 2012)

1. *Until now, did you try/did you succeed in selling your own agricultural produce? Where?*
2. *Do you know how to grow 20 different vegetables in one season?*
3. *Do you enjoy talking to your friends, neighbours, clients about your work?*
4. *Are you comfortable with sharing management responsibilities with a group? If not, why?*
5. *What surface area, technical equipment and resources do you have to grow for more people at the same time?*
6. *Do you think that you are able to grow without using chemical fertilisers and pesticides?*
7. *Do you have somewhere to procure/buy 'good seeds'?*
8. *Do you know how to grow your own seedlings?*
9. *Do you have a means of transportation to bring the produce to the city? If not, do you have anybody that you can count on for a season?*
10. *If you are producing in a conventional way, are you prepared to transition to agroecology?*
11. *Are you ready to build and share the transparent cost of your products?*
12. *Are you open to sharing techniques with other farmers?*

CHART 5 FARMER QUESTIONNAIRE

reasonably close to where you live. It is really valuable if you can invite experienced LSPA farmers to your meetings, because, for many farmers, it is more convincing if they learn about the concept from somebody who is also experienced in agriculture.

Transparency is really important. All of your questions or concerns should be discussed, because LSPA can only stand on strong foundations.

HOW LONG DOES ALL THIS TAKE?

The journey from the first idea to the up-and-running LSPA is long and demanding, but, at the same time, inspirational and adventurous. The timeline for setting up a LSPA might differ according to your starting point and the community around you. However, generally speaking, the more time you devote to the initial planning and thinking about the scheme, speaking with people and elaborating the scheme set-up, the better prepared you will be for the partnership operation.

2.2.2. The everyday running of an LSPA

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to avoid misunderstandings and difficulties in the community, principles and roles need to be clarified from the beginning. This can help with the subsequent integration of newcomers and can also provide a useful reference framework in awkward situations. The respective roles of the farmers and members are usually explained in the partnership agreement, but discussing them from time to

TIP: *You know that the majority of the LSPA members in your country are young parents who are interested in a sustainable lifestyle and organic food? Search for eco/alternative schools in your neighbourhood and leave leaflets there. Do not forget your contact details and the link of your website- if you have one!*



For example, the start of the DBB groups in Ankara region in Turkey was preceded by months of thinking and talking before the members first plunged their hands into the soil. However simpler schemes may be established quicker, as with the example the Swani Tiqa groups in Morocco that were established in just a few weeks from the first idea to the first shares being delivered to the members.

time at personal meetings – especially at recruitment events – is really important for a shared understanding.

FARMERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- » Farm to the best of their abilities, to satisfy the needs and expectations of consumers.
- » Follow specific farming methods (e.g., agroecology, organic, biodynamic, permaculture...).
- » Define the quantities supplied in one share.
- » Define the method and frequency of distribution.
- » Set the amount and scope of farm events.
- » Establish the price for a share or half-share.
- » Determine opportunities for and manner of voluntary farm work.
- » Ensure transparency related to the production.

POSSIBLE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEMBERS

- » Be a group coordinator (a person who advocates for LSPA), who maintains the contacts between the group and the farmer, collects payments for shares and sends money to the producer. However, duties and roles are not set in stone²⁶.
- » Pay the agreed price for share/products in a timely manner. In the case of GSA, accept that the harvest usually cannot be modified to take individuals' preferences into account.
- » Accept the seasonality of products.
- » Respect and accept the special

knowledge and skills of the farmer.

- » Clean and return boxes and other containers used for distribution.
- » Take part in specific tasks (e.g. help in delivery, harvesting).

CROP PLANNING

Crop planning in a LSPA is extremely important as the producer has to be sure he or she can feed a certain amount of people during the whole season or even longer. It is therefore necessary to devote enough time and wisdom to the planning of crops. However, no two agroecological farms are alike, and the approaches to crop planning differ greatly. Therefore there are no universal guidelines to crop planning. A lot of literature is however available²⁷.

TIME AND PLACE OF DISTRIBUTION

The place of distribution may be at the farm if the consumers live in the same area as the producer, or in the city. If distribution takes place in the city, it is recommended you find a free space in a local organisation or a private entity that supports solidarity economy activities. If not, consumers will need to rent a space for distribution. The time of distribution is usually agreed between the producers and the group of consumers.

If the producer is not the owner of the land, it is necessary to establish the capital to procure a farm. An LSPA can start with a minimum of some rented land and borrowed equipment. In this case, looking forward in the long term,

a decision should be taken to purchase land.

Options include:

Farmers provide capital

Members provide capital

The group seeks grants

The group seeks loans

CONTRACT

The agreement between producer(s) and eaters is usually formalised in the contract – that can be either oral or written. Sometimes it is enough to make an oral commitment based on promises and trust. If written down, it might include practical arrangements as well as the main principles and values, and, apart from typical contract contents, it may contain the following points:

» **List of vegetables:** Production for one season is planned by farmers or can be planned together with committee members, based on farmers' capacity, experience, characteristics of the land and number of consumers. At the same time, consumers can propose new vegetables to be included in the contract.

» **Distribution plan:** time-span of deliveries, number of weeks of the seasonal delivery, time and place of delivery, etc.

» **Responsibilities of the farmer and consumers**

» **Payment method and prices**

» **Optional:** plan for weekly planting and harvesting plan: these are estimated

plans, because it depends on weather conditions and other factors.

2.2.3. Fair finance for LSPAs

Production costs are covered and producers receive a decent income for their work. Members pay the cost of an estimated production and receive a diversified harvest that is equally distributed among all members. Besides these mandatory costs, subscribers may decide to pay for the social insurance of producers. All the costs are decided transparently.

Fair financing can be achieved in a number of different ways²⁸:

MARKET PRICE

Find out the price that people are paying for veggie box schemes and build the share based on the price of individual items (at Farmers' markets or similar distribution channels) until you reach the approximate price of the whole share.

Example: You've found out that people are willing to pay 10 € for a weekly delivery, then compound the share:

ITEM	QUAN- TITY	UNIT	FM PRICE/ UNIT (€)	TOTAL PRICE (€)
Onion	0.5	kg	1	0.5
Peppers	0.5	kg	3.2	1.6
Potatoes	1	kg	0.48	0.48
Apples	1.5	kg	0.8	1.2
Plums	1	kg	1.4	1.4
Squash	2.5	kg	0.6	1.5
Zucchini	0.5	kg	0.6	0.3
Tomatoes	1	kg	2	2
Red beet	0.5	kg	1.2	0.6
Kohlrabi	1	kg	0.4	0.4
Total delivery price				€ 9.98



MARKET VALUE PRICING

Estimate your annual costs for a season’s production (income you want to get for season) = A. Estimate how much people usually spend on vegetables per season = B. Divide A by B and you get the number of shares.

Example:
 Annual farming cost =
€4,000
 Typical spending on vegs =
€200
 Number of shares to meet budget =
 $4,000/200 = 20$

REAL COSTS OF FARMING BASED ON COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Set out your total budget. Most often: Cost of production (i.e. seeds, seedlings, tools, etc.); employee's costs; machinery depreciation; investments; advisory services; overheads.

Divide the total amount by the number of current or potential members, i.e. budget for the season is €4,000 and you have 20 members, thus the member share must be €200.

DELIBERATE ON CONTRIBUTIONS

You can even have the members decide what amount they would like to contribute (i.e. how much they can afford to pay to enable the total farm budget costs to be covered). This method supports creativity, freedom, solidarity and inclusion of low-income members. However, it is demanding on community cohesion, trust, etc. Steps:

- » Present the total budget (see above) to the community
- » Let the members (usually secretly) write their bids
- » If all bids meet the budget = OK
- » If not, next round of bids is done until the budget is met.

SIMILAR MODELS PRICING

Very simply, find a similar LSPA (in terms of production, membership, acreage, altitude, etc.) to the one you want to start and ask what their share price is. If it sounds reasonable to you, just use it!

TRY IT OUT!

LSPA are a sensitive and specific model. You need to devote some time to setting up your initiative.

As a producer it could help you if you:

- » Experience the model with a small group
- » Cultivate a larger area than needed in order to cover any losses
- » Build a strong relationship with your consumers: discuss the concept with them regularly, invite them to your farm, ask for their feedback on the system, etc.

If somebody does not fit into the community, just let him/her go. Sometimes it is not easy, but the energy that you put into convincing somebody can be more efficiently used for farming or community-building.







PART 3

*Community-
building*



3. COMMUNITY BUILDING

LSPA is more than a direct trading model between consumers and farmers. The partnership based on trust cannot work without complete understanding of the shared principles. Open communication and joint thinking result in food communities where farmers and consumers do not form two different groups anymore but are both members of one and the same community.

In 2011, the Soil Association in the United Kingdom commissioned research into the impact and benefits of CSA. It was found that CSA farms enable communities to take control of their food supply by providing their members with a variety of local, often organically produced food. The report highlights the remarkable power of community farms to positively influence a wide array of important social aspects. Many members report feeling significantly happier, with over 70% saying their quality of life had improved. Their cooking and eating habits have changed through using more local, seasonal and healthy food.

WHY COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT FOR CSA COMMUNITIES

Communication is a crucial aspect of LSPA. It forms the basis for trust and partnership, creating a shared identity and also contributes to the recruitment of new members. Consistent, frequent

communication is a key to success; it is especially important in case of problems: the earlier you start to talk about a problem, the sooner it is solved.

TIP: *Be constructive! Positive atmosphere is a key to solving problems and moving forward.*

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For better communication within the partnership, it is important that everyone knows what are roles and responsibilities in the scheme. Being precise and specific about the division of roles and responsibilities helps share the work burden equitably and also helps the less active members to see what the big picture of the scheme operation is and how demanding it can be.

Chart 6 lists the typical roles in a community-led LSPA and the description of the tasks included in that role.

NOTE: *The necessary roles and responsibilities differ greatly depending on the type of LSPA; for example, in a partnership where members just subscribe and receive their shares and are not involved in the farming business, most of the responsibilities mentioned would fall on the producer's shoulders.*

ROLE	DESCRIPTION OF TASKS
FARMING	
Crop planning	Planning the harvests and yields, the amount of crops and varieties grown, green manure, etc.
Work organisation	Continuous farm-work and coordination of workers during the year
Budgeting of farming costs	Creating a budget for farm-work
LOGISTICS	
Coordination of distribution	Evidence of logistics, communication of deliveries, outlet points management, etc.
ADMINISTRATION	
Accountancy and records	Accountancy, payments, bank account, cash, etc.
Financial management	Collecting membership contributions, receipts for farms expenses, preparatory work for financial issues for presenting to the core group and general assembly.
Fundraising	Donors, sponsors and grants
MEMBERSHIP	
Subscription	Maintaining the electronic (or hardcopy) subscription forms
Membership record	Keeping updated list of members
Subscription of new members	Communication with new members, evidence, etc.
Recruitment	Promotion of the CSA and recruiting new members
COMMUNICATION AND EVENTS	
General assembly	Preparation of programme, content and procedure of general assembly
Social event organisation	Organisation of social events for members and public
Volunteering	Working with volunteers
E-communication	Website and social network maintenance; newsletter and recipe sharing
Core group coordination	Preparation and procedures of regular core group meetings
MAINTENANCE	
Building maintenance	Ensuring that all buildings are functioning and repaired
Machinery maintenance	Fixing of machinery, irrigation, water pipelines, etc.
EDUCATION	
Children's education	Events for children from both inside and outside the LSPA
Assistance to other LSPA	Consultancy for other LSPA
CHART 6 IN A TYPICAL LSPA (SOME MAY APPLY TO CSA BUT NOT TO OTHER TYPES OF LSPA)	

3.1. Communication between producers and members

There are several communication channels that can be used within an LSPA community. Always remember to discuss which one the members prefer. Human beings are different, and there are people who prefer personal communication, but others like e-mailing or sharing posts on Facebook. You should find out the shared approaches that will include everyone and find out which kind of channels are suitable for specific issues (e.g. it is enough to write an e-mail about the next farm visit, and therefore you do not need to call every member).

Be prepared! Do not expect communication to be easy. It is more likely that in many cases your communication will be one-sided as answers and responses do not arrive when or how you intended. Accept this fact and do not despair: even though most people appreciate information, they do not have the time or may not be willing to actively communicate.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Deliveries are perfect occasions to meet members personally. As a farmer/coordinator you should be the host of these meetings – never forget to talk a bit with the members as they arrive!

Topics to speak about at the delivery:

- » Explain to your members what happened on the farm last week. What is growing well, the kind of difficulties you experienced, etc.
- » Ask them how they used the share from last week, were they satisfied with the content, quality, etc.
- » Explain how they can use the new vegetables, share recipes or tips.

TIP: *The best way of building an LSPA community in an informal way is when you organise one delivery for all of your members. The shared weighing of the vegetables, discussions and the friendly atmosphere helps members to get to know each other, so the deliveries become a community event. Members can be encouraged to come with their children, share recipes and other useful information regarding sustainable lifestyles and enjoy each other's company.*

ONLINE COMMUNICATION

E-mails

The easiest way to communicate with your members is by e-mailing. Do not forget to add a relevant subject to your e-mails, because it can help attract attention. If you do not receive an answer to your e-mails on an on-going basis, ask your members, because your e-mails could be ending up in their spam folder.

Website/blog

It is vital for farmers/communities to publish their availability. It is a common problem that consumers are often not able to find or contact suitable farmers. These channels can be used for sharing news with your members.

Some LSPA communities have also started thematic blogs that generally collect and share the best recipes made from the weekly share.

Newsletters

The most common communication tool used by LSPA groups is the newsletter. You can inform the members about the content of the weekly shares through regular e-mails, send some of the best recipes, share news from the farm, promote your events (e.g. farm visits, community days) and send reminders (e.g. this is the time for renewing memberships or transfer the monthly share). Never forget to illustrate these with nice photos!!

Almost all of the e-mail providers (Google, Yahoo, Mailchimp...) include a newsletter app that is easy to start. You just need to collect the e-mail addresses of your members. find a good name for

TIP: *If you find it difficult to start a newsletter on your own, ask somebody from your community who has the capacity to work with this kind of application. A group member could be also responsible for compiling the contents with your help.*



the mailing list and decide on the structure and the frequency of the e-mails.

Social media

Some people like it, some don't, but social media platforms like Facebook or Google+ are widely used. If your members are happy to use these platforms, a group or community could be a good place to share news, pictures and motivate the members of your community to stay in touch with each other.

Becoming engaged in too many different media sites can spread resources too thinly; it is better to actively engage and create a community on a few platforms than have scattered communities on every platform.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is also considered as a great tool by some groups. For example, Laura Tabet, from Nawaya, explains why her group chose to use it in Egypt: "We use this tool, maybe not for CSA but at least for farmers' markets. One of the reasons we promote WhatsApp, is that many small scale farmers (especially women) in Egypt are illiterate. With WhatsApp, there is the option of sending voice notes. WhatsApp also allows them to be directly included if they own a smart phone. Last point: WhatsApp is more secure than many other social networks as it is encrypted".

FACEBOOK GROUPS

Are the place for small group communication. Groups allow people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organise, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos and share related content. When you create a group, you can decide whether to make it public so anyone can join, or require administrator approval for members to join, or keep it private and by-invitation only.

GOOGLE+

If you have a Google account, you will be able to create a community. Find communities on the sidebar and select 'create community'. Choose public or private and it will ask you to name your community, so create a name. Select the level of privacy, whether or not anyone can join or search for your community, and click 'create community'. From there, it will ask you to finish setting up the community by adding a tagline, picking a photo, filling out the 'about' section, and adding discussion categories.

Google can be a good option for using shared tools. You can easily share tables and documents with your members if you choose the option of shared editing

Printed materials

If your members do not use online applications much, you can produce a printed newsletter that can be delivered with their share; you can also use printed posters for promotion.

Media

If you are trying to find new members, it is worth connecting with local media (local TV, radio or newspapers) or asking an NGO/national CSA network that might have good media connections to help. Media outlets like nice pictures and stories, so your partnership can definitely provide them with good content. Be prepared! Always have at least three sentences in your mind on what you would like to share



STORY

Aicha was worried because her daughter became sick on the day she was supposed to pick up her share. Her husband was travelling abroad and she was home alone with the kids. She tried to call the farmer, but could not reach her. Finally, she realised that a nice family from the same group lives just two streets from them, and at the last delivery they had exchanged phone numbers. So everything was solved; the family was so nice that they brought the weekly share to her house. After this it was never a problem if one of the families could not go to the delivery, they even gave each other their weekly shares during their respective holidays.

3.2. Communication among members

Communication should be bilateral within LSPA communities. As a member we cannot just wait for the farmer or the coordinator if there is a problem, because in an LSPA they are responsible for many tasks that need to be carried out at the same time and they may not be available at all times. If members are also the initiators of communication, it will be easier to find solutions.

Giving feedback

An LSPA community cannot exist and develop without feedback: the community-based operation requires regular, constructive feedback mechanisms. Sometimes it is not easy to share our opinion or make constructive criticism, but there are some easy techniques which can help you.

All LSPA communities should decide on the feedback mechanisms they will use. There can be regular meetings, online questionnaires, or farmers/coordinators can monitor satisfaction when

HELPFUL:

"There were not enough strawberries at the delivery." Not helpful: "I was the last one at the delivery, even Linda left, so I could only have the rest of the vegetables. By the way, I did not know that you can cook something good from these green beans, but Mark gave me a really good recipe, even my son had some beans for the dinner. That was good that we got a half kilogram of green beans, it was enough for the whole family, not like the strawberries."

HELPFUL:

"The salad was too old when we got it." Not helpful: "I do not like this salad, it had a strange taste."

WHAT YOU CAN ASK WITH THE USE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES?

- What your members / customers really liked? Which kind of vegetables should be grown or other produce should be manufactured during the next season? What did your members / customers not like at all?
- What they think about the size of the share and its price? Is it too much? Or are they willing to pay even more?
- How satisfied are they with the delivery? Is it arranged for a good time and place?
- How satisfied are they with the organisation? Do they have enough information? Are the communication channels appropriate?
- What do they think about the community events? What else they would like to do?
- Are they involved in any kind of volunteer activity? What do they think about that? If not, what is the main reason for their stand-off?

they make deliveries. But because giving or accepting feedback can be a sensitive issue, some simple principles should be respected.

» Create a safe situation: find an appropriate time and place for giving your feedback. If the person receiving the feedback doesn't feel comfortable, your feedback will not reach its objective. If you are giving feedback on a problem, first you should do it personally, and not in the presence of the whole group.

» Be specific: get to the point and talk straight. The more you use complex sentences with reference to other issues, the less your message will be understood.



TWO EXAMPLES HOW TO USE THE BOFF MODEL

1. The farmer is quite often late with the delivery. You are very busy: you usually just come there from your workplace. When the delivery starts late, you cannot pick up the share, because the kids cannot wait outside.

"David, I have a problem. For the last three weeks, you arrived late, so the deliveries started more than 40 minutes later than they should. So, I felt really bad and nervous, because I had to ask somebody else to take my share, because I could not wait for you; I need to bring my kids home from their dance class. For me it is really important to have a fixed time when you start the deliveries. Do you think it would be possible?"

2. Or as a farmer/coordinator you can also give feedback to the members.

"Adam, as you know we agreed upon a monthly payment system. We are already in the middle of the month but you have not paid your monthly membership fee. This creates a really difficult situation for me, because I need to buy some new seeds and tools. It is really important for me that you pay your fee at the beginning of the month and settle your debt this week, because my budget really depends on the members. If the online transfer is not working for you, it is possible to give me your fee in cash here. What do you think?"

STORY

Karim noticed that some other members were standing in a group and talking about something secretly. He was curious as to what was happening so he joined the conversation. It turned out that the members were not satisfied with the quality of the carrots. Last week all of the carrots were full of worms and they just realised that this week there were also too many holes in them. Karim suggested to the group to talk about this problem, because if they don't, nothing will change. So they expressed their problem to the farmer who was surprised, because the carrots were picked by one of the interns and he did not have time to check them in the rush of the harvesting. So, from this week, the farmer will check all of the vegetables before the delivery.

Never forget to give positive feedback as well. Recognition always motivates people to keep on doing their work. It is easier than you thought:

Mina, I just wanted to tell you that it is so great to be a member of your group. Since I have joined, I eat a lot more vegetables. I realised what you produce is delicious, not like the vegetables sold in the shop nearby.

TECHNIQUES FOR GIVING/ACCEPTING FEEDBACK

Online surveys

Online surveys can contribute to the effective assessment of the season. In winter, when you and all of the members have more time, it is worth sending out a survey that can give you a good picture of how your members evaluate the previous season.

What can you use the questionnaires for?

- » What did your members / customers really like? What kind of vegetables should be grown or other produce included next season? What did your members / customers not like at all?
- » What do they think about the size of the share and its price? Is it too much? Or are they willing to pay even more?

STORY

At one CSA farm, rumours started that the membership fee was unfairly high and that the farmer only spends money on his own well-being instead of investing in the farm. The farmer called a meeting where he presented the precise and very transparent budget of the farm. The members understood what is behind the prices and that the rumours lacked any foundation. The trust within the community was re-established.

-
- » How satisfied are they with the delivery? Is the time good and the place suitable?
 - » How satisfied are they with the organisation? Do they have enough information? Are the communication channels appropriate?
 - » What do they think about the community events? What else they would like to do?
 - » Are they involved in any kind of volunteer activity? What do they think about it? If not, what is the main reason for their lack of involvement?

Personal feedback

Taking the principles mentioned above into consideration, a useful model for giving feedback could be the **B.O.F.F.** or BOFF. The acronym explains how it works in practice.

Behaviour: describe the behaviour or the problem you wish to provide feedback on

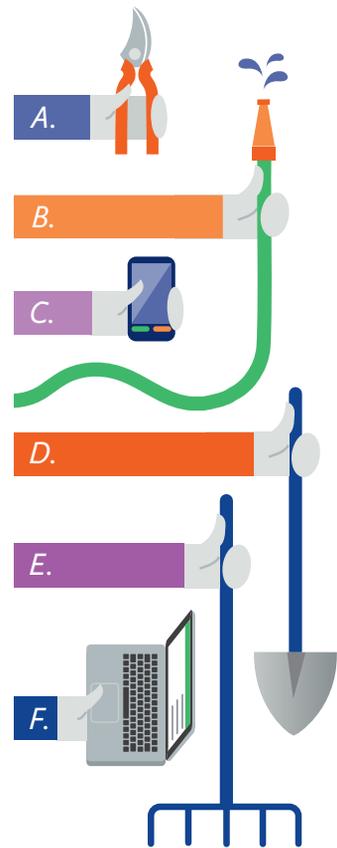
Outcome: describe the result of the behaviour or the problem in question

Feelings: how the behaviour / result made you feel

Future: what you would like to have in the future

Meetings

Meetings can be a good occasion for joint planning, evaluating a season or even discussing a problem. Being in a group can help the less active members to express their opinion. It is always useful to have a schedule for the meeting, because this can help to avoid wasting people's time. If many members are coming, it is useful to have somebody who facilitates the event. In order not to be the only person doing this, it is worth asking an external facilitator who can help you focus on the issues.



TIP: *In some countries, coordinators receive free shares for their work. In this way, they feel their work is acknowledged, and this is a good motivation for doing some kind of organisational work for the community.*

3.3. Volunteering

WHY VOLUNTEERING IS IMPORTANT ON LSPA FARMS

The members' involvement differs from country to country, and even from partnership to partnership. It definitely requires more energy to organise volunteers within a community, but it has many advantages. Through volunteering, members learn to better understand the CSA model and some of the tasks no longer fall to the farmer/coordinator. The majority of CSA members come from a city, and have only a weak link with rural life and agriculture. Hands-on experience can build a stronger connection with the farm and change the general concept of consumers that farming is a "romantic" activity. And of course, there are some organisational tasks that can be shared between the members, making the farmers' life easier.

Volunteers play a really important role in substituting for the farmer or coordinator. Just think about it: harvesting is more demanding than you expect, everyone can fall ill or just need a holiday for a week. In those cases, it is really important to have some key members who the farmer can ask for help.

WHAT TASKS CAN BE DONE BY VOLUNTEERS?

Deliveries

Most LSPA volunteers are involved in the delivery. More hands can be really useful for packing, but the distribution of the harvest, the cleaning and the administration (registration of the members that sign up and pick up their share, paying/contracting) can be also organised with the involvement of volunteers. And do not forget basic fact: all members come to the delivery if he/she wants to get their share. In some countries, undertaking some tasks during the delivery is obligatory, because it is a good opportunity for social education – members become more familiar with the processes in practice and with each other.

Internal communication

Communication with the members can be a challenge alongside everyday farming. Yet there is always somebody within the community who likes to talk, write and connect people. Young parents who are at home on parental leave with their babies are usually happy to do something for the community. Ask the members to start a blog with recipes that can help inform people how to use the harvest or to manage the newsletter or your social media platforms.

STORY

In some countries, there is a specific volunteer who is responsible for organising the community, so farmers have more time for taking care of the farm-related activities and logistics. In Algeria, for example, Torba has several facilitators who are responsible for helping producers and consumers to manage their partnership. The facilitator might be a consumer in that CSA or only a resource person for the group. But it is mandatory that each facilitator be member of a CSA. The facilitators are volunteers and they are in close contact with the national network. They play an important role in initiating the CSA and in helping the members (producer and consumers) to understand what CSA is and what kinds of roles and responsibilities need to be taken into consideration and how manage challenging situations.

External communication

Sharing personal experiences about your community is a perfect way for finding new members. Newbies are often friends, colleagues or relatives of the members. Do not be shy, in the case of a vacancy, ask your members to help. Or if you do not have time to promote your community through social media or at a public event why not ask some of your members who are passionate about your LSPA.

Farm-work

Members from the city usually love working on the farm. Sometimes even weeding or harvesting can be a relaxation for those who spend their time in an office during the week. Farm-work can play a role in children's education as well. For families with children visiting a farm provides perfect recreation. List the tasks that could be done by your members and organise workdays on your farm – this can also be connected

to a farm visit. And be patient! Not everyone knows how to do these tasks properly.

Social coordinators

You have probably met people who are the catalysts of an event or a party. They have the ability to host an event, entertain the guests and take care of everyone at the same time. If you are not that kind of person, do not worry! There might be somebody within your CSA community who can help organise farm visits, harvest parties or recruitment events.

Treasurers

You have probably met people who are the catalysts of an event or a party. They have the ability to host an event, entertain the guests and take care of everyone at the same time. If you are not that kind of person, do not worry! There might be somebody within your CSA community who can help organise farm

visits, harvest parties or recruitment events.

Volunteer coordinator

If you already have a big groups of volunteers, it can take quite a lot of time to

manage them. Try to find a key person who is good at networking, managing people and already experienced in volunteering – he or she can be a perfect volunteer coordinator in your community.

HOW TO WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS?

It can sometimes be a challenge to motivate members to volunteer. They usually have a family, work a lot, or simply do not have experience in volunteering. But here is some practical advice that can help you to overcome these obstacles.

» **Prioritise your tasks.** It can be difficult to hand over a task to a member. But if you make a list and recognise the most important things that only you or your employees can do, you will see also the ones that could be done by a volunteer. You should never forget that your time and experience should be valued.

» **Have a list of tasks for volunteers.** People are different. Somebody who feels uncomfortable among new people is probably not a good person for coordinating an on-farm event. Or a manager who works all day long in an office might be more motivated to work outside in your fields during the week-end than be responsible for some kind of online task. So, try to propose different kind of tasks and let your members decide what they would like to do.

» **Estimate time!** The different tasks should be also ordered according to the required timeframes. In that way, members can easily recognise which tasks are regular and recurrent, or what they can choose if they have only 1-2 hours a month to dedicate to volunteering. It is also useful to ask your members how much time they can volunteer a week/month/year. This can help them to achieve their commitments.

» **Be detailed and explain everything step by step.** Some tasks may come naturally to you, but could be a challenge for your members who are not used to working on a farm. How can you recognise a weed in a field? How should a spade or a hoe be used? Try to collect all of the information needed for a given volunteer task and explain it patiently to your members.

» **Lay down some rules.** What will happen if somebody takes on a task and forgets about it? Or just does not carry it out in the agreed time? Think about these possible cases and find some shared guidelines that can be used to facilitate the volunteer activities. You can

agree with your members that they should inform you about their possible delay some days before the deadline, or it could be their responsibility to ask for help if something is not clear to them.

» **Mentor your volunteers.** If you are continuously monitoring and mentoring your volunteers, the motivation can be sustained for a long time and mistakes can be avoided. From time to time, ask them if everything is going well; do they have any questions or difficulties? Your volunteers might suggest some methods that are new to you but that help perform the tasks more easily.

» **Organise groups.** Some members – especially those who would like to belong to a community – may prefer to volunteer with others. You can organise small groups like “social coordinators”, “online volunteers” or “helpers of the farm”. In CSAs where volunteering works really well, there is usually a core group. Core group members are the “right hands” of the farmer, they can be asked to do the main organisational tasks and can substitute for the farmer in many cases.

» **Praise them!** Never forget to thank volunteers when they are finished with a task or if they do something really helpful on a regular basis. You can also do this through your mailing list by sending

TIP TO FARMERS:

Let everyone talk! Invite older members to recruitment events. When potential consumers ask questions about the partnership at the recruitment event, first invite people who are members for a longer time to share their experience. Later, you can add the missing pieces of information. This way the meeting is more inclusive, older members will feel competent and become more closely related to the farm. The newcomers will receive information from a consumer perspective, which is similar to their position. Try this method, and you will realise that it is not easy, but worth practising!

STORY

People can only join a LSPA community, if they participate in the recruitment event and meet the farmer eye-to-eye. This way the one can assure that everyone is on the same page: they have the same ideas and expectations about how their LSPA is running and they will follow shared principles. There is nothing worse than being disappointed about the LSPA or managing disappointed members. Let's prevent these!

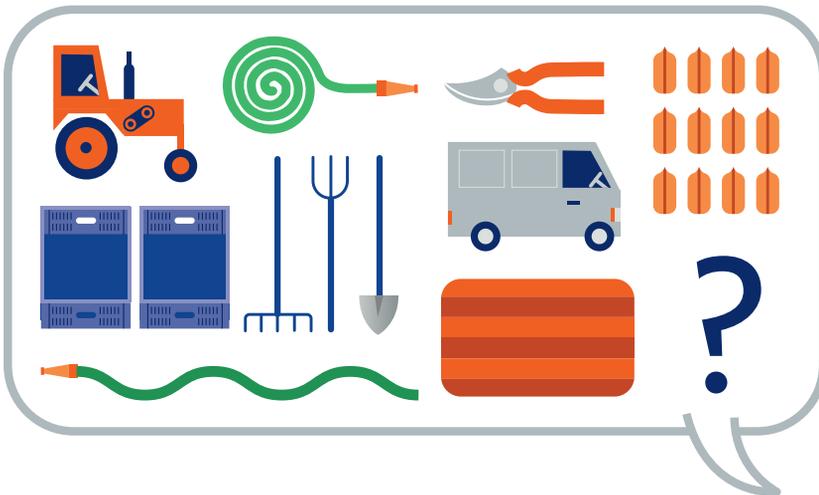
some nice pictures or funny stories about the volunteer activities: they will definitely feel recognised and your other members will see how great it is to be a volunteer within the community.

» **Never give up.** You may not find a volunteer for all the tasks. Nevertheless you should keep on sharing with your LSPA community if you need volunteer work contributions. In that way, they will see how complex your work is and, at some point, they will jump in and help you.

» **Be aware of the legality of volunteer work.** In some countries, volunteering might be subject to specific legislative guidelines, so be careful before you accept someone as a volunteer, and make sure there is no disparity with the law.

TIP FOR MEETINGS:

Always start and finish meetings on time. When you start to adjust the meeting kick-off to late-comers, suddenly being late becomes a habit even for those who are usually on time. Why should they arrive on time when everyone else is late? This is a dangerous path; do not go down this road! Finishing on time is also essential, so people who have commitments after the meeting will not miss important information. Once the scheduled parts of the meeting are over, people can still stay on and socialise.



3.4. On-farm activities and recruitment events

WHY THESE EVENTS ARE IMPORTANT

Farm visits and events are great occasions to meet the farmer and fellow CSA members. Members can learn where their food comes from, farmers meet the people who actually eat their delicious and carefully grown produce. Personal meetings give members a sense of belonging, and can create a real community from a group of individuals. These events are essential for building relationships and trust among members.

WHAT IS A RECRUITMENT EVENT?

Potential consumers have the opportunity to meet the farmer and other members at these meetings. Newbies are introduced to the concept and principles of the different LSPA models, and to the actual terms and conditions of the farm. This is the event where the produce, the delivery, the fees and payment, the means of communication and all the basic things are explained.

The recruitment event is usually organised at the beginning of the season and can be held back-to-back with the yearly kick-off meeting, where community members discuss the yearly crop and delivery plan, the fees and other important issues.

WHAT ARE THE ON-FARM ACTIVITIES?

This can be anything that happens on the farm: cooking, preserving, parties,

pick-your-own, discussions and planning.

How many events are necessary?

One face-to-face recruitment or kick-off meeting is an essential event, where members can discuss the principles and practicalities as well as yearly crop plans. Additionally, most LSPAs organise at least one farm visit during the year, when members can look around, participate in planting, weeding or harvest, and meet each other. When there is surplus on the fields, members can be invited to help harvesting and have fun or, in the case of an unfortunate disaster, for example a storm, they can go to help with the recovery. The only limit is the capacity of the farmer and of the members.

Who should organise the meeting?

The key competence of the farmer is production. Let's help him or her to focus on what she or he knows best! Of course, the farmer issues the invitation, but active and committed members can volunteer to help with the organisation, the preparation, with on-site and after-party activities. Members sometimes don't realise how good they are at organising. If there are no volunteers, the farmer can ask open-minded members to help with the events.

CHECKLIST FOR EVENTS FOR ORGANISERS

- » Send directions to the farm.
- » Share organisers' mobile numbers, just in case.

- » Let people know about the purpose of the meeting and if their presence is expected or optional.
- » Tell people what they should bring: food, mugs, paper and pen...
- » You should set the time frame for the programme, and start and finish on time. If there are special events, send the timing in advance, so people know when they want to join or leave.
- » If you have a programme, follow it and prepare with 2-3 simple, fun games. You may ask members to volunteer to run these games.
- » You can play a short, funny game at the beginning to help learn names and focus on the forthcoming meeting. Simple but funny games can be also a good way of entertaining during the day if the members are open to this kind of activity. You may ask members to volunteer to run these games.
- » Have someone (can be a volunteer) who welcomes and introduces people to each other whenever people come. Always introduce people to each other!
- » Give badges to people so they can write their names and wear them during the event. You only need some cheap, simple white stickers and markers for this. This will bring people closer.
- » If you expect people to be active at the event, let them know in advance or on the spot. You can invite people

to help with cooking, dishwashing, planting, weeding, whatever. Just don't be shy: go and ask politely and explicitly. If you ask them nicely no one will refuse or feel uncomfortable.

- » If it is a recruitment event, send general info about the CSA movement, for example charters, principles, link to the farm's internet website, and ask invited wannabe-members to read these before the meeting.

A PLAYFUL WAY TO INTRODUCE:

People stand up in a circle. One by one everyone says their name and with one single movement they imitate what they have done before they arrived at the meeting. For example: my name is Jane and I had a coffee this morning – and Jane shows how she drank the coffee. Each person says their own name and makes their movement as well as the names and movements of all the previous persons. If there are 15 people, that last one will say 15 names and do 15 movements.

TIP FOR EVENTS:

People love to play, even if they sometimes deny it, an introduction to each other goes very well with games! Let's try this one! Ask people to stand up and imagine a map where the central location is the farm. The farmer stands on the farm's spot and appoints the Northern direction. Now all people should stand in a spot that indicates their living area relative to the farm. When everyone is on the imaginary map, people should say their name, where they live and the name of the vegetables that they like and/or dislike. With this exercise members are introduced to others who live near them and who may help them out when they are unable to pick up their shares. They may also find like and dislike matches.





PART 4

*The
Fundamentals
of Agroecology*



4. AGROECOLOGY

REMINDER

Local Solidarity-based Partnerships for Agroecology are based on direct relationships between consumers and producers. They allow consumers access to fresh, healthy, agroecologically grown produce. These partnerships help farmers to care for the environment, preserve the quality of their products and make a decent livelihood from their work. Community Supported Agriculture is one form of LSPA; it is characterised by direct, contractualised sales. Participatory Guarantee Systems is another (see below), as are certain other kinds of short food circuits

Community Supported Agriculture takes the form of direct partnerships between local producers and consumers. It involves sharing both risks and benefits that are inherent to the activity. CSA is part of the wider family of LSPAs

PGS (PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEMS): *“These are quality insurance systems that are locally centred. They certify the producers on the basis of active participation that is the basis for trust and networks.”* (IFOAM).

4.1. Agroecology: a Global approach

Agroecology is literally defined as the crossroads between Ecology and Agriculture but it is not limited to a set of agricultural practices that respect the environment and human health. It is a global concept, a philosophy and a way of living, producing and consuming. It is against the capitalist economic model based on the accumulation of goods, the exploitation of man and natural resources with its consequences that we know: famine, conflicts, pollution, climate change. Agroecology is an alternative model.

Agroecology has increasingly been adopted by institutions, civil society and its definitions vary according to the authors. Here are some examples of definitions consistent with the values defended in this guide.

We choose not to limit agroecology to the sum of agricultural practices that respect the environment and human health, but rather to consider it as a holistic concept, a philosophy and way of life that encompasses the full cycle, from production to consumption. Agroecology as promoted in this manual is opposed to the capitalist economic model based on the accumulation of

wealth, the exploitation of human-kind and natural resources, and all the consequences that this entails: famine, conflicts, pollution, climate change.

Climate change (in this manifested primarily by the aridification of the Mediterranean climate), when linked to inappropriate agricultural practice and extensive uncontrolled livestock farming have led to the disappearance of many natural ecosystems, the loss of biodiversity and extreme erosion, which in turn have led to severe desertification that is now difficult to reverse.

Agroecology consumes little water and is based on systems of mixed cropping and diversified livestock raising; it thus encourages complex agro-ecosystems that are less vulnerable to climate risk, are more resilient and help to rebuild diversified ground cover and to regenerate degraded soils' natural, organic composition. It also emphasizes the use of landraces and peasant varieties that have adapted to local conditions. Furthermore it supports autonomy and resilience of family farming to climate change and its consequences.

Agroecology provides an alternative

model, a systemic approach that supports ecological sustainability, social responsibility and economic viability of life, both human and agricultural. It is based on enhancing the value of natural and human potential of any given territory and enable people to ensure their independence and food sovereignty at local level. Technically it is low in costs, economically viable and also creates rural employment as well as permanent income, especially for women and youth. Agroecology thus supports the relocalisation of the economy and stabilisation of peasants on their farms.

URGENTI, TERRE & HUMANISME AND THEIR MEDITRANEAN PARTNERS ARE COMMITTED TO THE PROMOTION AND SCALING UP OF AGROECOLOGY THROUGH SUPPORTING PEASANT DYNAMICS AND TERRITORIAL TRANSITION. THEY ARE ACHIEVING THIS THROUGH INCREASED VISIBILITY OF AGROECOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES IN PUBLIC SPACE AS WELL AS BUILDING PUBLIC POLICIES.

4.2. Various definitions of Agroecology

FAO (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS)

Agroecology is a scientific discipline, a set of practices as well as a social movement. As a science, it studies the interaction between the different components of the agroecosystem. As a set of practices, it looks for sustainable farming systems that optimize and stabilize yields. As a social movement, it pursues multifunctional roles for agriculture, promotes social justice, and enhances the economic viability of rural areas. Family farmers are the people who have the tools to practice agroecology. They

are the true guardians of the knowledge and understanding necessary to reach these goals. As a result, family farmers around the world are key players in agro-ecological food production “.

FAO defines the 10 Elements of agroecology aimed at helping countries to transform their food and agricultural systems, mainstream sustainable agriculture and reach the “zero hunger” objective as well as many of the other sustainable development goals.

SHARED CHARACTERISTICS OF AGROECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS	CONTEXTUAL CHARACTERISTICS	FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity Synergies Efficiency Resilience Recyclaging Co-creation and knowledge sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human and social values Cultural and food traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular and solidarity economy Responsible governance

It is important to note that in the “Circular and solidarity economy” point FAO encourages direct consumer/producer relationships through LSPAs (PGS, Community Supported Agriculture, farmers’ markets).

In 2011, O. De Schutter, the then-UN Special Rapporteur, demonstrated in his report *Agroecology and the Right to Food* that agroecology can double world food production while reducing poverty and providing solutions to the problem of climate change. This was confirmed by the International Symposium organized by FAO in 2014 (Italy). Driven by the global producers' organizations, the International Forum on Agroecology (2015, Mali), testifies to the deep attachment of small-scale food producers to this process.

NYÉLÉNI DECLARATION

Food sovereignty and agroecology are inseparable. In February 2007, various social movements gathered in Nyéléni, Mali, to reaffirm the importance of food sovereignty as an alternative to neoliberal agricultural policies. It defines food sovereignty as follows: *"Food sovereignty is the right of people to define their own food and agriculture policies, to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve their sustainable development goals, to determine the extent to which they want to be autonomous [and] to limit the dumping of products in their markets"*.

AGROECOLOGY AS SEEN BY THE MEDITERRANEAN NETWORK OF LSPA

Establishing and joining an LSPA is a deeply committed action that strengthens and revitalises local territories and economies. The creation of producer-consumer partnerships stimulates

local, long-term development. It does this by connecting farmers from rural areas to urban consumers who are mainly from urban areas, through building a deep, long-term relationship. Producers and consumers build a partnership within an LSPA. The aim is to develop sustainable agriculture, share the risks and the benefits of the farm, a fair and rewarding income for the producer. For consumers, it means access to healthier, more nutritious foods at affordable prices. Beyond the quality and price of the products, this relationship implies a mutual commitment to ecological sustainability of the given territory, social responsibility that is shared between the LSPA actors, and the economic viability of a system that has been collectively organised.

This approach to the fundamentals of agroecology is what we are setting out in this book. It is why the Mediterranean LSPA network has chosen to focus on agroecology as a guiding principle, adapting it to local contexts and challenges. A key feature of agroecology is the recognition that every farm, land and human being is unique and different and that there can therefore be no magical formula to success. Agroecology respects these differences and focuses on adapting to the given context, climate and social needs of a territory. This is why we will focus on fundamentals and key principles rather than techniques and methods.

4.3. Notions of adaptability

Agroecology rejoices in differences and advocates for adaptability according to contexts, climates and social environments. This is why we talk about fundamentals and principles rather than techniques and methods.

Following this overall view of agroecology, the next part of this manual lays out our Mediterranean vision. It is the result of the collective work carried out by URGENCI, Terre & Humanisme and the Mediterranean members of the LSPA network in June 2018 in Rabat, Morocco.

Here are the various existing definitions of agroecology, grouped in 12 broad arbitrary but fundamental fields.

The order of these fields is the result of the collective work carried out within the network, and emphasizes the most important points for the Mediterranean context. Nevertheless, all fields are essential because agroecology is a holistic approach. Furthermore, these fields are strongly interconnected, and action on any one of the parameters inevitably influences others.

The different fields are illustrated by examples drawn from experiences of the various members of the Mediterranean network.

4.4. Twelve fundamentals of agroecology

1. Water: optimized management of water resources

In agroecology water management is optimized so that everything is done to preserve this fundamental natural resource. Especially in a Mediterranean context where water resources are limited.

BASIC PRINCIPLE: make sure that every single drop of water that falls on the ground remains there for as long as possible.

RECOVER WATER: even in semi-arid environment, there is water! 150 mm of rainfall / year on 1 hectare it is 1 500 m³ / year, which is a significant amount. The goal is to recover water when it falls and store it for future use. Ideally, a maximum of water will be stored directly in the soil and subsoil rather than artificially in tanks. How can this be done? There are many different techniques: create humus, use compost, water redirection, half-moons or basins, work in harmony with natural contours, create benches, retention ponds, terraces, mulch and beards.

TRANSPORT AND STORE WATER: traditional systems (*fogara* or *khetara*, *metfyah*), roofs, cisterns, canals, wells, lakes, ponds, and diversions.

OPTIMISE WATER: reduce soil

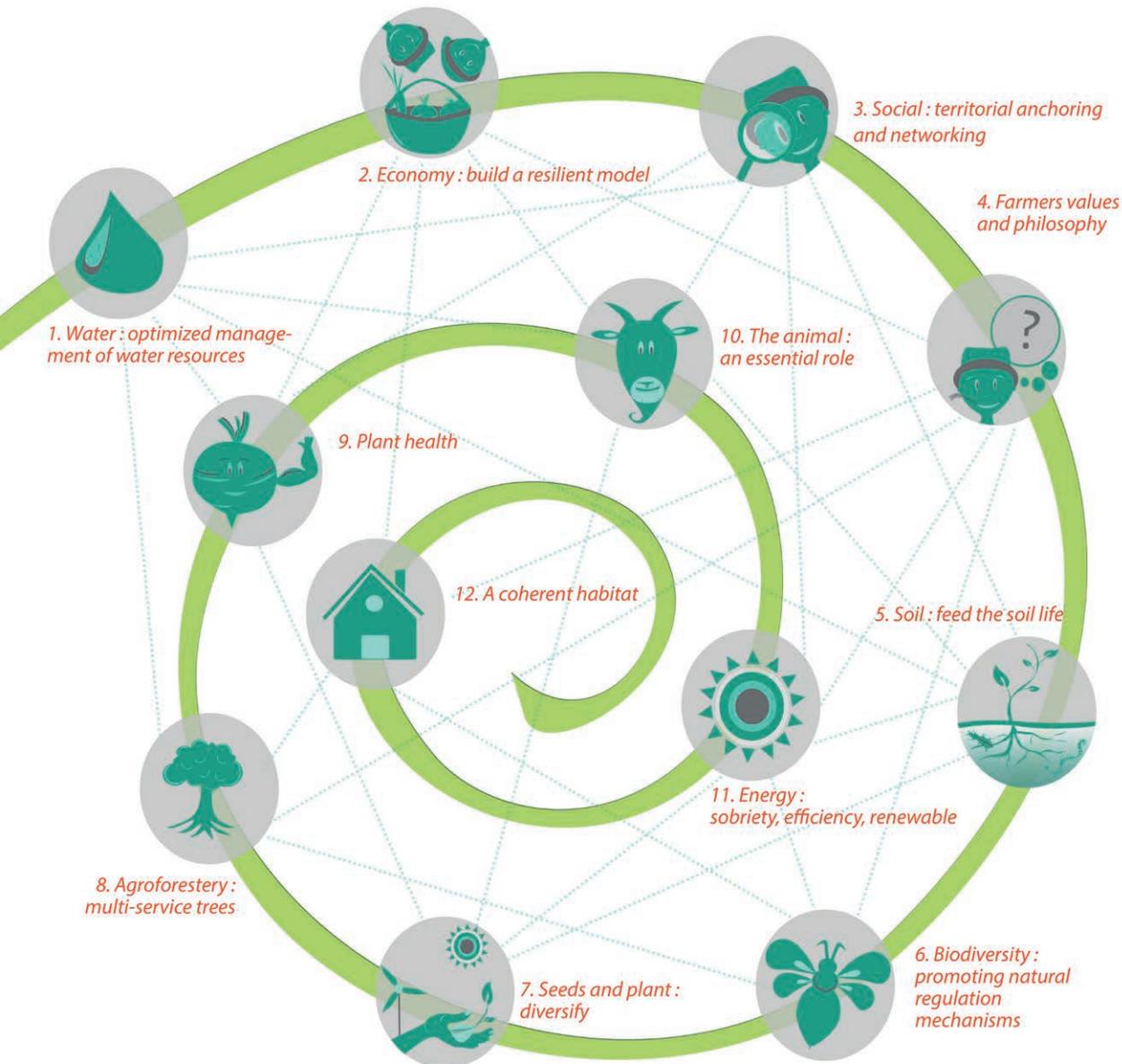
" AGROECOLOGY IS THE ART OF COOPERATING WITH LIFE "

PIERRE RABHI

" Agroecology considers the respect of the nourishing land and the food sovereignty of the populations in their territories as the essential bases for a balanced and sustainable society. It is a set of practices, a science and an art reconciling ecology and agronomy, humanity and all forms of life. Its purpose is not only to take care of the soil, the plant, the animal or the human being, but also to consider all elements of the ecosystem and social systems and to ensure quality of their interrelations. In this sense, agroecology is a harmonious balance of mixing, agriculture and ecology, quantity and quality, human activities and biodiversity, philosophy and techniques, ecosystems and social systems. "

Synthesis of different definitions

THE 12 FUNDAMENTALS OF AGROECOLOGY IN MEDITERRANEAN



evaporation and plant transpiration (through ground cover, shading ...), use drip irrigation, localized watering, shading, shelterbelts, adapted spaces, match plant cycles and seasons, participatory seed breeding, companion crops, deep watering.

OTHER KEY ELEMENTS: choose types of production, varieties and breeds that are adapted to the local availability of water; choose efficient irrigation systems and plan irrigation sparingly,

as needed; limit evapo-transpiration (through the use of hedges and wind-breaks, ground cover shade ...), and as far as possible, avoid all sources of water pollution.

ZINEB'S GARDEN IN SHOUL - SALÉ-RABAT MOROCCO

Located in a semi-arid region, Zineb's Garden is a model of water management that combines water recovery, irrigation and recycling. The farm is partially equipped with a localized irrigation system (drip). In order to recover water, Zineb tries to keep the water wherever it falls. The watering takes place in the following way: at the bottom of the garden, there is a riverbed that is usually dry. "Tafraouts" or bunds hold water and let it seep into the ground. Zineb has worked with the shapes and contours of the slopes, planted fruit trees, kept the soil covered, and planted terraced crops using hillocks or impluvium and swales. Grey water is recycled by phyto-purification in several places on the garden. The soil is systematically covered in all areas of the garden to avoid evapo-transpiration and keep the water in the soil alive.

THE DITCHES OR SWALES OF THE TORBA COLLECTIVE, ALGERIA

In a context of mountainous areas in northern Algeria, where there are increasing periods of heat and scarcity of water resources, Torba has begun development work to capture and store water by building 70 cm deep ditches that follow the ground level lines.

"The ditch is an obstacle, and stops the water flowing away, it limits the erosion and promotes infiltration. In addition, they planted olive trees on the slopes downstream of the ditch, which will benefit from the presence of almost constant underground water. The ditch is connected downstream to a water storage pond that allows excess water recovery through a pile of stones once the ditch is full. At the end of this first experiment, it appears that fruit trees are better than others, they grow faster and bear more fruit. In short, they are healthier!"



2. Economy: build a resilient model

Agroecology is based on the revitalization of a local economy through the development and cross-fertilization of different modes and means of valorisation of products in short circuits (on-farm sales, producers' stores, CSA, markets, development of local currencies). Agroecology makes it possible to produce income-generating activities and sustainable and rewarding jobs, it promotes the balance and complementary links between urban and rural areas.

WHAT ECONOMIC MODELS WORK BEST? Sales and distribution are the pillars of the economy and the sustainability of the farm: the peasants who do best are those who have considered

their sales model in advance (customers, sales, products). For a farmer to live, he / she needs to sell her/his produce!

PROCESSING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS provides greater added value: it increases profits, there is diversification of products, sales and work are spread over the year, there is increased added value, but also a unique identity to the farm and better product preservation.

KEY ELEMENTS: start "small", with diversified activities, secure some finance to support the launch of the project, define the sales strategy, look for original ideas to connect consumers to the farm, stress the farm's originality, its identity, the connection with the surrounding territory, diversify marketing channels, control your access to market.

EXAMPLE OF JEROME NOYER'S FARM, DRÔME, FRANCE

Jerome settled on 4 hectares of land owned by his uncle in 1996, and followed the path of organic farming from the outset. In 2018, his farm covers an area of 16 ha, of which he owns only 2. Today, this fine example testifies that it is quite possible to live from peasant farming. Jérôme has a comfortable monthly income, takes 6 weeks of vacation every year and finds the time for leisure activities (music). He has no outstanding loans.

Jérôme has built the resilience of his farm's economic model on several fundamental elements that are often overlooked by many young people who want to start farming today in agroecology and / or permaculture:

1. He started gradually and modestly: he invested gradually, putting some money aside when he could. He tested himself on different levels.
2. He avoided taking out bank loans.
3. The majority of the equipment was purchased jointly with other producers (Farm Equipment Cooperative).

4. He has diversified as much as possible: cereals, oilseeds, protein crops, vegetables (35 varieties of different vegetables).
5. He sells everything through short supply chains.
6. In 2006 he participated in creating a producers' store "Au Plus Pré" close to where he lives. It was particularly well thought through in terms of legal and organisational aspects, its location, the logistical aspects, and communication. This producers' store actively supports the 17 farms involved. It is this store that provides Jerome with the financial security for his farm.
7. He is part of a producers' network of mutual aid, specifically working with certain producers of the farmer's shop.
8. He uses collective tools (mill, press ...) for processing as part of his production for flour, oil and pasta.
9. The farm is autonomous in terms of seeds, manure, equipment ...
10. He has become very skillful at technical level and very pragmatic: he masters the compromises that must be made to allow a significant production in an agro-ecological approach.

Useful links :

<http://www.aupluspre.fr/> Social aspects and territory: territorial grounding and networking



3. Social aspects and territory

Agroecology considers humans to be an integral part of the ecosystem. In an agroecological approach, farmers are strongly linked to their community. It favours territorial dynamics by relocating the food economy and promoting strong links between producers and consumers. It also aims to promote social justice through the networking of actors and creation of alliances that promote and support mutual assistance, cooperation, mutualisation and the rehabilitation of ancestral know-how. It aims to build individual and collective food sovereignty and truly sustainable local food systems.

suppliers, marketing channels and complementarities of production systems at a territorial scale. It is equally important to participate in local social life and to search for an environmental, economic and social added value that benefits the living area.

SOME KEY ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT CAN BE: cooperation, educational farms, social inclusion, meeting other farmers, welcoming farmers and the public on the farm, the provision of local services, involvement in the associative fabric and participatory projects, farmers' mutual aid.

CONNECTION TO THE TERRITORIAL ENVIRONMENT: it is crucial to find

"MANOS VERDES", SALAMANCA, SPAIN

<http://www.asdecoba.org/proyecto-manos-verdes/>

This project was born in Salamanca in the Buenos Aires neighbourhood. This is a neighbourhood where a lot of migrants and poor people live. These people understood that the only way they could access their rights was through community building and solidarity. They started to work on different aspects including the right to food.

Their perspective was that the right to food should be linked with food sovereignty rather than public aid. They therefore started different activities within their community including looking for land where they could produce healthy food and hold training in agroecology.

In recent years they have gained access to 4,5 hectares of land in a rural area. They got the land for free because in this area, there is an aging population who no longer use the land. They are very close to Salamanca, and 15 people are

working there (including two trainers). Some of them are migrants and others are people who have had jail convictions. They grow food using agroecological techniques and they have two main points of distribution. One is the LSPA group and the other one is a catering business. This catering business is involved in the local dynamic, a sort of “meals on wheels” that provides food for old people in this rural area.

Manos Verdes has transformed the reality of this neighbourhood and the life of many people.



manos verdes

“THE PERMACULTURE REVOLUTION IS UNDERWAY IN TUNISIA

March 2011, 2 months after the Tunisian Revolution, Amine started an experimental space of alternatives for a sustainable Tunisian future on a family farm. He passionately implemented practices for healthy food production, water conservation, energy efficiency, eco-construction and waste recycling for 7 years. Thousands of visitors have shared the experience and the work on the land, which also attracted international attention and promises of development.

When he realized he was facing the risk of becoming an amusement park or a rural museum, Amine decided to close his doors at the end of 2017 to reconfigure his work. While he has devoted himself to the mass awareness-raising and to inspiring young people to start ecological farms, the question he now asks is how to establish a model in harmony with his ideals rather than dictated by the needs of visitors. This teaches us that real sustainability is not in promoting ideas and practices, but rather in creating channels that allow them to become a sustainable part of the local territory. In a country with arid climatic conditions, how and with what should soil be covered to reduce the loss of water through evaporation? Will dry toilets be accepted without taboos to save water resources? The most important thing is to find practical solutions that will allow alternative actors to live a better life, with a more professional approach.

FUORIMERCATO NETWORK, ITALY

FuoriMercato was created in 2012 in an abandoned factory in Trezzano S/N near Milan; it was started by three workers and a big entity composed by families, workers, social and human rights activists.

Over the years, FuoriMercato has managed to establish connections between people and different realities in North, Centre and Southern Italy. It is now a huge network of production and distribution that aims to build solidarity between its members who are producers, cooperatives, social centres and collectives of refugees. They organise a local market every two weeks (with products from the rural hinterland and all other local and national producers). They also have on-line sales for all the producers in the network. They have built a strong national network and are connected with other foreign networks.

Many members of FuoriMercato networks work specifically with refugees. They are starting new projects such as LIBERA, an anti-mafia association based in Cislano (close to Milan). They have organized a local market and a hub for

local logistics.

FuoriMercato provides an alternative to mass distribution, promotes self-management and allows the creation of decent and sustainable local jobs. This example shows the force of a network that is rooted in a given territory.

4. Values and Philosophy

FARMER VALUES: Agroecology is part of an approach that involves a commitment to humans and the environment. Agroecology actors adopt a benevolent, aware and respectful attitude to life in all its forms. They implement this at territorial level using their knowledge of traditional know-how and participating fully in local, social life. Agroecology makes access to land a legitimate right for all.

VISION AT A HUMAN-SCALE:

Agroecology involves the development of practices and techniques at a human scale aimed at:

- » Better understanding of the ecosystem to which we belong and in its various aspects: social, economic, agricultural and environmental.
- » Adopting a careful approach to the interaction and interrelationship between people, crops, livestock and natural environments and promoting synergies of abundance.
- » Restoring meaning and reality to a relocalised economy, recognizing the value and needs of all inhabitants.
- » Limiting financial risk-taking (related

to large investments).

TOWARDS AUTONOMY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY: autonomy lies at the heart of the agroecological approach. Anchored in a given territory, it involves optimizing and making sustainable use of natural local resources and whatever is required to produce and what is generated by the activity (food, seeds, inputs, energy, water...). It involves the development of specific know-how to achieve self-sufficiency from seed to the food. This is also true of the economic and financial model.

KEY ELEMENTS: Genuine respect for life, adaptation to the environment rather than the opposite, the use of keen observation and actions based on these observations, learning to use nature as a guide, a holistic approach (based on inter-dependence), sobriety, autonomy, diversity, sustainability, multi-functionality, continuous improvement and respect for the work of elders.

EXAMPLE OF THE LAMALOU FARM, HÉRAULT (34), FRANCE

After being a farmer and trainer at CIEPAD, an old training centre created by Pierre Rabhi, Stéphane settled down as a farmer on the Lamalou farm, north of Montpellier in 2001. His first criterion was the beauty of the place... He genuinely wanted to live and work in the same place, but feeling at ease with the place itself and its beauty were key to him! This desire for independence guided Stéphane and his wife Sylvia, who joined him in 2006: to be independent in terms of their food, energy, finance, the building where they lived, and in their relationship... They are today fully committed to the agroecological approach.

In order to consolidate his farm from an economic standpoint as well as his dream of creating a lasting relationship with a group of local consumers, Stéphane created the first CSA in the region in 2004. Progressively it became the main source of farm income. Stéphane has always worked slowly and surely, settling and diversifying, with great humility in relation to nature. Rather than borrowing from banks, they have always waited to earn some money to reinvest in the farm, and grow their project step by step. This is how Stéphane and Sylvia advanced on their lifepath, without any loans, apart from quite recently where they requested a modest loan to help them to self-build their home. After living for 15 years with their family in a yurt without water or electricity, Stéphane and Sylvia have just finished their magnificent strawbale carbon neutral house, which is particularly well thought out. Many of the construction materials come from the farm or from neighbouring fields, and beautiful windows have been positioned to optimise the year's path of the sun.

They try their best to limit the use of plastic and oil. They have donkeys that they use to work the earth and provide them with manure. They breed seeds for the activist seed company Kokopelli, which provides them with another sizeable source of income.

When we meet Stéphane, Sylvia and their 3 children, they convey a feeling of deep harmony. Aware of "their wealth", they like to share their life experience so that others can gain self-confidence and start projects themselves.

<http://lafermedulamalou.blogspot.com/> <https://fr-fr.facebook.com/lafermedulamalou/> <https://app.woof.fr/host/822>



5. Regeneration and Maintenance of the Natural Ground Fertility

Feed the soil to take better care of the plants. We need to do everything we can to promote soil fertility. To this end, agroecology recommends adopting a vast system of techniques and know-how that include: rotations and crop associations, composting and fertilization practices, protection and permanent soil cover (cover crops, mulch, no till).

COMPOST AT THE SERVICE OF FERTILITY: aerobic fermentation of animal and vegetable waste and some non-aggressive minerals, to produce stable humus, real food that amends the soil

whose structure it improves, including the capacity absorb water, aeration and water retention.

TILLAGE IS MINIMAL AND ADAPTED: to limit compaction and deconstruction; to avoid upsetting the vital natural layers, between the arable land that is home to aerobic microorganisms, and deep ground, seat of anaerobic microorganisms, each microbial category plays a specific role

KEY ELEMENTS: no synthetic chemical pesticides, limited use of copper and sulphur, crop rotation, companion planting, cover crops, minimum tillage, amendments and natural fertilization.

FARMER FIELD SCHOOL AT ANADOLU MERLARI, BIGA, ÇANAKKALE, TURKEY

The Anadolu Meralari (Anatolian Meadows, in Turkish) is part of the Savory international network that focuses on the regeneration of meadows thanks to agro-ecological practices. The network aims to achieve the implementation, training, dissemination and development of regenerative agricultural practices, in particular the holistic management of the farm. Anadolu Meralari manages an apprenticeship farm located on non-irrigable hills. It consists of fields of a total of 22 hectares, with multiple constraints: abrupt, steep slopes that limit the use of tractors, no source of water, and limited access to some parts.

Goats (for both the dairy produce and meat), sheep (for meat) and finally cows (for meat): all livestock is exclusively fed on what is at hand on the spot. This is a pioneering practice for modern agriculture in Turkey. Holistic planned pastures: no seedlings, no ploughing or fertilisation on the field school. The results are convincing: the increase of biomass productivity, biodiversity and microbiological activity (SoM) is important. The most significant impact on the soil is the increase of organic matter (OM), the main indicator for soils' health, for carbon sequestration, water retention capacity and other regeneration dynamics.

Increase of OM between 2014 and 2015:

0-30 cm: from 1.75% to 2.37%

30-60 cm: from 1.15% to 1.54%

60-90 cm: from 0.31% to 0.54%

The 2 pictures shown here were taken on the same day and illustrate the results achieved.





6. Biodiversity

Agroecology involves protecting, respecting and safeguarding biodiversity. This protection promotes natural regulatory mechanisms and ensures the balance and resilience of the system.

Attracting maximum biodiversity helps to attract auxiliaries that help increase pollination and predation of pests.

Let's protect small animals! Life in the soil is enriched by "collaboration" between roots, plants and micro-organisms. The latter can be seen as plant cooks, who greatly contribute to the natural soil fertility. Indeed, ranging from mycorrhizian associations to worms, including auxiliary predators, all these little animals deserve more protection.

KEY ELEMENTS IN BRINGING BIODIVERSITY TO THE FARM:

- » Sun: transforming solar energy into organic matter
- » Plot: encourage the establishment of small plots
- » Crop management plan that depends on the pedo-climatic context (nature of the soil, exposure, altitude ...) and landscape elements (forests, hedges, water points, cliffs ...)
- » Trees, forests, scrub, dead wood, flowers ...
- » Stone, rock, mineral ...
- » The water: riverine preservation, lakes, ponds
- » And also: soil, choice of natural species, animal shelters, air auxiliaries.

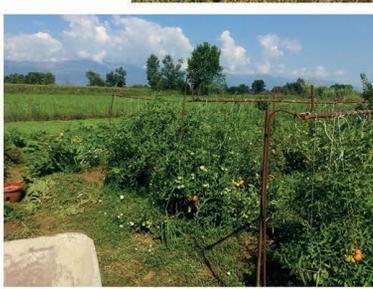
ECOGAIA FARM, GREECE.

Alexandros Karatzas and Natassa Antari are the brains and hands of the Ecogaia farm, close to Trikala, in continental Greece. Here is their history in their own words: "The food we eat is essential for our health. This is why we decided to create a small farm (5,5 ha) with vegetables, plants, trees and small animals. Our vision: to come back to organic forms of agriculture and handicrafts, looking for self-sufficiency, community, solidarity and sustainable culture.

"Biodiversity is both an objective and a mean to actually reach our objectives. To have diversified water and soil management techniques; to have a lot of different varieties of plants and animals; to carry out different activities on the farm: all are equally important as factors for resilience. The traditional varieties that we plant play a crucial role for us. We use only compost that is created on the farm, which allows us to have a lot of worms. We grow a lot of different varieties of flowers, because they also attract bees and auxiliaries that protect from insect pests. We test the plots with vegetables to identify where they grow best. We have set up a rain water collection system. We cultivate all the fruits and vegetables that can be grown in our region. We have a few chickens. Pigs give us manure and clean up and weeds under our new trees. One of the pigs, "Pega", is now the farm's mascot."
Useful ink: www.ecogaia.gr; www.facebook.com/ecogaiafarm



ECOGAIA FARM



7. Seeds and plants

Agroecology advocates for the use of diversified seeds and animal breeds that have adapted to the local conditions and contribute to the farm's stability and autonomy. The agroecological approach prohibits GMO and hybrids.

Peasant seeds are increasingly threatened by the use of hybrid seeds (including those imposed by official catalogues). These modified seeds that are sterile and can not be reproduced, are often exported from the European Union to countries on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, and are thus not adapted to or appropriate for

the Mediterranean climate and the soil.

75% of edible varieties have been lost in one century (FAO)

The Mediterranean LSPA network encourages farmers to organise and build seed saving networks and thus to preserve peasant seeds and the necessary know how to produce and save peasants' seeds.

KEY ELEMENTS: promote agro-biodiversity with local varieties and animal breeds. Prohibit GMO and F1 hybrids. Promote production, reproduction, seeds and plant swapping and the creation of peasant seed saving.

BUZURUNA JUZURUNA ASSOCIATION AND SEED PRODUCTION FARM, LEBANON

In spring 2016, ecological activists from Lebanon and France, as well as Syrian refugee farmers in Beqaa met to start a new project: to return heirloom seeds to the vegetable gardens of Lebanon.

The team first came together and started sowing what has now become a 2,000m² pedagogical garden in the Taanayel Domain for local seed production and reproduction. They built a seed saving house made of mud bricks. It currently houses thousands of seed samples from the region.

In autumn, they organized a seed festival, that included over a hundred of people from the Mediterranean region. During the festival, the basis for a joint project was developed: it laid the foundations for the solidarity and transmission of agroecological know-how in the Near East. Following this incredible encounter, the Buzuruna Juzuruna association was founded .

The team grew and decided to look for a bigger plot of land to experiment with growing vegetables, cereals and fruit. It has led to a long-term pilot farm where their convictions in agroecological farming have become consolidated through experience, practice and observations, together with a school for training and sharing this agricultural adventure with the widest number of people

possible. Ultimately, sustaining this dynamic project will entail creating resources to pay salaries for the solidarity support and sale of their products. They have now moved to a plot of 2 hectares with a 10-year lease in the Beqaa, near the city of Saadnayel.

There are now hundreds of varieties of heirloom and Mediterranean vegetables that are being grown, seeded, selected and improved on the farm. More than forty varieties of ancient wheat, barley and rye have been multiplied to supply passionate bakers in the future. A conservatory for many varieties of trees used in the region was also established this winter; several hundreds of trees were planted that will also serve as an educational support for grafting, and pruning apprenticeships.

<https://www.facebook.com/Grainesetcinema/>



8. Agroforestry

Agroforestry is a production model that associates tree and bush plantations with intercropping and underlying cultures. Agroforestry is considered to be a high yield system that allows a maximal use of space.

Agroecology implies global agroforestry management by valuing the inter-relationships between forests, crops and livestock. Trees are the pillars of agroecology with their many symbiotic functions: they take nutrients from deep soils to restore them to the surface soils, structure and aerate the soil, contribute to the production of humus, temper the action of the winds, the sun and rain, ensure homes and habitats for wildlife, are a source of energy and support boundless knowledge and inspiration (heating, the production of many

and varied objects, providing us with fruit and more ...).

Multifunctional trees provide a windbreak, organic matter input, retain soil, are an ecological niche, fix CO₂ and mycorrhizae. They also provide shade, humus, wood as fuel, create a microclimate, can be used for making tools, provide food, medicine, branches and diversity. They can be used for construction materials, are landmarks, appease the eye, can be used for huts, and crafts. They give us oxygen, sap, resin, rubber, insulation, fodder, help fix nitrogen, contribute to conservation, pump nutrients, create natural beauty, attract honey bees, may be considered as sacred, provide essential oils, mushrooms, help game to hide, and can even be used as clothing.

CHENINI OASIS, TUNISIA

Chenini oasis is located on the Tunisian seashore. The proximity of the sea makes this site rare and precious. As in any oasis, the complex organisation allows the coexistence of plants, animals and humans in an arid environment thanks to three main elements: the fertile soil, the collective water management and vegetation.

Traditionally, plants and trees are organized by “vegetal layers”: the upper layer consists of palm trees of various varieties (up to 45 varieties in Chenini!). Palm trees provide edible fruits and building materials. They also provide shelter against the wind and shadow for the lower layers. Below, one can find the orchard, with various fruit trees (pomegranate trees, olive trees, fig trees, peach trees, citrus trees...) which provide fruit and shadow for the 3rd layer, composed of forage plants like alfalfa and of vegetables like carrots, turnips and onions...). The Chenini oasis is a place where

plant and animal diversity are high. One can find domestic breeds (sheep, goats, poultry...) and animal wildlife (migrating birds, waterfauna...), which all contribute to maintaining the ecosystem. The fragile balance is only possible thanks to the complex interactions between trees and plants, as well as to the complex collective irrigation system set up by humans.



9. Plant health

Observation, the key to a privileged relationship with the plant ecosystem, guarantees appropriate prophylaxis (management of soil and plant cover, plant associations, relationships with the environment, etc.) and interventions in phase with the environment. The agroecological approach forbids the use of any synthetic products (pesticides and fertilizers).

In agroecology, we do not use poisonous synthetic inputs, artificial hormones or GMOs.

If needs be it is possible to choose phytosanitary and veterinary treatments that are as natural as possible, using fast biodegradable substances are not a risk to crops, livestock, the natural

environment, producers or consumers (natural, harmless preparations).

KEY ELEMENTS: reduce vulnerability through adaptation and hardiness of breeds and varieties used, reduce risks by limiting monocultures and preferring diversity, prioritize all forms of pest and disease prevention through appropriate agronomic practices (diversification, calendar management, crop rotations, crop combinations, mechanical protection ...) and breeding practices that strengthen the natural immunity of animals (hygiene, premises, food, animal welfare ...), resort as soon as possible organic control and favour auxiliaries.

EXAMPLE OF RECIPE USED BY TERRE & HUMANISME AT THE MAS DE BEAULIEU, FRANCE

In a well-balanced ecosystem, there is almost no problems: the plants are in harmony with their biotope and are rarely ill. However, this can happen from time to time. In this case, in order to cure the fungus and insect attacks, here is some advice.

For preventive treatment and to stimulate the natural defences of plants: concoction of horsetail herb, oak bark, or camomille matricaria herbal tea.

- Insect repellent and insecticide: maceration of onion and garlic skins, tansy or absinth. In case of a massive attack, one should use black soap and neem (*azadirachta indica*) preparations.
- Mildew : fermented burdock extract or willow concoction.
- Powdery mildew : 10% diluted whey.
- Rust and slugs : absinth fermented extract.
- Growth stimulation : liquid comfrey or nettle manure.

To learn more about this read (in French only):

<https://terre-humanisme.org/publications/fiches-pedagogiques>



10. The animals: their place in the farm organization

Animals play a vital role in agroecological dynamics. Their presence offers multiple services to the agro-ecosystem: opening of environments, multiplication of biodiversity, fertilization (composts and organic amendments), draught for ploughing etc. The animal strengthens the autonomy and resilience of the agro-ecological farm: from diversification of production to pastoralism, from eco-tourism to pedagogical and social vocation.

As far as possible, farms should use a maximum of territorial and community management, and a livestock load that

is adapted to fodder resources, available water resources and the regenerative capacity of the grassland.

KEY ELEMENTS: all animals play an active role on the farm, manage animal production (meat, milk, eggs, wool, honey ...) in a way that strengthens animal diversity and using rustic breeds. Use draught animals when suitable, take into account all the animals' contributions to the farm (food, manure, animal workforce, pollination ...); always care for animal welfare (density, health ...) and animal health.

BOUINANE FARM, ALGERIA

Ammi Rachid is a mountain crop-livestock farmer. He provides the Torba collective LSPA with fruit and vegetables. As well as plots for growing vegetables and diversified orchards, he leads a dozen head of cattle, sheep and goats to surrounding pastures. As far as the poultry is concerned, Ammi has a flock of several hundred chickens that are free range and live under the trees. They are a local breed. This model of traditional farm including animal husbandry ensures the food autonomy of the family, as well as also securing them a regular income.

In addition to animal production (meat, dairy products, eggs...), the animals' unprocessed manure plays a central position in the farm's ecosystem. It is often collected into a pile, allowed to decompose with crop residue and recycled through regular turning (once or twice a month to produce compost that is needed to fertilise the orchards and vegetable plots).



11. Energy, the power of restraint, efficiency, renewability

The best energy is that which is not consumed. Everything is done to limit energy consumption and make it as efficient as possible. The use of renewable energies comes is the next highest priority.

It is important to optimise energy use: the management of the resources required for the activity should be as economical and sustainable as possible. Resources produced by the farming (composting waste, biogas, etc.) should also be optimised.

The first energy available on the farm is the farmer's energy! The farm should thus be thought out to be as effort saving as possible and ensure the highest possible efficiency.

A greenhouse or tunnel enables better monitoring of the conditions for plants and the production of some winter vegetables. Some young plants can be prepared at the beginning of the season and replanted outdoors.

Renewable energies are available on the farm in abundance and for free: solar energy, the wind, hydraulic power and biomass. Their use allows a drastic reduction of the negative effects on the environment and enables greater autonomy.

The best use of resources is guaranteed by the careful management of the inputs that are necessary for the activity, and by the valorisation of resources produced by the activity, like waste composting, biogas...etc

MINNIE'S DRIED FRUITS, EGYPT

Minnie's Dried Fruits was founded in 2010 in Egypt, in order to produce high quality dried food and to provide possibilities for training and employment to poor women from rural areas.

The first project initiated by Minnie using solar drying, was launched in Dahshour (Gizeh) in March 2011 and relies exclusively on solar energy as well as on local products and workforce. The product packaging can be recycled and the project's carbon footprint is minimal.

Minnie's products are seasonal and based on what is available locally. The dried products are 100% natural, without any added sugar, chemicals or preservative or flavor enhancers.



12. *Habitat, coherence of buildings*

Since the farmer is an integral part of the agroecological approach, her/his habitat is ideally located on the farm. The habitat built or renovated for the agroecological activity is integrated into the territory. The use of local and ecological materials is encouraged and optimized for bioclimatic rehabilitation and design of buildings.

Ecological building using local materials is a promising and innovative practice that addresses several issues at once. It is not only a way of proposing alternatives that provide an equal performance compared with conventional imported materials whose bioclimatic properties are limited. It is also a way of relocating know-how and jobs, and

providing people with the possibility of living in decent housing and in a healthy environment. These materials can usually be recycled, and are produced with renewable local resources, using low energy processes. They can be of vegetal, animal, mineral or recycled origin (for example, the use of local wood for the roofs, or straw for the wall insulation).

KEY ELEMENTS: coherence between the house and the farm, through a well-thought integration into the landscape, the restoration of old buildings with local materials, recycling of materials, use of ecological materials and bioclimatic construction of the new buildings.

THE AGROECOLOGICAL PEDAGOGICAL FARM OF ZERALDA, ALGERIA

The farm is entirely built using recycled materials. It consists of stables, a building for the sheep, a yard for poultry, a guest hosting space, multifunctional meeting rooms. The farm can host students, families and is also training sessions.

The materials used are wooden pallets, wooden electrical poles, chipboard, a traditional oil press, former agricultural tools, a recycled steel frame, rushes for the walls, ropes as well as glass and polycarbonate shop windows for the greenhouse. Even the electric wiring has been collected from the Algiers metro construction site.

The farm's pavement is made of insulation bricks collected from a former factory. The central warehouse is 130 years old and is now entering a new life as the pedagogical farm's restaurant. The farm is equipped with solar panels that cover its needs in electric light and heating. Rain water is collected. 400 trees, bushes and plants have been given by a seed and grafting company that is going out of business. An old Khama was found in the garbage. An old truck stands at the centre of the farm. The toilets are also made out of recycled materials. A cow and some sheep have been rescued from the slaughter house. Finally, a seed and soil museum is under construction.



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PART 5

*Participatory
Guarantee*

*Systems
(PGS)*



5.1. PGS BASICS

REMINDER

LOCAL SOLIDARITY-BASED

PARTNERSHIPS FOR AGROECOLOGY

are based on direct relationships between consumers and producers. They allow consumers access to fresh, healthy, agroecologically grown produce. These partnerships help farmers to care for the environment, preserve the quality of their products and make a decent livelihood from their work. Community Supported Agriculture is one form of LSPA; it is characterised by direct, contractualised sales. Participatory Guarantee Systems is another (see below), as are certain other kinds of short food circuits.

COMMUNITYSUPPORTEDAGRICULTURE

takes the form of direct partnerships between local producers and consumers. It involves sharing both risks and benefits that are inherent to the activity. CSA is part of the wider family of LSPAs.

A PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM

(PGS) is a collectively managed approval system. With active participation of all actors involved, and working on the basis of transparency and trust, they choose and certify their producers and products according to collectively determined criteria.

5.1.1 What is a PGS?

PGS AIMS TO:

- » Secure access opportunities to safe food for consumers
- » Enable direct contact between producers and consumers
- » Secure better marketing opportunities for small-scale farmers/producers
- » Support small-scale farmers and promote agroecology
- » Support solidarity-based groups and networks
- » Facilitate exchange of knowledge and

skills among various actors of the food system

A concise definition of PGS from the IFOAM: "Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange."

5.1.2. Origins of PGS

» The definition and implementation of PGS worldwide has been pioneered by the organic movement, particularly by the IFOAM. The term Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) was first used in 2004, at the “Alternative Certification Workshop” held in Torres, Brazil by the IFOAM and MAELA (Latin America Agroecology Movement). At the workshop, development of PGS was identified as a priority, and to that end, the PGS International Working Group was established. This group has now become an official unit under the IFOAM.

According to IFOAM's estimations dated 05.02.2018: "There are at least 241 PGS initiatives worldwide of which 115 are under development and 127 are fully operational, with at least 311.449 farmers involved and at least 76.750 producers certified. PGS initiatives exist in 66 countries; among them 43 countries have fully operational PGS initiatives in place." <https://www.ifoam.bio/en/pgs-maps>

5.1.3 Main pillars of PGS

PGS has inherited many shared characteristics with LSPAs. It is based on the fundamental pillars of **food sovereignty, solidarity economy and agroecology** (see Module 1 for a definition of these concepts).

5.1.4 Who are the stakeholders?

PGSs require and reinforce active participation of all its partners. It aims to empower and hold all these individuals and groups responsible, based on long-term relationships. Which ones and in what ways these different groups will be included in the system depends on the particularities and preferences of the structure, where regional/local context plays a role.

PGS can potentially include all actors of the food system, by defining frameworks of their contributions:

FARMERS/PRODUCERS: depending on priorities, the emphasis can be on small-scale farmers, producer cooperatives/collectives, food processors...

CONSUMERS: As direct beneficiaries of clean and healthy food production, consumers constitute one of the key actors of PGS. Consumers may contribute to the PGS individually or as part of a CSA/LSPA. And let's bear in mind that in a PGS stem, everyone, including the farmer, is considered as a consumers.

PURCHASERS: depending on the background, purchasers can be independent businesses, institutional buyers, restaurants...

LSPA GROUPS: CSA groups, cooperatives, other ethical purchasing groups.

RESEARCHERS AND ACTIVISTS.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS.

NATIONAL OR LOCAL GOVERNORS/DECISION-MAKERS.

5.1.5 PGS and third party organic certification

PGS is often seen as complementary to third-party organic certification systems, as both aim primarily to secure environmentally-friendly production and healthy products.

However many people consider PGS as an alternative to organic certification, as PGS is more accessible in economic terms and in terms of procedure to small-scale farmers/peasants. Indeed, being rooted in the same movement and having similar inspirations and goals, PGS and third party organic certification can live together and even support one another. Many producers involved in a PGS also have third party certification. It is also argued that the transparent and intimate environment provided by the PGS between producers and consumers adds an additional element of trust when integrated into the third party certification (May, 2008).

Early organic certification systems in the 1970s in various parts of the world were operating very similarly to what we call PGS today. Some of these groups, such as Nature et Progrès in France, still practice PGS.

5.1.6 Benefits of PGS

» As stated above, PGS is considered more accessible to small-scale farmers as compared to the third party certification system, which is often perceived as too expensive and/or too bureaucratic.

» PGS may foster agroecological practices beyond what third party organic certification requires.

» Farmers often consider the companies carrying out certification as insufficiently independent, and consumers often raise doubts about the reliability of controls. PGS, by holding all stakeholders in the process responsible and empowering them, reassures both consumers and producers.

» PGS fosters active citizenship and collaboration among consumers, by cultivating a sense of collective ownership. It enhances citizens' communication, participation and collective problem solving skills.

» PGS supports social inclusion by recognizing the value of farmer's work and status.

» PGS enhances farming practices by helping producers build capacity in terms of product diversification, packaging, agroecological techniques, relating to social networks, promoting products, etc.

» PGS enhances consumer practices by raising their awareness about the source of their food, farmers' conditions, production methods, and the socioeconomic background of food systems. PGS also guarantees the quality of products for the consumers.

5.1.7 Operational values

PGS is a structure that is grounded in many social values:

DEMOCRACY: Inclusion of all actors (consumers, producers, facilitators) through participatory and transparent decision-making.

COLLABORATION AND SOLIDARITY: The main expected outcomes of LSPA. Transparency. Critical for building trust.

EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION: Necessary for collective action.

DYNAMISM AND FLEXIBILITY: Rather than rigid structures and rules.

5.1.8 Different types of PGS

Although the idea of PGS is simple and intuitive, the solutions are diverse, as each context and needs are different:

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE: from very local to national scale.

LEGAL ENTITY OR GRASSROOTS STRUCTURE.

PAID STAFF OR NOT, FEES FOR PARTICIPANTS OR NOT.

STATE RECOGNITION OR NOT - WHEREVER AVAILABLE.

IFOAM RECOGNITION OR NOT.

“SPG MAROC” DEVELOPED BY THE NETWORK OF AGROECOLOGICAL INITIATIVES IN MOROCCO (RIAM)

CONTEXT

The RIAM has been part of the global reflection on the Participatory Guarantee System since 2011. In April 2017, the network decided to set up a PGS with the help of Sylvaine Lemeilleur, Researcher at CIRAD (International Centre Agricultural Research for Development).

The RIAM is the owner of the agroecological label whereas CIRAD accompanies the process of implementation of the Participatory Guarantee System. The first certification took place at the end of October 2018.

The CIRAD carried out numerous farmer-to-farmer workshops, but it also assisted consumers in the charter writing process, helped to define the vegetable specifications, the rules and procedures, the farm visit template, the opinion of COLOC (local label committee) and CONAT (National Label Committee).

OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to create a label of agroecological quality but also to foster a dynamic within the local community (producers, consumers and intermediaries) to improve and develop agroecological practices throughout the chain.

METHOD

A participatory method was used to create the PGS guidelines: every sentence in every text was discussed and voted on until unanimous approval was reached. It took 13 workshops, each lasting 3 and a half hours. A theatre workshop was also held to allow the actors to play out the situations.

The trademark was registered at the OMPIC (Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property) to protect the label.

THE CHARTER IS COMPOSED OF 3 CHAPTERS:

One about an agricultural model that respects the environment and biodiversity.

One about the equity and economic sustainability of farming systems in the territories.

One for farming as a source of social well-being.

The vegetable specifications consist of 8 components:

1. Development and choice of crops.
2. Soil management and fertilization.
3. Prevention and work against diseases, pests and weeds.
4. Seeds and seeds used.
5. Farm equipment.

6. Water management on the farm.
7. Waste on the farm.
8. Farm worker's working conditions.

Each part of the vegetable specifications consists of prohibited, mandatory and recommended specifications to be achieved in the near future.

These are the elements that formed the basis of the first certification in 2018. This process is constantly evolving and texts can be revised.

5.1.9 The political value of PGS

Given the collaborative and participatory character, PGS is:

- » A structure for exercising self-governance and democracy.
- » An efficient tool for achieving food sovereignty.
- » A set of guidelines in the solidarity economy movement that facilitates the implementation and supports alternative economic models.

An LSPA is typically small enough to manage logistical issues and enable close interaction among members, PGS is not necessarily so narrowly localized.

PGS is rather an overarching structure that fulfils functions that complement CSAs and other LSPAs. Many critical tasks, like setting product and production criteria, reaching out to trustworthy farmers/producers, paying structured visits to farms/production sites, monitoring their conformity to

criteria, establishing farmers' registers and means of distribution, may require large amounts of labour and time if done separately by LSPAs.

Depending on collective decisions, a PGS can function as a network that promotes and supports LSPAs. In Turkey, the DBB network, while allowing consumers direct access to producers, encourages the formation of LSPAs, or participation of its members in such existing structures.

5.1.10 Farm visits

One of the main functions of a PGS is to organize structured and regular group visits to the farms / production sites of the producers.

A farm visit is an excellent opportunity to strengthen relationships between the producer and the consumers. It is not just a means of inspection or supervision, but more importantly, a learning opportunity for all parties. It makes consumers think about issues,

challenges and constraints faced by the producer. It raises consumers' awareness of the situation on the farms, which can lead them to get more involved, through participation in farm work, financial assistance, etc. This exchange also allows the producer to have feedback and proposals on his farm.

The producer seeks to make his farm replicable for other farmers, counteract rural exodus, and show that a family can live from their land. To avoid misunderstanding on both sides, it is necessary to prepare the visit for both the producer and the visitors. Farm visits can become a dangerous exercise if the visitors are not prepared, as the urban versus rural divide can grow and create the risk of total misunderstanding.

In any farm visit, there is a need to highlight both strengths and constraints, respect the farm and the producer, and address specific points from the consumers' side. An option is to send a form to the visitors in advance.

Do not discard the importance of complementary visits.

One main issue will be how often should the producers be visited for collective inspection, to reassure consumers and other partners. There is no single good answer to this question, availability of time and other resources will be important. In any case, one should bear in mind that PGS is not about "controlling", which may imply notions of dominance and hierarchy. It is mainly about maximizing contact, feedback, mutual learning and continuous improvements. Similar concerns will be valid when it comes to whether or not to conduct laboratory tests of products.

5.2. LET'S GROW A PGS

The first question should be: is there a need for PGS? Is the organic certification not satisfying? For example, in Algeria, certification is useful only for exporting to the European Union. Furthermore, organic certification is delivered by foreign companies. Thus, the creation of an independent Algerian label seems relevant. In Morocco, there

is a need for an agroecological label to sell part of the produce to supermarkets.

2.1. Get to know each other

This initial phase is essential and can take a lot of time. It consists of a lot of exchanges, communication and net-

working. In the initial meetings:

- » Decide who should meet: Who are the potential beneficiaries / stakeholders?
- » Decide on where and how to meet.
- » Include local LSPAs, researchers, activists from the outset.
- » Create strong links: meals on the farm, participatory workshops (Twiza in Morocco). Links are reinforced, exchanges in a good atmosphere, sharing = trust is built.
- » Identify facilitators to build the link between consumers and producers.

DURING THESE INITIAL MEETINGS, IT IS WISE TO CARRY OUT AN ASSESSMENT OF RESOURCES AND NEEDS:

What already exists?

Who are the eligible farmers? It can be critical to choose reliable and knowledgeable producers from the outset – it is always easier to expand existing networks and develop greater confidence and trust rather trying to construct these from scratch.

What are the relevant structures/LSPAs that can provide inspiration?

Is there a real need for starting a PGS? What are the benefits and drawbacks of existing third-party (organic) certification system(s) in your country/region.

THE GOAL IS TO ORIENTATE AND FACILITATE A PRE-EXISTING DYNAMIC. ONE CANNOT START A PGS FROM SCRATCH.

IS IT NECESSARY TO HAVE SEVERAL PRODUCERS TO START A PGS? YES, BECAUSE A KEY IDEA IN THE PGS

MODEL IS THAT PRODUCERS WILL REGULARLY VISIT EACH OTHER.

THE INITIAL CORE GROUP SHOULD CONSIST OF PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS.

How is it possible to work with illiterate producers? In Morocco and Turkey, the producers involved are rather new farmers. In India, there are famous cases of PGS involving illiterate women farmers. They account for their production methods with an oral pledge.

5.2.2. Set up shared values, vision, goals

Once the group decides that it's worth starting a PGS, the 1st step is to agree on a definition of Agroecology that is shared by farmers and consumers.

THE 2ND STEP is to define what we want to achieve within 5 years from both the consumers and the producers' perspective = building a shared vision.

THE 3RD STEP is to define the advantages for both parties.

CHOOSE A METHODOLOGY FOR COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING. IF NEEDED, FIND A FACILITATOR TO PROVIDE SUPPORT (SEE COMMUNITY BUILDING MODULE FOR GROUP DYNAMICS AND MEETING METHODOLOGY);

MAKE A NEEDS/PROBLEMS ANALYSIS: WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN AND DOCUMENT.

RIAM PGS (Morocco) SHARED VALUES

RIAM PGS is a project of RIAM (Réseau des Initiatives Agroécologiques au Maroc), established with the technical support of CIRAD (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development). This collective quality assurance system has been progressively structured through collective reflection and actions since 2011. Here are the shared values of RIAM:

- A shared vision.
- Solidarity between all the different actors of the network and their participation.
- Transparency and trust between all stakeholders of the PGS.
- A process of continuous learning, with exchanges of knowledge and know-how, to improve practices.
- Horizontality by sharing and alternating responsibilities among PGS members.

DBB (Turkey) VISION STATEMENT

DBB (<https://dogalbilinlibeslenme.wordpress.com/>) is a PGS founded in Turkey in 2009, that currently includes 25 active producers and about 1000 active consumers/prosumers from various parts of the country. Here is the DBB vision statement:

“We want a democratic and ecological food system where food production and supply conform to agroecological principles; agricultural production respects the natural environment and supports biodiversity; consumers become responsible prosumers; farm workers reclaim social visibility and economic security; and every member of society can access healthy foods.”

5.2.3. Set criteria

PGS criteria are generally consistent with the criteria adopted by the organic certification system, but may include other standards set through participatory processes. These involve adoption of a holistic agroecological approach,

including production methods (such as favouring biodiversity, sustainable/regenerative resource management) and socio-economic dimensions (such as conditions of permanent or seasonal workers). This often implies a

preference for production criteria rather than just product criteria.

Depending on group consensus, a PGS may also choose to adopt guidelines to accompany producers who intend to transition to agroecological methods.

5.2.4. Decide on the model

As with other aspects of the PGS, the legal/economic model and the governance structure, should be decided collectively and through consensus. At this stage, it will be very instructive to study other PGSs, at home or abroad. And of course, regional or national legislation can be decisive in the adopted model: (1) legislation (or lack of legislation) on small-scale production, marketing restrictions, direct sales or short supply chains, etc., and (2) legislation about NGOs, cooperatives and other possible means of organisation. Depending on the context, one option is to remain a grassroots informal structure and not take on any legal structure; DBB in Turkey is an example of this.

The next step is to decide on the internal workings of the PGS; membership types and methods, committees and/or workgroups, roles, means of facilitation, etc. Here too, it is wise to allow enough time so that decisions are taken collectively, with as much unanimity as possible.

As an effective social platform, a

PGS can always assume additional functions such as organizing meetings and learning events, incorporating work groups for awareness raising, lobbying, advocacy or training, seed saving and exchanging systems, implementing mechanisms for barter, etc.

5.2.5. Design for facilitating communication

PGS is based on trust, which in turn is based on honest and efficient of communication. Maximizing interaction between actors should be a priority. Various channels can be implemented to facilitate communication among facilitators, producer-buyer connections, feedback mechanisms, etc.

Holding together a high number of people and groups requires a lot of communication skills for all parties, including empathic connection and determination to survive potential conflicts. Some key questions are:

- » Failing to anticipate that there will be no conflicts or problems.
- » How the group deals with conflicts.
- » How does the group survive and learn.
- » It can be a long process before a culture is created.

Although a positive attitude from the outset is definitely an asset, one should not expect that there will be no conflicts. What is essential is how the group deals with conflicts, how it

survives these, and learns from them. It can be a long process before a culture is established.

One good practice will be to keep a record of conflict experiences and how these issues were dealt with.

5.2.6. Document results of nonconformities

Explicitly document all measures for farmers and other participants who do not comply with the rules.



RIAM – PGS MAROC

PREAMBLE

The members who have been awarded the label are bound by this charter, to which all subscribe.

This charter expresses the foundations of their commitment and their vision around the ethical, ecological, social and economic issues that they have identified as essential for their activity. Each member, whatever the specificity of his or her practice is committed to the implementation and the promotion of these principles within the framework of their professional activity with a view to permanent improvement, and shares this vision:

A) WE SHARE THE QUEST for an alternative agricultural model that is people centred and capable of ensuring

producers' autonomy, that respects the environment, biodiversity and territorial resources, contributes to food security and guarantees a healthy diet affordable for all.

B) THIS ALTERNATIVE agricultural model is based primarily on the absence of synthetic chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc.).

C) OUR GARDENS and farms are places of life that respect humankind, and are in harmony with animal, plant and mineral elements. This commitment is evaluated in the context of a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) also called participatory certification, proposed as an alternative to third party certification systems (i.e. by a private organization). It is also understood that members respect the existing legal framework

of the country as a prerequisite, but it is not the responsibility of the PGS to enforce them.

The manner in which the PGS visits, awarding of the label and the sanctions in the event of non-compliance are established will be defined in the rules of procedure of the GIP of the RIAM.

Nevertheless, PGSs that originate in a global citizens' movement around agroecology, share a common definition as "locally anchored quality assurance systems, that certify producers based on the active participation of relevant stakeholders and are built on a basis of trust, networks and exchange of knowledge" (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, 2008) and comply with six principles:

1. A SHARED VISION OF THE OBJECTIVES and values developed in the SPG between all the actors involved.

2. SOLIDARITY BETWEEN all the different actors of the network (producers, consumers, traders, restaurants, etc.) and their participation in the design and implementation of the PGS and at the different levels of the organization.

3. THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE SYSTEM since all the players in the PGS know how the certification process works, and have access to information (charter, specifications, etc.).

4. THE TRUST BETWEEN ALL PGS stakeholders who commit to respecting the charter and the specifications defined collectively.

5. THE INVOLVEMENT OF ACTORS, in particular producers, in a process of continuous learning of knowledge and know-how, which helps them to improve their practices.

6. HORIZONTALITY BY SHARING and alternating responsibilities among PGS members. In terms of agricultural practice that respects the environment and ecology, we, members, commit to:

D) THE RESPECT OF NATURE and the preservation of life supports (water, soil, air) and balances of life.

E) PROMOTE AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY, the beauty of landscapes, territories, ecosystems, wild areas within the farm.

f) Favour the use of the resources and the inputs produced on our farms or those resulting from the cooperation between producers of the same territory (wood, compost, manure, peasants seeds, etc) in a perspective of autonomy and research of the natural cycle of life.

(G) PROMOTE SELF-PRODUCTION of seeds and exchange between producers in the network.

(H) DEVELOP THE DIVERSITY OF SEASONAL CROPS (in association, in stages) and the complementarity with breeding (at the level of the farms or by co-operation between producers of the same territory) and to proscribe the intensive mono-cultural system, and with the objective of cultivating sustainability.

(I) FAVOUR THE MAINTENANCE and restoration of the natural fertility of living soils (water sensors) by favouring organic fertilization (based on green manures and composting), combating erosion, maintaining plant cover crops (all strata).

(J) DRAW INSPIRATION from nature to create locally adapted and prevention-based solutions, natural care methods and the natural regulation of pests and diseases.

(K) FAVOUR THE CONSERVATION and development of animal breeds and adapted peasant seedlings and seeds adapted to the soil.

(L) FOCUS ON WATER AND ENERGY efficient activities and practices (from production to marketing).

(M) PROMOTE RECYCLING AND REDUCE or even avoid non-biodegradable and non-recyclable waste (from production to marketing).

(N) FOR THE EQUITY AND ECONOMIC sustainability of farming systems in the territories, we, members, commit ourselves to:

(O) FAVOUR AUTONOMOUS PRODUCTION systems (in particular in terms of seeds, inputs, energy and financing) and resilient through the diversification of activities and their multi-functionality (agri-tourism, processing, training, etc.).

(P) PARTICIPATE IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT of the territory by favouring the employment of local labour and local supplies for the operation of our farms.

For an agriculture that is a source of social well-being, we, members, commit ourselves to:

(Q) KEEP A PEOPLE-CENTRED dimension of our production structures, favouring artisanal processing, supplying local markets and supporting the link between producers and consumers.

(R) PARTICIPATE AT OUR LEVEL in a fair distribution of income and value added created along the value chain with fair and just prices.

(S) PROMOTE FOOD SECURITY AND ACCESS for all to a quality and diversified diet that preserves health.

(T) PROVIDE WORKERS ON OUR FARMS with decent working conditions training and / or participation in PGS visits to help them become more involved in the farm and the network project.

Focus on specifications on waste management and water management on the farm from the RIAM PGS Charter.

WASTE ON THE FARM 2018

PROHIBITED	TOLERATED	RECOMMENDED
Burn plastic waste	Sorting of waste • Gather non biodegradable waste (plastics, glass, metal, etc ...)	Circular and solidarity economy Responsible governance

WATER MANAGEMENT ON THE FARM 2018

PROHIBITED	TOLERATED	RECOMMENDED
Irrigation with non ecologically treated wastewater	Localized irrigation * (except by inundating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil recovery (increasing evolution) • Show that we have taken note of the situation of the water resources (in particular before new drilling initiative *) (within 1 year) • Biological and physical rainwater recovery system (increasing evolution) • If sloping terrain and recurrent water scarcity, water storage (consistent with crop area and needs) placed upstream of crops for gravity irrigation (increasing trend) • Manage (reduce pollution, sanitize) wastewater

One concern that should be addressed is not to make the system “too heavy” or complicated for farmers. Standards can be detailed, but guidelines and measures should be kept as simple and efficient as possible to ensure dynamism and flexibility.

Flexibility: There should be mechanisms to handle structural inability to conform to ideal standards and directing farmers to better practices, without compromising transparency. Standards should not suppress, but rather stimulate the creative potential of the farmer.

How DBB HANDLES EXCEPTIONS

DBB’s production criteria for various categories of food (vegetables and fruit, cereals, animal products, apiculture products, processed food) includes “allowable exceptions” that the farmer may deem necessary for a limited period of time. The guideline reads as follows: “In case a DBB producer deems necessary to temporarily deviate from the DBB standards listed here, (s)he is expected to explicitly share this situation with the whole group, explaining his/her reasons for this action and providing a schedule and plan for adopting resilient agroecological methods”.

5.3. OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES TO STARTING AND RUNNING A PGS

Every context has its own set of challenges, based on its ecological, social and economic particularities. Common concerns may include:

- » How to keep expenses low for farmers.
- » How to secure a workforce, especially with grassroots structures: Decent acceptable work standards and promotion, labour for moderation, supervising conformity to group rules and conventions.

- » Challenges to find viable paths between autonomy (of individuals and groups) and shared codes.
- » Challenges to find ways for maximizing participation and feedback: How to address cultural barrier collaboration.

Notes

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PARTNERS DESCRIPTION AND THEIR COUNTRY SITUATION

ALGERIA

TAFAS is the abbreviation of the Arabic name “Tadhamoun maa el Fellah Assly”, which means: Solidarity with the authentic farmer. It is a short supply chain, that brings the consumers and the farmers closer to one another, through a direct relationship and without intermediaries.

The Tafas experience began in 2014 when a group of consumers in the Algiers region decided to change to a diet of healthier food.

The group began by contacting a small farmer and shared their hope to source healthy products from his farm. The experience started in a simple manner. This short supply chain quickly raised interest among hundreds of consumers. 200 families are now registered. They are all willing to consume products from mountain farms, on a regular basis, in a responsible way, and at a fair price.

The demand far exceeds the offer. The active members who are part of the management staff of Tafas have begun to prospect for other farmers. Tafas is currently connected to more than 10 farmers including 4 from Algiers area and the rest from different cities or

localities in the country (Blida, Zeralda, Setif, Tizi Ouzou...).

The development of a CSA start-up training programme is a work in progress, with contributions from Tafas stakeholders and with the help of young project leaders from all major cities in the country. The ultimate goal is to create more jobs in this alternative sector.

EGYPT

NAWAYA has supported small scale farmers to transition away from chemical agriculture, and create family-based enterprises around traditional foods and rural heritage since 2011. Given the issues of marketing, formalization and cash flow, Nawaya sees the immense value of transmitting the LSPA good lessons learned in Arabic speaking countries. This starts with efforts to connect farmers, NGOs, universities, and other practitioners to exchange resources and best practices that serve rural communities’ priorities. Participatory processes allow for the easy sharing of models and lessons learned from on-going LSPA initiatives, while Nawaya turns these into easy-to-follow formats for simple replication– reducing the

burden of reinventing the wheel, and allowing focus on adapting and innovating in local contexts. Online video and facilitation tools allow people from diverse backgrounds to communicate with one another, in an effort to help answer questions, discuss alternatives and access peer coaching.

Off-line programmes connect small initiatives to shared business and network resources that reduce resource constraints and make small-scale alternative solutions based on LSPA more viable. And farmer-to-farmer learning ensures farming communities are core participants in sharing locally validated information, ideas, and methodologies that will allow LSPA to scale up and out.

www.nawaya.net

FRANCE

TERRE ET HUMANISME is one of the pioneers in the agroecology movement in France and at international level. Their key objective is to share agroecology as a practice and ethical to improve the living conditions and the natural environment of humankind. T&H coaches and supports Mediterranean actors involved in LSPA in Morocco (RIAM) and Algeria (Torba) in the framework of bilateral partnerships. T&H took part in the Learning Journeys organised by Urgenci by providing methodological and technical expertise in agroecology, and contributed to drafting this training manual for LSPA actors. As a follow-up to the training needs identified

during the course of the Learning Journeys, T&H is committed to a train-the-trainer project in agroecology that is specifically aimed at helping the Arabic-speaking LSPA partners strengthen their skills and training methods.

<https://terre-humanisme.org/> infos@terre-humanisme.org

LES AMAP DE PROVENCE is a regional network for Associations pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne, Associations for maintaining Peasant Farming, the French model of CSA. This network is specific to the Provence Region in the Mediterranean region of

France. It supports local solidarity-based partnerships between farmers who are implementing agroecological principles and consumers. Since its creation in 2001, its mission has been to federate, facilitate and coordinate the Amap groups in the region in a way that is faithful to the national Amap Charter.

http://miramap.org/IMG/pdf/charte_des_amap_mars_2014-2.pdf

The network represents more than 150 Amap groups, 300 Amap farmers. A collective (3 farmers and 10 Amap members) is regularly elected to manage the network. There is a Commission on Farming and Ethics that responds to any request related to the creation of Amap groups or the follow up of existing groups. It is also available to intervene and engage in problem-solving operations. The network has also created a network of mentoring farmers, called

Paysamap (27 farmers). They are in charge of the technical and professional follow-up of beginning and experienced Amap farms. The Paysamap network supports the installation and sustainability of Amap farms, helps farmers provide the Amap members with a share that aims to satisfy the members but also allow the farmer to live a dignified life. Paysamap also stresses the fundamentals of the Amap movement – ethics, values, Charter – thanks to various tools and personal experiences.

GREECE

AGROECOPOLIS is a young organization created in 2017 in Thessaloniki. It is however the result of many years of collaboration between various individuals and collectives, formal initiatives and informal groups. Agroecopolis is the Hellenic network for Agroecology, Food sovereignty and access to land. It actively promotes LSPA as a viable solution for the regeneration, the sustainability and the resilience of rural and urban communities in Greece, a country hit by the socio-economic crisis. AEP is creating training and dissemination materials in order to help people create new initiatives. They are also organising workshops to this effect with urban dwellers and farmers. They are currently involved in the creation process of a national association of LSPA to ensure the fiscal and legal compliance of existing and new partnerships. The aim is also to foster exchanges, to

share tools, support and skills between the partnerships. AEP also helps to set up similar initiatives abroad. A concrete example is the solidarity-based exportation of citrus fruit and olive oil to some LSPA in the European Union.

ITALY

TAVOLO RES (Rete di Economia Solidale, Solidarity Economy Network), the informal organisation that brings together all the Italian local groups and networks of Solidarity Economy (Rete dell’Economia Solidale – RES) was founded in 2002. Its mission is to promote alliances, exchanges and partnerships among the solidarity economy actors; it works to connect people in order to build supportive communities, with particular emphasis on economic, social and environmental impacts. Tavolo RES promotes and connects joint actions at the local, national and international level, aimed at developing economic and social relations based on solidarity and community building.

Tavolo RES brings together Solidarity Purchasing Groups, (Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale – GAS), Districts of Solidarity Economy, local and regional networks, and other actors that share the values of Solidarity Economy (consumers, producers, service providers...).

Tavolo RES is engaged in critical reflection on its own sphere of activity and its ability to change to an alternative economic model that is ecologically and socially sustainable. Tavolo RES

aims to reterritorialise the economy, and is strongly focused on the idea of community, which is understood as an area of experimentation of strong relationships based on mutual trust that can help to refocus economic activities on the community's needs.

LEBANON

1 - RELATIONSHIP TO LSPA ACTIVITIES:

SOILS is not directly engaged in any LSPA activities in Lebanon, but it follows new short food circuit initiatives closely and tries to shed light on them by inviting organizers and/or producers to write articles about their initiatives or farms for their newsletter and promoting their work on social media.

One of SOILS' members sells his produce directly to consumers, either in Badaro Urban Farmers Market, or via the "Meet the Producers Initiative" - where people pre-order their produce online and pick it up every Wednesday at a bakery in Beirut.

Soils are also in regular contact with farmers who practice agroecology and sell directly to consumers, share resources with them, as well as informing them of any potential opportunity (training, learning experience, etc.).

www.soils-permacultue-lebanon.com

2 - LSPA IN LEBANON:

We noted 2 types of short supply chain initiatives in Lebanon: Farmers' markets: where producers from all over

Lebanon gather in Beirut and sell their produce directly to the consumers. Some of them are certified organic or practice agroecology without any certification. They pay a fee to rent a stand. The markets are usually organized by an association, but more recently a new market has emerged that is organized by the community itself. Examples: Souk el Tayeb, Badaro Urban Farmers. Baskets: pre-orders are placed for seasonal baskets (or individual vegetables) through mailing or a WhatsApp lists, or via a website. Pick-ups are usually at a specific point, and less frequently delivered to households. Some producers organize their orders and pick-ups on their own, others have formed networks and have one producer organize the orders, and in some cases orders are organized by a company or an association. Examples: Healthy Basket, Meet the Producers, The Farm.

MOROCCO

LE RÉSEAU DES INITIATIVES

AGROÉCOLOGIQUES AU MAROC – THE NETWORK OF AGROECOLOGICAL INITIATIVES IN MOROCCO, RIAM.

The Network of Agroecological Initiatives in Morocco brings together individual stakeholders, collective economic and social actors. The aim is to promote the agroecological transition, ecocodevelopment, sustainable agriculture and fisheries in an eco-systemic approach, Its main mission is to identify these stakeholders

throughout Morocco, to federate them, to allow them to meet to exchange and strengthen their links.

Thanks to its connection to other regional, national and international networks, the RIAM aims to capitalise and mutualise best practices as well as innovating and inspiring experiences (relocalisation of the economy, sustainable rural and urban agriculture, green economy etc...). The RIAM focuses on further network building in the field of farming and fisheries. Its goal is to valorise, to certify and market products, to build, agritourism and advocacy for the transition to agroecology. The RIAM supports multiple experiences of short supply chains, with a maximum of one intermediary, as in the case of ecological, solidarity-based farmers' markets.

The RIAM has also set up the first Participatory Guarantee System "Système participatif de garantie Maroc" (Participatory Guarantee System, Morocco), as well as the Agroecology Observatory in Morocco. It is building greater collaboration with scientists.

SWANI TIQA

Swani Tiqa means trustworthy vegetable growers. The Swani Tiqa association was created in 2015, after several years of informal existence. Its objectives are the following:

51 Initiate a new urban-rural relationship, giving greater value to the rural world, fighting the rural exodus and encouraging urban consumers and

citizens' solidarity-based commitment.

52 Promote the role of women and youth in rural economies.

53 Preserve environmental heritage – water, soil, biodiversity – in a sustainable development-focused approach, and promote local seeds, resources and know-how.

54 Raise awareness of civil society on the 3 main pillars of sustainable development: the social, the economic and the environmental.

The Swani Tiqa bring together producers and 3 consumers' group. Each group has been taking vegetable shares for over 9 years. The shares have been prepaid 6 months in advance, and sometimes include some fruit. The contract includes consumers sharing risks with the producers. There is a summer and a winter season.. This is a unique experience in Morocco. In addition to the weekly shares, producers have changed their activities: one has been evolving towards organic certification, another towards an associative commitment within a farmers' network, and the third towards managing a social inclusion farming centre for mentally disabled people.

PALESTINE

PALESTINIAN AGRO-ECOLOGICAL FORUM

Established in June 2018 by a group of volunteers, the Palestinian Agroecological Forum aims to provide a platform for all those who are interested in practicing and promoting

agroecology as a basis for achieving food sovereignty in Palestine.

Its main objectives:

- » Spread the message, philosophy and practices of agro-ecology and showcase its role in achieving food sovereignty in Palestine.
- » Exchange local, regional and global knowledge in the field of agro-ecology.
- » Map agro-ecological farms in Palestine, and support agro-ecological farmers in marketing their produce.
- » Facilitate the creation of CSA groups supporting agro-ecology in Palestine.
- » Push for changes in the agricultural policies to adopt chemical-free and socially-just farming methods such as agro-ecology.
- » Join global networks with mutual vision and goals, and support the global movement in the field of agro-ecology and food sovereignty.

The Palestinian Agroecological Forum strives to unite all the efforts and expertise in Palestine to ultimately create a strong movement in this field.

SPAIN

ZAMBRA BALADRE was initially established to coordinate struggles against social exclusion. Zambra Baladre is composed of groups of people with low incomes, in a situation of social exclusion. The coordination operates at national level with local groups from different parts of Spain (Galicia, Salamanca, Basque Country, Valencia,

Andalucia, Castilla). There are 15 groups throughout Spain and one of the topics they are working on is food sovereignty. Within this topic, CSA groups are among the most successful initiatives for accessing healthy food and also building community including this group and other organizations, mainly in the framework of Social and Solidarity Economy and feminist perspective.

The groups are diverse and of different organisational forms, but their common ground is that healthy food should be accessible to everybody. They are very critical of public policies for food aid that provide them with food that does not cover their basic needs. They are fighting for the right to adequate food, not from the welfare perspective but from a Human Rights approach.

In some of these groups, socially excluded people become farmers and even CSA group farmers. In other groups, they are not the farmers but groups are working with tools to improve their access to food.

TUNISIA

ASSOCIATION FORMES ET COULEURS OASIENNES (AFCO)

<https://www.facebook.com/>

Association-Formes-et-Couleurs-Oasiennes-241400966045784/

The Oasis Forms and Colour Association was created in the Chenini oasis, in the southern part of Tunisia. The AFCO focuses mainly on

citizenship education. One of AFCO's missions is to facilitate youth commitment. The idea is to help young people feel responsible and involved in order to create their space in society. Citizenship education also requires youth's participation in facilitation at territorial level and their understanding of the institutional functioning of their territory. The agroecological dimension of development actions in the oasis emerged before the creation of AFCO. It actually originated in a rehabilitation programme in the Chenini Gabès Oasis that started in 1992 with an international expert, on food security, the agroecologist Pierre Rabhi. Some of AFCO's founding members participated in this programme. URGENCI has helped people to discover the world of local and solidarity-based partnerships for Agroecology through Mediterranean meetings that provided experience sharing around examples of concrete actions. This has allowed AFCO to plan to set up the first LSPA in Tunisia.

TURKEY

DBB - "NATURAL FOOD, CONSCIOUS NUTRITION" PGS NETWORK

Logo: <https://dogalbilincliibeslenme.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/dbb-logo.jpg>

Website: <https://dogalbilincliibeslenme.wordpress.com>

The "Natural Food, Conscious Nutrition" network (DBB) is a PGS in Turkey and was founded in 2009. It involves farmers/producers, consumers, activists and LSPA groups who take responsibility for producing and accessing healthy food produced using agroecological methods. DBB aims to bring producers and consumers who are aware of issues closer to one another, establish an environment of trust, collaboration and mutual learning, facilitate means of direct product supply, and support CSA groups and other forms of LSPA. It is a grassroots organisation with no legal entity that includes around 25 active certified producers from all over the country, and about 1000 active consumers. Its main communication platform is an e-mail list that is managed by the moderators of the network and open to all participants.

FOUR SEASONS ECOLOGICAL LIVING ASSOCIATION / TADYA

Logo: https://tahtaciorencik.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/tadya_logo1.jpg

Website: <https://tahtaciorencik.org/>

The Four Seasons Ecological Living Association (Dört Mevsim Ekolojik Yasam Derneği) is an NGO based in Ankara. It aims to practice and promote agroecology, ecological rural development and LSPAs in and around Ankara. The association has been (I) working in the Tahtaciörencik Village via TADYA (Tahtaciörencik Village Ecological

Living Collective) to encourage local farmers/producers to be part of the DBB Participatory Guarantee System. It secures their income while supporting them to introduce more nature-friendly and healthy production methods, (ii) works on land to practice and illustrate agroecological methods, (iii) organises eco-tours and learning visits from the city to the village and (iv) designs and runs agroecology training programs for farmers and for those who intend to start farming.

SOME ACTIVITIES FROM 2018:

- » Presentation to Ankara Development Agency staff: Agroecological Perspective for Rural Ankara and the Tahtacıörencik Example: 01.12.2017
- » “How to Set Up a Farm” Training Program. Seminar: 11.03.2018 (120 participants), Group training: 7.05.2018 - 03.06.2018 (12 participants)
- » Introduction to Agroecology and Permaculture for Farmers of Ankara (A Training in Güdül District, with MA Training and Consultancy, the Development Agency of Ankara, Municipality of Güdül and Güdül Directorate of Agriculture): 12-13.05.2018 (24 participants)
- » Introduction to Medicinal Plants in the Wild and in Gardens. Ütopya Learning Center, Kazan, Ankara: 02.06.2018 (18 participants), Tayfa Kitapkafe, Kocatepe-Ankara: 23.06.2018 (16 participants)
- » Helping the establishment of an LSPA, the Bardacık Food Community

in Kızılay, Ankara

URGENCI

URGENCI is the international network of Community-Supported Agriculture initiatives, fostering peer-based solidarity among CSA initiatives to actively contribute to the food sovereignty movement!

Local solidarity-based partnerships between farmers and the people they feed are, in essence, a member-farmer cooperative, irrespective of whoever initiates them and whatever legal form they take. There are different ways of organising these partnerships; it is a framework to inspire communities to work together with their local farmers, to provide mutual benefits and to reconnect people to the land where their food is grown.

The emergence of Community Supported Agriculture, first in Japan with Teikei, created in the late 1960s, and of many other initiatives since then, shows how consumers and producers in various places are responding to the same global pressures. This supports the development of organic family-run farms and fair local food systems.

In spite of the diversity of approaches and the lack of solid organisational structures, LSPA can be seen as an alternative movement, characterised by a common aim to connect producers and communities. Many members and

organisers of LSPA initiatives express a desire to see the concept spread, with active support and encouragement provided by some established initiatives.

In the Mediterranean Basin, URGENCI has been leading experience sharing meetings and network building activities for the last 3 years already. A mapping meeting in Marseilles, learning journeys in Lebanon and Turkey, training programme editing workshops in Rabat and Algiers have all been initiated by URGENCI. The idea behind the joint Mediterranean training programme is to provide network members with the tools and the working framework to develop training activities with the support of local or national authorities. URGENCI's Memorandum of Understanding with the Food and Agriculture Organization, signed in October 2017 provides important recognition by the highest international institution in the field of food and farming, has greatly facilitated the organisational processes much easier. It is also an important guarantee for the actions to come.

For more information, visit
www.urgenci.net

FOOTNOTES

1. Parot, 2016.
2. See the website of the Japanese Organic Agriculture Association, JOAA, www.joaa.net/english/teikei.htm<http://nyeleni.org/spip.php?article290>
3. See the 10 principles of Teikei as displayed in Cathy Bouffartigue, Wim Merckx, Jocelyn Parot, Peter Volz (eds), *Training in Alternative Food Distribution Systems: Regional Logistics*, 2015.
4. This definition was coined during the first international symposium of URGENCI.
5. For a complete definition of Food Sovereignty, c.f. the Nyeleni Declaration written in 2015: <http://nyeleni.org/spip.php?article290>.
6. The Food Sovereignty Movement aims to provide the building blocks for people to develop their own food distribution systems and allow farmers to produce and process food for their communities. This requires supportive food safety rules and local food infrastructure for smallholder farmers. Much work also remains to be done in order to ensure that agroecologically produced food is accessible to all people in society, including those with low or no income.
7. According to the intercontinental solidarity economy network (RIPESS), Solidarity Economy refers to “the production of goods and services by a broad range of organisations and enterprises that have explicit social and often environmental objectives, and are guided by principles and practices of cooperation, solidarity, ethics and democratic self-management”. The field of SSE includes cooperatives and other forms of social enterprise, self-help groups, community-based organisations, associations of informal economy workers, service-provisioning NGOs, solidarity finance schemes, amongst others. C.f. www.ripess.org/social-solidarity-economy-sse-and-financing-for-development-ffd-a-concept-note-about-ffd-yvon-poirier-ripess-board-of-directors/?lang=en.
8. More on the topic of social inclusion in LSPA, more specifically in CSA at http://urgenci.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Hitchman_CASS1.pdf
9. Holloway et al., 2007.
10. Henderson and Van En, 2007.
11. Perez et al., 2003; Bregendahl and Flora, 2012.

12. Halloway et al., 2007.
13. Bregendahl and Flora 2012.
14. Perez et al.2003.
15. Halloway et al. 2007.
16. Perez et al., 2003.
17. Birhala and Möllers, 2014.
18. Respondent cited in Lagane, 2015.
19. Lang, 2008.
20. This system of certification is called Participatory Guarantee System. The quality and method of farming is usually guaranteed by a reliable farmer from another CSA. This model is further detailed in a later section of this booklet. You may also find more here: www.ifoam.bio/en/value-chain/participatory-guarantee-systems-pgs
21. Perry and Franzblau, 2010.
22. Henderson and Van En, 2007.
23. Perez et al., 2003
24. Perez et al., 2003; Forbes and Harmon, 2008.
25. Henderson and Van En, 2007.
26. Swisher et al., 2012.
27. For example, Frédéric Thériault and Daniel Brisebois's Crop Planning for Organic Vegetable Growers published by Canadian Organic Growers in 2010.
28. Bashford et al., 2013.

Notes

IMPRESSUM

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TVE, www.tve.hu

CRIS, www.cries.ro

URGNCI, www.urgenci.net

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AUTHORS OF THE ORIGINAL EDITION: Zsófia Perényi, Morgane Iserte, Georgiana Păun, Mihaela Vetan and Jan Valeška

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING: Judith Hitchman.

GRAPHIC DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATIONS:

Lívia Hasenstaub, György Szalay, Katerina Parisková

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Book description The Mediterranean edition of the booklet on Local and Solidarity -based Partnerships for Agroecology is the result of a collective work involving farmers, consumers, network facilitators, researchers and gardeners from more than 20 countries of every part of the Mediterranean Sea Basin. It offers practical advice balanced with scientific knowledge, ethical perspectives, training materials and field stories necessary to anyone willing to start or consolidate an initiative. It should be considered as one of the training materials designed for the Common Training Framework around the Mediterranean, in order to facilitate the spread of LSPA groups by providing skills and competences to local communities.