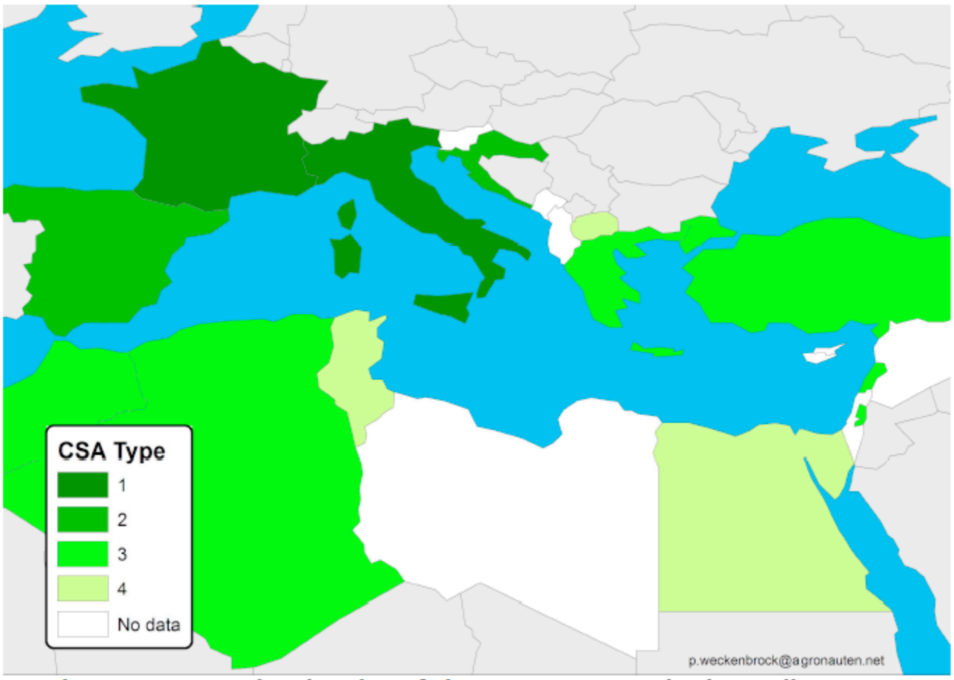

Chart 1- Map on the situation of the CSA movement in the Mediterranean countries.

MAPPING

LOCAL AND SOLIDARITY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

April 2016.

MAPPING METHODOLOGY

Mapping the Local and Solidarity-based Partnerships in the Mediterranean Basin is an extremely challenging task: it means dealing with a new and rapidly growing field. To date, to the best of our knowledge, there is has been no study that deals specifically with local food systems in the area as a whole.

In order to come up with a comprehensive picture of the situation, the project participants decided to divide the area into 2 regions: the *Northern Mediterranean Basin*, and the *Southern Mediterranean Basin*. Note that the *Southern Mediterranean shore* also includes Turkey, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories.

The Northern Mediterranean area had just been mapped in the framework of the First European Census of Community Supported Agriculture, conducted by Urgenci between June and December 2015[1]. A large-scale survey aimed at estimating the qualitative and quantitative situation of CSA in Europe was carried out by the international CSA network, with 3 objectives:

1. Collect objective data to reach a more precise definition of the Common Ground of the CSA initiatives throughout Europe.
2. Critically address the practical implementation of our common principles in different contexts.
3. Support advocacy actions by identifying and counting our forces.

The working definition of CSA coined for this research project was:

"CSA is a direct partnership between a group of consumers and one or several producers whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming activities are shared, through long-term formal or informal shared agreements. Generally operating on a small-scale, CSAs aim at providing quality food produced in an agroecological way."

Once this working definition was determined, a team of 25 researchers covering 23 European countries started collecting data, using 2 tools.

1 This research was conducted thanks to an European Union grant managed by CONCORD, the European platform of NGOs, under project code DEVCOM 2014 354 907.

Tool 1: the **Country Template**. A standard country template was designed, asking about both the main information on the existing CSA movement, its expansion, as well as giving space to address the internal dynamics. This template was actually drafted at a very early stage of the research and then improved during the later phases. The result is a 5-10 page subjective report about the CSA movement in each of the European countries.

Tool 2: the **Survey**. A questionnaire, originally designed to be completed by all the existing CSA groups, was collectively drafted by the research team. It was a challenging task to design a common questionnaire, especially since it had to be translated into a dozen national languages. The questions were mostly about the practicalities of "doing CSA" as defined by the groups themselves. At European level, 403 groups responded within 6 weeks (November-December 2015) thus providing an interesting collection of data to further inform the country reports and the overview.

Among the 23 countries covered by this research, the following belong to the Northern Mediterranean Basin: Spain, France, Italy, Croatia and Greece. The data collected for these countries during the 1st European CSA Census were thus ready and available to be used for the mapping of the Mediterranean Basin. The only new country of the Northern Basin that was added to this mapping was the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The **situation was radically different for the Eastern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean Basin.** First of all, CSA is a rather new concept in most of these countries. There was thus a need to extend the exploratory work to some other forms of producer-consumer partnerships. During the meeting in Marseilles, the participants jointly chose the term of "Ecological, Solidarity-based Food Partnerships" to reflect the reality of the local, sustainable food movements where CSAs are just one of the multiple forms of direct partnerships between producers and consumers.

Secondly, Urgenci relied on a partner organization to collect data from most of the Eastern and Southern Basin countries. The organization *Mouvement Terre et Humanisme,* created by Pierre Rabhi to foster the practice of agroecology around the world, has been active in the Mediterranean region for at least a decade. It even has permanent staff dedicated to coordinating the work of affiliate members in the region. The contribution of this staff person in terms of networking proved decisive in the success of our meeting and collection of data.

Turkey and Morocco were exceptions. In Morocco, **the RIAM** (Network of Agroecological initiatives in Morocco), an independent network gathering all the actors committed to agroecology in the country, conducted an in-depth assessment, and provided detailed descriptions of all existing initiatives (their report is available full-length in French in the annexes). In Turkey, previous contacts had been established with the network of ecological associations called Bugday.

For the Southern Mediterranean Basin, it was deemed neither appropriate nor feasible in the tight project schedule to circulate the quantitative survey designed for the European movements. The only working tool used was an adaptation of the country template. Compared with the original template as used during the European CSA census, the main differences were the inclusion of other forms of local partnerships over and above CSA, and the focus on the endogenous barriers (in the country) to developing the CSA model to a greater extent.

The templates were initially filled in before the meeting in Marseilles took place. They were then completed by the meeting participants, (one person per country), and later edited by Urgenci and *Mouvement Terre et Humanisme* staff.

SYNTHESIS

1- Identifying the community in "Community Supported Agriculture" in changing societies

When we think of the Mediterranean today, it brings to mind the many tragic images connected with this region of the world. Most countries on its shores are currently undergoing deep structural and social change. Among these major changes, the transition from a traditional, rural, agricultural model to a more urban, industrialized society is certainly one of the most important. It is underlined by the demographic dynamics that could accelerate these changes (according to the 2014 statistics in Algeria, 28,75% of the population is under 15, in Egypt it is 32% and in Lebanon 22,5%).

Nevertheless, the countries of the Southern and Eastern shores of the Mediterranean are still characterized by a high - if decreasing - level of employment in agriculture: in Egypt 28% of the population works in agriculture; in Morocco it is still around 40% of the population[2].

In most of these countries, the dominant model is still subsistence farming (most of the production is used to feed the farmers and their families) or semi-subsistence (less than 50% of the production is sold). In Algeria, the average size of a farm is 5 hectares. Additionally, in these societies there is a high level of expenditure on food per household: 18-22% in Lebanon compared with a mere 14% in France. The low figure in France is of course also connected to the excessively low cost of industrially produced food, where many of the costs have been externalised.

2 Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche maritime, *L'agriculture marocaine en chiffres,* 2014.

This situation can be characterised in the following opposition between two social models: on the Northern shore, there is a low and continuously decreasing number of farms that actively produce, and the size of these farms is therefore constantly increasing. At the same time, there is a massive demand for local, organic produce, and a multiplication of consumer purchasing groups and organizations. On the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean shores, consumer purchasing groups are still rare. There is, however still an abundance of small-scale traditional family farms. In the countries of the Southern Mediterranean shore, the city dwellers are closely connected to the rural areas, and most of them still have a relative who is a farmer. Through mutual trust-based networks and family links, direct purchasing groups develop on an informally. These groups order food products on an irregular basis. Therefore, before consulting the results of this first mapping, it is important to understand that the absence of formalized CSA does not mean that solidarity-based partnerships do not exist. On the contrary, solidarity within the family or towards peoples' rural communities of origin is a cardinal value. It is also important to note that the small numbers identified in the mapping process can lead to a potentially exponential growth pattern, as it has in many other countries.

2- A typology of CSA movements around the Mediterranean

Thanks to the information gathered by our mapping participants, it seems possible to divide the CSA movement into 4 different types. Please note that this typology includes other types of "Ecological, Solidarity-based Food Partnerships", as stated above.

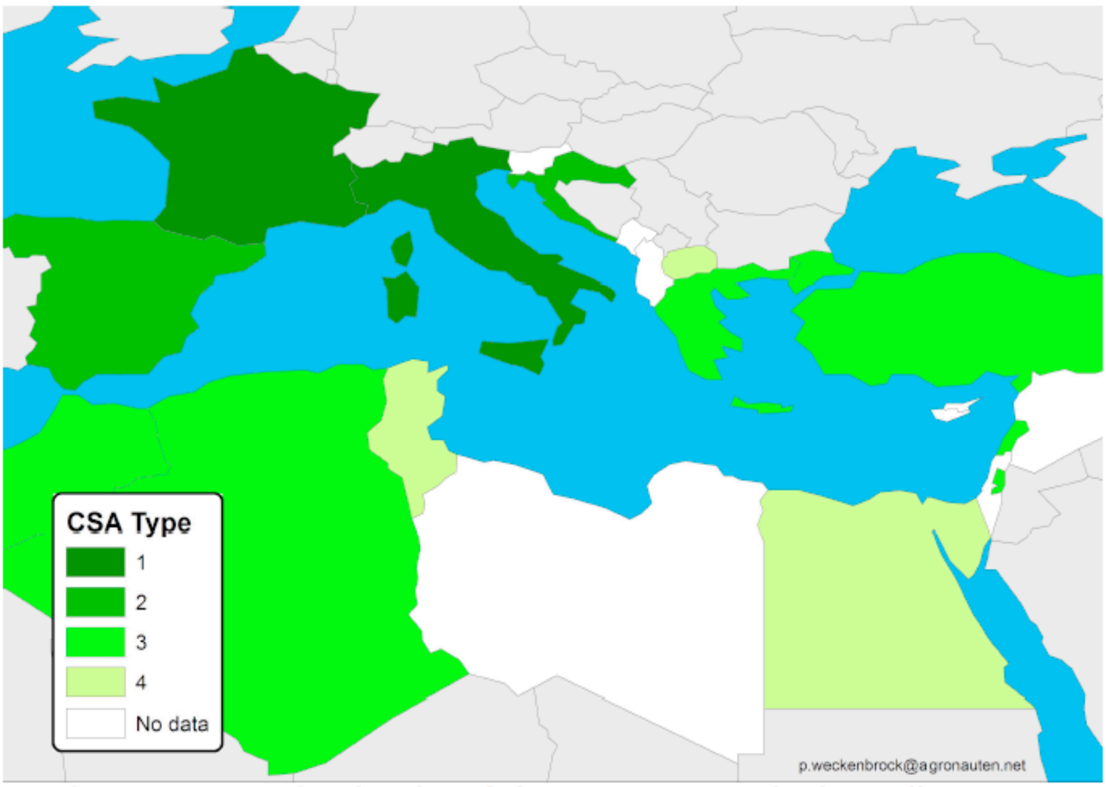

Chart 1- Map on the situation of the CSA movement in the Mediterranean countries.

Type 1: Mass movement
Type 2: Consolidated movement
Type 3: Experimental movement
Type 4: Embryonic movement
Type 5: No information

Type 1: Mass movements in France and Italy.

Two countries can be considered as being showcases for mass CSA and Ecological, Solidarity-based Food Partnership movements: France and Italy. In certain regions up to 20% of the population is involved in some form of solidarity/direct purchasing of food. Although the question of whether the Italian *Gruppi di acquisto solidale* can be considered CSA is still unresolved, it is clear that in these 2 countries, local and solidarity-based partnerships between producers and consumers have been adopted by many hundreds of thousands of consumers. Even if we consider just the 2 French Regions on the Mediterranean coast, the AMAP[3] movement is still far ahead of other countries (except Italy) in quantitative terms. According to the 2015 census in Provence and Languedoc-Roussillon (the Mediterranean regions of France), there were 226 registered AMAP groups that account for around 570 farms and 40,000 consumers[4].

Type 2: Well-established, growing movements in Spain and Croatia.

2 countries seem to have well-established movements, with a fast pace of growth. In Spain, there is a large array of short and direct circuit initiatives, CSA being only one model among many others. The first CSA was established in 2000, and there are now at least 75 groups and 7,500 consumers. A farmers' union called Ehne Bizkaia, based on the Atlantic Coast (in the Basque country), is increasingly giving impetus to the movement in the whole country. Growth in Croatia is one of the most exponential, with 20 groups and 4,000 consumers, even if the first partnership was created just 4 years ago (in 2012).

Type 3: Recognized experimental initiatives in Turkey, Morocco, Palestine, Lebanon, Greece and Algeria.

In these five countries, there are from 1 (in Algeria) to 10 functioning groups (in Turkey). Some have a long experience of a CSA-like model, like the *Sharaka* group in Palestine, which was established in 2000. Most however, have been recently created and are slowly disseminating. In Morocco, the first groups were formed in 2008-2009, and there are now 5 CSA initiatives in the country. According to the RIAM, the Network of Agroecological Initiatives in Morocco, the coordinating organization, and therefore able to provide a thorough assessment of the situation, there are around 20 more ecological solidarity-based partnerships in addition to the 5

3

4 Census conducted by the Miramap in 2014, published in 2015.

CSA[5]. *Torba,* in the suburbs of Algiers, created in 2015, is now accompanying the creation of 2 more initiatives. The atmosphere in these initiatives, as described in the country reports, is dominated by the feeling that the model appropriate to the local context still needs to be developed. There is a will to focus on consolidating sound initiatives rather than multiplying unbalanced partnerships, as this could ultimately prove detrimental to the whole movement. These experimental initiatives are almost all unique: some are based on a written contract, others are not; some work with upfront payment, others have no contractual agreement, but are trust-based; some are order-based, others work with the same share for everyone...

Type 4: embryonic movements in Egypt, Tunisia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

In these three countries, the participants were unable to identify any existing CSA. However, this does not imply that there are no dynamics of a local, organic food movement: organic festivals for small farmers in FYROM have been very successful, while at the same time, an NGO called *Nawaya* has been instrumental in multiplying farmers' markets and farm visits in Cairo, Egypt. The concept of CSA is known in all these countries, and there are some field actors who have been planning to start CSAs, but the spark to initiate the practical dynamics of implementation has thus far been missing. It is hoped that the impetus of this new network will provide the means.

5 The RIAM provided a very detailed assessment of the situation in Morocco. The document is available full-length in the annexes in French and could serve as a basis for further assessments.

NUMBER OF CSA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES	First CSA created in	Number of existing CSA groups	Number of persons consuming products coming from a CSA	Number of CSA farms	Number of non-CSA, ecological and solidarity based -food partnerships
ALGERIA	2015	3	120	3	
CROATIA	2012	20	4000	25	
EGYPT	0	0	0	0	5
FRANCE	2001	226	40000	570	
GREECE		2	40	2	
ITALY	1994	2000	440000	3000	
LEBANON		3	300	3	
MOROCCO	2009	5	300	5	20
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES	2000	3	300	3	
SPAIN	2000	75	7500	100	
TUNISIA	0	0	0	0	2
TURKEY		10	1000	10	
TOTAL		2347	493560	3721	
TOTAL "SOUTHERN SHORE"		24	2020	24	

Chart 2- Number of identified CSA initiatives the Mediterranean countries.

3- Common values

There is much common ground to all these initiatives, irrespective of the context. First of all, they all support farmers who have consciously adopted agroecological practices as defined by the 2015 Nyéléni Declaration:

"*The production practices of agroecology (such as intercropping, traditional fishing and mobile pastoralism, integrating crops, trees, livestock and fish, manuring, compost, local seeds and animal breeds, etc.) are based on ecological principles like building life in the soil, recycling nutrients, the dynamic management of biodiversity and energy conservation at all scales. Agroecology drastically reduces our use of externally-purchased inputs that must be bought from industry. There is no use of agrotoxins, artificial hormones, GMOs or other dangerous new technologies in agroecology*"[6].

The protection of traditional, heirloom seeds is a top priority concern for all these movements, as well as the principle of caring for the soil and nature. The dimension of solidarity is also present in all initiatives, as is the concern for a way of life that protects both people and planet.

6 International Forum on Agroecology, *Final Declaration*, 2015. http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/sustainable-peasants-agriculture-mainmenu-42/1749-declaration-of-the-international-forum-for-agroecology

Secondly, all the movements share the expression of solidarity with farmers, and the belief that the farmers' economic position needs to be prioritised and consolidated within the food chain. There is a common desire to “help smallholders”. In the group members' eyes, the direct relationship and the fact of being in direct contact with the producer are perceived as the major assets of this model. This is expressed in some of the countries through supporting the concept of Food Sovereignty, as it also includes all these issues.

Thirdly, there is a common principle of repairing broken social links and reconnecting people with food production. In some countries (Lebanon, Greece, Algeria), the commitment to the CSA model is closely related to a commitment to support the most fragile sectors of society including the refugees.

4- Challenges

There are many factors that challenge the development of CSA and other ecological solidarity-based food partnerships. If we consider the two sides of the producer-consumer partnership, they face various different issues: there is a **lack of training on the producers' side**, both in terms of production and in terms of communicating with a consumer group; on the consumers' side, there is a **lack of information and long-term commitment**. The information that there is an alternative to the traditional market place (*souks*) that are dominated by middlemen, an alternative that is beneficial to farmers, is still not public knowledge in most of the countries (except France and Italy). There is a **further challenge of raising awareness** of the full meaning of Agroecology.

The cost of local organic products can also be an obstacle. It is important to raise awareness on the additional cost of agriculture that does not externalise costs, and is based on natural methods. More thorough studies on prices could produce some interesting surprises. In some areas, organic agriculture is still the default model, as in the mountains in Algeria.

Finally, another obstacle is the **reduced access to healthy, unpolluted Commons and natural resources**: seeds, soil and water are all scarce resources around the Mediterranean Basin. They are being increasingly grabbed by large-scale corporate actors, whereas they should remain in the hands of smallholders who are the most able to use them in a sustainable way.

5- Actions required to overcome these challenges

The most immediate way to overcome these challenges is to **multiply experience-sharing programmes**, to build mutual learning from others' initiatives. These kinds of programmes have been conducted by Urgenci in Europe on a large scale over the last 5 years and have almost certainly contributed to the growth of the movement in the Northern Mediterranean Basin countries.

Longer and more permanent **mentoring and training activities** in Agroecology, permaculture, as well as CSA group training would be very beneficial (Urgenci has now a substantial experience in this field). Field actors are actually calling for the creation of farm incubators, alongside participatory Open Source learning programs.

Thanks to their influence, international organizations (like the FAO) could play a key role in helping to **raise awareness of local and national authorities** and convincing them to communicate about the social and economic benefits of food partnerships. They could support the further collection of in-depth information about the CSA movements in the region. In particular, the questionnaire used for the European census could be used for all the existing CSA groups around the Mediterranean Basin. This would allow help collate homogenous data.

Apart from supporting CSA information campaigns, local authorities could also **support the creation of local CSA networks**. In a longer-term perspective, public authorities should **reconsider public procurement strategies** and promote territorial and **local food platforms and Food Policy Councils** to guarantee local food procurement in schools, civil service canteens, hospitals and homes for the elderly.

ALGERIA

Author
Karim Rahal is the Founder and President of the Association, "Collectif Torba".

Number of existing partnerships in Algeria: 1 founded in 2013, and 2 currently being established. The partnerships are called AMAP in Algeria, and they now feed about 30 families.

National Context
Algeria is the largest country in Africa, and is home to 40 million inhabitants. It is estimated that Algeria's food production covers around half of its consumption. It is one of the main cereal and milk powder importing countries.

Agricultural data
The arable land consists mainly of a coastal strip reaching as far as the Atlas mountains, as well as highlands dominated by pastoralism, where water is a scarce resource, and finally the oases of the Saharan south. A new industrial type of agriculture is currently developing in some regions (Biskra, El Oued), based on the use of water pumped up from the water table. Vegetables are produced thanks to the heavy use of chemical inputs.

The average farm size is around 5 hectares. Traditional family farming is still firmly rooted, but certified organic agriculture remains marginal; the population thus eats both products that have not been exposed to chemicals (cereals, some vegetables and fruit, olive oil...) and other heavily exposed products (tomatoes, potatoes, poultry, imported products...).

History and characteristics of the Local and Solidarity-based Partnerships
The history of local solidarity-based partnerships in Algeria started with an experience of direct sales between a farmer and consumers' collective. The group formed to buy his weekly production and to distribute it at a given point in the Western suburbs of Algiers.

The group receives the vegetables/fruit from Ammi Rachid, a traditional vegetable grower, who has converted to Agroecology. The vegetables are paid for upfront, at the beginning of the season (there are 2 seasons during the year: Autumn and Spring). The farmer commits to growing without using any chemical inputs. The choice was made not to opt for official organic certification, since the quantities produced are still relatively modest. Furthermore, certification would have to be through a foreign organization from France or Tunisia. The group preferred to consider the trust-based relationship as the best way to certify their producer.

The price is built to reflect the market standards. However, in this direct selling scheme, the farmer receives approximately an additional 30% that would otherwise go to the middleman. Another interesting feature of this model lies in its time-saving dimension: the farmer does not have to spend his day on the roadside selling his produce.

As organic consumers, the group members agree to accept products even if they do not look perfect, are misshapen, or if their size is not standard. When joining, group members sign a charter whereby they accept a product that would not comply with the market standards. On the other hand, the charter also stipulates that the product price should not be more than 20% above that of the market price.

Every Friday, the producer delivers his produce to the Fayet club, the meeting point of the Torba association. During the weekly distribution, 2 of the group members take care of weighing and distributing the fruit and vegetables for each of the 30 shares. Each member is responsible for the distribution at least once a season.

CROATIA

Author
Danijel Balaban is a CSA organic grower and biodynamics enthusiast. At the very beginning of the CSA movement in Croatia, together with a group of activists, he started one of the first CSA groups and organic farmers' markets in his region. He was an administrator of the local CSA group when, after a year he decided that farming might be the response to the freedom he was looking for. Aside from being in the field, he works with Urgenci as a Kernel member and is also part of the research group. More recently he has redesigned the Urgenci website and does some graphic design for Urgenci's activities.

Native name of CSA
Grupe Solidarne Razmjene (groups of solidarity exchange) or *Solidarne Ekološke Grupe* (organic solidarity groups).

Common definition
Croatia has three CSA streams (GSR, SEG, RIS) which differ slightly in their modes of working but the overall definition says that solidarity groups are informal citizens' groups that exchange products and services based on transparency, trust and solidarity.

Country context

General information
Croatia occupies the largest area of the Eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. As part of the Mediterranean, it penetrates deep into the European continent. The narrow Dinara Mountain Range separates the country's Mediterranean region from its central European continental section that runs from the Easterly edges of the Alps in the North-West to the shores of the Danube in the east, encompassing the Southern part of the fertile Pannonian lowlands.

The service sector dominates Croatia's economy, followed by the industrial sector and agriculture. Tourism is a significant source of revenue during the summer, with Croatia ranked the eighteenth most popular tourist destination in the world. Croatia has a high income economy where International Monetary Fund data shows that Croatian nominal GDP stood at $57,371 billion – $13,401 per capita – in 2013, while purchasing power parity GDP was $86,570 billion – $20,221 per capita.
Real GDP growth in 2007 was 6%. The average net salary of a Croatian worker in March 2013 was 5,516 kuna ($988) per month. As of June 2015, the registered unemployment rate in Croatia was 16.1%.

In 2010, economic output was dominated by the service sector that accounted for 66% of GDP, followed by the industrial sector with 27.2% and agriculture accounting for 6.8% of GDP. According to 2004 data, 2.7% of the workforce was employed in agriculture, 32.8% by industry and 64.5% in services.

Agricultural information

Farms in Croatia can be characterised as being relatively small with an average size of 5.6ha per holding in 2010; this is considerably less than the average of 14.4ha per holding across the whole of the EU-27. About one half (52.5%) of all holdings in Croatia were less than 2ha in size, with the vast majority (89.4%) being less than 10ha. It is noticeable that a majority of farms are not actually commercial farms, but rather grow agricultural products for household consumption or non-commercial trade activities. It is also worth noting that the number of organic farms has grown rapidly in Croatia from 130 in 2003 to 1,449 in 2011.

A little over two thirds (68%) of the land used for farming (the utilised agricultural area) in Croatia was classed as arable land. Of the 895,220ha of arable land in 2010 about two thirds (65%) was given over to cereals, of which a majority (310,450ha) was land under grain and maize production.

According to the EU's labour force survey, agriculture, forestry and fishing employed 229,200 people aged over fifteen in Croatia in 2010, the equivalent of 14.9% of the total workforce over fifteen years old. This was one of the highest rates among EU member states; the EU-27 average was 5.2%.

The farm structure survey carried out in 2010 suggests that a high number of people worked regularly in the Croatian agricultural industry (513,680 people). Many of these people were family helping out on the farm but having their main employment elsewhere. Farming in Croatia is very much a family affair; on average 90.7% of the labour input for agriculture (measured in annual work units) was carried out by the farmer and/or a member of his/her family in 2010. This was a much higher proportion than the average for the EU-27 (76.4%).

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop?

The first initiatives related to establishing CSA groups in Croatia were launched at the end of 2012 when the organisation ZMAG ran a project called 'Fine Threads of Local Development'. The project supported local food production and the creation of cooperative groups for the purchase of locally produced food and the promotion of the preservation of old seed varieties and the concept of food sovereignty. Within the project, various workshops were held at national level where administrative teams were formed and CSA principles were agreed upon to bring about a movement with solidarity being the most important value identified.

We can say that the CSA movement in Croatia started similar to many of the worldwide movements – Community Supported Agriculture and Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne – in order to solve the problem of overpriced organic food in the country and the help save small-scale local food production.

What is understood by CSA?

Although the farms that supply Community Supported Agriculture in Croatia display small variations in size, organisational and production structure, their common characteristic is a tendency to bypass middlemen and ensure fair income for growers. In this context, we can find a much more common form that can be called "subscription", where farmers guarantee a certain amount of farm produce for an agreed sum. The overarching definition states that solidarity groups are informal citizens' groups that exchange products and services based on transparency, trust and solidarity.

Are there different types of CSA?
Groups of Solidarity Exchange, Organic Solidarity Groups, Exchange and Solidarity

Legal setup
Informal groups of citizens and non-profit organisations

Interaction with public bodies
Family farms as such operate within a legal framework of Croatian law, yet CSA as a model of direct selling was faced with legal obstacles from the very beginning because it wasn't in full compliance with existing farm legislative bills. The concern of CSA farmers and consumers led to communication with the Ministry of Agriculture to expand and renew the bill in order to take basic and additional family farm activities into account.

Involvement of the eaters
From The Census data, we can say that group members are willing to invest their time and energy in actions that are tied to group interests, e.g. sharing recipes, covering administration work and attending open days. The group commitment could do far more by way of playing a bigger part in investment and food growing but this falls to the grower who openly has to ask for help.

Organic certification
Of seven respondents, three replied that their food is certified organic and another three respondents replied that their food is organic but not certified. However, even within groups there are differences about whether or not producers can be accepted if certification proves to be a financial obstacle for them.

Outlook
Croatia is a country where family farms occupy 84% of agricultural land and about half of the farms are under one hectare. Families in the countryside are therefore still social actors that determine a significant part of our already small manufacturing role in the overall consumption of food. Research into the characteristics of Community Supported Agriculture in Croatia for the most part confirmed similarities with the characteristics of similar groups in other parts of the world.

Community Supported Agriculture can provide significant support to the development of organic agriculture, primarily as an additional distribution channel for organic products ensuring access by and inclusion of local communities. CSA group activities can definitely contribute to the building of local networks that may encourage more small-scale producers to engage in organic agriculture. This is certainly one of the activities that can contribute to the diversification of agriculture in Croatia, especially among the rural population who do not have sufficient capital to launch market-oriented agricultural production or who choose not to do so.

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EGYPT

Author

Ahmed Galal Lotfy is a Core Team member of the Non-Governmental Organization called Nawaya.

Country Context

Egypt has a population of around 90 million, growing at a fast pace: 1.6% annual growth according to IFAD - Rural Poverty Portal. Food imports represent 21% of all merchandise imports (IFAD- Rural Poverty Portal). The Nile River is of crucial importance: it represents almost all the water resources for the country: 55.5 Billion Cubic Meter (BCM)/year, for a total need of 79.5 BCM/year[7]. Apart from the Nile, the reserve of water from rainfall and underground water is just 1.3 BCM/Year. Thus, water is the central issue for agriculture in the country, as there is around a 23 BCM deficit every year to cover the country's needs.

Agricultural information

Cultivated area (arable land + permanent crops): 3.8% (FAO);
Share of Agriculture in Nile River water: >85% (MWRI);
Rural Population: 57% of total population (FAO);
% of people working in Agriculture: 28% (World Bank);
% of poor living in rural areas: 70% (IFAD-Rural Poverty Portal);
% of Agriculture in GDP: 14.5% (IFAD-Rural Poverty Portal);
% of total exports: 20% (IFAD-Rural Poverty Portal).

The average farm size is 1.7 hectares (4.2 acres = 4 feddans), but 50% of small farmers cultivate less than 1.0 hectare (2.5 acres = 2.4 feddans). About 10% of farm households have more than four hectares (9.9 acres = 9.5 feddans)[8].

History and Characteristics of CSA

Egypt has no history of CSAs in its present-day form. It is not legally defined and thus there is no legal framework to regulate it. However, it is not illegal for producers to sell their products direct to consumers who are willing to share risks with the farmers and buy their produce.

Egypt has laws to regulate its 7000 agricultural cooperatives. One of the services among others that these cooperatives offer their members, is to help farmers market and sell their crops. Although the cooperative set-up is not the same as a CSA, it is one of the possible arrangements that can incubate a CSA. A company can also be a legal structure that can administer a CSA (to be studied further).

7 Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI).

8 IFAD, *Assessment of Rural Poverty: Near East and North Africa.*

However, there is a growing trend in Egypt for eating healthy, organic foods. This is mainly amongst the more financially able, because of the high prices of organic foods. In general, people are willing to meet producers and get information about their products directly from them. Farmers' markets are growing rapidly mainly in Cairo. The unfortunate aspect about these farmers' markets is the absence of small-scale farmers. They find it difficult to access these markets. *Nawaya* has been working to include small-scale farmers in these markets, but high participation costs and logistics difficulties were some of the challenges facing the farmers. Traditional farmers' markets (*souq*) take place in low income and rural areas but are usually dominated by traders rather than producers. Also, organic producers would have to sell at the same price as conventional ones as consumers on the traditional market wouldn't pay a higher price for their produce. There are few organic certifying bodies in Egypt. For small-scale farmers, the fees for registering with these bodies in addition to minimum field size requirements can be a challenge.

Agroecological practice

Even if the NGO Nawaya has not been working in any specific framework, their activities with farmers with regard to Nyéléni Declaration on Agroecology and Food Sovereignty are:

- Participatory and open source group learning with small-scale farmers on agro-ecological practices, although this has only been happening for 2 agricultural seasons
- Farmer-to-farmer learning through in-field exchanges, as well as the production of farmer training videos with Access Agriculture
- Recognizing the central role of women: the organization has a women-run kitchen space for the processing and packaging of traditional and innovative goods - we will have challenges understanding the legal landscape in Egypt as many traditional products cannot be sold under Ministry of health licensing schemes
- Supporting some farmers to organize locally - but unfortunately there is no appropriate legal structure for farmers - and the cooperatives in Egypt have a very pejorative reputation due to corruption
- Consumer groups are non-existent in Egypt, and there needs to be a way to harness the desire to support farmers' produce, to ensure sales for the farmers, and figure out how to scale up a CSA programme in Egypt.

Outlook

Since Nawaya has started worked and aims to continue working with small-scale farmers to implement sustainable farming methods and to help them gain access to markets, there is an opportunity for introducing the CSA model to the Egyptian market with the hope that it will benefit the producers and consumers. The First Mediterranean meeting of CSA in Marseilles was an excellent opportunity for Nawaya to understand other models and experiences and become part of the network hoping that it will be a support while taking the first steps in studying the creation of a local model for CSAs.

Challenges to starting CSA

In order to start a local CSA, several challenges need to be addressed:

1. Water Quality and Quantity: Most farmers in the area depend on water irrigated from canals bringing water from the Nile. The canals and water distribution are managed by the government. These canals are polluted by waste that is thrown in by residents, fertilizers, pesticides, sewage and chemical waste from factories. The waste thrown into the waterways also causes blockages that also lead to water shortages.

   The support that is needed in this area is to apply small-scale filtration systems that can be used by the farmers. The blockage of waterways will not be resolved in any other way. Alternatively, digging water wells is a possible solution (although an expensive one for a single small-scale farmer), but it is more suitable for a group of farmers sharing the costs of digging and maintaining the well.

2. Seeds: There is a tradition of seed-saving among farmers. However, this does not apply to all the crops they grow. For the seeds they save, practices have to be greatly improved to keep the potential of the seeds over generations. Also, there are no seed saving networks, so it would be beneficial to start one to allow farmers to exchange seeds and best practices. We can benefit from the experience of Greece where there is a strong seed saving network in this matter.

3. No CSA experience: To start a CSA, capacity building of the participating farmers and administrators will be needed to apply the best methods of production and distribution. Also, it will be very beneficial for some exchange visits to take place. A possible exchange visit could be with TORBA in Algeria where one CSA is operational and they are looking to expand the model.

FRANCE

Author
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Native name
AMAP – Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne (Association for Maintaining Small Scale Family Farming, sometimes also literally translated as Peasant Agriculture).

Common definition
It is generally agreed in France that CSA coincides with AMAP. AMAP stands for *Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne* (association for maintaining small-scale family farming). The original idea was to make it possible for smallholders to keep their business alive through strong support from consumers' groups. Risk sharing is the key to the AMAP model. In the AMAP model the producer signs a written contract with each consumer for several months or one year.

The other way in which risk-sharing is practiced is the pre-payment system, enabled by the use of cheques; this guarantees the producer secure monthly payment by the consumers.

There is a national charter for CSAs in France. The first version was written in 2003 by the AMAP pioneers from AMAP Provence, the first regional network to be established in the country. AMAP is also considered as a trademark, registered at the National Institute of Intellectual Property, and the name can only be used if and when there is full compliance with the Charter.

The Charter has just been revised over a long, two-year comprehensive consultative process that ended in December 2014. The mobilisation of members was very encouraging, and workshops took place basically throughout France. Twenty-seven local and regional AMAP networks participated by completing a general questionnaire that focussed on potential modifications. Furthermore, fifty-seven isolated AMAPs (that were not network members) replied in the first year of the process. There are important differences as to how representative these contributions actually were. On the other hand, some networks made a joint and very representative, contribution.

Agricultural information

The official figures, even from such a short period as 2010–2013, demonstrate a steep decrease in the number of farms. Whereas the used arable land declined slowly (27,622,527ha in 2013, from 27,712,724ha in 2010), the number of farms fell dramatically during the same period: from 491,384 to 451,606. The average size of a farm in France in 2013 was 61ha, compared with 55ha only three years earlier. Contrary to Italy, Spain and some other European countries (Romania, Poland), even if the symbolism attached to agriculture is still strong in French society, there is no longer any traditional farming in France, at least not in the sense of subsistence or semi-subsistence family farming. Most of the farms are highly mechanised and growing in size, and only 3% of the total workforce are employed in agriculture. Only 28.9% of these jobs are held by women.

The share of organic agriculture has been growing on a regular basis since 2008, after an initial phase that lasted four or five years in the mid-2000s. In 2014, around 5.6% of farms were certified organic, and about 7% of the jobs in the agricultural sector were provided by organic farms and companies. These ratios should be compared with the 4.14% of the land that has already been converted to organic.
Obviously, the organic sector seems to be focusing on smaller farms and to be more labour intensive than the conventional farms. Even more importantly, the public procurement system purchases of organic produce rose by 11% from 2013 to 2014, which is a sign that the general trend of growth of organic consumption (around +10% each year) is also reflected in schools and public administration consumption.

Another striking detail in the landscape of French agriculture is the close relationship between culture and politics. On the one hand, the term *terroir*, for example, highlights the existence of artisan food cultures connected to a particular territory, characterised by unique soil composition and climatic conditions. The notion of *terroir* is thought to play a central role in the worldwide success of French top-end products, including wines and cheese.

On the other hand, agriculture in France also has an assertive political dimension. This is no surprise, since France is often considered as the political nation par excellence, where everything has political connotations. Thus, these two French passions, food and politics, have regularly met in an explosive combination. This was the case, in summer 2015, when the price paid to industrial pig farmers slumped so much that many of them faced bankruptcy. However, apart from protests, often led by conventional farmers, there has been a growing and perhaps more constructive *agriculture paysanne* movement since the 1990s.

Number of CSAs

There are over 2,000 AMAP groups (an increase from 1,334 in 2011) according to the newest census conducted in 2015 by the Inter-regional Movement. The first AMAP/CSA was established in 2001. Since 2010, an Inter-regional Movement of AMAPs, composed of the regional AMAP networks, covers most of the national territory. It is the result of a long process, led by the three main regional networks, including the first one that was established in the Provence region.

In 2011, the ADEME, the National Sustainable Development and Energy Agency conducted a national poll that showed that up to 6% of the national population have been involved in an AMAP/CSA at some point. This means there are up to 4 million Frenchmen and women who have had some experience of an AMAP/CSA in the last twelve years. A still-unreleased census conducted in 2015 by Miramap estimates the number of existing AMAP/CSA at 2,000+. This would represent around 320,000 *"mangeurs*" (eaters) or "*consom'acteurs*" (conscious consumers) and approximately 3,500 farms. The increase since the previous census organised by Miramap in 2011 – that identified 1,335 CSA groups – is quite significant.

There are other models that could qualify under the term CSA according to the European standards, like the 120 social inclusion gardens called "Jardins de Cocagne". The first Jardins de Cocagne were established in 1991, ten years before the AMAPs, and now include 4,000 socially challenged workers, 20,000 member families or 80,000 eaters. Thus, the total number of CSAs would be around 3,620 farms and 400,000 eaters in France in 2015.

History and characteristics of CSA

The first AMAP was born from a meeting between a group of "eater-activists" and a farmer from nearby Toulon, a few kilometres from the Mediterranean, who had seen a CSA pick-up while visiting family in New York. Together, they decided to launch a similar initiative and were very successful in spreading the word. The context of the original partnership should be underlined: the farmer shared the idea with an *Attac* group[9] in a period when *Malbouffe*, the French word for Junk Food, was a top issue for almost all French citizens. This campaign culminated when José Bové and several activists dismantled a McDonald's in the South of France in 1999. That was less than two years before the first AMAP distributions took place, on May 10th, 2001.

The birth of the AMAP movement, and its exponential growth during the years 2001–2008, should be understood as the confluence of two movements: the *agriculture paysanne* (peasant agriculture) movement on the farmers' side, and the critical consumption movement on the consumers' side.

Agriculture paysanne, the concept referred to in AMAP, literally translates into *peasant agriculture*. As in English, the word "*paysan"* used to be extremely pejorative, a synonym for someone dirty, ill-mannered, uneducated... But in the 1990s, a movement of small-scale family farmers decided to use it to qualify the type of agriculture they practiced: environmentally friendly agriculture, that also respected local culture, landscapes and of the social conditions of all farm workers. In fact the key element of the concept of *agriculture paysanne* is the farmers' independence within the food production and distribution chain. Instead of being just one link in the chain, specialised in just one type of production (monoculture), the *paysan* is someone who has control over his production from the seeds to sales.

9 https://www.attac.org/de/what-attac

Since 1998, when the term *agriculture paysanne* was registered as a trademark, it has been widely used in France by the alternative farmers' union called *Confédération Paysanne*. It has travelled, and similar concepts have been developed in other countries in the framework of La Via Campesina, the international federation of family farmers' unions by all the actors of the Food Sovereignty Movement. Food Sovereignty, the "right of people to decide how the food they consume is produced and distributed", combines very well with the objective of regaining autonomy in a context of food and agricultural crisis.

Both the concept of Food Sovereignty, as defined above, and *agriculture paysanne* underline the need to question the relationship between farmers and society. *Paysan* comes from *pays* (country), in this case the area where the farmer is from, and the territory of his activity.

The second strand in the creation of the first AMAP is the responsible consumption movement. Attac members played an important role in providing a core group of activists for the first AMAP groups. Attac was founded in 1998 in France as a movement advocating for the implementation of a Tobin tax on financial transactions, and quickly became a major anti-capitalist organisation. Within a couple of years, its membership figures became even bigger than some of the smaller political parties. Led by intellectuals and academics, it was also a radical critique of consumerism and called for actions by "consom'acteurs" (conscious consumers), by boycotting and choosing ethical products. Attac members gave the first AMAP groups their activist structure and fibre and a voice that was heard in the media. Attac cannot however claim the exclusive paternity of AMAP. There were effectively many more reasons driving consumers towards the first AMAP pick-up points. I will point out the two most visible reasons. One of them was the awareness that farming was going through dramatically hard times in France, with the number of farms reduced from around one million in the 1980s to fewer than 600,000 in the early 2000s. Another significant reason was, as in any country where the movement grew strong, the distrust of agri-business following the Mad Cow Disease and several other food safety issues. The environmentalist component of the movement should also be taken into account.

What is understood by CSA?
CSA is almost always understood as an English translation of AMAP. AMAP is a local, solidarity-based partnership between a producer and a group of consumers. AMAP is indeed an association (and not a business) that supports the relationship between a consumer group and a local producer. These two parts, the producer and each consumer, are linked through a written contract-based direct-sales system. The idea is to make sure the farmer can rely on a guaranteed income that will continue to provide a decent living for that farmer for the next year at the very least.

Are there different types of CSA?
AMAP is the most widespread model, but there are other models that could be considered as CSA. For example, the 100 *Jardins de Cocaigne* (Cocaigne Gardens) – social inclusion gardens – have been functioning with a membership and commitment system since 1991, ten years before AMAPs were created. We have

however decided to focus only on the AMAP model, because this movement is the most visible and has been able to disseminate most successfully.

Legal setup and interaction with public bodies

In March 2012, AMAPs surprisingly came into the political limelight: they were the object of a parliamentary question raised by two members of the opposition. In military language, these questions would be called "friendly fire". On 13th March, deputy Gille explained to his peers that the proclaimed governmental support for short-supply chains was not effectively being implemented through appropriate legislation; on 20th March, another deputy, Jack Lang, took up the topic in a similar way. The purpose of these interventions was mainly to push for tax exemption for AMAPs.

The driving forces behind these initiatives are difficult to map. But it is possible to imagine that the parliamentarians had been invited to act in this way by short-supply chain middlemen claiming to function as AMAPs, although not strictly following the AMAP Charter. An AMAP as an association, supports the relationship between a consumers' group and a local producer but there are no middlemen: it is a direct relationship between the producer and each consumer. No cash transits through the AMAP, which is purely a support structure. AMAPs per se are therefore not liable to tax.

The Government responded very promptly, on 17th April. The answer includes a reminder of the association's fiscal regime. It is then followed by a general definition:
"The Associations pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne (AMAP) have been designed to create a direct link between a producer and groups of consumers, who commit themselves to buying the farmers' production at a fair price allowing the producer to cover his/her production costs, and to generate an income, while remaining accessible to consumers".

But the most surprising and thus interesting part was the following: *"An AMAP that guarantees a professional the sale of his/her production through connecting the members to the producer (even without commission), contributes to the economic development of the farm. The AMAP's activity is thus considered to be profitable and should be liable to sales' tax."*

This exchange in the parliament created a controversy: are AMAP "business as usual" or associative not-for-profit structures run by self-organised citizens with the objective of serving the general interest? The national AMAP network, Miramap, reacted with a press release that stressed the notion of general interest and claimed to be a social movement.

Eaters' commitment

The major commitment as a social movement is reflected in a set of everyday practices of those involved in an AMAP ("*faire de l'amap*" as the AMAP members themselves often say). When we compile CSA kits and internal organisational CSA documents in France, the following tasks have been commonly identified as the key aspects of collectively running an AMAP or a CSA: pick-up point management (cleaning, opening, etc.); diversification of products available and farms involved; communication, especially between the consumers and the farm; member recruitment; collection of contracts and cheques; event planning.

Communication is important at two separate levels. Firstly, it is the work of a Farm Group that is in charge of following and understanding the evolution of the farm, updating the group and supporting the farmer (if and as needed) in explaining his/her own farm dynamics to the consumers, through regular farm visits for example. But communication is also about enhancing the fun of being a CSA member, through recipe-sharing, short newsletters, websites/blogs. These communication efforts are targeted both at current and potential members, thus contributing to member recruitment.

Apart from this information channel, a well-functioning CSA also requires members to play an active part in regular events. Even if only an active minority of CSA subscribers, often called the Core Group (*le noyau* in French), take part on a regular basis, they are very important in differentiating CSA from non-CSA models and in feeding the process of collective decision-making and dynamics.

Organic certification

According to regional networks' own accounts, approximately half of the AMAP producers in France have organic certification for all or part of their production. The fact is that the Charter (written in 2003, extensively revised in 2014) does prohibit the use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers but does not require organic certification for AMAPs. Since the very beginning, (the idea of CSA was brought back from the US by a non-certified organic farmer, who nevertheless worked in accordance with organic principles), there has been a continuous and structured debate within the movement to define whether organic certification should be a prerequisite or not. The only consensual answer until now has been to avoid this requirement by emphasizing Participatory Guarantee Systems as an alternative to third-party certification. The rationale is that PGS is better suited to the specificities of the AMAP model, and can frame the improvement of practice on AMAP farms. For example, PGS also allows the consumer group practices to be scrutinised, as well as the working conditions on the farm (situation of farm workers), whereas organic certification only looks at the technicalities of agricultural practices.

Agroecology

The rewritten AMAP charter was adopted in December 2014 by an assembly of representatives from the whole of France. In this new text, a whole paragraph is devoted to agroecological practices. It states that "*AMAP supports agriculture that is respectful of human beings, the environment and animals, and refers to the fundamental principles of organic agriculture.*

In particular, it commits to a way of farming that:

- *is sustainable, diversified and adapted to the territory, independent from agro-chemicals and from all attempts to privatise or patent living organisms (including GMOs)*
- *enhances plant and animal biodiversity;*

• *contributes to maintaining and developing farmers' seeds."*

The Preamble explicitly refers to the loss of peasant agriculture know-how. As explained earlier, peasant agriculture (*agriculture paysanne)* is the pillar of the AMAP model and the key concept within the AMAP charter. *Peasant agriculture* is referred to in the preamble and then briefly defined through five fundamental principles. It
• Contributes to the sustainability and the installation of new farms
• Fosters autonomy in the way farms function
• Works towards territorial and solidarity-based dynamics
• Supports the economic sustainability of partner farms
• Includes the social conditions of farming activity.

Outlook
The French CSA movement finds itself at the crossroads of several issues, including environmental and food-safety issues. This is also a reaction to a situation where large-scale agribusiness companies have dominated the food chains for so long. In a way, AMAPs are one more expression of a double French passion for food and politics.

But finding the right balance between both aspects can sometimes be challenging. In particular, since 2011, the Miramap leaders have been trying to reinforce the social movement dimension of AMAP groups. And although there is widespread knowledge of the socio-political dimension of AMAP commitment (not in the partisan but rather in a societal sense), there are also many cases of purely business-driven initiatives claiming to be AMAPs that have adopted the practice as social enterprises. For this reason, the AMAP networks have increasingly worked on communication and pedagogical tools, include Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) to reassert the call for social change originally delivered by AMAPs, and to make sure that everyday practice is more strongly oriented towards social change. This clarification effort is necessary if AMAPs intend to differentiate themselves from commercial initiatives and reassert themselves as a social movement.

GREECE

Author

Jenny Gkiougki, was a business consultant who returned to Greece at the time of crisis to participate in the process of change in the country. She is an activist on many fronts ranging from social justice to ethical and solidarity economy. She is a social entrepreneurship advisor and mentor on a voluntary basis. Her main focus is on Food Sovereignty and all things related, as she strongly believes this to be the way out of the present situation. In 2011 she co-organised the Greek Conference on Food Sovereignty and in 2014 the Permaculture Caravan. She is part of Neighbourhoods In Action, a group of activists – who focus mainly on ecology and the environment, human and urban rights, social and ethical business. – that fielded candidates in the local government elections for the municipality of Thessaloniki (1 million inhabitants, the second largest city of Greece), and won one seat on the Local Council. In the last two years, she has initiated the creation of two CSA projects.

Native name for CSA

The direct translation of 'Community Supported Agriculture' into Greek is *'Κοινοτικά Υποστηριζόμενη Γεωργία'* but because the Greek language contextual meaning the first word 'community' would be understood as Agriculture Supported by the European Economic Community (EEC) and – although this entity has been replaced by the EU – for people unaware of the idea of CSA, 'Κοινότητα' could be seen to refer to the EU. Hence, some use Κοινωνικά Υποστηριζόμενη Γεωργία (Socially Supported Agriculture) instead, which has the same acronym (ΚΥΓ). The acronym, ΚΥΓ, is pronounced kiy with 'y' as in 'yacht'. The initials ΚΥΓ have been used since the 1980s and can be found in literature and research papers to this day. People tend to also use the English acronym CSA, whilst most of the initiatives also put '(CSA)' – in Latin letters –next to their names. In Summer 2015, we introduced the term ΚΥΓεω – just adding an extra syllable to the existing one, as ΚΥΓ does not roll easily off the tongue. The added syllable made ΚΥΓεω (kiyeo – with 'y' as in 'yacht') is easier to pronounce, and is now used extensively. One initiative uses the term ΚΟΣΑΠ (KOSAP) Κοινωνικά Στηριζόμενη Αγροτική Παραγωγή (Socially Backed Agricultural Production). Another project prefers the name Αλληλέγγυα Αγροτική Οικονομία (Solidarity Agricultural Economy). During the first Hellenic CSA meeting (27–28 October 2015) it became clear that there is no consensus with regards to the name and different projects use different terms.

Common definition

Although projects vary greatly in structure and form, they seem to share the ideals of:

- The production of quality food
- Produced in an agroecological way
- A direct relationship between producer and consumer
- Solidarity
- Volunteer culture.

Country context

Greece covers an area of 132,000km2. Its topography is characterised by big mountain ranges and it boasts one of the longest coastlines (15,000km) and more than 2,500 islands. Almost 20% of its land falls under the protection of Natura2000. Population density is 82 people per km2. Of its almost 11 million inhabitants, 5 million are under the age of 30 and 2.5 million are over 60 years old. Geographically speaking, they are dispersed as follows: almost 4 million live in the greater area of Athens and 1 million in Thessaloniki. 70% live in cities and the rest in villages and towns of under 50,000 inhabitants.

The effects of the economic crisis (loss of more than 26% of GDP in 5 years) are harsh as depicted in table GR2 where a comparison is made between the current situation and that of the year just prior to the country's loss of sovereignty and inclusion in the IMF.

Other important numbers in understanding the socio-economic situation in Greece are:

- The official unemployment rate is 26% and youth unemployment is over 50% (real figures are higher).
- Living below the poverty line (annual salary of €4,000): 36% – if we remove the small benefits some groups get, this number rises to 52%.
- Six out of ten pensioners receive less than €700 a month; 45% of pensions are below the poverty line (changes to the health benefits also means they have to pay much more for medical care and also for medicine).
- The breakdown of the workforce (11 million) is shown in chart GR3.
- 350,000 homes have no member of the family in work
- Average net salary full-time: €815 per month; part-time: €346 per month
- 7 out of 10 jobs have 'flexible employment' status
- 'Capital Controls' still in effect since end of June 2015
- Suicide rates before the crisis were around 300 per year. For the last five years the collective official number is 5,000 whilst the real numbers could be in excess of 15,000 (many suicides are not recorded as such, for religious and social reasons and also due to the State's constant endeavour to paint a brighter picture – like the ban on news of suicide in the media).

The intensity of the economic crisis is also illustrated by the following figures: the Gross Domestic Product fell from 242 bn€ in 2008 to 177.6bn€ in 2014. The GDP per capita has dropped from 21.194€ to 16.250€, and the Net Disposable Income from 17.854€ to 13.206€.

The latest 'post-referendum' austerity pack means that farmers are expected to pre-pay 55% of the following year's tax; to pay tax rates and insurance contributions equal to those of all other professions; and that tax on 'farming fuel' will surge from €66 to €330 per ton.

Agricultural information

According to the most recent data released by Eurostat, Greece's utilised agricultural area (2.8% of EU total) has seen a rise of 22.4% in the decade from 2003 to 2013. The average area per holding has risen from 4.8 to 6.8 hectares in this period but the number of holdings has seen a 14% fall and is currently at 709,500 individual holdings with 'big farmers' holding roughly 40% of arable land. 4% of agriculture is organic, as opposed to 0.4% in 1998. Of this, almost 60% is olive groves. Agriculture uses up 86% of the country's water resources.

Historically speaking, the end of the feudal system ('τσιφλίκια' – tsiflikia), the population exchange and the influx of refugees in 1922 led to a redistribution of land and the disintegration of traditional, large farmsteads. Today, most farmers do not live on a farm, but rather in the village, and their plots are often – but not always – nearby.

This piece of land has sentimental and social value and is seen as the farm family's efforts to secure social reproduction and preserve agricultural identity, of which the land is the symbol (Koutsou et al.). So plots pass from generation to generation rather than being sold off. Thus, land does not always belong to the person farming it; old folk in the countryside tend it on behalf of their city-dwelling offspring, and women inherit it from deceased fathers or husbands.

Inclusion in the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) subsidy system means that in some cases, in order to meet the qualification criteria, farmers cede their land to wives, children or daughters-in-law, creating new holdings that exist only on paper, or the owner gets the subsidy and the caretaker gets the land rent-free. So, the real number of farms is 14% to 36% less than the registered official data.

Another characteristic is the 'present-absent' farmers (Koutsou et al.) meaning that it is very common to see farmers who have more than one occupation, and where farming is not necessarily the biggest source of income (pluri-activity); many living and working in cities visit their fields sporadically (remote distance farming). Although on paper there seems to be a 'feminisation' of agriculture, a very limited number of farms are actually run by women, and a significant proportion of farm heads are pensioners. Age breakdown of Greek farmers: <35 5.2%, 35–44 14.7%, 45–54 23.9%, 55–64 24.9%, >65 31.3%.

History of CSA

There are 7 known CSA initiatives. The first CSA started in 1995, the rest since 2010. There is no national umbrella organisation for CSA as of now. According to the CSA Census and data collected in other ways, the estimation is around 600 weekly shares. If a share feeds 2–4 individuals then, collectively, we are talking about 1,200–2,400 eaters.

In the mid 1990s, organic production began to take shape, mainly as an answer to the demand for clean quality food, and it was then that bio-farmers started realising the constraints the marketplace was creating for them. There are no farmers' markets in Greece, only street markets where most vendors are not the producer but rather retailers. The struggle to create organic street markets started together with an investigation into alternative distribution channels, but with limited results for a multitude of reasons – bureaucracy, rigid legal and tax frameworks, the failed example of agricultural coops, to name but a few.

Since 2009 and the advent of the crisis, we have seen a surge of citizens' groups trying to tackle food in different ways, and since then we have seen box-schemes, collective-buying groups, no-intermediaries markets, social solidarity grocery stores, non-profit supermarkets, and of course CSAs all appear. People are becoming more aware and conscious of issues relating to their food, health and the economy. The continued austerity is creating a fertile ground for such endeavours to continue and flourish, even though, it has to be noted, the legal and tax framework contexts are hostile, and we need to push for big changes and the creation of alternative frameworks.

When talking to people who are unaware of the idea of CSA, it is very difficult to get them to understand the concept and to steer away from concepts like 'price per kilo'. Even those who participate in such projects realise they still have a long way to go, compared with examples from other European realities. And it seems that every group has their own particular interpretation. But, in today's Greece, where the social and economic web was dismantled so rapidly and viciously, we cannot expect to see a copy of what we would see anywhere else. The elements that seem to be universal in Greek CSAs are:

- A direct partnership between a network of consumers and one producer or a network of producers
- An informal, non-legally binding agreement between the two parties
- The production of quality food in sustainable, agroecological ways
- The land belongs to the farmer who is the one responsible for agricultural decisions
- Very low levels of consumer participation
- Most participants are not politically motivated
- Most projects count on the work of a very small number of volunteers, without whom the project could not survive.

Though most cases seem to be a box-scheme type of operation (we call them baskets 'καλάθια'), there is evidence of risk sharing practices – either by accepting to pay a slightly higher price for a period of time to compensate for the producer's bad harvest, helping out financially in times of crisis, or eating only spinach and greens for weeks, due to bad weather, but very little towards sharing of responsibilities.

Are there different types of CSA in Greece?

All projects are different from one another. To explain this, we can present a few specific cases.

Just at the outskirts of Thessaloniki, there is a proper farm with a farmhouse, stables and 1.5ha of land that produces wheat, vegetables and some dairy products. Since 1995, the farmers wanted to run it under the CSA principles. Over this period they have managed to create a pool of families that are in touch with the farm and visit it to buy their food but also to take part in other activities like (therapeutic) horseback riding, workshops or a lazy stroll around the place on a Sunday morning. There is no regular assembly, no written contract between parties, nor is it obligatory to order food every week.

There is the possibility of picking/harvesting your own fruit and vegetables from the gardens, helping out with chores and taking part in open days and festivities on the farm. Some of the consumers have developed a closer relationship with the farming couple and help out financially or manually if and when they can. They do not, however, take part in major decision-making, and the running of the place, organisation of crops etc. is the sole responsibility of the farmer.

In 2010, a group of concerned citizens under the name Agronauts (Αγροναύτες) started presentations and open discussions in Athens to inform people about the idea of CSA –calling it Community Backed Agricultural Production – and they were soon able to create a network of consumers in different neighbourhoods who were willing to buy direct from producers. This network now feeds around 300 families a week, supplied by two main producers and a further two on an occasional basis. There are now seven delivery points in Athens, and individual consumers have to pick up their share on a specific day and time. Consumers do not have a say in what they buy, rather they agree to having a basket delivered to them which will contain roughly 8+ kilos of 7–10 different seasonal varieties produced in an agroecological way for the cost of €10. Agronauts acts as a mediator between the two parties and helps by organising a lot of the work and by doing presentations and promotions of this model, strictly on a voluntary basis. People are encouraged to pre-pay on a monthly or yearly basis but it is still possible to pay by the week.

The people who do the delivery do not handle money, and only deliver pre-paid orders. The Agronauts promote the idea of self-organisation of drop-off points and require at least twenty families in an area to come together before starting deliveries, but will include an additional drop-off point with only five families if it’s in the vicinity of an existing one.

This is the only group that has set up a list of rules that can be found on their very informative website, although here too there are no written agreements of any sort. People are also encouraged to visit the farmers and have a look at how their food is being produced, as the network really wants to promote the cultivation of closer relationships between producers and consumers. The farmer with the biggest involvement in the network has a plot of land of around 3ha that produces organic vegetables. He also runs an ecological school to pass on some of his and others’ knowledge and skills to aspiring new farmers. Every year they organise a festival there, and many members attend. Legally speaking there is no signed contract, consumers can ask for a receipt, and most farmers are in the position to issue one; but the standard practice is that money is seen as a donation to the farm and subsequently the farmer gifts some vegetables to the donors. Solidarity and risk sharing have been demonstrated, as consumers will take a smaller basket when produce supplies are low, or accept fewer varieties and a lower volume when the harvest is bad.

Further North, close to Thessaloniki, a young couple of new farmers have a plot of land (0.3ha) that is a CSA. During a few meetings, they were given information and literature to study, and got help with finding the twenty-five families that would take part. The couple created an on-line questionnaire that was distributed to the prospective members and was used as a tool for price setting and choosing the crops. There was no signed agreement between the parties.

The project ran successfully for the 2014 Summer–Autumn season with two weekly deliveries of €5 and €10 baskets (half and full share) with the farmers doing all the delivery work unaided by the consumers. This put a big strain on the producers and led them to rethink their strategy: although there was a waiting list they put the project on hold. It is due to be revived this season (Spring 2016) with thirty member families but different levels of participation, and possibly an increase in prices.

In the area of Korinth, 80km south of Athens, we can find The Garden of Korinth (Περιβόλι Κορίνθου – Perivoli Korinthou) a group of young and old, small-scale, low-impact farmers (fifteen at present) who created an informal association in 2011. It is aimed to help each other out in solidarity with labour and distribution issues. They have fruit trees, orchards, olive groves and vegetables and the size of their fields varies from case to case. Some of the young farmers rent the land they are cultivating. In 2013, they started an e-ordering system, and they also introduced the idea of the basket. They now cater for thirty families in Athens with weekly home deliveries handled by a third party for a small fee which the consumers agree to pay. Apart from their own, they also make produce from other farmers available, but use a colour coding system to denote items that are not seasonal (and hence with a bigger eco-footprint). There is no formal contract and consumers are offered different payment possibilities with 50% discount for collection from the farm and self-harvesting options and 60% if they commit to going three to four times a year to work in the fields to help out. Sometimes the possibility for collective ordering is offered for things that are not produced by them, for example legumes. Their hope is to create a "fully autonomous consumers' network" that would play a more active role; but at present consumer involvement is very low. They believe there is great need for consumer education and awareness-raising and try to play their part in this. Recently they also started doing a little exporting of organic fruit and veg to Europe.

A group of university students in Heraklion, Crete, concerned with producers' hardships, undistributed food and food waste, created Weeds (Ζιζάνια –Zizania) in 2011. Weeds is based on the Agronaut model. A team of volunteers organises all aspects of ordering and deliveries at the practical level, but there is no commitment on the part of the consumers, and no written contract. Consumers are given the option between a set basket and an open order. Orders are placed online via an application they created, and are willing to share with anyone who is interested. Products come from sixteen farmers and include dairy products and meat; this does not include horticulture. There are three drop-off points and about 20–25 baskets are delivered on a weekly basis. Although on their blog the acronym CSA features next to their name, they do say that they are not a full CSA yet, but rather are on the way to becoming one. This project has an assembly that comes together twice or four times a month to decide on all major issues.

Production, certification and distribution
All projects' steer clear of the use of chemical inputs and most are certified organic. 99% of them need to use other distribution channels to make ends meet, the main one being (organic) street markets, followed by eco-festivals, no intermediaries markets, catering, organic/ solidarity/social shops and restaurants. Only a few are exporting small amounts.

Legal status
All CSAs in Greece are currently operating informally without any legal status. During the Greek CSA meeting in October 2015, an accountant and a lawyer participated to address this issue. The conclusion was that there is no legal form at present that could be beneficial to such endeavours. We are waiting for the new bill on agricultural coops (due this summer) to see if it will be helpful. This is a major drawback as it hinders the expansion of existing teams and prohibits the creation of new ones. It also makes it almost impossible to have other types of CSA such as consumer-owned or -rented land CSAs.

Interaction with public bodies
Understandably, and especially due to the above-mentioned legislative gap, there is little interaction between CSAs and public bodies. Neighbourhoods In Action, a group of activists that was elected as a member of the Thessaloniki Local Government Council in 2014, made a formal proposal to the municipality regarding the issues of CSA, food policy councils and farmers' markets which was received with great interest. Subsequently, Thessaloniki is one of the 116 cities that signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Act on 15 October 2015. This leads us to believe that some greater collaboration and interaction will be possible in the near future.

Agroecological practices
It goes without saying that all farmers operate using agroecological principles. Most of them do not just do conventional organic farming but go a step further and use alternative agriculture practices like permaculture, biodynamics, homodynamic, no-till and natural farming principles. They use heirloom, traditional varieties of seeds and many try to breed their own. Most are small-scale and non-intensive farmers who share a special bond with nature and it shows in their work.

Outlook
The existing projects seem to be doing better every year, and most are keen on coming closer to the CSA principles of solidarity and sharing of risk, responsibility and reward.

CSA's future in Greece looks very promising. Despite the uncertainty around legal forms and related issues, the continued harsh austerity is forcing both consumers and producers to look for solutions. Having said that, it is clear that much effort will need to be placed on educating consumers, i.e. citizens, in more participatory models of sourcing their food. Farmers, on the other hand, will need training and new skills when it comes to being CSA farmers.

The matter of mutual trust and commitment will have to be addressed. Consumers find it hard to trust uncertified bio-farmers. Farmers feel uneasy with the idea of pre-payment, thinking that it will create pressure and unreasonable demands from the consumer. This has been said to me by farmers but is also documented (Partalidou).

Clearly this means that emphasis has to be placed not just on promoting the CSA model, but on clearly stating the benefits for each side and exploring them to create new types of relationships.

Providing aspiring CSAs with a range of tools can prove critical to their success; from CSA management (things like costing, and calculation of number of shares, or achieving transparency) to interpersonal relations, participatory systems, conflict resolution etc.

Experience-sharing and exchange of know-how will be key factors if CSA is to scale up in Greece. We also foresee greater collaboration between existing CSA groups, and with other types of Alternative Food Systems. The way forward is Food Sovereignty.

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ITALY

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Common definition

CSA experiences in Italy are conceived as groups of farmers and citizens–consumers that cooperate in a common project of food production that respects agroecological principles and social justice. Consumers normally share the economic risks with the farmers and give them financial support by paying in advance. In some cases, consumers are not only buyers but contribute directly by working in farm activities.
In Italy, there is a strong tradition of Solidarity Purchasing Groups, called Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS), that is very close to the common definition of CSA. The core vision of GAS refers to the principles of solidarity, mutuality and sustainability; this core vision underpins the relationships between group members and farmers. The close relationship with the farmers is generally characterised by friendship, trust, transparency, respect and fairness. The financial support is reflected in fixing fair prices (that meet both the farmers' needs and are affordable for the consumers) and, in many cases, in various forms of advance payments and funding. In the last two decades, GAS has contributed to the spread of a different approach in the production–consumption relationship.
This research incorporates feedback from Italian GAS.

Country context

General information

Italy's territory covers 302,073km² with 60.7 million inhabitants (Istat, 2014) and a density of 201.21 people/km². The country is characterised by a hilly territory (41.6% of the total area), followed by mountainous areas (35%) and plains (23.2%).
In Italy the GDP was €25,400 per capita in 2013 (-6.6% since 2000). Italian families have a net disposable income of €2,419 monthly, of which €468 is spent on buying food (Istat, 2012). Data by region of residence differs significantly by age, nationality and gender.

Agricultural information

In 2013, Italian farms numbered about 1.5 million, occupying 992,000 work units (1,620,844 active farms in 2010 with 12,856,048ha cultivated). The agricultural system is generally characterised by a strong presence of small units: 80.7% companies employing less than a unit of work and 88.6% with a turnover of less than €50,000. 96.7% are individual companies and 97.5% are owner-managed. Subsistence farms that produce exclusively for their own consumption account for 10.4% of the total.

The number of organic farms registered for cultivation and breeding is 45,162, corresponding to 2.8% of the total number of farms in Italy. The average area used for organic farming is 18ha per farm, higher than the average for the conventional plus organic which is 7.9ha. There are big differences across the Italian regions – in the South and Islands the area is even greater (43.3ha in Sardinia, 23.7ha in Basilicata, 22.8ha in Apulia). 70.9% of the area used for agriculture in the South is dedicated to organic farming (Istat 2010-2012). In Lombardy there are 1,442 organic farms, satisfying less than 10% of the demand of organic products (€300,000,000 per year).

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?
To describe the dynamics, it is necessary to distinguish between CSA and GAS experiences.
The first CSA created in Italy is the Caps (Comunità agricola di promozione sociale – Farming community for social promotion), in the area of Pisa. Starting as a group of more than 100 families, it currently involves 20 families. It is the first example of CSA where the members organised as a group. It was established with the respectful aim of advancing the GAS experience. Its main goals were to support a farmer, by ensuring him/her a fair and steady income, and to participate in farming activity according to a 'co-production approach'. Therefore, the members discuss the annual production activities and the economic aspects with the farmers and participate in farm activities by doing some hours of work.

In the last few years, other similar associations or cooperatives were created. Arvaia, in the area of Bologna, is currently the most important experience of CSA in Italy. It is a cooperative composed by citizens and organic farmers, cultivating public land rented from the Municipality. At the beginning, in 2013, there were three paid people working on the farm, now there are ten. Its main purpose is cultivating the land through collective management, mainly for the members' food consumption or to support the activities of the cooperative. The cooperative manages a market and a small shop. The members plan the annual production activities together and, based on the budget, advance-fund them. The members can visit and see fields and crops and are asked to contribute to the work on the basis of half a day each year.

In terms of the development of GAS, there has been an incredible boom in Italy: from 1994 to 2004 there was a steady growth, reaching a total of 150 units registered in 2004. From 2005 onwards the development has been stronger, with the number of groups duplicating every three or four years. Nowadays, there are more: about 1,000 units registered and it is estimated that there are as many units again – or even more – that are not registered.

What is understood by CSA?

The model of CSA in Italy is that groups of farmers and citizen–consumers cooperate on a common project of food production that respects agroecological principles and social justice. Consumers share the economic risks with the farmers and give them financial support by paying in advance. In some cases, consumers are not only buyers but contribute directly by working on the farm. In Italy, however, the most important reality is that of GAS (see below).

Are there different types of CSA?

Although in recent years some project-experiences have developed in strict adherence to the CSA model, in Italy, there is a stronger tradition of Solidarity Purchasing Groups called GAS (Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale). GAS have many shared aspects that are close to the common definition of CSA. The core vision of GAS is stated above.

From the website of the National Network of Solidarity Economy (www.economiasolidale.net):

> *"A GAS chooses the products and producers on the basis of respect for the environment and the solidarity between the members of the group, the traders, and the producers. Specifically, these guidelines lead to the choice of local products (in order to minimise the environmental impact of the transport), fair-trade goods (in order to respect disadvantaged producers by promoting their human rights, in particular women's, children's and indigenous people's) and reusable or eco-compatible goods (to promote a sustainable lifestyle)."*

According to the responses of the Census, GAS are characterised by having a direct partnership (97%) but they do not seem to be committed to sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards, or to establishing a formal contract between producers and consumers. It is considered important to have a formal or informal agreement (68%) but fewer respondents assigned importance to establishing a long-term agreement (30%). The situation is different with CSA, where the members' commitment is greater. The aim of providing quality food is common to most respondents (96%), as well as the production of food in an agroecological way (92%).

Over and above the results of the Census, it is important to underline that the relationships between producers and consumers are generally very close. Consumers and producers coordinate with each other on many of the decisions of the production process (type of agricultural produce, prices, forms of delivery, problem-solving and so on). So, even if there are no written contracts, the commitment of GAS members is very intense, as they participate emotionally and materially in supporting the producers, even financially (in many cases GAS have saved a local producer from leaving his/her activity thanks to financial support and pre-payment campaigns).

More generally, GAS have become an instrument of community-building that promotes change in production and consumption practices towards a fairer and more sustainable food system. In this sense, Italian GAS are particularly effective as communication vehicles, as they work as platforms of exchange for knowledge and specific information on agroecology, environmental impacts, social justice, and solidarity economy. In the last two decades, GAS have indeed contributed to a wide strengthening of critical consumption and to the spread of a different approach to the production–consumption relationships even beyond their world. GAS contribute to the development of civic engagement and political awareness among their members. They operate as important instruments of solidarity economy and sustainable development. They are involved in ethical financial initiatives (i.e. Banca Popolare Etica, Mag2 Finance), thereby giving economic support to third sector actors; moreover, they support the various campaigns organised by various organisations and movements. For all these reasons, they are widely acknowledged as spaces fostering citizenship and building civic responsibility.

Type of produce and distribution method

Typically, GAS are a platform for buying food and, to a lesser degree, other common consumer items (clothes, shoes, cleaning products, cosmetics, water filters). However, new initiatives are emerging aimed at the collective buying of services (i.e. car insurance, energy).

According to the results of the Census, the food that is produced and distributed most is fruit, vegetables and honey (from 80% to 90% of the total respondents), followed by meat and eggs (about 70%), while less then half of the respondents included bread (40%).

The distribution appears to be mainly organised through collective pick-up points (85% of the respondents) and only to a much smaller extent by home delivery and pick-up at farms (respectively 25% and 28%). Only 5% of the respondents practice self-harvesting.

Legal setup

Most of the GAS are informal organisations, although there is a national law that recognises them if they are constituted as formal associations. The Census confirms this information. Some CSA are formal organisations, formalised associations or cooperatives.

Networks

Italian CSA and GAS do not have an umbrella organisation, but there are synergies with the local networks (i.e. inter-GAS), or with other local actors within the solidarity economy movement, for example *Distretto di Economia Solidale* (DES – District of Solidarity Economy) or *Rete di Economia Solidale* (RES - Network of Solidarity Economy). All DES have converged in a national structure called *Tavolo RES Italia* (Italian network of solidarity economy). There are 14 DES registered and more than 20 networks that are formally linked to Tavolo Res and its charter.

According to the Census, half of the respondents are part of the national network of GAS or a solidarity economy organisation. Others are connected to local (municipal) or regional networks of GAS or solidarity economy organisations.

Eater involvement

In general, all members of GAS organise all the logistics of taking orders and distributing food as well as managing collective activities on a voluntary basis. In every GAS some members work as direct representatives of the various farmers:

they set up and prepare the material for the order, deliver the order to the farmer, organise the logistics for the distribution and payment, check that all the procedures work correctly. In big GAS, the working structure is frequently clearly articulated with a precise definition of roles and tasks.

Every month – more or less – there are internal meetings and periodically there are visits to the farms. The farmers are welcomed to participate in the meetings and, often, special events are organised to facilitate the communication between producers and consumers (explaining the characteristics and growing challenges, knowledge-sharing, etc.).

In addition to the management of supplies, GAS usually share other activities such as: discussions or public debates on specific issues, training activities, support for particular campaigns or participation in events organised by other organisations at local or national level, barter and other forms of exchange, etc. All these strengthen the relationships between members. The practical sharing of food values supports a special kind of social interaction. It is very common that GAS organise meetings and events where people sit together around a big table, enjoying food and conversing about the food itself. This practice is very important for the exchange of knowledge and to support individual change in food consumption habits.

The data gathered through the Census more or less confirms this kind of organisation. The relevance of buying shares emerges (79% of respondents); this is in accordance with the modalities characteristic of the GAS experience. The willingness to invest money in the farm appears to be less significant however: it is practiced by only 15% of respondents. More than a quarter of respondents are involved in managing the deliveries. More than two thirds of them (64%) are involved in decision-making. About half attend open days/social events and participate in other forms of internal interaction.

Organic certification

Organic farming is one of the requirements considered by GAS members when choosing a producer, and it is one of the basic principles defined in the National Charter. However, in many cases, GAS choose producers with no official certification although they apply the principles of organic farming to their cultivation/production. The reason is that small farms often have to overcome financial and bureaucratic obstacles to obtain certification, and prefer to forego it even if they are effectively organic in their production method. In these cases, the social control carried out by the local networks is the means used to guarantee requirements are respected.

Agroecological practices

CSA and GAS are both strictly linked to agroecological principles in farming practice; organic farming is preferred but there are also cases in which biodynamic techniques are adopted. In the census more than 97% of respondents affirmed that they produce and distribute organic food (be it certified or not).

The link with the land and the awareness of its value are considered essential. For this reason, most of the GAS organise regular meetings with the farmers and visits to the farms. These visits reinforce relationships but of course also increase the citizens' knowledge of farming practices. CSAs such as Caps and Arvaia do encourage members to participate actively in cultivating the land and supporting the farmer in the field so that they can learn about land management (fertility preservation, weed control, etc.) and become aware of the difficulties linked to the production of organic vegetables.

Outlook

In Italy, CSA appears in a national context where Solidarity Purchasing Groups (GAS) have already prepared the terrain for local projects and actions linked to the solidarity economy, agroecology and critical consumption. In the last 5 years, the first CSA-like initiatives were mostly created starting from the efficient structure – formal and informal, material and cultural – of the GAS national network. As CSAs are aimed at providing support to farmers, they can be considered the natural evolution of GAS because GAS are traditionally seen as consumer-centred initiatives with a strong personal engagement with the farmers but without a formal commitment towards them. The Italian CSA movement is small and undeveloped compared to the growth of GAS, but it is, however, exerting its presence on the world of GAS. There are in fact signs of an evolving process that is moving towards the creation of a more general model; this model is characterised by a stronger commitment in relation to the sharing of responsibilities and risks. This represents an emerging debate within the GAS world.

The evolution from a GAS model to a CSA model is not easy because citizens are used to approaching cooperation with a consumer-driven perspective and many farmers have already set standard agreements with GAS. Nevertheless, much could be done to promote a shift in this sense and to help the spread of information about this model. First – as CSA is not well known – it would be necessary to communicate clearly in all the national territory about what CSA is and which characteristics define it compared with GAS. At the same time, creating the right conditions and giving concrete support to implementing this change could help people in setting up more GAS.

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LEBANON

Author: Rita Khawand, co-founder and President of the association "Soils Permaculture Association Lebanon".

Common definition

There are currently 3 active food partnerships that comply with the definition of CSA. However, they do not have any common name. When members have to define their groups, the specific wording that keeps coming up is: *direct contact between rural producers and urban consumers.* The oldest group dates back to 2001, and if we combine the members from all these groups, the total of eaters in these groups reaches around three hundred.

National context

The Republic of Lebanon, situated on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, covers a total area of 10 452 km2 most of it being mountainous. The population in July 2011 was estimated to be 4 143 101 with a growth rate of 0.244% (World Factbook), the population of Beirut, the capital city, was 1.9 M in 2009.

When considering the Lebanese households' expenses, "Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages" came in second, with their share hovering between 18% and 22%[10]. The ventilation between the different components of this category goes as follows: meat constituted 4.9% of total household expenditure, vegetables accounted for 3.3%, and bread and cereals reached 2.9% of the total. Just as the previous category, the share of total household expenditure on food decreased hand in hand with increasing household income and size. It is worth noting that Northern residents are those who spend the most on food (27% of total expenses) among other Lebanese, mainly due to their relatively low income. In contrast, those living in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, regions that have relatively higher incomes, accounted for lesser although still considerable percentages of 17% and 18%, respectively.

Agricultural data

Lebanon is a major food importer. Fruit, vegetables and poultry production exceed the local market consumption and could contribute to increased exports.

However, the opening of Arab State markets and the Free Trade Agreements in place will certainly affect this production by allowing the import of cheaper fruit and vegetables from neighbouring countries. Farmers in rural areas need capacity-building to improve their farming methods, to increase their productivity and competiveness. This would also contribute to the development of a more environmentally-friendly agricultural sector. In 2002, agriculture in Lebanon represented 6% of the GDP, and 7% of the active population's activities, while in 1970 its contribution to the GDP was around 9%, involving 19% of the active population. Agricultural production decreased by 12% between 1970 and 2008. This

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The figures given in this country report are provided by the report *How were Lebanese Households Allocating Their Pay checks in 2012?*.

is mainly due to the effects of the post-war (1975–1990) economic crisis, and to the economic policies favouring the tertiary sector (services) over the primary and secondary sectors.

The natural advantages of the country in terms of water resources, number of sunny days, geomorphology and climate diversity would allow the development of the agricultural sector, if other socio-economic and geo-political constraints were overcome. Value chains are not properly managed, production is inferior to consumption, and imports mainly from neighbouring countries are significant. At individual household level, agriculture is mainly a part time activity, complementing other production, or service activities. Commercial agriculture is not very frequent, and when it occurs, it needs to be complemented by other sources of income.

The average size of holdings is small, reflecting the structure of this activity and the dispersal of the farms. Fragmentation and the small size of holdings are characteristic of the mountains and the South. The sizes are a little larger in the Bekaa and the coastal plains. Only 5% of holdings are larger than 4 ha, with 49% of the total Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA), while 30% of the UAA is larger than 10 ha and concentrated in the Bekaa. Of 1.1 million hectares of exploitable land in Lebanon, only 360,000 hectares are actually suitable for easy cultivation, while the total area actually planted does not exceed 280, 000 hectares of which, only 32% is irrigated. 50% of cultivated plots have a surface area of less than 5 dunums (5000m2).

Organic agriculture,

Today, organic agriculture is a growing field in Lebanon; it has been witnessing a constant increase since the early 90s. In October 2009, the Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network (MOAN) stated that there are currently 302 organic farms in Lebanon covering an area of 9443,70 (ha). This area was then composed of permanent grasslands (6,125ha), fresh vegetables and melons (569.9 ha), cereals (493.9 ha), olives (300.7ha), greens (290.3 ha), grapes (266.5 ha), wild collection (111.4 ha), fruit trees (21.2 ha), nuts (8.0 ha), permanent medicinal and aromatic plants (2.5 ha), berries (1.2 ha), seeds and seedlings (1.0 ha) and citrus (0.4 ha).
Lebanese organic farmers are characterized by owning small plots of land and not working in groups or cooperating. They are scattered and work mainly individually[11].

History and Characteristics of CSA and Ecological Solidarity-based Food Partnerships

There is no CSA development program yet. The focus among civil society organization is more on agricultural practices, in particular permaculture. In some regions, it will be necessary to start everything again from scratch. For example, the Soils Permaculture Association in Lebanon has the experience of working in small villages in the Jezzine region - South Lebanon, where most people have stopped growing food. When tobacco growing (which used to be the main activity there), ceased some years ago, locals not having any entrepreneurial skills did not have the knowledge to change to growing alternative crops, and nowadays younger generations have no interest in the land and migrate to urban areas. This is why the association is focusing most of its work on the raising awareness among farmers and

11 Fawaz, 2011.

training them, while supporting food processing and catering initiatives - hoping that in the future these will be able to source their raw material locally. 1 or 2 events are organized every year where locals can sell their (processed) food products to visitors who come from Beirut.

With the scandals around food safety issues that broke in recent years people are becoming more and more aware of the importance of knowing where their food comes from and how it was grown, and so direct relationships with farmers are becoming more common, especially through farmers' markets.
The local food partnerships in Lebanon could be classified in 2 types

- Share: with or without commitment, delivered either direct from organic farmers to consumers on weekly basis, or with the help of local shops or initiatives (such as Healthy Basket - by the American University of Beirut). Usually the basket system operates on an on-delivery payment basis, except for the Healthy Basket initiative which used to have a seasonal or monthly commitment program.
- Farmer's market: *Souk El Tayeb* was the first to launch the weekly farmer's market in 2004, and it continues to bring together conventional and organic farmers from different regions every Saturday in downtown Beirut. Some other similar initiatives have emerged in recent years such as *Souk Aal Souk* market - organized occasionally by the Food Heritage Foundation in municipalities or universities.

These two initiatives focus on fresh produce. On the other hand, processed food marketing is much more developed (it has more added value) and there are numerous NGOs that promote processed food items made from ethically sourced food run by rural womens' cooperatives (such as Fairtrade Lebanon, CRTDA) in their shops or during exhibitions.

What are the official CSA structures? What are their links with public institutions?

- Souk El Tayeb (NGO)
- Food Heritage Foundation (NGO)

These NGOs might collaborate with the public authorities occasionally or through some programmes, but there is no structured collaboration. One of the founders of Food Heritage was member of the National Committee for Organic Agriculture (Ministry of Agriculture), but she has now left, and it seems that the whole committee is no longer functioning.
Currently, most organic certification is provided via IMC (Italy), since LibanCert (a local company) was shut down.

Agroecological practices
On their websites the 3 initiatives mention some of the objectives of the Nyéléni declaration, in particular:

- ✓ Offering city residents direct contact with rural producers
- ✓ Preserving agricultural traditions
- ✓ Protecting the interest of small farmers and enabling them to compete with industrial and globalized food trade
- ✓ Preserving the environment and protecting human health by promoting organic agriculture.

However, these partnerships are using "organic agriculture" as a synonym for "environmental protection", without defining the main ecological principles behind it.

Standardized organic agriculture principles do not necessarily coincide with those of agro-ecology as mentioned in the Nyéléni declaration. For example, a local certified organic producer, who participates to the farmer's markets, imports "organic" feed for his 3,000 chickens from France, not taking the energy consumption of the shipping into consideration.

Perspectives

The current situation represents a major opportunity to encourage CSA and agro-ecology in Lebanon, especially as the urban consumers' awareness about food issues is increasing. However the missing element is small farmers. There are not enough small farmers to be supported any more, as the rural areas are undergoing desertification. Before making efforts to support farmers to sell their produce, the permaculture activists in Lebanon are focusing on helping existing farmers to adopt agro-ecology and in parallel supporting the emergence of a new generation of farmers.

The association « Soils Permaculture Association Lebanon» has identified 5 actions to take to support CSA and other alternative food systems in Lebanon:

- Encourage the preservation, development and exchange of remaining heirloom seeds
- Develop educational infrastructure for agro-ecology (facilitators, programmes, educational material, demonstration sites, etc.)
- Facilitate access to land for new farmers (too much land is left uncultivated, because of legal problems and because of the high price of land);
- Enlarge access to funds to develop Agroecology on different levels (seed banks, training, land, demo sites, etc.)
- Develop organizations that advocate for small-scale farming and support grassroots agro-ecology initiatives rather than supporting large-scale agribusiness companies and interests.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Author
Aleksandar Gjorgjievski, President of the Association for Sustainable Social and Economic Development SUNRISE, based in Skopje.

Local definition of CSA
The native name for "CSA" is *Solidarno Zemjodelstvo* (Солидарно Земјоделство). It means Solidarity Agriculture in English. There is no functioning CSA group in the country as of March 2016.

According to ASSED Sunrise's research and analysis, with a relevant promotion of the CSA model among the farmers and consumers, the first CSA in Macedonia could be set up in a short period of time.

Given the opportunity to be present on the first CSA Mediterranean meeting in Marseilles, France, ASSED Sunrise has established cooperation with Urgenci – France and the other organisations for the future development of Solidarity Agriculture (*Солидарно Земјоделство*) or CSA in Macedonia.

With the experience shared in Marseilles and the farm visits, as well as their previous engagements in the organic sector in Macedonia, ASSED Sunrise's President Aleksandar Gjorgjievski feels that its organization has enough motivation and capacity to work on the future CSA initiatives in the region.

National context
The Republic of Macedonia is located in South East Europe in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula. It has a population of 2.107 million (2013 World Bank) and an area of 25,713 sq. km. It has about 50 lakes and 16 mountain peaks over 2000 m high.

Agricultural information
The agricultural land size is 1,261,000 ha, of which 509,000 ha is arable land, while 752,000 ha are pastures. The average size of farms is 2 ha, and approx. 18% of the employed population works in the agriculture sector. The share of organic agriculture in total production area is 4,663 ha (certified for organic production).

Although the Association for Sustainable Social and Economic Development SUNRISE has not encountered anything similar to CSA in the country, there is great potential for promoting this model. The basic ingredients for Community Supported Agriculture model, organic farmers, consumers and retail of organic food, can all be found in the larger cities (especially in the Capital city of Skopje).

Agroecology does not yet exist in Macedonia, and there is also very little theory of agroecology included in the programmes of the higher education institutions.

Challenges for the development of CSA

The biggest challenge in the development of CSA in Macedonia seems to be awareness-raising and education about the CSA model among both the producers and the consumers. The economic situation might also be a barrier, due to the lack of available disposable income on the consumers' side for investing in the prepaid products provided by Solidarity Agriculture.

One of the key future challenges will be the governmental policies' focus on larger farms. This will reduce opportunities for Community-Supported Agriculture and limit positive conditions for developing agroecology. There is therefore a need to organise the agricultural producers (separate from the official organizations as The Federation of Farmers of the Republic of Macedonia, or The Federation of Organic Producers), in a way that will secure the future processes and assure their dynamic development.

These obstacles could be removed by:

- Including CSA in government policy programs - with subsidies or by minimizing tax etc.)
- Promoting government initiatives at local and national levels to support CSA
- Involving scientific institutions in the processes of developing CSA more systematically
- Involving State agencies in the support of agricultural development in Macedonia and the Food quality control agencies.

MOROCCO

Author
Annie Mellouki is one of the funders of RIAM, the Network of Agroecological Initiatives in Morocco. RIAM brings together all the actors in Morocco that are working on the issue of sustainable, healthy food production inspired by the principles of Agroecology.
Annie Mellouki has also been a major contributor to the mapping process in terms of designing the methodology and offering an example of what information can be provided.
She wrote a comprehensive mapping document about initiatives in Morocco, in French.

National context
Morocco, with a surface area of 710,850 square kilometres, includes 3,600 kilometres of coastline, 510 km of which are on the Mediterranean.

Water is a major issue in Morocco, since a large part of the country's rivers and oueds dry up for several months each year, and sometimes even for several successive years. The climate in Morocco is both Mediterranean and Atlantic, with 2 main seasons: a dry, warm season (Summer) and a wet, cold season (Winter). Some regions of Morocco belong to the Sahara desert zone.

Morocco has a population of almost 33,3 millions inhabitants. The urban population accounts for 60.3%, which is the result of an intensive rural exodus. More than a quarter of the urban population is concentrated on the 200 km-long urban corridor on the Rabat-Casablanca axis. The key sectors of the Moroccan economy are linked to phosphate mining, agriculture, tourism, and various export industries (cars, agrifood...). The percentage break-down of the main economic sectors in the GDP are: agriculture 17%, industry 28% and services 55%.

Agricultural context
Agricultural policy since 2009 has been structured by the Moroccan Green Strategy, designed to make the sector competitive and to use it as an engine for national economic growth as well as in the fight against poverty. This strategy definitely primarily aims to boost industrial agriculture, but it has also supported organic agriculture in a marginal way.

Organic agriculture has been developing in Morocco for over 30 years. It has however remained a small part of the country's agricultural production, and is mostly export-driven. Steps have recently been taken to reorganize and develop the organic sector. In 2010, a professional association, called Amabio, was created; in 2012, the law #39-12 was passed to regulate and promote the sector and a national organic logo was designed. Organic certification is currently delivered by 6 certification bodies, on the basis of the existing organic agricultural standards in Europe and the USA. The development efforts of the 5 last years have resulted in a 5-fold increase in production that now reaches 70,000 tons, of which only a fifth is exported (12,000 tons).

Sustainable agriculture in Morocco
Sustainable agriculture[12] of different kinds is well represented in Morocco. A majority of smallholders have traditionally managed their land in a natural and ancestral way using agroecological techniques. Chemical inputs have not been used, both because of the consciousness that biodiversity is at work, and because of insufficient available financial means. This situation is now evolving, and a growing number of businesses are looking at Moroccan fertile areas with interest. In remote areas, agroecological practices seem to have a bright future.

A new trend that can be observed almost everywhere, although on a numerically limited scale, is that of new farmers deliberately partially or fully choosing permaculture or agroecology for their farms: mulching, chemical-free techniques, GMO-free, natural and integrated pest control, composting, renewable energies, water-conservation systems, solar pumps, eco-building, seed saving, agroforestry, are among the practices inspired by agroecology and that are considered sustainable. This emerging movement is still to be consolidated.

The marketing of sustainable agriculture products or “beldi” products (fresh from farm) in Morocco is mostly done through specialized organic shops, large-scale retailing shops (even if the organic sections in hypermarkets are quite small and clearly dominated by imported products), farm shops, e-shops, home-delivery companies or at basket pick-up points in local shops. Some farmers are also selling to restaurants such as the committed restaurants of Chefchaouen.

Alternative certification (Participatory Guarantee System) has already been studied and promoted by RIAM (Agroecological Initiatives' Network in Morocco). There is at least one functioning example, thanks to the association Aftha in Chefchaouen.

Training in sustainable agriculture is still rather under-developed in Morocco. Currently, training in agroecology, permaculture or organic agriculture is mostly conducted by Moroccan or foreign associations. They organise workshops or training camps, as well as a few long-term training sessions.

History and characteristics or CSA in Morocco
Various regions of Morocco have been witnessing the creation of many direct partnerships between producers and consumers. There are several existing models: the weekly share-model (with or without upfront payment), delivered in town or at the farm, farm-gate direct sales systems, deliveries to specific organic shops, as well as partnerships between committed restaurants and local producers.

If we follow the more formalised and demanding definition of CSA as described by Urgenci in its European handbook on CSA[13], then the concept of CSA, with risk

12 “Sustainable agricultures” is the term used to speak about organic agriculture, permaculture and agroecology.

13 “*4 principes fondent la base commune des CSA : 1.Partenariat: généralement formalisé en contrat individuel (oral ou écrit), de plusieurs mois ou d’un an, entre chaque consommateur et le producteur, et caractérisé par un engagement mutuel (nourriture/argent/partage/santé). 2.Local:se basant davantage sur l’intégration des agriculteurs(trices) dans leur environnement et dont le travail bénéficient aux communautés qui les soutiennent, sans pour autant se limiter au sens géographique. 3.Solidarité entre les agriculteurs(trices) et les groupes de soutien impliquant le partage des risques et des avantages comme une alimentation saine et locale, une rémunération suffisante et régulière pour une vie digne et un maintien des fermes nourricières. 4.Producteur/consommateur - une relation directe de personne à personne dans un rapport de confiance, sans intermédiaires ou hiérarchie.*”

sharing, seasonal prepayment and written contract, is not very widespread in Morocco.

There are 5 initiatives of this type: 3 in Rabat, Swani tiqa Najib, Swani tiqa Radouane and Swani tiqa Mustapha, 1 in Mohammedia, the Britel farm, and 1 in Casablanca, the Bioconfiance Gardens Dar Bouazza under the supervision of Bouchaib Harris who is currently experiencing some difficulties.

These upfront payment-based initiatives have several years of experience. The 3 Swani Tiqa and the Bioconfiance gardens started in 2009. The Britel Farm is 2 years old. All these initiatives are autonomous, individual or associative. They are coordinated by a network called Agroecological Initiatives' Network in Morocco, RIAM.

Their common principles of solidarity and direct producer-consumer relationships are all reflected in the 2015 Nyéléni Declaration on Agroecology. Efforts are still needed to remove some barriers, focusing on the reinforcement of capacity building in agroecological practice, access to Commons and transfer of skills.

PALESTINE

Author: Saad Younis/Dagher, from the Arab Agronoms Association.
Native Name(s) for CSA: *Sharaka* (Partnership).

Short Fact Sheet on CSA and/or Ecological Solidarity-based Partnerships

In Palestine, the first CSA was organized in 2000, when 19 families met and decided to contact a farmer and started to buy direct from him. The second one started in 2007 and was named "*Sharaka*".
From *Sharaka*, a new idea developed to establish a not-for-profit company to facilitate the transport of poor farmers' produce, initially to the city of Ramallah.
The third CSA was established recently this year (2016). The approximate numbers of eaters in these groups totals around 250-300 people.
Parallel to these CSAs, there is work in progress to create a local seed library to preserve local seeds.
Early 2016, a first dissemination meeting was organized with Palestinian ecologists, who agreed to establish CSAs in different cities.
There is no CSA umbrella organization for now, but the recently established Palestine Eco-Entrepreneur Network could serve as a coordinating body.

National Context
The total area of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of Palestine is 6,222 km2 and the total population (mid 2014) was about 4.55 million, 2.31 million males and 2.24 million females. The Palestinian Population in the Gaza Strip is younger than the West Bank Population.

The percentage of individuals under 15 made up 39.7% of the total population as of mid 2014 (37.6% in the West Bank and 43.2% in the Gaza Strip). The elderly population aged (65 years and over) made up only 2.9% of the total population of which 3.2% in the West Bank and 2.4% in the Gaza Strip in mid 2014.
The population density in Palestine is among the highest in the world, with up to 756 persons/km2 average. In the Gaza Strip, it is 4,822 persons/km2.

The head of one in every ten households is a woman. The size of female-headed households was relatively low, with an average size of 2.8 persons, compared with 5.7 persons for male-headed households. Female participation rate in the labour force is very low compared with males. Unemployment is about 26.2% nation wide, and stands at 18.2% in the West Bank and 40.8% in the Gaza Strip. Unemployment rates reach 36.5% among females compared to 23.3% among males.

The results of the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey of 2016 reveal that the major share of cash expenditure was on food: one third of total expenditure is on food.

The same data revealed that 12.9% of the individuals in Palestine suffer from extreme poverty: 7.8% in the West Bank, and 21.1% in the Gaza Strip.
The Interim Agreements between Israel and the PLO divided the West Bank into three categories: Area A, currently comprising about 18% of the land in the West Bank, which includes all the Palestinian cities and most of the Palestinian population of the West Bank. Area B comprises approximately 22% of the West Bank and encompasses large rural areas; Israel retained security control of the area and transferred control of civil matters to the Palestinian Authority (PA). Area C covers 60% of the West Bank (about 330,000 hectares); Israel has retained almost complete control of this area, including security matters and all land-related civil matters, including land allocation, planning and construction, and infrastructure.

The division into areas should have been temporary and was meant to enable an incremental transfer of authority to the Palestinian Authority. It was not designed to address the needs of long-term demographic growth. Yet this “temporary” arrangement has remained in force for nearly twenty years.

The precise number of Palestinians in Area C is unknown. The Israeli NGO Bimkom estimates the population at 200,000, whereas according to an extensive survey by UNOCHA [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs] there would appear to be 300,000 Palestinian residents in Area C. According to UN food aid agencies, these communities face a high degree of food insecurity – 34% after receiving aid – as compared to 17% in Areas A and B.

Agricultural information

Agriculture is an important cultural tradition vital to the economy of the West Bank and Gaza Strip of Palestine. Farming families have been a part of Palestinian life for thousands of years. They not only provide communities with food and jobs, they are a source of pride and a means of self-sufficiency. From drier and drier seasons to ever-changing political obstacles (both physical and bureaucratic), farming families of the West Bank and Gaza face a whole array of major challenges to their way of life and their livelihoods, but they respond every day with resilience and creativity.

Agriculture in the West Bank accounts for 5 per cent of the GDP and employs 12 per cent of the labour force. The separation wall running through the West Bank isolates thousands of families from their land, threatening their food security and the already fragile economy. Nearly one fifth of West Bank agricultural land is inaccessible. West Bank farmers face challenges not only in the realm of production, but also in marketing. Restrictions on movement and delays at checkpoints make it difficult for goods to reach the markets.

Agriculture in Gaza has also been hit hard by the blockade. A total of 46 per cent of agricultural land in Gaza is inaccessible or unusable due to the destruction of land during “Operation Cast Lead” and by the “security buffer zone” along Gaza’s Northern and Eastern borders with Israel. The labour force employed in farming dropped from 12.7 per cent in 2007 to 7.1 per cent in 2009.

History and Characteristics of CSA or/and Ecological, Solidarity -based Partnerships in the country

The first attempt to start CSA was in Ramallah City, when 19 consumers contacted a farmer and conducted the first meeting with him. The farmer was producing milk, cheese and vegetables. This attempt was stopped, because the farmer could not cover the consumers' needs and only 3 families continued with him. In 2007, a group of consumers established a new group, called "Sharaka", which means *partnership,* in order to support farmers in marketing their produce. *Sharaka* members also help farmers in different farming activities, like olive picking especially in dangerous areas, where there is a danger of confrontation with Israeli settlers or military. From Sharaka, another group established a Non-for-Profit Company to support small-scale farmers who have no access to the market. For the time being, there are 350 consumers who buy their food through "Adel company" (Adel means fair). The Arab Agronomists Association (AAA) is providing the technical support to farmers to move towards agro-ecology and link them with Adel.

Members of CSA groups are highly educated people, who want to support Palestinian farmers to cope with many problems they are facing starting with the occupation. Consumers also want chemical-free products, but they are willing to also support small-scale farmers who care about the environment.

Recently, another group of consumers has been forming around a farmer who has been returned his confiscated land and who started his agro-ecological farm. This group consists of about 20 consumers.

In 2015, a new initiative took place, when AAA started to work with a village called "*Farkha*" in the middle of the West Bank of Palestine to convert the village into eco-village starting with agro-ecology. The total population of this village is about 1,500 inhabitants and nearly 90% of the population depends partially or fully on agriculture. AAA is establishing a demonstration and pedagogical eco-farm on an area of 1.5 hectare. A group of households in the village also started to apply agro-ecological principles in their home gardens. The idea is to start in one village and then to move to the surrounding villages, with the perspective of creating a network of Palestinian eco-villages, where agro-ecology stands at the core of this vision.

There is only one organic certified farm producing vegetables, but for the CSA groups the system is mainly based on building trust between farmers and consumers who do not want the farmers to opt for organic certification, as they no longer believe in this system.

Local definition of CSA

In Palestine, mainly in the larger cities, there is a rising consciousness about the importance of eating "clean" food, which means eating food that has been produced using natural methods. As a result, groups of people have started to look for farmers who are practicing agro-ecology. There is also a rising tendency to boycott products from Israel, and people are willing to support poor Palestinian farmers.

So CSA is understood here as a mean of supporting poor farmers and of getting natural food, but also for some people, of boycotting Israeli products.

Are there different types of CSA?

There are different models for supporting farmers. As mentioned before, there are CSAs around individual farmers, as well as such models such as Sharaka and the not-for-profit company called Adel, which is the most successful model.

There is no specific legal status for CSAs. The only officially registered body is "Adel", which organizes weekly markets. Adel's eaters are eager to wait a week to buy the food, because they see that it has a different taste. They usually arrive 2 hours before the opening of the weekly market to queue for the products.
Organic certification is not required in these initiatives; relationships with farmers are based on trust.

The Ten Teikei principles are not known as such in Palestine, but most of the principles are observed without actually knowing these principles.

Agroecological practices
In Palestine, all land is owned either by farmers or by the State. There are even a few cases where the land is owned by the village and under full control of the village council. Farmers can do nothing on this common land.

Farmers usually work on their land or they have a lease agreement with the owner. It is easier to convince farmers who own the land to convert to agro-ecology than those leasing land. People from the first group care much more about the land and the soil than people from the second group, who want to maximize their profits in a very short time.

Farmers are very inventive and are implementing many different agro-ecological practices, which are similar to the ones applied in the other parts of the world. Recently, the farmers started to think about "healing nature" through water retention, and Arab Agronomists' Association (AAA) started the first steps in the eco-farm in Farkha village.

There are many agricultural practices practiced locally, like:
- Sandwich raised beds
- Mixed and companion planting
- Composting and using of compost tea
- Mulching using organic materials
- Water retention practices.

In the last 3 years, AAA has organized two national conferences on agro-ecology.

The Arab Agronomists Association (AAA) could be considered as an umbrella organization and it displays aspects outlined in the Nyéléni Agro-ecology Declaration. AAA's focus is to promote agro-ecology among Palestinians and Palestinian farmers.

The main challenges CSA is facing in Palestine are the following:
- The lack of literature in Arabic on agro-ecology
- Low number of trained agronomists on agro-ecology
- Insufficient exchange of expertise between Palestinians and other countries.

The following means would be necessary to overcome these obstacles:
- Translation of books on agro-ecology into Arabic (like Pierre Rabhi's books)
- Build a training program for agronomists and farmers on agro-ecology
- Building an exchange of expertise program between Mediterranean countries.

SPAIN

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Ecologistas en Acción is a national confederation of about 300 local, grassroots groups who work to develop the social ecology paradigm, with a total of about 30,000 members. In the "Agroecology, Food Sovereignty and Rural World" field, the local groups are deeply involved in the development of local alternative food networks. At national level, several activist documents have been published to develop short food supply chains and alternative food networks (AFN). Four national meetings were held (in 2010, 2013, 2014, and 2015). The aim is to spread, encourage, link and coordinate such networks. These national meetings provide a unique – albeit periodic – meeting space for such initiatives. *Ecologistas en Acción* attended the Nyéléni-Europe meeting (Krems, 2011) as well as two Urgenci-Europe meetings (Milan, 2012; France, 2014).

Native name
The CSA-like form (defined as: box-scheme; one farm for many consumers; pre-payment; risk-sharing tools or systems; consumers involved in farm works; etc.) has been called many names in Spain: Cooperativa Unitaria (a unitary cooperative, for example *Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta* in Madrid); *Cooperativa Agroecológica* (agroecological cooperative, for example Hortigas in Granada or Surco a Surco in Toledo); or *Agricultura de Responsabilidad Compartida* (shared responsibility farming, for example ARCo-COAG in Nekasarea). There are a few projects that use foreign terms, such as CSA (CSA-Zarazalejo in Madrid) or AMAP (La Montañita in Burgos; PACA in Catalunya).

Common definition
CSA in Spain for the purpose of this study, is defined by having:

- A long-term agreement (of at least one year) between farmers and consumers
- Shares as the only form of food delivery
- Risk-sharing mechanisms such as stable fees that are independent of the amount of food received by consumers, or pre-payment of fees at the beginning of the season
- A commitment by consumers to be involved alongside the farmers in distribution, administration and decision-making about food production and the economics of the project.

Country context

Spain is the second largest country in Western Europe and the European Union (500,000km²), and the fourth largest country in Europe. On a population basis, Spain is the sixth largest in Europe and the fifth in the European Union (46 million inhabitants). Per capita GDP is about €22,000, 93% of EU-28 average.

Although population density is quite low (92 people/km²), about 80% of people live in cities, and rural territories represent 80% of land. Only about 4% of the active population works in the agricultural sector, which represents about 2.5% of GDP (especially fruit and vegetables, wine, olive oil, and other)[1]. Family expenditure on food has severely decreased its relative weight from 50% in 1950 to 14% in 2014[2]. The average price for produce received by farmers represents about 20–25% of the final prices that vary from 5% for oranges to 50% for some meat[3].

Spain is the country in EU with most organic certified land (2.8Mha in 2014, representing 5% of total agricultural land) and ranks sixth in the world, but only has 32,000 certified farms (noticeably less than Italy, which has less certified organic land), with 3% of all farms. But the annual per capita consumption of organic food is below €10 which represents less than 1% of total food sales. Short food supply chains are expected (in Government data) to deliver from 35% to 50% of total organic food final sales on the internal market, but this figure is expected to grow significantly for fresh fruit and vegetables[4]. About 80% of Spanish organic food is exported to the EU and USA, mainly raw fruit and vegetables, oil and wine (often bottled in other countries). In 2012 about €350,000 of organic food was imported, mostly processed foods[5].

Since the 1990s, the most widespread kind of short food supply chains (SFSC) have been food co-ops, bringing together consumers and farmers within the scope of alternative and solidarity economy. Since the beginning of this century, the model of little consumer groups has become the most common, with between 550 and 850 groups, and involving more than 50,000 consumers. It usually consists of single groups of 10–25 families who contact different farmers or people who deliver various produce ordered direct or collectively. It is usually based on volunteer, non-professional, self-organised work. These consumer groups show different levels and sorts of commitment between consumers and farmers, and, in some cases, come close to CSA schemes. In the last five years, during the so-called crisis, this model of little consumer groups has been shown to be reaching its limits and we can observe a trend in the growth of the number of consumers involved in each group. The professionalisation of some tasks in the order management of ordering, and the creation of local networks for coordinated ordering and delivery is important. At the same time, big food co-ops (over 200 hundred family-members) are growing and strengthening; and other SFSC are developing and becoming more common and stable in the form of small, non-specialised shops, regular farmers' markets (between 150 and 200) or public procurement.

History and characteristics of CSA

How did CSA develop? Dynamics?

In 2000, the first CSA in the metropolitan area of Madrid was created (Bajo el Asfalto está la Huerta), by occupying a plot of public abandoned agricultural land. This model

spread in the region of Madrid and to other cities, and, in 2005, there was a meeting in Madrid of 14 initiatives of CSA-like food co-ops. Since then, new initiatives inspired by French AMAPs have appeared (e.g.: La Montañita, Burgos, 2012; PACA, Catalunya, 2013). In the Basque Country, the farmers' union EHNE-Bizkaia set up the Nekasarea farmers' and consumers' network in 2006. It currently includes more than 30 farmers and 90 groups of consumers, under a CSA-like scheme. In the neighbouring province, Gipuzkoa, another network (BasHerri Sarea) was developed in 2012, inspired by the pioneer CSA project Uztaro Kolektiboa (Beizama, 2004), but there are only a few CSA schemes within this network.
93% of the CSAs we contacted were created after 2005, and 62% after 2010, so we can consider such experiences to be a growing movement, but quite new and therefore not stabilised in Spain.

What is understood by CSA?
The most common features of CSA recognised in answers to the Census on the CSA definition are: direct partnership (96%); production in agroecological ways (96%); aiming at providing quality food (93%); formal or informal agreement (89%); shared risks (86%); and long-term agreement (78%).

Within this study, a CSA is defined by the long-term agreement (at least one year) between farmers and consumers; shares as the only way of food delivery; risk-sharing tools such as stable fees independent of the amount of food received by consumers with pre-payment at the beginning of the season; and consumer's commitment to distribution, administration and decision-making about food production and the economy of the project alongside the farmers.

This is the strongest definition regarding consumers' involvement, and has also been taken from many debates between CSA projects during the last fifteen years. It is linked to assemblies, self-organised groups, with a deep political view of agroecology and food sovereignty.

During the first European Census of CSA, 75 CSAs feeding about 7,000 people (on average, 100 people fed by each CSA) were identified. The average land size is 1.1ha of vegetables and fruit, and 150m²/consumer.

Land ownership
Most of the farms are rented (40%) or owned (26%) by the farmers. Only 12% are rented (10%) or partly rented (2%) by CSA; and in three cases land belonged to a private party.

Type of produce and distribution method
The most common types of food included in CSAs are vegetables (96%), bread (67%), and fruit (52%). 98% deliver through collective collection points, and in 26% of the CSA it is possible to pick up the produce at the farm; this is the only possibility for vegetables in one case.

Labour and income
Only 38% of farmers make 100% of their income from the CSA, and the average figure is 79%. Most make some complementary income through another distribution channel (54% of the farmers).

Are there different types of CSA?
There are many different models, which we could summarise in four general types:

Producer-led CSA
This type is promoted by a single farmer or, sometimes, a group of farmers who organise consumer groups to deliver their produce. Land is usually owned or rented by farmers, as are farming tools and machinery. They set up mechanisms for risk-sharing, such as stable fees independent of the amount of food delivered (no prices for food), pre-payment, and long-term buying commitment. Consumers' commitment is limited to financial support and economic risk-sharing; consumer participation in decision-making, delivery, or farm work is usually low. There are about 15 projects of this type, one is quite big and includes about 1,200 consumers.

Producer-network-led CSA
There are two networks that could be considered as part of this model, both in the Basque Country. What differentiates this model from the producer-led one is that shared-risk systems exist not only between consumers to farmers but also between associated farmers. Farmers exchange produce to provide consumers with a full supply of food, and usually support each other in order to complete the shares when crops decrease on any farm; this is a collective risk management tool. There are about 50 projects that fall into this model, linking two different networks in the Basque Country and another project in Andalusia.

Joint consumer- and farmer-led CSA (Cooperativas Unitarias)
This is the model with the strongest commitment between farmers and consumers, and for some projects it is the only real CSA model. It includes about 15 projects. It usually consists of groups of people who manage the land where a farmer or group of farmers produce – usually vegetables – for the CSA, usually as employees of the CSA. Each consumer pays a regular fee, independent of food production; tools, machines and land rental are joint responsibilities and collective property. Consumers show a high level of commitment, including decision-making in assemblies, administration, delivery support, and farm work are shared (and sometimes compulsory).

Consumer-led CSA
Under this model, consumers establish a long-term agreement with a farm or group of farms to buy their food and support the farm when crops decrease or when the farm needs financial support. The land is rented or owned by the farmer, as well as the tools and machinery. The commitment of consumers is reduced to buying shares or minimum ordering, occasional financial support, and attending open days. Only three projects under this model answered the European Census survey (and therefore they consider themselves a CSA), since many projects don't consider this type to be a CSA. More than a hundred such groups can be found in Spain.

Legal setup
Most of the CSAs are informal groups with no legal status or recognition. Few of them have registered as associations to be able to legally employ the farm workers and to prevent possible legal issues linked to health and sanitation regulations or financial administration. In two cases (3% of the sample) there are legal cooperatives

where both farmers and consumers are members. Only 6% of the CSAs have formal agreements between consumers and farmers.

Labour and income

The most common situation is that farmers are independent workers, as single farmers (59%), farm-families (29%) or a group of farmers (7%). Only 8% of CSAs have full-time workers or part-time workers (3%) employed by the CSA; and, in 3 cases, farm work is mandatory for consumers.

Interaction with public bodies

CSAs in Spain do not usually have direct links with public bodies. The most common situation is that of single projects whose main political activities take place through social movements but without aiming to impact policy or lobbying. 21% of CSAs are linked to local CSA or Food sovereignty networks in some way.
The Nekasarea network (45 CSAs in Bizkaia province) is the only network member of Urgenci, and, together with another project in Castilla y León, they are the only CSA network that are part of a national network (ARCo-Agricultura de Responsabilidad Compartida, linked to the farmers' union COAG). Only these CSA networks are involved in interaction with public bodies, exclusively through the farmers' unions to whom they are linked.

Involvement of the eaters

The main involvement of consumers in CSAs is in exchanging recipes (91%); buying shares and decision-making about farming management (90%); attending open days (87%); and investing money (76%). Only in a few cases do consumers get involved in farm work or administration tasks (29%), and packaging (17%).

Organic certification

71% of CSAs produce organically but are not certified, and 28% are certified. Only one CSA produces food without using organic farming practices. Some of the CSAs are involved in local Participatory Guarantee Systems, especially those defined as producer-network-led CSAs.

Most of the CSAs go beyond organic certification in their farming practices, e.g. using local seeds and varieties, committing to seasonal and local food, or producing their own inputs through local resources like plant-based extracts. Crop diversity needed to grow food yearlong leads to a very diversified design of the farms, and sometimes includes livestock (especially poultry) mixed with vegetable farming.

Agroecology

Most Spanish CSAs are involved in the food sovereignty movement, and are active stakeholders in promoting food sovereignty at local level. Most of the projects are involved in local, environmental and social struggles, and support the creation of new CSAs and the spread of agroecology. Many of them are also involved in local seed networks and try to recover traditional ecological knowledge in the territory where the farm is situated either formally or informally. They can be considered a powerful tool to sustain the first steps of young, urban people who want to link with the countryside and agroecology, and perhaps support them to become farmers. But nowadays, apart from the Basque Country, political activity is weak. It would however appear to be growing in some areas, such as Valencia and Barcelona, as a result of recent electoral changes.

Outlook

The CSA movement in Spain has developed in the last fifteen years in different ways, depending on the different territories and organisational contexts in the farming sector. On the one hand, CSAs in the Basque Country have been promoted by local farmers' unions: they are visible, coordinated and politically active. After ten years, the development and maturity of the network shows a trend to localise the networks and to launch local processes of food sovereignty, and to strengthen the professionalisation of farmers. On the other hand, in the rest of Spain, we find many little, scattered and isolated CSAs (except around Madrid, where ten groups have some informal coordination) that frequently face highly precarious situations, and trouble in maintaining their activity.

In both contexts, CSAs are mainly linked to an urban population, in relation to both farmers – who are often new to farming – and consumers, and it is difficult to bring professional, conventional farmers into such schemes. The lack of knowledge, appropriate land and other farming resources for the new entrant farmers is often highly challenging, and carries a high risk of insufficient production for consumers. The process of professionalisation of these new farmers is bringing new challenges to the movement, as political aims can get set aside when the farmers are faced by need of technical and marketing concerns. This leads to a reconfiguration of the CSA idea, based on the need to ensure economic viability for both farmers and consumers, and to simplify the internal and external coordination structures and work of the CSA.

In 2005, the CSA model was proportionately strong in in terms of the general development of SFSC in Spain. Since then, the important development of SFSC in Spain has not been based on CSA (excluding the Basque Country) but on simpler, less committed models of consumer groups. Compared with neighbouring countries such as France, reflection is needed on why the CSA movement is growing so slowly in Spain, especially in the context of growing political awareness and the strong development of alternative, cooperative and solidarity economy projects throughout the country. Perhaps reflection needs to be carried out on the most appropriate models of internal organisation of CSAs. Or possibly the lack of public support for such projects (and, in many cases, the outright rejection of requesting public support) is hindering the movement. Perhaps more needs to be done to communicate the project and values of CSAs. Thus, the European Charter could be an interesting tool for stimulating the movement.

In any case, CSAs still exist and are growing in Spain, and the process of reflection that comes with the maturity of the projects is now beginning. May this census be a powerful tool for achieving this!

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TUNISIA

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National Context

With 163,610 km² and a population of 10,777,554 inhabitants, 5% of Tunisia’s surface area is covered in water, and around 10 million hectares of agricultural land, which makes up about 62% of its total size. 5 million hectares are cultivated land, 4 million ha are used for grazing and 1 million ha of forests and bush.

The agricultural sector represents 15% of the GDP and provides work for about 22% of the active population. The average size of farms is 10 ha (75% of the farms are smaller). The largest share of the agricultural production comes from animal breeding, followed by fruit (olives, dates, citrus fruits), vegetable growing and cereals. According to official data, the organic production in Tunisia amounts to 3% of the national GDP, has allowed the creation of 4,800 enterprises and provides about 73,000 jobs that are directly or indirectly connected to this sector of activities. The total surface of land dedicated to organic agriculture is 219,800 hectares.

History and characteristics of CSA

In Tunisia, there is no concrete experience of CSA as a formalised partnership. But there are several private initiatives (associations, cooperatives...) that have adopted the concept of solidarity, responsible consumption and that support sustainable agricultural practice. Tunisia Coop is one of the initiatives in this field that fosters responsible consumption through the « Souk de la Coop ». This market based on the concept of short chain marketing systems allows the consumer to discover and join the cooperative. It similarly enables the social link between consumers and producers to be restored.

Organic agriculture in Tunisia is, however, currently experiencing considerable growth. The State has established a national strategy based on strict regulations, training, the structuring and encouraging of organic farms. All these efforts are contributing to the creation of training centres and certification bodies based in Tunisia.

Outlook

Several initiatives are acting in the same field in Tunisia, and share the recognition of the concept of Agroecology. It thus seems necessary to set up an organisation and/or a local and responsible partnership in order to bring all these efforts together.

TURKEY

Author

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Native Name for "CSA" (Community Supported Agriculture) and translation into English

Topluluk Destekli Tarım: Community Supported Agriculture
Gıda Topluluğu: Food Community
There are around 10 CSAs and/or Ecological Solidarity-based Partnerships in Turkey. The oldest is the *Buğday Association Cumhuriyetköy Bahçe* project, which started in 2005. The second initiative was *Güneşköy Bahçemiz* ("Our Garden"), created in 2006. There is no formal CSA network, but Buğday Association (Buğday Derneği) is the informal lead group. At present there are around 1,000 people who get a share from one of these 10 initiatives.

Country Context

Turkey has a population of 78.74 millions (as of 1st January 2016). The average age is 31 years. The country is 780,580 sq km, of which 9,820 sq km are covered in water. The GDP per capita is 19610 USD. Agriculture still accounts for almost 10% of the GDP (9.7% in 2006). In 2004, agriculture still provided work for 35.9% (25.6 million) of the work force with services accounting for 22.8% and industry 41.2%.

Agricultural information

Terrain: narrow coastal plain; mountains with an East-West orientation, high central plateau.
Climate: In Southern and Western coastal area: hot, dry summers with mild winters. On the Northern coasts: more temperate weather. In the interior, continental climate with very hot summers and harsh winters.
Agricultural land: 390.590 sq km (2010) (about 50% of the land mass).
Forest area: 213.900 sq km (2010), about 26% of the land mass.
Main agricultural products: grain, hazelnuts, olives, fruit, sugar beet, tobacco, cotton, livestock...

Due to the heterogeneous character of the terrain, farm/field size varies a lot from region to region and even within regions. There are more conventional monoculture fields than poly-culture farms. Villagers produce grains (mostly wheat and barley) in relatively bigger fields. In the Black Sea region, there are large areas of monoculture growing hazelnuts. The Aegean region is an important olive-growing area. The Southern coastal area grows a lot of citrus fruit, and central region specialises in grains. There is more traditional, small, poly-culture practice in the Eastern region compared with the West.

Industrial investments, mining projects, hydroelectric power stations, deforestation and depopulation of villages are serious and detrimental factors hindering the development of clean, ecological food production. Governments have constantly tried to reduce the rural population. The Metropolitan Law of 2012 cancelled the village status of thousands of settlements and turned them into districts of the central, metropolitan municipalities, with potentially very hazardous results for small farmers.

Organic production started in the mid-80s for exports (figs, raisins, citrus et). This was followed by a steadily but slowly growing internal market. Now organic production may be growing at a rate of 20%, but it still very low compared with conventional production. Organic production has well-defined procedures, organic certificates are issued and controls carried out by private companies that are authorized by the State. There are organic product shelves in some large-scale retailing hypermarkets in big cities. There are organic open markets in Istanbul, Ankara, and a few other cities. More precise information on the organic production/sector can be provided by Bugday Dernegi, the leading NGO promoting organic production and consumption.

History and Characteristics of CSA

CSA practices started with Bugday Association's two projects in Istanbul, in 2005 and 2006, namely "Bahçe" (Garden) project. Participants made advance payments to receive boxes of vegetables grown on a plot. There may have been earlier attempts in Ankara by Hocamköy ecovillage initiative / Harman project, but this needs to be confirmed. This was followed by Güneşköy, another eco-village initiative in Ankara, that has replicated Buğday's project and continued on a yearly basis since 2006, distributing about 50 boxes per week in the growing season. Similar projects were developed in İzmir (İmeceevi) and Çengelköy, Istanbul. In 2009, two initiatives emerged, BÜ-KOOP in Istanbul (a cooperative) and DBB group in Ankara as well as and ÇAYEK in Çanakkale (2013). DBB and ÇAYEK are all under the umbrella of PGS (Particpatory Guarantee Systems). BÜ-KOOP is similar to an eco-coop that provides logistics (a small sales room). DBB promotes the formation of small CSA groups, and there are a number of “community groups” working under DBB. In recent years, more and more CSA initiatives have been emerging, including those led by Yeryüzü Association (Yeryüzü Derneği) in İstanbul, and many small if limited groups around İzmir. Relatively recent producer-driven groups include Tahtaciorencik Village Ecological Living Collective (TADYA) in Ankara, and Bayramiç Yeniköy in Çanakkale.

What is understood as CSA in Turkey?

This is what the term CSA implies for Turkish volunteers:
1/ Knowing the producer(s) in person or having direct contact with them.
2/ Solidarity in growing / eating natural (not necessarily organic) food. Supporting producers in different ways including prepayment.
3/ Protecting traditional, heirloom seeds.
4/ Trying to reduce transport costs by placing collective orders.

Some CSAs are more producer-initiated/managed, whereas others are more consumer initiated/managed.

There is also a traditional CSA-like system. Turkey is in transition from a more traditional, rural society to a more modern, industrial one. Many people in cities and towns retain their links with villages (parents, relatives, friends etc.). And those people in villages continue to support city-dwellers (mostly their close relatives) by providing them with fresh local food of all kinds. When people go to their villages, on holidays for instance, they come back with huge amounts of food. Or their relatives send them food with people travelling from their villages to the cities. Actually this is more like “agriculture-supported communities”.

Another form of “CSA-like initiatives” can be seen within companies or institutions. Sometimes a person tells his/her colleagues that there is good honey/hazelnut/whatever in her village (or somewhere else), and these people place a collective order, sometimes on a regular basis.

Which model is the most successful in Turkey?
To my knowledge, when producers or groups of producers take the initiative of creating groups (e-mail lists, Facebook groups etc.), they can reach more people. And when they provide easy ways to communicate product lists, placing orders and delivery, they can sell more. Pure CSA models like Güneşköy Bahçemiz, which were producer-initiated, also work very well.

How are the eaters' commitments expressed or formalised?
In the *Güneşköy Bahçemiz* example, this was a simple one-page contract that conforms to mainstream CSA principles. In some cases there is no formal agreement; eaters sometimes contribute in advance to producer's investment or other costs (many examples within TADYA) only on the basis of mutual trust.
Güneşköy Bahçemiz had organic certification. But in general this is not required at all., Although few in number, such initiatives in Turkey are based on mutual trust and close human relationships.

Agroecological practices
Almost all CSA initiatives value ecological production (no systemic chemicals, care for the health of the soil and environment, as well as other criteria).
"Natural production" is mostly understood in terms of traditional small-scale no-chemical production, free-range animals supplemented by naturally-grown, traditional feed. "Agroecology" is not commonly known; it is now being introduced. People refer more to (and apply) permaculture principles, holistic management, ecological gardening, Fukuoka style natural agriculture, etc. The Nyeléni declaration may not be not known, but its main principles are inherently present in most initiatives.

Needs assessment
The CSA movement has recently been growing in Turkey. Initiatives have also started to come together, to learn from each other and to plan ahead. I expect an increase in the number of CSAs in the near future. The country in general is a very fertile ground for CSAs, with people in cities still retaining their links with their villages and vast amounts of clean, unused land and other agricultural resources.

What challenges are the initiatives in your country facing?
Not many young people living in villages anymore. Sometimes people from cities “go back” to rural areas and try to start small-scale farms. This is difficult because it can be hard to access a good piece of land, clean water, etc. Trying to learn agriculture from scratch also requires too much time and energy.

State policies in general seem to be designed against small-scale production, although some subsidies exist for organic production and for using environmentally-friendly methods. There is insufficient legislation to exempt small-scale producers from hard-to-follow regulations.

What means would be required for you to overcome these obstacles?

The creation of small-scale farms that exhibit economic success and also provide education and tutoring would be great. We are trying to create a pedagogical farm in Tahtaciörencik village. More grass-roots initiatives (in the form of CSAs or other LSPs) are necessary. We should try to encourage people to take responsibility for such solutions.