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The Logistics of Short Supply Chains-Project entering a new phase

By Jocelyn Parot, GENERAL SECRETARY OF URGENCI



In the heart of Summer, the Freiburg -based association die Agronauten organized the 4th exchange in the frame of the “Logistics of regional food supply chains” -project, 13-17 July 2014. Partners from other participating countries, France, Finland and Belgium, joined forces to make it become something more than just one more experience sharing event. Apart from visits to local initiatives, including the colourful and emblematic GartenCoop Freiburg, the participants spent 2 days designing a common “Guidelines for training in alternative food systems”. The goal is to write collectively a booklet offering practical perspective on various short supply chain models, often larger than CSA stricto sensu, and giving basic notions to anybody interested in implementing such a model.

The result should be available during the second year of the project. Nicolas Pelloquin, from AlterConso, France, which hosted the first exchange in October 2013, comments: “that was really a great moment of shared reflection, and that brought the project to a new dimension, where we are going to create something together. The previous phase of genuine and simple experience-sharing was necessary: we had to get to know each other better! Yet now we are pretty much looking forward moving this common work forward together in France and Finland, during the next exchanges this Autumn and Winter”.



«Hungry for Rights»: Training Food Sovereignty Catalysts in Europe

By Jocelyn Parot, GENERAL SECRETARY OF URGENCI



What is the common interest that links active farmers from rural areas in Lithuania to conscious consumers from the GAS movement in wealthy, fashionable Lombardia ? What connects social workers and migrants living in former industrial neighborhoods just 60 km North from Paris and Scottish crofters from the Outer Hebrides or local nutritionists from Cyprus ?

All of them share the belief that local food systems could revive sustainable economies and brighten the future of family farming in Europe. Led by ACRA-CCS, an Italian NGO, 6 partners in Europe and Senegal are currently implementing Hungry for Rights, a project that was born during the Nyeleni Europe Forum in Krems.

The Hungry for Rights project was launched last year, and is now entering a new phase, that will hopefully lead to the introduction of Local Food Councils. This will be thanks to the work of the catalysts, the name given to the practitioners and specialists who have been trained in the first phase of the project, and who are now able to deploy their activist energies to build more ambitious food strategies for their territories. Obviously, the objectives are not exactly the same for all participating territories. Kestutis Navickas, from the Baltic Environment Forum, in charge of the project in Lithuania explains: "Food Sovereignty is not a widely shared issue among farmers in our country. But the catalyst school has in fact been a great opportunity to train a core group of activists in this field. It actually fits

very well with our main concern here, which is to facilitate family farmers' access to local markets or to consumers' groups through CSA or direct sales".

In Scotland, the issue is for the Scottish Crofters' Federation to "make sure there is a young generation of crofters ready to take up their shares of the common land on most of the islands", says Maria, the National Focal Point for Scotland.

The situation looks rather different in Italy where Food Sovereignty already resonates strongly, and where the Municipality of Milan is already working on a comprehensive food strategy. "We chose to build on already existing initiatives rather than starting the process from zero. The density of our networks is also a key element for reaching our objective: to come up with a Food Policy and a Food Council for our region", says Giacomo with confidence.

122 catalysts were trained in the 5 different countries between January and June. Their main task is now to mobilize target groups (including farmers and migrants) and to facilitate their participation in Local Food Policy Councils. Another aspect of their work is to prepare a joint declaration on Alternative Food Systems endorsed by local actors, for the Universal Exhibition in Milan, in June 2015. Meanwhile you can meet some of the catalysts virtually on their dedicated social network (Changing Actors), by registering as a member of the "Changing Actors" community: <http://www.viviconstile.org/comunita/hungry-for-rights-europe>

Urgenci

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URGENCI brings citizens, small farmers, consumers, activists and concerned political actors together at global level through an alternative economic approach called Local Solidarity Partnerships between Producers and Consumers.

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News from the Network



Urgenci website is not only offering a new façade to the CSA movement, but also fostering actors' commitment to the network. There are now 3 new administrators for our website : Jan Valeska, from Czech Republic, is in charge of updating "LetSFS" -project's pages; Sini Forssell, from Finland, has stood up for the task of maintaining the CSA Research group section; Martin Meyr, from Austria, is going to improve the new website with several new applications.



We are proud to announce that the previous Secretary of the International Committee of Urgenci, **Benjamin Shute, has been received at the White House !** He was accompanying Lindsey, his wife, who had been invited as the leader of the National Young Farmers' Coalition.



CSA in Brazil ?

By Philipp Weckenbrock, Brazil

A presentation about CSA was given at the University of Brasilia by Philipp from Freiburg, Germany, and Cathy, from France, mid-July. More than 50 persons showed up to exchange about the CSA model. Among the audience, 7 producers, representatives of various organizations, government employees and academics.

So far, the CSA concept seems to be quite unknown in Brazil: during a few weeks of presence here in Brazil, we could identify only 10 CSAs, but there might be more operating (see http://aao.org.br/aao/artigos-e-noticias.php?id=98&p=12&search=&cat_id=&tags=).

Yet, based on the impressions from this event, and on the vivid discussions held around the concept, this might be changing. Some meeting participants looked extremely motivated and have the hope that soon, a new CSA might be set up in the capital city.

What's next?

Late Summer-Autumn calendar for CSA lovers



The late summer and the Autumn are going to be extremely active for CSA lovers !

19-23 August - Paris

There will be various Urgenci companions from German, Austrian and French CSAs taking part to 2 different workshops and one farm visit during the European Summer University of Attac, 19-23 August in Paris. An opportunity to renew the great experience from the 2012 ESU in Freiburg.

23 August - 2 September - Beijing

The next event will be held on another continent, in China, where 3 Urgenci delegates are invited to a conference on short supply chains, local food and public procurement in Beijing and its region 28 August-2 September. The event is organised by the Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation.

26-29 September - Galicia

Back to Europe and Galicia in September for a meeting organised by Sindicato Labrego Galego, a farmers' Union affiliated to La Via Campesina, 26-29 September. The meeting's topic is « Collaboration between producers and consumers, particularly through Participatory Guarantee Systems and Distribution Short Circuits ». Please contact us immediately at contact@urgenci.net if you want to register for this event.

8-10 October - Romania

At the other end of Europe, in Cluj, Romania, a meeting on the development of the ASAT model will be organised by the French Embassy and the local Federation of organic agriculture, with the participation of the ASAT development team and a representative from Urgenci. It might have a decisive effect on the consolidation of the still vulnerable ASAT movement in the country. The meeting will be held 8-10 October.

11-15 - Turkey

Almost at the same moment, the Organic World Congress, organized by the IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements), will gather the worldwide organic movement in Turkey, 11-15 October. Urgenci will send 7 delegates from 3 different continents, and will hold a pre-conference 11 October, jointly with the IFOAM Participatory Guarantee System Committee.

13 - 18 October - Rome

Simultaneously, the 41st session of the Committee for Food Security at the FAO will take shelter in Rome as every year 13-18 October. Urgenci will be represented there by Andrea Calori, President, and Judith Hitchman, Special Envoy.

23-27 October - Torino

Italy will host another major yearly meeting, Slow Food's Terra Madre, in Torino area, 23-27 October. This year, Oumar Diabaté, from Mali, elected Member of the International Committee of Urgenci, is invited. His work as a seed saver has indeed been recognized.

16-21 November- France

Finally, there will be a major European Catalyst Meeting in Picardie, France, 16-21 November, in the frame of Hungry for Rights, the project led by the Italian NGO ACRA (see article above).