# TEIKEI

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## Urgenci @ Expo dei Popoli



Since 2011, a number of Italian organizations operating in very diverse sectors (development, environment, human rights, producers and consumers rights, etc.) have been looking forward to the "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" Universal Exposition held in Milan with the aim of influencing the public debate with another concept of Feeding the Planet, based on the principles of food sovereignty and environmental justice. Their final goal was to hold an international forum, the People's Expo, in Milan on June, 2-6, 2015, with the participation of around 20 international multi-country delegations of networks that were already active on the issues of food sovereignty, environmental justice and human rights, and an expected total of 200 delegates. A 10-people international delegation from Urgenci has been invited to participate in this event.

## Judith Hitchman, advocacy officer, took part to the organizing process within the Steering Committee:

"The first meeting to explore the potential participation of social movements in Expo dei Popoli took place last November in Rome, and brought together a few members of the Via Campesina, IPC (International Planning Committee), Nyeleni Europe and Urgenci. The immediate and key preoccupation was to use the opportunity as a space to communicate on our work, and also to ensure that our long-standing efforts in the appropriate decision-making spaces was in no way captured by the official Expo (sponsored by many transnational agribusiness corporations). As members of the Steering Committee, this was a key concern, and one for which we collectively fought until the very end. Urgenci had a strong multi-continental gender balanced and essentially young delegation from...

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...China, Japan, Québec, the USA, Mali for the intercontinental members, and Hungary, France, Ireland, the Spanish Basque Country, Austria and Italy for Europe. However there were more consumers than producers in the delegation, as June is a key moment when they are far too busy in their fields to take a 5-day break. The fact that there was an Urgenci Charter-writing meeting back-to-back with the Expo also meant that people who participated in both were away from home for over a week!

The organisation of the Expo was, on the whole positive. There was plenty of time for inter-networking between networks that do not always work closely together; this has led to some ideas for potential new projects. Urgenci's participation in the Expo dei Popoli was marked by the excellent interventions in Speaker's Corner (Isa Alvarez intervention is on the Expo site, with a link on the Urgenci Facebook page). Judith Hitchman made one of the final speeches on the strategy and way forward, drawing on all the work done by Urgenci and the allies in other social movements, and explaining the full complexity that this involves in terms of the different institutional entry points. The Expo dei Popoli gave us all a chance to meet some of our members from different countries and continents who we rarely have the opportunity of seeing, as well as strengthening many of our alliances.

At the end of the 3 days, we were invited to the Mayor's Palace for an aperitif. This included a short speech by Andrea Calori, Urgenci's current President, who is also an eminent member of the Milan Food Policy Council."





## Zsofi Perenyi, TVE, Hungary: Pachamama and the diversity

"Expo dei Popoli in Milan was an amazing and inspiring event where people from all over the World met for some days in order to talk about food sovereignty and other important issues together. Exchanging experiences with farmers and consumers from different continents made me realise that we are facing with similar challenges (e.g. the gap between consumers and farmers, the expansion of huge companies) which could be addressed also with a joint effort. Consumers in Hungary would like to have access for good quality food, just like in Asia, Africa or USA. Small-scale farmers are threatened by financially strong companies everywhere. And there are many networks like Urgenci which have the aim to achieve food sovereignty, solidarity economy and sustainability, so it is definitely important to be in touch with them and react for important issues together.

From the Hungarian perspective it was really interesting to see how local municipalities could help in spreading and supporting local food initiatives. At the moment, we are also thinking at TVE how we could connect local actors and step over the everyday politics with them.

Also it was interesting to learn about the concept of agroecology which is not a term used by us. We started to learn about this topic, because it is something which synthesize our aspirations within the Hungarian CSA movement. In a time, when climate change and social problems determinate our days, it would be really important to make more and more people understand how strongly nature and our society are connected and this should be the way to move forward."



"I'm so thankful I was invited to join the Expo dei Popoli in Milan! This was my first experience as part of an Urgenci delegation. I greatly appreciated the focus on agroecology as an alternative food system value-chain response to the multi-national corporate food chain. Hearing farmers, labor movement, and fair trade movement organizers discuss their perspectives on food systems and how they communicate about agroecology was particularly valuable. These perspectives will inform our conversation at the local, grassroots level here in Wisconsin.

Connecting with and hearing about CSA from organizers around the globe was a highlight. I was particularly grateful to meet Isabelle St-Germain, a geographically close colleague from Equiterre in Canada, and for the opportunities we discussed for future partnership and collaboration.

This experience reminded me that while our work is focused on the local connections we make among farmers and consumers, we are not alone in this endeavor! We can learn from others working to strengthen small-holder farmers, improve labor and economic conditions, and improve health for people and the environment. These are the values we share and I look forward to bringing these lessons from across the globe to our farmers and community."

Narumi Yoshikawa, Director of Global Environmental Forum, Vice manager and Lecturer of Waseda Environmental Institution of Waseda University, Japan: People's Expo emphasized the basic strategy opposing globalization by local solidarity.

"180 people from 50 countries took part in People's Expo in Milan to exchange unique theories and experiences on how to reclaim our "Food Sovereignty" as an human basic right.

"Teikei" is an index of spiritual happiness nowadays. As such, Urgenci show concrete strategies. Our movement, which protects farmers' dignity and seeks to expand solidarity throughout the whole food chain, aims at rebuilding the entire food community. I think the challenge for Asia, is to train people's media literacy about the globalized food system. I found my path conveying the voices of farmers Unions and people's associations which form part of the Urgenci network. Thank you for sharing!"





## Isabelle St-Germain, Senior Director of Équiterre : Équiterre at the Milan Peoples' Expo : meetings and solutions to better feed the world!

"I had the unique opportunity to be invited by Urgenci at Expo Dei Popoli in Milan last June. The topics of this forum were: Food sovereignty and agroecology. It brought together hundreds of representatives from more than sixty countries around the world wishing to echo the Milan World Expo, which puts forward the large agribusiness. The objective of the participants was to share and pass another vision on how to feed the world, more sustainably and emphasizing on the solidarity between producers and consumers.

During the three-day forum, many exchanges helped highlighting the flaws in the current food system, which generates intensive agriculture with massive use of pesticides, small farmers' exploitation and far too much waste. For example, did you know that 80% of the world's poorest are those who feed us? Besides the richness of debates and discussions, many solutions have been put forward to find sustainable ways to change the current agri-food system, such as establishing direct marketing between producers and citizens.

As a representative of Équiterre, a Quebec organization with a 20-years experience in local and responsible sourcing, I was invited to speak about community supported agriculture, especially about our "family farmers" network, which now gathers over 100 farms and feeds almost 40 000 citizens per week (via 500 delivery points and 13,000 subscriptions to organic baskets). Thanks to this unique experience, I've met with the dynamic members of the Urgenci community who are going through similar challenges and was able to deepen my knowledge on food issues."

## Isa Alvarez, Nekasarea network, EHNE-Bizkaia, Basque country, Expo dei Popoli: Food sovereignty and Solidarity Economy, agents of change

"Milan gave us a warm welcome, as both the weather and human relations were warm indeed! Hundreds of people and movements gathered together to reclaim food systems, as TNCs pretend they are feeding the world meanwhile we know this is not possible without a powerful peasantry. So this meeting put La Via Campesina in the limelight, but they were not alone. Besides the role of small-scale farmers producing the food, the consumers importance has been highlighted as a transformative political element. Solidarity Economy played a central role, being the umbrella giving us values and strategies under which we all feel sheltered. Likewise, the word NETWORKS was the buzzword in all the working groups, gaining an increased visibility. CSA networks are a key worldwide for the development of food sovereignty and, although they have already done good work, many tasks remain ahead of us if we want to build sustainable alternative models of food production and distribution.

My experience with Urgenci these days has been a constant learning. I have personally seen the degree of importance given to the CSA internationally, which gives an idea of the level of work performed and the degree of consideration Urgenci is getting. For me, it has been a great pleasure to share experiences with people who bring us so much and enrich us daily."









#### Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary, Urgenci: Being a Political Facilitator at Expo dei Popoli

"I was lucky to be the Political Facilitator for the workshop on Alternative Distribution Food Systems. The most challenging aspect of Expo dei Popoli was the lack of any final goal: no declaration, no strategic plan was expected, but rather a kind massive mutual update about the participating organizations' calendars. It was indeed an unique opportunity to meet activists and organizations from so many different geographical backgrounds. In our workshop alone, all 6 continents were represented, as well as all the different stages of the Alternative Food Distribution Systems, including Fair Trade.

We came up with an interesting figure, called the Strategic Pentagon for Alternative Food Distribution Systems. The 5 sides all depict a type of actors to target in order to promote AFDS.

When going clockwise and beginning at 12.00, the first side is the one of Local authorities, which have a major role to play to foster AFDS development, through public procurement and policymaking. We had several positive examples represented in our workshop, including Rio de Janeiro and Utrecht.

The second side is the the one of individuals, with an emphasis on training in agroecology for farmers and consumers' choice, which requires education.

The base of our pentagon is the side of networks, civil society organizations. This is the level of sharing tools and resources to support individual activists.

We want to multiply the exchanges of best practices between municipalities, between both farmers and consumers, and also to benefit from experienced networks like Equiterre in Quebec.

The two remaining sides bring the strategy to the international policy level. One stresses the need to address international institutions, especially the FAO. The other focuses on communication to the mass public, in order to make the Food Sovereignty Movement heard. Both dimensions will be at the top of our priorities during the next months until the Climate Change Summit takes place next December in Paris.

Expo dei Popoli, with its excellent mass media coverage, including numerous national Italian TV reports and articles in quality newspapers like the Guardian, was an interesting step in this direction.»

## Please read the final document "Food Sovereignty through Agroecology: solutions to mend broken food systems"

## > Common Ground: European Charter-writing process / summary report



Expo dei Popoli in Milan provided a good opportunity to launch our European Charter-writing process, taking advantage of the presence of many food sovereignty activists. The workshop took place during the weekend (June 6-7) with European activists coming from 15 European countries.

The objective of this meeting, organised by Urgenci Europe in the framework of the Common Ground project, was to acknowledge the need for a Common Declaration at European level. Participants came from many different European countries to facilitate the links between the European Network and the specificities of the Local Network to which they belong. Here are some bits of the synthesis; please read the entire document on the Urgenci's dedicated Common Ground webpage.

#### Introduction

Community Supported Agriculture initiatives are blossoming all over Europe. Even though the forms of the initiatives are very context-dependant, exchange programs and European meetings have proven that there is a shared vision-process in the CSA community in Europe that needs to be expressed in a Common Declaration. This is the reason why the Urgenci European Kernel launched a "Common Ground for CSA in Europe" project, thanks to a sub-grant from the European NGO platform CONCORD and the support of the FPH Foundation. It represents a major opportunity to

launch a maturing process and provides the means to 15 local and national CSA networks to facilitate charter-writing workshops, with an on-going exchange at European level.

The main objectives of the Common Ground project are to:

- Prepare the next European CSA meeting to be held in autumn 2016 in Ostrava, Czech Republic. This will be achieved thanks to the consistent and decentralized participatory work on our Common Values. We hope to validate the Draft Declaration in Ostrava.
- Contribute to the definition of a European CSA movement through capacity building and mapping exercises,
- Implement a participatory action-research process aimed at gaining deeper insight into the European CSA initiatives. This will be done with the CSA Research Group.

The aims of this multi-level and multi-stakeholder process are to:

- Reinforce both the European CSA platform and the local and national networks, fostering critical discussions on what we stand for and how to share it widely.
- Have a baseline on which we all agree, as it is the best way to take position on behalf of our movement ; because if we don't do it, somebody else will!
- Ensure there will be a follow-up between these important get-together meetings, as a way to nurture a sustainable movement-building process.

#### The scope of our joint work:

Most participants agree that we should stick to a European Declaration on CSA. With a Preamble that states that we are part of the European Food sovereignty movement / very much connected to other Alternative Food Distribution Systems (Community gardens, farmers' markets, etc).

Our needs: Common Ground for CSA.

Drafting a set of Principles for CSA – whether it is called a Charter or a Declaration, doesn't matter. We have to decide whether we want Binding Rules or Principles. Everyone agreed that we don't need more rules, but an inclusive declaration/charter, that can be easily understood (and that producers can reclaim). It should prioritise our principles and draw a clear line: "This is our playing field. Corporations and other schemes have no right to play here."

A useful exercise would be to start with words we don't want to use. In terms of constituency: farmers must be present!

## Templates to collect information for the Berlin Meeting next September, 10-12, 2015

<u>Each National/ Local networks should briefly answer to those two main questions:</u>

## 1. Do you have a local charter or reference document?

- If yes, explain the process that led to writing it. Who were the stakeholders?
  - How do you/do you not use it?

#### 2. What is the common goal of CSAs?

- What is your political vision?
- What are your core values and/or principles?
- What is your operational definition of CSA, namely what is your *modus operandi*?

A CSA Research Group has been created, as a followup to the first two European CSA meetings. The kick-off meeting is in Freiburg, Germany, on **August 26th-27th, 2015**. One of the aims of this group is to document the CSA situation in each country, in a complementary way to that of the Declaration / Charter writing group.

#### **Conclusion:**

Our objective is to have a validated draft to present at the **3rd European CSA meeting in Ostrava, Czech Republic, (Autumn 2016).** The next step is the 2nd European Charter-writing workshop in Berlin during the Solidarity Economy Forum, Sept 10-12. Then, "national consultations" will be organised before the end of 2015 to collect CSA networks' comments and feedback on the process improvement.

# The first PGS in the Flemish region of Belgium has just been launched!

by Wim Merckx, Voedselteams vzw



In Flanders the network "Voedselteams" is well known for its promotion of sustainable agriculture and short distribution circuits. Today about 170 food producers have joined the network. The consumer members are organised in local groups which enables them to order from a wide variety of locally produced food (fruit and vegetables, milk products, bread, meat, drinks, preparations, deserts...). As explained in the PGS-newsletter of March & April 2014, the PGS of Voedselteams is the result of a long period of extensive research and networking. The main purpose was to include the members and the farmers in the screening and evaluation of producers.

The first PGS visits are scheduled for June 2015. The introductory days organised in April and May 2015 were very successful as they were attended by a total of more than 40 people. Aside from a few staff members and producers, most of the people present were members who volunteered to take an active part in the PGS-process. For them it is a unique opportunity to learn more about and to support sustainable food production. They engaged for a period of two years with two PGS-visits every season and a few days dedicated to training and intervision. As for the producers, they will attend at least one peer visit during this 2-year period. This way, two members as well as a producer and a staff member will be present at every visit. A steering group will also be created with all stakeholders (staff, members, producers). For Voedselteams this is the beginning of a new and exciting project and it is also means that PGS is definitely gaining ground in Belgium.

## **Towards a Collective Book on Logistics of Short Supply Chains**

The European Exchange project on the Logistics of Short Supply Chains and Regional food systems is now coming to its end. After 7 exchange visits and training conducted in 4 different European countries, the closing meeting was held in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Germany, 18-19 June. This final encounter was preceded by a 3-day-training session in Marseilles area, France, at the end of March and a week-long visit to a lot of different projects in Finland at the end of May. Part of the objectives during this wrap-up meeting was to put the last touches to a training manual. This book aims to offer all local activists the building blocks they need to organise their own local food system. About 25 initiatives from all the participating countries that had all been visited during the project, and even some initiatives from non-participating countries are used to illustrate the examples. The numerous participants (about 20) involved in writing the book are quite happy that they have been able to come up with concrete, critical and practical descriptions of their way of functioning. **See more on the project page** 

## The 6th International Symposium of Local and Solidarity -Based Partnerships between Producers and Consumers in 5 questions...



### 1. What is the symposium schedule?

November, 15th-22nd: including field trips (November, 15th-18th), International CSA Conference (November, 19th-21st) and General Assembly (November, 22nd).

### 2. Where is it happening?

China is a surprisingly active Community Supported Agriculture frontline, with more than 500 identified CSA initiatives nationwide and more and more being born every month. In this context, it just sounded normal to choose Beijing, China as our meeting place, following those of France, Portugal, Japan and the US.

#### 3. What is the scenario?

The Symposium will provide an outstanding opportunity to get to learn about and meet people from successful CSA experiences from other countries, and also to build our collective reflection on the contribution of our movement to regenerating the soils, regenerating farming, through new generations of farmers, and regenerating the economy through the links to other Solidarity Economy projects. Here is the programme!

#### 4. Who will be attending?

Key Chinese figures, 60 foreign guests, from experienced and to newby farmers will have the opportunity to exchange in Farmer-to-Farmer Cafés, as well as consumers, network facilitators, university lecturers, allies...and over 500 Chinese participants.

### 5. What mood can you expect?

Please relax, let us guide you during field trips, but be prepared for hard working sessions, where you will have to bring your contribution and represent your organizations!

2015 is a key year for Urgenci as the network will be holding its 6th International Symposium in China, which definitely is a propitious moment to share strategies and expectations with our key allies from the Food Sovereignty, organic and solidarity economy movements and of course, the time for our biannual General Assembly when members elect the International Committee representatives and decide on the next 2-years action plan.

The international CSA network clearly needs to be backed up by local initiatives to be consistent in its action and coherent in its advocacy role. Participating in its official business gives us all a strengthened voice and a clearer status for defending CSA as a powerful alternative, united in diversity!

Please, participate in the survey we are organising to learn more about your expectations and prepare our General Assembly:

- "Full Harvest" version: http://bit.ly/1Lwp7nf
- "Quick Pick up" version: http://bit.ly/1IAbSfh

And JOIN US paying your membership fee for 2015 Thank you!