URGENCI
THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

First Mediterranean "Local Solidarity Partnerships" Experience-Sharing event

Marseilles, Feb 29th, March 1&2, 2016

- - PARTICIPANTS AND INITIATIVES - -

All participants presented their experience based on THREE pictures that illustrate what we identify as our « fundamentals », **three core values that link our initiatives and illustrate our daily practice:**

1. **Agroecology**
2. **Solidarity: the farmer-consumer alliance**
3. **Food sovereignty**

MOROCCO
Touriya Atahrouch, Swani Tiqa, near Rabat.

AGROECOLOGY

In the semi-desert region near Rabat, traditional agriculture mostly consists of cereals and extensive livestock farming. However these monocultures contribute to land degradation: the land is scorched by the summer sun after the June harvest. Our agroecological approach is based on some techniques for optimum farming: planting beds, drip irrigation, land cover, diversity vs monoculture, composting...

SOLIDARITY

The producer-consumer partnership we call “swani” is like the French AMAP; committed consumers engage in a direct relationship with a farmer, and pay upfront for seasonal contracts. Swani members and their farmer meet every week at the pick-up point and organise regular events on the farm.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

There are discusssions between producers and consumers about the price of the basket. Several working meetings were held to determine the contents of the basket. The price of industrial agriculture produce is so low we cannot compare or compete; the goal of our partnership is to ensure a decent income for the farmers.

> Swani Tiqa, which means “vegetables gardens & trust”, began after meeting AMAP members thanks to Urgenci, with a solid cooperation from Terre & Humanisme.

ALGERIA
Karim Rahal, collectif Torba, Algiers.

AGROECOLOGY

- Consumers gardening on the outskirts of Algiers: using fallow land, we work in shared gardens to learn about agroecological farming: it gives us joy!
- It is now the heart of our experience: we would like to establish an AMAP where consumers produce their vegetables. We plan to recruit a farm worker who will monitor the gardens.
- We work to improve our practice and knowledge of agroecology

SOLIDARITY

- It is a consumer-driven project: we initially contacted a farmer in the mountains (who uses very traditionnal methods) and proposed a real contract to him
- Every Friday, we come to the delivery point to get our “couffin” (from Arabic Kufa, which means basket and in French, “baby-basket”.)

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Seed breeding is the key point. Food Sovereignty is based on local seeds.
We are now building our own « Seed House » where multipliers are home gardeners and farmers.

TUNISIA
Insaf Ben Marzouk, Terre et Humanisme Tunisie, near Tunis.

AGROECOLOGY

Terre & Humanisme Tunisie is a Tunisian association that wants to promote agroecology throughout the country. It aims to:

Organize training

→ Promote and organise extensive training (with several modules) in agroecology for farmers from the neighbouring areas.
→ Promote and organise sessions to know what agroecology is about, such as "create your vegetable garden" activities for non-farmers.
→ Promote and organise initiation to agro-ecological gardening with children.

Encourage the autonomy of small-scale farmers and develop traditional skills

→ Agroecology has shown it can be a sustainable solution for the population. Thus, we want to help the small-scale farmers of the region to integrate different practices that will enable them to gain autonomy.
→ Protect and promote natural biodiversity and the Tunisian agricultural heritage by meeting with family farmers who continue to practice traditional farming and protect local seeds.

SOLIDARITY

We organized several events with our partners in Tunisia including: The farmers' seed festival in Tunisia, organized by the Permaculture Association in partnership with THT.

We helped to create a local farmers' market on the island of Djerba.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
Produce
on a plot of 2000m2 about ten kilometers from the capital. This land will be used to work with two target groups: urban consumers and farmers.

→ Create and manage an agro-ecological garden of 6000m2 minimum to produce between 20 to 40 baskets of organic fruit and vegetables that would be sold to families and would demonstrate the profitability and efficiency of agroecology, while supporting the economic viability of the project.

(We should all spare a thought for our friends who were unable attend this meeting, especially those from Libya and Syria)

EGYPT
Ahmed GALAL, Nawaya, near Cairo.

Nawaya's vision is the "co-creation of self-reliant, bountiful and resilient Egyptian communities". Our main focus is working with small-scale farmers to implement sustainable agricultural practices and income-generating activities. By working closely with rural communities, Nawaya is stimulating local innovations that are fair and sustainable.

Nawaya has been implementing a project for sustainable farming with 15 small-scale farming families in El-Badrasheen area in El-Giza governorate for the past two years. The project has just ended, and we aim to start writing a proposal for phase two soon.
The program aimed to achieve the following:

Improve household income through processing activities and providing access to markets.

Create demonstration fields and farmer-to-farmer training to scale up impact at community level.

- Develop curricula on sustainable farming practice based on the needs of Egyptian small-scale farmers.

Nawaya also runs a compost project using local waste with a production capacity of 50-75 Tons/month, offers training services to other organizations (e.g. compost making and beekeeping training) and is about to start a project that aims to improve the production and livelihoods of date palm growers in the El-Badrasheen area.

Baladini, the food arm of Nawaya, runs a kitchen that currently employs 15 women to produce artisanal food that respects high nutritional and hygienic quality. The kitchen offers catering services and its products are sold in several outlets/markets around Cairo.

Nawaya is very interested in setting up a CSA programme.

PALESTINE
Saad Dagher, Arab Agronomists Association, Ramallah.

AGROECOLOGY

AAA has been leading agroecological activities in the West Bank since 2003. And we should talk about “chemical farming” instead of conventionnal farming, it would be much clearer !

Healing nature is our priority: this photo shows us digging holes to harvest the water from the soil. It is not only a new relationship to food consumption, it means having a spiritual connection to food and earth.

SOLIDARITY

- Farmers markets,
- The Sharaka “partnership” between producers and consumers in Ramallah.

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 called "Sharaka", which means partnership.

Sharaka members also help farmers in different farming activities, like olive picking, especially in hot spots, where there is danger from the Israeli army or Israeli colonizers. From Sharaka another group established a Non-Profit Company to support small-scale farmers who cannot access the market. There are now 350 consumers who buy food through the "Adel company". The Arab Agronomists Association (AAA) provides technical support to farmers to move towards agroecology and links them to the fair trade company ADEL (Adel means fair).

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

In recent years, various initiatives have been launched to strengthen local production and consumption in order to foster a resistance economy in Palestine that will bring back various forms of sovereignty: food sovereignty is considered as the first that needs to be restored, as it is important as the ultimate frontier of territorial, political and economic dispossession.

We also need to bring together all these good initiatives that already exist, and we are working on this. There is a Palestinian eco-village movement: we are now starting to establish an agroecological farm in the village of Farkha, near Salfit, with ten ecological home gardens and a solid-waste-management system to compost the organic waste of the whole village. It will be the first project of this kind in the West Bank that encompasses an entire village. It can then serve as a training center and example for others. Our plan is to convert Farkha into an eco-village.

LEBANON
Rita Khawand, SOILS Permaculture Association Lebanon, Saidoun, Al Janub.

AGROECOLOGY

This project involved training in agroecology for 17 farmers (16 female, 1 male), in South Lebanon, for 5 weeks in winter 2015.

The training was a combination of theoretical and practical exercises, at the end of which the participants were divided in two groups, each group worked on designing improvements for one of their colleague's gardens. After the workshop we published a manual in Arabic (available on our website). The training was commissioned by Mercy Corps (with funding from the EU). We tried to explore alternatives to tobacco growing with the participants,,because tobacco is harmful for the Earth, not rewarding financially, and doesn't provide food or any other benefit. But the scope of the training didn't allow us to go any further. We hope that one day we will be able to work with some of the trainees on growing alternative crops and helping them to sell them directly to consumers.

SOLIDARITY

Local producers from our village Saidoun and neighbouring villages (mainly women) promoting their traditional processed food items (jams, syrups, herbs, etc.) at the Fair Trade Day, which we organized in August 2015 within the framework of Fair Trade Towns project (organized by Fair Trade Lebanon, with funding from the EU). The project helped us build relationships with the local producers and explore their skills. We will collaborate with them more in a long term project that we shall start implementing in Spring 2016.

FOOD SECURITY

This picture was taken inside a small Syrian refugee camp in the West Bekaa in Dec 2015. It shows some plants that were grown in between the tents in Spring 2015 when Syrian Eyes (group of Syrian volunteers) started a gardening workshop there. At the request of Syrian Eyes, we coordinated with a German permaculture designer, who is doing an assessment inside the camp to come up with a master plan that will help the residents grow some of their food in restricted space to enhance their diet, and also improve the sanitation conditions (water, toilets, etc.), while optimizing the existing resources. Once the plan is ready we will raise the necessary funds and implement a 2-month pilot project to make the planned improvements. We will involve a local team in the whole process, in order to build their capacities, and be able to conduct similar projects in other camps in the future.

TURKEY
Ceyhan Temürcü, Ankara.

I came to the meeting as a representative of three grass-roots organizations: (i) A PGS system based in Ankara; **DBB** (The "Natural Food, Conscious Nutrition" group) (ii) A producer–initiated CSA collective; **TADYA** (Tahtaciorencik Village Ecological Living Collective) and (iii) Our small eco-farm that we are currently building: **Kır Çocukları** ('Children of the Woods').

Kır Çocukları is part of TADYA and TADYA is one of the producers in DBB. Here is brief info on each of these groups:
DBB has been active since 2009. It promotes contact between buyers and producers by allowing direct communication through an e-mail list. It implements mechanisms for collective supervision and feedback . Currently it consists of 15 active producers and about 400 active consumers. It does not provide any logistic service, but promotes the formation of CSAs. Web page (English pages are available): https://ankaradbb.wordpress.com.

TADYA is lead by six committed farmer families in the Tahtacıörencik village, as well as many contributors and supporters. It implements DBB standards for natural production (vegetables, meat, diary, fruit, bread, processed food, soaps, ointments, etc.). It organizes tours to the village f bring producers and urban populations together. It also aims to protect the natural environment and promote nature-friendly development in and around the village. It experiments with different ways of selling products, including direct sales, producers' markets, home delivery, cargo shipping etc.

Kır Çocukları defines our little family initiative. We are already living in the Tahtacıörencik village, in the process of constrcuting our cottage house and ecological farm. We are visited by many volunteer helpers from around the globe, via international help exchange networks. Other than experimenting with ecological methods in farming, we produce herbal ointments, soaps, tinctures, sauces, flour etc. We also hold workshops in the city and in the village and organize eco-tours especially for families with children. We are aiming at saving and sharing heirloom seeds and promoting agroecological practices.

MACEDONIA
Aleksandar Gjorgjievski, SUNRISE, Skopje.

We are an Association for Sustainable Social and Economic Development SUNRISE from Skopje, Macedonia. Traditionally we organise the ORGANIC FOOD FESTIVAL in the Western part of the city of Skopje.

As an organization involved in the Organic Food sector in Macedonia we have established communication and cooperation with a large number of organic food producers, as well as with other organizations related to the organic production in Macedonia.
We are hoping to bring the CSA model to Macedonia and give new energy to organic agriculture.

We have a vision for a sustainable model of food production and a permanent stabie connection between the food producers and consumers through Community Supported Agriculture.

GREECE
Jenny Gkiougki, Neighborhoods in Action, Permaculture Caravan, Greek CSA Movement, Greek Food Sovereignty Movement, Thessaloniki.

AGROECOLOGY

Greek economy and society is in crisis; the latest bailout (after the Referendum) attacks agriculture by raising taxes and contributions, demanding prepayment of next year's tax, etc. The sell out by the Greek Agricultural Bank puts farmers under more strain (with a real possibility of losing their assets). The average farm size is small. We do not have farmers' markets - after the 'Potato Movement' we started 'No Middlemen' but when it became successful we were met with tear-gas and arrests. Hence farmers - at least small-scale agroecological ones, are forced to look into other options - CSA being one of them.

CSA farms are small in size - most Greek examples operate with <1ha. This creates strong pressure on acquiring new skills for cultivating multiple varieties on small plots of land and tools for building alliances and co-ops between several farmers. As many move away form the system and its subsidies and organic certifications, these farmers need guidance and training in skills that will make them self-sustaining, usibg techniques such as Permaculture, Biodynamic and Natural Farming.

The Greek CSA model is more similar to the Italian GAS than the French AMAP, although many would like to replicate the latter. there are currently approximately 2000 people eating through CSAs in Greece. Baskets cost between 5 and 10 euro, and contain either 3-5kg or 7-10kg respectively (winter season); a 0.3ha farm feeds 30 families. All projects are informal without formal agreements, due to taxation and legal constraints. As well as CSAs, there are also urban and peri-urban gardening schemes, not-for-profit grocery stores, and collective purchasing groups. All these try to cut out middlemen and support local, small farms. Many are informal due to bureaucratic constraints. Creating a legal entity is costly and time-consuming; to create an NGO, Association or Club costs around 1,000 euros and registration takes several months (NGOs also pay an annual minimum tax of 1000 euros). This is why most of us operate in informal groups. We are waiting for the new bill on agricultural co-ops to be published this summer to see if it presents greater opportunities.

P.Manikis showing grafting techniques;'Permaculture Caravan' 'Free Seeds–Free spaces'@PERKA-occupied ex-army barracks turned urban gardens.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Although the term Food Sovereignty is not so widely known, in the past five years it has been gaining ground. Many of us write articles and give interviews to promote it - even to mainstream media. Economic conditions force many people to seek alternatives with sustainability as their main concern. We are blessed to have Masanobu Fukuoka's successor in our midst (Mr. Panayiotis Manikis) and various networks of Seed Savers around the country. There are a few examples of permaculture-run farms and we already have the first biodynamically-certified farms.
"**N**eighborhoods in action" is a group of activists based on ecological and environmental, human and urban rights, social and ethical business. It won one seat at the local government Council elections in Thessaloniki, city of 1 million inhabitants. We are pushing for change and helped organise the first Greek CSA Gathering[1]. The fact that our municipality is one of the 116 that signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pactis also important. We also chair the Council for the Induction of Refugees in Thessaloniki.

From the Greek CSA Gathering, Oct.2015 Lorenz Glatz presenting Austrian CSA GELA and Andrea Ferante - ECVC, talking of La Via Campesina.

SOLIDARITY

There can be no Food Sovereignty or even Food Security in Greece if we do not take the refugee crisis into account. Hot spots, hospitality centres and relocation camps are being set up all around the country, but there is great need to make them sustainable, less energy-consuming, and address the matter of access to safe, healthy, nutritious and culturally appropriate food.

From my CSA assembly - we now have 10 families; a 5 euro basket

[1] which was instigated by my role as Researcher for the URGENCI European CSA Research Group and the project for a European Declaration on CSA.

Advertising for ‘social agriculture’ project operated by Pireus Bank and a supermarket chain, with the blessings of multinational giant McCain. The ‘fruits of care’ come from potato-growers in a small area. The project does indeed provide a fair(er) price for the producers but binds them to financial schemes and all other dependency-creating clauses of contract-agriculture. This is one of the reasons why we need to push for change in legal and tax frameworks and to support self-sustaining farming based on agroecological practice.

CROATIA
Danijel Balaban, Transition town Pula, Pula.

AGROECOLOGY

Transition town Pula is a voluntary initiative that works to support the city of Pula in the process of creating resilience to the challenges of global warming, the impacts of climate change, peak oil and economic crisis.

We believe that agroecological farming is a solution towards transition, the benefits of growing many different crops on a farm, and the importance of saving and storing local crop varieties of seeds.

SOLIDARITY

With a focus on the local community, Transition town Pula sees the challenge as an opportunity to strengthen personal and community well-being and expand the local economy. We strive to unite and work with people who work at building local resilience and sustainability of food, water, energy and other issues of importance to the local community.

We aim to build a world that uses less energy and fewer resources and we believe that by doing so, our neighbourhoods will become a closer knit, more self-sufficient and thus resilient community.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Our core purpose is to mobilise and facilitate community action in order to respond effectively and positively to climate change and peak oil. We hope to achieve this by:

- Raising awareness of climate change and peak oil
- Engaging and building networks with people and groups already active on these issues
- Creating visible practical projects that will reduce our C02 emissions, reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and empower residents to participate.

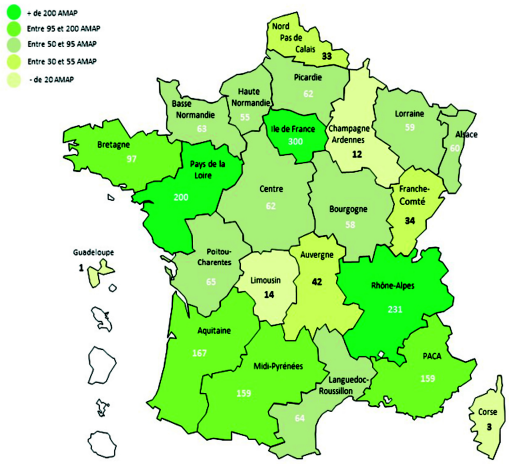
ITALY:
Adanella Rossi, from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Environment of the **Università di Pisa** was supposed to participate in the meeting representing the Italian GAS (Gruppi de Acquisto Solidale), but unfortunately was unable to attend at the last minute.

FRANCE:
Aziyadé Baïnouti, Les AMAP de Provence, Marseille.

The AMAP movement in France

2001 The first AMAP (Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne) was created in Aubagne (Bouches-du-Rhône)
Creation of the first Regional AMAP network, *Alliance Provence*
2003 Creation of the regional AMAP networks *Alliance PEC Rhône Alpes* and *AMAP Ile de France*
2008 Creation of the international CSA network URGENCI
2010 Creation of the Inter-Regional AMAP Movement, MIRAMAP
2014 Alliance Provence became *Les AMAP de Provence*

2015 19 networks and 2000 AMAPs identified in France
(some sources say there are 2700 AMAP and associations with the same objective)



Mapping of AMAPs en 2015

The AMAP concept

Civic awareness comes down to daily actions. AMAPs are the result of the major crisis of agriculture and food systems, and represents a real movement for change in our society that is a response to the strong demand from citizens (both consumers and farmers) for another model of food production and consumption. The AMAP aims are the social and ecological transformation of agriculture and the movement advocates for new relationships between farm and food, and the gbuilding of new solidarities.
The AMP objectives are to:

- Maintain and develop local agriculture that is economically viable, socially just and environmentally sustainable and has a low environmental impact, as well as to generate economic activity and employment, social cohesion and territorial dynamics,
- Promote responsible citizenship and the right to food,
- Support a solidarity-based local and just economy,
- Contribute to promoting food sovereignty around the world, in a spirit of solidarity.

AMAP members and AMAP farmers respect five basic principles:

- A peasant farming approach,
- Agroecological practice,
- Quality and accessible food,
- Active participation in a popular education approach,
- A supportive and contractualised relationship without middlemen.

Les AMAP de Provence, is a regional network and member of MIRAMAP
Since November 2014, Alliance Provence, the first network created in France in 2001, became the AMAP of Provence, the regional section of the Inter-Regional Movement, MIRAMAP.

In 2015, the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur had 164 AMAP and 470 Peasants in partnership with AMAPs.

SPAIN
Samuel Bourrut-Lacouture, Plataforma Soberania Alimentaria Valencia, Valencian Community.

AGROECOLOGY

This picture shows one way of marketing agro-ecological products. This Association of responsible consumers provides small-scale producers with a short food supply chain to sell their produce direct to consumers.
But this shop also sells non-agroecological product that are neither seasonal nor local. There are various reasons for this, including the fact that the members of the purchasing group decided on the characteristics of their products they would stock during their meetings. Many consumers are effectively turning to organic produce for health reasons, rather than prusuing socio-economic change.

Most of solidarity purchasing groups in the Valencia community are stricter than this one, but it is interesting because it is one of the biggest: it brings together more than 170 families in Valencia (the Valencia Region consists of three provinces: Valencia, Alicante, Castellón) while the average is of 30 families per group.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Saying we want to achieve food sovereignty can sometimes be too pretentious. Is it possible to achieve food sovereignty if we continue to use plastic packaging?
The general dynamics of consumer groups for agroecology and food sovereignty in the Region of Valencia is limited to small-scale and unstructured groups that only sell products packaged in wooden crates, and seasonal produce according to agroecological principles.

There are others groups that open the door to capitalisation or professionalisation, as well as products with a greater ecological impact.
The first groups are generally smaller. The second are composed of a larger number of families, but they are fewer. The debate is open and there are questions
How to have a more massive impact on people who are not aware of ecological and social issues? How can we achieve food sovereignty for a social majority?

SOLIDARITY

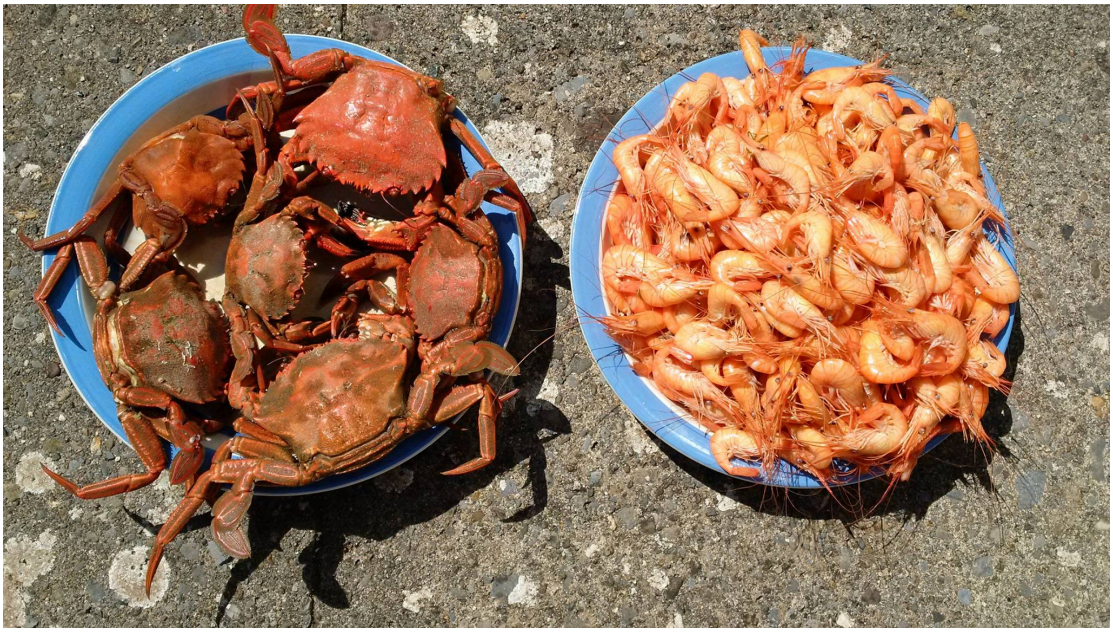
This third picture shows a day outing organized by a consumers' association and local farmers. After visiting the fields, with much explanation on the farmer's work, consumers and farmers jointly cook and enjoy a good meal. These meetings are vital to the development of solidarity between consumers, and between consumers and producers. These kinds of activities is widespread among consumers' and farmers' associations. Solidarity is also expressed through loyalty (a consumer group provides a stable and secure market for the local producers that supply them) and fair prices (the price is set by the producer). On the other hand, the risk of crop failure is still not shared by the consumers.

Judith HITCHMAN, Urgenci's president, France-Ireland.

AGROECOLOGY

Without bees, we would lose all our food systems: we must preserve bees to protect our biodiversity and agroecology.

- ***FOOD SOVEREIGNTY*** *is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. In this case my traditional fishing rights in the coves in my home village, to catch food and feed my family!*



- ***SOLIDARITY ECONOMY:*** *is the social cohesion produced by consumer involvement in distributing the weekly share. This photo shows how two of my grandchildren in their CSA took their family's turn at the weekly distribution, loving every minute of this co-production and consumer involvement.* Helping young people to learn where our food comes from is a vital part of transmitting our knowledge to future generations.