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Urgenci

The International Network of Community Supported Agriculture
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From Grassroots to International Forums... and Back

By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary

Following the Symposium, the General Assembly of the network was held on 22nd November 2015. It was a perfect reflection of our movement: the participants represented a patchwork of initiatives, and a diversity of geographical contexts. 66 foreign participants from 28 countries took part. Farmers were well represented, totaling a third of the foreign participants (22). This symbolizes the commitment of the farmer-consumer dynamic on both sides.

The backbone of Urgenci, the national and regional networks (type 2 members), played a major role during the GA, with 18 of the 19 paid up member networks represented. Additionally, 23 of the 37 paid up CSA member groups (type 1 members) were present (physically or through proxies). This represents a total of 82 voting rights for the General Assembly out of 56 groups or network members that represent 112 potential votes. A single type 3 organisation was represented, as well as 6 individual members (type 4 members) of the 28 paid up for 2015.



COMMON PLEDGE FOR THE COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT, adopted during the International Symposium held in Shunyi, China, 21 November 2015.

Community-Supported Agriculture is what brings us together. CSA is the name we give to a diversity of approaches that all aim to strengthen direct farmer-eater relationships. This includes sharing risks and benefits. This is the essence of CSA.

Urgenci is the international organization that facilitates the connections between existing national and local CSA networks through the shared belief in the core values of Agroecology: Food Sovereignty, Solidarity Economy and Biodiversity.

Urgenci aims to disseminate and advocate for CSA. Urgenci also supports the building of new regional and national CSA networks.

In almost 10 years of existence, Urgenci has achieved international recognition, and the CSA movement now involves five continents and 1.5 million people.

We are farmers, eaters, network representatives, and advocates from all around the world. We gathered in China for the 6th International Symposium of Urgenci, organized jointly with the 7th Chinese national CSA conference, to support the Rural Regeneration movement and invigorate our initiatives worldwide.

From our exchanges, we make this pledge.

We pledge to communicate the benefits of CSA, and its vital role in the radical transformation of the food system.

We pledge to build nourishing personal and organizational relationships, as well as strategic alliances to develop CSA globally.

We pledge to support and empower local, national, and continental CSA networks in all their diversity.

We pledge to enable knowledge sharing between all actors, especially farmer-to-farmer.

We pledge to celebrate farmers and communities.

We pledge to support growers and eaters as they care for the land and people in their practice of Agroecology.

We carry these pledges home to our communities with the determination that the CSA movement will continue to grow.

The New IC Dominated by Female Farmers and Eaters



President: Judith Hitchman (Europe, consumer) is Irish, and lives in France. She ran her own international consultancy, and worked as training designer and project manager in communication, cross-cultural management and sustainable local development projects for 40 years. She is also a professional interpreter. She has been involved in Urgenci since 2008. As Special Envoy, she was responsible for Advocacy and represented Urgenci in the Civil Society Mechanism of the Committee on Food Security from 2012 to 2015.

Vice-President: Shi Yan (Asia, farmer): In 2008, after she had graduated, Shi Yan spent 6 months on a CSA farm in Minnesota. She then returned to Beijing and launched the Little Donkey farm. Over the next 5 years, Little Donkey developed as a CSA, and now has 400 families who are growing their vegetables on plots on the farm, as well as 500 families that have subscribed to the CSA and who receive a weekly organic box of produce. In 2012 Shi Yan set up a second CSA in Beijing, called Shared Harvest. At the VIth International Symposium she launched a national network of over 500 Chinese CSA farms.



Denis Carel (France, farmer), is a cheese-maker and has a goat farm in Roquebrussane in France. He has been a Board member of the AMAP de Provence network since 2003, as well as of Miramap, the French national CSA network, since it was created in 2010.

Secretary: Kiera Mulvey (North America, consumer) was previously manager of the Fairshare CSA network in Madison in Wisconsin (it is a non-profit organisation that groups 50 CSA farms and has over 25,000 members who support the CSA movement in the region). She now works for a network in the East of the United States.



Andrea Calori (Europe, consumer) is a qualified lecturer in town planning at the Polytechnic of Milan. He has also worked for several years as a consultant on local food systems in Europe and Latin America. Andrea facilitates relations between public authorities and CSA networks. He is also one of the leaders of the Italian GAS movement (GAS stands for Gruppo di Acquisto Solidale), the Italian version of CSA, and in this capacity he was elected as President of Urgenci in Kobé, Japan in 2010; he has remained President until now.



Josefina Cendejas Guizar (Latin America, consumer) is a university lecturer in the state of Michoacan in Mexico, and is very involved in the cooperative movement, REDCOOP, and RIPESS, the international network for the promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy.

Simon Anoumou Todzro (Africa, farmer) is from Togo. He is a pioneer of organic farming and agroecology in West Africa. He is a globetrotter who was trained in many different countries including Germany, Switzerland and France. His farm is also a training centre. (CFAPE, near Lomé).



Narumi Yoshikawa (Japan, consumer) is an anthropologist by training. She is involved in the Japanese Teikei movement and has carried out a lot of field research on the subject of CSAs. She is replacing Shinji Hashimoto, as one of the 2 Asian IC members.

The International Committee is the decision-making body of Urgenci, and elected by the network. A new position was created to support the IC. It is that of Special Coordinator for Education and Training activities. Zsafia Perenyi (Hungary, Consumer) was designated to fill this post. Isa Alvarez replaces Judith Hitchman as Advocacy Officer for Urgenci. These are additional to the other existing support provided by Fergal Anderson (responsible for Relations with the Food Sovereignty movement), and that of Samuel Thirion (responsible for Institutional Relations).

Action Plan 2015-2017

Download:

http://urgenci.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/GA_2015_ACTION_PLAN.pdf

The collective work was led thanks to participatory methods, and facilitated by Frederic Theriault, from the Tourne-Sol farm in Quebec. An action plan was decided together, with two strings of actions. First, a thematic string of actions was articulated around 5 working groups: Advocacy, Communication, Experience-sharing, Resources/Research and Finance. Second, geographical actions were designed by representatives from each region and adopted by the General Assembly. The action plan and the presentation of each working group are available on Urgenci's website.

Advisory Committees

A.Experience sharing

By Zsafia Perenyi, Special Envoy on Educational Issues for Urgenci

The main aim of the working group is to strengthen the experience sharing within URGENCI. To achieve this, three main actions were identified.

1.Organise more and more focused face-to-face meetings:

Farmer to farmer, network to network, or regional meetings should be intensified. URGENCI should be represented at allies' meetings as much as possible, and URGENCI observers at regional CSA meetings should disseminate URGENCI's key messages.

2.Multiple experience sharing at different levels:

A Mentorship program and a contact directory could be set up. Similar programmes at continental or country level should be established that replicate the European experience-sharing projects.

3.Increase participatory methods, both on a permanent basis and during our face-to-face meetings.

Online tools that allow us to dialogue at a distance and webinar technology can help us. Our events could be even more participatory and case studies could be shared widely, through films, photos (to avoid language barriers) radio interviews etc.

If you are interested in joining this working group: [zsofi\(at\)tve.hu](mailto:zsofi(at)tve.hu)



B. Advocacy

By Judith Hitchman, President of the IC of Urgenci

Advocacy has been designated is one of Urgenci's key objectives. It involves advocating and working for policy at all levels - Local Authorities, national governments, and International Institutions (European Union, Committee on World Food Security and Nutrition...) that supports small-scale food producers in such a way that it empowers and facilitates those involved in Community Supported Agriculture and Fisheries - producers and consumers alike.

Urgenci's advocacy officer:

Isa Álvarez – isa.urgenci@gmail.com



C. Communication

By Kiera Mulvey, Secretary of the International Committee of Urgenci



As an international network teeming with diverse projects, communications is a key focus area for Urgenci. At the 2015 General Assembly a team was established to develop and execute a dynamic communications strategy to improve systems that will inspire and connect work around the globe. The communications working group plans to improve systems and structures currently in place such as the Urgenci website and social media presence, enhance internal communications, and launch new communications projects to better connect and engage Urgenci members.

Improvements will focus on structures for original content contribution that allow more input from a diverse group of CSA practitioners and advocates around the world. New project focus will be the creation of a book featuring CSA around the world edited by Elizabeth Henderson with content sourced from the international Urgenci community. The overall goal of communications working group initiatives is to make the current work of Urgenci and CSA practitioners more visible to encourage replication and share accomplishments. Here's to positive communications!

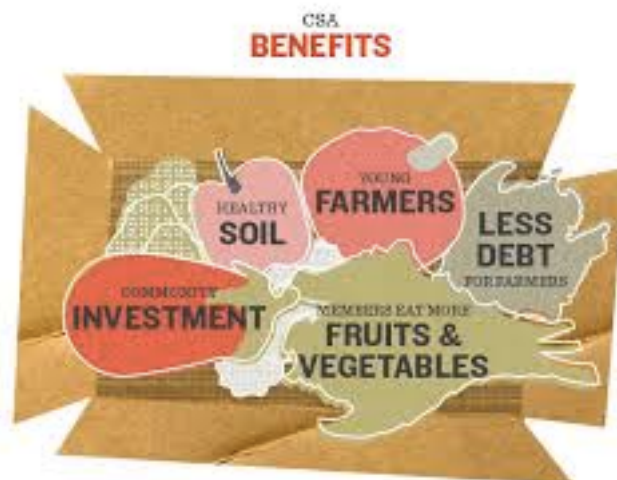
IC contact: kieram@gmail.com

D. Financial sustainability

By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary of Urgenci

Ensuring long term financial sustainability is a top priority for Urgenci. It is equally crucial for our network to reinforce its independence, and avoid depending on any single specific source of funding. This Advisory Committee on "Financing Urgenci" will bring together ideas and support from all over the world, and explore different options to reach the goals we collectively define. Membership contributions, private donors, region-focused foundations are some of the possibilities this committee plans to examine.

Please contact: [jocelyn.parot\(at\)urgenci.net](mailto:jocelyn.parot(at)urgenci.net)



E. Advisory Committee on Tools, Resources and Research

By Josefina Cendejas and Narumi Yoshikawa, Members of the IC of Urgenci



Following the agreement during the Urgenci General Assembly, this working group will coordinate the production and dissemination of knowledge about Community Supported Agriculture, connecting it with Solidarity Economy and Food Sovereignty.

Research is a key activity for increasing visibility and deepening insights on CSA initiatives, their modalities, strategies and impacts. Scientific research can describe, demonstrate and eventually strengthen the sustainability, and highlight the social benefits of alternative community-based food strategies in comparison with industrial agriculture and food chains.

Tools and resources based on research and best CSA practices are necessary to support group educational and training processes. Ideally, these instruments should be designed and produced to meet specific needs and contexts of participants and projects. It is the responsibility of the Advisory Committee to respond accordingly by providing support.

Coordinators: Josefina Cendejas Guízar - [josecend\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:josecend(at)gmail.com)

Yoshikawa Narumi - [hanapic.naru\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:hanapic.naru(at)gmail.com)

Regional Meetings

Third European CSA Meeting

By the European Kernel

On 16th-18th September 2016, we, local small-scale peasant farmers and eaters engaged in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), a direct partnership where the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, will all converge in Ostrava in the Czech Republic to assess our achievements and challenges.



With the support of Urgenci and many other organizations:

- We have enabled knowledge sharing between all actors, especially farmer to farmer;
- We have communicated the benefits of CSA widely, as well its vital role in the radical transformation of the food system;
- Local, national, and continental CSA networks have been empowered in all their diversity;
- We have been working to define our Common Ground : the result of this work, a European Declaration of CSA, will be presented in September;
- We have been investigating our successes and failures as CSA members : we will be able to share the results of the First European Census on CSA, and present a European Guide of CSAs.

But there is still a long way to go to build a strong coalition of CSAs and CSA networks across Europe.

This meeting will also be an important step in preparing for the Second Nyeleni Europe Forum on Food Sovereignty, scheduled to take place in October 2016 in ClujNapoca, in Romania. We shall feed our outcomes into this process. CSA is an important part of the Food Sovereignty movement: it builds practical tools to restore citizens' control over their food chains, helps develop a truly sustainable local food system, and supports social cohesion and inclusion.

More info: ostrava.urgenci.net

You can still register online (until 10 July): <https://survey.owlswatch.net/index.php/763984>
and participate in the crowdfunding campaign (deadline: 10 July):
<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/third-european-csa-meeting/x/14274278#/>



Asian CSA Meeting

By Urgenci Asia

Shi Yan went to Korea twice this year, first to attend a forum on CSA and then to visit some promising projects. The situation there is similar to the Japanese Teikei: many groups flourished a long time ago, and now some local governments are focusing on local food and backing the rural regeneration movement (young farmers). There are strong possibilities of regional cooperation at the moment.

In Asia, Wallapa van Willenswaard-Kuntiranont, from the Towards Organic Asia (TOA) programme, is organizing the 3rd Mindful Markets Asia Forum, “*Organics for System Change: Social Enterprise and Consumer Movement*” on Aug 30th -Sept 2nd at Srinakharinwirot University (SWU) in Bangkok, Thailand.

This event could be the opportunity to convene CSA organisations and groups to a regional meeting and to organise the first Asian CSA conference in 2016.



North American CSA Meeting

By Isabelle Joncas, from Equiterre, Quebec, Canada

In 2000, Equiterre organized a first pan Canadian symposium on CSA. Since then, the local food marketing systems have been developing among mainstream farmers. Many opportunities can still be explored to boost its development. French speaking stakeholders acting for a more sustainable food system feel the need to meet and give a new impulse to their movement at a political level and increase the visibility among the consumers. Équiterre will host a Conference on Proximity Farming on December 2-3, 2016 in Montreal. Équiterre’s Network of Family Farmers, which has just marked its 20th anniversary, will be prominently featured at the event. Themes explored will include technological innovation and best practices in direct marketing.

Objectives of the « Conference on Proximity Farming »

- Showcase inspiring domestic and international examples and demonstrate expertise focused on innovation in direct marketing channels;
- Disseminate research on the formula of organic baskets and other direct marketing channels;
- Provide discussion opportunities between the francophone actors of direct marketing, the organic vegetable producers, the policy makers and the researchers
- Raise greater awareness of decision makers and citizens on the different possibilities of short supply chains and organic box formulas.



Latin American CSA Meeting

By Josefina Cendejas, Member of the IC

The San Nicolás de Hidalgo University in Michoacán, the Autonomous University of Chapingo, REDCOOP and Urgenci are organizing the 1st Latin American CSA meeting (*1er Encuentro latinoamericano de Agricultura de Responsabilidad Compartida*) on October, 19th-22nd, 2016 in Morelia, Michoacán, México.

The target audience is small producers, conscious consumers, food cooperatives, organizers of alternative fairs and farmers markets, academics and trainers in organic agriculture and solidarity economy, activists interested in disseminating the CSA concept in Latin America.

The objectives are to learn about and share information about the different models and strategies of Community-Supported Agriculture groups in Latin America, and create a regional network that support and bring visibility to these initiatives.

It will involve different activities: conferences, workshops, visits to farms and farmers markets, workshops and a founding assembly.

The coordination and contact details are: Josefina Cendejas Guízar, urgencilatinoamerica@gmail.com



African Meeting

By Simon Todzro, Member of the IC of Urgenci and Judith Hitchman, President of the IC of Urgenci

In February 2015, NGOs and actors involved in Agroecology from Mali, Burkina Faso and Togo met in Ouagadougou and created the West African network ROAPC : Réseau de L'Ouest Afrique de Producteurs et Consommateurs to facilitate technical exchanges in Agroecology between peasants in the region. It also works on raising awareness of consumers in the growing number of AMAPs (CSAs).



In November 2015, a delegation from Mali and Togo from ROAPC took part in the 6th URGENCI International CSA Conference in Beijing. They presented their programme for creating and developing CSA (AMAPs) in 6 West African countries where they did not yet exist in a significant way: Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin. URGENCI supports this project, and is committed to trying to raise the necessary funding to do this. Currently URGENCI is discussing this issue with the German NGO Bread for the World and hope to convene a West African CSA meeting before the end of the year.



Mediterranean Meeting

By Morgane Iserte, Urgenci Network Coordinator

On February 28th, March 1st and 2nd, participants from 12 different countries of the Mediterranean Basin (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Croatia, France and Spain) met for the first time in Marseilles for a experience-sharing event on CSA.



The three-day meeting kindled a spark of hope (see the press release: <http://urgenci.net/the-first-mediterranean-lsp-meeting-in-marseilles/>) and triggered a desire to work together on the common issues the Mediterranean societies are currently facing.

You will find all the reporting documents and contents from our pilot Mediterranean project on the dedicated webpages (<http://urgenci.net/the-mediterranean-csa-project/>):

- the participants and initiatives presentation, with videos about you all [here](#)
- the [meeting minutes](#), on the webpage "[Experience-sharing meeting](#)"
- the [Mapping results](#), on the webpage [exploratory mapping](#)

Enjoy the reading and spread the word!

Pooling Resource campaign for the website

Tools and resources illustrating best CSA practices are necessary to support educational processes within groups and disseminate the CSA concept widely. Many of us have access to clever toolkits, full and detailed manuals, inspiring videos produced by their CSA group or conducted within their network or with partners. Whatever the language, please help us to sow these CSA seeds and collect as many great tools and as much creative material on our website, by sending them to contact@urgenci.net

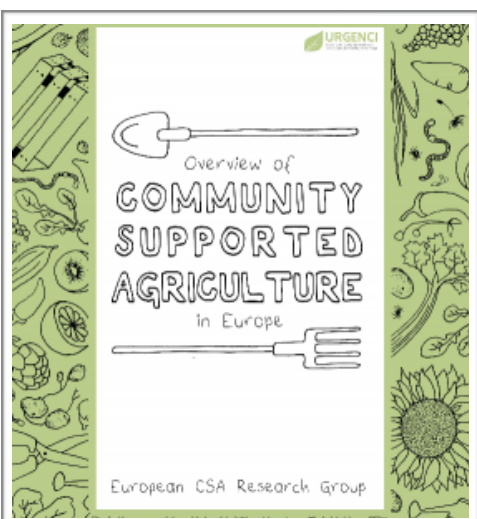
Example from Be Part of CSA!

In the framework of the Erasmus+ Be Part of CSA! project, partners developed communication tools, including this short movie about Community-Supported Agriculture.

<http://urgenci.net/actions/be-part-of-csa/a-csa-short-movie/>

An educational booklet about CSA and a trainers' guide will soon be published. This follows testing them during the training modules that took place this year in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Romania. More about the project:

<http://urgenci.net/actions/be-part-of-csa/>



In the "European CSA Overview", the European CSA Research Group combines the knowledge of actors from 22 European countries. All these actors are from the interface of research and farming. They have an intimate knowledge of CSAs in their respective countries. The report thus gives an insiders' perspective on the state and the dynamics of the CSA movement throughout Europe. With this research, the European CSA Research Group aims to improve how knowledge is generated and shared amongst CSAs in Europe. It also strives to create awareness among policy-makers and the wider public of the reality that there are existing real alternatives to industrial food systems. The report shows that between half a million and one million Europeans are "doing CSA". *It is available for pdf download on the Urgenci international network for CSA website: www.urgenci.net*

Urgenci

TEIKEI 提携

The International Network of Community Supported Agriculture !

URGENCI brings citizens, farmers, consumers, activists and concerned political actors together at global level through an alternative economic approach called Local Solidarity Partnerships between Producers and Consumers. Find more on the web (& Facebook) ! www.urgenci.net Twitter : @urgenci1 // Address : Maison de la Vie Associative 13400 Aubagne FRANCE // Phone : +33 6 87 04 49 30 // Mail : contact@urgenci.net

Urgenci's newsletter has been named *TEIKEI*, «cooperation» in Japanese, as a tribute to the pioneering role of the Japanese organic agriculture movement in setting up the first Community - supported Agriculture models. It is also a tribute to the victims of the March 2011 Earthquake and Fukushima nuclear disaster, which hit Japanese so cruelly, just one year after Urgenci IVth International Symposium had been hosted in Hyogo prefecture

The International Network of Community Supported Agriculture

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