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Urgenci

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## CSA Rising in Eastern Europe

By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary

Two major movement -building events took place this Autumn: the **3rd European meeting of CSA Movements**, in post-industrial Ostrava, in the Czech Republic, where **Food Sovereignty** was on everyone's lips, and the **2nd Nyeleni Europe Forum for Food Sovereignty** in rural Transylvania, Romania, where **CSA was a burning topic**. This double echo is no surprise. Food Sovereignty is to be understood as the right of people to decide on their own food systems. It is also the right of farmers to break free from the domination of corporations. CSA is thus an enactment of Food Sovereignty: CSA groups offer daily support to local family farmers using agroecology. They make a choice as citizens, not only as consumers. In a period when democracy is challenged, this active vision of citizenship needs to be grown. It is an antidote to multiple crises.

CSA is just one model, perhaps the most demanding. It is just one step, perhaps the most far reaching. For many, it is an entry point: new CSA members may also take a share in an organic land trust, set up solidarity purchasing groups in marginalized neighbourhoods or join a Local Food Policy Council. CSA is part of a bigger movement. This is why Urgenci has been framing all its actions referring to the Nyeleni Movement for Food Sovereignty, and will continue to do so. This is why Urgenci is eager to be part of the campaigns decided by the 700 participants, in order to make the *"story behind food relationship"* more visible.



## **EUROPEAN DECLARATION ON COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE**

*read during the Third European Meeting of CSA Movements held in Ostrava, Czech Republic, 17 September 2016.*



### **Preamble**

All over Europe, people are coming together to take control of our food systems, from production to distribution to consumption. We are building systems centered on our local communities. We are joining forces to achieve food sovereignty, *by claiming our right to define our own food and agricultural systems.*

The time is ripe to address the disastrous effects of the industrial food system. Food is too important to merely treat it as a commodity. The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement generates practical, inclusive solutions to the food crises. We are many, varied and united. We are stepping up in solidarity— taking responsibility – to create socially inclusive, economically viable and environmentally sustainable food systems. Hundreds of thousands of people in Europe have already proven that CSA works, by creating a variety of practices, initiatives and networks based on common values.

Building upon the existing charters and experiences, this declaration aims to lay down the common ground for this CSA movement to flourish.

### **Definition**

*Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a direct partnership based on the human relationship between people and one or several producer(s), whereby the risks, responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared, through a long-term, binding agreement.*

## CSA Guiding Principles

CSA is not a static model. Like a garden it is dynamic: it evolves and grows through daily care. Each CSA partnership has autonomy.

We also agree on these basic principles as our common ground to grow the CSA movement.

- Responsible care for the soil, water, seeds and the other commons through the agroecological principles and practices as found in this declaration and the Nyeleni Declaration 2015
- Food as a common good not a commodity.
- Human scale production rooted in local realities and knowledges.
- Fair working conditions and decent income for all involved.
- Respect for the environment and animal welfare.
- Fresh, local, seasonal, healthy and diverse food accessible to all.

Community building through direct and long term relationships with shared responsibility, risks and rewards.

Active participation based on trust, understanding, respect, transparency and cooperation.

Mutual support and solidarity beyond borders.

## Build – Develop – Empower

We want to build a strong coalition of CSAs and CSA networks across Europe to:

- Strengthen the CSA movement and help new CSA to flourish.
- Enable sharing of knowledge and skills between CSAs in different countries.
- Conduct and promote participatory research on our farms and in our networks.
- Empower and educate people to act for and develop the movement
- Show the benefits of CSA for the whole of society.
- Advocate for CSA communities at international, European and local level to implement our principles.
- Engage in local food governance.
- Work together with the food sovereignty movement and strengthen our alliance with social and solidarity economy movements.



We are a grassroots movement: we believe that the power of CSA is in pragmatic, everyday action and face-to-face relationships. We are connecting with each other, with the producers in our communities, and with the living soil beneath our feet.

**This is our Common Ground.**

*Adopted by 3<sup>rd</sup> European Meeting of CSA on 17<sup>th</sup> September in Ostrava, Czech Republic*  
movement will continue to grow.

NB: Please find an article explaining the purpose of the Declaration on Urgenci's website:

<http://urgenci.net/long-live-the-european-declaration-on-csa/>

*Ostrava pictures are courtesy of Tina Wintersteiger and Cathy Bouffartigues.*





## Asia: CSA at the Mindful Markets Asia Forum

**by Wallapa and Hans van Willenswaard,**  
*Suan Nguen Mee Ma social enterprise*  
*Towards Organic Asia (TOA).*

A prolific journalist of the *Bangkok Post* turned farmer and pioneered the first CSA project in Thailand. Jane and Payong Srithong, a farmer couple in Supanburi, continued the CSA Group. They work closely together with ethnic Karen groups in the forests and linked up with participants in Bangkok. We were happy to be among the first members of this CSA that has now existed for over 14 years, with a stable number of around 60 urban families. Wallapa then started the Green Market Network which empowered several CSA initiatives like 'HealthMe' and the City Farm of Nakorn 'Prince' Limpacuptathavorn or 'Veggie Prince'. In addition to the CSA, we sell some of their products in our Suan Nguen Mee Ma coffee shop and restaurant, in the old part of Bangkok.



*City Farm with (central) 'Veggie Prince'*

In May 2013, we organized the International Forum on Innovating Alternative Markets in Bangkok. We invited the full global IFOAM PGS (Participatory Guarantee Systems) Committee, with

members from 5 continents, together with CSA pioneers Shi Yang (Shared Harvest, China), Joy Daniel (IIRD, India) and Etono Ohito (Teikei, Japan) to the 40th IFOAM anniversary.

Wallapa (Suan Nguen Mee Ma, Thailand) represented the newly established Towards Organic Asia (TOA) alliance with its core partners in the Mekong region. Together they discussed how an *URGENCEI Asia* network could emerge from the growing activities and



*Wallapa opens the first Mindful Markets Asia FORUM, August 2014.*

international exchanges in Asia. Public exchanges also included various representatives of La Via Campesina in Asia (Indonesia, Nepal, Korea).

Bennet Haynes (formerly Ralston Farm, USA), who had been active in the organic farming movement in Thailand, represented TOA at the 5<sup>th</sup> URGENCEI symposium in USA (Monterrey, CA, 2013), but initiatives to start URGENCEI Asia remained inconclusive.

From our exchanges within the Towards Organic Asia (TOA) alliance we know that CSA initiatives do not always fit easily into the cultural context of the Mekong countries. Usually, traditional markets where customers and producers/traders know each other in person are still functional. And the enormous logistical challenges of linking potential CSA participants who often live scattered around big cities are difficult to overcome. However, a dynamic variety of initiatives - that often are not easy to capture in one 'model'- is growing all over Asia. Larger scale alternative consumer-producer cooperatives like in Japan (*Seikatsu* cooperative) and Korea (*Hansalim*) are now well established, while new initiatives emerge along similar lines.

In order to match the need for this diversity of alternative marketing initiatives – including CSA but not excluding other approaches – to meet, learn from each other, seek inspiration and learn to advocate, the **Mindful Markets Asia Forum** was organized for the first time in Bangkok in 2014. The 4<sup>th</sup> Mindful Markets Asia Forum is planned 21 – 23 September 2017.

*Cover of the book on the first forum: Mindful Markets. Producer-Consumer Partnerships towards a New Economy. Suan Nguen Mee Ma publishers.*

The 6<sup>th</sup> international URGENCI conference, in Beijing, China, that was held in November 2015 was an important event for Asia, and we were happy that we could include our TOA partner from Vietnam in the Thai delegation, and disseminate the remarkable 'Beijing experience' widely in our network. With Shi Yan (China) and Narumi Yoshikawa

(Japan) representing Asia in the URGENCI International Committee, we expect new initiatives towards *URGENCI Asia* to develop in the near future. Maybe the next occasion to meet will be the IFOAM conference in India, November 2017?



*Presentations of the Community Livelihood project, Hong Kong (far left); MOA Japan and Thailand (second and third from right).*

In addition to the Mindful Markets Asia Forum, this year we organized a two-week *Mindful Markets social enterprise course* in Thailand. The course participants from mainland China and Hong Kong (thanks to the support of PCD), Myanmar, Laos, Bhutan, Malaysia, Russia and Thailand worked on their own business plan, supported by mentors and peers, and visited various characteristic examples of social enterprises in Thailand: a famous traditional hospital and herbal medicine enterprise, the Sampran Hotel & Resort known for its 'Sampran Model' working together closely with local farmers and providing space for a weekly food market, a small-scale agro-forestry enterprise producing herbal drinks, the Lemon farm organic supermarket and our own Suan Nguen Mee Ma social enterprise.





*Excursion to the rice fields around the Sampran Hotel & Resort. Farmers sell their rice directly to the hotel in the framework of the 'Sampran Model'.*

Jane and Payong Stirling's CSA was presented in the course, as well as during the Mindful Market Asia Forum. Matthew John, IFOAM World Board and social entrepreneur, conducted a workshop on PGS, and speakers from China, Japan, Laos, Cambodia and Bhutan made the forum exchanges dynamic and resourceful. Kartini Samon (Indonesia) represented GRAIN and gave a critical review of the present food systems in Asia. A remarkable CSA case, the Community Livelihood project, Hong Kong, was presented by Fan Pui-ying, Ngai Yin and Tin Zi Zok Wai. Alternative currency is also part of the direct farmer – consumer collaboration in this remarkable project.

*Wallapa (left) thanks the speakers from MOA Thailand (middle) and MOA Japan (right).*



Wallapa is now a mentor for networking of projects supported by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation all over Thailand.

Unexpectedly, during a visit to Uttaradit province, a very quiet corner of the country, one of the farmers demonstrated how he linked up in a local CSA with lecturers from a regional university. We hope to extend our network in the coming years and discover many new spontaneous initiatives like this.

*Pictures in this article are courtesy of Hans von Willenswaard.*



## Mediterranean Meeting

*By Morgane Iserle, Network Coordinator*



Since the successful Marseilles experience-sharing meeting in March 2016, Urgenci and its partners from the Mediterranean basin have been looking for new means to implement the project they drafted collectively: **“Towards a Mediterranean network of Local and Solidarity Partnerships for Agroecology!”**

In order to present the project to a wider audience and move forward, they accepted the invitation to participate

in **MedCOP22 that was held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 18-19 Tangiers in Morocco**. Thanks to the RIAM, the delegation included Terre et Humanisme Morocco, the AMAP de Provence and Urgenci. We had a stand in the Medina of Solutions and organised a side event during the **MedCOP22**.



On October 19th, delegates from France and Palestine facilitated a workshop during the **SwitchMed Connect event** in Barcelona, which is an annual gathering of Mediterranean stakeholders to build synergies, exchange knowledge, and scale up eco- and social innovations. Our workshop within the Civil Society Track on “Building a Mediterranean Network of Local, Agroecological Solidarity Partnerships” was well attended. Participants from many countries (and partnering organisations from Algeria and Morocco) worked on needs analysis and solutions before opening a discussion on potential partners and synergies with other networks like the SwitchMed Initiative.

The next step is now taking place during the **COP22, in Marrakech**, with our partner from Morocco – RIAM, together with Terre & Humanisme Morocco and l’Orange Bleue, organizing a 3-day side event on the “alternative agriculture and climate change” issues. International and local participants will gather to exchange and build up common agenda, showing that ecological and community-based solutions can play a key role in fighting climate change. There, RIAM hopes to use this opportunity to move our common shared project forward: let’s build a “Solidarity & Agroecology!” network!

To be continued.







## Be Part of CSA! -project activities at the Third European Meeting of CSA Movements

*By Zsafia Perenyi, Special Envoy on Educational Issues*

**Be Part of CSA Resources on Urgenci's website:**

The 3rd European CSA meeting was also an important milestone for the “Be part of CSA!” educational programme. This was the first time that project partners shared their experiences with CSA actors from all over Europe.



Education is a really important tool for strengthening the CSA movement – as demonstrated by about 25 CSA actors who participated on the “Be part of CSA!” session in Ostrava. Several local educational initiatives were created based on specific needs, and learning about this European educational programme and its experiences was an inspiration to everybody.

Experience sharing was the key activity that made the Ostrava meeting truly participatory. After a short presentation of

the “Be part of CSA!” training project, the Hungarian and Romanian training participants shared their experiences and stories in two big groups. Farmers and consumers explained how motivating it was to participate in a 4-day training programme, to meet others who have the same interests and doubts, and to learn from experienced CSA farmers and coordinators. They explained how the training programme had completely changed their lives, and how CSA had now become the only way of life for them.

This is probably the main strength of the “Be part of CSA!” training programme: **it serves not only as a knowledge sharing platform, but also plays an important role in empowerment of those participating in the project.** Thanks to the training events, participants got to know each other and built cooperation, which in turn also strengthened the national CSA networks. These relationships live on, even after the end of the training programme. It seems that this approach was also interesting for other CSA organisations. We agreed that as the educational materials will be finalized in English (training guide, booklet, short film, crop planner etc.), they will be shared for new language adaptations. An e-mail group was suggested for those who are interested in educational activities on CSA.

The project team made sure that all of the feedback was collected: the evaluation of the session was an important point on their management meeting agenda that was held just after the European meeting. The overall evaluation of the project was planned and the final dissemination activities were listed to ensure the smooth closing of the project.

*Picture courtesy of Zsafia Perenyi.*







**By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary**

Urgenci was a key actor during two flagship events of the European Food Sovereignty movement held this autumn. We were the main organizer of the 3rd European Meeting of CSA Movements that brought together 150 participants from 26 countries, in Ostrava, in the Czech Republic, as well as one of the main organizers of the Second Nyeleni Europe Forum on Food Sovereignty, in Cluj, Romania. This Forum was the converging point for over 500 farmers and consumers. Among the numerous outcomes of these events, there are three shared commonalities.



### **Strong in the East**

Food Sovereignty platforms are being established at the national and regional levels in the Eastern part of Europe, where CSA is developing fast. In these countries, the initiatives have grown from almost inexistant 5 years ago to become one of the driving and organizing forces within the movement.

### **(Peasant) Agroecology**

Vigorous movements are fuelled by internal discussion and controversies. A current hot topic is Agroecology, a term that is still open, attractive and is thus a raging battlefield. Faced by mainstream, governmental capture of agroecology in

some countries, some Food Sovereignty activists prefer the use of the term "Peasant Agroecology". They believe there is a need to distinguish themselves from the industrial, corporate-based vision of Agroecology.

Other activists however believe a successful word should not be abandoned. *"It is not the word that we need to change, but the content: we should struggle to fill it with our meaning"*, says Thierry Kesteloot, from Oxfam Solidarity Belgium. Many activists also say that Agroecology cannot be reduced to the family farming dimension, as it also induces a strong social dimension.

### **Campaign, campaign and campaign again**

A striking feature of both events was the emphasis on winning the battle of ideas. CSA and Food Sovereignty advocates don't think of the local as something that is opposed to the global. They rather see both dimensions as feeding and reinforcing each other. Campaigns at the European level can help make local initiatives more visible. The Nyeleni Europe Forum participants came up with the idea of a common European action to be held on the 17th of April (Day of Peasants' Struggles), on the theme of the **Story behind Food Relationship**.

In addition to these main topics, both events were of course packed with new ideas on how to share experiences and with lively CSA talks. There was a Mediterranean CSA Network meeting with 35 participants from 10 countries, a CSA evening talk about different models, a Consumers' Constituency meeting (the latter two attended by 40 participants), and many other happenings. Stay tuned to [urgenci.net](http://urgenci.net) for comprehensive reports.





## It takes two (Urgenci women) to tango in Rome

**By Judith Hitchman, President**

The **Civil Society Mechanism of the UN Committee on Food Security (CFS) and Nutrition** was created in 2011, when the CFS was reformed. It has both sectorial and geographical constituencies, and Urgenci has occupied one of the two Consumer constituency seats on the Coordination Committee since the beginning. The mandate is for a 2-year period, and can be renewed once. The CSM forms working groups on all policy matters. The groups define a Civil society position, make input first to the draft report, and subsequently work to develop a negotiating position. The work continues after the policy is adopted, to ensure that the actual policy – when favorable - is disseminated widely.

The annual meetings follow a sequence: first the Civil Society Coordination Committee (CC) holds a meeting, followed by the annual Civil society Forum, and then the CFS itself. Apart from plenaries, there are also side events and CSM coordination meetings, lobbying States and discussions of all sorts.

When Judith Hitchman stood down at the end of her mandate in October 2015, she was replaced by Isa Alvarez from Nekasarea, the Spanish Basque CSA network as CC member. We both share all the Urgenci values set out in the European Declaration on CSA, but we do have our specific knowledge and skills that allow us to work in a very complementary way. Over the last 2-year period Judith has been involved in the Policy working group on Connecting Smallholders to Markets, as has Shi Yan. Our Chinese Vice President was a speaker at the High Level Forum that was held in spring 2015. She was also present for the negotiations that took place late April. Following the negotiations, the

Civil society group developed an analytical guide with case studies to illustrate how the policy can be used. Two of those case studies are on CSA. The policy document was adopted during CFS43.

Meanwhile Isa Alvarez was working hard in the group on nutrition. This subject is sometimes a too implicit part of our work. This year, the UN declared the start of the decade of nutrition. This is an opportunity to work more deeply on this issue with governments and civil society organisations. States have been taking the same position as CSM, and there is some hope that more resources will be available without the finds being specifically earmarked for any dedicated use.

It is important to keep past policy decisions alive, and link them to current policy. This was the case of the way in which Connecting Smallholders to Markets was linked to the policy on Food Loss and Waste that was adopted two years ago. And while many good efforts have since been made to recycle food that would otherwise be wasted, little is done to show that CSA actually is part of the necessary system change. Luckily, Nigel Baker, from Coventry University, has done a comparative study between Canalside CSA and a supermarket in the UK, that provides evidence that food loss and waste in the total food chain is around 6% for CSA and over 55% for conventional food production and supermarket sales.

Although we have good news on our collective progress, we are also facing several challenges in CFS. This is 2016, and we still have to fight very hard on the agreements to place womens' rights as a central issue for Food security. Several governments, as Russia or USA, do not want to hear anything about womens' rights. Women feed the world. Therefore if they do not have full human rights it will continue to be impossible to find and implement real solutions for food security. *The full version of this article is on our website, [urgenci.net](http://urgenci.net).*



# Sharing stories, knowledge and discussions through video

By Christabel Buchanan, Coventry University

Urgenci want to share your videos with others from the network, and with other related networks, on the **Urgenci Youtube channel** (<http://bit.ly/2bTpZJj>).

Please send us any videos that you already have so that we can upload them, share them online and begin to organise them on our website.

They do not have to be about CSAs directly, but can also have more technical/demonstrative content, or something which reflects a debate or an event.

Topics for the videos could include:

- **farmer knowledge** on farming practices, techniques which other growers would be interested to see;
- the **story of the creation and running of a CSA or a CSA network** and some hurdles/difficulties you have overcome;
- a **request** for something which you need in your CSA or your network that others might have; technical help, volunteers etc.;
- an **event or action** which you attended/organised related to farming or to a theoretical topic
- a discussion on a topic, e.g. food sovereignty or the solidarity economy, including interviews, debates, panels etc.
- anything else that we haven't thought of!

If you have any questions, please get in touch.

We would like you to submit these (via the cloud, vimeo, youtube etc.) **by 1st December**. If you submit via email, please use the address [contact@urgenci.net](mailto:contact@urgenci.net)

Thanks, and looking forward to seeing what you are doing and thinking,

In Solidarity,  
Christabel

## Urgenci

## TEIKEI

提携



### The International Network of Community Supported Agriculture !

URGNCI 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](http://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](mailto: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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