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Urgenci

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MASS MOBILIZATION
AWARENESS RAISING
AMONG THE WIDER
PUBLIC

ADVOCACY: INFLUENCE
POLICY MAKERS AT EU
AND FAO LEVELS,
ALLIANCES

**SOCIAL
MOVEMENT
BUILDING**
MUTUALIZE
TOOLS,
STRENGTHEN
NATIONAL
NETWORKS

RESEARCH
OUR
INITIATIVES,
ADDRESS OUR
DIFFICULTIES,
IMPROVE OUR
IMPACT

**COMMUNITY SUPPORTED
AGRICULTURE**

PRODUCER-CONSUMER ALLIANCE

DIVERSITY OF INITIATIVES

SHORT SUPPLY CHAINS

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

EXPERIENCE SHARING
TRAINING, MENTORING, EDUCATION

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Urgenci's Path to Sustainability

By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary

The scheme above shows all the areas covered by our collective work. Major achievements have taken place in all 5 areas: **Experience sharing**, with the development of new face-to-face training programmes in many countries (Be Part of CSA!); **Advocacy**, with the deepening of the partnership with the FAO and with strengthened alliances; **Research**, with the first mappings of initiatives in Europe, around the Mediterranean and West Africa; **Movement building**, with the help to the development of several national networks; and **Mass mobilisation**, with the implementation of the EAThink project, an Education to Sustainable and local food systems that mobilise thousands of pupils and teachers. At the same time, Urgenci's communication has been boosted on social networks, on its own website and in the media sphere.

Urgenci members have been building a shared space for their activities. This is our common house. If we want this house to be sustainable, we need to consolidate its foundations. We need to renew and grow our membership. We need to consolidate members' and networks' commitment to the international network. We need to lead joint campaigns. This is a long path, and it starts now, with the 2017 Membership Campaign!



PEASANTS' RIGHTS

Join the movement and ask the EU and its Member States to actively participate in good faith in the elaboration of a "UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Working in Rural Areas".



RIGHTS FOR PEASANTS



Background : In 2010, the Human Rights Council mandated the Advisory Committee to undertake a preliminary study on ways and means to further advance the rights of people working in rural areas, including women, in particular smallholders engaged in the production of food and/or other agricultural products. In 2011 and 2012, the Advisory Committee submitted two studies, in accordance with relevant Human Rights Council resolutions:

- Preliminary study ([A/HRC/16/63](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/4a5b5b5b.html))
- Final study ([A/HRC/19/75](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/4a5b5b5b.html))

In September 2012, at its 21st session, the Council adopted the resolution to establish an open-ended intergovernmental working group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. This group is basing its work on the draft submitted by the [Advisory Committee](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/4a5b5b5b.html), and without prejudging relevant past, present and future views and proposals.

The [first session](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/4a5b5b5b.html) of the Working Group took place on 15 – 19 July, 2013, Palais des Nations in Geneva, home of the Human Rights' Council.

Since then the process has been on-going. In March, FIAN, Hands On The Land and the members of Nyeleni Europe participated in a major conference on Peasants Rights in Schwäbisch Hall in Germany. This was the first time that Urgenci was fully engaged in this important process.

The main outcome was the Peasants Rights before the UNHRC in May.

Urgenci, as member of the actively promoting this sign the petition at: [https://](https://www.peasantsrights.eu/)

petition to support the upcoming session of

Nyeleni Europe process is petition. You can read and [peasantsrights.eu/](https://www.peasantsrights.eu/)





Participating in the Food Lab Initiative Towards a Common Food Policy

By Judith Hitchman, President of the International Committee of Urgenci



IPES-Food launched in March 2016 a three-year process of reflection and research entitled: *Towards a Common Food Policy for the European Union*. Through this process, IPES-Food will convene scientists, civil society groups, grassroots organisations and policy-makers from various governance levels in order to identify the policy tools that would be needed to deliver sustainable food systems in Europe.

The process gets underway on April 7th, when members of IPES-Food join a range of partner organizations for a kick-off meeting in the European Parliament. A concept note detailing this process can be downloaded here: [Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU](#); the information is also available below.

IPES-Food co-chair Olivier De Schutter, who will lead the process, laid out the case for a food policy in an address to the

European Economic and Social Committee on March 11th.

Why does the EU need a 'Common Food Policy'?

European citizens may choose the food they put into their shopping baskets, but they have not chosen the food systems that serve up that food. There is currently no EU 'food policy'. Instead, the food we eat and the food systems we enjoy are shaped by a variety of distinct policy frameworks: agriculture, food safety and public health, trade, environmental protection, climate and energy, economic and social cohesion, rural development and international development, employment and education.

These policies are developed largely in isolation from each other. They are formed by policymakers working within their specific policy areas, in dialogue with

industry groups, civil society organizations and scientific bodies whose own interests are often bounded by the same political and disciplinary siloes.

Policies at various governance levels are also disconnected from each other. Few attempts have been made to systematically link local-level initiatives affecting food systems (e.g. arising from city-level authorities or local civil society groups) to policies adopted at the national or EU level. Food systems are therefore subject to imperatives that potentially conflict and counter-act each other, while major opportunities are missed to build on local initiatives in order to accelerate collective learning.

Urgenci and several of our member networks and allies were honoured to take part in the 3rd food policy lab, on alternative food systems. Laura Ullmann from the GASAP network (Belgian CSA network) made a powerful plea to listen to the real needs of people at grass-roots level. Judith Hitchman input many different aspects of connecting smallholders to markets as well as the multiple possibilities a democratic food system and Food Policy Councils can offer through the various ways in which Alternative Food Systems can be self-organised by civil society and supported by Local Authorities.

More information : <http://www.ipes-food.org/supporting-alternative-food-systems-next-steps-in-defining-a-common-food-policy-vision-for-europe>



Nutrition, CSA and Right to Food

By Isabel Alvarez, Advocacy Officer

For some years now, Urgenci has been working steadily in the Committee on World Food Security (CSF) in Rome. Judith Hitchman has been followed by Isa Álvarez as part of the coordination committee of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) of the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the largest international space of civil society organisations working to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition.

Urgenci has participated in different working groups and been part of the Task Force for various policies. In recent years, in addition to the group on Connecting Smallholders to

Markets, we have been very actively taken part in the nutrition group as it we see it as a fundamental issue on which CSA consumers and groups have much to say.



When talking about Community Supported Agriculture, we always stress the importance on CSA generating solidarity-based relationships and enabling producers access to decent and dignified lives. Obviously, we all know that people in CSA groups eat much healthier food than other consumers sourcing their food from other distribution channels. Additionally, CSA feeds more than our bodies: we also generate and nurture community

spaces that are fundamental to counteracting the current agribusiness system. In spite of this argument, we often fail to underline the importance of supporting healthy communities for nutrition purposes.

As we know, food produced in the agro-industrial model contains many chemicals used to meet the demands of the global market. Likewise, in the case of

outside that standard is considered expensive, without even questioning the underlying reasons of why the rest is so cheap. Finally, it is important to point out the fact that with such discount prices, people with lower resources eat mainly highly processed foods that are rich in sugars and unhealthy fats.

CSAs go against everything just described. They establish a direct relationship between



vegetables, most products travel thousands of kilometres from the place where they are grown to the final consumer. They are picked before they are ripe with the consequent loss of most nutrients that this entails. In the case of animals, fattening is carried out on the basis of transgenic feed mostly in closed spaces (CAFOs), which leads to the development of unhealthy fats for the body.

Large retail chains use discount policies and are supported by the power of the media advertising, and have built an imaginary in which our food must be cheap irrespective of the real production costs. The result is that any product that falls

producers and consumers. Food is produced in an agroecological way, without harmful chemical inputs and collected at its optimum moment of maturity, containing maximal beneficial nutritional properties. CSA groups also establish prices that are fair for both producers and consumers, based on the logic that eating healthily is a right, and not a luxury.

All this undoubtedly contributes to improving the nutrition of CSA eaters. This is why we believe it is necessary to make nutrition visible as one of the strong values of CSA as well as making CSAs more visible in spaces where the nutrition issue is discussed and policy laid down.



The first West African meeting of local and solidarity-based agro-ecological partnerships



Press Release prepared by the participants to the meeting and the edited by Judith Hitchman

« We are women and men, farmers, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) activists, agronomists, agro-ecologists, agro-ecology trainers, Food Sovereignty activists, Civil Society actors from 7 different countries in West Africa. We come from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Togo. Over and above the current extraordinary social and economic challenges, our societies are all confronted by the realities of climate change and increased food insecurity, and are facing situations of extreme vulnerability. We are all confronted by the overwhelming attempt by industrial agriculture and agribusiness to dominate society. It is creating the impoverishment of peasant farmers, land grabbing and capture of peasant seeds. Consumers do not have access to sufficient information or financial means to buy healthy local food. At the very moment

when, confronted to these shared issues, what we need is greater exchanges, resource sharing and mutual support, yet borders are closing, and there is a risk that West Africa may become a space of division, where neither producers or consumers will be the winners.

« We, as committed grassroots civil society actors, and members of civil society, share the vision of West Africa as a space that can bring us all together. In our communities, we are working on a daily basis to craft new solutions. Caring for and nourishing the Earth and the humans it feeds lies at the heart of our concerns. We demonstrate on a daily basis that agro-ecology, implemented by family farmers and supported by committed consumers, provides more effective answers to the environmental challenges than those promoted by

industrial agriculture. We need to share the collective promotion of our collective agro-ecological solutions. Agro-ecological initiatives through local solidarity-based partnerships between producers and consumers need to increase in Africa!

« We came together on the 14th and 15th March 2017 in Kpalimé, for the first West African meeting of agro-ecological local and solidarity-

based food initiatives between producers and consumers. At the end of this historical meeting, we are convinced that our initiatives will contribute to strengthening peasant agriculture, its capacity to feed the cities, to recreating the social cohesion at both rural-urban and urban levels and to restoring farmers' dignity throughout the whole West African region. The aim is to jointly work with producers and consumers in local solidarity partnerships and to promote them.



In order to achieve this goal, we need to disseminate our good practices. By exchanging our field practices and knowledge, we can strengthen all those who are mobilizing, in all their diversity, to preserve peasant agriculture and build

sustainable food systems. We want to build a West African network of alliances between agro-ecological producers and conscious consumers. We are opening a new

chapter of our collective work to contributions by all. Join us and contribute to this new collective challenge!

*This meeting was made possible by the work carried out by **Urgenci**, the international network of Community Supported Agriculture (www.urgenci.net) and the generous support of **Brot für die Welt** (<https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/>). We acknowledge their support for this important initiative with our heartfelt thanks. »*





Sowing for Future Projects

By Morgane Iserte, Network Coordinator

Education activities build bridges between small-scale family farmers and active consumers. As stated in the [European CSA Declaration](#), citizens and farmers engaged in CSA across Europe aim, among others objectives, « to enable sharing of knowledge and skills between CSAs in different countries, to empower and educate people to act for and develop the movement and to show the benefits of CSA for the whole of society ».

This year, Urgenci and its partners submitted three different « Erasmus+ » projects. Erasmus+ is the educational programme of the European Union to foster cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices.

The purpose is to address the CSA members and farmers needs and to facilitate the spread of CSA initiatives by transmitting knowledge, skills and competences from experienced stakeholders and organisations to local communities. Indeed, the number one lesson from "Be part of CSA!" is that structuring a formal educational path for CSA means empowering its promoters and building fruitful links that help strengthen CSA networks.



Module 4 session of the Be Part of CSA! training programme in Romania, 2016.

During the 3rd European CSA meeting in Ostrava (CZ), European CSA partners organised a working process to collect the training needs from newcomers and design the educational projects

accordingly. Several key topics emerged from these consultations.

CSAct ! The CSA collaborative training programme

This project is designed as the follow-up and extension of the first Erasmus+ project for CSA, called ["Be Part of CSA!"](#), that established a framework to craft a European core CSA training program. Based on the experience gained by 2 mentoring organisations during this initial project (2014-2016), TVE in Hungary who coordinated the project and Urgenci as current international coordinator, CSAct! is designed to offer a context-sensitive training for CSA stakeholders in 5 new countries : Poland, Spain, Greece and Italy where CSA is still fledgling.

- CSA Farmers have specific needs, as mentioned several times in the CSA working groups and underlined by supporting organizations. A specific training event will be organised to foster "Farmer-to-Farmer" peer learning;
- Long-term financial sustainability is also a key question for CSAs as showed in the "Be part of CSA!" project. An extra module on "Practical business training for CSA entrepreneurs" topic is necessary.

Partners: Urgenci (coord.), TVE (HU), Deafal (IT), Agroecopolis (GR), FER (PL), COAG (ES).

Solid Base !

Solidarity-based economic units are built on a model of democratic decision-making and a participatory management system, that aims to ensure collective responsibility for the outcomes of economic activities.

An educational programme that provides practical entrepreneurial knowledge not only for farmers but for their consumers, who actively participate in the management of these initiatives is needed to take this to a higher level.



Module 4 session of Be Part of CSA! in Czech Republic, 2016.

Partners from Hungary, Czech Republic, Germany and the European CSA Research group will develop a specific project coordinated by TVE, called *Solid Base*, on "Financial and management education for small-scale farm based entrepreneurs" (2017-2019). Urgenci is part of the cast and bridge-building with the other European educational projects will be a priority.

A set of supporting tools and materials will be created and tested to help farmers and engaged volunteers to ensure the financial sustainability of solidarity-based food systems through knowledge and skills transfer.

Partners: TVE (coord.), AMPI (CZ), Solawi (DE), Agronauten (DE), Urgenci.

EATIngCRAFT (EducAtion Towards the



Creation of Alternative Food neTworks)

Participatory Guarantee System Training organized by Nature et Progrès in the Tarn area, France.

The idea of a joint project on PGS and CSA was first coined in Beijing, in November 2015 at the Urgenci 6th symposium. We had had previous talks about working together with IFOAM on this issue.

PGS is not only an innovation in certification; it is essentially a powerful pedagogical tool. PGS allows for interactive learning and expands the horizon including various stakeholders of the food chain in the process: producers, consumers, retailers, traders and others, such as NGOs. PGS as well as CSA build long-term trust-based relationships and accelerate learning processes through a more efficient and equal access to knowledge.

This project objective is to develop an innovative adult learning training program with 4 modules on PGS.

Partners: IFOAM (coord.), Nature & Progrès (FR), MIRAMAP (FR), TVE (HU), Pro-bio-Liga (CZ), AgroEcopolis (GR), Urgenci.



UNIVERSSE RIPESS congress in Athens panel and workshop

By Judith Hitchman, President

Every two years, RIPESS Europe holds a big congress. This year, it will take place in Athens from 9-11th June. Urgenci is a member of the RIPESS Europe Co-ordination Committee as well as a full and active member of the global Board. This is because solidarity economy is the second pillar of Urgenci's values (food sovereignty is the first).

and food sovereignty movement host organisation who will moderate the panel.

The title of this panel will be *Agroecology: a key element for responsible production and consumption and fighting climate change*. It is planned as a follow-up workshop to the panel discussion held two years ago at the Berlin Solikon congress. There will also be an interactive workshop on the subject of *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): bridging the gap between solidarity economy and food*

4th European Social Solidarity Economy Congress | Athens 9/10/11th of June

universse 2017

Democratizing Economy
Emancipating Society
Empowering Change

In preparation for this important event, Urgenci has submitted two activities to the Greek organisers: a full panel discussion on agroecology, led by Rupert Dunn, member of the Landworkers Alliance (ECVC) and the only CSA peasant-baker in the UK, Gaëlle Bigler of Switzerland, member of the Urgenci Kernel and leading light in the Swiss CSA movement, Judith Hitchman, president of Urgenci and of course Jenny Gkiougki, as our Greek CSA

sovereignty.

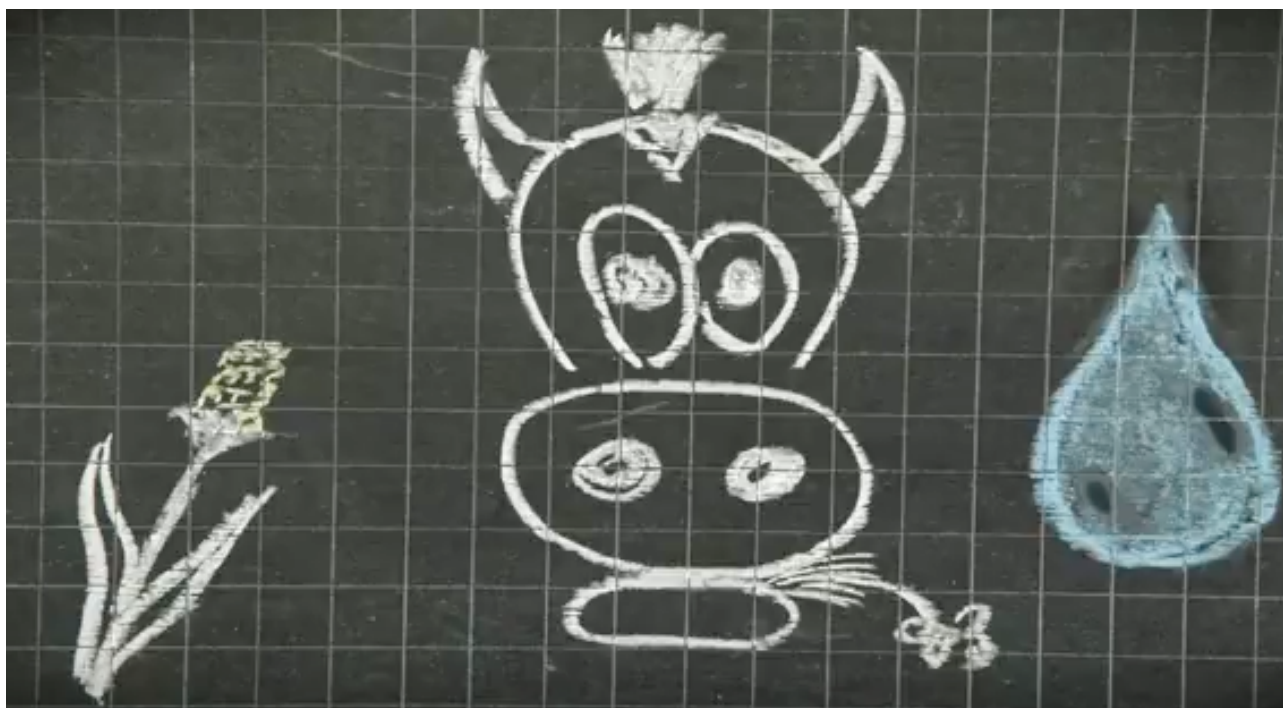
More information on the Universse website: <https://universse2017.org>

Ripess website: <http://www.ripest.eu/fr/save-the-date-4eme-congres-europeen-de-less-a-athens-9-11-juin-2017/>

A crowdfunding campaign is organized to support participants' travels to Athens: <https://fr.goteo.org/project/universse2017congress>



By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary



Why do we need a “EAThink meets CSA” -seminar?

EAThink is a European project with multiple activities to educate children to sustainable and local food systems. Since the EAThink project started in 2015 (<http://eathink2015.org/en/>), Urgenci has been identified both as the partner in charge of its implementation in France, and as the organisation with expertise on alternative food systems. One of Urgenci's primary goals is to use this project to share knowledge and skills on this topic. Urgenci is thus organizing a seminar on the 10th and 11th of July in Caen, Normandy, France, in order to bridge the gap between the project and the CSA movement.

Goal: Experience-sharing

The goal, during 2 days of work is: 1. to **share the experience gained during the project in France to the European CSA Community**; 2. to **show what are Urgenci members in Europe doing, in the field of formal education** for children.

The importance of Education for the CSA movement

For the CSA movement, there is interest for this meeting, for 2 main reasons. The first reason is that the topic of education (formal and non-formal) keeps coming up as a strong theme during the European meetings of CSA movements: there is a need for communication with a wider audience, for « education of the consumers », and for reaching all layers of the society. Schools are definitely by far the best place to address all these 3 objectives.

The second reason is that quite a few CSA and local food activists are already working closely with schools in their own countries. This seminar would be an unique opportunity to shed a light on their experience. It would be the first time a meeting on the topic of Education and CSA would be organised.

Participants' Profile

This event is thought for active citizens involved in alternative food systems, especially CSA. It will give them concrete

knowledge and skills on how to develop activities with teachers and school administrations.

The primary targets are sustainable local food system stakeholders (farmers, conscious consumers, short supply chains logisticians, network facilitators...) who want to share their experience of developing pedagogical activities on sustainable food systems in the formal education system.

Example 1: a CSA initiative that has been active on this topic, within or outside EAThink, can send somebody experienced in lecturing about CSA in schools.

Example 2: specialists of education to sustainable development doing regular interventions in schools are also very active in a local food co-op. They are linking their interventions to their experience within the co-op. Then, these persons would also bring an excellent contribution.

Participants (10-25) are expected to be experienced in the field and to come ready to present their own work. The working methodology will be as participative as possible, with workshops and demonstrations of specific activities.

Teachers are not the primary target for this activity, as they already had an international seminar organised in Milan in October 2015, and as they will have a second experience-sharing seminar in Vienna next Autumn.

Logistics

There will be 1 day and a half of seminar, and half a day of field visit on a local social integration farm which has been a major project partner. Participants should arrive one day earlier (Sunday 9 July) and leave

Tuesday 11th late afternoon at the earliest. Anyone interested should contact us as soon as possible: jocelyn.parot@urgenci.net



Free Online Soil Courses

By Oliver Moore, CSA Ireland .The GROW Observatory is a citizens' observatory that will empower tens of thousands of growers across Europe with knowledge on sustainable practices and make a vital contribution to global environmental monitoring.

GROW's first free online course will help growers understand their soil and explore global environmental soil issues. **It starts on the 8th May** and runs for 3 weeks. By doing this short, free course, you'll connect with other growers - together you'll get to know your site and soil, and understand them in the wider landscape ecosystem. The course has been co-written by Permaculture Association International Coordinator Dr. Naomi van der Velden. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/grow-from-soil-to-sky>
<http://growobservatory.org/>

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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. www.urgenci.net, @urgenci1 // Maison de la Vie Associative 13400 Aubagne FRANCE // +33 684685282// 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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