

*Towards a Mediterranean network
for Local and Solidarity-based Partnerships for Agroecology!*

**Summary report:
Working sessions during the Learning Journeys, Oct-Nov 2017.**



Background

In 2015, FAO supported Urgenci's work on an initial pilot project aimed at *"supporting the exchange of good practices between already existing alternative food distribution systems and increasing capacity of rural and urban citizens on sustainable food distribution systems in the Mediterranean area"* (Dec 2015-April 2016). Thanks to the Moroccan RIAM (*Réseau des Initiatives Agroécologiques du Maroc*), AMAP (*Association pour le Maintien de l'Agriculture Paysanne*) de Provence (South France) and Terre & Humanisme, we started thinking about a **Mediterranean network for Local and Solidarity Partnerships for Agroecology (LSPA)**. [A first meeting was convened in Marseille](#) in February 2016, with encouraging outcomes (first mapping of LSPA, needs for exchange sharing and pooling of resources in a positive mind-set). The concept of LSPA is broader and more open than CSA, and includes agroecology as a central element.

After significant efforts to get support for follow-up and consolidation ([MedCOP 22 in Tangiers](#), SwitchMed in Barcelona), Urgenci managed to secure funding for **two Learning Journeys in 2017**: in Ankara on October 5-8, hosted by DBB and Tadya collective and to Lebanon on November 21-26, hosted by the Soils Permaculture association Lebanon.

These field visits to pilot sites and discussions among us were aimed at facilitating *"exchange of good practices between small-scale food producers and consumers on already existing alternative food distribution systems"*, in order to design *"capacity development-oriented learning activities"* in 2018.

This work objective, **to create appropriate training modules on LSPA for the Mediterranean countries**, has been tackled during both Learning Journeys, in different ways.

The work focused on adapting and enhancing the “[Be part of CSA](#)” [training booklet](#) (crafted in Europe) and [Trainers’ Guide](#) to Mediterranean countries’ specific needs. This work was twofold: it had first a practical dimension of testing the methodologies presented in the module 4 on “Farm visits” of the “Be Part of CSA! training”; and, second, a world café session was organized during the last afternoon of the Learning journey.

The diagram illustrates the endocrine system with the following components and connections:

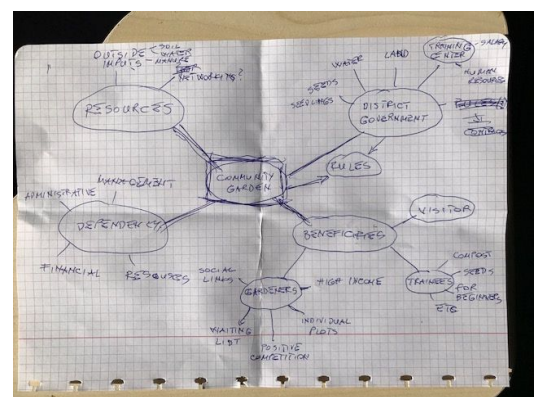
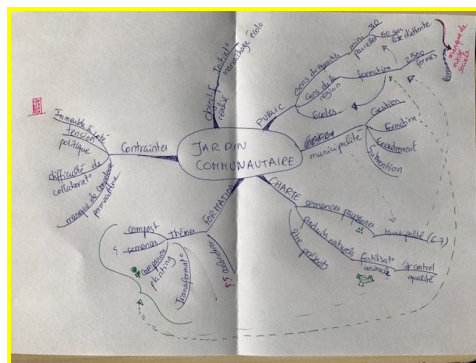
- Hypothalamus:**
 - Releases **Thyrotrophic hormone** to the **Thyroid** gland.
 - Releases **Gonadotrophic hormone** to the **Gonads**.
 - Releases **Adrenocorticotrophic hormone** to the **Adrenal** gland.
 - Releases **Parathyroid hormone** to the **Parathyroid** glands.
 - Releases **Anterior pituitary growth hormone** to the **Anterior pituitary** gland.
- Pituitary Gland:**
 - Releases **Thyroid stimulating hormone** to the **Thyroid** gland.
 - Releases **Parathyroid hormone** to the **Parathyroid** glands.
 - Releases **Anterior pituitary growth hormone** to the **Anterior pituitary** gland.
- Target Organs and Hormones:**
 - Thyroid:** Releases **Thyroxine** and **Triiodothyronine**.
 - Parathyroid:** Releases **Parathyroid hormone**.
 - Adrenal:** Releases **Adrenaline** and **Cortisol**.
 - Gonads:** Release **Sex hormones** (e.g., **Testosterone**, **Oestrogen**).
 - Anterior pituitary:** Releases **Growth hormone**.
- Feedback Loops:**
 - Thyroid:** Thyroxine and Triiodothyronine provide negative feedback to the hypothalamus and pituitary.
 - Parathyroid:** Parathyroid hormone provides negative feedback to the hypothalamus and pituitary.
 - Adrenal:** Adrenaline and Cortisol provide negative feedback to the hypothalamus and pituitary.
 - Gonads:** Sex hormones provide negative feedback to the hypothalamus and pituitary.
 - Anterior pituitary:** Growth hormone provides negative feedback to the hypothalamus.

```

graph TD
    A([Training Center and Implementation Guide]) --> B([Produce])
    A --> C([Trainees])
    B --> D([6 varieties of products])
    D --> E([Harvest])
    D --> F([Marketing])
    C --> G([50 people engaged])
    C --> H([30 part. staff/hrs for training])
    H --> I([Contract base staff division])
    I --> J([permanents])
    I --> K([flexibles with salaries])
  
```

Suggested Points to Fix

- physical: water source further source
- social: community building
counting less income groups
city planning education
- political: pricing, forested position



1.2 World Café

On the last day of the Learning Journey, a whole afternoon of collective work on adapting the training booklet was organized, as a World Café session, on 6 different topics. 4 topics were chosen on **the basis of the four training modules in the Be Part of CSA! Booklet** ("General background of CSA", "Starting a CSA initiative", "CSA community building", "Field training"), and two additional groups were added: "Agroecology and CSA" and "A web application".

- **Table 1: Module 1 - What is CSA ?**

Table 1 focused on adapting an LSPA Matrix to replace the "CSA only" matrix in the booklet, p. 15. Several changes were prepared and handled to the newly created Editing Committee. The most prominent changes were about the spectrum of the matrix: **Small shop; Open Market – Farmers' Market – Farmer on the move ; Community gardens ; Own/Family production ; Box Scheme ; CSA. The proposal was also formulated to add to the matrix the criteria of responsibility towards group, farmer and towards environment.** Additionally, at this table, the **Turkish model was widely discussed.**

- **Table 2: Module 2 - How to Start CSA ?**

The facilitators decided to focus on the questionnaire to approach a potential CSA farmer as it is available in the Be Part of CSA! -training materials.

The result is a list of changes that will be handled to the Editing Committee. A few questions have been added : "Do you use your own seeds?" ; "Are you open to share techniques ?" ; "Are you ready for transparency, to show the cost of your production and your products ?"

- **Table 3: Module 3 - Community building**

This table focused on **reviewing the main aspects of the community building aspect of CSA / LSPA.** The idea was to reorganize the module.

The number 1 topic discussed was the first steps for creating the relationship between producer(s) and consumers (collective discussions, checking the common ground, setting up the rules, building the producer-consumer relationships). **The participants found out that charters** were needed, either at the CSA groups' level, or at national level, or even at the level of the Mediterranean network.

Another topic for discussion was to redefine methodologies for setting up a committee, assigning tasks and coming up with **a list of management tasks to be shared. The group also came up with the scheme of the Management Pyramid** : the challenge is to enlarge the basis to have a strong management committee.

- **Table 4: Module 4 - CSA in Action, Field visits**

The focus was on field trips and exercises, as realized during the learning journey : mindmap, well of ideas, free range visit.

The participants worked on differentiating processes **according to the purpose of the visit:** it is essential to define the purpose of the visit well beforehand. Is it about checking? PGS ? Learning ? Experience sharing ? **Purpose 1 is to learn more about the farm.** The main warning is to avoid interference with the daily routines of the farm during the visits. **Purpose 2 is farm checking.** A checklist for the organizing steps to conduct a farm checking process, including visits, was written. **Purpose 3 is the conflict prevention process.**

The participants also drafted an **organisational checklist** (timing ; frequency ; expectations from visitors and hosts ; pre-meeting with the whole group for ideas and feedbacks; logistics; conflict resolution and facilitation).

- Table 5: Agroecology and CSA

The focus was on how Agroecology and CSA relate, and how to develop an additional module within the training frame, centered on AgroEcology.

1- **“Why AE in CSA ?”** was the first question asked. The answer was that CSA and AgroEcology have a lot in common : Care for Earth – biodiversity ; Holistic approach, Multi-layer ; Human relationship-centered; Low ecological footprint ; Autonomy (from external outputs) ; Efficiency ; Integration of new scientific methods.

2- Another series of key questions was **“What is CSA ?”, “Who defines it”, “who monitors CSA”,** and **“what are the inputs of AgroEcology into CSA ?”** (encouraging experimentation, use of heirloom seeds when available...).

3- The third key question raised at this table was : **“How to integrate AE in CSA through training ?”**. Especially, who would be training, how (informally ? during field trips ? through experience sharing ? approved videos gathered by the network ? farmer field schools... ?), where ? when (4-5 times / year, following the seasons ?) ?

- Table 6: Application

Two options were discussed: merging existing databases, or building a new one, with different criteria. The details were shared with the editing committee.

At the end of the World Café session, a decision was taken **to set up an Editorial Committee** with one representative of each country. In parallel, national consultations should be conducted to help adjusting the training content to organisations' and people's needs.

2/ in Lebanon:

On the first day in Saidoun, participants -after the introduction and first discussions, were introduced with the Training project and asked to give their feedback on what they would consider the first steps.

What training needs would they identify as a priority in their countries?

TO WHOM	
GENERAL PUBLIC (Schoolchildren)	Schools/ Children/youth Agencies/government Universities LSPA initiatives Moderators
FACILITATORS	Community building Network building Conflict resolution/communication
TRAINERS	moderator/facilitator in agroecology LSPA network building
FARMERS / NEW FARMERS PAYSAN FARMAT	Agroecological Training LSPAs
EXPERTS	Start/participate in LSPA CSA PGS Linking to farmers

We decided to think in terms of audience (For whom?) and content (What?).

Each participant wrote his/her main ideas on post-its; we then clustered related topics and organised them in a summary table:

To whom	What
General public - Schools/children/youth - Local governments/ agencies (advocacy) Society as a whole <AWARENESS-RAISING>	- Agroecology, philosophy and methods - Right to food - Health & Nutrition (How: organizing a Collective Mediterranean campaign/ initiative)
Facilitators /trainers/ Multiplicators	- Community-building - Network-building - Conflict resolution and communication
Small-scale Farmers/Peasants New farmers	<div> Agroecological farming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - land design - polyculture - transition - seeds - quality standards - land/soil resources - beekeeping </div> <div> LSPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - start a LSPA - multifarmer cooperation - logistics - access to land </div>
Eaters/LSPA members/ Consumers	Start/ Participate in a LSPA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSA - PGS Linking to farmers

The first item, **awareness raising** in all Mediterranean countries, and definitely constitutes a clear priority. Nevertheless, it seemed to us that it was not exactly the focus of our current “training needs assessment”, and that it would be more fruitful to strictly work on “farmers, consumers and facilitators” training needs.

For public awareness, we considered that organizing a collective Mediterranean campaign on LSPA is important, we should keep it in mind and find the means to move forward on this issue (perhaps finding specific funds, digging deeper into this topic later in Thessaloniki?)



After the many farm visits and fruitful interactions during the Learning Journey, we met on the final day in Beirut's Haven for Artists to continue the working process to reinforce our cooperation in 2018 on capacity-building activities for LSPA.

If our goal is to build the "Mediterranean (modular) LSPA training programme" based on the needs expressed by each country's organisations, what is the best way to collect the needs (as not all countries were represented in Lebanon)?

We decided to build a short survey to be sent to the <MedNet list> to collect priority needs.

The other key idea is to assume that the funds secured for next year (40,000 USD for the development of training modules, as 20,000 USD are already earmarked for the Thessaloniki meeting) are insufficient to imagine large-scale activities yet. Hence our assumption is that to maximise the positive effects, we definitely have to take advantage of potential contributions from the MedNet members and find a way of matching our 2018 training project and our members' ongoing educational activities.



The questionnaire shall therefore also address the contribution side, in terms of training activities and major events organised in 2018 by the MedNet partners.

Together, we started reviewing needs and contributions collectively:

COUNTRY/organisation	Needs	Possible contributions
Jordan, Dona	Resuming training	Trainers Food processing & Pastoralism

Syria, UNPD	Include AE in agricultural training Resume trainings	Collaboration on trainings Mapping
Habitat International Coalition (based in Cairo)		Networking with other stakeholders Resources
Urgenci	Translation to Arabic Work on Policy level in the region	Training material on CSA e-Learning platform/ sharing resources Facilitation, but little LoA : 40 000USD and Mediterranean LSPA Meeting in Thessaloniki, Nov 9-11, 2018
Algeria, TORBA	Training for facilitators in AE	Community-building module training Case study on Torba's activities Translation to Arabic
Palestine, AAA & Sharaka	Material on AE in Arabic Mapping of AE producers	Training on AE and nature conservation How to start a Sharaka Case study (article, video)
Italy, TavoloRES & CSA network in construction	Activation of a national CSA network	CSA training Modules adapted in Italian Case study National event on SSE&CSA next year
Greece, AgroEcoPolis	Networking and community-building AE trainings for farmers and refugees Training for AE advocacy	Hosting Thessaloniki Med./ European and Int'l event (Nov 9-11, 2018) Networking on Solidarity economy and Access to land Natural farming connection Research outputs Participatory video training
Tunisia, ASOC & Terre et Humanisme	Promote national debate/consultations Mapping local actors	Translate material in Arabic Disseminate information (post online/ forward) Help building a tool for information sharing and networking

Terre & Humanisme, France	Better define AE and terms Define specific needs and identify possible activities (so to look for donors)	AE trainers AE training material in French Support to set up AE pilot farms Free participation to already planned trainings in France in the longer term: Training of Trainers for the Mediterranean Handbook on AE in Arabic
Egypt, Nawaya	Mapping actors Reinforcing understanding of CSA/AE AE training, including videos	Contribution to mapping/identification/definition Artisanal food production? Access Agriculture: Fact sheets for farmers templates Video production and dissemination for farmers
Lebanon, Soils Permaculture	Training of the trainers in AE Educational material for schools and children Training to farmers on conversion from conventional to AE	Translation to Arabic Beekeeping trainings Educational material, especially for refugees and at-risk communities Dissemination & Communication : Newsletter Free participation to trainings organised in Lebanon (funded by Mercy Corps, almost 10 in 2018-2019)
Turkey, DBB & Tadya collective	Training and guidance for farmers in AE practices and LSPAs/community organizing Demonstration site (training on set up and management)	Invitation to events/ trainings organised in Turkey (for ex: Dec 9, "Building food communities") Advocacy support (guidelines, strategies) Experience in PGS (participatory guarantee systems)

Most needs that were identified clearly point to:

- 1. Practical AE trainings, especially for trainers (TOT/ training of trainers) – AE training material in Arabic.**
- 2. Agroecology & LSPA: philosophy and principles, educational material to raise awareness among small-scale farmers and consumers on the benefits of LSPA (video?)**
- 3. Modules on what is LSPA? How to start a group.**
- 4. Mapping AE actors (producers, support groups.)**

Conclusion:

When drafting the [2017-2018 MedNet Action Plan](#) proposals, we identified actions to overcome the challenges the fledgling network was facing:

<<- *The most immediate way was to multiply experience-sharing programs, to learn from others' initiatives.*

- *Longer and more permanent mentoring and training activities in agroecology, permaculture, but also CSA group training (Urgenci has now a substantial experience in this field), would be very beneficial. Field actors are even calling for the creation of farm incubators, alongside participatory Open Source learning programs.*

Thanks to their influence, international and regional organizations could play a key role in raising the awareness at the level of local public authorities and convincing them to communicate about the social and economic benefits of food partnerships.>>

- 5 Learning Journeys were initially planned as a first means to reinforce capacity building, focusing on sharing experiences during the course of 2017.

<<*These trips will constitute an excellent opportunity for the foreign participants to get a better insight into CSA as “on the ground” experiences, it is also a nice way for the hosts to make their partnerships live/ grow, to reinforce them. Learning journeys are the best way for us to build trust and interest among people, to enhance the (future) CSA farmers and members capacity and creativity.>>*

We had planned to hold a final meeting by the end of 2017 (possibly in Lebanon!) to report back, aiming at consolidating and structuring training sessions for the next year. Building a collaborative platform to share the outputs of the Learning Journeys and collect existing material from MedNet members were also on the agenda.

In the original Action Plan, our work for 2018 insists on training and mentoring, as well as updating and completing the mapping (Research).

<<- *Organizing 7 trainings sessions – 3 for all, 2 specific on CSA organisation for members/consumers, 2 specific on agroecological farming in partnership with Terre & Humanisme.*

- *Feeding the collaborative platform and consolidating the Mapping of LSPA.*

- *Organizing a second meeting, Official creation of the Mediterranean network: to establish what is common to all the LSPA initiatives, after having explored its diversity.>>*

What we achieved in Turkey and Lebanon is a huge step forward, as we have been successful in both :

- Taking part to “mind-blowing” interactions in countries where our LSPA perspective is differently questioned and implemented. Experience-sharing and field visits are really a fertile soil for the MedNet to flourish: it is a requisite for building trust and common understanding despite our very different experiences.

- Doing serious, participatory work on articulating our future training agenda and existing materials/events. The group dynamics have been really fruitful and have helped us address needs and possibilities in a very positive way. There is a strong will to work together!

We set a provisional timeline:

- Sending the participants and hosting organisations list to the e-list, also the country mapping template to complete and enhance the LSPA Mapping for 2018;
- [Sending the survey](#) by December 15th, 2017; getting answers by January 15th, 2018;
- Editorial Committee to analyse the results and make a proposal for the 2018 “training” MedNet agenda, by the end of January, 2018.

Conducting this exercise in a participatory way will guarantee the inclusiveness and solidity of our training programme and its specific adaptations.

We also have the good fortune to know that this collective effort will provide us with the opportunity to meet again, during training activities/ national consultations throughout the year and finally in Thessaloniki on November 9-11, 2018 during the Urgenci international CSA symposium. Agroecopolis will host the first Mediterranean Local and Solidarity-based Partnerships meeting in 2018, brilliantly concluding our 2017-2018 objectives!

ANNEX 1/ Elements of the Letter of Agreement between Urgenci and FAO
'Developing a modular training programme serving capacity development oriented activities on Local and Solidarity Partnerships between food producers and consumers'

Timeframe : now-Nov 2018

Budget : 60,000 USD (with already 20,000 USD secured for the Thessaloniki meeting – November 9-11, 2018.)

Outcomes/Outputs:

- Modular Training Framework/global educational programme (in Arabic/FR/EN/ES) serving capacity development oriented activities on Local and Solidarity Partnerships between food producers and consumers;
 - Online resource space, collecting support documents of the Training Framework to be downloaded by learners and trainers;
 - Expert Mentor's Network set up for the development, validation and dissemination of the training program on Local and Solidarity Partnerships (LSP);
 - Training Program on LSP widely disseminated for learners and trainers.

Activities:

- Identification of regional focal points of the Trainer's Network – both consumers and producers –to be involved in the development process and testing of the modular training programme on LSP;
- Organization of a needs assessment exercise based on the experiences collected from previous actions, including the learning journeys (1st meeting of the Mediterranean network and the subsequent mapping report, country activities in Turkey and Lebanon) and through the development and dissemination of an online questionnaire.
- Development the first draft of an *educational training program on Local and Solidarity Partnerships (LSP)* between food producers and consumers along with educational materials,
- Organization and facilitation of a consultation process for the validation of the Training Program - through country specific editing workshops (CSEW) in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey, Macedonia, Croatia, France to incorporate feedbacks from the regional focal points;
- Development of an online resource space, where support documents of the Training Framework can be downloaded by learners and trainers;
- Dissemination of the modular training programme on LSP (in Arabic/FR/ES/EN) also through the Mediterranean Network Meeting (foreseen in Greece, Thessaloniki, November 2018);
- Elaboration and dissemination of relevant information among small-scale food producers and consumers in the relevant geographic area;
- Facilitation and logistical arrangements (travel, accommodation, visas and subsistence) for relevant participants of the County Specific Editing Workshops and of the Mediterranean Network Meeting.