



#49 November 2018

Urgenci

The International Network of Community Supported Agriculture  
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## CSA Beyond Borders: A Nutshell Odysseus

***By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary***

The URGENCI International Symposium is back in Europe after 10 years. The last three Symposia successfully took place in Japan, the USA and China. URGENCI, although it looked small and fragile as a nutshell, has proved to be as resilient as Community Supported Agriculture itself. No better place than Greece for returning from our nutshell Odyssey!

We have learnt a lot in the course of these years: CSA has continued to swarm beyond geographical and cultural borders; CSA can help bridging the gap between different segments of our societies that are being affected by globalization in many different ways; we have seen the power of CSA: reconciliation in action and social cohesion, rebuilding the broken link between producers and consumers. Nevertheless, looking beyond our field missions, beyond our multiple projects, beyond our exchanges and our debates, we still need to stress our movement's contributions to society as a whole, not only to some farms and communities. As the Greek root of the word pharmacy (*φάρμακον, pharmakon*) reminds us, medicine, if used in the wrong way, can become a poison. CSA is not and should not be exclusive, but inclusive. It is not and should not be a niche market for highly educated urban people, but a home and a vehicle for solidarity and people's agroecology. For this reason, we have learnt how necessary it is to know how best to use CSA. We need CSA healers and CSA doctors! We need them to be trained and united. We need them to share their knowledge with fellow CSA caretakers. Luckily, this is exactly what is set to happen in Thessaloniki! Let us all meet, and make our collective voices heard.



## **Staff Changes: Good Bye Morgane! Hello, Tim!**

Morgane, URGENCI network facilitator since 2010, left Urgenci a few months ago. Working for an international movement and facing such ambitious objectives in a small structure like as URGENCI is a demanding journey. Sometimes it is hard to stay on course. But Morgane never lost her sense of direction because her moral compass is so strong. It included a sense of sacrifice and a tremendous loyalty to her organization. As a socially minded person with a great sense of the collective, she managed to breathe life into some dormant branches of the network.

She repaired connections, created new links, came up with new project ideas, clearly named problems to be solved and tirelessly pushed for more face-to-face meetings. It would take too long to name all her achievements. So let's be short and sweet: Morgane, thank you! We wish you good luck for your new projects: fair winds and following seas!

A new staff member joined the team at the beginning of July: Timothé Féodoroff joined URGENCI as Project and Communications Facilitator. Many of you have already gotten to know him at least on-line through the huge amount of work he has done to prepare our International Conference in Thessaloniki. Welcome on board, Tim!

## **The Mediterranean Network met in Morocco and Algeria**



Thessaloniki is not only the venue for the International Symposium and the European meeting, but also for the Mediterranean network of Local and Solidarity -based Partnerships for Agroecology (LSPA). URGENCI, supported by the FAO, has been able to organize a permanent working strand, aiming at developing **modular training activities** around the Mediterranean Sea Basin. Two **"common training frame editing workshops"** were scheduled. The first one was held last June in Rabat, Morocco. The second one was held in Algiers, Algeria late October. Participants came from experienced initiatives in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Italy and France. In Rabat, they started by placing themselves in the trainees' seat, as they took part in a training session.

They also had a chance to put the theoretical knowledge they gained into practice, in the course of several farm visits. One key issue in this region is the challenging background, that is due to the low awareness in consumers' groups

regarding agroecology and local food within consumers' groups. The "MedNet" chose not only to adapt the existing training materials, but also to create some additional ones. This includes a specific new module on Agroecology that has been developed, as well as substantial content that has been added on the Participatory Guarantee Systems.

*"The Mediterranean version is designed as a tool to be used, partially or fully, in our countries for training which is already well underway in our case",* explains Ceyhan Temürcü, from DBB, Turkey. *"We really needed such a training programme, especially regarding the economic dimension of setting up and running LSPA: a lot of initiatives are starting and need our immediate support",* stresses Jenny Gkiougki, from AgroEcoPolis Hellas, Greece. *"And of course, the ultimate goal is to share our creations with other regions of the world".* The Mediterranean editing experience should therefore soon be replicated elsewhere.



**By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary**

A lot has been happening lately and more is scheduled to happen in the farmer's corner. Farmers were at the center of the research conducted on the financial sustainability of CSA. 35 of them gave some of their time to do in-depth interviews, whereas others took the online questionnaire (116 questionnaires were completed during the Summer). Their massive participation in the research is a sign that **CSA farmers have identified a need to address our weaknesses and share solutions.** After such a wide mobilisation, the challenge for the SolidBase research team will be to provide farmers and CSA facilitators with some down-to-earth training, as well as with concrete solutions to implement in their own contexts.

Earlier this year, the **first farmer-to-farmer meeting** took place in *Cascina Santa Brera*, Italy. This is part of developing tailored training sessions and documents, including the CSA Farmer's booklet, aimed at providing CSA farmers sustainability. This goes hand in hand with the attempt to create a farmer-to-farmer discussion group within URGENCI (<https://urgenci.net/csact/>).

Thirdly, a new e-learning platform is under construction. We hope to include a specific mentors' directory. The idea is to

create a catalogue of European CSA mentors, with complementary skills. This list will consist of experienced CSA farmers who are recognized for their skills and their ability to share their experience. They should also be available enough to be able to reply to any demand at any time. The e-learning platform, including the mentors'

directory (for European and the Mediterranean area) will be available next Spring.

Finally, the farmers are also the main protagonists in a project on cultivated biodiversity and *in situ* conservation called DYNiversity (<http://dyniversity.eu>). The project is still in its early stage, and the goal is now to collect first-hand knowledge about the CSA movement's contribution to cultivated



biodiversity. In order to do so, a survey has been drafted to map the most relevant and innovative experiences about biodiversity in the CSA. A large-scale mobilization of CSA farmers, in Europe and elsewhere, with practical knowledge in the field, is once more expected: <https://bit.ly/2Ajl3XX>.

These European educational projects are co-funded by the Erasmus+ and the Horizon 2020 programmes.





## Strengthening our Capacity to Advocate for CSA

**By Voices Project Team**

URGENCI's advocacy capacity is central to strengthening the role of the Community supported Agriculture (CSA) movement at local and global level. As a global social movement, **the CSA and their networks work collectively to overcoming global challenges to the food system**. URGENCI has launched a project to build collective advocacy strategy throughout our European member networks. It addresses one of the key objectives that were set by the 6th Urgenci International Conference in Beijing in 2015. The project's kick off meeting was hosted by the *Schola Campesina* in *Biodistretto della Via Amerina e delle Forre*, 50 kilometers from Rome. The first day of the meeting was dedicated to collective knowledge sharing on the role of social movements within the Rome-based UN Agencies. The second day focused on practical testimonies from two experienced leaders of the Food Sovereignty movement. On the 2 last days, **the group of 25 Urgenci members from 9 different European countries** joined the Civil Society Forum in Rome, at the FAO Headquarters building. This is the annual meeting of all groups involved in the CSM policy-building processes. As Sodeh Hamzehlouyan, co-president of the AMAP Ile de France said about this first of four meetings *"this experience will allow us to create more efficient connections between our grassroots advocacy and what Urgenci is doing at international policy level"*.



# 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. [www.urgenci.net](http://www.urgenci.net), @urgenci1 // Canopé, 21, rue Moulin au Roy 14000 CAEN FRANCE // +33 684685282// 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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