



#50 June 2019

Urgenci

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.....
The 1st Generation of
European CSA
Advocates, 1

.....
Latin American
Exchanges, 2

.....
Coming Soon:
URGENCI's E-
Learning Platform, 2

.....
Being a Member of
Peacework Organic
Farm, 3

The 1st Generation of European CSA Advocates

By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary

URGENCI and its national members from 12 European countries held an advocacy capacity building session in Brussels. This training session took place on the 14th, 15th, 16th of May. CSA advocates had an unprecedented opportunity to share experience and to refine their key messages. URGENCI and its members believe it is high time to raise the voices of CSA. *"CSA is a concrete step towards a new social contract between producers and the societies they feed"* explains Mathias von Mirbach, a CSA farmer from Germany. CSA is one of the most effective tools to help sustainable family farmers and conscious consumers regain control of territorial food systems. This model is highly efficient for fighting food waste, preserving cultivated agro-biodiversity and consolidating local economies and employment. The nutrition provided by local agroecologically grown fruit and vegetables is now recognised as essential in fighting Non Communicable Diseases. Direct payments and other measures of direct support should be directed towards CSA producers. It is vital for thousands of farms across Europe to ensure that agroecology and peasants' rights are promoted as the overarching principles of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and are prioritized over corporate profits. *"As part of the Nyeleni Europe Movement for Food Sovereignty, we in URGENCI are convinced that it is equally essential to ensure small-scale agroecological producers are at the core of this radical change towards a Common Food Policy"*, stresses Isabel Alvarez, Vice-President of URGENCI. Now is the time for radical change. A change that is well under way in the CSA movement.



Latin American Exchanges: 'CSA Brasil' on a Visit to Chile

By Ariel Molina, Member of the International Committee

Cláudia Vivacqua, a founding member of the community association CSA Brazil, went on a long visit to Chile between March and April 2019. She carried out many different activities while she was there. Claudia held lectures in Curarrehue for the city civil servants, as well as for the personnel from the Institute for Agricultural Development of the Ministry of Agriculture. She also met with Mapuche farmers and possible *co-agricultores* (co-producers) in the Panki Hot Springs and participated in the ecological fair organized there. Chile has had experiences in CSA and now our dear Cláudia

has taken the embryo of the CSA movement to more Chilean farmers and consumers. She has also shared our experience by acting and disseminating the 'CSA Brasil' network! Long live Chilean Friends, CSA Without Borders!



URGENCI E-Learning Platform Will Soon be Available

By Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary

"Have all the webinars been recorded?", "Where can I listen to the webinar on managing the budget of a CSA farm?", "I have to organize a training session on starting a CSA in my country. Where can I find training materials on your website?", "Do you know if there is a tutorial video about organizing a CSA pick up?"... All the questions will soon be answered by a single reference: URGENCI's e-learning platform.

"Our platform will combine all the functionalities of a resource centre for CSA members, CSA farmers and CSA trainers with new training support materials", explains Zsolia Perenyi, URGENCI's Special Expert on Education and one of the key persons behind the CSAct! platform.

"There was a huge need to reorganize all the existing training materials in a single place", adds Danijel Balaban, the platform designer. *"Now, all the materials are better organized. You can follow the curriculum, or choose to use any of the materials*

independently". Among the new materials that have been added, the users will have access to short tutorial videos, on topics that are specific to the CSA. They will also have access to a new Mentors' Directory, where selected well-experienced CSA practitioners from Europe and the Mediterranean Basin can be identified for further apprenticeship and trainer-learner exchanges. References, links, trainer's guides and training participants' booklets will also be progressively uploaded and stored on the platform.

More info on CSAct: <http://urgenci.net/?s=csact>





Being a Member of Peacework Organic CSA

By Anna Hoyt, former member of Peacework Organic CSA

The first year of my marriage, my husband and I discovered the fun of planting a seed and watching it turn into something miraculously big, beautiful and edible, but then we moved into apartments and couldn't garden. We joined the Wayne County Food Coop instead. The president of our coop board announced one day that he would be welcoming a young woman called Elizabeth Henderson from Massachusetts to his farm. She would be recruiting members for something she called Peacework, a Community Supported Agriculture venture with an intriguing business model. We would give her money at the beginning of the growing season as a bet on how things turned out. If it was a good season, we'd get our money's worth in vegetables. If not? Well, that's how the cookie crumbles with farming.

We joined, and we continued to be members for over twenty years, long after Liz moved her operation further west and accomplished the herculean task of starting all over again on fallow land, and long after she had passed the Peacework Organic CSA baton on to her partners, Amie Chickering and Greg Palmer.

Liz's model for a CSA -- that members are obliged to contribute several four-hour work shifts a season -- sets it aside from most CSAs that call only for a buy-in. Most importantly, this model ensured that we would know our farmers (and *vice versa*), where our food came from, and something of what it cost in terms of labor. It also meant we would

have an up close and personal experience with the greatest of stuff, dirt.

The typical work shift required one to show up on a Sunday morning when the fields were fresh and dewy and the birds in full swing. We'd gather in a circle for introductions, followed by a rundown of the jobs that needed to be accomplished that morning. Those could range -- for example -- from weeding carrots in the field or, for the mobility-challenged, to sorting garlic in the barn. Workers participated from early summer to Thanksgiving which meant learning to appreciate weather in all

its manifestations, from wet and bitterly cold to mercilessly hot. Of course, it was a pittance compared to what the full-time farmers -- Liz and her partners -- experienced. Small-plot vegetable farming without much use of machinery has got to be the most

demanding, back-breaking, knee-destroying work in farming.

The fortunes of our stomachs reflected Peacework's seasons. Some years, we could not eat enough to keep up with our share; in years of drought, we welcomed them in precious small amounts. There were oddities -- garlic scapes for instance -- that came in gushes, setting a few of us wondering what to do with them until Liz was considerate enough to publish a cookbook.

Most of Peacework's members were urbanites who looked on a day spent at Peacework as a family outing. It was a chance to put their hands in the dirt, to show their kids where food comes from, and to spend a morning



amicably working in Liz's vegetable beds side-by-side with the day's crew, and at noon, sharing a potluck lunch. We'd often be eating something we'd picked that morning, peppered perhaps with the watercress that grew in the spring below the barn. I wondered if neighboring farmers weren't amazed at all those people Liz got to work in her fields who *paid* for the privilege. But relying on folks who are clueless about farming was a mixed blessing. There were people whose unwelcome dogs rampaged through the tomato vines. There were more than a few who mistook a vegetable for a weed and pulled all the vegetables, leaving behind a row of weeds. Worst of all were those who walked in the beds, destroying with a few steps the aeration nurtured over many seasons. All of this took considerable patience and tact. Liz could have more easily not done the "community" in CSA and grown for the wholesale market, but she chose instead to foster hundreds of people through the experience of growing their own food. Besides the CSA members, she also supervised a regular rotation of summer



interns. Some were WWoofers, from Worldwide Opportunities for Organic Farming, many of them inexperienced, as was I one harvest season when – needing a break from newspaper writing -- I worked for Liz. My fellow worker was a WWoofers, a painter in the midst of a Master's in Fine Arts program. I'm not sure about the farming, but he painted a terrific mural on the side of a storage shed. Many of Liz's interns were young idealists, seriously interested in farming as a career, and many returned year after year and became a part of the Peacework family.

May Day was a chance to celebrate that family. A scrawny "pole" -- actually a small tree with strips of colored cloth attached -- was erected. There would be musical accompaniment (at the very least a fiddler and accordion player) while we circled the maypole, becoming more and more giggly and entangled, until all the strips were wound. We ended with a hearty hurrah for the fertility that ritual invoked. These memories are part of the fabric of our life as a family, as is the entire CSA experience we had with Liz.

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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, @urgenci1 // Canopé, 21, rue Moulin au Roy 14000 CAEN FRANCE // +33 684685282// Mail : contact@urgenci.net

TEIKEI 提携

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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