

# Report of **COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE** **beyond borders!**

**7<sup>th</sup> International Symposium  
and General Assembly**

**4<sup>th</sup> European Meeting**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Mediterranean Meeting**

**THESSALONIKI, GREECE**

**November 2018**



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# Introduction

Farmers, shepherds, fisherfolk, consumers, network representatives and supporters all converged to the ancient and cosmopolitan city of Thessaloniki, the 2nd largest city of Greece, to attend the “Community Supported Agriculture Beyond Borders” forum. People from Europe were joined by people from the Americas, Africa, Asia and even Oceania as it was not only the 4th European Meeting, but also Urgenci’s 7th International Symposium and 2nd Mediterranean Meeting of Local and Solidarity Partnerships for Agroecology! The location of the meeting was chosen against the background of the economic and social crisis in Greece, which has shaped the country for almost 10 years now. The development of solidary partnerships between producers and eaters was thus brought into the public debate as part of a solution to this crisis.

This major gathering was co-organised by Urgenci, the international network of Community Supported Agriculture and Agroecopolis, the Hellenic Network for Agroecology, Food Sovereignty and Access to Land. Urgenci is a network of many national and regional networks worldwide, and connects between two and three million members. As a social movement, it is part of both the global food sovereignty movement and the solidarity economy movement. This forum was devoted to exchanging on how to put these questions even more clearly on the global agenda across borders.

There was a full day of tours of local projects, two days of workshop on different tracks: CSA, food justice and solidarity economics, practitioners sharing, advocacy, some special tracks for the Mediterranean network members, and one for CSA beginners. There was also an evening of CSA videos, lots of Greek folk dancing and eating, and as a finale, the Urgenci General Assembly. There was even a group action – digging and planting a

small garden at the public school where some of the workshops took place and an artistic project: the shouting butterfly print lab.

Please note that this meeting, involving several layers of action and networking, was supported and made possible by a team of voluntary professional translators, who translated the speeches into up to 6 languages, supported by a team of technicians from the COATI (Colectivo para la autogestión de tecnologías para la interpretación) from Barcelona. The voluntary interpretation co-ordination worked closely with COATI who provided the necessary technology for the interpretation. We would like to thank them as some of them have been involved in Urgenci gatherings for over 10 years!



# Highlights from the opening ceremony

Shi Yan and Jan Valeška presented a tree to the local organisers. Shi Yan is not only a farmer and the manager of the Shared Harvest farm in Beijing but also the new Co-President of Urgenci. As previous Vice President, she had organised the latest International gathering three years ago, a major event that highlighted the Community Supported Agriculture movement in China. Jan Valeška, from the Czech Republic was the coordinator of the organisation of the 3rd European Meeting, held in Ostrava in 2016. Shi Yan and Jan thus gave a tree to the local organisers, as a symbol of the continuity within our movement, in accordance to the theme of this meeting: “CSA beyond borders”.



Elizabeth Henderson, Honorary President of Urgenci: “These are hard time of course, but CSA and the movement for food sovereignty are getting stronger all over the world” “By contrast with all the grim news, or perhaps as a consequence, CSAs and the movement for food sovereignty continue to spread around the world. There is so much exciting activity in Europe, that there is no way to keep up with all the creative projects to spread CSA and help established CSAs to thrive – Be Part of CSA, SolidBase, EATing-Craft.” “As happens so often in human history, the best ideas bubble up from the bottom; the greatest wisdom comes from most afflicted. Here in Greece, you have lost your financial sovereignty. Necessity being the mother of invention, to cope with austerity, you are leading the way to local food sovereignty. It is so exciting to be here and so much to learn from you. Thank you for hosting us, despite all the obstacles!”

**“We might be small, but a mosquito is small and still keeps you awake at night!”**

**(Jenny Giougki during her opening address)**

At regular intervals during the 7th International CSA Symposium, Jocelyn Parot, General Secretary of Urgenci, asked the people assembled together – “Is there hope in Thessaloniki?” And the crowd roared back – “yes!”

There is no fixed way of organizing these partnerships: it is a framework to inspire communities to work together with their local farmers, provide mutual benefits and social cohesion, and reconnect people with one another and to the land where their food is grown.

The emergence of Teikei in Japan, Community Supported Agriculture in the USA and the UK, Association pour le Maintien de l’Agriculture Paysanne in France, Agriculture Soutenue par la Communauté in Canada/Québec, Groupe d’achat solidaire pour une agriculture paysanne in Belgium and of many, many other networks around the world show how consumers and farmers in various places are responding to the same global pressures. This supports the development of organic and agroecologically run family farms and local fair food systems.

Building trust-based direct relationships between producers and consumers has enabled millions of people around the world to have affordable access to fresh, healthy, nutritious food, while ensuring decent livelihoods for producers. CSA also works to foster ecologically sensitive farming and reduce food miles and mitigate climate change.



# THE TRACKS



# Solidarity Economy Track

During the 3 sessions of the solidarity economy track some very interesting projects from Burkina Faso, Turkey, the Philippines and Palestine that bring agroecology to the land and peaceful change to the people, even under conditions of social and economic chaos were presented.

## ***Food Justice, SSE and CSA***

Facilitator and reporter : Elizabeth Henderson and Jason Nardi

Speakers : Stephanie Wild, Thomas Anemos, Maressa Bossano, Javier Rivera

Participants: 55

Topics:

- Sliding scale systems – bidding round, traffic light
- Social shares for low incomes
- Work exchange for shares
- How to make CSA membership easy and pleasant
- For member involvement – make tasks specific
- Epicerie solidaires (solidarity grocery stores)

Keywords to capture the essence of the exchanges:

- Sliding scales
- Ways to include more low-income members

Actions for the future:

- Create a list of things that local, regional and national networks can do to support CSAs with resources
- Create a list of actions that Urgenci can take to support local, regional and national networks

## ***CSA in a context of crisis***

Facilitator and reporter: Elizabeth Henderson and Jason Nardi

Speakers: Mary Ann Nacpil, Ceyhan Temurcu, Saad Dagher, Martine Bonkoumougou

Participants: 50

Topics:

- CSA as way to solve problems of conventional agriculture – younger generation does not want to farm, prices fluctuate wildly, lack of markets for isolated family farms.

Keywords to capture the essence of the exchanges:

- Training for new farmers
- Stable pricing
- Farmer cooperation and networking
- Agroecology – like the spinning wheel in hands of Gandhi

Actions for the future:

- Help understanding how capitalist markets function and alternatives to them
- Change takes place slowly
- Promote next World Social Forum Convergence– Barcelona 2020 – [transformadora.org](http://transformadora.org)

## ***SSE and agroecology as pillars for CSA***

Facilitator and reporter: Elizabeth Henderson and Jason Nardi

Speakers: Ibrahima Coulibaly, Sukya Lee, Shi Yan Sina

Participants: 50

Topics:

- Meaning of peasant agroecology
- Importance of rights and access to land
- Roles of women and youth

- Women as farmers
- PGS as a way to expand content of CSA shares

Keywords to capture the essence of the exchanges:

- Peasant vision for agriculture
- Peasant movement
- Women farmers
- Learning from traditional peasants
- Using apps

Actions for the future:

- Guide to available apps for CSAs – which ones are helpful, which are not worth the money



# Practioners Track

## CSA and the Commons

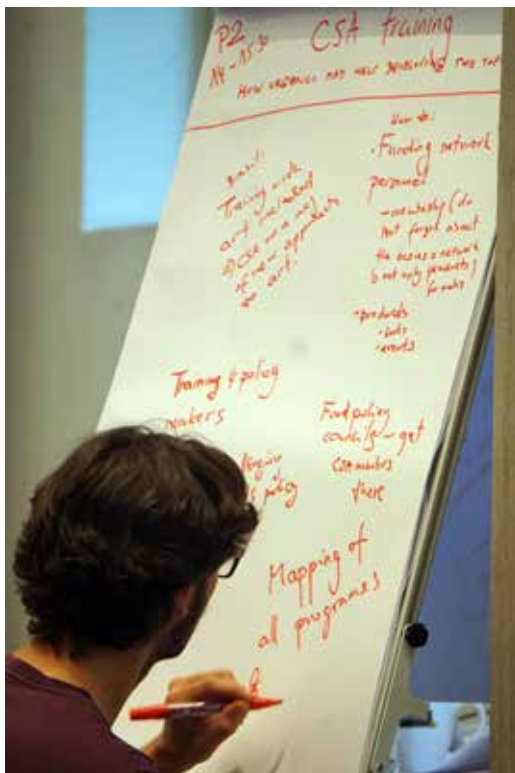
During this plenary on “Access to the Commons” the issues of access to land, cultivated biodiversity and water resource management were considered from the CSA perspective. And it all started by questioning our relationship with the fundamentals: seeds, soil, land and water.

## Training for CSA

Training programmes are widely used for promoting the concept of CSA and for supporting farmers and their groups. In some countries informal education helps beginners to start CSAs; in others, training is dedicated to special issues (e.g. financial sustainability of CSAs, agroecology). After the short presentations, group discussions were organised to identify our training needs in each continent or region.

## Alternative certifications

The first conference on Alternative certification was held in 2004; this led to the definition of the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) concept, and subsequent spread. Where are we 14 years later? Why do we need an alternative form of certification? What are the underlying social and democratic values and their impact in supporting agroecology? How can they help change the food system? This session examined examples from different countries with the help of a specialist from IFOAM, Federica Varini.



# Advocacy Track

The advocacy track got off to a great start, with three full house sessions. Old and new alliances at all levels were discussed. There were many key inputs on outreach and position building, as well as the need for social and cultural diversity and inclusiveness in an intersectional approach. This is how to address building a full territorial food systems approach!

In terms of content, the workshops dealt with the importance of international institutions and processes for the national CSA networks. The development of non-binding guidelines in the UN Committee for Food Security and Nutrition was cited as an example. Policy for Agroecology is currently being negotiated there as an internationally accepted alternative model to industrial agriculture. Through the advocacy and the active cooperation of URGENCI, a reference to solidarity economy has been included in the FAO 10 Elements of Agroecology.

## ***CSA in institutional processes and policies***

The goal of this workshop was to learn about the advocacy work in different international processes, with different institutions at different levels and how and why this work is important for the development of CSA.

- Food sovereignty is not possible without people and grassroots actors (non-State actors)
- What we need to do is to build the alternatives to the industrial food system. The role of consumers is to build alternative and promote change
- Capacity building in URGENCI can help FAO learn how to disseminate our work
- There are new European laws and obligations to care for the Commons: how can we use them?
- Building teams is essential
- URGENCI needs to improve how to share what already exists in terms of policy and to do more active outreach and feedback in national networks on the success stories in Rome
- We need to always keep the human right to food in our focus
- How can we take the Rome-based policy down to national, territorial

- and local levels more effectively?
- How can we make what is invisible more visible?

## ***Nurturing public policies for food sovereignty***

We shared our experiences working in different spaces developing public policies for food sovereignty. We talked about the main tools we have developed for this work and our key challenges.

- Laws alone don't get you anywhere: you need access to markets, work on market regulation and instruments and access and rights to land, seeds and water
- Being in for the 'long haul' and having staying power is crucial to advocacy
- How to preserve and use soil health in public policy and advocacy is an important issue in the Netherlands
- There are 5 critical sovereignties: land, water, seeds, energy and women's rights
- Blue or green growth are not the solution: they perpetuate the neoliberal system
- Alliances inside the institutions and at different levels are key

## ***Building a CSA coalition and alliances***

What does working in a coalition and making alliances mean? This is the key question we discussed in this session. The need for local and international alliances and URGENCI's experience with different organizations was the focus. We shared our map of networks we belong to/work with and where we would like to be in the future.

- It is essential to support our allies in their struggles: there is a need to support the Indigenous Peoples and the Samis in the struggles for land. They can share a lot of important knowledge with us to help us to preserve our Commons
- There is a need to increase our diversity in terms of intersectionality and also place stronger emphasis on women's rights
- It is important to share our research and knowledge
- Food is intersectional
- Need in production to shift from high volume/low value to low volume/

high value model. CSA/CSF helps achieve this

- We should strengthen our links to social inclusion and healthcare (such as through the LGBTQ centre for distribution in NYC), work with food stamps
- Healthy soil, healthy food, healthy people
- Build stronger links with energy co-ops
- Work on the logic of bioregional/biodistrict co-development
- Need to support and facilitate the return to the land.
- Use CSA as a means of decommodification / definancialisation of food

## ***Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)***

How CAP plans policies for European agriculture and what are our main points for advocacy on this point. What have we done? With whom? And how do we need to move forward.



Here are some key ideas from the discussions:

- We need to work in alliances with those already working on the CAP platform led by ECVC and Nyéléni Europe working group on CAP
- We need to have our own specific position in the document used for the Impact meeting. We need to update this with a couple of sentences on the European elections etc
- CSA is a prefiguration of a new social contract that could be possible
- Short supply chains (as in CSA and not supermarket concept) allow the development of food democracy, support a farming model that meets today's social needs and develop agricultural research that is built on our shared values and that supports citizens' commitment and farmers' knowledge
- There is agreement to continue working on the Good Food Good Farming platform and to promote Peasants Rights
- We should work with the CAP platform in different countries, especially France, Spain and Germany



- We should also continue to engage with IPES-Food on the Common Food Policy Plan for Europe
- We can connect with Peasant's Rights and should also make links to Free Trade Agreements in terms of global impacts of CAP
- It is very important to use CAP to lobby those running at local/regional level in all our countries for the European Elections in Spring 2019. This will allow us to relay our positions at local/regional/country level

## ***Food Policy Councils***

Food Policy Councils are a key tool to develop local strategies for alternative food systems. We heard about different experiences in the USA, Europe and Latin America and shared the main challenges faced at this level.

## ***International institutions***

What work have we been doing in international institutions and how can we move it forward in the future?

## ***Access to land***

Access to land is one of our key issues in food sovereignty. We wanted to know and share the situation about this issue in different regions and how we are working on it from an advocacy point of view and to share existing policy documents

- There are increasingly significant price increases that make access difficult
- Land concentration is a big issue: 1% of the farms concentrate 20% of the available farmland and the top 3% of these farms represent 50% of these.
- Leaseholds are increasingly replacing ownership
- The farmer population is ageing
- CSA creates a market for produce
- Alliances, trust and a vision are key

# ***Voices for CSA!***

## Agreed principles for Advocacy Process

- a. Include international participants in our exchanges
- b. “Silence is consent” vs consensus
- c. Specific space for networks to be represented network representatives
- d. Hold calls when there are disagreements
- e. Online decision-making (Solawi procedures can provide inspiration). “Decisions to be taken” within 3 days by emails/ at least 4 expressions of agreement
- f. Urgent cases / emergency decision-making process

Petitions: only if they are sent by an organization or individual that is identified as one of our close allies.

## Expectations/ goals

- a. Link global to local: create a space to talk about the issues
- b. Build a common strategy + methodology
- c. Follow up from Rome regarding the booklet and discussion of workshop in Brussels in May
- d. Strengthen the network and build coalitions.

## Action plan

- a. Share experiences, know how
- b. Include non-European participants in the project ;
- c. Build capacity to transmit and communicate our message collectively
- d. Become more visible, build the ability to feed into policy making processes
- e. How to measure impact
- f. Learn how to communicate with politicians so that they put peasant agriculture on their agenda and to how to get support
- g. Help to build national food policies
- h. Build a team.

## Guidelines on how to advocate for CSA

- a. Each of us should collect 3 key topics/ questions/ doubts from Voices participants and share them afterwards. Ex : “Is it worth doing it ?” International advocacy.
- b. Each of us should pay attention to / and collect successful examples they hear about in Thessaloniki.

## Beginners Track

The aim of this track, organized by Agroecopolis, was to attract Greeks: local people who did not attend the 3-days gathering, but were eager to learn more about CSA and the commotion that had been created around their city during these days!

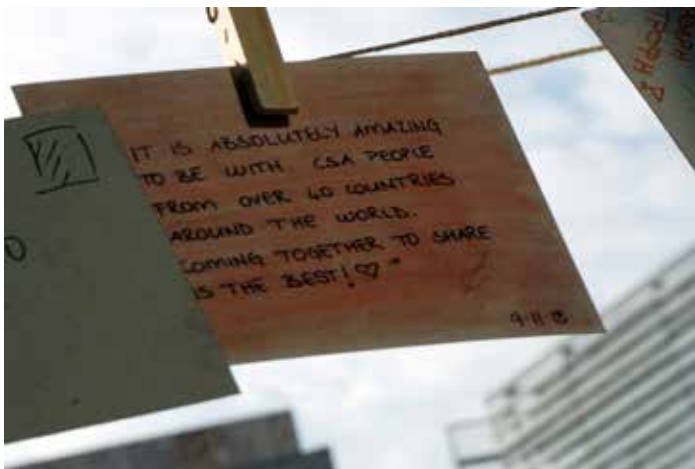
More than 40 people attended - a mix of interested farmers, active consumers, members of cooperatives, CSA coordinators, NGOs, journalists. The added benefit of having international visitors from CSA initiatives around the world (Germany, Korea, Czech Republic, USA, and more) made for a richer context and interactions.

During this workshop we introduced the notion of CSA, its aspects, the values it is based on, and the main steps needed in order to start an initiative.

Foreign participants like Jolke de Moel from Eemstadborderei in the Netherlands, and Francois Handfield from Canada, talked about how they do things back home and in this way it became clear just how big the spectrum of CSA initiatives is: from farmer-led to consumer-instigated and from family-farms to collective land ownership projects. As we say “there is no specific ‘recipe’ for making a CSA, recipes exist only for baklava”.

Greek initiatives like Agronautes (the oldest Greek CSA-like initiative Athens), Perivoli Korinthou (Corinth), Apo Koinou (Crete) shared their experiences with the audience and talked about the problems and challenges they face.

Those of the participants who were already part of such initiatives were highly interested and interactive, plus they were given the chance to meet each



other, exchange experiences and issues of concern. Common challenges that were identified from the farmers standpoint were the involvement and commitment of consumers, while community-building was identified as having enormous significance in the long-term success of a CSA. A lengthy discussion followed at the end of the day on the meaning and ways of networking.

Those not already participating in CSA projects, producers and eaters alike, despite the challenges they heard from experienced CSA members, were undeterred and showed a will to create new initiatives as true to the definition of CSA as possible.

The future of CSA in Greece seems very promising and they are happy to have sowed the seeds for this new multi-coloured (not green) revolution.

This whole track was split into several workshops:

## ***What is CSA***

The aim of this first workshop was to inform the participants about the diversity of Community Supported Agriculture, the 3 pillars of CSA, the different existing models and the different actors involved.

## ***Starting a CSA***

The aim of this second workshop was to get to know how to initiate a Community Supported Agriculture project and to successfully implementing the first steps such as how to recruit farmers and consumers and some elements for seasonal planning.

## ***CSA and peasant agroecology***

Speakers talked about their diverse experiences in setting up and running different CSA models. There was enough time to exchange with participants and to answer questions.

## ***Greek Caucus***

This workshop discussed the specific Greek situation and launching a formal association for CSA farmers in Greece.

# Experience sharing Track

## *CSA and pastoralism*

Facilitator and reporter: Denis Carel and Flore Binggeli

Participants : Denis Carel (France), Flore Binggeli (Switzerland), Alfredo Sendim (Portugal), Zoltan Lengyel (Hungary), Aslak Holmberg (Saamiland, Finland), Cesar Ikoudaya (Togo), Adeline Alagban (Togo), Christos Aggelosgiannas (Greece)

### Situation of pastoralism

All around the planet the pastoralism is declining for various reasons: competition from agro-industry, health and safety rules and regulation (on dairy farms), disappearance of local slaughterhouses, of pastoral areas, competition with the new forms of “rewilding” (predation of wolves,) supported by the movements of the deep ecology, vegan movement, etc...

Superior quality of meat from pastoral farms

It is obvious to all that the quality of the meat of pastorally reared animals is much higher than that of intensively reared animals.

Influence of livestock farming on the ecosystem and the climate and vice versa. Without pastoralism, there is a reappearance of bush in the South and forest in mountain pastures, declining biodiversity, an increased risk of fire and avalanches. Pastoralism keeps landscapes open and allows the maintenance of a cultural landscape. Moreover, pastoralism generates jobs that cannot be relocated.

Pastoralism is a rather “soft” system of management for natural areas. By opening environments and returning organic matter to the soil, it favours biodiversity. It consumes few chemical inputs and fossil-fuels, so it is more environmentally friendly. In addition, because of its low productivity it is less sensitive to climate change. As it is more resilient, it can thus participate to the food sovereignty of the territories.

If agroecology is the science that studies the complexity of interactions between soil, plant, animal and human, then we can say that there is no agroecology without animal production, without pastoralism, without peasant

farming.

## Presentation of the farms

Denis: Organic goat farmer and cheese maker in Provence (southern France). He is now retired, but he continues to help his son who took over the farm. They have a herd of 180 goats of ROVE, a rustic local breed, who graze on 500 ha of communal and state forests, under contracts of prevention against the risks of fire.

Alfredo: works in agroforestry in Portugal, raises his cattle in oak forests, contributes to the maintenance of the forest and the soil, and the cattle also feeds on acorns.

Zoltan: Hungary extensive large areas, he does not have a stable strictly speaking, , and all his animals are raised outdoors.

Aslak: The creation of borders in Saamiland (Lapland) has changed the system of pastoralism with reindeer because herds can no longer carry out transhumance. It is now necessary to feed the animals with dry fodder, so you need hay meadows, and buy machines. Livestock farming is therefore much less ecological. It has brought about a change in lifestyle and culture.

Flore: farm in Switzerland (dairy goats, cheeses) in the plain (alt 750 m) and mountain pastures for a 4-month summer season. The herd is fed by pasture in spring and autumn; in winter by the fodder produced on the farm. In summer grazing totally free in the mountains (alt 1500 - 1900 m). A system that maintains the pre-Alpine landscape, ecological and excellent for the health of livestock (including intestinal parasites).

Christos: Goat farmer and cheese maker in the region of Thessaloniki.

An overview of what is happening among workshop participants regarding the sale of cheese and meat):

We mainly talked about what is done around the marketing of meat.

Alfredo: meat production and marketing in CSA to about 100 families. Pigs, Lamb, Chicken, Beef

Zoltan: meat production and sells it all in CSA on contract with commitment of 6 months. Every 2 weeks: 1 chicken = 1 customer

Once a month pork: 1 pig = 12 customers. Each batch of 7 kg contains about 1kg of fresh meat and otherwise sausages, pâtés, ...

Once a month lamb: 1 lamb = 3 customers rotating between front, back, chops.

Flore: Sells 10-15% of her cheeses in CSA (130g every week/customer). Sells all her meat directly to consumers but without contract, on pre-order, whole or half, customers usually freeze the meat. (50 young goats and 3 pigs/year)

Denis: Sells 50% of his cheese production in AMAP (French CSA), the rest to a wholesaler, shops and on the farm. Because of the lack of slaughterhouse proximity, he does not get any value from the kid meat but in recent years he helped his customers discover the goat meat through his AMAP.

Christos: Tries to convince his customers that eating meat once a week is enough and that meat is also seasonal. Produces traditional Greek cheeses (Feta) with raw milk, although it became illegal under the health regulations of the administration which imposes milk pasteurisation.

Constraints of health rules ( bacteriological requirements) on small farms in CSA (meat).

Hygiene norms are more and more strict and lead to the closing of the nearby slaughterhouses everywhere. Hence the need for significant journeys to go to the nearest slaughterhouse: so many animals are needed to be brought for it to be profitable. In Switzerland, there are still local slaughterhouses (maximum 15 to 20 km from a farm) (but for how long?) so it is easy to bring one or two animals to the slaughterhouse.

Alfredo: Portugal is fighting for the right to slaughter animals on farm. Slaughter is the sacrifice of a life.

Cheese with raw milk. In Greece it is forbidden to make raw milk cheese.

In Portugal and in France the AOCs protect the possibility of using raw milk. In Switzerland there is no ban on the use of raw milk.

Should URGENCI develop the field of livestock farming within the framework of the CSA? The CSA can support the products of breeding (cheeses and meat) by purchase contracts, close relationship between producers and consumers.

CSA offers the best system to explain to the consumer how to raise an animal, how to consume it with respect, and how to consume all parts.

CSA makes it possible to know how many members are necessary to slaughter a beast.

CSA guarantees the sale of a good part of the cheeses, including during the holiday periods when the customers are not always so available.

## Conclusion and actions for the future

We didn't have time to address all aspects of pastoral livestock systems. We were few, but the exchanges were dense. It was the first formally organized meeting about livestock and pastoralism within URGENCI. In General, the CSA model is strongly associated with the vegetable share.

The workshop demonstrated that the CSA system gains to diversify by integrating other agricultural products.

A concrete question came out of the workshop: How to establish a contract for livestock produce? And especially how to address consumers in CSA.

The job of the breeder is to breed animals, take care of them throughout their life, and then sacrifice them to feed people.

Breeders at this workshop want CSA consumers to be well aware when they eat meat that they are involved in a seasonal life and production cycle that ends with the sacrifice of an animal.

The minimum ethical requirement would be to constantly keep this in mind when we eat meat.



## ***Community Supported Fisheries (CSF)***

The purpose of this workshop was to introduce participants to the different types of local and direct “deck to dish” strategies being used by fishing communities in North America and explore different models that could and are being adopted to address challenges in Europe.

North American examples :

- Local Catch was founded in 2011. The challenge was to maintain its values and avoid co-optation. They have a charter of 8 principles.
- Josh Stoll recommended looking at Fishadelphia CSF in the USA: it is a solidarity low income accessible model.

French example : CSF linked to a CSA

- Claudine in the Southern part of France is part of a CSF linked to her AMAP. The eater pays ten shares in advance and they take delivery every 2 weeks. The issue in the Mediterranean is the increasing scarcity of fish stocks. Deliveries are now more flexible, as the fisher didn't always have fish available on the day of delivery.
- Some fishers from the Basque country and Brittany have their own certification systems.
- Another great example is a CSA on an island in France: Amap Île d'Yeu

Greek situation:

- For Greece, CSF would be based on the concepts of accessibility and affordability
- Greenpeace works on Fair Fisheries in Greece.

Global fishers' networks:

- There are two global movements. They both work at global level regarding FAO and so forth:
- WFFP: World Forum of Fisher Peoples
- WFF : World Forum of Fish Harvester and Fish Workers

WFFP & WFF work together on developing fishery guidance policy.

European network:

LIFE: Low Impact Fisheries of Europe is focused on what is happening in Brussels and has a narrow focus. They indirectly said they don't work at international level. Not involved in the process in Rome.

Initiative from the UK. Worked with Greenpeace. Greenpeace has pulled out since then, independent network now. EU.

Issues related to Common Fisheries Policy.

Narrow focus on what LIFE members are doing in national context and no international level.

LIFE working in the Brussels bubble. Not in opposition on key issues.

General ideas:

- There is an overall shift from transactional relationships to relational ones, and “new fishers” are entering the fishing business in North America in a similar way to new farmers.
- There are clearly identified CSFs in many European countries already.
- The common denominator with CSA is agroecology.
- Issue of the middlemen. Fishers continue to sell to middlemen. Fish disappearing from local value chains.
- Josh: there are some very positive examples from the US.
- In some countries: direct marketing. In the UK, fishers who have established direct marketing/ with consumer groups, restaurants.
- Challenge: find more concrete initiatives to rally around.
- Guidelines in other spaces, not only FAO.
- For many members, difficult to engage with work at FAO level.
- Localised value chain.
- Cooperative, structure owned by the cooperative.
- How do we broaden the movement?
- Renewing of energy in Europe.
- How do we think more strategically about proposing alternatives...

Wasquaï: fishermen are in contact with a platform. Fishermen send fish to platform, direct distribution to the consumers.

Indonesia: direct consumption less formal. Java: cooperative, fishers process fish together, sell it together... Less formal.

In this workshop a concrete case of Community Supported Fishing Cooperative in Istanbul, Turkey was also explored. Their members explained how it works and the different challenges they are facing.

## ***CSA and cultivated biodiversity: Dynaversity***

CSA and Cultivating Biodiversity, theory and practice. In theory, Community Supported Agriculture is a perfect framework to support in situ conservation efforts provided by local agroecological farmers. In this workshop we talked about the reality on the field, thanks to a current analysis in progress: the DYNAversity project.

The project, in which the network Solidarity Agriculture Through URGEN-CI is a third partner, investigates to what extent CSAs contribute to the conservation of biodiversity in different countries in order to develop ideas for cooperation on this topic with the help of examples of best “good practices”.

Limited time and the size of the group, however, made an in-depth exchange of experiences rather difficult, so that the planned time was over after short reports on the projects of individual participants. But even if deeper discussions did not take place, getting to know a person’s name and project is a great help for future cooperation.



# Self-organised Track - on specific information technology

## *On-line CSA management tools*

This workshop examined all tools provided by the Free and Libre Software which may be suitable for CSA initiatives, organisations or network management. They then discussed how the CSA movement and the Free and Libre Software movement could benefit from exchange and partnership.

In the first track the results of the research on software suitable for CSA Management carried out within the framework of the URGENCI project SolidBase were presented. Another exciting input from the audience was a short introduction to the fair.coop platform, whose complementary crypto currency is already used by a few CSAs in Greece and Italy.

## *Mapping CSA*

The programme also included a session on mapping CSA initiatives. URGENCI asked Jon Richter to accompany the discussion, which was attended by the two fair.coop representatives. This was thought together with experiences of further mapping processes, e.g. of the Commons, Degrowth and Solidarity economy initiatives, from which recommendations for action were derived.

## *Farm hacks*

To consciously reshape our food systems, we focus on CSA. To gain more control over the tools to be used to achieve this, we need to consider all approaches and all levels of complexity in the technology required. This workshop considered the diverse grassroots' production tools and IT and exchange on how to strengthen them.

A brief overview of the most important organisations in the field of open source agricultural hardware and some of their most exciting developments: L'Atelier Paysan, farmhack.org, e-open source ecology US+GE and, openecolabs were presented in the farmhacks session. Francois Handfield from CAPE in Quebec also talked about the workshops that they run on building machines.

# Mediterranean network needs and perspectives Track

## ***Agroecology in the Mediterranean region***

In this workshop the speakers first presented Med-Net's (Mediterranean Network of Local Solidarity Partnerships for Agroecology) training module on agroecology as part of a Local and Solidarity based Partnerships training programme for the Mediterranean region, and related activities in the network. Participants then shared their relevant experiences and prospects for collaboration on agroecology in the region.

## ***Community building in the Mediterranean region***

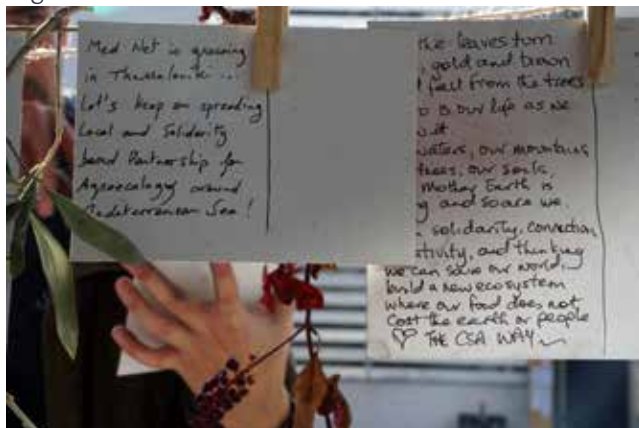
This workshop consisted of two parts. In the first part, Laura Tabet presented Med-Net's (Mediterranean Network of Local Solidarity Partnerships for Agroecology) training module on community building, which is part of an LSPA training programme for the Mediterranean region, and related activities in the network. In the second part, participants shared their relevant experiences and prospects for collaboration on community building in the Mediterranean basin.

## ***PGS in the Med Region. Towards a Mediterranean network***

This workshop started with a brief presentation of the Mediterranean Network of Local Solidarity Partnerships for Agroecology and its projects. Since its creation in 2016 the Network has organised learning journeys and editing sessions for a training programme on LSPA in Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco, and Algeria. In this session the Network was introduced to a larger public and ideas were shared on how it can develop.

- Need to shift back from the industrial model to sustainable food systems and agroecology
- Mediterranean diets are a key to health and the way forward: we can help with our ideas

- The training booklet that is being produced should be widely distributed to help build a new CSA culture and food system.
- The online platform will provide an on-going link
- There is a need for physical meetings to maintain contact and the existing links
- The question of how to share things and raise collective awareness is still very high
- PGS is the relevant answer to organic certification processes
- Where is it possible as a regional network to find funding for exchanges and experience sharing
- We have a shared responsibility to raise funding for the future
- Co-operation is essential in what is an increasingly hard period (climate change, migration, economic difficulties...)
- The Mediterranean countries have a shared culture of solidarity
- Portugal also needs agroecology training. The main difficulty is that people are dispersed over a wide geographical area
- We need to make the platform a living space in 3 languages (EN/FR/AR)
- We still need more train the trainer options to really disseminate properly
- The question is also how to turn the outputs into inputs and add sustainability
- There is maybe a possibility of joining a follow-up to the Madre project: Denis and Judith are following up on this. It would mean that the network would have to make a quantum leap in terms of scaling up, but people are willing to take up the challenge. The project would be based on urban-rural linkages for larger cities on both shores.



# Network building Track

URGENCI, as the international network of Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiatives, is “fostering peer-based solidarity among CSA initiatives to contribute to the food sovereignty movement worldwide”. Being an international network does not imply that there is a given model of CSA or a perfect type of network. Concretely, the members can represent a single individual project (often pioneering this kind of partnership in a given region), a network of CSA projects (whatever number of CSA involved) or an organisation promoting CSA amongst other kinds of alternative models to mainstream agriculture. We could add that some of these networks are totally informal while others have achieved a higher level of structure.

Participants attending the workshops of the network building track were invited to:

- Discuss the charter / declaration / binding document they use or are in the process of producing within their network
- Read the European CSA Declaration, understand the process behind it and take possession of it by bringing it back to their own network for discussion
- Think about their local organisation and how being organised as a network could help individual projects
- Discover and discuss the first results of the Solid Base research project, on financial sustainability of CSA projects
- Get insights from a practical example of a fight for food sovereignty
- Meet other network representatives and connect with them, initiating a dialogue

## ***CSA charters / declaration / binding documents***

URGENCI connects many different networks, many of whom have gone through the process of writing a charter, a definition, a pledge and/or a declaration to give visibility to a common ground within their network.

A first period was allotted to explaining the process behind the writing of the European CSA Declaration, pointing out how discussing and confronting different views on CSA was as important as the result.

Many groups outside Europe already use it as inspiration for their own binding document / charter / declaration.

A second period was allotted to in-pair discussions on the document people use. A quick questionnaire was drafted as a support to the discussions.

## ***Network building and empowering farmers***

URGENCI can be considered as a 2nd level network or, put more simply, as a network of networks. The 1st level networks or groups are very heterogeneous, as there is a great diversity of types and forms of structuring / federating of CSA initiatives in a territory:

- Informal or formalised network
- Inter-CSA dynamics and other older ones



- Structured at different scales (local, regional or national)
- Federating some CSA or several dozens or even hundreds of CSAs
- Essentially based on volunteer work or employing one or several employees
- Supported or associated with other development organisations or having their own mode of functioning
- Developing more or less collective actions according to their collective capacities
- Some local contexts can be enabling or preventing networking
- Any process of progress is rooted in a reality, a context, in response to needs and to specific issues.

We therefore took the opportunity to facilitate the connexions between different network representatives for best practices and experience sharing.

We believe that scaling up to the inter-CSA or network level makes it possible to step back, identify common problems and share experiences, and that the search for solutions fosters the possibility to build further cohesion and coherence.



Five main possible functions for networks were identified:

1. Advocacy: implies representative function of members, spokespersons and influence with public authorities and the general public
2. Personalised support: includes help, support of the field stakeholders who face strong issues or occasional needs
3. Steering of joint projects: involves the development of action programs
4. Engineering: enables the support activity through the collective provision of training programs, resources and materials such as a members' platform.

To initiate the discussions and foster an on-going dialogue we created another short questionnaire.

## ***CSA and financial sustainability***

Peter Volz from the research organisation AGRONAUTEN and Jocelyn Parot from URGENCI presented the results of a Europe-wide survey they had carried out in the context of the SolidBase project together with the partners TVE from Hungary, AMPI from Czech Republic and the German CSA Network SOLAWI.

About 40 participants listened to the statu quo of research on this issue and the findings of a detailed online questionnaire in 9 languages that was completed by about 120 farmers and CSA coordinators. These online results were backed up by live qualitative interviews with about 40 farmers and a consumer survey with 390 participants.

The results show that financial sustainability of CSAs is still an issue for many, but that CSA has also helped to stabilize farms. In order to avoid financial troubles, it proved to be important to establish realistic cost predictions, establish transparent and good communication with the members and use a whole range of tools and approaches that exist already to ensure that the CSA runs without self-exploitation.

This can include aspects such as open source software for management and bookkeeping. More than that, the issue also has a socio-psychological dimension, with the farmer giving his work the right value. The context is also very different within Europe, e.g. in Eastern Europe. After the presentation there was a lively discussion – a clear indicator that the release of the final report and tailor-made trainings for CSAs in 2019 will be eagerly anticipated in the European CSA community and hopefully also beyond.

## ***CSA in the food sovereignty movement***

“We are joining forces to achieve food sovereignty” is a strong sentence opening the European CSA Declaration. But how can we do it, concretely? The Swiss CSA network has been involved in a referendum campaign at the national level to change the Swiss constitution to include an article of law on food sovereignty. From that very practical example, we discussed the different possibilities to put these strong words in practice. Eline Müller, who worked full time for the campaign, explained the Swiss legislative system, how the campaign evolved, the arguments for and against the legislative change and the impact this whole campaign has had on the Swiss food sovereignty movement.

# Social Justice Track

## ***CSA and social inclusion***

Countering critics who say that organic food is just for middle- to upper-classes, organic and agroecological CSA projects are taking the lead in reaching out to the marginalized, and to ethnically and racially diverse communities. In this workshop we'll look at some examples and talk about how to go further in that direction.

Facilitator and reporter: Elizabeth Henderson

Speakers: Maggie Cheney, Drazen Simlesa, Carlo Schiavo, Maresa Bossano, Isa Alvarez

Participants: 25

Topics:

- Creating safe space for LGBTQ people
- Organizing low income farmers
- Solidarity to cover lower income members
- All the ways CSAs do not accommodate low income people

Keywords to capture the essence of the exchanges:

- Fair pricing – fair to farmers and members
- Outreach to social service for low income people as way to reach them for CSAs
- Changing selfish mentality
- 5 a day eating
- Living wages
- Feminist values

Actions for the future:

- Provide definitions of fair prices, living wages
- Guide to including diverse members, lower income families, ethnically, sexually diverse populations

## Community building

Cooperation is a key word for CSA - working together with farmers, organisers and members

Facilitator and reporter: Elizabeth Henderson

Speakers: Maggie Cheney, Joel Orchard, Dee Woods, Joy Daniel

Topics:

- Flexible payments, deliveries, different share content for rural and urban members
- Workplace CSAs, young farmers movement, website to share resources, templates.
- Value of social media. Shares platform. Young farmers as feeder stock for CSA network.
- Food hubs
- Ethnic food production
- Conflict resolution
- Project – ask people to photograph food and explain choices. Ask children to find out what was on the plates of parents, grandparents and to relate content to biodiversity

Keywords to capture the essence of the exchanges:

- Role of Food hubs
- Uses of social media
- Importance of conflict resolution skills

Role for URGENCI:

- Share stories.
- Share good examples, resources, templates
- Coordinate visits, exchanges
- The right to healthy food – how to make this right a reality

Role for regional networks:

- Raise money for share subsidies
- Farmer to farmer training



# Training Track

## *Training CSAct!*

In this workshop experiences were shared and we saw how informal training programmes helped to form CSAs and CSA networks in different countries and the main results, including as part of CSAct!, an educational project involving 6 European organisations. Then we looked to the future and considered how we should continue to work with CSA-focused training programmes.

## *Solid Base training*

In this workshop an overview was given on Solid Base, a European training project on Financial Sustainability Education for Solidarity-Based Food Systems. Then four working group debated on the 4 modules of the project, namely management, financial planning, digital tools and participatory inclusion techniques.



Solid Base is an educational program which provides practical entrepreneurial knowledge for both farmers and eaters. Peter Volz from the research organisation AGRONAUTEN and Jocelyn Parot from URGENCI presented the results of a Europe-wide survey they carried out in the context of the SolidBase project together with the partners TVE from Hungary, AMPI from Czech Republic and the German CSA Network SOLAWI.

About 40 participants listened to the status quo of research on this issue and the findings of a detailed online questionnaire in 9 languages that was completed by about 120 farmers and CSA coordinators. These online results were backed up by live qualitative interviews with about 40 farmers and a consumer survey with 390 participants.

The results show that financial sustainability of CSAs is still an issue for many, but that CSA has also helped to stabilize farms. In order to avoid financial difficulties, it appeared to be important to establish realistic cost predictions, establish transparent and good communication with the members, and use a whole range of tools and approaches that already exist to ensure that the CSA runs without self-exploitation of the producer.

This includes such things as open source software for management and book-keeping. What is more important is that the issue also has a socio-psychological dimension, whereby the farmer attributes the right value to his or her work. The context is also very different within Europe, e.g. in Eastern Europe. After the presentation there was a lively discussion – a clear indicator that the release of the final report and tailor-made trainings for CSAs in 2019 will be eagerly awaited by the European CSA community and hopefully also beyond.

## ***Farmer to Farmer***

The Farmer-to-Farmer workshop is a longstanding tradition in the history of URGENCI International Symposiums and European Meetings. It has always been a widely appreciated place to share farmers' perspectives on the movement. However, this time the workshop provided more than the "on the spot experience sharing". A CSA Farmer's booklet is currently being developed, and this workshop was an opportunity to collect further contributions and comments to improve the current draft.



# THE ACTIONS FROM URGENCI SYMPOSIUM

The third day's work was dedicated to URGENCI's General Assembly. During that event the actions to be taken after the Symposium were listed:

- Social Justice track participants would like URGENCI to share stories on the website, through social media, about groups who have practices in social justice and also to provide guidelines (to help people start their initiative)
- Advocacy: make all the work we do in advocacy more visible. Create a strategy and a team to work on advocacy
- The advocacy part of the website should be enriched with diagrams about institutions
- Beginners: share all the resources mentioned in the track (contracts...) to help set up a CSA. Need to understand consumers and engage them better.
- Necessity to build a network in Greece
- Networks: a short questionnaire for the members of URGENCI to have a better idea who is part of URGENCI. And make the link between networks and the advocacy group
- Mediterranean: awareness raising regarding consumers
- Cover uncovered geographical areas, reach out to isolated initiatives
- Create a database of existing charters/ binding documents
- Include Community Supported Fisheries
- Promote the responsible consumption of meat within the CSA movement
- Promote extended proximity with peasant associations, for products that cannot be produced locally
- We must increase cross sectorial alliances, not only with those working on food, but also with feminist movements, social, solidarity economy
- Continue the Mediterranean network, actions around the Mediterranean Basin, including fisheries
- Commons and CSA : raise awareness on the goal of CSA to maintain the Commons
- Support agroecology in Africa as an answer to the issue of migrations
- On the URGENCI website, create an action list for volunteers to know what to commit to
- CSA in the MedNet: support agroecology development to build social cohesion around CSA
- Help returning refugees to start CSA and practice agroecology

- Reinforce solidarity among CSA farmers, to make sure CSA develops in a non-competitive way

The rich contents and enthusiasm as well as open-mindedness and respect were all reflected in the General Assembly, where a new three-year plan was drawn up. This is also a reflection of the coming of age of URGENCI as a globally recognised social movement and of the increasingly democratic and participatory governance.

The General Assembly also considered how to ensure financial stability through a new membership fee structure that will allow the network to withstand the pressures of potential project shortfalls and financial crises that could result from the current project-based model, and build a new approach was adopted to progressively build collective resilience.



The freshly elected International Committee is a good reflection of URGENCI's will to continue to grow as an even more inclusive and collective effort. It is a younger and more diverse team than ever before, while still reflecting the producer-consumer as well as gender balance that are also part of URGENCI's core values. It includes Judith Hitchman (Ireland), and Shi Yan (China) as co-presidents, Isa Alvarez (Spain) as vice-president, and Denis Carel (France), Ariel Molina (Brazil), Qiana Mickie (US), Veikko Heinz (Germany), Simon Todzro (Togo), and Shimpei Murakami (Japan). Zsafia Perenyi (Hungary) was re-elected as Special Expert on Education and Training. The spontaneous creation of a new Special Representative for Community Supported Fisheries is the mirror of the strong enthusiasm and determination to build a sister network under the URGENCI banner on this theme. Community Supported Fisheries are already well developed in North America and are increasingly recognised in Europe! Elizabeth Henderson (US) will also continue as URGENCI's Honorary President.

The new work plan includes specific focus on each continent, with key topics that will develop into new project proposals and actions in the course of the next three years.

## Work plan for Africa

- Continue the mapping of CSA initiatives in West Africa: Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Niger, etc
- Work on PGS in the different countries
- Training, accompanying the transition to agroecology
- Setting up CSA in countries that don't have any
- Experience sharing with other African countries and elsewhere

## Work plan for North America

- 2019: North American meeting with the CSF meeting planned
- Spread the word about URGENCI
- CSAs to communicate Solidarity and unity
- Platform of what we really want to see happen in terms of policy
- Farmers' unions.

- Build solidarity between farms and fisheries
- Evolution is due to cooperation more than competition

## Work plan for Europe

- Based on Action Plan from Beijing
- Food Policy across Europe – CAP – keep up the work on these models and projects. Including Fisheries in the conversation of the group
- Mapping/submit project on CSF
- Communications: website, improve communications among members/coordinators. Mentorship across projects
- Experience sharing on consumer-led CSAs
- Improve Access to CSA for all incomes/socially excluded peoples. Include support/cross pollination across the rest of the world. New IC members: Veikko, Judith, Isa
- Latin America
- Expand the group towards the Caribbean!
- Strengthen work on education, workshops in our countries. 1 workshop per year about CSA.
- Implement research and articles on how to share information and CSA amongst ourselves to inform others. Disseminate and give place to new and pioneering CSA projects. Disseminate the E-book in Spanish
- (Sharing the Harvest).
- Hold first national gathering in Brazil, in Mexico, and Caribbean; and in 2020 first gathering of Latin American CSAs.

## Work plan for Asia-Pacific

- The context around funding is a bit different for countries in Asia-Pacific.
- Working on mapping – creating a working group to contextualize what CSAs are in the Asia-Pacific context and including cultural sensitivities in the context. Ensure the resources can be translated into the
- languages that are used in these countries.
- Aim to hold an Asia-Urgenci Conference every three years; the goal is to

have this in the next 1.5 years, before the next General Assembly. This will help with fundraising and regional projects. Conferences help build common ground about the current situations across countries in APC. Better understand what Urgenci can bring to the table to support work in APC.

## Work plan for the Mediterranean region

- We took ideas to generate a list of ideas for our region. Each member voted on top choices.
- Database and inventory
- Community Supported Fisheries
- Documents and translation of documents.
- Local fundraising and joint projects
- Nutrition in the Mediterranean diet
- Visibility, and visuals in the media
- Sharing local experiences, face to face meetings
- Training – how to implement: content, platforms
- Clarify our goals
- Identify needs and actors within the network
- PGS, Training pool, lobbying, awareness building.
- Top Actions:
- Caravan Project – Mediterranean cross-border caravan to learn from people in villages, seeds. Training – Implementation of trainings
- Sharing Local Experiences
- Fundraising for joint projects
- Raising Awareness of Consumers
- Overall – we need more coordination and connection among the groups and Urgenci.

## Local solidarity-economy projects visits

Those who arrived early were treated a tour of solidarity economy initiatives in and around the city. There were trips to a gold mine that threatens to contaminate a village and nearby farms, a refugee centre, a cheese maker and his farm, and examples of urban resilience around the city.

The magnificent ancient region of Chalkidiki, birthplace of Aristotle, is under threat, as a major project of a gold mine would destroy the environment and livelihood of many farmers and local inhabitants.

The Vio.me factory has been abandoned by its owners in 2011. Instead of leaving, the workers took it over and have been fighting in the courts ever since to gain legal ownership, claiming that the former owners owe them millions in unpaid wages. They changed the factory's line of products from toxic glues to eco-soaps and cleansers which they sell through independent markets like the food coop we visited next. The worker owners of the factory source most ingredients locally. The factory also houses a free clinic that provides holistic health services.

The food cooperative Bios-coop is the only one in this city. After four years of operation, it is finally in the black and that financial achievement has only been possible because of twenty people working many volunteer hours.

Christos, a local farmer, produces raw milk feta cheese and lamb. The issues of traditional small farmers were highlighted: producing high-quality feta cheese is associated with several hurdles for the shepherd, such as the land use rights, the fact that traditional processing of raw milk is now considered illegal and the eternal problem of a high workload and low monthly income.

The local organisation Omnes is a social inclusion project for refugees and local people, working on the development and strengthening of structurally weak rural regions. They are doing amazing work in very difficult circumstances, trying to build solidarity economy collective solutions that will genuinely bring new and alternative economic life to the Kilikis city and region. The integration of refugees into regional agriculture is one of its priorities.

One idea tries to integrate the local cotton farmers into a regional value chain and to revive the still existing production facilities for further processing. The founders of the refuge centre were themselves former refugees and their goal is to resettle refugee families in agroecological villages. However, few want to stay and farm. Most refugees have set their sights on European cities. For the time being, the project has been able to provide homes for some families, a major improvement over tents. For sale at the conference were bags and pouches made by refugees from their life jackets at the Lesbos Solidarity Project.

Perka Gardens: at the height of the economic crisis, 130 families took over an abandoned military base to grow their own food. Like the other alternative projects, the legal ownership of the land is still unresolved. The tour guide spoke with conviction about the participatory governance of the gardens and the democratically established principles that ban chemical pesticides and sales and require traditional seeds. The members who have 50 square meters each include Greek families, refugees and unaccompanied youth. Some of the plots are beautifully and skilfully planted. Others have been taken over by weeds, as long-term commitment is hard to achieve in trouble times.

## Shouting butterfly print lab

The Shouting Butterflies Print Lab was an organic, inclusive, poetic print lab, created for this year URGENCI's 4th European CSA Meeting as a place to huddle up and to share thoughts about inspiring farming projects, local initiatives, and "wild ideas" worth spreading.

We created hand-made postcards and shared several transfer & printing techniques by using local plants as a source material. We invited people to send their messages to neighbours and decision makers by launching a massive posting action at the end of the URGENCI gathering.

The event is organized by URGENCI together with Agroecopolis, with the financial support of the European Union and the Foundation Mayer.



