



HOW SOCIAL ENTERPRISES CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

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INTRODUCTION

A convergence of factors makes the food system one of the most important global issues. Food represents our cultural identity. Food is what tries to remind us every day that we are part of Nature. The dominant trend is an increasing separation between the land and the food products, as well as the extension of the food chain: the increasing distance between places of production and places of its consumption breaks the links with nature and culture.

Approximately 795 million people across the world suffer from chronic undernourishment, while two billion are overweight or obese. One in three people suffers at least from malnutrition. No country is immune. World demand for food will increase substantially in coming decades, owing to demographic growth: the world's population is expected to increase from 7.1 billion in 2013 to 9.6 billion by 2050. Meanwhile we face a constant decrease in agricultural soil area. Food production causes significant pressures on the environment. According to the FAO (2014), agriculture uses 70% of global freshwater and the food sector accounts for around 30% of world energy consumption. It is essential to reconsider our food system from the perspective sustainability.

According to a public consultation held last year by the European Commission, new and different strategies for actions from farm to fork are necessary. The Europe 2020 strategy highlights that a resource-efficient Europe needs to “find new ways to reduce inputs, minimise waste, improve management of resource stocks, change consumption patterns, optimise production processes, management and business methods, and improve logistics.”

Social enterprises are able to develop innovative solutions that increase productivity while delivering better services in social, health, and education services. The social economy is an important economic sector in Europe, and provides a significant number of jobs. Its contribution to economic development and well-being has been confirmed by the recent economic crisis, which has highlighted the resilience of the social economy and social enterprises as well as their capacity to generate new employment and preserve existing jobs.

What does it mean for a social enterprise to take food into account? Social enterprise experiences in the sustainable food chain are spreading in various regions of Europe and include a wide range of initiatives. These experiences show that social enterprises are engaged in a search for new ways of interacting in the production and consumption of food, while showing an active and participatory commitment to their

communities.

We have investigated social enterprises that are part of sustainable food systems across Europe. Our study begins with an overview of food systems, and a brief discussion of the concept of sustainable food systems. The second part deals with the social economy and social enterprises as models for the development of sustainable food systems, and presents some alternative patterns for food systems developed by social economy enterprises, such as social farming and community food. The third part of the study focuses on the role of the social entrepreneur and presents some good practices of social enterprises involved in creating sustainable food systems. This research has enabled us to elaborate some observations on the role of social economy organisations in the implementation of actions toward sustainable food systems.

METHODOLOGY

Literature Review: Synthesis and analysis of existing data through desk research into three different sections: the first dedicated to the social economy, social enterprises and social entrepreneurship and sustainable development; the second to the food system and sustainable development; and the third to the social economy and sustainable food systems. At the same time several European projects related to at least one of the themes of this research were analysed.

Interviews with experts: The experts were identified mainly through the network of DIESIS, one of the widest at EU level, bringing together national networks and support structures of social economy enterprises, incubators etc. The experts have a policy background in social economy and specific knowledge in promoting sustainable food and social enterprises. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by telephone, e-mail or physical meeting. We asked them to identify good practices of social enterprises involved in sustainable food system in their country.

Collection of data on good practices, analysis and conclusion: So far we have collected more than 50 examples of social enterprises involved in supporting the transition towards sustainable food systems in Europe. The examples come from the literature, suggestions from the main national federations and European networks (many of which are part of the DIESIS network), European mappings and surveys on social enterprises and direct interviews with experts and practitioners. From these we selected 20 cases to be analysed through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. A presentation of each social enterprise involved in the research is available.

THE FOOD CHALLENGE

Food is essential to life. It needs to be of good quality, varied, accessible, safe for consumption and affordable. But there is something wrong with the global food system. You only need to look at the numbers to understand that.

The world's food system produces 4 billion tons of food every year, over 90% of which comes from land, and the rest from inland and marine waters. One third of the food produced – approximately 1.3 billion tons a year – gets lost or wasted. Global food losses and waste per year are 30% for cereals, 40-50% for root crops, fruit and vegetables, 20% for oil seeds, meat and dairy and 35% for fish. The food currently wasted in Europe could feed 200 million people¹. Based on this estimate of European food waste levels, the sectors contributing the most to food waste are households with 53% (47 million tons \pm 4 million tons) followed by the processing sector with 19% (17 million tons \pm 13 million tons)². The food wasted generates 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. This amount of wasted food has a significant impact on the environment, since the loss of land, water and biodiversity, as well as the negative impact on climate change, represents huge costs to society that are yet to be quantified. The direct economic cost of wastage of agricultural food products (excluding fish and seafood), based on producer prices only, is about USD 750 billion a year, equivalent to the GDP of Switzerland³. The reduction of food losses and waste will contribute to solving the paradoxes of food. It is a global challenge which requires actions from local to global level.

Approximately 795 million people, or one in nine of the global population, suffer from chronic undernourishment, while two billion are overweight or obese. One in three people suffers at least from malnutrition. No country is immune. World demand for food will increase substantially in coming decades, owing to demographic growth: the world's population is expected to increase from 7.1 billion in 2013 to 9.6 billion by 2050. At the same time we need to face the constant decrease of agricultural soil area. The FAO estimates that a 60% increase in global agricultural land will be needed to meet growing protein demand. In fact, it is estimated that global meat consumption will increase by 82% by 2050, with beef specifically increasing by 95%.

Tilman and Clark (2014) estimate that in many countries per capita caloric consumption is, on average, about 500 kcal per day, or 20% greater than is needed nutritionally, thereby explaining much of the global obesity epidemic (Swinburn et al. 2009). By 2050 these dietary trends, if unchecked, would be a major contributor to an estimated 80% increase in global agricultural greenhouse gas emissions.

The share of people consuming more than 3,000 kcal per day may reach 52% in 2050 compared to the

1 FAO, Food wastage footprint and climate change, 2015

2 Fusion EU Project. Estimates of European food waste levels final report, 2016

3 FAO, Food wastage footprint: Impacts on natural resources – Summary report, 2013

present 28%⁴. We know that our current food production and consumption habits are unsustainable in the long term not only for the planet but also for our health. In 2009 our protein consumption exceeded dietary requirements in all the world's regions – it is one-third higher than the average daily adult requirement. For example, the average European man eats nearly 90 grams of protein per day, almost double the amount of protein he needs (56 g)⁵. The over-consumption of animal-based products and ultra-processing of food with “empty calories” as well as physical inactivity put our health at risk and contribute to an insurgence of metabolic syndrome and obesity-related diseases. It is greatly increasing the incidence of type II diabetes, coronary heart disease and other chronic non-communicable diseases that lower global life expectancies. In the working population this leads to substantial productivity losses through absenteeism, job loss and premature retirement as well as an increase in public health expenditure.

Food safety issues continue to be of concern on the global level, with an estimated 600 million people – almost one in 12 of the world's population – falling ill after eating contaminated food, and with 420,000 food safety related deaths every year⁶.

Food production causes significant pressures on the environment, given that the food system uses many natural resources, such as land, soil and phosphorus. For example, it is responsible for about 50% of all eutrophication and contributes to the spread of environmental toxins, including pesticides. In addition, it is one of the most water-demanding sectors. According to the FAO (2014), agriculture uses 70% of global freshwater. The food sector accounts for around 30% of the world's energy consumption and around 22% of greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture contributes to climate change and is affected by climate change.

Based on current global trends, researchers predict that every species of wild-caught seafood – from tuna to sardines – will collapse by the year 2050, where collapse is defined as a 90% depletion of the species' baseline abundance.

The combination of food and economic crises has buffeted our food system, concerning both consumers and food producers. In recent decades, we have seen increasing prices of agricultural products and price volatility that has not resulted in higher income for food producers – on the contrary, it has undermined their income stability.

The recent recession in Europe led to unemployment and debt, and has eroded consumers' purchasing power, all of which could make food less affordable for households. In 2013–14, the UK's Trussell Trust, a national network of food banks, provided emergency food aid to more than 900,000 adults and children, an increase of 163% over the previous year's total. Greek, Spanish, and French charities have also reported marked rises in the number of people seeking emergency food support (Loopstra, 2015).

⁴ EU agricultural markets briefs, World food consumption patterns – trends and drivers, no. 6, June 2015

⁵ World Research Institute, 2016, Shifting a diet for sustainable food future - http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/Shifting_Diets_for_a_Sustainable_Food_Future.pdf

⁶ World Health Organisation, 2015. WHO estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases: foodborne disease burden epidemiology reference group 2007-2015.

The USDA defines food insecurity as a state in which “consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year.” Rising food insecurity is an urgent health and social problem. Is there enough to secure adequate access to food for all?

Food is far more than just something that keeps us alive. It is also a profoundly social urge. People eat together; mealtimes are events when the whole family or settlement or village comes together. Food is an occasion for sharing, for distributing and giving. It is the expression of altruism and has historical and cultural value for developing community, helping integration and the process of socialisation. Fundamental changes in the way food is produced, processed, distributed and consumed are essential for achieving sustainable development.

BOX 1: Sustainable Development

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. (Brundtland Commission, 1987)

The aim of sustainable development is the long-term stability of the economy and environment, something that is possible through the integration of the economic, environmental, and social dimensions throughout the decision-making process. During its summit in September 2015, the United Nations adopted the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which marks a historic shift towards a new paradigm by addressing economic, social and environmental disparities in a universal and integrated way. From the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2015⁷, which have partially been achieved, have emerged more ambitious points for socio-economic development: the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁸ with 169 targets, which are expected to guide the actions of governments, international agencies, civil society and other institutions over the next 15 years. This agenda is an action plan for people, planet and prosperity and reflects the fact that change is necessary to deal with the negative trends affecting economic, social and ecological perspectives. If we analyse the goals we can notice that the food and agriculture challenges are the key features in achieving the SDGs. This is evident throughout the SDGs, from the nutrition and health challenge (SDGs 2, 3, 6) and ensuring food in a changing climate while protecting biodiversity (SDGs 11, 13, 14) through creating an environmentally sustainable food system, food waste, circularity and resource efficiency (SDGs 7, 12) to empowering and engaging communities and civil society to make the food system sustainable, resilient, responsible, diverse, competitive and inclusive (SDGs 1, 8, 9, 11).

⁷ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were 8 goals established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, to be achieved by 2015.

⁸ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

The concept of a food system can be defined as a sequence of activities that includes the production, processing, distribution, marketing, preparation, consumption and disposal of food. Food production involves such factors as soil management, crop breeding and selection, livestock breeding and management, as well as harvesting. Food processing and distribution involve a series of post-harvest activities including processing, transport, storage, packaging and retail. Food consumption includes activities such as the preparation, processing and cooking of food both in the home and in the community, as well as household decision-making regarding food, cultural and individual food choices and access to proper knowledge of nutrition and food safety. Moreover, we need to consider the management of food losses and waste that are present at all stages of the chain from production to consumption. Thus, when we talk about the food system, we are referring at all activities, actors and interactions that embrace all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure, institutions, markets and trade) related to the food chain and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.

Food systems are multiple and complex systems that require a holistic approach. They have many entry points and require better connections to be made between different sectors and stakeholders in order to bring about a transition towards more sustainable food production and consumption.

Figure 1: The Food System



Source: Combs et al., 1996

As previously mentioned, our food systems are characterised by contradictions and imbalances that clearly

make them unsustainable. In the near future there will be an incredible challenge to deal with: feeding more than 9 billion people while becoming more environmental friendly.

As IPES-Food suggests, sustainability must serve as the benchmark for food systems reform, and to reflect the nature of food systems, it must be defined at the appropriate scales and dimensions. It is necessary to take a multilevel approach from the global to the regional scale of the food chain, as well as a multidimensional approach of economic, social and environmental sustainability as the Brundtland report recommends. As input to the European Commission High Level Conference Food 2030 said, our future food system should be more “sustainable, resilient, responsible, diverse and inclusive”.

According to the FAO, “A Sustainable Food System is a food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised”. Sustainability means ensuring human rights and well-being without depleting or diminishing the capacity of the earth’s ecosystems to support life, or at the expense of others’ well-being. The FAO’s vision for sustainable food and agriculture is that of “a world in which food is nutritious and accessible for everyone and natural resources are managed in a way that maintains ecosystem functions to support current as well as future human needs. In this vision, farmers, pastoralists, fisher-folk, foresters and other rural dwellers have the opportunity to actively participate in, and benefit from, economic development, have decent employment conditions and work in a fair price environment. Rural women, men and communities live in security, and have control over their livelihoods and equitable access to resources which they use in an efficient way” (FAO, 2014).

Figure 2: Sustainable Food System



The transition towards more sustainable food requires better management of natural resources and climate-friendly approaches by all actors in the food chain. It should be more resilient to change, including climate change as well as rising energy prices. A sustainable food system aims to operate within the biological limits of natural resources, especially soil, water and biodiversity, with the aim of achieving high standard of animal welfare. The sustainable management of resources also requires increased efforts to reuse and recycle, and to reduce food loss and food waste. The circular economy, where the value of products is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, makes this possible.

In 1986, Gussow and Clancy argued that promoting food sustainability and ecological harmony were essential to promoting a healthy diet for the individual, and introduced the concept of a sustainable diet. Over the years this concept has evolved and, as the FAO agrees, sustainable diets means “those diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable, nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy, while optimising natural and human resources”.

Thus, to be more sustainable we need our food to be more affordable, accessible, healthy, nutritious and safe for all of us, in order to reduce food insecurity among the population. People should be able to choose healthy and safe food, and they should be aware of the benefits and detriments of their food behaviour.

We have witnessed an increasing separation between the production and consumption of food through the extension of food supply chains. This tendency has entailed a reduction of autonomy for farmers. These workers are often poorly paid, are forced to put up with difficult working and living conditions and do not benefit from the same employment standards as those in other industries, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. A sustainable food value chain is committed to creating decent and equitable employment condition for all employees in the food chain. Sustainable food systems should be equal: decent livelihoods for farmers, decent wages for workers and affordable prices for consumers.

On the other hand this process has made people into unsuspecting consumers. The lack of real information about what we eat has confused consumers: healthy, organic, vegan, good, tasty, traditional, OGM, DOP, DOC, IGP, family pack, “empty calories”, fortified food, and so on. All these inputs, without proper information, have led to the emergence of food polytheism. The recent crisis has only strengthened this dynamic of social behaviour, where a lack of awareness and relationship with food, as well as economic resources, define what is served on our plates.

Alternative food supply chains are emerging with the aim of reconnecting producers and consumers and relocalising agricultural and food production. These include community food enterprises, short supply chains, alternative food networks, local farming and direct sales.

Public policies are fundamental to supporting sustainable solutions in all stages of the food chain. Promoting and developing sustainable actions require people to change their behaviour and habits. Awareness,

education and social engagement are the keys to developing participation and responsible behaviour among the community. Based on the principles of participation, empowerment and individual and collective responsibility, all of us are involved in fixing our food system. A sustainable food system integrates several components in order to create value in the ecological, social, nutritional and economic dimensions for the community.

As the American novelist and farmer Wendell Berry said, “Eating is an agricultural act”. All of us are participants in food production.

BOX 2: Resilience

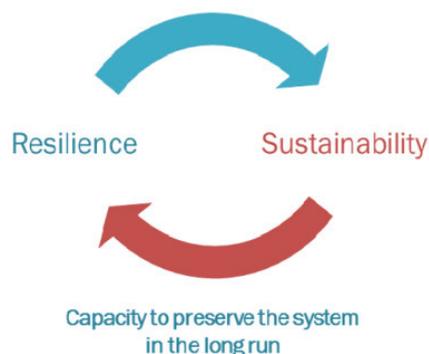
The term ‘resilience’ was first used in the physical sciences to denote the behaviour of a spring. It has now become an important part of the language of many disciplines, including ecology.

In ecology, the term is used to describe ecosystems that continue to function in more or less the same way despite adversity. It may be defined as “the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks” (Adger, 2005).

Resilience is a common feature of complex systems: the resilience of social systems, as well as that of food systems, is gaining interest. A resilience approach to sustainability focuses on how to build capacity to deal with unexpected change and offers a framework for facilitating sustainable development. The resilience perspective focuses on the dynamic interplay between periods of gradual and sudden change and considers ways to adapt to change(Folke, 2006). Resilience is thus a conceptual framework for understanding how persistence and transformation coexist in living systems, including human societies and food systems.

Resilience and sustainability are complementary, essential attributes of a healthy food system. One addresses short-term responses to disturbances and the other addresses holistic management for long term stability. A business that strives for sustainable development should contribute to social, environmental and economic development in its production while at the same time remaining flexible and resilient. Sustainability requires resilience: if a sustainability entrepreneurship cannot adapt to change, it may be unable to contribute to desired changes in the long run (Larsson, 2016).

Figure 3: Relationship between Resilience and Sustainability



Source Tendall et al. 2015

In the literature, many connections have been drawn between resilience and sustainable development (see e.g. Folke et al. 2004, Walker & Salt 2006, Mäler 2008). For example Holling stated that “A resilient socio-ecological system is synonymous with a region that is ecologically, economically and socially sustainable”.

A study conducted by Larson on Swedish social enterprise Biodynamiska Produkter⁹ has explored the sustainability and resilience of this not-for-profit firm that claims to contribute to the sustainable development of the food system. The results suggest that Biodynamiska Produkter, with its social mission and focus on organic food, meets the criteria of both a social and sustainable enterprise. It has organisational resilience since it can renew itself and self-organise after crisis as well as an organisational culture and working environment that stimulate flexibility and innovation. The transformation of Biodynamiska Produkter from a private company into a non-profit foundation could be viewed as an attempt to increase the organisation’s resilience by shifting to a more stable organisational form. Olsson suggests that social transformation is needed when moving from a less desired trajectory to one where the capacity to manage for sustainability is strengthened. According to the literature review, it has been demonstrated that social economy organisations can be more resilient and that the model of economic organisation solely based on the actions of two types of institutions (investor-owned enterprises and public organisations) has shortcomings. At a time of increasing global competition and major demographic and public budget constraints, new forms of organisation and interaction between the public sector, civil society organisations, private enterprises and citizens are needed, to create crisis-resistant models for effective operation (Alexiou, 2016).

SAFA

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS

The Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA) has been developed to assess the resilience and social well-being.

Sustainability is not just linked to strictly environmental aspects, but comprises the virtuous and balanced management of human and ecological resources. SAFA offers a holistic framework that encompasses all aspects of sustainable production, processing, distribution and marketing. Unsurprisingly, the approach has been called ‘holistic’ because of its scope and its articulation of 116 detailed indicators, 21 themes (or “goals” of sustainability), and 58 sub-themes (more detailed objectives). It builds mainly on existing sustainability schemes, creating opportunities for enterprises to use existing data and combine efforts with other tools and sustainability initiatives. However the indicators are adaptable and flexible, and can thus also be used in many different contexts. SAFA encourages continuous improvement and builds capacity for sustainability.

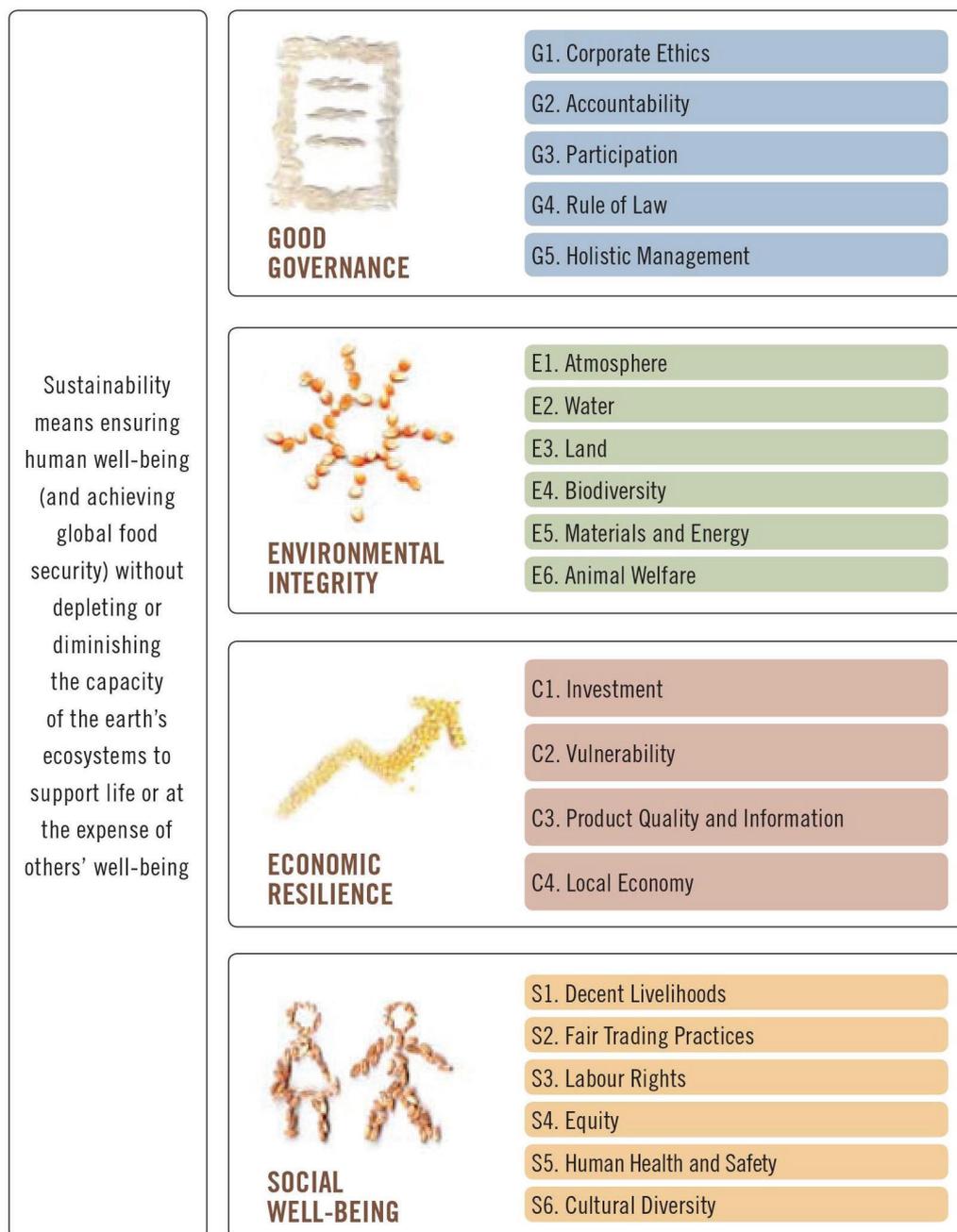
SAFA can be used at multiple levels for multiple purposes and by different actors such food and agriculture enterprises, NGOs and the sustainability standards and tools community, consumers, governments, investors

⁹ <http://www.biodynamiskaprodukter.se/DefaultBP.aspx>

and policy-makers. SAFA can be an effective tool for self-assessment exercises to evaluate an enterprise's sustainability and improve its performance, and can also be used to monitor the impacts of projects, to implement regional plans, to design local procurement, to assess investment and to develop legislation.

This assessment tool can be very useful to test our food enterprises, to identify gaps in existing business models and to manage and develop new approaches and new business models that can embrace and sustain our multidimensional food system. It can represent a common language for a sustainable food system, among food entrepreneurs, policy-makers, institutions, stakeholders and consumers.

Figure 4: SAFA - SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS AND THEMES



Source. FAO, 2013

SOCIAL ECONOMY FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

We worked extra hard to transform ourselves, as closely as possible, into one-dimensional human beings to allow the smooth functioning of free market mechanisms. However something went wrong. Muhammad Yunus¹⁰ thinks that “things are going wrong not because of ‘market failure’. It is much deeper than that. [...] Everyday human beings are not one-dimensional entities; they are excitingly multi-dimensional and indeed very colourful. [...] Let us suppose that we postulate a world with two kinds of people, both one-dimensional, but having different objectives. One type is the existing type, i.e. the profit maximising type. The second is a new type of person, who is not interested in profit maximisation. He is totally committed to make a difference to the world. He is social-objective driven. He wants to give a better chance in life to other people. He wants to achieve his objective through creating and supporting sustainable business enterprises”¹¹. This human being is a social entrepreneur.

SOCIAL ECONOMY

The term “social economy” embraces a range of concepts used in the various EU Member States, such as third sector, solidarity economy, alternative economy, non-profit sector, not-for-profit sector and voluntary sector. Beyond national differences in terminology and legal forms, social economy enterprises are all inspired by common values such as solidarity, social cohesion, the primacy of the individual over capital, social responsibility, democratic management and the fact that they are not driven by profit and any profits are reinvested in the company and in society. The social economy represents a host of practices and forms of mobilising economic resources to satisfy human needs, which are neither for-profit enterprises nor public institutions, but which nevertheless produce goods and services (Borzaga et al., 2013; Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005).

The social economy represents an instrument that puts participatory democracy into practice in Europe. Its enterprises are organisations of people who conduct an activity with the main purpose of meeting the needs of people rather than remunerating investors of capital. Traditionally, social economy organisations are categorised into four groups: associations, mutuals, co-operatives and foundations. Aside from the traditional types of social economy actors, a transversal category has been receiving increasing attention and political and legislative recognition. Social enterprises are the most innovative branch of the social economy.

¹⁰ Yunus is a Bangladeshi social entrepreneur, banker, economist, and civil society leader, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Grameen Bank and pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance. The name Grameen is derived from the word gram which means “rural” or “village” in the Bengali Language.

¹¹ Yunus M., ‘Social business entrepreneurs are the solution’ in Nicholls A., *Social Entrepreneurship*, Oxford University Press, 2006 pp. 39-40

They can play a unique role in identifying unmet needs and developing new types of service.

As they have developed, the social economy has gradually been expanding its operational sectors, playing a key role during the economic crisis.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Many definitions of social enterprise exist and a wide variety of organisational forms are adopted by social enterprises worldwide. In Europe, social enterprises are closely linked to, and emanate from, the tradition of the social economy, which is characterised by principles and values such as solidarity, the primacy of people over capital, and democratic and participative governance.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines social enterprises as “any private activity conducted in the public interest, organised with an entrepreneurial strategy, but whose main purpose is not the maximisation of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals, and which has the capacity to bring innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment”.

In the last decade, the European Commission, in order to promote a “highly competitive social market economy”, has identified the social economy and social enterprises as innovative responses to the current economic, social and environmental challenges, in which social entrepreneurs are striving to make a significant impact on society, the economy and the environment.

The Social Business Initiative (SBI), launched in 2011, was an important package of actions to support the development of social enterprises. It contained 11 priority measures, organised in three themes: facilitating access to funding, improving the visibility of social entrepreneurship and simplifying the regulatory environment.

In the SBI the European Commission has proposed the following operational definition of social enterprises: “an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for its owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities”¹².

Within its definition the Commission includes enterprises:

- whose social or societal objective of the common good is the reason for their commercial activity, often in the form of a high level of social innovation;

¹²Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee Of The Regions “Social Business Initiative: creating a favourable climate for social enterprises, key stakeholders in the social economy and innovation” COM(2011) 682/2

- whose profits are mainly reinvested with a view to achieving this social objective;
- and whose method of organisation or ownership system reflects their mission.

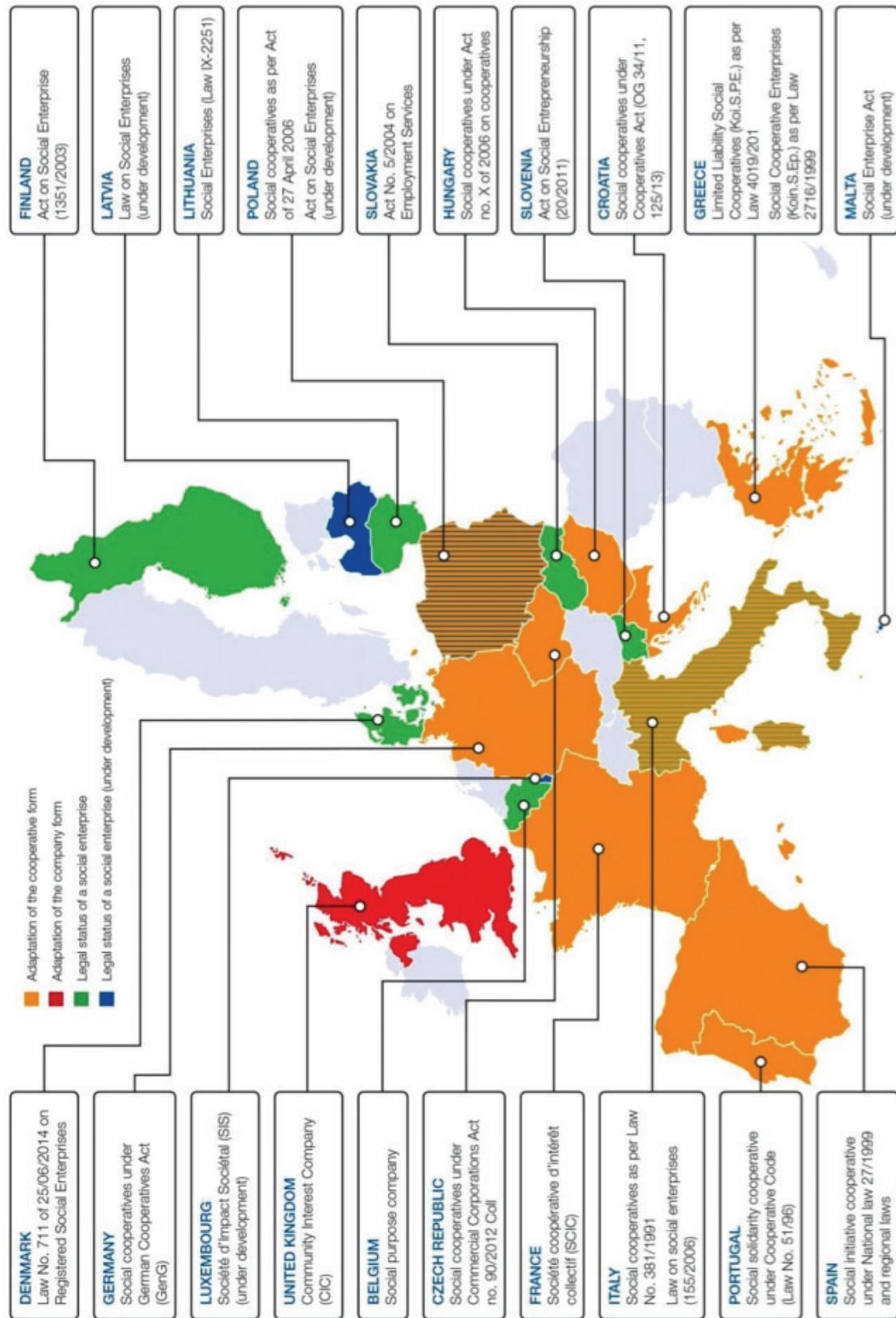
A social enterprise is a business run for a social purpose, where specific and well-defined social goals are translated into an organisation, which often performs activities of general interest and is managed in an entrepreneurial way, keeping a constant balance between its social and the economic dimensions. Social enterprises are able to provide solutions to social problems through an entrepreneurship approach that is economically sustainable and in some ways more effective and efficient than what could be done by the institutions alone. Social enterprises apply commercial and entrepreneurial strategies to maximise improvements in human and environmental well-being. The strong social vocation of these enterprises means that the profits earned are mainly reinvested in supporting their social mission. The presence of constraints on profit and asset distribution (the latter often being called an ‘asset lock’), which characterises social enterprises in many European countries, ensures the consolidation of the organisations and the pursuit of their goals in the long term.

Recent trends show that social enterprises are present in almost every sector of the economy, serving the interests and needs of their communities and society. This trend is not so unexpected. Social enterprises have been proven to be versatile organisations, which address areas of unmet or inadequately met social need and create new social opportunities where other actors have failed to act. They contribute to smart and sustainable growth, by taking their impact on the environment and social cohesion into account in their long-term vision. Thus, social enterprises are important actors that contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 objectives.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Despite the gradual convergence of social enterprise concepts at EU level, social enterprises are still conceived in significantly different ways and take a range of organisational and legal forms in different countries across Europe. Most of the EU Member States have some form of legislation that recognises and regulates social enterprise activity. Some have adapted existing company law to accommodate the specificities of social enterprises, while others have created a specific legal status. It remains highly challenging to measure and aggregate social enterprise activity across the Europe, because much of it remains hidden and under the radar. As a result, there is a risk of underestimating social enterprise activities and not obtaining a statistically robust picture of what European social enterprises do (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: Legal forms of Social Enterprises throughout Europe.



Source: A map of social enterprises and their eco-systems in Europe, European Commission

SOCIAL INNOVATION

In the first BEPA report about social innovation, it was defined as: “innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. [...] Specifically, we define social innovations as new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social need (more effectively than alternatives) and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words they are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance society’s capacity to act.” (BEPA 2010).

‘Innovation’ means the creation of new solutions through new forms of organisation and interaction. ‘Social’ refers to the kind of value that this innovation is concerned to deliver.

Social enterprises try to maximise improvements in human and environmental well-being, often through new business ideas. This does not mean that social enterprise and social innovation are the same thing. Surely, social enterprises are to be considered one of the most important and effective types of organisation undertaking social innovation to offer solutions to the most pressing social problems. However social innovation does not refer to any particular sector of the economy, but rather to innovation in the creation of social outputs.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY TO A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

The definition of the civil commons McMurdy gives as “any co-operative human construction that protects and/or enables the universal access to life goods” links sustainability with the idea of the civil commons. As Sumner suggests, in this way, the civil commons are co-operative, not competitive.

She states: “the structures can range from universities, governments and corporations to NGOs, neighbourhood associations and social businesses, as long as they build the civil commons. The processes can include teaching, learning, decision-making, facilitating, governing and researching, as long as they build the civil commons. These structures and processes interact dynamically to create, support and spread the civil commons. The wider and deeper the civil commons – socially, economically and environmentally – the higher the level of sustainability. The more the civil commons is enclosed, the lower the level of sustainability” (Sumner, 2011).

According to Sumner, if the concept of sustainability involves building the civil commons, then the sustainable food system would consist of a variety of collectivities that preserve and enable access to the food that humans need. Therefore, the social economy, which we consider to be part of the civil commons as a cooperative human construct, can be involved in the process of building alternative food systems, in order to become more sustainable.

Recognising the urgent need to tackle the multiple economic, environmental and social consequences of food production and consumption, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) calls on the European Commission and Member States to develop a clear EU policy and implementation plan for building a sustainable, resilient, healthy, fair and climate-friendly food system, which encourages cooperation and mutual understanding among all stakeholders along the food supply chain.

Over the past decade, and particularly since the global economic crisis, an increasing number of social economy organisations have focused on food. Food banks are a classic example of recovering food from donors to redistribute it to civil society organisations supporting the most deprived. They play a double role, both helping the poor to access food and reducing food waste. These experiences of food recycling combine several different roles, since upcycling can be considered to be an ecological action as well as a tool to build social cohesion and an opportunity to develop community awareness of food challenges.

More recently, various other examples of social enterprises involved in upcycling waste food have been emerging.

Rubies in the Rubble (www.rubiesintherubble.com) is a social enterprise in the UK, whose goal is to come up with solutions to its twin concerns of food waste and finding employment opportunities for women who have fallen on hard times and need a helping hand to rebuild their lives.

This social enterprise gives a second life to food that is wasted but yet edible. It works directly with UK farmers, sourcing fresh fruit and vegetables from their surplus produce, which it transforms into a range of relishes.

Many actors in the social economy have already started developing alternative food systems. All over Europe we can see Community Food Enterprises, local exchange communities, social farms, participatory supermarkets, consumers' cooperatives, solidarity grocery stores, canning cooperatives, innovative social businesses working with food waste, and so on. All of these organisations are working on multiple levels to achieve social, environmental and economic goals. These diverse and innovative social enterprises are active in communities and are often tackling social disadvantage while providing much-needed goods and services. The common thread is always the intent to sensitise the community, to make them more participative and responsible for our food systems.

The social economy actors are part of the territory, they know and take care of community needs. When we talk about sustainability, we have to consider not only the environmental dimension but also the social and economic dimensions of sustainability. Co-operatives and social enterprises play an important role in mitigating the impacts of social change. They are actors which are capable of understanding their territories and finding solutions through an integrated approach, in a cooperative manner between the community and social economy organisations.

BOX 3: Butterfly Development (Pro-Cserehat Association, Hungary) www.bffd.hu

Butterfly Development aims to develop realistic, regional alternative livelihoods for the members of disadvantaged rural communities, both Roma and non-Roma. It achieves this goal through complex regional development. Its main activity is developing and maintaining community-based organic vegetable gardens, the so-called Pro Ratatouille gardens. The Pro Ratatouille project proposal won the social business idea contest promoted by Nobel prize-winning economist Muhammad Yunus.

It is a project combining organic gardening, employment, non-formal adult education and Roma integration. It answers complex social problems such as rural unemployment, local discrimination, poverty, lack of local integration, malnutrition, food crisis and a lack of healthy nutrition. It works through the delineation and implementation of village gardening projects, community empowerment, participation-based development and non-formal education.

The project's integrated methods include non-formal adult education and empowerment work, in order to transmit the skills required for regular work and to create a sense of responsibility and the basis for planning positive life changes. The project was developed in the spirit of agro-based social business. The participants acquire basic knowledge about organic vegetable production and generate a co-operative community of



producers. The producers, who took part in the project from the beginning, are building up more and more experience in vegetable production and aim to produce for the market. This approach emphasises the importance of agriculture-based rural development, fair distribution of the goods produced, community-based innovation and business development.

“After meeting the needs of the producers and the villages, it is our aim to introduce a fair-trade brand with an emphasis on quality, solidarity and sustainability. The development of the brand would enable the connection of producers through a social business inspired company that would generate its profits with environmental and social awareness.”

SOCIAL FARMING

The term ‘*social farming*’ refers to a set of practices that use agricultural resources – animals, plants, gardens, forests, landscape – to promote therapeutic and rehabilitative actions of social inclusion, educational and social services useful to the daily life of local communities and rural areas (Di Iacovo 2008 and 2012).

Social farming is a significant example of social sustainability. While producing food, social farms pay close attention to the needs of people and the environment, and create networks in tune with other public and private actors in the territory. They are a collective action to build new strategies, concepts, ideas and organisations that meet social needs. In Europe, a growing number of farming initiatives are being implemented with the aim of supporting disadvantaged people, through therapy, rehabilitation and social or labour market reintegration, and providing training and education. This multifunctional approach to farming has attracted attention from multiple stakeholders such as the EESC, which in 2012 published an opinion containing a number of proposals and recommendations to the Commission, including the definition of a reference legal framework and the possibility of public support for initiatives in various countries.

Social farming can be a tool to respond to the growing needs of the population, both in terms of socially,

economically and environmentally sustainable agricultural production, and in terms of providing socio-sanitary and socio-occupational services. It represents a participatory and relational model of territorial development that is committed to building social cohesion and the local community. It is not only the result of productive activities and social activities, but something completely new and more articulate. It is an alternative system where food can be considered a tool of social activation, and where the active participation of the community can be a tool to promote a proper awareness of food issues.

Social farming is founded on a strong belief in equity. In accordance with this value, it tends primarily and progressively to follow organic and eco-sustainable production and agro-ecological systems capable of simultaneously safeguarding the health of all living things and the environment.

Social farming, as a multifunctional approach, may also open possibilities to enhance some other functions of agriculture, such as landscape management, supporting biodiversity and animal welfare. It is an experience where difficulties are the engine for the development of innovative and ecological solutions for the environment, society and local economy.

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS

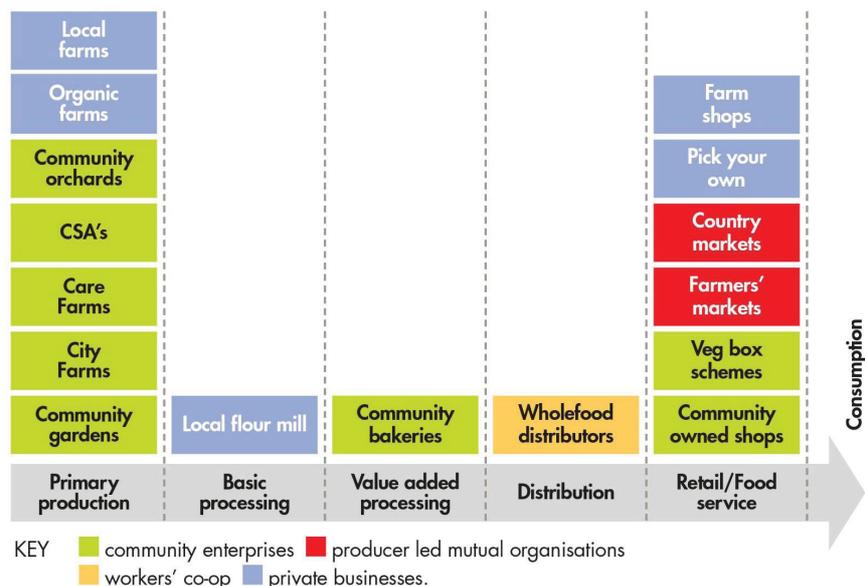
In response to growing trends in the current food system toward global integration, economic consolidation, and environmental degradation, communities have initiated alternative, more sustainable food and agricultural systems which integrate environmental, economic and social health aspects. Over the last decade, social enterprises in the UK have played a pioneering role in responding to society's demands for a more sustainable food system.

Initiatives like farmers' markets and community food shops have built relationships between producers and consumers in response to concerns about the lack of transparency and accountability in the conventional food system as well as to reduce the physical and mental distance between producers and consumers.

These initiatives are working together to find an alternative way to make food affordable to the community through a short, transparent and more resilient food chain. These patterns connect local food networks, to support the development of the local economy and to increase awareness of food of the community.

There is no formal definition of a community food enterprise. We consider, as Senscot says, that "community food enterprises are businesses run by communities for their benefit, which are involved in at least one part of growing, harvesting, processing, distributing, selling or serving local food. Community food enterprises include farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) enterprises, community-owned shops and food co-operatives." (Senscot) (Fig. 6)

Figure 6: Examples of local and community food enterprises



Source: Cardiff University

Community food enterprises are connected together to make the food sector localised, sustainable and fair. Moreover, they use food as a vehicle for other purpose such as care farming, work reintegration or to promote health and well-being, and reduce health inequalities.

Community food enterprises are committed to developing positive environmental, economic and social impacts in their places. They are catalysing not just a change in consumer buying behaviour but, more importantly, positive social change.

GREEN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

In the 20th century, the economist most closely associated with the term 'entrepreneur' was Schumpeter, who described entrepreneurs as the innovators whose function is to reform or revolutionise the pattern of production.

As suggested by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the social entrepreneur has the goal of addressing pressing social challenges and meeting social needs in an innovative way while serving the general interest and common good for the benefit of the community. Social entrepreneurs play an important role in facing social, economic, and environmental challenges, while contributing to job creation, especially at local level, as well as to democratic participation and the improvement of welfare services delivery. We are witnessing the emergence of social entrepreneurs who are thinking greener, who consider social issues as closely interconnected with environmental issues. These new

professional figures – green social entrepreneurs – are seeking to make changes in the relationship between economy, ecology and society through a multilevel approach to sustainable development.

Figure 7: Table - Characterisation of different kinds of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

TYPE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP	CORE MOTIVATION
Eco-entrepreneurship	Contribute to solving environmental problems and create economic value
Social entrepreneurship	Contribute to solving societal problems and create value for society
Sustainable entrepreneurship	Contribute to solving societal and environmental problems through the creation of a successful business
Institutional entrepreneurship	Contribute to changing regulatory, societal and market institutions

Source: Schaltegger S. & Wagner M., 2012

As stated by Zahedi and Otterpohl¹³, green social entrepreneur could play two important roles in sustainable development: first as an innovative community to change the structure of the economy through sustainability and second as a community which creates and changes the norms in a society so as to maintain sustainable development.

The greening of the economy is expressly addressed in the Europe 2020 strategy, which specifies targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to increase energy from renewables and energy efficiency. Social enterprises have the potential to deliver on these targets, set in response to climate change. Their potential is insufficiently exploited, not least because their way of working and their impact on employment is not well known across Europe.

HOW SOCIAL ENTERPRISES CONTRIBUTE TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD

We have interviewed more than 50 social enterprises implementing alternative models of food systems in order to be more sustainable. The good practices selected cover the different stages of the food system from production to waste, and so give a whole picture of the phenomenon. Furthermore, we have chosen enterprises with different social aims and with different ways of pursuing them. They are working on issues such as:

- Counteracting the desertification of rural areas
- Women's employment
- Migrant integration
- Decent job conditions
- Work integration of disadvantaged workers
- Raising community awareness of the importance of adopting more sustainable eating habits

The main thing that links all these cases is the strong will to deal with the social and environmental issues of their territory, so that entrepreneurship and local development go hand in hand because they are closely interlinked.

Thus, the way social enterprises contribute to increasing sustainability in food production and consumption is a tool to achieve social aims, such as social cohesion or integration and access to the labour market. Through these experiences we discovered different approaches to achieving similar goals: in some cases we found innovative solutions while in other cases the preservation of tradition showed itself to be the right way to deal with the challenge of that specific territory.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

What do the good practices we have researched tell us about social enterprises and sustainable food systems in Europe? Whilst both food and the social economy have been studied and supported in the context of food security developing countries, there are little data on the topic in the European context.

It is important for our communities to be more sustainable, and the production and consumption of food affect this sustainability. Food is a central issue for our societies and their health; it has a significant impact on the environment and resources just as it depends on them. Not to mention that food plays a leading role in the European economy, being the biggest manufacturing sector in terms of employment and value added.

Social enterprises have a proven potential to contribute to economic growth and address social issues in Europe. They promote sustainability, environmental protection and local development.

We were interested in investigating the topic to understand the potential positive as well as negative implications of social enterprises' involvement in this field of action.

This study aimed to gain a better understanding of the state of play of social economy actors already involved in creating a more sustainable food system, given the long European tradition of cooperatives in agriculture.

We have interviewed experts in the social economy and social enterprises from 14 Member States of the European Union: Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK.

We aimed to understand the national contexts around this topic, how much government policies are promoting sustainable food approaches, and the level of awareness within the community of the importance of changing our eating behaviour, given the consequences this has for our planet.

From the experts interviews it emerged that the principal role of social enterprises in creating more sustainable food systems is their relationship with their 'clients', through which people are not only consumers but stakeholders, who are more involved and have a greater sense of responsibility.

“Social economy actors are very close to the people and the territory compared to traditional corporations. They are stronger than traditional enterprises in terms of resilience and social needs as well. Social enterprise is the activator of the sense of the community... for example urban agriculture is also important because it helps to reconnect relations between neighbours. If you want this type of alternative system to have an impact it is essential to scale up.” (Europe Tomorrow)

“Social enterprises have a more direct relationship with producers and consumers. Most large corporations

consider people as a resource. For social enterprises, people are not only consumers but stakeholders who are more involved and have a greater sense of responsibility. The best way to promote sustainable food is offering these products in the supermarkets and in the shops”. (Make Sense)

“Social enterprises face some obstacles at the beginning, such as financial or legal issues, but they have a huge potential. It works in a local way. In the local economy it is difficult to be competitive, so one should be co-operative”. (Social Entrepreneurship Forum Vienna)

“Sustainable agriculture motivates people to promote and practice economically viable, environmentally responsible and socially fair agriculture. By respecting the principles of sustainable development, it meets today’s needs without threatening natural resources for future generations. Only social enterprises can enable it by structuring all four pillars. To address all those challenges related to agriculture and food, actors move our modes of production, processing, marketing and consumption towards more sustainability and proximity. Social enterprises are bringing answers, at the crossroads of the social, economic and environmental challenges.” (Avisé)

It is important to note, however, that social economy organisations have a broader role to play than simply supporting the status quo. Sustainable food systems are a multi-dimensional concept, an ambitious objective that can be achieved through different pathways.

From the good practices proposed we can see, even if we cannot consider our data significant due the limited number of enterprises analysed, that different approaches are possible to address the same issues. PermaFungi sustains the development towards more sustainable food through upcycling and resource efficiency in order to reduce food wastage.

Bees Coop believes that more sustainable food corresponds to making good, fresh, organic, nurturing food accessible and affordable, especially for people with a low income.

Sustainable food systems are also synonymous with decent jobs. The project of buying groups like GAS – Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale – or Local to You has two main objectives: to make good, fresh food affordable and accessible and to safeguard the small producers and farmers of the territory.

To be sustainable requires participation and the development of a sense of community and social cohesion. The experience of ASAT is a good example of participation. This community takes care of its small producers. This simple action has a direct impact on both partners: the consumers eat fresh, seasonal and traditional products from the land, and small producers can continue doing their job in a decent way. But the results are more than the sum of these two parts. ASAT contributes to information and awareness campaigns on the importance of healthy food. It believes that the objective of sustainable food systems should be to produce healthy and fresh food for people and not for profit, while respecting all actors – consumers as well as

producers.

The territory in which a social enterprise grows is an important factor that influences the development of the organisation and its characteristics. The context can also influence the choice of the social business model. Where the context is well developed, as it is in an urban context, we can find social innovators like PermaFungi, which have based their business on producing mushrooms from coffee grounds and thus contributing to recycling.

On the other hand, given the different priorities of rural areas at risk of desertification, we find the promotion of activities that meet the needs of the territory. TerriuS is a social enterprises created by young people from agricultural backgrounds who wanted to stem the tide of abandoning the countryside to live in towns. They are suffering from the desertification of rural areas, given the lack of youth employment opportunities. This phenomenon compromises the preservation of local culture and threatens small producers of traditional food. TerriuS has recognised the value of local food and wants to use this to keep young people in rural areas and support the autonomy of local food producers, leading to dynamism and local development.

Five key elements are present in all the experiences we analysed: inclusion, equity, respect, responsibility and opportunity. These elements can be seen as keywords and important aspects for a transition towards more sustainable food systems.

INCLUSION: Social enterprises play a major role in promoting integration among the community. While we are building sustainable food systems we can contribute to develop a community which is more inclusive and integrated. There are a lot of initiatives that use food as a tool of integration for creating double value – for the environment and the society.

EQUITY is an important aspect of a sustainable economy. We should learn to share, given that resources are limited while population keeps increasing. The co-operative model has always been about sharing the value of production. From these cases experiences emerged where producers and consumers want to cooperate together.

RESPECT is important for sustainable development. All the practices base their business on respect for the environment and the community. But they are also respectful of tradition and territory in order to preserve the special characteristics of their land. All of them aim to support local farmers and small producers, through action to promote decent working conditions.

RESPONSIBILITY. Making our food system more sustainable requires responsibility. All the social entrepreneurs who created these good practices have taken the responsibility to do more for their community. The point is neither profit nor organic food itself: they are a means for greater community involvement and relational empowerment.

OPPORTUNITY. The good practices selected are great examples of the opportunity we have to create decent and equitable employment conditions. These social enterprises turn out to be a solution for creating new jobs, both for young people and for people who need to come back to work.

Barikamà is a great example of opportunity. It is composed of young people from Africa who, starting from a simple but effective idea – the production of organic yogurt – are developing their social enterprise. Moreover, Barikamà works through reciprocal exchange with other members of the community. It gives young people with Asperger's syndrome the opportunity to undertake an internship in the enterprise. These people help Barikamà's members to improve their proficiency in Italian, and in return Barikamà helps them with their social integration.

Social enterprises are a point of reference of the territory which, with the involvement of the community, are making people aware of a more sustainable approach to food. Conversely, food can be a tool to develop social cohesion, create employment, mitigate social issues and promote local economic development. Social enterprises engender alternative solutions that work at different levels, where actions support each other. All of these social enterprises address various issues through an integrated approach.

Cauto is a social cooperative that manages the food surpluses of large retail outlets and markets in order to recycle it and avoid food wastage. The food surplus is redistributed among other associations, which use it to create preserves, feed the poor, feed animals and make compost. Through this activity Cauto has been able to create a strong local network with other actors in the territory, reduce food waste, give disadvantaged people the opportunity of a decent job and raise awareness of the negative impact of food waste and how to avoid it.

Social enterprises should not be considered as a niche sector of food production; they have the potential to be scaled up to increase their impact.

We already have examples of successful replications. We can consider the phenomenon of social farming in Italy. These social farms sell fresh, organic, local food while building a resilient community based on integration and respect for diversity. Frequently they are able to scale up by themselves thanks to collaboration with other actors in the territory. However, it is important to support these social enterprises by providing accessible opportunities in order to ensure the long term survival of innovative start-ups that are tailor-made to solve local issues while respecting their community.

Social enterprises are able to optimise their economic, social and environmental resources, so that the results are more than the sum of their parts.

Social enterprises are able to intercept emerging needs in society and to develop innovative responses to these needs. They ensure that their innovations address social and environmental issues. Based on the

special characteristics of the territory and their community, they promote a specific strategy of action in order to be more efficient for achievement of their goals. Through an integrated approach they are able to work at different levels.

Biovilla is a social enterprise that produces quality products while respecting their own natural timings, and sells them at affordable prices. It delivers training and education on sustainability. It is a “living example” of sustainable practices. As a virtuous practice, Biovilla becomes an innovative model as concerns the use of resources – natural, economic and human – based on sharing and community values, as well as closer contact with the natural world.

Since “food is essential to life and people are the key to the change”, to be more sustainable we need to change our behaviour. Our communities’ awareness is a way to make them more participative and responsible for our food systems and show that changes are possible. Social enterprises, thanks to their formal and informal networks, are able to be closer to the community. They influence their community because they make real the change of habits and make people part of this change. Social enterprises operate in a way that generates creative solutions where the crisis is turned into an opportunity. They think differently and work differently. They are flexible enough to address complex issues and consider collaboration as a winning strategy. They think global to act local.

GOOD PRACTICES

MARAMAO

Società Cooperativa Agricola Sociale Onlus. Canelli. Italia



ITALY

CALAMANDRANA - CANNELLI



START DATE:
2016



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
YES



EMPLOYEES: 9



The 'Start up impresa agricola sociale' project was started in 2014 by the *Crescereinsieme co-operative*.

In 2016 **Maramao** achieved a great goal. It became an agricultural social co-operative (Società Cooperativa Agricola Sociale).

Maramao cultivates vegetables on private land leased cheaply or free of charge. Private people share with the co-operative the goal of creating a social farming enterprise that cultivates organic products, involves asylum seekers and people under the international protection of SPRAR (System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees) in the province of Alessandria.

“ The values of social enterprise are: sustainable development, community engagement and respect for work. Thanks to these principles sustainable food is one of the results of the social enterprise.”

Maramao is a social enterprise that produces vegetables, cereals, grapes and hazelnuts and processes them according to organic farming techniques.

Maramao promotes social integration, the well-being of the people involved and builds trusting relationships between the people who cultivate and those who consume the products.

Maramao develops training opportunities and job placement for disadvantaged people, especially asylum seekers and refugees.

Maramao is committed to recovering abandoned rural areas, promoting local products and revitalising local territories and communities. All its activities are environmental friendly.

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

The principles which guide our social enterprise are respect for people, environment and development of the territory.

We are a social and agricultural cooperative, and our aim is to create and consolidate in three years a social agricultural cooperative that cultivates, produces and transforms not only agricultural products but also relationships, approaches and ways of looking at each other.

MAIN GOALS

Selling healthy, fresh organic products.

Developing a virtuous green economy that does not exploit the land, but recovers the territories.

Promoting a decent work that respects the person.

Recovery of rural areas at risk of desertification.

SOCIAL IMPACT

+ 20 hectares from the beginning.

90 asylum seekers and refugees.

30 hours per week of paid work for each person.

32 modules of training about biological agriculture.

3,000kg of hazelnuts.

5.900 kg of *Barbera* grapes.

4.500 kg of *Dolcetto* grapes.

4.200 kg of *Cortese* grapes.

2.000kg of *Moscato d'Asti* grapes.

6000 strawberry plants planted.

“ Social integration, well-being of the people involved, relationships of trust between farmers and consumers, training opportunities and job placement, including asylum seekers and refugees in the area, all of this is Maramao. ”



START DATE:
2013



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Yes



N° EMPLOYEES:
18 + Trainees



“Choosing Ama Terra products means being a critical consumer with an ethical consumption approach. Our products are local, organic with low environmental impact and social value added.”

Ama Terra Biosocial Farm was born in 2010, as a project of *Ama Aquilone Social Cooperative Onlus*. The project promoted agriculture as a tool of occupational therapy in the fertile land of the Italian regions Marche and Abruzzo.

In 2013 **Ama Terra** became a brand. The project developed from the will to educate the guests in the facilities in the well-being effects of organic nutrition. About 18 people with pathological addictions work every day in the farm. They are involved in activities like agriculture, stock breeding and the production of organic food, supported by agronomists, professional farmers and production assistants.

Ama Terra Biosocial Farm is:

Horticulture;
Beekeeping;
Orchards;
Viticulture;
Olive growing;
Breeding cattle and Suino della Marca pigs;
Production of organic food;
Cultivation of local ancient seeds like Senatore Cappelli type wheat, Castignano ecotype anise, passerina DOCG offidana wine and much more.

Ama Terra Biosocial Farm has a short production chain, with an efficient free home delivery service.

Ama Terra Biosocial Farm is environmentally conscious, recycles organic materials and nutrients and avoids packaging.

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Social enterprises contribute to environmental education, through a type of agriculture that is committed to developing conscious consumption, the protection of rural land, the local economy and the well-being of society. A virtuous cycle of nature, work territory and social ethics.

MAIN GOALS

Occupational therapy, a support for people with pathological addictions

Work inclusion

Innovative recycling

Preserving cultural food heritage
Producing healthy and organic food

Short environmental friendly
production chain

Promoting local economy

SOCIAL IMPACT

Ama Terra Biosocial Farm contributes to developing professional skills, facilitating, in many cases, re-entry to the job market.

The outcome depends on therapeutic journey of each individual



+



+





Cooperative
for the
Sustainable
Development

C.R.L.



PORTUGAL
PALMELA



START DATE:
2010



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Yes



N° EMPLOYEES: 5

+ 10 active cooperative members, many temporary volunteers and visitors coming and going.



Biovilla is a great project of sustainability. It contributes to the social, economic and environmental development of Portugal through practical and innovative business models. It always keeps sustainability at the centre of its action and brings sustainability to the daily life of everyone, enabling customers to access sustainable products and services at fair and reasonable prices.

Biovilla wants to be seen as a brand of reliable products and sustainable services, making available all the tools, new models and services that promote and enhance awareness of sustainability practices and their benefits. It does this through three important pillars: lodging, learning and organic farming.

Lodging: A sustainable kind of tourism in Nature combined with information about the area, bio- construction and the efficiency of energy resources. This pillar also aims to integrate local communities and projects and to create jobs. Profit is reinvested in the Biovilla project.

Learning: Biovilla's investment in social intervention is based on a continuous effort in education, training, community sharing and strengthening of social cohesion, because this is the way to reach a more balanced and sustainable society. Biovilla offers a range of training sessions in sustainability, transition and personal development. The main goal is training for sustainability because providing information and tools on the subject can become part of our daily life and can change everything.

Food: Organic farming (biodynamic and particularly permaculture) allows us to

“We believe that a cooperative project has the role of putting together strategies for social, environmental and economic purposes, in a conscious, coherent and sustainable way. But more than a good management plan, we believe it is equally important to keep the intention and purpose of the cooperative in everyday life so that values can take shape and remain untouched by financial or social pressures.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY



reach the goal of producing and processing different agricultural products and services, while caring for the natural heritage of the Arrábida Natural Park (ANP). The projects in this area are carrying out economic activities in close interdependence with the natural

heritage and the local community. **Biovilla** produces, distributes and sells organic products. The products are organic, nourishing, safe and certified, and so bring well-being and security to those who consume them.

WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

This has been since the beginning the idea of the project, the basis and path of actions that Biovilla wants to bring to the world. We are a cooperative that proposes impact and solutions in different layers of society, and therefore we are a project with not only social but also environmental and economic impact. Here, environmental, social and economic values and ideals are connected in a consistent, self-sufficient and efficient way. Biovilla is thus an innovative model of the use of resources – natural, economic and human. This model is based on sharing and community values, as well as a closer contact to the natural world and the systems that surround us in a perspective of symbiosis and synergies.



MAIN GOALS

- Produce quality products with affordable prices, respecting their own natural timings.
- Protect and promote polyculture, reach different ecological niches.
- Make the citizens more active, responsible, healthy, fair and sustainable.
- Promote, training and education on sustainability.
- A living example of sustainable practices such as a unique and unforgettable experience through tourism.
- Promote networks of local partnerships and support micro and local producers. Access to sustainable products and services at fair and reasonable prices.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- 10,000 people reached without any discrimination through scholarship, courses, retreats, workshops for guests.
- People volunteer for a few hours, days, months and in some cases years.
- Number of trees planted: 5,000
- Area of intervention: 55 hectares
- Biodiversity ponds: 3

SUPPORTS



START DATE:
2015

FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
YES

EMPLOYEES: 20
members



“Although there are people who think that organic agriculture means working the land and raising cattle in the way peasants did in the 18th century, organic agriculture is very innovative. A small country has limited agricultural land - there is nowhere to expand to, which means that we need to be very smart, effective and innovative in our approach.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY



Organic Estonia won the Development Idea competition organised by the Estonian Development Fund in 2015.

Organic Estonia refers to clean food and a free natural state of being. Half of the Estonian territory is covered in forest, which is all naturally grown. Hence the produce of our forests is actually already organic.

Organic Estonia is also in tune with the global trend of appreciating a sustainable and environmentally aware organic way of thinking. The organic way of life benefits everyone, and offers the best chance for a successful future. It is the key to ensuring the health and well-being of generations to come. It is Estonia's trump card to show that as a small country we do things differently – in a sustainable manner.

Organic Estonia stands on four pillars: forest, food, cosmetics and tourism.

Organic Estonia aims to bring together the small companies and people that want to work together for sustainable development, to make a system and to bring in some big organisations or groups which have more power.

Organic Estonia is mapping the organic areas in the country and is bringing together small organic farmers and producers to make them stronger. Moreover, it aims to increase the local consumption of organic food, which can be more affordable for everyone.



WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

There were no alternatives to achieve our aims. In our country we can see how many diseases we already have and how much health costs are rising and rising.

We have to look first at our environment, where we live; we have to look at the food we eat. We have very valuable organic materials. But if you do not have a system to manage the sector, the sector does not grow.

The sector is still quite small. We have many small producers and we want to bring them together to cooperate and have more power. Estonia aims to become an organic country.

MAIN GOALS

- To promote rural development.
- To develop the local economy through sustainable activity.
- To create the preconditions for cooperative activities.
- To preserve the environment.
- To develop organic farming.
- To promote healthy, fresh and local food.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- 20 member core team composed of volunteers.
- 60 people have expressed their support for Organic Estonia.
- Nearly 2,000 people involved in Organic Estonia project. .

“Organic Estonia could become a sustainable and balanced development example for the worldwide.”



TERRE
JONICHE



ITALY

ISOLA DI CAPO RIZZUTO E CIRÒ



START DATE:
2013



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Yes



N° EMPLOYEES: 8



“Our enterprise can support the creation of a sustainable food system by informing and involving the community. We will continue to work transparently, keeping our reality open to those who want to know and verify our commitments.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY



Terre Joniche - Libera Terra is based on the principles of the association “Libera. Associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie” (Libera – associations, names and numbers against the Mafia). These principles refer to respect for human rights, legality and social justice.

Terre Joniche - Libera Terra is committed to developing the assets it is awarded, confiscated from the Mafia, through the conservation and improvement of local agriculture resources, and the production of organic products and arable crops such as cereals and legumes (marketed under the label “Libera Terra”). The co-operative the purpose of pursuing the interest of the community, human promotion and the integration of disadvantaged people (referred to in art. 4 of the law of November 8, 1991, no. 381). It intends to promote responsible tourism paths, and for this purpose is building tourist accommodation.

Terre Joniche - Libera Terra valorises territories by recuperating assets confiscated from the Mafia, obtaining high quality products using environmentally friendly methods and respecting human rights. The use of the land involves crop rotation (for example, rotation between cereals and horticulture, intermingling with the main crops and even furtive crops). The social co-operative uses biological production and promotes training activities for its members.



WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

We believe in the values of social economy enterprises based on ethical principles and not only on the logic of profit. Social enterprises are able to develop:

- Environmental sustainability through the conservation and production of traditional quality products and the preservation of natural resources;
- Economic sustainability by generating income and creating decent jobs;
- Social sustainability through the promotion of legality and justice in the territories in which it operates.

“The aim of the co-operative is to grow so that the opportunities for the members and workers can be extended, even for the local young people”.

MAIN GOALS

To restore the dignity to the territories characterized by a strong presence of Mafia.

To create autonomous cooperative enterprises able to work and create positive spillover to the economy.

To propose a virtuous economic system, based on legality, social justice.

To promote critical consumption among the community .

To increase consumer awareness of the significant impact that their choices can have on economic-social system.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Terre Joniche with other 8 cooperatives of Libera Terra network

Production of 80 types of quality products.

15 different cultivations of local products.

44 weeks of Training camps with 820 participants.

39 towns and 1364 ha + others productive structures.

56 worker members + 14 voluntary members and 20 financing members.

Turnover of € 8.749.859 by Libera Terra products.



Мрежа Хлебни Къш

Obshtestven Klub Furna
Community Bakery Club Gabrovo



BULGARIA
GABROVO



START DATE:
2009



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Yes



EMPLOYEES: **Young group of volunteers and caters**



At the bakery, they prepare bread daily for sale to the local community. The flour used is obtained from a particular variety of wheat called Limez, which has unique nutritional properties and permits the revival of the traditions of artisan bread, as a high quality and healthy food.

This social enterprise is a public bakery that focuses on recruiting and training young people coming up out of the local institution as well as organising the community kneading of bread and therapeutic work with disadvantaged people, especially with children deprived of parental care.

“Social entrepreneurship is the future of the world economy. And it is a fact that the main food of every family in Bulgaria is bread. We make bread, so no one will leave hungry. To move in parallel sustainable processes for people is our common bright future.”

The Community bakery club assist local voluntary initiatives by providing space for free use of the oven, and donates bread to various charity events and institutions.

The club organises initiatives and projects in order to bring together community members with different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds.

It is part of the Bread Houses Network *“The mission is to inspire individuals and communities around the world to discover and develop their creative potential and cooperate across all ages, professions, genders, special needs, and ethnic backgrounds through collective bread-making and accompanying art forms and sustainable ecological education”.*

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Everything started with our participation in a project of the International Council for Cultural Centers (I3C), which aimed to inspire local communities in Bulgaria to start their own social businesses connected to bread making. We decided to experiment creatively. The main part of the team is artists. Of course it was a big challenge, but we believe that we did it well. Over the last 5 years we have actively engaged with the theme of social entrepreneurship. With I3C we were the first in the Bulgarian movement and have consistently taken action to prove that it is possible, real and useful. The team of the Gabrovo community bakery club looked for and have now opened educational platforms for social entrepreneurship. They are looking for good examples from outside and want to share experience, to continuously enrich their knowledge and skills.

MAIN GOALS

- Permanent employment of youth at risk.
- Education and professional development of craft skills.
- Social inclusion of vulnerable groups,
- Quality and healthy traditional products.
- Active, responsible and self-organising local community.

SOCIAL IMPACT

We strive to meet the community's expectations of a quality and healthy product and the profits from it fund social solutions and programmes for the community.

Every day we receive thanks from our customers. Many of them support us with donations, and share contacts and knowledge, for which we are very grateful. Many people and organisations are able through our shared space platform to express themselves, to share their ideas and find like-minded people. Of course the community bakery club team is always the first in line to offer help and support.

“Our social product is traditional and ecological bread, which saves dying cultural traditions and values. It is ecological and a beneficial tool for people who are ill or have special needs.”

AWARDS



Barikama'



ITALY
ROMA



START DATE:
2014



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: 8
+ 4 trainers



Barikamà was born as a microcredit project: from exploitation in the farm, toward self-entrepreneurship and social inclusion. In 2011, Barikamà started to produce organic yogurt (from 15 litres of milk) at Casale di Martignano.

The name **Barikamà** in the Bambara language means Resistance and it is a project that consists of social and work inclusion through the production, delivery and sale of organic yoghurt. The project is currently run by Suleman, Aboubakar, Sheikh, Sidiki, Modibo, Seydou and Ismael, who live in Rome, four of whom took part in the 2010 Rosarno revolts against racism and the exploitation of agricultural labourers.

In 2014 **Barikamà** became a social co-operative and started to produce organic vegetables. With the growth of the cooperative, we have decided to include Mauro, who has Asperger's syndrome.

Barikamà produces and delivers organic yoghurt and vegetables to local markets, buying groups (GAS), restaurants and bars.

Barikamà is respectful of the environment and makes its deliveries by bike.

Barikamà contributes to reducing waste by using returnable bottles. It is an example of the circular economy.

“We share our skills and capabilities in order to overcome our limits together. We prefer to share because it is the first step towards integration.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Barikamà is a project of integration. It believes in being sociable and in cooperating.

The model of social enterprise develops collaboration and participation. It is a way to share different competences to grow together.

The proof that it works is in its founders, who have learned to read and write Italian, and have become an active part of a social

network, able to self-manage their cooperative work and to advance in the world of work.

The challenge of economic insecurity and economic sustainability is not underestimated, but neither are the opportunities for growth, training and social inclusion.

MAIN GOALS

- Promotion of work and social integration for migrants.
- Production of organic food products.
- Promotion of social integration for people with difficulties.
- Protection of the environment.
- Reduction of wastage and promotion of up cycling.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- From 15 to 200 litres of milk a week.
- Present in 16 local markets.
- More than 30 GAS – Gruppi di acquisto solidale (solidary buying groups).
- 3 sales points.
- Integration and support of people who are trying to escape labour exploitation, learn Italian and have decent work.
- Social integration of young people with Asperger's syndrome.

AWARDS





PORTUGAL
MARVÃO – ALENTEJO



START DATE:
2011



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Yes



EMPLOYEES: 3



Terrius is the result of the desire of a group of “young people” linked to agricultural activity to “get their hands in the soil”. The idea emerged at the beginning of 2011, driven by the desire to build a distinctive and innovative project in the agri-food sector, based on the establishment of local partnerships of trust and fair trade with small producers and industries in the region.

Terrius adds value to local products, including by recovering PDO and PGI certifications, based on local sustainable development, which promotes the preservation of the natural heritage and the recognition of the region.

Terrius works daily to develop new products based on the quality and excellence of the local raw materials. Having innovation and image as differentiating factors allows the valorisation of its products and the Alentejo region.

Activities:

Purchase and negotiation with small producers.

Transformation and development of local products into new products of high added value.

Agricultural consultancy and training for small and young farmers.

Valorization of local products, in particular through certifications.

Involvement with the community through workshops, guided tours for schools and groups, and promotion of regional products.

“We are witnessing the desertification of rural areas, given the lack of youth employment opportunities. This phenomenon compromises the preservation of local culture, and risks the loss of certifications of national products and the loss of small producers with limited capacity and autonomy to dispose of their products.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Actually, we started as a for-profit business but after a period we realised that our purposes were social aims. We were working like a social enterprise, and our work and our achievements showed that our business model was that of a social business. Thus, we were moving towards social enterprise. In 2015 Terrius was selected by MIES, the Map of Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship, using the ES+ methodology.

“ We know that some people still live here, because of us ”

MAIN GOALS

The main objective is the sustainable production, preservation and marketing of wild products, fruit and vegetables of excellence from the region.

Economic development and attraction.

Retention of young people in rural areas.

Support in developing the autonomy of local food producers.

Dynamism and local development, based on local potential

Recovery of PDO and PGI certifications.

Preservation of the natural heritage and recognition of the region.

SOCIAL IMPACT

We keep about 30 farmers working with us.

We recovered 2 old products that nobody was producing (chestnut and acorn flour), and now lots of other producers have appeared in the country.

AWARDS



Graefewirtschaft

 **GERMANY**
BERLIN

 **START DATE:**
2009

 **FINANCIAL SUPPORT:**
Setup without /
Now partially (*)

 **N° EMPLOYEES: 45**
+ 5 Trainees
vocational training



“We invest in goals like promoting work integration and improving the neighbourhood’s living conditions. Other actors could do the same, but generally ‘traditional’ businesses try to maximise profits, and therefore, act less sustainably.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY



Graefewirtschaft is a social enterprise which aims to create jobs for migrants and refugees. The company qualifies and supports migrants at the workplace in cooperation with various partners. The association’s goal is to promote work integration and improve the neighbourhood’s living conditions by supplying needed services.

Graefewirtschaft has enabled a migrant group to start its own independent business. The Weltküche restaurant in Berlin has been run since June 2014. In the world kitchen migrants cook daily fresh dishes from their home countries.

Graefewirtschaft has developed into a major provider of community catering and canteens, especially for school meals. It offers breakfasts as well as lunches with healthy drinks. It makes everything fresh, and does not use processed products.

Graefewirtschaft attaches great importance to processing only fresh products. Its concept emphasises fresh and direct processing of products, as well as a short service life, operating frequently in school kitchens. It tries to find a balance between the desires and needs of children and a balanced healthy diet according to the standards of the German Society for Nutrition.

WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

We wanted to create decent jobs for migrants and refugees, and to offer good food products in our neighbourhood. We have chosen to start as a social enterprise, in order to prove that the concept of the social enterprise model works well.

Graefewirtschaft



Our main goal is not to maximise profit: other values are more important to us, like good and fair work conditions for migrants and refugees and at the same time implementing an offer of handmade cooking and organic food within our community.

MAIN GOALS

- Fresh and organic food .
- Handmade cooking.
- Healthy, multicultural, inexpensive meals.
- Good and fair working conditions.
- Integration and access to labour market.
- Recruitment, integration and training in the social enterprise for young NEETs (people not in employment, education or training).

SOCIAL IMPACT

Within the last seven years the Graefewirtschaft has employed more than 250 people and supported more than 200 refugees and migrants.

Today Graefewirtschaft serves today more than 2200 healthy and freshly cooked meals in 8 schools and 9 kindergartens.

We have one project in the framework of the “Federal ESF Integration Directive”, which is funded by the ESF and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Its main objective is Integration instead of exclusion. Watch the movie about us:

<http://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/ESF-Programmes/bmas/ESF-integration-directive.html>

BEST

Berlin Development Agency for Social Enterprises and Neighbourhood Economy presents through the Graefewirtschaft project a successful labour market policy strategy, which has given migrants a lasting career perspective. The model is transferable, independent of industry and target group.

AWARDS



365 Landmarks in the “Land of Ideas” 2011



PSD-Bank | Jury Prize awards 2015



Preis Soziale Stadt 2010



SPAIN
ALCORISA



START DATE:
1997



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: 12



Chocolates Artesanos Isabel is a small chocolate bakery in our village, Alcorisa, in the province of Teruel.

We have the ideal environment for creating and exploring with chocolate an uncharted territory of flavours, aromas and forms. We view chocolate as a jewel for the senses. But, as much as we want to please the palate, we are also aware of our responsibility towards the people and the environment.

We work with fair trade and ecological raw materials such as cocoa and sugar cane, and local products like extra virgin olive oil and Marcona almonds. It is really a pleasure to create a wide range of innovative chocolates from the best raw materials in order to offer natural, healthy and fair products.

We run a training course to teach a sustainable way to produce chocolate. We offer free training for single-parent families.

“Quality is our main priority, and we are satisfied when through hard work and know-how we meet the highest standards. But this is still not enough. We also feel concerned for the people that harvest our raw materials; we want to make sure that their living and working conditions are fair. We care about the Earth and the way we live in it.”

WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Our village is very small and is at risk of abandonment. Thanks to our excellence we try to help our community, especially the women. We are all women, and some of us work part-time in order to balance home and work life.

Our enterprise gives us the opportunity to reintegrate ourselves into the labour market through a training course and work experience. We pay special attention to single-parent families.

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





MAIN GOALS

- Respect for the person.
- Respect for the environment.
- Fair Trade to guarantee a living wage and an improvement in working conditions.
- Support of female employment.
- Reconciliation between work and private life.
- Labour integration.
- Organic products from local producers.
- Biodegradable and phosphate-free detergents.
- Reduction of packaging.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- 3 new women employed.
- 4 women reintegrated into the labour market.
- 30-hour training course.
- 3 free training courses for single-parent families.

AWARDS





ITALY

MERCATALE DI OZZANO DELL'EMILIA



START DATE:
2016



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
No
Logistic support from
cooperatives -members



EMPLOYEES: 4



Local to you is a platform that promotes social, organic and local farming while paying particular attention to the ethics of production. The project brings together some of the best Bolognese farms and social cooperatives, which work with disadvantaged people to facilitate their return to society.

The platform allows you to choose fresh and convenient products cultivated using exclusively organic methods without using synthetic chemicals, in order to enhance the entire agricultural ecosystem and exploit the natural fertility of the soil without environmental impact.

“The platform promotes an idea of food as a driver of sustainable, ethical, participatory, cultural and inclusive development. Bringing together various actors involved in food, Local to You contributes to the construction of local territorial development policies.”

Local to You is a critical and sustainable way to buy food. The platform is an opportunity to make the consumers well informed about what they eat. Local to You sells the best organic and seasonal products, available directly at home with just a few clicks.

The platform offers customised solutions for companies which want to provide their employees with deliveries of organic fruit and vegetables to the office and offers personalised delivery to the best restaurants in the area.

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY



Local to You is also present in the major regional markets in the Bologna area, and collaborates with local purchasing groups, linking our producers to final consumers by avoiding intermediate steps.



WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Local to You is a responsible choice for fairer trade because:

- It supports local producers by creating a virtuous economic circle and a more sustainable environment.
- It allows producers who cultivate excellence to distinguish themselves and offer fair prices.
- It believes in and supports social farming, which promotes social inclusion and employment, and is a tool for work integration, especially for people with low skills or disadvantages.
- It enables the consumer to make consciously ethical food purchases, which support the local economy and the processes of social inclusion and community-building. The role and impact of social enterprises in the creation of a sustainable agri-food system will depend in the long term on the ability to create a cultural change and critical consumer behaviour as well as on the ability to reach a critical mass capable of innovating and changing the more traditional patterns.

MAIN GOALS

The aim is to make the best products available on the market and to contribute to the economic development of the local area.

Through this business model, Local to You wants to contribute to the change towards a more participatory and responsible society.

Increasing the awareness of the importance of what we eat: seasonal, organic and nourishing food.

Supporting local cooperatives that ensure decent work for their employees.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- 3 social cooperatives involved.
- 6 social cooperative suppliers.
- 20 disadvantaged people involved.
- 250 families served per week.
- 4 private purchasing groups.
- 7 corporate purchasing groups.
- 4 regional weekly markets.
- 1 kindergarten.
- 2 farmhouses.
- 3 restaurants.
- 3 shops.
- 3,000 followers on Facebook.
- 500 followers on Instagram.
- 1500 subscriptions to the newsletter.



ESTONIA

TALLIN



START DATE:
2009



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: 10



Tagurpidi Lavka buys food products, especially organic products, from small farmers in rural areas of Estonia and sells them in and around Tallinn. It sells the products on markets and via an e-shop, where clients can order products in advance and have them delivered to their front door.

Tagurpidi Lavka informs its clients and the wider public about the advantages of buying and eating local food.

Tagurpidi Lavka reuses most of its packaging and uses as much biodegradable packaging as possible. It pays local farmers and producers a fair price for their products.

“Thanks to our activity, people who live in villages and small towns have an income. This is important to allow people to remain living in the countryside.”

It conducts information and awareness campaigns on the importance of proper food choices and improves citizen's awareness of sustainable behaviours.

“People buy apples or garlic from the other side of the world when they actually grow right here very well - we can easily grow our products and eat locally. The environmental impact of food could be much less if everywhere people ate more locally, knew the producers and farmers in their area, knew the value of food like a personal thing, knew where was grown.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Social enterprise is our tool to create change in society.

We want to change the way people understand food and how they relate to food.

We want to change how much environmental impact our food system has.

In a social enterprise all the decisions are made based on the social aims and not on profit, so in this mind set we can create positive change.

Social enterprise thinks differently and in a non-traditional way.

MAIN GOALS

Raising consciousness about healthy local food.

Reducing the environmental impact of food.

Supporting rural local areas, to prevent their desertification.

SOCIAL IMPACT

79 Farmers and small producers.

4681 internet orders.

More than 210 clients (every month).

Average additional income of €110 per month for their local farmers.

2 individuals started farming activities.



START DATE:
2008



“In our opinion, the objective of a sustainable food system is to produce healthy fresh food for people and not for profit, sustaining food sovereignty. This objective is the same as the objective of the social and solidarity economy - having at the centre of the activity people and not profit.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY



ASAT is organised as a voluntary-based initiative which builds a direct relation between smallholders and responsible consumers.

ASAT is part of the community supported agriculture system which is being developed in Romania with URGENCI support.

ASAT supports a form of alternative development for semi-subsistence households in the country, which can offer products of superior quality, under a mutually beneficial partnership, geared towards natural farming, fair payment, risk sharing and the benefits of quality agriculture and solidarity relationships between urban consumer groups and small farming.

ASAT aims to contribute to sustainable agriculture and to promote solidarity between cities and the countryside. It aims to provide consumers with healthy food at a fair and affordable price.

The ASAT model focuses on the need for new forms of solidarity between rural and urban areas.

How it works:

It forms groups of consumers (15-40 families) who decide to support a local producer through a partnership during the year. Consumers pay an advance (an early form of microcredit), and they share the organic farming risks with the farmer. The farmer undertakes to cultivate organically, as a condition of transparency about the price and the budget calculation. Producers also have to be transparent regarding farming activities (through a participative guarantee system) in order to build confidence and a long-term relationship with consumers. The price paid by consumers is a fair price,



covering all the costs of production, labour and social security, and allowing a decent living for the farmer. ASAT contributes information and awareness campaigns on the importance of healthy food.

WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

We consider ASAT to be part of the solidarity economy, which promotes ethical practices such as:

- A fair price for the producer – the price paid to producers is the real costs of production. The price mechanism is transparent to consumers. This is an important tool to raise awareness of the real price of food.

- Sharing the risks and benefits of natural production. Given that for a social enterprise the main objective is not to make a financial profit, it is possible to have a policy to make the products from a sustainable food system more affordable for a larger part of population, not only the people with money.

MAIN GOALS

- The human-scale production of crops and livestock adapted to a specific local context.
- Preserving the environment and biodiversity, production without chemical fertilisers or synthetic pesticides.
- Good food in terms of taste, health and with a low environmental impact.
- Support for local and sustainable agriculture.
- Decent work and respect for social standards for employees, including temporary and seasonal staff.
- Promoting transparency in the purchasing, production, processing and sale of agricultural products.
- No intermediary between producers and consumers.
- Setting each season a fair price between producers and consumers.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- Advice and support to over 250 families of consumers and relationships of solidarity and fairness.
- Support to 11 vegetable growers and more than 20 other farmers for other food products.
- Preservation of biodiversity: on average at least 25 different vegetables are grown on each vegetable farm, all of which are seasonally cropped and organically grown.

“Investment in information and education is a very important function for developing a sustainable food system. Social enterprises can play this role.”



BELGIUM
BRUXELLES



START DATE:
2017



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO public financial support for choice
Only for research and education



EMPLOYEES: 4
+ 1200 members that contribute with 3h of work / monthly



Collaborative supermarkets are emerging as a new, more family-friendly alternative to large retail stores.

BEES Coop, the first such supermarket in Brussels, operates thanks to its “special customers”. This “cooperative and participative” model is based on its members’ engagement, where buyers, owners and workers participate in the management of the small structure. The food products are organic, fair, short circuit and respectful of the environment, while the price policy is fair for all consumers while rewarding the producer properly for his work.

“The organisation’s cooperative design enables us to radically reduce the supermarkets running costs because the workers are volunteers. Everyone contributes 3 hours’ work every month according to a schedule, giving them the right to high-quality products, but at lower prices than in organic stores and similar shops.”

BEES Coop is a Brussels economic and social ecological cooperative. The idea, which was launched by more than a hundred people, aims to “make high-quality food financially accessible and allow people to reappropriate their food”. The co-operative wants to reconnect the consumer to the reality of production. Through food, **BEES Coop** becomes a space for living and communicating, which promotes diversity and mutual assistance, thereby strengthening the social network of the city.

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY



Launched in September 2014 by a group of citizens, the **BEES Coop** idea rapidly materialised around a buying group, whilst work on the opening of the supermarket got under way. The buying group tested products, initiated dynamic participation and informed itself on the subject of distribution. While waiting for the supermarket to be fully operational **BEES Coop** chose to test the system with a buying group and dry goods.



WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

We wanted to transfer our values and principles into a legal model that could represent us. In the logic of new governance we want to create a place of cooperation and participation, and to reduce costs to make food more accessible in contrast to unsustainable and improper consumption.

The social economy organisation is almost the only choice to reduce costs and make high-quality food more affordable for everyone.

BEES Coop has become a space for living

and communicating that promotes diversity and mutual assistance, promoting and supporting social cohesion and a sense of community.

BEES Coop aims for cost-effectiveness and financial independence, but does not aim to make a profit (it pays no financial dividend). In this spirit, BEES Coop has adopted the form of a cooperative company with limited liability and with a social aim, certified by the CNC (Conseil National de la Coopération in Belgium).

MAIN GOALS

- Making sustainable food accessible to the people.
- Promoting local economic growth.
- Creating a convivial area enabling the strengthening of social cohesion.
- Creating a fair price policy, for both consumers and producers.
- Adopting a policy of transparency regarding the products available, as well as the functioning of the supermarket.
- Raising public awareness of current consumer habits and their consequences on our health, our ecology, our economy.
- Fighting against food waste and overpackaging by promoting the sale of bulk food.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- 1,200 families as customers. This supports the creation of neighbourhood relations and social relationships.
- Currently in the test phase, 350 products for sale with €8,000 of sales excluding VAT.
- Working with 70% local suppliers, of which 90% are in direct sales.
- We associate at least 10 local associations working for social cohesion in the Schaerbeek district.
- 2 research projects for integrated logistics and the development of social cohesion, worth about €400,000 over 3 years, with 7 jobs created.
- Cooking courses for food sensitisation for precarious audiences, which created 1 job and involved 4 associations.
- Recovering unsold products, about 5% of sales.
- The waste organic products are recovered from the Schaerbeek collective gardens.



START DATE:
2011



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
The promoting authority is the Consortium of Social Cooperatives **'La Città Essenziale'**



EMPLOYEES: 6



Panecotto® project is the result of the ambition to promote and develop the resources of its territory by enhancing different aspects of the local traditions. It is an ethical business model, and more specifically an ethical franchise.

The key concept of **Panecotto®** is to promote the territory, from culture to tourism, wine and food, through a meeting place that is not only a tasting place or a restaurant, nor a bar or a cultural café, but rather is a glimpse of Basilicata "to enjoy".

This quite traditional concept is linked to an innovative, fascinating and involving image and to a management style that represents an added value in terms of a stronger involvement in social cohesion and in terms of paying greater attention to niche companies.

Panecotto® works with small local farms, recovering slow-food products that are little known and of great value. It is located in the stony landscape of Matera, a place recognised by UNESCO and of great tourist and cultural value.

"The network of small businesses and the quality of the products guarantee longevity. The capacity of the social enterprise was to create the network."

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

It's about the social integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market and the ability to obtain economic resources to invest in facilities for needy people and families.

MAIN GOALS

Valorisation of the typical products of Basilicata.

Promotion of the territory and its social, environmental, artistic and cultural features.

Slow food system.

Social integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market.

The impact is defined by our network, developed over 5 years.

SOCIAL IMPACT

44 local farms.

67 local products.

12 tourist facilities.

“The project is replicable in European areas that have valuable food and wine products but have lost their ability to distribute and market. The secret is to create a dedicated network or cluster.”

SOLIDALE ITALIANO

altromercato



ITALY



START DATE:
2011



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
It was financing by its shareholders :
Altromercato and CGM.



Solidale Italiano Altromercato was born in 2011 to promote products made in Italy by cooperatives, consortia and organisations active in problematic areas of the country, which adhere to fair trade values.

Solidale Italiano Altromercato is a platform where you can find excellent organic products which respect biodiversity. The good food market respects workers and the land, and contributes to the development of communities and territories.

The products present on the platform are selected according to the methods and principles of social and sustainable agricultural production, such as:

- the involvement of disadvantaged workers;
- the recovery of assets confiscated from the Mafia and areas subject to depopulation;
- a direct relationship between the producer and the consumers.
-

The short chain guarantees a fair distribution of value across the chain, ensuring good economic sustainability.

“From the basis of a profound sharing of values, the partners have committed themselves to make a real input into the Italian social economy through the application of the practices and instruments of fair trade.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

Solidale Italiano Altromercato is an agreement between social enterprises. The goal is to bring together social enterprises that produce high-quality food in a single platform to reach a wider and more sustainable market. Altromercato launched the Manifesto del Solidale Italiano, in collaboration with the Italian Association of Agricoltura Biologica (AIAB), the cooperative group CGM and Slow Food Italia.

MAIN GOALS

Ensuring fair wages and prices for producers and consumers.

Building direct, transparent and traceable supply chains for citizens' safety.

Protecting the rights of people and the environment against any exploitation of workers and land.

Facilitating the distribution of products from socially responsible enterprises.

Encouraging the social integration and economic sustainability of marginalised people.

Involving more and more manufacturers through clear, verifiable and shared criteria.

SOCIAL IMPACT

9 collaborations (from North to South of Italy).

36 products, coming from paths which reaffirm legality, to combat exploitation and promote social inclusion.

“Equity, cooperation, development and social inclusion, decent pay, economic sustainability and value to local production as well as respect for the environment are applied to support and enhance Italian agro-food and handicraft products.”

in collaboration with





PERMAFUNGI



BELGIUM
BRUXELLES



START DATE:
2013



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Yes



N° EMPLOYEES: 7+ 4
Trainees
socio-professional reintegration



“ This project will reduce transport, create jobs, train qualified staff and raise public awareness.”

PermaFungi is a project for urban agriculture and circular economy whose mission is to help make our cities more resilient.

PermaFungi recycles coffee grounds into two valuable products: oyster mushrooms and compost. This technique completely transforms waste into two useful products.

PermaFungi actively promotes sustainable development through social, economic and environmental actions in Brussels. This social enterprise produces and sells fresh mushrooms and compost, and is developing a network of decentralised production.

At the same time, people are important and **PermaFungi** wants to be a place where everyone can contribute: in fact the enterprise has established a participatory management and socio-professional integration programme and employs interns and volunteers.

WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

From the start, social and environmental issues were critical factors for the founders.

When they started their enterprise they wanted to show that production and consumption habits could be changed by focusing more on environmental and social issues than exclusively on the logic of profit.

The social enterprise model represented the best way to develop their mission based on the three pillars of sustainability.

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





MAIN GOALS

- Upcycling agro-industrial waste.
- Producing healthy and organic food.
- Creating low-skilled jobs.
- Becoming independent of fossil energy sources.
- Promoting local economy.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- More than 15 tons of recycled coffee grounds produce:
- 3,500 kg of oyster mushrooms (in 2016 alone).
- 14 tons of fertiliser.
- 3,300 km by bike to collect coffee grounds (350 kg of CO2 saved).
- 5 people employed.
- 22 workshops for 250 participants.

“We believe that every worker can contribute to decisions. Over a year, we have set up a participatory management system and the results are promising.”

AWARDS in 2016



Prize Prix de l'économie sociale



Prix des générations futures



Best Sustainable Partnership Award



Parmi les 5 lauréats européens



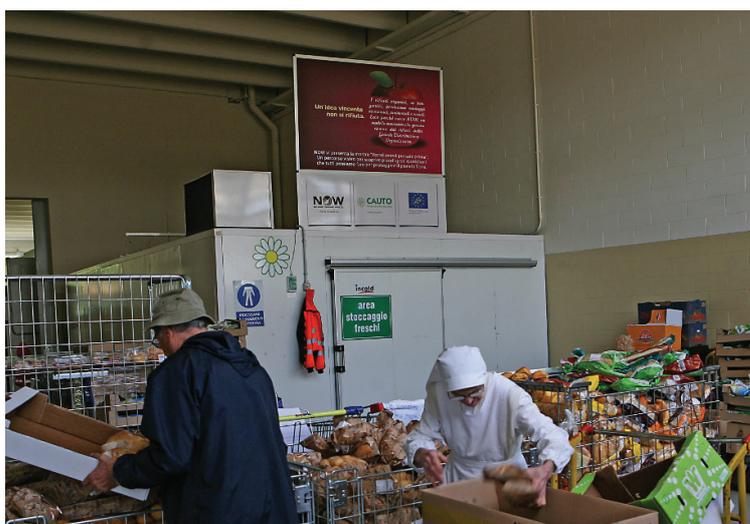
START DATE:
1995



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: **450**



CAUTO was born in 1991 as an association to recover food surpluses from the local markets. In 1995 it became a cooperative, which rescued food from large distributors.

CAUTO is an acronym for 'Cantiere autolimitazione' which means 'construction site for self-restraint'.

Food retrieved by **CAUTO** is used for human, animal or composting purposes.

Food which is still edible is redistributed among associations that are committed to helping indigent people, whose numbers have, unfortunately, increased in recent years.

At the same time, **CAUTO** has links to networks of small farmers who collect food to feed their animals. Fruit and vegetables which are oddly shaped though still edible can be used to make jams and preserves.

CAUTO has a circular economy model. It also promotes food education projects on reducing food waste in schools and in the territory.

CAUTO works to avoid good food being wasted. Food is also a social tool to reconnect the community and to help integration, especially of disadvantaged people, through paths of labour integration.

“The social cooperative is able to mitigate an increasingly emerging anger in society, generated by many problems such as low income, unemployment and loneliness. Social enterprises know the territory and are present to meet the community’s needs.”

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY



“Social cooperatives are trees that contrast with the social desertification of the community.”



WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

CAUTO was born in 1991 as an association of youth that recovered surplus food from the local markets. It became a type B social cooperative whose mission is to integrate people into the labour market.

CAUTO believes that the group is the key factor, because within the group each member can be valorised, and especially the weaker ones can become stronger. Through manual work the group can recognise

the dignity of people and becomes part of society.

CAUTO's other important mission is to protect the environment. We have only this world. We need to learn to limit ourselves. The strength of cooperatives is to know the territory. They aim to solve problems and meet the needs of the community.

MAIN OBJECTIVE

- Job integration , especially of vulnerable people.
- Preservation of the environment.
- Reduction of the food waste.
- Dignity of labour.
- Development of the territory.
- Build paths of reciprocity.
- Build networks with local actors.

SOCIAL IMPACT

- 3.000.000 Kg of food rescued from the local supermarkets.
- 22 new jobs from waste management.
- 4.000 km2 the area where we made environmental education.
- 150 vulnerable people integrated into employment.
- 80 local associations involved.



FRANCE
PARIS



START DATE:
2016



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: **4**
volunteers -
soon 2 employees

Recycling
Circular economy
Reduce food waste

Sharing economy
/ collaborative
/ of platforms



Social & solidarity economy

HopHopFood aims to develop food solidarity areas, while reducing food waste of individuals and households, via a free digital platform.

HopHopFood is a platform which geolocates and connects people who have, at any given moment, not enough good food and those who occasionally or generally have too much food or want to donate it.

This simple, fast and fun platform will be launched in France before the end of 2017. It will be accessible from any smartphone, tablet or PC.

HopHopFood creates spaces of solidarity and food exchanges or donations.

WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

We are at the heart of the 3 sustainable economies: circular, sharing, and social and solidarity economies.

Circular economy: HopHopFood participates in the recycling of food and the reduction of food waste.

Sharing Economy: HopHopFood creates spaces of solidarity between populations that otherwise do not meet. It also participates in the economics of platforms because its model of solidarity creation uses an electronic platform. It is a collaborative economy where the internet and populations "collaborate" in exchanging food.

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





Social and solidarity economy: HopHopFood is a non-profit organisation, one of the traditional statutes of the social economy in France (and in Europe). It is also part of the solidarity economy because it aims to have a positive social impact on vulnerable people.

MAIN GOALS

Our objective is to promote food sharing by means of a simple, fast and pleasant geolocation application.

Our approach is that there is no reason to stigmatise those who have less or blame those who have too much. It is the difficulty of bringing these two populations closer together that must be combated.

SOCIAL IMPACT

When the platform is launched, and food solidarity zones are tested then created, we will be able to monitor:

Food which would have been wasted and was donated via the digital platform.

Number of donors and receivers of food via the digital platform.

Number of locations where food solidarity has been enabled thanks to the digital platform.

Number of people in the food solidarity zones who have been impacted by the donations through the digital platform.

- Tons of food saved from being wasted.

“In France, several start-up businesses have tried to launch digital platforms for the exchange of food between individuals (C to C). All failed, and from C to C have now decided to concentrate on B to B, B to A or B to C. None of them had the ambition to go further and develop zones of food solidarity as we have. In food exchange for free, only not-for-profit entities can survive.”*

*A – Association; B – Business; C – Consumers

ORTI SENZA FRONTIERE

Project of CS&L CONSORZIO SOCIALE



ITALY
MONZA BRIANZA



START DATE:
2016



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Fondo Hope*



PARTICIPANTS:
30 migrants



CS&L Consoirzio Sociale is a consortium of 35 social cooperatives. It was created to promote the development of social and business networks between social cooperatives within the framework of the law of Italian social cooperation, which divides the areas of work into two: social services and work integration.

The Orti Senza Frontiere project carries out vocational training for work in farms and agricultural cooperatives. The aim of the project is to train asylum seekers and refugees and give them useful skills to develop an active integration and to help them to find a way to regain their independence, even in the case of political refugees whose asylum applications have been rejected. It is a model to build job prospects and patterns of integration. It includes a horticultural training course based on organic and synergetic agriculture principles, and one on forestry, which covers several interconnected plant species.

This is a training course designed for people who are in transit. The initiative respects and enhances the person and the community, generating fresh, tasty organic products without using land, but by recovering land that otherwise may remain abandoned.

The project aims to develop short-chain markets through buying groups (GAS). This initiative allows people to save money and eat healthily, while promoting an environmentally friendly model of production, which is certainly a valuable investment for the future of the territory and its community.

"It's a small pilot experience, but it shows that we can do more with them."

*Fondo Hope

A self-financing fund promoted by the cooperative consortium. It works by reallocating a portion of the daily fee received for the reception of refugees. This share is reinvested in projects on themes such as job placement, training, and assistance in finding an alternative solution in the event that a political refugee's asylum request is rejected.

STARTING POINT OF ACTIVITY





WHY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

The principles that guide social enterprises are respect for people, the environment and the development of the territory.

We are a social and agricultural cooperative, whose aim is to create and consolidate in three years a social agricultural cooperative that cultivates, produces and transforms not only agricultural products but also relationships, approaches and ways of looking at each other.

MAIN GOALS

The aim of the project is to test training courses that can teach some basic skills in agricultural practices, in order to successfully integrate migrants and refugees into society and work.

The project gives migrants the opportunity to learn new techniques, natural and manual, in an area that interests them.

The training course will help them find employment in Italy. In the medium to long term, the project aims to promote their autonomous participation in social and economic life.

The project wants to cultivate organic gardens and recover local practices and traditions.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Spontaneous and active participation of migrants.

30 migrants trained in new agricultural techniques.

From 1 to 3 vegetable gardens created.

“Social enterprises are involved in sustainable food issues but we are still quite small. There are a large number of sustainable development activities, to address which our cooperatives will have to become more and more networked in order to agree shared strategies and concrete proposals.”

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