

COST Action 866 – Green Care in Agriculture

CONFERENCE OF VIENNA – 20-22 june 2007

Working Group 3 (policies)

**100 ideas
for development of green care**

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Bruxelles (4/5 December 2006) - wg3 conclusions:
collect cases and short descriptions of care farms from different countries

- **why**: to demonstrate the diversity in care farm initiatives across Europe and inspire ourselves and policy makers
- to present **inspiring examples** of green care in a very appealing way; beautiful book publication; later eventually on public website
- **how**: adopting **criteria of SoFar** and the SoFar result as an example with **additional cases** from missing countries
- **working title**: 100 ideas for development of green care

**Working title derives from an Italian document
about 2000-2006 structural funds programming**

100 idee per lo sviluppo

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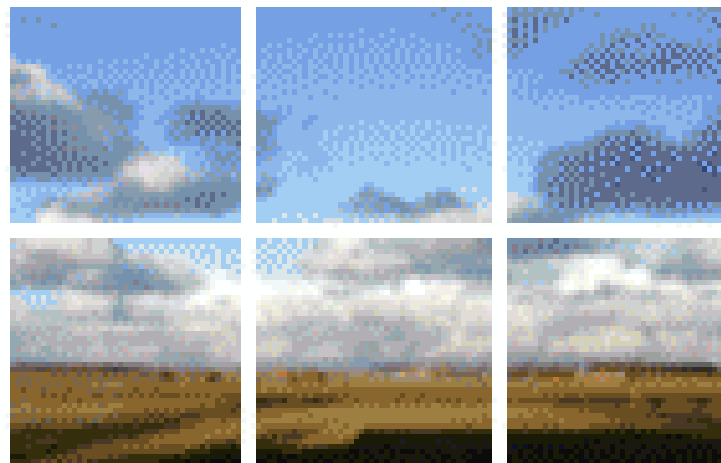
100 ideas for development





CENTO IDEE PER LO SVILUPPO

SCHEDE DI PROGRAMMA 2000-2006



a cura del
Dipartimento per le politiche di sviluppo e di coesione

Catania, 2-4 dicembre 1998

CENTO IDEE PER LO SVILUPPO

SCHEDE DI PROGRAMMA 2000-2006

INDICE GENERALE

scheda = card

IV. Idee-programma delle amministrazioni locali

V. Idee-programma delle amministrazioni centrali

VI. Analisi e proposte

100 ideas for development of green care

The implementation

- Francesco and myself reviewed the Sofar form to be sure it was correct in the COST 866 context
- Francesco sent to Thomas the empty form used by Sofar and a filled form regarding an Italian case as example
- On February 2007 Thomas sent a specific mail to all wg3 participants of the December COST meeting in Brussels to collect some more cases in preparation of Vienna meeting

NO ANSWER ARRIVED

NEXT STEPS

- **to discuss & to confirm the objective (now)**
- **to share the Sofar criteria (now)**
- **(home) to fill the standard form (4 pages) for the most important initiatives (2 at least). No Sofar but Cost countries (Austria, Greece, Finland, Norway Sweden..) could add their experiences; Sofar and Cost countries could add new cases**
- **(home) to give a short description (1 page) for other cases**
- **to define a little group to collect and analyse the answers in view of the book publication**



So Far Social Farming

Social Services in Multifunctional Farms

Since ever agricultural and rural societies, all over the Europe, have developed experiences promoting diverse

- home page
- partners
- social farming
- objectives
- work plan
- expected outcomes
- contact us
- brochure
- links

<http://sofar.unipi.it>

In Expected outcomes

State of the art



Agriculture is Social

environment for social care farming. The project started in may, 2006 and has duration of 30 months.



EU Vi Framework Programme

So Far stands for social farming. Complete title of the project is "Social Services in Multifunctional Farms"

So Far is funded by the European Union as part of the research priority 8.1.B.1.1—"Modernisation and Sustainability of Agriculture and Forestry, including their multifunctional role in order to ensure the sustainable development and promotion of rural areas", in the VI Framework Programme for research and technological development



Agriculture is Peaceful



home page

partners

social farming

objectives

work plan

expected outcomes

contact us

brochure

links

"State of the art" and cases

Slovenia



In Slovenia, as in many EU countries social farming is not organised yet, but rather a patchwork like reality mostly developed on voluntary bases, bottom-up actions, and not supported by any specific policies....

- [See more about it...](#)

Italy



The term "agricoltura sociale" (i.e. social farming) has recently entered the scene of rural development in Italy, embracing a wide constellation of different practices that are emerging in our territories; experiences that, in many cases, were born as bottom-up actions...

- [See more about it...](#)

France



The Netherlands



The combination of agricultural work and care is not new. For a long time it was common that individuals who were 'different' and could not participate fully in society, worked on a farm...

- [See more about it..](#)

Flanders / Belgium



According to the most recent count of the Support Centre for Green Care in September 2006, over 200 care farms are more or less active in Flanders...

- [See more about it...](#)

Germany



COST FORM (pages 1-2)

SO FAR

Description of cases – Italy

A. C.

A social and organic farm for disadvantaged categories and all citizens



The case, in brief

"A.C." is a farm run by a social cooperative for labour integration (so-called "B" kind). It was started more than 25 years ago by some members of a Christian inspired community in the area of "Roman Castles", nearby the city of Rome.

Since its beginning, farming has been conceived as a means for social and labour inclusion of disabled and socially excluded people. In this sense, "A.C." includes vulnerable persons as employed members, trainees and/or volunteers in occupational therapeutic activities.

"A.C." appears today as a very vital and multifunctional farm, open to the territory, to which it offers didactic activities for schools, a farm-restaurant and a food shop, equipped picnic / recreational areas, meetings and initiatives of diverse kind. A parallel society doing relevant business in the retailing of "organic" and "ethical" food has been recently created.

The farm has become a reference place not only for disadvantaged persons or social sector, but also for all citizens of Roman area. Today, the cooperative defines itself as a "social farm" and is actively integrated within an emerging network working for ethical and social farming at regional and national scale.

Key-words

- Social cooperation
- Social farm
- Organic farming
- Mental and physical handicap
- Social exclusion
- Labour integration
- Occupational rehabilitation
- Training
- Didactic farm
- "Bio-ethical" food
- Direct selling
- Biologic food retailing
- City farm

SO FAR

Description of cases – Italy

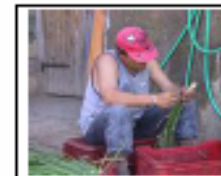
Beginning of the project

In 1966, in the town of Fermo in central Italy (Marche region) a small group of so-called disadvantaged persons together with a priest and some volunteers start a new communitarian initiative, to react to a threaten of social exclusion. The community – named C. – inspired by social and Christian values, have created progressively new groups through decades, that are today spread all over the country (14 groups in 10 regions, including more than 500 people and getting in touch with at least other 7.000 persons each year).

"A.C." is a spin-off of C. community, born in 1978 in Grottaferrata – a small town in a residential, hilly area, named "Roman Castles", next to the city of Rome. The founding priest and some physical handicapped persons create a first family-group, going to live together in a farm-house with 3 hectares annexed, donated by a religious body. The farm-house starts giving shelter to excluded and disabled youngsters, carrying out diverse activities (agriculture, handicraft, gardening services), with the aid of social workers, volunteers and "conscientious objectors".

In the 90s, "A.C." has become a social cooperative for labour integration ("B" kind), that is a "non for profit" enterprise having the aim of integrating disadvantaged categories in labour. The farm have progressively reinforced linkages within the local system, answering to diverse needs and requests expressed by local socio-health services or directly by families. Agriculture was also expanded and qualified (i.e. scale enlargement, diversification, conversion to organic and certification of produce).

Still with the purpose of favouring labour integration of disadvantaged categories, during the 90s a training centre for organic farming is created. Since 1997, educational and labour training is offered through programmes carried out in cooperation with public bodies. More recently, in 2004, an old rural building was restored and transformed into a restaurant (having special facilities for disabled persons). A hall for meetings and an equipped, outdoor area for didactic and recreational activities have been recently created also. These activities are part of a new concept of "social agro-tourism" that the farm is promoting.



"The group guided by Milly and his husband, two disabled persons of great humanity and cultural depth, immediately starts farming with the purpose to create a living and labour place that could be "normal" and not mere relief work" (A.C., brochure)



COST FORM (pages 3-4)

SO FAR

Description of cases – Italy

Activities today

The cooperative has today 24 members, of whom 8 are disadvantaged persons (physical and mental disabilities). At present, other 10 persons are involved as trainees and/or in occupational rehabilitative activities. Training activities are carried out in cooperation with local administrations and are partially funded through ESF. "Socio-therapeutic" integration involves ex-addicts: it is run on the basis of agreements with local socio-health services and do not provide any compensation for the farm.

Farms' produce is highly diversified. It comprehends: vegetables, poultry and rabbits, daily produce of eggs (1100 per day, in average), honey (200 beehives), olive's oil (13 ha) and quality branded wine ("frascati d.o.c.", 5 ha) – all certified as "organic". The cooperative has two food shops named "C. bio", one on the farm and in the other one in Rome. They sell their own produce and a wide spectrum of other organic labelled food.

The restaurant is experimenting relevant success and is becoming an increasing important activity. It offers a cuisine based on farm's food. It has special facilities to welcome disabled persons and it aims at having a "social" nature (e.g. hosting groups). Moreover, the cooperative promotes didactic initiatives for schools, seminars and meetings concerning diverse social topics and issues, music concerts and parties open to all citizens.

More recently the cooperative has created a distinct commercial society named "bio-solidale distribuzioni" (i.e. solidarity-bio retailing) that is developing a relevant business in the retailing of organic food (mainly vegetables). This activity has started by the delivering of farm's produce in some food shops in the city and province of Rome. Then, it was progressively extended, bringing to the retailing of produce coming from national and international organic food markets. Today the society supplies 15.000 daily meals for school canteens, 15 specialised food shops, and also several organised purchasing groups (supplying "baskets" for a minimum value of 150 €). The next plan is to extend the range of products – including packaged food (e.g. pasta, biscuits, tinned food), various kinds of cold meat (i.e. salami, ham, etc.) and cheese.

*"A. C....
where the
authenticity of
the fruits of the
land is joint
with human
solidarity"
(web site)*



SO FAR

Description of cases – Italy

Prospects

With the creation of specialised retailing and agro-tourism (i.e. restaurant, facilities for educational, recreational and social activities) "A.C." is aiming at strengthening its role as "social farm" (this is a term used by the same players) in the area. Particularly the aim is to: "creating spaces open to youngsters, families, and more in general, to all local inhabitants, where meetings and debates on diverse issues are organised; the creation of these places for meeting and aggregation represent an important milestone for the cooperative; they allow the farm to open more itself to the outside and enhance its social role" (web site)

As stated by Semmi (2005), the special location of A.C. – "in a hybrid territory between the rural and the urban, immediately close to the town's centre of Grottaferata (municipality with 19.000 people) and next to the capital" – appears as a crucial strength of this case, well comprehended by the same players, since the beginning of their activities.

Recent evolution seems to strengthen this special relation (e.g. complementarity / integration) between the rural and the urban. A.C. may be viewed today as a real "city farm" – a biologic and social reserve for urban people's needs (- needs of "ordinary and special" kinds). Societal demand for such spaces and services seem to be crescent vis-à-vis a still limited offer. The cooperative seems to be very aware of its role and potential as shown through its recent initiatives – initiatives that are likely to produce relevant economic results in the next future. Definitely, as Semmi affirms (2005), A.C. may be viewed as a model of multifunctional farm, in which the social component plays a pivotal role.

The cooperative is also integrated in multiple networks and is in touch with key stakeholders in social and agricultural sectors, at local, regional and national levels; comprehending actors of public institutions and civil society organisations. Particularly the cooperative is connected to an emerging network in Latium (including the University of Viterbo and actors of social and agricultural sectors) and works actively to promote concepts and practices of "social farming"



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SHORT DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE (1 page -A)

1. C. (B social coop)

General aspects and history of the project

Specificity	Socio-agricultural initiative offering “occupational therapy” for social/care services’ users and aimed at creating opportunities of labour integration for disabled persons. It has strong interconnections with other socio-rehabilitative and occupational therapy initiatives which create a relevant consortium of social cooperatives in their whole, in Veneto region (North-East of Italy). They have sound cooperative relations with institutions too.
Agricultural component	The farm has 15 hectares managed biologically. It has both vegetable and animal produce (particularly pigs and poultry). It has a food shop and it carries out educational activities for school children. It includes also a crafts’ laboratory where disabled persons work too.
Social/care component	It carries out daily activities for social/care services’ users (“occupational rehabilitation”). A number of disabled persons are also employed as paid workers
Start and evolution	The initiative was started at the beginning of the 90s, by a group of persons having previous experience in the world of syndicates and/or social/care. The land and the farm’s buildings were offered by the municipality, to which they belong. In parallel, occupational socio-rehabilitative activities within industrial field were also developed. Today these are distinct, however very integrated realities – a consortium of social cooperatives with different specificities which closely work together with local social/care public bodies. A sheltered workshop (offering day and night hospitality) has been recently created too.

SHORT DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE (1 page-B)

Activities today

Project staff and labour

The staff is represented by and educator + 5 social workers + a technician leading the agricultural work. 3 volunteers join the staff regularly too.

Clients/ Participants

12 persons with psychiatric problems are involved + 3 disabled persons are employed as paid workers

Funding

Daily attendance fees are provided for the group of 12 persons (40 € per person).

Economic situation

Costs and incomes are balanced. Agriculture is the main source of income (49%). The shop (33%) and social/care (18%) provides for the rest. However investments were made possible by the income of other activities - developed in parallel through other co-operatives (socio-rehabilitation, industrial production).

Effects

Relevant effects on all sides (e.g. physical , mental, social, community, societal, etc.)

SHORT DESCRIPTION EXAMPLE (1 page-C)

Side dimensions and prospects

Landscape care

Special agro-environmental measures (e.g. hedgerows, arable land) are applied and landscape work is thought to be well suited for participants.

Networking, institutional environment

Actively involved in specific circuits. Very well integrated with local social/care bodies and with institutions. Actively promoting social cooperation development.

And now

**GOOD
WORK!**

