



SOURCE

Boosting SOcial and Organic farming for inclUusive and sustainable gRowing eConomiEs

Newsletter n. 02
09/2023

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STRONG RELATIONS BETWEEN ORGANIC AND SOCIAL FARMING

The medium-term goal set out in the Farm-to-Fork Strategy is to **increase the proportion of areas under organic farming** throughout Europe. The multifunctionality of agriculture has long been the basis of rural development measures. The social function, i.e. the taking over of public tasks from the municipality and state-run institutions, the integration and reintegration of specific target groups into society, is also an important part of this multifunctionality.

The **connection of organic farming with social farming is especially justified**, because in social farming, reaching a high level of productivity in agriculture is limited, and it can be achieved in the traditional forms of farming only through technological modernization and increasing labour productivity. Here, non-profit goals and profit interests contradict each other, but at the same time, social farms must also provide adequate income in order to be viable and represent a real solution for the integration of certain social groups.

That is why agricultural sectors that make it possible to achieve a high production value in a small area and have a relatively high labour demand are more likely to be the activity area of

the social farm. **The organic sector is particularly suitable for the area of activity in a social farm**, since a high production

value can be produced in a unit area, with a high labour demand. Organic horticultural crops require a lot of manual work and can produce a high production value in a small area.

Another important issue in favour of social organic farming, although research in this direction has not yet been carried out, it is likely that, in addition to environmental protection, a fairly large proportion of organic farmers also have a higher willingness to social responsibility.

THE SOURCE PROJECT

SOURCE is an ERASMUS+ Project financed by KA210-VET - Small-scale partnerships in vocational education and training. Its main **objective** is to strengthen the connection between Social Farming and Organic Farming by **supporting upskilling processes** of farmers and aspirants to spread organic and social farming for sustainable and inclusive ecosystems. The project will contribute to the **improvement of the existing training practices** and to design a common vet syllabus for the so-called “social organic farmer” by boosting green innovation and the transition to sustainable production and inclusive societies in the future.



Co-funded by
the European Union

2021-1-IT01-KA210-VET-000034559

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The implemented activities will be the following:

- Collection of best practices on social and organic farming at European level and analysis to create a knowledge baseline as common ground for future development on Social Farming and Organic Farming;
- Social-organic farmer profile description and social-organic farmer vocational training syllabus to identify social-organic farmers' skills and competences;
- Co Creation of policy recommendation to boost social and organic farming through innovative curricula

INTERVIEWS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OF SOCIAL ORGANIC FARMERS

In-depth interviews of the 3 countries were collected and analysed to identify the most important subject areas of the above-mentioned vocational training.

The interviews were conducted with social workers, organic farmers and educators, in equal proportions from each country. The interviewees also contributed to determine the subject areas of the training with their valuable comments.

Finally, based on all of this, the most important skills and competencies to be acquired during the training were identified, that is, what profile a social organic farmer should have after completing the training.

The analysis highlighted the important role of attitude and the view formation during training.

SHORT-TERM JOINT STAFF TRAINING IN GREECE

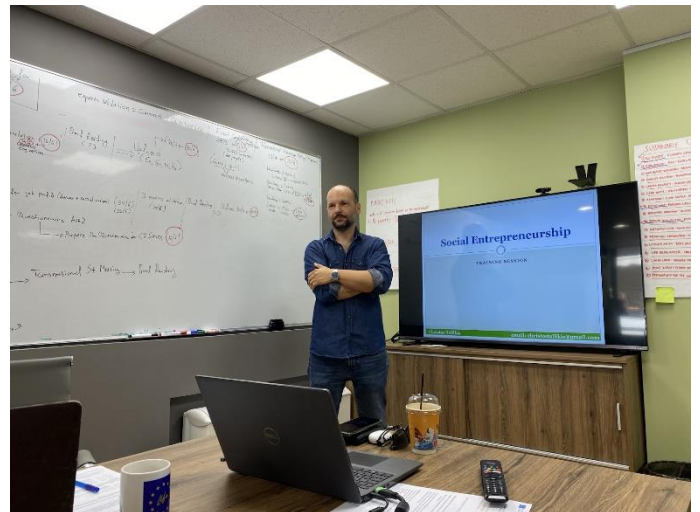
The next important milestone of the project was the 3-day training organised by the Greek partner (NeAGen) in Athens, which main task was to discuss the policy recommendation plan for social organic farming.



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING SESSION IN GREECE

On the last day of the training, with the help of an invited instructor (Dr. Christos Tsilikis, PhD in Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship Advisor of the Municipality of Athens, Mentor of Professional Chamber of Athens, Member of Solidarity Consulting Network), we reviewed the organisations belonging to the social economy, their scope of tasks and activities, as well as the most important related concepts.

The most important characteristics of the social entrepreneurship are the followings: privately owned and formally organised with the autonomy of decision; freedom of membership; created to meet their members' needs through the market; decision making and any distribution of profits are not directly linked to capital or fees contributed by each members; each members have one vote; all events take place through democratic and participatory decision making process; social economy includes not only the social enterprises.



It should be emphasised that social farming can have the legal form of a social enterprise. Social farming usually relies on private funding and grants, while social enterprises can run a business and make a profit.

FARM VISIT – EQUALACT SOCIAL, HOLARGOS ATHENS

On the third day of the training, the participants visited a social garden in Holargos Athens, and got acquainted with their work, the target group, their scope of activities, and the infrastructure available to them. The Equalact Social is an initiative of the local society in collaboration with the Municipality of Holargos, providing social services to people with disabilities helping them earn a small salary by selling their products to local farm markets.

The participants were able to learn about the main challenges, the most important limiting factors and the successes of the social garden.



The target group of the social garden is currently adults with autism spectrum disorder over 18 years of age. They grow vegetables and mushrooms that are sold on the local market.



The area available for the production of vegetables is the size of a kitchen garden, so they are able to produce a very small quantity of products, and the income from this is also low. However, the therapeutic effect is outstanding.

They mainly started from the field of social work and it is a big challenge for them to provide the necessary agricultural expertise. They would greatly need specialist advice in this area.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The conclusion drawn after the exchange of experience and information can be that, in addition to subsidies, the establishment of a legal environment and tax system supporting the operation has a great role to play. There is also a need for a training that combines the organic and social fields. In this way, a social worker coming from the social field could acquire agricultural knowledge. The appropriate expertise in the field of organic farming is even more important, since this is a particularly knowledge-intensive sector. Furthermore, the socially sensitive organic farmer would have the opportunity to acquire knowledge related to social work.

The above-mentioned conclusion is supported by the practical experience gained in connection with the project. The visited farm also considers this to be the most limiting factor. There is a lack of professional guidelines and expert advice in the field of their gardening activities.



FROM THE SYLLABUS

Attitude

According to the analysis, attitude is the most important competence area in all participating countries because organic farming also assumes a kind of social sensitivity.

Emphasis in training areas

The basics of farming are important for everyone, but from the social workers' point of view, they would rely on the farmer's professional knowledge. Nevertheless, specific topics such as soil and plant science are even more important if the garden wants to produce for the market and does not function only as a therapeutic location.

Self-reflection and motivation

The learner of the social organic farm course must be clear about why s/he chooses this profession.



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