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Work Package 2: CSO Participation in Community-Supported Agriculture
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Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) as a Model of Local Food System

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1 Workshop aims

Our case study exemplifies community-supported agriculture (CSA), which is a cooperative model of agriculture and food distribution. According to the UK Soil Association:

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a relationship of mutual support between a farmer and those who eat the food they produce. It is a partnership between farmers and consumers where the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared. As well as reconnecting people with the land

and their food, it can give farmers and growers a secure income and also helps to create a sense of community.

1.1 Focus on local food systems

Our initial case study, a CSA garden initiative, is entitled *Orti Solidali* (solidarity gardens) *Divino Amore*, named after the district in Rome where the garden is located. This initiative arose from networking between CSOs working in different fields (e.g. social inclusion, scientific research), a farm co-operative which works in the Rome area, and the Fondazione dei Diritti Genetici (FDG). The *Orti Solidali* is a peri-urban garden supported by a direct agreement between the local community and local farmers.

In the first workshop organized by the WP2 team, we aimed:

- to present the results of the study so far and
- to discuss, together with external experts and civil society organisations (CSOs), the main difficulties that arose during the study and that are common to other local food systems (LFS).

Therefore we named this workshop “*CSA as a model of local food system*”. We invited representatives from several knowledge areas: academic experts, national CSOs, local groups involved in LFS initiatives, and the *abbonati* (subscribers) from our CSA. The workshop name came from the main question – *Is CSA a good model of local food system?* – that we asked participants to answer in their contribution.

1.2 Broader involvement

Integral to our overall aim, the preparation sought to involve various expertise and experiences, in particular:

Researchers and experts from the academic world

According to the first objective of the CREPE project, we wanted to enlarge our CSA network by involving more researchers that could contribute to improve the research activities.

The workshop therefore represented an opportunity to present the WP2 preliminary results and consequently to explain what kind of contribution we expected from them.

According to their availability, this involvement represents the first step toward the “CSA advisory committee” that should contribute to the analysis of the CSA model from an interdisciplinary approach.

Practical experiences from other CSOs

According to the first objective of the CREPE project, we wanted to enlarge our CSA network involving CSOs from different national regions.¹

1 “1. Capabilities: To strengthen CSOs' capacity to participate in research, while engaging with diverse perspectives and expertise, thus facilitating co-operation between researchers and non-researchers” (from CREPE Technical Annex).

The CSOs we involved mostly work in urban or peri-urban contexts; they run projects related with urban agriculture, social agriculture and food production.

Their presence in the workshop represented the opportunity to share experiences that could help us to solve the difficulties emphasized in our first report.

Considering that the CSA model is not really known in Italy, the workshop represented also the opportunity to explain this LSF model to the participants. The discussion also highlighted the opportunity to create a CSA network on a national scale.

Stakeholders from *Orti Solidali* CSA

As described in the results of our WP2 first-stage report, the *Orti Solidali* CSA had a difficulty in gaining the involvement of all CSOs that had been initially involved.

This lack of involvement affected the economic and social sustainability of the project, its implementation and above all its communitarian spirit – the core of every CSA initiative.

The workshop therefore offered an opportunity to involve different stakeholders, to explain and discuss together especially about the critical points of the project, and possibly find solutions to the above problems.

2 Preparation process

WP2 focuses around an experimental case study, which required the organization of a team of “researchers/observers” that could study the CSA model and its knowledge networks from an insiders’ viewpoint. This viewpoint allowed us to see that many problems that arose are common to other local food systems, especially ones that are not supported by institutional funds – i.e. most of them. This influenced us to shape the workshop in a way that could answer questions about, for example, financial problems for community projects, the question of voluntary labour, etc.

Therefore, when we started thinking about whom to invite, we decided to balance the list in favour of external CSOs, especially groups/civil society/environmental activists that run a project with of common features with our case study – for example, a grass roots project, in the field of social agriculture, starting with no funds. This was an attempt to use cooperative research to solve common problems, and if impossible to solve, at least to debate these problems with actors that are dealing with them.

With this aim in mind, we wrote a document explaining the perspective from which we organized our study, our expectations of it, our interest in common issues, especially on the several aspects of sustainability (see Appendix n° 2)

In this document we highlighted the problems of the agricultural system, focusing mostly on urban agriculture and peri-urban agriculture in the urban green belts. Then we explained that, from our experience of observing/researching an LFS, we found 3 big families of problems that are faced by every urban LFS:

- agriculture: what kind of agronomic technique for a urban LFS is preferred;
- community issues: how to create community around agricultural issues and how can a community support agricultural good practices;
- sustainable urban planning: how to make space for agriculture in urban areas;

We asked every guest to answer to one of these questions in his/her contribution for the workshop.

From appendix n° 2:

- **Agriculture:** *what kind of agronomic technique for urban LFS?*

Primary industry has a double responsibility towards environmental issues. On one side it contributes to the environmental footprint on a significant measure. On the other side it could actively contribute to its decrease.

How do agronomic choices relate to the environmental, social and health issues in agriculture?

- **Community:** *Community that supports agriculture, agriculture that builds the community*

The main pillar of the CSA model is the building of new networks between farmers and consumers and between consumers themselves as well.

The experience with the Orti Solidali showed us the difficulties in keeping this relationship and solving the unavoidable problems arising between stakeholders with different needs, motivations, aspirations and knowledges.

- **Sustainable Urban Planning:** *agriculture makes space for itself*

The recovery of marginal areas inside and outside the city, the protection of the territory, the management of public space.

Agriculture needs space. And in the city space is in competition with other usages, often speculative usages. And agriculture has no effective means to compete with these alternative usages of such public spaces.

CSA as collective agricultural recovery of urban spaces

This draft programme already reveals the structure that we had in mind for the organization of the contributions/presentations of our guests.

3 Participants

As already explained in the first section, we managed to involve a diverse mix of stakeholders: meaning experts from the academic world, other CSOs and citizen groups active on LFS on their territories, and the organizer and the subscribers of our case study CSA, the Orti solidali.

The workshop involved around 25 participants and included:

From the academic world we managed to invite 2 teachers and two PhD students, all interested in LFS but from diverse backgrounds.

Giorgio Conti, professor from the Environmental Studies Department of the Ca'Foscari University in Venice, came to discuss the re-thinking of our anthropological relationships between spaces, urban and rural areas, and a new conception of economy.

Maria Fonte, professor from the University of Naples "Federico II", brought a contribution on local food between neo-liberalism and new food communities.

Also attending were 2 PhD students, both of them studying Sustainable Urban planning, one from the University of Rome LaSapienza and one from the Berlage Institut in Rotterdam.

Chiara Ortolani talked with us about how to reconnect relationships in urban areas through making a community project such as a garden. She also presented us a project of community urban gardens born in Rome in a disused train station in the neighbourhood of Monteverde.

Amir Djail presented the problem of urban agriculture on the biggest context of urban governance. He showed us several gaps that are affecting urban agriculture – not only where and how to produce, but as well the production of all those immaterial goods (such as ideas, knowledges, imaginary and relationships) which are essential to create a more sustainable urban agri-food system.

As to the civil society organizations and groups that we invited, they all share a direct experience with some experiment of urban agriculture (critical gardening, solidarity gardens, therapeutic agriculture).

We invited groups from Milan and Bologna, to discuss about urban agriculture problems with people from other Italian cities (*Orto degli Aromi*, Milan, *Crepe Urbane*, Bologna)

Anna Satta, the coordinator of the OrtiSolidali CSA, came to talk about the several implications of her project in the 3 thematic areas that we identified

Mariella Bussolati is a scientific journalist and came to our workshop to present a innovation in the field of urban agriculture: a urban garden on line network which links real gardens with terrace gardens, critical gardening areas and so on (ortodiffusoproject - <http://ortodiffuso.noblogs.org/>)

Romina Peritore is an architect and her contribution to the discussion was about criticisms and strategies for an inhabitable urban rural area.

Some subscribers of the CSA attended the workshop and contributed to the discussions in each thematic area.

4 Workshop process

We had only a short time and a medium-sized attendance (25 people and 6 hours), so we decided to divide the available time into 3 sections, according to the 3 themes described above: *agriculture, community and sustainable agriculture*. We organized them in this way:

- Presentation of the theme, with a short introduction explaining the perspective from which to analyse problems
- Presentation of our experience dealing with the issues in our specific case study
- Contributions from academic experts on the theme
- Contributions from CSOs and LFS groups on the theme from their personal experiences
- Debate on the issues and problems that were highlighted

We were conscious that it would be difficult to focus the questions and the discussion especially on the workshop aims and our case study. As researchers we decided to moderate the debates and especially the external contributions very strongly, in order to reduce the time wasted on issues not relevant to the debate.

In moderating the discussion, tried to favour those contributions that were most coherent with the 3 thematic sections and the 3 related questions that we posed. In the preparatory document that we wrote to invite people to the workshop² we already defined the issues that we wished to discuss. We asked people to stick to them in their contributions.

This moderation focused the discussions on the key issues that we envisaged. To achieve this aim, we also found thematic introductions very useful: they gave a background perspective to the debated issues so that people couldn't go too much off topic during their expositions and waste all their assigned time. At the end of every contribution, we tried to summarize it by highlighting key themes that were raised and drawing a continuity between the expositions in the discussion.

Cooperative research encompasses two knowledge dimensions: one is the codified, expert knowledge, and the other one is a tacit knowledge, developed from direct experience and action, based on acknowledged skills/competences. These two dimensions co-operate together in building knowledge.

Therefore we selected our guests in order to balance them and to create a two-way flow of information: from professors willing to present and debate their papers, to the CSOs willing to meet other stakeholders and receive knowledge; and the other way around.

5 Outcomes

Here we describe the workshop discussions by following the order of the workshop programme. We report the more interesting comments.

AGRICULTURE

During the organization of the workshop we decided to dedicate one entire theme section to describe the agronomic choices of LFS experiments among the workshop participants. An important driver to develop LFS models, especially in urban areas, derives from the necessity to reduce the environmental impacts of food production, distribution and consumption.

Therefore the presentation of this first theme was based on the history of events that changed the relationship between urban and rural areas as regards to food production and the potential to reduce its environmental impacts.

As the presentation emphasised, in recent decades we saw the situation shifting – from a symbiotic balance where urban areas depended on and looked after surrounding rural areas, to a globalized model where most people live in urban areas and depend on enormous agricultural areas spread all over the world (see presentation in appendix).

Then we presented the two different models that are attempting nowadays to represent the future of agriculture and food production: the agri-industrial based one and the agrarian-ecological based one. The first one is global, big dimension, fossil fuel and laboratory

2 See Appendix n° 2 – pre-circulated text

oriented, while the second one is more local, small dimension, renewable energies, ecological and field oriented. In this context we started talking about the synergic method used in the Orti Solidali, as an agricultural technique with a low environmental impact and a big nature compatibility.

The four main principles of Synergic Agriculture are:

1. Keep the soil undisturbed and uncompacted.
2. Use the soil's self-fertility as fertilizer.
3. Integrate the litter zone with the agricultural soil profile.
4. Establish a symbiosis with beneficial organisms to protect crops.

In this farming technique the rule is to make space for the feet and space for the plants, because putting feet where plants are to grow leads to soil compaction and where there is no air in the soil nothing will grow. The cultivated areas are well demarcated, their elevated form giving a notable increase in surface area for production.

Moreover, they are all covered with mulch – covering the soil to preserve the organic material, preventing erosion and compaction by rain, diminishing evaporation in summer and maintaining a soil micro climate which reduces the adverse effects of temperature extremes. Protecting the soil in this way removes the need to aerate it each year.

Synergic agriculture claims that there is no need to fertilize the soil because it can maintain itself through 'soil auto-fertility'.

“In crops, if the edible parts of a plant are harvested and the rest left to return to the soil, the organic mass left by the decaying plants will be superior to the volume of nutrients taken from the soil”³

Instead of pulling out all the plants and leaving the ground bare over winter to suffer the effects of erosion, some plants and all roots are left in the soil, their decomposition assuring a continuous reserve of organic matter in the soil.

Moreover it's necessary to allow a certain number of pests (or so-called pests) to live in the garden because they sometimes work as the gardener's helpers. Spontaneous plants are not pulled out (not all, anyway) because, being indigenous, they attract insects and other organisms which are beneficial. For this reason, it is better to combine the greatest diversity of plants in the synergic garden.

After giving a short overview about synergic agriculture, we spoke in a broader sense about sustainable agriculture and other methods used by other projects whose participants were present at the discussion.

Anna Satta, who is the coordinator of the Orti Solidali as well as a professor of the *Synergic Agriculture Free School*, showed how synergic agriculture techniques adapt very well to a LFS and especially a CSA:

- Time saving

This technique is based on a very intense preparation of the garden in the WP2 first-stage, setting up the actual space where the vegetables will grow. Synergic agriculture tries not to disturb the work of Nature, instead to take advantage of it. This is possible thanks to some devices e.g. the use of straw mulching on top of the garden or the inter cropping of plants. All this requires time and intensive work, mostly in the first stage of setting up a garden. They require less work and time later on, compared to other conventional techniques. This is an interesting point for urban agriculture and associated issues.

- Money and energy saving

3 "The Fundamental Reality that Underlies Fukuoka's Principles", Hazelip Emilia

Synergic agriculture tries to maximize energy inputs that come from natural cycles, and this makes it a low-energy method: e.g. the soil auto-fertility process, made possible thanks to the use of the integrated biological control and plant inter cropping (see above).

- Environmental sustainability

Synergic agriculture is one of the most environmentally friendly farming methods and therefore this would be an extra point in choosing to adopt such method for urban LFS, that usually develop in highly polluted areas, and in general for all those places where environmental pressure is already high.

Afterwards, we also briefly presented the environmental indicators that we want to calculate in our research (such as those relating to the method of irrigation, use of water resources, land use, biodiversity, as described in the first-stage report). In the original plan of the workshop, we aimed to discuss the most useful indicators with the professors that are working with us on the study, in order to reduce the number of indicators and concentrate the attention on some environmental questions. Unfortunately a few days before the workshop we had problems with speakers that should have come to present these indicators, and they were unable to attend. So we did not go into depth on this issue, as we would initially have liked.

The discussion on the agronomic questions has been interesting: many participants were interested in discovering more about the agronomic method we chose and the scientific evidence on this method. Most of them, and above all the CSA subscribers, are looking for effective alternatives to conventional food production methods.

This encourages us because the project has an important objective to generate scientific evidence for the environmental sustainability of the agricultural method used in this project, and to spread informed knowledge to civil society around these issues, given that there are no scientific studies on this subject.

As we discovered in this discussion, when speaking about urban agriculture experiences, it is essential to connect two knowledge levels: expert knowledge (academic research) and empirical knowledge (from CSOs and other local active groups). This is because ecological intelligence is needed to solve environmental problems related with agriculture; such knowledge comes from the interaction between these two levels.

As a key outcome from the workshop, participants sought answers to the question: What kind of agronomic technique to use for urban LFS? In the agricultural field, there is not a perfect technique, but there is a preferred approach – an ecological one, which is considered the best approach to be practised by the participants.

The implementation of LFS models depends on a change from the agro-industrial vision towards the rural-ecological vision. This means a change in focus – from agricultural productivity towards quality, from large-scale retail trade to local distribution, from high-input fossil fuel toward low-energy methods of food production, distribution and consumption. Whatever agronomic technique we choose (organic, biodynamic, natural farming, synergic), most important is the overall vision, not the specific agronomic method.

COMMUNITY AND WORK

The second section of our debate was opened by an overview on the history and structure of the CSA model as an LFS.

We presented a history of the CSA movement and then several types that can be set up:

- Subscription (or farmer-driven): Organised by the farmer, the degree of consumer involvement in the farm varies between schemes but is generally small.

- Farmer co-operative: a farmer-driven CSA with two or more farms co-operating to supply the consumer members with a greater variety of produce.
- Farmer-consumer co-operative: as above, but with a greater commitment from the consumers. Consumers and farmers may co-own land and other resources and work together to produce and distribute food
- Shareholder (or consumer-driven): In this initiative, consumers work closely with the farmer who produces varieties of food they want to eat, and the degree of consumer involvement varies but is usually higher than in the other 4 kinds of CSA enterprises envisaged.⁴

A shareholder CSA has a great variability of consumer involvement. This factor determined difficulties with voluntary work during the first stages of the Orti Solidali project ⁵ We discussed the specific experience of the Orti Solidali CSA, looking for answers to questions like: How does a urban agriculture project help creating community? And how can an LFS be a community aggregator and answer to urban agri-food problems?

Anna Satta, the coordinator of the Orti Solidali, outlined some difficulties encountered in developing the project, in particular: fund raising, partnership and community building.

Fund raising

Problems arose when seeking funds (from institutions, banks, foundations) for a social agriculture project that aims for the social inclusion of disadvantaged people and for the creation of LFS community networks. Despite the great interest of the CSO and the spread of LFS new networks in the main cities, it is still difficult to obtain funds for semi-autonomous projects such the Orti Solidali.

Partnership

Talking about LFS and especially CSA community aspects, *Anna Satta* highlighted a contradiction. Despite money problems, the CSA partnership fundamentally works on a human level. An instrument that gathers collective needs, such as the CSA, stimulates people to collaborate for the common good with their own skills, means and attitudes.

Other problems include: money-energy contributions and *rurban* conditions, e.g. rural-urban relations, e.g. the distance between the subscriber and the garden, lack of time, working priorities, lack of know-how. These problems limited contributions from the subscribers to building and maintaining the CSA.

Community building

A CSA can be an instrument to strengthen social relationships in a urban context, around a common need such as food security:

A key component of these newer definitions of food security is attention to building local capacity to produce and distribute food and control food supplies . . . [and] to keep decision-making power within the community rather than losing it through dependence on external sources of food . . . localized food production can meet many of the diverse community needs more effectively than globalized food systems because it can give priority to community and environmental integrity before corporate profit-making . . . while reinforcing social identity and cohesion. ⁶

In our CSA initiative we experienced that a CSA network actually sets up a community network, but the difficult point here is to establish the *practice of community*: e.g. keep the

4 from the WP2 first stage report

5 See WP2 first-stage report, section 3.2

6 (Anderson and Cook, 2000)

contact between the several areas of CSA the network continuously, stimulate participatory processes, building of the community identity.

The wider debate was opened by all the other guests from CSOs who brought their experience of urban agriculture in big cities (such as Rome, Milan and Bologna). Some exponents of the academic world spoke as well, contributing with general overviews on urban agriculture and innovative proposals during the debate. Diverse LFS initiatives came from different backgrounds (e.g. critical gardening groups, urban solidarity gardens, therapeutic agriculture projects). Nevertheless they had many similarities, mostly regarding communitarian aspects, such as the employment of disadvantaged workers, the 'spontaneous self-organization of citizens for a common good', the involvement of people from diverse backgrounds and age.

We recorded and highlighted some recurring points that kept emerging during the debate between the participants:

For food security and alternatives to the global agri-food system, many participants agreed that focusing on local food as a solution could be the wrong choice.

The participants felt that "local" can be an ambiguous or even dangerous term if referred to food production and consumption because it can lead to localism and protectionism – not a realistic solution to agri-food problems. Instead, LFS priorities seek the integration of environmental, social, ethic and economic problems; they could be one solution to the environmental and health problems created by the current agri-food production system.

Given this priority, it's necessary to build a path through which nowadays passive consumers (in Italian *consumatore*) can improve their consciousness towards these issues. The figure of consume-actor (in Italian *consumattore*) implies an active role for consumer choices. CSA and other LFS initiatives seem to be a good tool to achieve and exercise this consciousness, especially on a urban area.

A Food Community is constituted by several consume-actors. It represents the second step of this rise in consumer consciousness. A Food Community can be the basis for the constitution of a CSA initiative. Several Food Communities could develop a network on regional or national or even global scale.

In the diagram below we tried to show this flow in a graphic way:

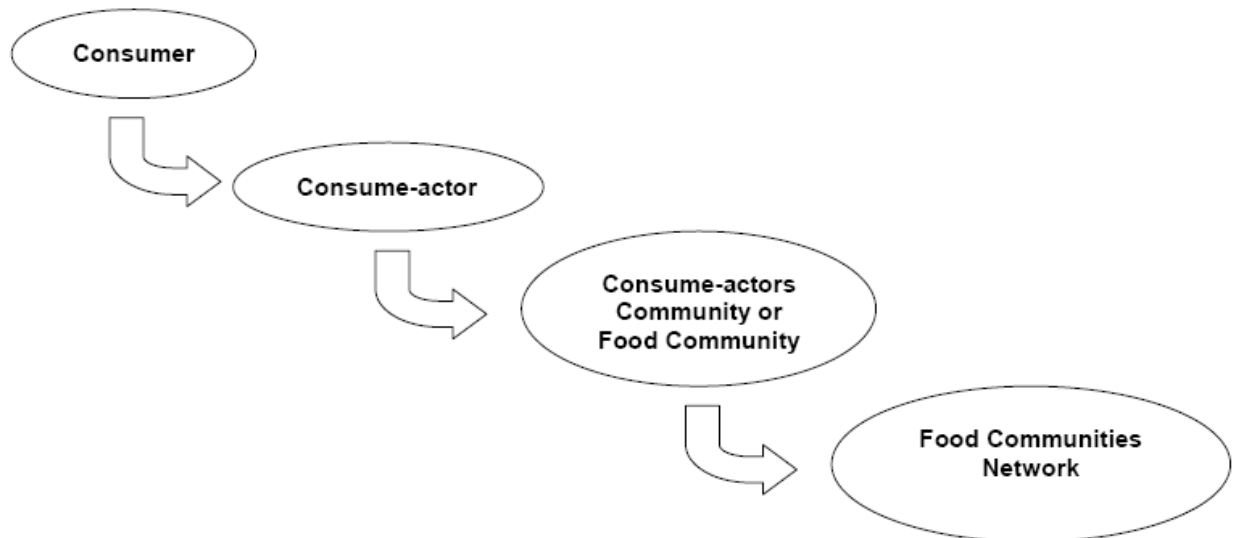


Figure 1: From consuming to community making

To set up and prosper, CSA and all the other LFS need an *identity*, which can be economic, environmental, ethical, territorial, historical etc. This identity often represents the reason why people decide to constitute a CSA. And this identity is a *conditio sine qua non* for the building of a CSA initiative, because it strengthens relationships among the people involved and helps to solve the problems.

The workshop also highlighted another difficulty: many LFS and especially CSAs are not static models. They develop and change during their path: we can better speak of dynamic models. This feature made it even more interesting to study the evolution of our model, compared with several other models exposed during the workshop.

SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING

This section of the workshop was not planned from the beginning, but it came to our minds only later when we realized that we couldn't really face all the problems of urban LFS without talking about strategies of sustainable urban planning.

Some contributions in this section talked about the problems in modern urban planning, criticizing *zoning* paradigm (the functional separation of the different parts of the cities), the centralized planning of space and the disappearance of local specificities.

Speakers gave a general overview of the problems that LFS have to face regarding urban planning in big cities:

*"In recent decades building speculation and profits have been the main factor that led to housing emergency, green belt soil consumption and robbery of the last free public spaces in the big urbanized cities. There is not a lot of space left from these strong urbanisation processes"*⁷

There is no space *designed* for urban agriculture in the big cities. This has been the main theme around which the workshop debate developed: Which strategies for creating space for urban agriculture?

One step suggested by the participants has been to take back the *empties* (the Gilles Clement *third landscape*⁸), i.e. urban areas that are left empty or abandoned by urban planning.

But this can be a very demanding strategy: a guest representing an activist group from Bologna told us about their difficult experience as a local social movement trying to take back an empty urban space to make urban agriculture; problems were encountered with institutions. This happens because in Italy urban agriculture is not very developed, and is often managed within strict regulations and production facilities. Access to urban land is guaranteed only to citizens' associations or companies (in case of town and country parks or urban gardens) or to particular population groups (such as vegetable gardens for the elderly or educational gardens for children). Access to land is denied to social groups not recognized by the government as political movements or individual farmers.

In this process, urban agriculture loses its original goals. In the 1970s urban agriculture was mainly a practice of re appropriation of urban areas against new models of speculation. By contrast, in recent years urban agriculture – like all ecological issues – has become a bargaining tool within the processes of *urban governance*. Urban agriculture has been promoted within the processes of participatory planning in the form of city parks, countryside, gardens social groups or woodlands markets for producers. These experiences are important

7 From Appendix 6b

8 a terrain classification describing abandoned spaces such former industrial areas or nature reserves which are prime areas for accumulating bio-diversity. because these landscapes are places of indecision, bio-diversity thrives, giving ecological value to these otherwise neglected areas. as clement sees it, these neglected space are the earth's genetic reservoir.

for testing non-conventional techniques of production, marketing and management of urban and peri-urban areas. At the same time, they do not appear as real solutions to address environmental urban issues, nor as a way to involve the population in participatory urban planning processes.

From the environmental point of view, the promotion of isolated cases of urban agriculture without the establishment of ecological networks and production rules out the possibility of establishing food systems based on ecological cycles closed in the city and its region.

Moreover, the role of citizen involvement in promoting urban agriculture for a urban transformation loses its strength when people cannot make real decisions on economic and urbanisation choices.

Given this situation, another step suggested during the workshop debate was to rethink the old medieval concept of *commons*. The 'commons' were the lands, forests and streams that could be freely used by the peasants and serfs in medieval Europe. Some ideas were advocated for adapting this concept to today's urban spaces. For example people discussed food and environment as commons that should be preserved, as well as collective alternative uses for urban commons (e.g. water, garbage).

In the end, the debate stated the need for re-appropriation of urban space by citizens, as well as for a rethink of public spaces and common goods. This is essential if we want to set up an urban CSA or some other model of LFS. In a virtuous circle, the collective interest of citizens can re-appropriate urban green areas and green belt fields, thereby increasing their value for purposes other than building houses and infrastructures.

6 Conclusions

When we decided to build the workshop structure along the cooperative research guidelines, we did not expect such a great success.

This was the first occasion for us to see a real cooperative research flow in action. We definitely experienced a double flow – from academic to empirical knowledge, and the other way around. This interchange made the workshop a rare occasion for both groups of actors to discuss such themes: for the academics to hear first-hand experiences of LFS, and for the CSOs to gain a broader overview of how practitioners develop urban agriculture.

Some academics showed their interest towards our project in building a *CSA-LFS advisory committee*. They offered us their availability to set up a network to keep discussing these themes. For example Prof. Maria Fonte and Amir Djalil already sent us a contribution based on the workshop debate (see Appendix 6c).

Most CSOs who attended the workshop got in contact with each other for the first time. They are maintaining contact for the possible development of some ideas that came up during the debates. Such proposals include: the building of *urban horticulture teams of experts* that could inform people on the possibilities of building LFS in their areas/communities and follow them in their first steps, as well as other projects of *urban gardens mapping* such as the one that some subscribers are setting up (<http://mappamondonuovo.org/>). We believe this to be a good starting point for an enlargement of our CSO and academic network on our case study.

In relation to the sustainability analysis of our case study, we collected interesting points from the discussion. These could relate the future research more closely with the contributions from guests and especially the subscribers.

Returning to our 3 main discussion issues:

The workshop discussions helped our study to clarify ways forward on the Orti Solidali, especially for analysing the three aspects of sustainability.

Environmental sustainability analysis seems to be pushed more by a curiosity than a necessity in our research, in order to help implement the project. CSA subscribers believe in the project from an intuitive point of view, although it is too soon for the project to be showing strong empirical evidence. At this stage it is necessary to choose some environmental indicators and do research on them, in order to get some more specific data to talk about.

Economic sustainability analysis is important for our research to demonstrate whether or not the project can effectively work. It is important to analyse this question through suitable indicators.

Social sustainability analysis is a problematic point to research because the *Orti Solidali* lacks a real working community to sustain this CSA. Therefore, it is important to analyse these data and try to find the way to improve social relations among the participants, above all between the subscribers and the workers.

The identity of the *Orti Solidali* as a community is not yet clear. The active involvement of community members happened mostly at the beginning of the project, when most of the practical-agricultural work was needed. It is necessary to find other ways to involve people in these initiatives, in order to create community and understand how to facilitate CSO participation in agri-food issues.

Appendices

1 Invitation letter to participants

Gentili invitati,

in allegato trovate il Programma provvisorio del Workshop: La CSA come modello di local food network, che si svolgerà sabato 7 novembre presso la sede della Fondazione Diritti Genetici, in via Garigliano 61/A.

Vi preghiamo di controllare la correttezza dei dati inseriti: Nome, Cognome, Titolo, Titolo dell'intervento e di inviarci il prima possibile eventuali correzioni.

Preghiamo inoltre, per chi non l'ha fatto, di inviare un riassunto dell'intervento di circa 10 righe, che gireremo poi a tutti i partecipanti.

Chiediamo inoltre il vostro consenso a predisporre un elenco dei relatori con il contatto e-mail da distribuire agli altri relatori, così da agevolare eventuali comunicazioni dirette.

Per quanto riguarda la durata del vostro intervento, per lasciare spazio ad un'ampia discussione intorno ai temi proposti da parte dei partecipanti, vi invitiamo a non superare i 15 minuti.

Avrete a disposizione un computer per proiettare eventuali presentazioni ppt. Vi invitiamo a non superare le 15 slide, così da non appesantire la giornata e permettere di seguire con attenzione tutti i numerosi interventi.

Vi ricordiamo inoltre, visto l'entusiasmo dimostrato da tutti voi nel partecipare attivamente alla discussione e la complessità del tema proposto, di organizzare l'intervento il più possibile intorno al titolo del workshop, al tema del Progetto CREPE e alle caratteristiche del Progetto Orti Solidali.

Vi alleghiamo quindi il documento introduttivo al workshop in cui troverete ù, speriamo, preziose indicazioni a proposito.

Rimaniamo naturalmente a disposizione per qualsiasi chiarimento.

Vi invieremo ulteriori indicazioni di carattere logistico nei prossimi giorni.

Cordiali saluti

Andrea Pasqualotto
Brunella Pinto

2 Pre-circulated text

Progetto CREPE

Workshop: **La CSA come modello di local food network**

Introduzione

Nel corso del 2007, per la prima volta nella storia dell'umanità, la percentuale della popolazione mondiale che risiede in aree urbane ha superato il 50%, anche se in Europa già da tempo il valore di questo dato supera il 75%.

I ritmi di consumo di suolo agricolo da destinare ad infrastrutture e nuova edificazione, che accompagnano questa tendenza, oltre 100 ettari al giorno solo in Italia, ed il conseguente problema di insicurezza alimentare che potrebbe minacciare nel prossimo futuro anche i paesi occidentali, ribadiscono l'urgenza di ripensare e ricostruire le relazioni ormai esauste tra le aree urbanizzate ed il territorio circostante.

L'imminente fine dell'era del petrolio, su cui si basa il modello economico dominante, e quindi anche l'agricoltura convenzionale di tipo industriale, impone inoltre un ripensamento non solo dei flussi energetici ma soprattutto dei flussi materiali.

Le persone che vivono nelle aree metropolitane, soprattutto in seguito al ricambio generazionale, si ritrovano però prive delle conoscenze teoriche e pratiche necessarie per utilizzare i flussi energetici e materiali forniti dai cicli naturali, su cui si basava il modello dell'agricoltura tradizionale.

Il tema dell'agricoltura urbana e peri-urbana va quindi riproposto ed approfondito non più come anacronistica e nostalgica pratica residuale, ma come modello di ri-appropriazione della campagna da parte della città, e quindi nella sua molteplice dimensione: ambientale, economica, sociale e culturale.

Il settore primario, affrancato dal suo ruolo esclusivamente produttivo, diventa inoltre, secondo l'ottica della multifunzionalità, un fornitore di numerosi servizi che permettono di innalzare il livello della qualità della vita non solo per la popolazione urbana ma anche per quella rurale.

Il Comune di Roma, con i suoi 3 milioni di residenti e la caratteristica di comune agricolo più grande d'Europa, rappresenta in questo senso un territorio con una potenzialità pari almeno alla sua vulnerabilità.

In questo contesto, Il Progetto Orti Solidali rappresenta una sfida ambiziosa in quanto intende non solo trasformare il territorio peri-urbano da scenario domenicale a sistema di riferimento quotidiano, ma soprattutto ridurre la distanza tra produzione e consumo, attraverso un contatto diretto ed attivo dell'uomo con il paesaggio eco-culturale in cui è inserito.

Il progetto Orti Solidali⁹

9 <http://ortisolidali.wordpress.com/>

I tre elementi su cui si basa questo progetto avviato dalla associazione "Il Tetto Casal Fattoria"¹⁰ all'inizio del 2009 nella periferia sud di Roma sono:

1. L' allestimento di 60 orti su una superficie di circa un ettaro coltivati secondo il metodo agronomico denominato *Agricoltura Sinergica*¹¹.

Tale metodo, prendendo come punto di riferimento lo studio dei processi naturali, gli studi e le intuizioni del microbiologo giapponese Masanobu Fukuoka e gli approfondimenti di Emilia Hazelip, si propone come interessante prospettiva di modello agricolo sostenibile. La semplice attività orticola destinata all'autosussistenza non garantisce necessariamente una sostenibilità ambientale della pratica agricola. È necessario invece sviluppare nuove pratiche date dalla sintesi di esperienze antiche di tipo empirico con le conoscenze scientifiche moderne.

I principi base dell'agricoltura sinergica sono fondamentalmente tre:

1. assenza di lavorazioni meccaniche e riduzione al minimo di qualsiasi disturbo del suolo;
2. fertilizzazione e protezione del suolo tramite una copertura organica permanente;
3. coltivazione delle specie vegetali in consociazione

2. Il modello CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)¹².

Questo modello di produzione/consumo si propone di azzerare la filiera commerciale, stabilendo un rapporto di partenariato attivo tra i produttori e i consumatori tramite un sistema di abbonamenti a quote prefissate della produzione agricola.

La coltivazione degli Orti Solidali viene offerta come servizio a 60 persone che pagano un abbonamento annuale. Le responsabilità, i rischi e i risultati del progetto vengono condivisi attraverso la partecipazione attiva dei cittadini alle diverse fasi produttive.

3. L'Agricoltura sociale

Il lavoro negli orti intende fornire una concreta opportunità di formazione e lavoro per giovani svantaggiati, in questo caso due ragazzi profughi, provenienti dall'Afghanistan, costituendo inoltre una risorsa per il necessario ricambio generazionale nel settore. Il tentativo di trasformare un'attività prettamente hobbistica e volontaristica in un'attività capace di creare reddito rappresenta la principale sfida di questo progetto.

10 www.iltetto.org

11 <http://www.agricolturasinergica.it/>

12 <http://ortisolidali.wordpress.com/category/csa/>

Il progetto CREPE ¹³

CREPE è un progetto europeo che rientra nel settimo Programma quadro dell'Unione Europea¹⁴, settore Scienza e Società, sviluppato da un team di 2 università e 6 CSO (Civil Society Organization) europee: Open University (UK), Food Ethics Council (UK), Fundación Nueva Cultura del Agua (ES), FRCIVAM Bretagne (FR), Fondation Sciences Citoyennes (FR), Transnational Institute (NL), Univ of Twente (NL), Fondazione dei Diritti Genetici, (IT).

Il Progetto CREPE intende mettere a confronto le organizzazioni della società civile con il mondo accademico per approfondire i problemi agro-ambientali secondo un'ottica di ricerca cooperativa.

Come Fondazione Diritti Genetici (FDG) stiamo lavorando al Workpackage 2 : CSO participation in Community-Supported Agriculture. Il nostro workpackage consiste nel monitoraggio del *Progetto Orti Solidali*, preso come caso studio delle buone pratiche di partecipazione delle CSO (Organizzazioni della Società Civile) nelle problematiche agroambientali. Lo studio si focalizza sulla partecipazione delle CSO nella creazione e nel funzionamento di un modello innovativo e sostenibile di produzione e distribuzione alimentare: la CSA (Community Supported Agriculture o Agricoltura sostenuta dalla comunità).

Il coinvolgimento diretto dei consumatori e di altre CSO ha come obiettivo quello di implementare la consapevolezza della cittadinanza nei processi agro-alimentari territoriali, (oltre che garantirne il sostegno finanziario diretto) e nelle tematiche di sostenibilità ambientale insite nel modello produttivo e di consumo.

Il Workshop intende approfondire alcune tematiche riguardanti il modello CSA secondo un approccio transdisciplinare.

Workshop progetto CREPE

Il Progetto Orti Solidali sta già evidenziando con forza le potenzialità ed i limiti della CSA nel definire nuove relazioni economiche e sociali in ambito agricolo.

È opportuno quindi mettere a fuoco e discutere attorno alle questioni principali emerse durante i primi mesi di avviamento del progetto.

Secondo l'esperienza degli Orti Solidali, sono stati individuati 4 temi su cui incentrare la discussione.

13 <http://crepeweb.net/>

14 http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_it.html

3 Agenda & timetable

Progetto CREPE

Workshop: **La CSA come modello di local food network**

7 Novembre 2009

Fondazione Diritti Genetici

via Garigliano 61/A, Roma

PROGRAMMA DELLA GIORNATA

Coordinano e moderano il workshop:

Brunella Pinto, Andrea Pasqualotto

Ricercatori, Fondazione dei Diritti Genetici

09:00

Presentazione del progetto e introduzione ai tavoli di discussione

09:30

Tavolo 1. **AGRICOLTURA: quali scelte agronomiche per gli *alternative food networks*?**

Il settore primario ha una doppia responsabilità verso le questioni ambientali. Da un lato contribuisce all'impatto ambientale in maniera significativa, dall'altro può contribuire attivamente alla riduzione degli stessi.

In che modo le scelte agronomiche degli Orti Solidali si relazionano con le questioni ambientali, sociali e sanitarie dell'agricoltura?

LA DISCUSSIONE

- **Anna Satta**, Responsabile del Progetto Orti Solidali

- **Matteo Lener**, Biologo

10:30

Coffe break

11:00

Tavolo 2. **COMUNITÀ: Comunità che supporta l'agricoltura, Agricoltura che costruisce la comunità**

Il pilastro principale del modello CSA è la costruzione di nuove relazioni tra produttori e consumatori e quindi tra i consumatori stessi.

L'esperienza degli Orti Solidali ha mostrato le difficoltà di mantenere queste relazioni e risolvere gli inevitabili conflitti tra attori con diverse esigenze, motivazioni, aspirazioni e conoscenze.

LA DISCUSSIONE

- **Maria Fonte**, Università di Napoli

"Cibo locale: tra neo-liberismo e nuove comunità del cibo"

- **Mariella Bussolati**, Giornalista scientifica

"Utilità sociale della campagna nella città"

- **Giorgio Conti**, Dipartimento Scienze Ambientali, Università Ca'Foscari di Venezia

"Ripensare-riprogettare una nuova relazione antropologica tra luoghi e lavoro, tra urbano e rurale: dall'economia all'oeconomia"

- **Associazione Il Giardino degli Aromi**, Milano

"Esperienza di Libero orto"

13:00

Pausa pranzo

14:30

Tavolo 3. **URBANISTICA SOSTENIBILE : l'agricoltura si fa spazio**

Il recupero di aree marginali dentro e fuori la città, il presidio del territorio, la gestione dello spazio pubblico.

L'agricoltura ha bisogno di spazio, nelle città lo spazio è in competizione con altri utilizzi spesso speculativi, l'agricoltura non ha le armi per competere con usi alternativi

CSA come recupero agricolo collettivo di terreni urbani

LA DISCUSSIONE

- **Romina Peritore**, Architetto, Roma

"Spazi aperti e urbanistica sostenibile: criticità e strategie per una campagna urbana abitabile"

- **Amir Djalil**, Dottorando al Berlage Institute – Rotterdam

- **Novella de Giorgi**, Collettivo Crepe Urbane

- **Chiara Ortolani**, Dottoranda in Teorie Urbanistiche, Università La Sapienza, Roma

16:30

Conclusioni e saluti

4 Participants list and contribution abstracts

Abstract interventi workshop CREPE

Maria Fonte, Università di Napoli

“Cibo locale: tra neo-liberismo e nuove comunità del cibo”

Mariella Bussolati, Giornalista scientifica

“Utilità sociale della campagna nella città”

Laureata in agraria, giornalista, si è sempre occupata di ambiente, economia, gestione delle risorse, ha collaborato al primo progetto di orto urbano per la sezione milanese del Wwf (1990), continuando poi a interessarsi dell'argomento. Sta organizzando il progetto Orto diffuso, un network di orti che collega orti sul balcone, orti di quartiere, orti comunitari, orti in campagna, con un monitoraggio in gps e una mappatura interattiva. Il progetto sottolinea in particolare tre aspetti: quello economico (recupero reddito dalla coltivazione), e quello di progettazione urbana (riprofilazione degli spazi cittadini) quello sociale (scambio di pratiche e di competenze),

Giorgio Conti, Dipartimento di Scienze Ambientali, Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia

“Ripensare-riprogettare una nuova relazione antropologica tra luoghi e lavoro, tra urbano e rurale:dall'economia all'oeconomia”

Romina Peritore, Architetto

“Vuoto e urbanistica sostenibile: criticità e strategie per una 'campagna urbana abitabile' (o per una gestione attiva del territorio)”

Consumo di suolo e scelte di piano (PRG Roma)
Spazio agricolo visto non più come residuo, ma come risorsa per il “progetto urbano”
I vuoti che occupano gli interstizi della città territorio possono essere considerati come sistemi evolutivi, che cambiano in funzione della produzione dello spazio, delle politiche locali e degli utenti. Accettare l'agricoltura come una componente durevole della crescita urbana dipende da una decisione politica. Pianificazione urbana e multifunzionalità dello spazio agricolo: quale prospettiva? Come conservare gli spazi agricoli fra le aree centrali urbane delle campagne? Reinterpretare lo spazio agricolo come una *infrastruttura naturale di interesse pubblico* (Donadieu, *Campagne urbane*). Avvicinamento dell'attività agricola alla città

Amir Djalil, Dottorando al Berlage Institute, Rotterdam

“Agricoltura urbana come comune”

In questo processo l'agricoltura urbana ha in parte perso i suoi significati originali. Se negli anni Settanta l'agricoltura urbana era principalmente una pratica di riappropriazione di spazi urbani contro i nuovi modelli di speculazione edilizia che si stavano affermando, negli ultimi anni l'agricoltura urbana - come in generale tutte le tematiche sull'ecologia - è diventata uno strumento di contrattazione all'interno dei processi della governance urbana.

L'agricoltura urbana è stata promossa all'interno di processi di pianificazione partecipata nella forma di parchi città campagna, orti sociali, fasce boscate o mercati dei produttori.

Se da un lato queste esperienze sono importanti per la sperimentazione di tecniche non convenzionali di produzione, commercializzazione e gestione degli spazi urbani e periurbani, allo stesso tempo non appaiono come reali soluzioni né per affrontare i problemi ambientali urbani, né per coinvolgere le popolazioni urbane all'interno dei processi decisionali.

Dal punto di vista ambientale, la promozione di casi isolati di agricoltura urbana senza la costituzione di reti ecologiche e produttive esclude la possibilità di costituire sistemi alimentari basati su cicli ecologici chiusi all'interno della città e del suo territorio.

Dal punto di vista sociale, l'agricoltura urbana è spesso gestita all'interno di regolamenti e strutture produttive rigide. L'accesso ai suoli urbani è garantito esclusivamente ad associazioni di cittadini o ad aziende (nel caso di parchi città-campagna o giardini urbani) o a particolari fasce di popolazione (come nel caso degli orti sociali per anziani o gli orti didattici per bambini). Alle formazioni sociali non riconosciute dalle amministrazioni come i movimenti politici o ai singoli coltivatori l'accesso ai suoli è negato.

Inoltre, sorgono dubbi sulla funzione che ha il coinvolgimento dei cittadini nella promozione dell'agricoltura urbana all'interno delle trasformazioni urbane, quando questi non possono esprimere giudizi sulle scelte economiche, come ad esempio i volumi edificatori.

Infine, l'agricoltura urbana, nelle sue forme più politicamente corrette e pulite, è stata appropriata come un fenomeno di moda dalle fasce di popolazione più abbienti. L'agricoltura urbana diventa quindi un potente strumento di marketing urbano capace di legittimare culturalmente e ambientalmente (greenwashing) interventi di speculazione edilizia, accumulare la rendita urbana e favorire processi di gentrificazione.

In questa situazione non è pensabile né auspicabile un ritorno alle vecchie forme di governo del territorio da parte del settore pubblico. Dall'altro lato, il rifugio all'interno di forme di organizzazione locale basate su comunità di produttori e consumatori non potrà mai avvenire all'esterno dei processi neoliberali di governance.

Con tutto ciò non voglio negare l'importanza dell'agricoltura urbana per l'ecologia della città e per la promozione di forme più dirette di democrazia. L'agricoltura urbana deve essere promossa e integrata all'interno delle nostre città.

Il problema per i movimenti e per i coltivatori sarà quindi come riappropriare la produzione dell'agricoltura urbana, non solo vista come produzione agricola, ma soprattutto come produzione di idee, saperi, immaginario e affetti (che hanno un valore economico non paragonabile a quello degli ortaggi urbani).

Se per i movimenti la possibilità di questa riappropriazione si misurerà nei termini dei rapporti di forza con le amministrazioni e con i capitali, quale può essere il ruolo degli architetti e dei pianificatori all'interno di questi processi? Esistono le basi per una nuova fase di 'urbanistica militante'?

A questo proposito, vorrei introdurre due concetti che potrebbe tornare utili sia ai movimenti, sia agli architetti e agli urbanisti per mettere a fuoco gli obiettivi delle proprie lotte e del proprio lavoro, tenendo presente le problematiche che ho esposto: il terzo paesaggio e il comune.

Questi due concetti non sono né qualcosa di che già c'è, qualcosa di pienamente realizzato, né una utopia. Si riferiscono a qualcosa che già è presente, ma che attende ancora una piena realizzazione.

Il /terzo paesaggio/

Il terzo paesaggio è, per Gilles Clément, l'insieme dei luoghi abbandonati dall'uomo, che non sono naturali né artificiali.

Come Clément fa subito notare, il terzo paesaggio si riferisce a terzo stato, e non a terzo mondo. Non richiama quindi un ritorno a forme primitive di organizzazione, ma fa riferimento ad una possibilità, ad un potere costituente.

Il terzo paesaggio nel suo insieme costituisce il /jardin planétaire/, un progetto molto più ambizioso del /community garden/.

Come possiamo produrre e reclamare paesaggi terzi?

Né pubblici, né privati, costruiti a partire dalle crepe lasciate delle ecologie urbane ufficiali?

Il /comune/

Il concetto di comune si riferisce da un lato alle risorse naturali, alla terra, all'acqua, all'atmosfera, agli ecosistemi e alle specie che vi interagiscono.

Dall'altro lato, con comune intendiamo tutti quei saperi, idee, affetti che sono condivisi e sono prodotti dal lavoro e dalla cooperazione. Questo comune è allo stesso tempo alla base della produzione capitalistica, e presupposto della liberazione dalle sue forme di captazione e sfruttamento.

Nel nostro caso il termine 'comune' assomiglia quasi letteralmente ai 'commons', i terreni, le foreste e i corsi d'acqua che potevano essere liberamente utilizzati dai contadini e dai servi nel medioevo in Europa, ma richiama anche il prodotto dell'intelligenza collettiva e di quei 'capitali simbolici collettivi' che sono parassitati dalla rendita capitalistica e dalle nuove forme di accumulazione originaria.

Novella De Giorgi

"Il rapporto tra movimenti e istituzioni sull'uso dei terreni marginali urbani a Bologna"

Crepe Urbane è un collettivo nato nel 2007 a Bologna all'interno dello spazio pubblico autogestito XM24. *Crepe Urbane* è anche una rivista indipendente che, come lo stesso nome suggerisce, si propone di aprire una riflessione su tutte quelle realtà che sfruttano i margini, gli scarti e i buchi nella gestione dello sfruttamento razionale del territorio per creare nuove forme di relazione e di socialità non necessariamente legate al rapporto produzione-consumo.

Il progetto si rivolge principalmente al territorio circostante, ovvero l'area dell'ex mercato ortofrutticolo. Quest'area, abbandonata da quasi dieci anni, è attualmente coinvolta in un ampio piano di "riqualificazione urbanistica" che prevede la realizzazione di nuove abitazioni, di numerosi servizi pubblici e di una vasta area verde. Tra gli obiettivi principali di *Crepe Urbane*, la destinazione di una porzione del nuovo parco ad un giardino-orto autogestito.

Speculazione edilizia e rendita sono i due fattori che hanno portato alla forte emergenza abitativa, al consumo di suolo nelle aree di cintura e alla rapina degli ultimi spazi liberi nelle zone interstiziali che caratterizzano la città di Roma. Questi fenomeni hanno contribuito alla dissoluzione dei legami sociali e territoriali che sono stati sempre più asserviti alle esigenze del mercato.

Zibechi, in *Disperdere il potere*, afferma che è necessaria "la costruzione di un mondo diverso, o meglio - con Marx – la *liberazione degli elementi di una nuova società*, rappresentati dalle relazioni sociali anticapitalistiche contenute nel mondo attuale". Si tratta quindi di riannodare i legami sociali e con il paesaggio e proprio quei luoghi che le amministrazioni chiamano vuoti urbani sono visti dagli abitanti come delle risorse. In alcuni quartieri romani gruppi di abitanti cominciano ad appropriarsene. In tali spazi l'orto diventa un ambito capace di riconnettere i legami sociali e con il paesaggio e potrebbe divenire uno strumento capace di fermare il consumo indiscriminato del suolo.

5 Presentations by the organisers (see separate files)

- 5.a Introduzione workshop Crepe.doc
- 5.b Tema 1_Agricoltura.pdf
- 5.c Tema 2_Comunità.pdf

6 Texts or diagrams presented at the workshop (see separate files)

- 6.a Presentazione Fonte.pdf
- 6.b Presentazione Ortolani.pdf
- 6.c Intervento_Amir-1.pdf