How Biodistricts are empowering and re-embedding agroecological food systems in local economies?

Perspectives from Spain and Italy

**Speakers**

- **Jostein Hertwig (Norway)**
  Coordinator of the United Nations Core initiative "Organic Food System Programme" and Head of Beras International Foundation

- **Aina Calafat (Spain)**
  Responsible for advocacy and international projects at SEAE (the Spanish Society for Organic Farming)

- **Karen Hoberg (Spain)**
  Economist and Board Member of the SEAE (the Spanish Society for Organic Farming)

**Moderator**

- **Cesare Zanasi (Italy)**
  Associate Professor at Bologna University and Member of the Scientific committee of IN.N.E.R (International Network of Eco-Regions)

- **Salvatore Basile (Italy)**
  President of IN.N.E.R. (International Network of Eco Regions) and co-President of GAOD (Global Alliance for Organic Districts)

**ME**

Wednesday
20th of October 2021
18:30 - 20:00 (CET)

on Zoom & Facebook

With the financial support from the LIFE Program of the European Union, the Fondation de France and the Fondation Ecotone
How to think and manage a Bio-Region according to local conditions

The Italian Experience

Cesare Zanasi – IN.N.E.R; Bologna University
RECAP What do Organic Districts involve?

- Tourism/Gastronomy
- Regenerative/Organic farming
- Agroecology - Natural resources management – Energy production
- Food: Processing – Distribution - Consumption. Food and nutrition security, Quality and Health
- Social issues. Social agriculture - communities’ enforcement - urban-rural relations
- Youth and organic agriculture

WG 6 Communication
How to Build a Bio-Region according to local conditions

Different Types of Organic districts according to their start-up strategies

- Bottom – up
- Top-Down
How to start an Organic District – Different Approaches

Different Types of approaches can be found when observing how the Organic Districts originated in different contexts

Bottom-up: different local stakeholders decide to start an organic district and together define the vision and strategies for the Organic Districts development

Top-down: an Organic District starts from decisions taken by the local or central government; vision and strategies are shared with the local stakeholders with different degrees of involvement
Pros and cons of the different approaches

**BOTTOM-UP**

Positive side: it is considered the most desirable and sustainable type of approach. The local stakeholders’ active participation provides the necessary commitment and context-tailored management necessary to activate a durable experience.

- **Negative side:** it takes relatively high financial, human and capital local resources able to ignite and support the start-up stage.
Pros and cons of the different approaches

**TOP-DOWN**

**Negative side:** the relative lack of local stakeholders’ involvement in the creation of the Organic District can have the following negative consequences:
- Reduced commitment of local stakeholders
- Solutions not effectively related to the local context
- Prevailing «political self-referential agendas» on the local context real necessities
- Excessive reliance on public support and possible creation of stakeholders’ lobbies (discrimination in providing support based on personal or political allegiance)

**Positive side:** effective when some of the local resources (economic, social, technical) are scarce. A top-down approach can be effective in less developed areas
Adoption a mix of the top-down and bottom-up approach influenced by

A careful assessment of the local resources’ availability

Local and Central Government representatives trained and committed

General political climate favorable to a decentralized management where local communities’ pro-active role is supported
How to manage a Bio-District according to local conditions

• Different Types of Organic districts according to their local
  • Social
  • Economic
  • Technical
  • Political
  • and Historical features
  • Governance/Relation in the Social as well as Supply Network
Which conditions influence a successful Organic District?

**History/Chance**

**Factor (input) conditions**
- Factor (input) quantity and cost
  - Natural resources
  - Human resources
  - Capital resources
  - Physical infrastructure
  - Administrative infrastructure
  - Information infrastructure
  - Scientific and technological infrastructure
- Factor quality
- Factor specialization

**Context for Firm Strategy & Rivalry**
- A local context that encourages appropriate forms of investment and sustained upgrading
- Vigorous competition among locally-based rivals
- Firms must participate actively, with a significant local presence (bottom up)

**Demand conditions**
- Sophisticated and demanding local customers
- Customers' needs that anticipate those elsewhere
- Unusual local demand in specialized segments that can be served globally

**Related and supporting Industries**
- Presence of capable, locally based suppliers
- Presence of competitive related industries

**Government**
Which conditions influence a successful Organic District?

**EXAMPLE OF RESULTS**

The Italian Experience
General Context Analysis
(Supply / value chain)

Local school canteens
Bio-distretto organic farmers
(n.450 incl.30 with on-farm processing activities)
Local consumers
Tourists
Local restaurants
Tourist operators
Bio-distretto organic farmers
(n.450 incl.30 with on-farm processing activities)
AIAB Campania (n.30 members)
RARECHE – Happy People (n.20 members)
Coop. Nuovo Cilento (n.400)
Short supply chain logistic platform
organic farmers associations
organic agro-processing operators
olive oil mills (n.5)
wine-making plants (n.10)
dairy plants (n.2)
chestnuts plant (n.1)
Local organic specialised shops
Supermarkets

Direct marketing (80%)
On-farm direct marketing 1%
Farmers’ markets/promotional initiatives 64%
Organic purchase groups 12%
AIAB e-commerce initiative 3%
Local school canteens
Local restaurants
Tourist operators
Local consumers
Tourists

Traditional retail (5%)
Local organic specialised shops
extra Bio-distretto specialised shops
Supermarkets
General Context Analysis (example)

(Governance: stakeholder analysis)

INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Municipalities Associations (39 municipalities)

Legambiente

Copagri

MESA – MedDiet Eco-Systems Atelier

Organic Regenerative

RARECHE Farmers’ Market

AIAB-Campania

Bio-distretto Cilento non profit association

Cooperativa sociale Apeiron

Purchase Groups

Ministry of Economy

Support in the framework of the National Strategy for Internal Areas Development

Ministry of Agriculture

Support for research work on experience analysis and assessment

International Network of Eco Regions

Joint management of public services (transport, waste management, school canteens, renewable energies)

Salerno University Fondazione L’Annunziata Mediterraneo HI.S.P.A.

Leader LAGs

Pro loco Associations

Fondazione Alario per Elea Velia

Campus Mediterraneo (research, training & assistance initiative)

INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Joint management of public services (transport, waste management, school canteens, renewable energies)

General Context Analysis (example)

(Governance: stakeholder analysis)
RESULTS - Organic District
How far is it from a fully developed Organic District?

Tot Score: 22/35

Low (0-14)
Low - Av.ge (15-21)
High - Av.ge (22-28)
High (29-35)

Farm Strategy, structure and competition
Factors condition
Related and Supporting Industries
Government
Demand Conditions
History
Chance
RESULTS:
Compliance to the Organic District objectives (example)

- Support farmers-consumers relationships
- Promote communication of Organic
- Support Mix Farming
- Support coexistence of different production techniques
- Support food sovereignty
- Supporting social farming
- Territorial valorization
- Simplify the certification and control system

Tot Score: 26/40

- Low (0-12)
- Low - Average (13-24)
- High - Average (25-32)
- High (33-40)
RESULTS:
What is the development stage of my district?

Initial stage/Final stage (0-18)
Take-off/Decline (19-24)
Maturity (24-30)

Tot Score: 16/30
RESULTS:
Type of Market Orientation (example)

Present orientation: Local market selling to residents

Potential orientation: non-residential population (tourists-neighboring urban settlements etc.)
Strategies Suggestions (example)
Their specificity depends on the depth of the analysis

• Increase number and size of the companies
• Organic agriculture activities growth driven by tourism
• Improve coordination among the chain actors
• Create technical and economic services able to externalize some functions that small farmers cannot perform
• Simplify the organic certification procedures


• Triantafyllidis A., Pietromarchi, A., Colombo L., 2019, p.10

Links

- ALGOA: https://www.algoa-organics.org/
- GAOD: https://gaod.online/
- IFOAM: https://www.ifoam.bio/
- IN.N.E.R.: https://www.ecoregion.info/
- UN Departement of Economic and Social Affairs: https://sdgs.un.org/goals
Thanks!!