

L’Agricoltura Sociale: Fattore D’Innovazione: Le buone prassi di agricoltura sociale

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**Social Farming – the EU experience based on the SoFar Project
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More information on the SoFar project is available from <http://sofar.unipi.it>

Da sempre l’agricoltura e le società rurali, in tutta Europa, hanno sviluppato esperienze volte a promuovere diverse pratiche e forme di solidarietà, assistenza sociale e inclusione sociale.

In particolare si parla di “agricoltura sociale” (o *care farming, green care*) per descrivere quelle pratiche agricole che mirano a sostenere il recupero socio-riabilitativo e l’inserimento lavorativo di persone svantaggiate e con “bassa capacità contrattuale” (es. disabilità mentale e fisica, detenzione, tossicodipendenza, minori, emigrati).

“SoFar” è una iniziativa internazionale di supporto alla ricerca per le politiche rurali europee, finanziata dalla Commissione europea nell’ambito del VI Programma Quadro per la Ricerca e l’Innovazione). Il suo principale scopo è di supportare la costruzione di un nuovo ambiente istituzionale per “l’agricoltura sociale”. Il progetto ha avuto inizio a maggio 2006 ed ha una durata di 30 mesi (finito gennaio 2009)

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Throughout history, agricultural and rural societies, all over the Europe, have developed experiences promoting diverse practices and forms of solidarity, social assistance and social inclusion. In particular, we may speak of social farming (or ‘care farming’ or ‘green care’) to describe those farming practices aimed at promoting disadvantaged people’s rehabilitation and care and/or towards the integration of people with ‘low contractual capacity’ (i.e.: psychophysical disabilities, convicts, drug addicts, minors, migrants).

“So Far” is a multi-country specific support action, funded by the EU Commission [Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development]. Its main goal is to support the building of a new institutional environment for “social/care farming”. The project started in May 2006 and finished in January 2009]

Agricoltura Sociale: le aree di lavoro

- **Riabilitazione/cura:** per persone con gravi disabilità (fisica, psichica/mentale, sociale) con un fine socio-terapeutico;
- **Formazione e inserimento lavorativo:** esperienze orientate all'occupazione di soggetti a più basso potere contrattuale o disabilità lievi);
- **Ricreazione e qualità della vita:** esperienze rivolte ad un ampio spettro di persone con bisogni (più o meno) speciali, con finalità socio-ricreative (agri-turismo "sociale", fattoria didattica);
- **Educazione:** per soggetti molto diversi che traggono utilità dall'apprendere il funzionamento della natura e dei processi produttivi agro-zootecnici (minori, burn out, malati terminali);

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Areas of work include

Rehabilitation/care: for people with disabilities – physical, intellectual, social needing socio-therapeutic service

Integration into labour markets

Recreation and quality of life – for people with special needs, social co-operatives, education farms

Education – for learning about the fundamentals of nature and animal production (children, those suffering from burnout, those with illnesses]

Social farming can have a big impact on agriculture and the rest of society because of:

- The benefits for service users - empowerment, social inclusion, education, employment, therapy.
- Innovation: in agriculture, social and health care and education
- New links between agriculture, social care, health care and education sectors
- Strengthening urban-rural relationships and stimulating urban agriculture
- Providing opportunities for diversification for farms and rural areas.
- Improving the reputation of farms and enterprises
- Improving social capital in rural areas
- Strengthening social services in rural areas; healthy and vibrant rural communities and improving the landscape

Social Farming has developed in different ways across Europe – in the countries studied in the SoFar project. In general, the closing down of big institutions in many countries across Europe in the 1970s and 1980s meant a large increase in the number of social farming initiatives.

In general, in the SoFar project, we observed that there are about four different stages of development of social farming in the countries we studied.

These are as follows:

Social Farming in a Pioneering situation: There are quite a small number of initiatives – mainly based on voluntary activity. There is a low level of awareness by local society and by policymakers and institutions. Slovenia and Ireland are in this stage at the moment.

Social Farming associated with Multifunctional agriculture: In this the interest in social farming comes mainly from agriculture. There is little awareness from the health care sector or the social care sector. Belgium is in this stage at the moment. Social farming is supported by funds from the agricultural and rural development policy areas.

Social Farming as a recognized system in social/health care: In this stage there is big interest in Social Farming from the health care sector. Germany is in this stage at the moment. Social farms are often professionally-based and are part of the health care sector.

Social Farming as an inclusive approach: In this stage there is a large number of practices, strongly recognised by society. They have organised themselves in regional and national networks. There is involvement of both the agricultural and social/health sector. The Netherlands, Italy and France are more or less in this stage.

See the Table in the Powerpoint presentation for the number of social farms in each of the SoFar countries.

Different types of social farming

We observed a great diversity of social farming initiatives in the SoFar countries.

In the Netherlands and Belgium, most social farms are private, family based social farms. Most farms are open to service-users with different backgrounds and needs. On most of these farms, agricultural production is the most important activity and social services are of lesser importance.

Most social farms in Ireland, Germany and Slovenia were set up by the third sector (e.g. religious groups, service-users' organisations, voluntary organisations). They have developed into institutional, professional care farms. They often focus on one type of service-user. The main service users are people with mental health problems, intellectual disabilities or drug and alcohol abuse problems. Social services are the core business and the agricultural production is of less importance.

In Italy, there is the strong existence of social co-operatives, focussing on providing care and on labour integration. They are not-for-profit enterprises and community based initiatives. They can benefit from special regulations for social cooperatives.

In France, there are networks of different types of social farms. One type is concerned with community gardens which focus on labour integration of service users. Most of them are managed by not-for-profit organisations. There are also networks of pedagogic farms that are used by primary schools.

Some key messages from the SoFar work:

- Social Farming is an important area of multifunctional agriculture which has not been fully explored as yet. It provides a way of linking private and public goods, providing food production and social services for both urban and rural areas.
- Social Farming already exists in many EU rural areas as a result of the effort of many innovative and pro-active farmers. It is already providing a diverse range of services for less empowered people and local communities
- The main issue that social farmers want to highlight is the need for recognition of the work and the need for greater awareness about the idea. In general, there is not a strong focus on seeking extra funding.
- The concept of social farming is highly demanding because it requires integrating policies from different areas. Rural policies need to have a greater focus on social needs in rural areas, while social policies need to have a greater focus on the specific needs of rural areas
- Social farming needs supporting tools and supporting rules in a supportive policy environment.
- The rights and needs of service-users must be a central concern for everybody involved as Social Farming develops. This is a really important issue because the service-users are some of the most vulnerable people in any society.



Agricoltura sociale: Esperienze EU IL progetto SoFar

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IL progetto SoFar

- “SoFar” è una iniziativa internazionale di supporto alla ricerca per le politiche rurali europee, finanziata dalla Commissione europea nell’ambito del VI Programma Quadro per la Ricerca e l’Innovazione). Il suo principale scopo è di supportare la costruzione di un nuovo ambiente istituzionale per “l’agricoltura sociale”.



SoFar Partners

- Università di Pisa e ARSIA (Agenzia regionale per lo sviluppo e l'innovazione in agricoltura Toscana) – Italia
- Università di Wageningen – Paesi Bassi
- Istituto di Ricerca per l'Agricoltura Biologica, Witzenhausen – Germania
- Università di Ghent, Belgio
- QAP Decisions, Grenoble, Francia
- Università di Lubjana, Slovenia
- Università Nazionale dell'Irlanda, Irlanda



AS: una definizione

“L' AS è quella attività che impiega le risorse delle piante e degli animali, la presenza di piccoli gruppi, famigliari e non, che operano in realtà agricole, per promuovere inclusione”.



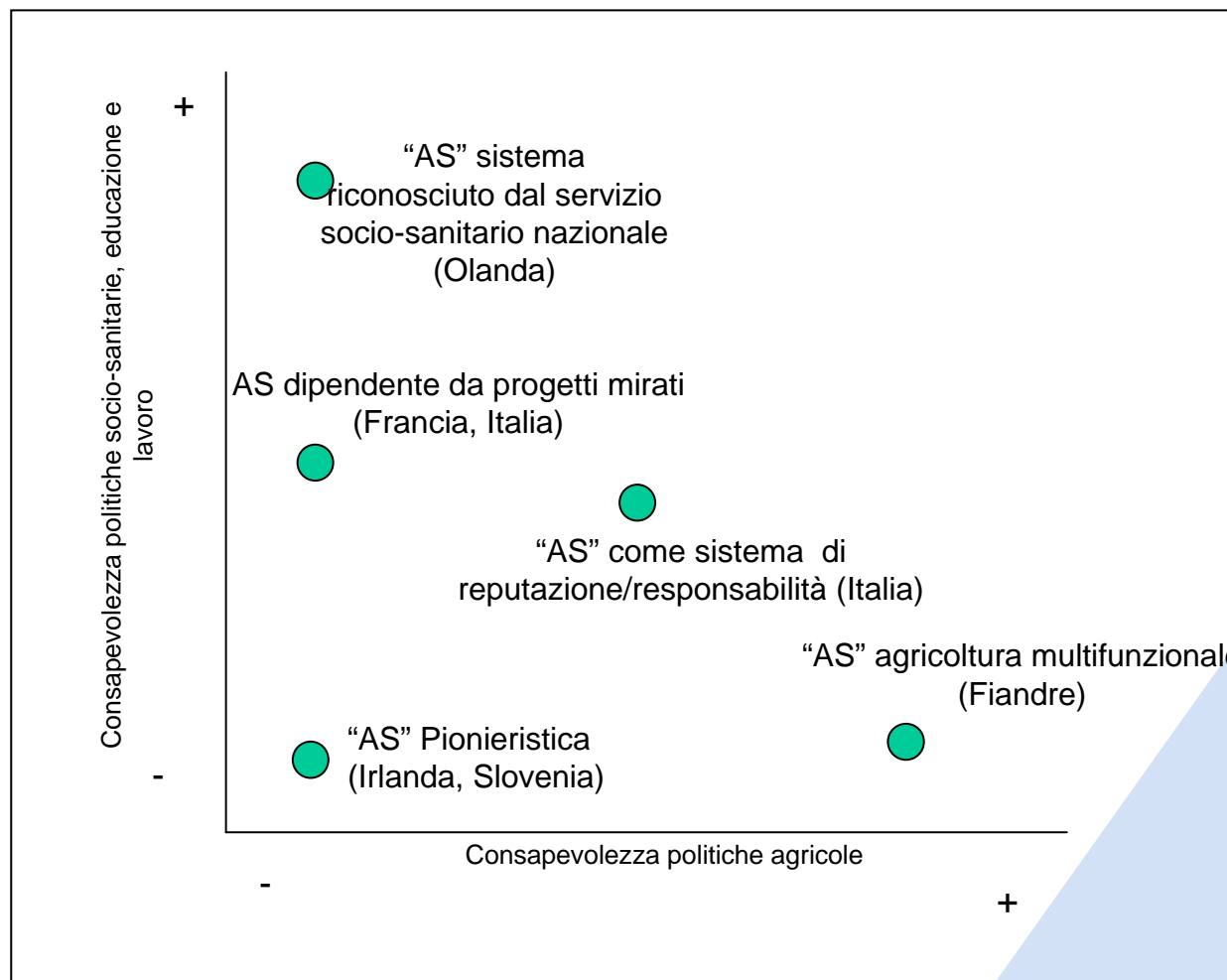
AS: le aree di lavoro

- *Riabilitazione/cura*: per persone con gravi disabilità (fisica, psichica/mentale, sociale) con un fine socio-terapeutico;
- *Formazione e inserimento lavorativo*: esperienze orientate all'occupazione di soggetti a più basso potere contrattuale o disabilità lievi);
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- *Servizi alla vita quotidiana*: agri-asili, servizi di accoglienza diurna per anziani, riorganizzazione reti di prossimità per la cura ed il supporto alla vita di anziani.



Il riconoscimento dell'AS

Grafico: Consapevolezza degli attori pubblici e modelli d'AS in EU





Social farming: SoFar countries

Number of social farms in the different SoFar countries and the number of users

| | Private | Institutional | Others | Total | N° users |
|---|---------|---------------|--------|-------|----------|
| Belgium (Flanders) | 258 | 38 | 12 | 308 | 2.000 |
| France | | | | | |
| -associative social inclusion farms / gardens | | | 400 | 400 | |
| -pedagogic farms | | | | 1200 | |
| -therapeutic farms | 200 | | 300 | 500 | |
| Germany | | | | | |
| -therapeutic farms | 12 | 150 | | 162 | |
| -school farms | | | 58 | 58 | |
| Ireland | 2* | 92** | 12 | 106 | 2.000 |
| Italy | | | | | |
| -therapeutic/inclusive/social farms/ gardens | 150 | 65 | 450 | 675 | |
| -prisons | | 10 | | | |
| -pedagogic farms | | | | | |
| Netherlands | 746 | 83 | 10 | 839 | 10.000 |
| Slovenia | 4 | 6 | 5 | 15 | 500 |