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Empowering participation, strenghtening participatory governance in living labs

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Democratizing interactions with and among food system actors in a newly set-up Agroecology Living Lab in a Mediterranean area.

#AdaptFutures23

ALL ORGANIC

Agroecology Living Labs **(ALL)** to promote robust and resilient **Organic** production systems

Core Organic funding ≅ I million €

5 Countries (Estonia, Poland, Romania, Italy, Algeria)

7 Partners

> than 25 researchers and hundreds of practitioners

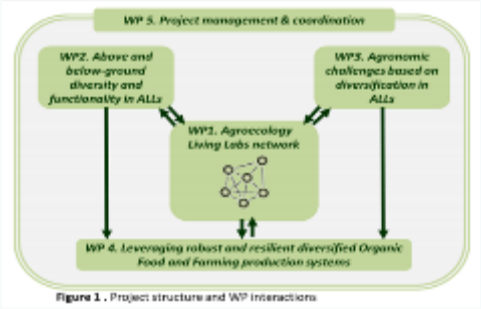


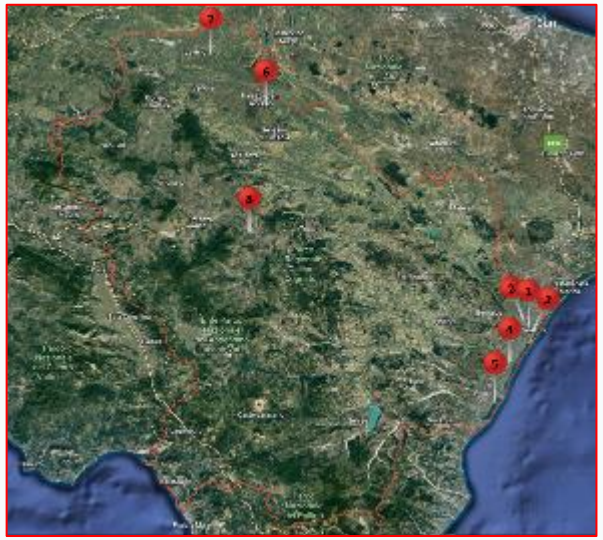
Figure 1 . Project structure and WP interactions

Adoption of a wide range of diversification strategies:

i) temporal diversification (combination of annual/perennial species, rotation, multicropping),
ii) horizontal and vertical spatial diversification (alley- inter- and strip-cropping),
iii) genetic diversification (minor crops, local landraces, evolutionary populations);
iv) diversification techniques (no/reduced tillage; on-farm produced compost, fertilisers,, ……)

The Italian Living Lab

Basilicata



Important economic role of agriculture
Climate change
Highly productive agriculture

Different pedo-climatic environments
Different marketing channels/outlets
Different socio-relational dynamics

WHY
individual and collective motivations

TECHNICAL
Unoptimal use of land in specialised farms
Soil health because of improper crop rotation

ORGANISATIONAL
Difficulty in growing and sourcing the diversity in crops needed to supply the customers

ECONOMIC/MARKETING
Conventionalisation of ‘major’ crops
Improvement/creation of new value chains to enhance the farmers’ economic sustainability

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
How to identify, measure, monitor and improve weaknesses? (e.g. off-farm inputs)

SOCIO-RELATIONAL
Need to network with other farmers to exchange experience and escape from isolation

RISK MITIGATION
Crop diversification as economic solution to decrease risks or to find new/more profitable outlets

CLIMATIC
Disorientation on crop management and planning

WHAT

diversification practices in organic farming

Diversification strategy	Farm ID# 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Temporal								
Complex rotation	X				X			X
Agroecological service crops (ASC)	X	X	X	X				X
Spatial								
Intercropping	(X)		X	X	X			X
Agroforestry (fruit - vegetable crops)	X	X		X	X			X
Agroforestry (fruit - cereal crops)	X							
Hedgerows	X	X	X	X	X			X
Strip cropping	X							
Genetic								
Use of landraces/local varieties	X				X			X
Use of mixture of species	X		X	X				
Organic heterogeneous material	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Practices								
Farm compost	X	X		X	X			X
Minimum/zero tillage	X	X	X	X	X			X

Research station:

- Pilot composting plant
- Introduction of agroecological service crops (e.g. living mulch)
- Soil management for hydraulic arrangements (extreme events mitigation)

WHAT/WHO

LL dynamics and actors

LL dynamisation
- Plenary LL meeting
- Workshops
- Thematic gatherings

Approach
- Gradient of actors engagement
  - I. Participant – participation limited to ALL main activities (e.g. plenary, farm visits)
  - II. Discussant – following the diversification option and involved in result analysis
  - III. Tester – testing the diversification option
  - IV. Experimenter – testing the diversification option + monitoring by research team

Researcher – practitioner cooperation
- On-farm and online meetings
- Trials co-design
- Results co-validation

LL initiatives
- Living Library

WOW

impact and lessons learnt

LLs provide a functional practical and theoretical framework for interaction

LLs not per se representing a tangible evolution vis-à-vis previous participatory mechanisms

High level of interest and willingness to involve/being involved

Wealth of practices already on the ground: need to assess their performance and replicability

Diversification not a silver bullet, but its potential advantages and urgency highly perceived

WARM GREETINGS

Thank you for your attention

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