

Project: Rural development for employment

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Partner: Itaka Training

Authors: Alessandra Cugnetto

Research best practices of rural development in Italy

Intro

In order to identify a collection of relevant best practices in rural development, Itaka Training applied a separate two-step methodology: desk research and fieldwork. During the first phase we have analysed excellent projects, and identified and selected the good practices, looking for specific information from the rural development sector and extrapolating information directly from project websites and institutional websites; during the second phase we interviewed the managers of the selected projects.

Projects and the best practices identified as relevant to the project RDE are: Mulinum and “I Semi della Legalità”.

- ⇒ [Mulinum– Sustainable management of private small farmers](#) - Promoting the sustainable management of small farmers who have renovated some ancient natural stone mills, thanks to a crowdfunding operation launched in 2016, and using only local ancient grains.
- ⇒ [I semi della Legalità](#) - Promoting the management of some cooperatives operating on lands and assets confiscated from the “mafia”. The Project promotes social integration actions for disadvantaged people as disabled migrant, unemployed young and women.

Case study 1: Mulinum - Promoting the sustainable management of small farms born in Calabria dreaming of creating a complete and controlled wheat chain, which starts from the organic cultivation of exclusively local seed varieties.

Digital resources

<https://www.mulinum.it/>

<https://it-it.facebook.com/mulinum/>

<https://www.italiachecambia.org/2020/03/mulinum-molino-contadini-nato-grazie-comunita/>

<https://www.gamberorosso.it/notizie/mulinum-a-san-floro-la-startup-agricola-che-produce-grano-farina-pane-e-pizza/>

Aims and objectives:

Enhance ancient agricultural traditions, renovating old mills, cultivating ancient types of wheat on abandoned lands.



- To promote young and social entrepreneurship in rural areas.
- To promote ethically production activities.
- To present a good practice and a solution that could tackle unemployment and depopulation.
- To promote new opportunities for the development of the local economy.
- To replicate the “San Floro” format in other Italian and European regions, in partnership with local organic farms.
- To promote and foster new kind of gastronomic tourism linked to the production chain.

Top highlights:

The most important aspects of the chosen practices are:

- The involvement of the local population;
- The enhancement of local traditions through the enhancement of ancient wheat processing methods;
- The involvement of private supporters who support the project with passion and dedication;
- The creation of 20 new agricultural start ups using a complete and controlled wheat chain in every step;
- The creation of a model of agricultural development "from below", replicable in other regions, based on the philosophy of respect for local products from raw materials to finished products.

Detailed description of the chosen case study:

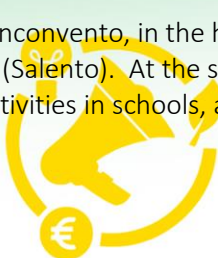
Mulinum is a new model of farm born in Calabria since the crowdfunding operation was launched in 2016. Stefano Caccavari launched crowdfunding to save the last stone mill left active in Calabria in San Floro, a village near Catanzaro. In 90 days, it collected 500,000 euros thanks to the contribution of 101 members.

Mulinum works every day for the renaissance of the Italian wheat culture, focusing on the biodiversity of seeds and the wealth of their properties. Mulinum has chosen to use only ancient local grains. About 6 varieties of ancient local grains grow today in Calabria: Senatore Cappelli, Verna, Farro, Iermano, Maiorca, Rubeum.

This is the largest case of crowdfunding in the Italian agricultural sector. Thanks to an entrepreneurial strategy based on the idea of networking and virtuous participatory dynamics. The choice not to seek public aid, but instead count on the support of private individuals, made Mulinum a startup that thanks to a shareholder base spread throughout the territory, and is able to exponentially replicate its format.

This entrepreneurial vision has become an extremely participatory form of ownership, where those who choose to support Mulinum do not only do so for economic reasons, but also for ideal reasons: to rediscover their origins, save their history and contribute to the protection and growth of its territory.

After Mulinum San Floro, Mulinum Buonconvento, in the heart of Val d'Orcia, is about to come to life. Then it will be the turn of Mulinum Mesagne in Puglia (Salento). At the same time the manager and the team of Mulinum are promoting education and awareness activities in schools, and planning guided tours in partnership with public local schools.



Background

The first idea was "The Family garden", born in 2015 on the lands of Caccavari family. A vegetable garden grown organically divided into parcels and rented to people living in Catanzaro, and in other surrounding area, eager to eat healthy and seasonal fruit and vegetables. Over the weekend, tenants could visit their piece of vegetable garden and bring the harvest home.

It started with ten plots and reached 150 in two years. Through "Family garden" a community has been born, where people can meet. The "garden" has become a meeting place and an opportunity to rediscover a direct relationship with nature and its products.

Benefits for RdE project

The RdE project can have several benefits from the chosen case

The chosen case promotes an agricultural best practice that aims at economic development, repopulation of abandoned areas and promotion of new production activities, enhancing local products. "Mulinum experience" is consistent with the objectives and purposes of the project RdE. The "Mulinum star up" is replicable in other areas of Europe.

Describe local, regional, national, and international impact

The Mulinum project has a big impact from different angles and at different levels because helps promoting local products at risk of been lost; respecting traditional techniques and promoting cultural heritage.

In Calabria, one of the poorest regions of Europe, this best practice has a very important impact because it has produced new jobs in an area of high unemployment. It is also contributing to tackle depopulation in rural areas.

On a regional and national level it is a replicable model and the managers are already planning to open "Mulinum" in other Italian regions.

On interational level the best practice "Mulinum" can be replicable in the other areas in harmony with local agricultural traditions.

In conclusion

"Mulinum" is in line with the mission of Rde Project and with European policies that support the development of local economies and the European cultural heritage. It is certainly worthy to disseminate in local, regional, national and international medias as a best rural development practices especially because it has contributed enormously to tackle rural depopulation, unemployment and improve the local economy.

Case study 2: "I Semi della Lealtà" is a project of Calabria Region as good practice of Calabrian agriculture for ethical and sustainable development. The idea was realized to enhance the role of social agriculture, as a driving force for development in the rural area, as a factor in improving the quality of life of the Calabrian population. The Project is a network of regional farms and companies. The farms and the companies are actives in the social field.

They reuse confiscated assets from the mafia and they promote social inclusion actions.



Digital resources

<http://www.calabriapsr.it/images/pdf/Buone-pratiche/Report%20finale%20I%20semi%20della%20legalita.pdf>



It is a cooperative born thanks to law 109/96 and by a Project of the National Association "Libera contro la Mafia". The young members of the co-operative have chosen to work on their own territory, on land

confiscated from the ndrangheta of the Piana di Gioia Tauro. To date, the company produces oil, olives, chillies and aubergines, aiming to maintain the high quality of organic products and carrying out ethical tourism activities, to enhance the economic and healthy development of the area.

- **Fattoria La casa di Nilla, (Catanzaro – CZ - ITALY)**

it is a specialized center for the care and protection of children and adolescents who are victims of abuse and mistreatment. The activities aim to guarantee educational, social and clinical services, operating in synergy with the network of territorial public services and agencies responsible for protecting the well-being and rights of children and adolescents. The farm produces: honey, oil and citrus fruits

- **la Fattoria del Benessere, (Decollatura – CZ - ITALY)**

It was born on the municipal territory that involves disadvantaged groups of the population in production, working for social reintegration, through educational, cultural paths and didactic. The company produces: spelled, bread, pasta, cutters and chaff cushions.

- **Corsorzio Macramè, (Reggio Calabria – RC - ITALY)**

Since its establishment, the Consortium has concentrated its activity on agricultural interventions on confiscated assets. 30 subjects are involved and work for the promotion of people's rights, respecting legality, with the logic of implementing shared social, agricultural and tourist projects. The consortium commits itself concretely to promoting for the social growth and

Cooperativa Demetra Onlus (S. Stefano d'Aspromonte – CZ - ITALY)

it is an organization for social promotion and international cooperation, which carries out actions to combat gender-based violence.

The guiding action aims at preventing the phenomenon through training for specialized operators and particular professional categories. The company produces wine, oil and carrubba flour.

I Chora (Condufuri – RC - ITALY)

It is a reality born from the encounter, of the Trentino and Calabrian culture.

The main objective is to create a social experience of legality, promotion of the territory, culture and enhancement of human resources, who live in conditions of social disadvantage.

The cooperative aims at social inclusion through responsible tourism activities and the marketing of local products under the "Terre Libere" brand.

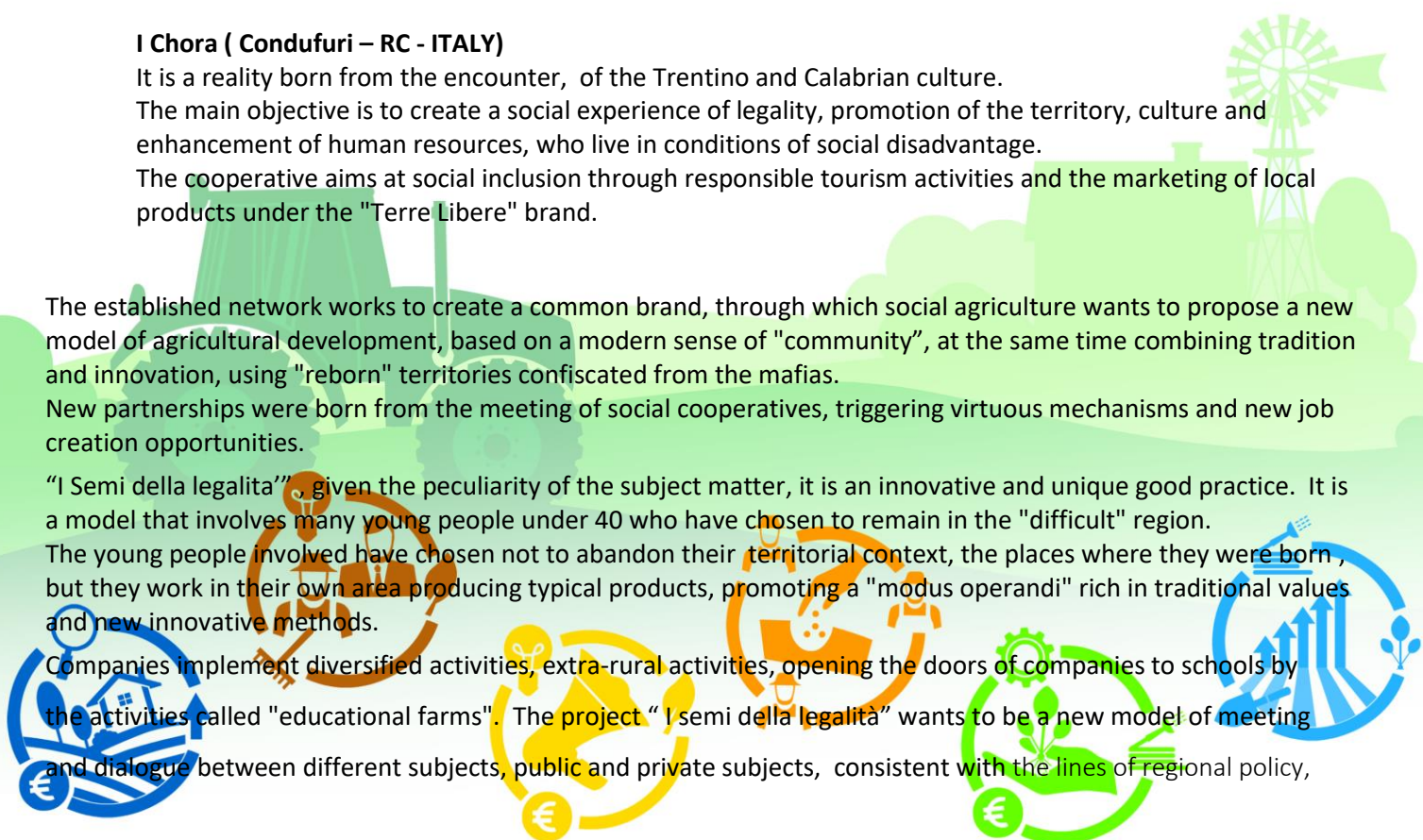
The established network works to create a common brand, through which social agriculture wants to propose a new model of agricultural development, based on a modern sense of "community", at the same time combining tradition and innovation, using "reborn" territories confiscated from the mafias.

New partnerships were born from the meeting of social cooperatives, triggering virtuous mechanisms and new job creation opportunities.

"I Semi della legalità", given the peculiarity of the subject matter, it is an innovative and unique good practice. It is a model that involves many young people under 40 who have chosen to remain in the "difficult" region.

The young people involved have chosen not to abandon their territorial context, the places where they were born, but they work in their own area producing typical products, promoting a "modus operandi" rich in traditional values and new innovative methods.

Companies implement diversified activities, extra-rural activities, opening the doors of companies to schools by the activities called "educational farms". The project "I semi della legalità" wants to be a new model of meeting and dialogue between different subjects, public and private subjects, consistent with the lines of regional policy,



which has among its priorities the fight against the mafias and illegal recruitment.

Background

The Background in which the best practice is developed is the increase in assets confiscated from the mafias.

Thanks to the law 109/96 it is possible to use these assets for social actions. The Calabria Region, through the Agricultural Department controls that the confiscated lands and confiscated companies are used for the community, for the economic and social development.

Benefits for the project

The Project “I semi della legalità” is consistent with the objectives and purposes of the project RdE

The RdE project can have multiple benefits from the chosen case because the chosen case promotes the knowledge of an agricultural best practice that aims at economic social and cultural development. It promotes the repopulation of some rural areas depressed.

According with the RDE Project the best practice chosen counters the abandonment of rural and poor areas by proposing economic and cultural development actions.

Through this study case The RdE project can analyse the phenomenon of depopulation due to cultural causes.

Describe local, regional, national, and international impact

The impact of the project “I semi della legalità” is excellent on every levels.

On local level the project contributes to the creation of new job opportunities to produce local agricultural products ensuring high quality.

The project has an important social value because the products come from confiscated territories. It means a very important change of mentality for the local population. The project aims to promote inclusion paths for disadvantaged people (disabled, young people and unemployed women and migrants). In this way through this best practice, the actors work against the abandon and the depopulations of some area of Calabria.

On regional level, in line with the regional policies, the actors of the project “I semi della legalità” contrast the mafias mentality and illegal recruitment of workers.

The experience of the best practice is replicable to national and international level thanks to the “diversification” of activities, and to the versatility of the companies and of the farms.

The best practice chosen is replicable in other areas of Europe.

In conclusion

The best practice chosen is coherent with the mission of Rde Project and with the mission of political European, that supports the development of local economies and the cultural heritages of all European countries.

The best practice can be replicated at European level and it can be shared in the local, regional national and international media as one of the best practices for rural development. It can be shared as one of the best practices to resolve the phenomenon of depopulation in some areas economically depressed.

