



GRAGE

Grey and Green in Europe: elderly living in urban areas



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 645706.

TITLE

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GRAGE: *Grey and green in Europe: elderly living in urban areas*

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Task leader	Alessio Cavicchi
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¹ R= Document, report; DEM =Demonstrator, pilot, prototype ; DEC Websites, patent fillings, videos, etc.

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² PU= Public; CO= Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)



GRAGE

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Introduction

During the last years, several international initiatives of city branding based on food and gastronomy have been established. These networks are built on multi-stakeholder engagement practices, recognizing their pivotal role for city branding and governance development. Thus, city networks are characterized by sharing common objectives based on the enhancement of local food supply for urban management and place branding strategies.

The local community members may see the product as an element of their local culture, at the core of local activities. Some common elements oriented to sustainable involvement of the whole community of residents and tourists, can be easily detected:

- endogenous ingredients used in traditional culinary practices;
- local know-how and food miles concept;
- promotion of food festivals and fairs;
- respect for the environment;
- education to reduce food waste and promotion of sustainable local production processes.

The purpose of this report is to explore main practices used in planning and executing multi-stakeholders activities, underlying differences and critical points, in order to offer relevant indications for policy makers with a specific focus on the role of elderly.

Urban policy, food and the elderly. Main evidences from international policy reports

Several international reports have been released by international organisations. More than 20 documents have been screened and here below some of the main outcomes about the role of elderly are depicted.

In Food for cities report edited by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), there is a focus on innovative techniques, such as rooftop gardening that could be legalized and regulated. Moreover, mechanisms for enabling more innovative approaches to making urban land available for agricultural production, could include imaginative approaches to land banking, creation of incentives through taxation and associated relief, and the establishment of garden plots/allotments for food growing.

In the Active Ageing report, the World Health Organization (WHO) offers a framework for action addressed to policymakers. The main outcomes underline that, like younger people, older citizens need training in new technologies, especially in agriculture and electronic communication. Older people can and do remain creative and flexible. Intergenerational learning bridges age differences, enhances the transmission of cultural values and promotes the worth of all ages.

Attaining the goal of active ageing will require a joint action within various sectors in addition to health and social services, including education, employment and labour, finance, social security, housing, transportation, justice and rural and urban development.

For what concerns sociality, risks for loneliness and social isolation must be reduced by supporting community groups run by older people, traditional societies, self-help and mutual aid groups, peer and professional outreach programmes, neighborhood visiting, telephone support programmes, and family caregivers. Intergenerational contact should be supported and housing in communities



GRAGE

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that encourage daily social interaction and interdependence among young and old people, should be provided.

Lastly, full participation of older people should be enabled through education and training policies and programmes supporting lifelong learning for women and men as they age. It is also a priority to provide older people with opportunities to develop new skills, particularly in areas such as information technologies and new agricultural techniques.

In the RUAF foundation report "Cities farming for the future - Urban agriculture for green and productive cities", it is underlined how Urban agriculture may function as an important strategy for poverty alleviation and social integration of disadvantaged groups (such as immigrants, HIV-AIDS affected households, disabled people, female-headed households with children, elderly people without pension, youngsters without a job by integrating them more strongly into the urban network and providing them with a decent livelihood so to prevent social problems (Gonzalez Novo and Murphy, 2000).

Urban farming repeatedly allows for the inclusion of women, children, the poor, the homeless and the elderly into constructive food production activities. Thus urban agriculture, in a manner consistent with the practice of conventional community (social and economic) development, can be a constructive contributor to city neighborhoods and the social networks of entire Cities. This goal is articulated in the mission statement of the American Community Gardening Association, a key non-governmental supporter of city farming in the US and Canada:

"The Association recognizes that community gardening improves the quality of life for people by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, beautifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education" (ACGA, 2006).

A Taxonomy on International Food Cities Network

Taxonomy is a concept usually used in the biological field.

"The logic of taxonomy [...] lies in empirical classification based on multivariate analysis of multiple dimensions that may cover structures, processes, strategies, and contexts" (Meyer et al, 1993).

Even though city networks are not biological elements, the logic behind taxonomy classifications could be useful to describe also different elements belonging to other fields of research.

Some examples:

- Definition of social participation in ageing literature (Levasseur et al., 2010). In particular it is stressed the role of "gardening" by citing Mendes de Leon et al. (2003)
- Taxonomy on products offered by destinations (Balakrishnan, 2009)
- Taxonomic overview of the literature in place branding (Chan & Marrafa, 2013)
- A taxonomy of brand valuation practice (Salinas & Amber, 2009)
- Taxonomy to study tourists (Crick, 1989)



Therefore, a taxonomy table classifying main characteristics of city networks based on food is reported below (Table 1):

Table 1: Taxonomy

Activities\Projects	Sustainable Food Cities Network	Eating City	Cittaslow	Sustainable Food in Urban Communities	Creative Cities Unesco	Urban gardens network (1997) - Barcellona
Engaging with stakeholders (Identification and organization of their groups)	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Working with stakeholders 1 (Organise meetings)	Y	Y	Y (not compulsory)	Y	Y	Y
Working with stakeholders 2 (Communication and dissemination tools)	Y	Y	Y (not compulsory)	Y	Y	Y
Participative Action Planning	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Transnational Exchanges	N	N	Y (not compulsory)	Y	Y	N
Building Capacities (training sessions and knowledge sharing)	Y	Y	Y (not compulsory)	Y	Y	Y
Involvement of the elderly	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y



GRAGE

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- *Sustainable Food Cities Network* is a UK based network whose aim is to promote healthy and sustainable food to the public, tackling food poverty, diet-related ill health and access to affordable healthy food and generally promoting a sustainable food economy. The basic theoretical concept is related to sustainability. It is recognized that, in developing their programmes, many places have found it useful to think about food across six areas: 1. Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public; 2. Tackling food poverty, diet-related illnesses, health and access to affordable healthy food; 3. Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects; 4. Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy; 5. Transforming catering and food procurement; 6. Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system.

In its website, <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/>, the organization offers many different tools, such as action plans, toolkits, guides and web sources to help local communities and cities to carry on their work.

Furthermore, the Sustainable Food Cities network offers an award, designed to recognise and celebrate the success of those places taking a joined up, holistic approach to food and that are achieving significant positive change on a range of key food health and sustainability issues.

The Award is open to any place - be it a city, town, borough, county or district - which:

- has an established cross-sector food partnership in place;
- is a member of the Sustainable Food Cities Network; and
- is implementing an action plan on healthy and sustainable food.

Many resources are available on <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/keyissues/tacklingfoodpovertyandaccesstohealthyfood/resources>

- *Eating City* is a multi-year program of activities established in France and promoted worldwide by public and private institutions. The aim of this program created in 2010 is to create opportunities for international meetings to generate case studies and a series of publications with concrete proposals useful for public and private decision makers working along the food chain and also for food industry and food service operators and buyers.

According to the website of the Eating City International Platform (<http://www.eatingcity.org/about/>), in order to handle Food issues, Cities must revise their usual competences. To do so, they need to build up a vision in which feeding people shifts from its mere definition to a more systemic understanding. Indeed, food is not only a sum of calories and nutrients necessary to make our body working, but it is embedded in a whole system that influences our quality of life and includes all activities and actors necessary to grow, harvest, process, package, transport, market, consume, and dispose food and all food-related items.

This life-cycle thinking approach allows to build a model of food lifespan from origin to plate that makes possible to identify all food-related activities and infrastructures in and out the city and to design an organization chart that connects all stakeholders and infrastructures involved in the food supply chain, giving them a role and a responsibility.

Through a deep cultural change, Cities Food Policies may turn food into a thread to connect all the main competences of the cities related to economic development,



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education, health, environment, solidarity, culture and leisure, governance, but it can also give consistency to a synergic osmosis between cities and adjacent territories.

- Cittàslow was created in 1997 and currently more than 190 cities in the world take part to this programme. Nowadays, 30 countries, 228 cities, 18 networks exist. According to the website of Cittaslow (www.cittaslow.org) the main goal of Cittaslow was, and still is today, to enlarge the philosophy of Slow Food to local communities and local governments applying the concepts of ecogastronomy as practice of everyday life. Municipalities which join the association are motivated by curious people of a recovered time, where man is still protagonist of the slow and healthy succession of seasons, respectful of citizens' health, the authenticity of products and good food, rich of fascinating craft traditions of valuable works of art, squares, theatres, shops, cafés, restaurants, places of the spirit and unspoiled landscapes, characterized by spontaneity of religious rites, respect of traditions through the joy of a slow and quiet living.

- *Sustainable Food in Urban Communities* involves 10 European cities and its focus is on growing fruits and vegetables in the city, safeguarding and improving fertility of lands, delivering food stuffs in a more sustainable and less carbon intensive way. This project is funded by the Urbact programme. Urbact is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development and includes the participation of 29 countries, 300 cities and 5000 active participants. The programme enables cities to share good practices.

According to the website of this initiative, embracing a wide array of activities associated with the production and consumption of food, the project highlights one of the most important developments in the history of food policy and practice, namely the rise of the city as a transition space for the design and delivery of sustainable urban food strategies.

Mayors and civic society groups can learn much from their counterparts in other cities so to appreciate that every urban context is unique. Three themes of 'Growing', 'Delivering' and 'Enjoying' were selected by project partners to approach the complexity of the food system more simply, and to find a way to organize the different vibrant and heterogeneous experiences of the ten cities. The three themes were used to collect and review practical case studies of existing work in each city. The theme of "Growing" explores all possible ways to grow food near or in the city. The theme of "Delivering" explores ways to distribute, share and procure food within the city. The theme of "Enjoying" explores how people in the city can embrace a sustainable, happy, healthy and vibrant food culture in canteens and households.

In addition, project partners addressed three cross-cutting issues: 'Governance, synergies & local system'; 'Social Inclusion, jobs & economics'; 'Carbon emissions and resource efficiency'.

- *Creative cities of UNESCO* is a network of creative cities, founded in 2004, working together towards a common mission for cultural diversity and sustainable urban development.



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The network is currently formed by 116 cities working together towards common objectives: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.

By joining the Network, cities commit to sharing their best practices and developing partnerships involving the public and private sectors as well as civil society in order to:

- strengthen the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services;
- develop hubs of creativity and innovation and broaden opportunities for creators and professionals in the cultural sector;
- improve access to and participation in cultural life, in particular for marginalized or vulnerable groups and individuals;
- fully integrate culture and creativity into sustainable development plans.

The Network covers seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music. Among these different thematic networks, one on gastronomy has been established and 7 different cities characterised by vibrant gastronomy communities and local traditional culinary practices perform activities under this umbrella.

- *Finally, another initiative that was carried out in 1997, Urban gardens network – Barcelona* is a program developed by the Department of Environment and is devoted to elderly citizens (>65 years) with the aim of incorporating them in an activity for improving the environment through the organic production of vegetables.

From the mobility experiences carried out by researchers involved in this task, we can draw the following summary. Further explanations will be provided in the deliverable 4.2 foreseen at month 36.

❖ Finland:

- Finland has always been a green country and Finnish people feel Urban Agriculture (UA) familiar. A large part of actual urban population still maintains close contact with agriculture and their native rural place (for instance, many Finnish have summer cottages).
- UA was introduced in Finland at first as an educational and practical activity in schools. Then, various UA projects for elderly, people with disabilities, and other engaged people (environmentalists, foodies, etc.) have been developed.
- Gardening activities are considered as a tool for better quality of life: participation of elderly in gardening activities also includes food production. However, gardening is not only aimed at growing plants to achieve economic or nutritional benefits. Reasons are mainly subjective, such as: mental and physical wellbeing and keeping people active.
- Most common UA activities among interviewees are home and community gardens

❖ Greece:

- UA was introduced mainly as a consequence of 2008 crisis.



GRAGE

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- Main projects/initiatives targeting sustainable food practice activities are mainly directed to school children: the aim is to teach them how to grow food (vegetables and fruits).
 - It is difficult to involve elderly because many initiatives addressing UA are mainly disseminated via web: hard to reach the elderly as a target group.
 - Elderly are more difficult to involve at first, but once involved are constant (eg. Community gardens)
 - Adults are easier to involve at first, but then discontinuous: eg. proper gardening needs a lot of work.
- ❖ Italy (Marche):
- Historically UA development is influenced by the fact that Marche is mainly a rural region. Currently, young urban population moves to rural areas (they are actually drivers of know-how development).
 - Initially UA was introduced with support of local government as a social initiative for the elderly. Later, this initiative was introduced to schools. Middle aged people positively accept UA, however, but they should be more actively involved in gardening.
 - Nowadays different stakeholders' networks are supporting the implementation of similar successful projects led by local governments to develop UA. They are increasingly interacting.
 - UA nowadays is perceived to be one of the principles of responsible citizenship. UA in Marche region is the integral part of social concept of modern city development («Responsible citizenship» , «Active citizenship»).
 - The key motivation for UA is related to higher food quality. Gardening is mostly practiced by elderly introverts. Extroverts prefer other activities, third age universities in particular. At the same time third age universities have potential to raise elderly's UA motivation.
 - Marche region has developed network of entities with positive experience of UA projects, which grounds significant potential for development.
- ❖ Ukraine:
- Collectivization processes, developing internationalization processes, have brought a loss in local cultures (also food culture, mainly the ones related with religious festivities).
 - Projects connected with gardening are usually related to youngsters, not to elderly people
 - Young people are trying to give new economic value to grandparents' plots of land.
 - Organic production is implement by players with strong linkages at EU level with international actors of the food supply chain and distribution.
 - Political slowness compromises efficient policy adoption to improve elderly nutrition.

Conclusions

During the last years there has been a proliferation of cities networks around the theme of food and gastronomy. National and transnational consortia have been created to provide endogenous elements of development and wellbeing for local population and to enhance branding efforts by attracting international visitors.



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Many of them consider food as a vehicle not only to promote their towns but also to follow sustainable development paths in a holistic way, proposing governance models and supporting healthy and active lifestyles.

From our taxonomy, it emerges how international consortia of food cities are characterised by some common activities such as regular meetings, international exchanges and training sessions. Nevertheless, some differences can be outlined especially between activities that are merely informative (informing policy) and activities leading to action. Anyway, some of these networks can bring to an overlap of initiatives because some cities belong to more than one network.

Concerning the aim of GRAGE project, it is important to stress that in a more or less explicit way, elderly are considered as relevant beneficiaries or as actors of sustainable co-creation paths.

Many implications for the entrepreneurial governance of the city, the importance of location and local communities on the selected activities and the integration of different policy objectives could be drawn.

Thus, a questionnaire has been designed and a survey is currently carried on in the involved partner countries. Results will be delivered through a scientific paper at month 36 (del. 4.2).

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GRAGE

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