

Places of Learning



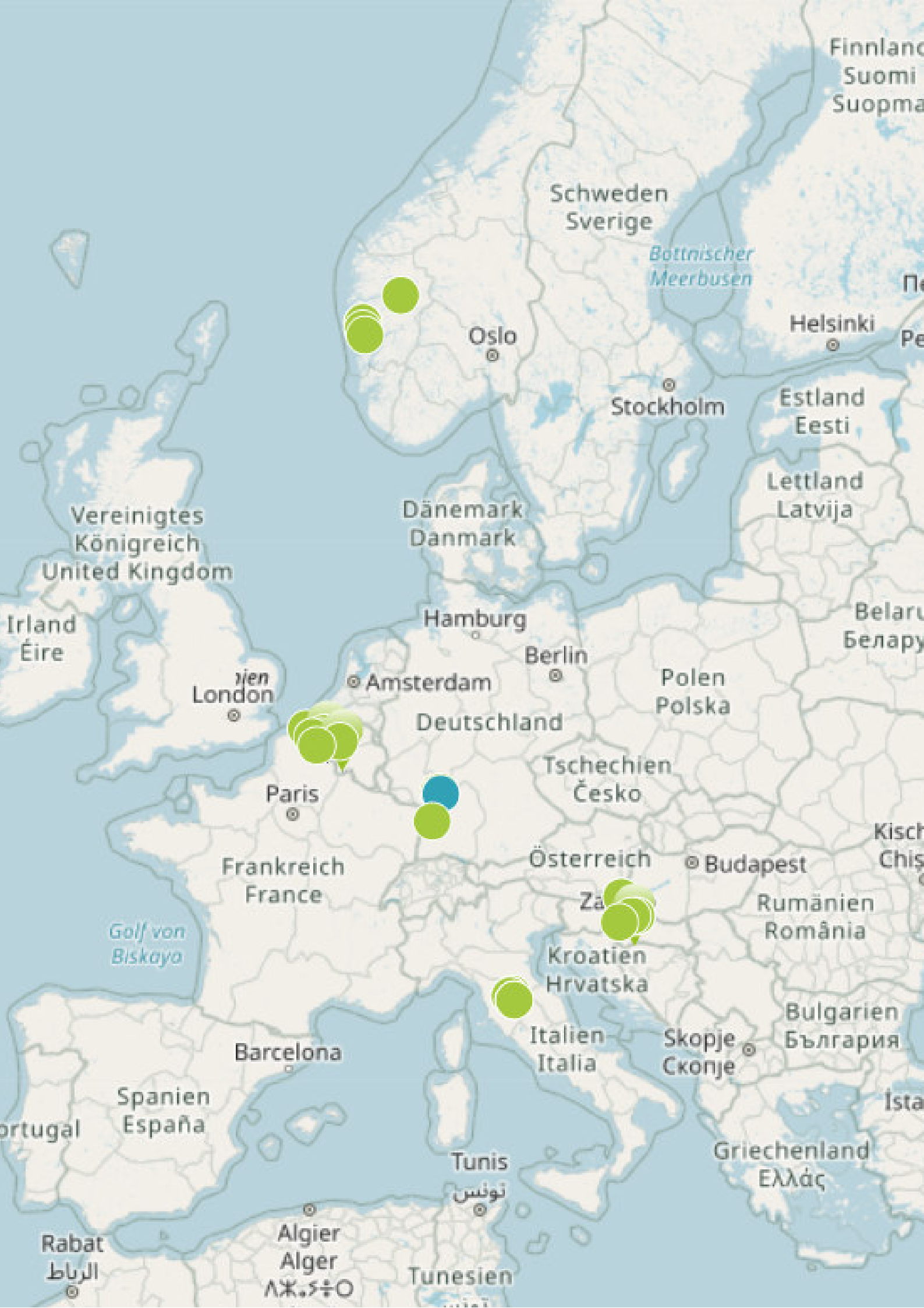
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PLaces of Learning

The places of learning bundle the knowledge and the potentials of the rural area or the linking of urban and rural structures at a physical location and prepare it there in such a way that it can be passed on to those interested in learning. At the places of learning, knowledge on the topic of sustainability can thus be experienced and lived, making the complex topic more tangible and understandable. All places of learning are characterized by sustainable management, experience in dealing with tourists and groups of learners, and a wealth of knowledge. Building on the core curriculum developed in MAREA, each place of learning passes on its specific knowledge and uses its own individual methods. As a result, each learning experience is individual.

The RuralAcademy places of learning are an ongoing process. Even after the end of the project, new places of learning will be added. The Online Platform „Mapping for Good“ enables us to enter and describe the new places of learning directly. This booklet on the other hand, describes the origin places of learning. In the MAREA project, more than 20 places of learning were established in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway and Croatia. A detailed description of the places of learning built in the project can be found in the following booklet.



Name: The Heathland Centre at Lygra

Location: Lygra is a small coastal village an hour north of Bergen. Cultivated by people since time immemorial, the green, rolling and windswept landscape epitomizes the life of the fisherman farmer; fishing, raising sheep and encouraging grazable growth by burning heather.

The Heathland Centre received the UNESCO Global Cultural Landscape Award in 2001, and in 2005 the centre was awarded the Council of Europe – Europa Nostra's Cultural Landscape Award for "its pioneering role in the protection of authentic heathlands, and the maintenance of biodiversity and traditional knowledge related to the landscape".

Farmer/trainer: Museum manager Torhild Kvingedal is a local enthusiast and inspirator, expert and receptionist, all rolled into one. As good a hostess as a guide, she welcomes guests with facts and stories of the landscape and traditions on the island.

Transfer of competences: Visitors are free to explore the museum and the paths of the island on their own, or through guided group tours. Signs and information boards tell about the history and the current management of the cultural landscape. Old Norwegian sheep, a surviving breed of the original Northern European short-tailed sheep, are an essential part of the landscape. After enjoying the scenery and history, a taste of local artisanal food at the centre's restaurant will complete the experience.

Story: The Heathland Centre is unique in Europe, its authentic heathlands being managed traditionally by the local farmers, but its landscape and visitor centre also being open to the public. The heathlands and the cultural landscape on the island of Lygra is also a beautiful natural experience, with a rich flora and fauna, including bird life. Here you can learn about the use of resources on a heather farm in ancient times, expanding your knowledge about the coastal heathlands and biodiversity through films and exhibitions. A natural economy far from our modern consumerist society. At the Heathland Centre you can also learn, through practical experiences, how to lead a more sustainable life today.

Size of the Place of Learning: The Heathland Centre covers an area of approximately 190 hectares, of which 24 hectares are cultivated infields, and the remainder is grazed outfields, mainly consisting of heathland with some grassland in special areas. Most of the area is privately owned by five farms and preservation is based on long-term agreements with the owners.



Name: The Heathland Centre at Lygra

Type of production: More than four kilometres of paths lead visitors through this ancient, coastal landscape, basically unchanged for the last 5.000 years. The visitor centre includes an exhibition of European coastal landscapes and a film about traditional heathland farming.

Services/options: The Heathland Centre offers educational activities for school classes and students, field courses, guided tours, seminars etc. Our restaurant offers traditional and artisanal local food. We also offer accommodation.

SDG´s:

SDG 13 Climate Action

SDG 15 Life on Land

SDG 17 Partnership for the goals

Contact:

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- E-mail: torhild.kvingedal@muho.no
- Phone: 0047 56356410 / 0047 95158756
- Opening hours: May - September
- Wed.-Thurs.-Friday 11.00 - 15.30
- Sunday 12.00 -17.00
- Groups and students by appointment all year

Insights:



Name: Lundemannsverk

Location: Lundemannsverk a farm located at the scenic island “Stord” on the west coast of Norway.

Farmer/trainer: The farm is run by farmer and gardener Ida Kleppe (42). Kleppe is a film maker with long experience in producing and directing documentary films for the Norwegian and international market. In 2018 she quit the film industry, and became an ecological farmer and gardener.

Transfer of competences: Lundemannsverk is a certified ecological farm/market garden. They produce vegetables, fruit, berries and from the spring of 2023, also free range eggs. They have a own farmshop, and in addition to the local market, they also produce for hotels and restaurants regionally. They use regenerative methods, and strive to produce food in harmony with nature.

Story: The farm Lundemannsverk was bought by Ida Kleppe and Sverre Brufladt in 2020. At the time, the farm was totally worn down, and none of the buildings could be saved. The fields were ruined by water as the drainage was broken, and the land was becoming quite wilde. This, they saw as a greate starting point for organic farming! No “disturbance” can have it`s benefits. Still, there was an enormous amount of work ahead.

In 2021, they tore down the remaining buildings, and started reconstructing the farm. They started working with the soil and the draninege and planed the greenhouse and the rest of the buildings. They also planted about 60 fruit threes, as the start of an orchard. In 2022 they had a test production of vegetables, have built the greenhouse, and were in the process of building the house that they will live in. From summer of 2023 they will open the farm shop.

They believe that if they practice clever methods, work with nature, use science and common sense, they will be able to grow food that is healthy for both the environment and the consumer.

Size of the Place of Learning: Internationally, farms on the west coast of Norway are small, event tiny – some will say. And luckily, market gardens don’t need a lot of space. The market garden will – when reached full size in 2024 - be about 0,5 hectare. In addition, there will be 0,2 hectare of fruit and berries, and about 0,3 hectare for poultry.



Name: Lundemannsverk

Type of production: On Lundemannsverk vegetables, fruits and berries suited for the climate on the west coast of Norway will be produced. The produce is sold in the farm shop.

Services/options: Farm shop

SDG's:

SDG 13 Climate Action

SDG 15 Life on Land

SDG 17 Partnership for the goals

Contact:

- Farmer Ida Kleppe
- E-Mail: lundemannsverk@gmail.com
- Phone: +47 47331590
- Lundemannsverk 46, 5414 Stord, Norway

Insights:



Name: Gripen gard & rurale tidsreiser

Location: The farm is situated by the big lake Storavatnet at Holsnøy at the Norwegian western coast. Farm in the end of the road, the road does not go all the way to the farm.

Farmer/trainer: Helene Olli Sollid, born 1963.

I am a single farmer and I have all my income from the farm. I am a wwoof host, and me and my wwoofers/volunteers is what I call "The Gripen Family".

Transfer of competences: Here in Gripen, the main goal for teaching is to live a sustainable life, with no harming of nature or environment. I want to show people that it is possible and not at all shameful to use less money. I can live a fulfilled and happy life with little consumption. I want to teach how to make your own stuff from what you have or can get second hand. How to make, fix and mend. How to make your garments from the wool from our sheep. We make a lot of preserves, we have bees, we have a big kitchen garden. We bake and make our food from scratch, we eat our own meat, we fish the fish we eat, and collect eatable and other usable things from the woods.

Story: I am the architect who got bored, and jumped off that kind of life, and bought an old, abandoned farm, and started all over. I work all the time, and I get energy from it. I am a workaholic! I like to do everything myself, and I learn a lot. I have restored the whole farm, I do it my way, with as little new materials as possible. I practice circular economy, and I am good at it! I am a fixer, and I call myself an "everything otter". This is my hashtag: #NeedNoNewShit

Size of the Place of Learning: The farm is 45 hectares, with pastures and fully farmed areas, but most of it is native pine forest, which I recently got saved. As a child I had some serious sorrows concerning nature loss, especially forests that got destroyed by city growth. When my last playground got taken from me, I promised myself; when I grow up, I will buy my own forest, and then save it. Save it; for me, for everyone else, and for the future. So, I did. My neighbor and I saved our forests together, and that is now "Gripakletten nature reserve". And for this, I am very proud!



Name: Gripen gard & rurale tidsreiser

Type of production:

- fresh and processed mutton and fish
- veggies and berries
- forest products
- tourism services
- wool and yarn
- courses/learning
- “forgotten crafts”
- handcraft and handcrafted products

Services/options:

- Farm stay
- wilderness stay
- courses
- meals
- different events
- parties like weddings and more

SDG's:

My slogan: Increase your life quality with reduced consumption. Make, mend, reuse, and share! The most important thing is that the only way to save the planet is together. Everybody must contribute if we are going to succeed. To make it short; my main goal is to get people to sign up on “Team Planet”. I slightly rewrite some famous words in to: “Small footprints for mankind, a giant step for the environment.”

Contact:

- Homepage: <https://gripengard.no>
- E-Mail: post@gripengard.no
- <https://www.instagram.com/gripen.gard>

Insights:



Name: Hausbrennerei Sponagel & Gehr

Location: Mannheim-Seckenheim

Seckenheim is a district of Mannheim and lies at the Neckar River in the southwest of Germany. The place was mentioned by name for the first time in 766. In the 18th century, the village was a prosperous farming village that gained its wealth through the cultivation and processing of tobacco. Today, various farmhouses still remind us of the village's former importance.

The house distillery is also located in one of these former farmhouses. Located in a former farming village, the distillery also looks back on a longer history.

Farmer/trainer: Eva Gehr

Eva Gehr has restarted the house distillery in 2019 after a long absence and runs it now in the fifth generation. Due to her proximity to biodynamic agriculture, in which she worked for years as an advisor, she pays great attention to the quality of her ingredients. For example, she mainly uses fruits from meadow orchards.

Transfer of competences: Eva Gehr likes to let the groups participate in the different distilling processes. Mashing together is just as possible as witnessing the actual distilling process. In interactive and varied tastings, everyone can also learn more about the brandies, the distilling craft, the distillery itself, the village and the biodynamic approach.

Story: Eva Gehr comes from a family that has been firmly rooted in Seckenheim for generations. For five generations, Seckenheim families have brought their fruit to the Sponagel Gehr distillery and collected freshly squeezed juices and/or distilled spirits. Eva Gehr, however, did not have initially the ambition to continue the family distillery. Nevertheless, she remained loyal to the agricultural sector as an advisor to farms. She has been particularly active in biodynamic farming and has built up a lot of knowledge and a large network over the years. Since she decided to continue the distillery, she has combined the family tradition with her passion for the biodynamic approach. What remains always unchanged, is the closeness to the Seckenheim community.

Size of the Place of Learning: 50 liter capacity kiln

Located in a traditional farmhouse with barn, garden and traditional wine press cellar for tasting.



Name: Hausbrennerei Sponagel Gehr

Type of production: Distilled spirits production, tasting and sale

In the distillery Sponagel Gehr, everybody can buy different liquors and also watch them being produced and learn more about the actual process. In addition, various forms of tasting show the variety of the products.

Services/options:

- booking courses
- interactive tastings
- good products from genuine handcraft

SDG s:

SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate Action

SDG 15 Life on Land

Contact:

- Eva Gehr
- E-Mail: eva@sponagelgehr.de
- Phone: +49 621/4814886
- Rastatter Straße 21, 68239 Mannheim

Insights:



Name: Permakulturparadies Schlaraffental

Location: The garden called "Schlaraffental" is located in a small town (Bühl) in the southwest of Germany. It covers about 6000m² and belongs to Frank and Sonja Fröhlich. In the past, it was mainly cultivated by conventional viticulture, which is common in the region and which also meant the corresponding use of fungicides, pesticides and herbicides. Since 2011, Sonja and Frank have been transforming the site and working on it according to the principles of permaculture and food forest gardening. In the meantime, a variety of creatures (e.g. lizards, praying mantises, butterflies, wild bees) and plants (various fruit and nut trees, e.g. almond trees, khakis, peaches, apples, cherries, pawpaws, various vegetables) grow and thrive there.

Farmer/trainer: Frank Fröhlich, 52 years old and Sonja Fröhlich, 48 years old

He has worked as a school social worker, but now works full time in Schlaraffental. She works with children and young people at the Protestant Church. In her spare time she supports her husband in Schlaraffental.

Transfer of competences: Explore the Schlaraffental with all your senses! A tour around the garden with Frank and Sonja is the best way to discover the biodiversity that is possible with a sustainable approach. Due to the surrounding monoculture areas, the contrast is not only visible, but also tangible.

Story: Frank comes from a family of winegrowers and grew up working in the vines. As he got older, Frank could not and did not want to support this type of cultivation due to his ecological attitude. In 2011, Sonja and Frank decided to remove the entire vineyard area adjacent to the family home and try out something new.

The three big challenges in Schlaraffental are the high temperatures, the drought and the soil structure. That's why Sonja and Frank in 2022 have installed a large irrigation system consisting of cisterns and retention ponds. Not a drop of rainwater is to be lost in the future.

In addition, the water storage capacity of the soil is to be continuously increased with the help of plant charcoal (terra preta) and humus buildup.

Size of the Place of Learning: 6000m² with various fruit and nut trees and vegetables



Name: Permakulturparadies Schlaraffental

Type of production: At the moment, the family produces only for its own needs.

Services/options:

- Garden Tours
- Courses
- Meals

SDG's:

SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate Action

SDG 15 Life on Land

Contact:

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- E-Mail: frank@schlaraffental.de
- E-Mail: sonja@schlaraffental.de
- <https://www.instagram.com/schlaraffental>

Insights:



Name: CSA Goedinge

Location: Ghent

In the southwest of Ghent in Afsnee, you can find the CSA farm (community-supported agriculture) of De Goedinge. Afsnee, as a sub municipality of Ghent, is located far enough from the city to still maintain a typical town center and rustic ambiance, while being close enough to the city to have an easy connection to the city – which is vital for the farm’s strategy in carbon neutral transport. By using a boat powered by solar panels and cargo bikes, the farmers transport their products across the Leie and the city center to shops restaurants and to drop-off locations for the larger public. Additionally, it’s possible to come to the farm and harvest the crops yourself.

Farmer/trainer: Wim/Maarten/An

Wim is a farmer with a love for both the urban and rural area. Now he no longer needs to choose and has become a city farmer. Maarten is an experienced farmer from the Kempen who found himself in Ghent. Together with Wim, he followed the education for farmers ‘Landwijzer’ on biological and biodynamic farming. His partner An is the local flower expert and is passionate by education and agriculture.

Transfer of competences: Firstly, the farm allows for harvesting crops yourselves by subscribing to the package of self-harvesters. Secondly, within all who subscribe be it self-harvesters or those who pick up packages, all info on the farmer’s choices are shared. Events and education are open within the community.

Story: For centuries the farmland of De Goedinge has been used for agriculture. The ground and surrounding farmsteads were donated to the monks of Saint Peters in the middle ages, reserving a spot in heaven. That’s why the name Goedinge was given to the place, as it is an old word meaning gift or reimbursement. In the 19th century, the grounds were given to the O.C.M.W (public centre for social welfare) of Ghent. The CSA was started first in 2018 after a public procurement of the city of Ghent and O.C.M.W. Ghent. The farmer’s team saw this opportunity and started in cooperation with the local farm ‘De Roo’ to create a farm based on CSA principles.

Size of the Place of Learning: The CSA feeds about 360 people currently.



Name: CSA Goedinge

Type of production: Vegetable farming on soil in open air and in greenhouses, flower field.

Services/options:

- Food packages / flower packages
- Harvesting experience

SDG's:

SDG 3 Good health and well-being

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate action

Contact:

- Homepage: <https://www.goedinge.be/>
- Mail: info@goedinge.be

Insights:



Name: Inagro

(Research & advise centrum in agriculture and horticulture)

Location: Rumbeke-beitem

Rumbeke-beitem is a small town in the Belgian province of West-Flanders, close to Roeselaere and not far from Kortrijk. Rumbeke is the larger of both relatively small towns, Rumbeke and Beitem. Rumbeke was first historically mentioned in the 12th century. Beitem is a small town that is located around it with its church built as recent as 1866. In this time the surrounding villages split and received their own respective church and parish. In modern times though, both towns became part of the larger municipality of Roeselare. The flax cultivation and processing into fabrics became of great economic value in this region during the 16th century and onwards, until the crisis of 1845-1847 spurred the emigration to France where mechanised weaving had become more advanced.

Researcher/farmer: Veronique De Mey / Sophie Waegebaert

Sophie Waegebaert and Veronique De Mey are researchers on hemp cultivation and agricultural products within the Inagro research & advise centrum. Their experience with hemp cultivation, which is making a comeback as a growable product, and the research they do on test fields, makes them valuable to provide advice and know-how to farmers and other parties interested in the cultivation of hemp.

Transfer of competences: At Inagro, advise to farmers and horticulturists is essential to get valuable new insights across various themes, be it new crops or improved techniques. In order to share their insights, it is possible to contact the researcher in the respective field (on the growth of hemp, Veronique De Mey is the responsible contact, see her info below). Alternatively, the research institute provides guided tours to the centre or the roof greenhouse Agrotopia for companies, associations, or agricultural education, and visits to farms for families, associations or students.



Name: Inagro

(Research & advise centrum in agriculture and horticulture)

Story: For 65 years, Inagro has been operational as an advise and research institute providing the newest information to the farmer on how to produce efficiently, increase flavour, or promote sustainable ways of farming. Its founding dates back to 1956 to support industrialised crops which suffered economically, such as tobacco and flax. The flax preparation industry had been in favour since before WO II of the founding of a flax-focussed scientific institute, until in 1954 the idea was born to found it as a provincial research centre. During the years, the scope broadened from the study of technical issues on industrial crops to the improvement of cultivation techniques, the comparison of varieties, and the introduction of new crop types. From the start the improvement of profitability was on the agenda, but nowadays quality and environmental impact are at least as important.

Size of the Place of Learning: Inagro owns many different fields, labs, greenhouses and so on to provide a wide array of know-how on a diverse range of crops and animals. They execute over 400 tests each year.

Type of production: Congestible fungi, dairy farming, pig farming, educational agriculture, labs, chicory hydroculture, open-air horticulture, field agriculture, greenhouse vegetables, small fruit, aquaculture, insect farming, biogas production and biological farming are all part of the production processes at Inagro.

Services/options:

- Advise & practice-based research
- Booking of educational visits

SDG's:

SDG 3 Good health and well-being

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate action

Contact:

- Homepage: <https://inagro.be/bezoek-ons>
- E-Mail: veronique.demey@inagro.be
- E-Mail: info@inagro.be
- Phone: 051 27 33 00

Insights:



Name: BIGH (Building Integrated Greenhouses)

Location: Anderlecht

Anderlecht is a municipality in the Brussels Capital Region, located southwest of the City of Brussels, and in the north-central part of Belgium. It is a bilingual district due to its proximity to Brussels. Historically the village's name was first mentioned in the 11th century, and became a cultural hotspot in the 15th and 16th century. After its population grew, the municipality undertook several new urban developments to house its newcomers in the start of the 20th century, such as garden cities and urban renewal programmes. Nowadays, it is more known due to its football club. The BIGH is located on top of the Abattoir Foodmet, a large market in Anderlecht.

Founder/trainer: Steven Beckers

Steven Beckers is an architect specialized in circular thinking in construction, aspired by ecodesign, and advocate of urban farming. After mapping all roofs in Brussels for a study at the request of the Ministry of Environment, he founded the new company BIGH which was inaugurated in 2018 as the first urban aquaponic farm in Brussels. The aim of BIGH is to create a network of sustainable and urban farms. Their local production for cities and innovative building integration system is what makes this production both sustainable and stand out from its surroundings. The learning content is mostly imparted by other employees, but possible with Steven Beckers at request.

Transfer of competences: The BIGH provides 5 different levels of tours of around an hour, targeted at either regular visitors (informative weekly tour, publicly guided), larger groups of visitors (students or non-profits), or professional (interactive/team building or specifically tailored to horticulture, aquaculture, real estate, or commercialisation professionals).

Story: BIGH was developed by Steven Beckers combining his lifetime experience as an architect with his passion for ecologically sound and sustainably oriented solutions grounded on circular thinking. These expertise and interests were sprouted further into the Building Integrated Greenhouse concept which involves the heat recycling of the underlying Foodmet, for which the fridges provide the heat by extracting energy which is used to heat the BIGH greenhouses. Further on the BIGH farm includes nutrient and water recycling within the aquaponic system sharing water within the water-recirculating greenhouses and fish production. The use of solar panels provide about 70% of the remaining need for energy.



Name: BIGH (Building Integrated Greenhouses)

Size of the Place of Learning: 4000m² fish aquaculture and two greenhouses, vegetable (tomatoes, ...) and herbs (basil, ...) located on top of the Foodmet.

Type of production: Fresh products, aquaponic farm, local production, circular nutrient, water and energy flows

Services/options:

- Fresh products (fish, vegetable, herbs)
- Booking of educational visits complemented by a tasting

SDG's:

SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate action

Contact:

- Homepage: <https://bigh.farm>
- Homepage: <https://bigh.farm/en-contact/>

Insights:



Name: HUMUS

Location: Zulte

Historically, Zulte was part of a series of villages along the old banks of the river Lys. It arose along the historic route Gent-Kortrijk near the avenue to Ter Lake castle. In the 19th and first half of the 20th century, Zulte experienced strong growth due to the arrival of trade and industry and an important flax trade and cultivation. Today Zulte has grown into a municipality with more than 15,000 inhabitants. Zulte is located in the vicinity of the urban centers of Deinze and Waregem.

Farmer/trainer: Marc en Bénédicte Verhofstede-Versele

Marc Verhofstede is an organic farmer and a compost expert in Belgium. He advises gardeners, horticulturalists and farmers on different techniques to feed and improve the soil health. He also consults on animal health issues in Belgium. He is a real inspiration to farmers and gardeners. Marc builds windrows on a large scale for use on his farms.

Together with his wife Bénédicte they grow organic grains (Old-spelt, rye, quinoa, millet) and leguminous plants on 10 ha of sandy soil in Zulte on plots where Alfred Versele once farmed. The harvest is sold in the farm shop of the company in grain and flour form. Agroecology, agroforestry and regenerative agriculture are the approaches of the biological farm HUMUS required for the management of sustainable food systems. Their primary goal is to improve the soil for healthy and vital food!

It is no coincidence that Marc and Bénédicte's company is called HUMUS. Their basic philosophy? A living soil with a lot of humus is the key to healthy and vital nutrition, biodiversity and soil fertility for generations to come. The repeated use of homemade humus-rich compost on the farm has significantly increased the soil quality. They bring this experience to the fore through personal advice, lectures, guided tours and workshops. Soil quality does have an impact on the quality of our food and therefore also on our health. Poor soils produce poor nutrition and that makes us sick.

Transfer of competences: The basis to all health is living humus in soils. This means we have to find the way and the means to save the humus we have and to build up live humus in soils as quickly as possible. This is our only chance to turn around the worldwide decline of agriculture.

Humus management offers practical concepts and individual possibilities to efficiently build up humus within a short period of time. This is a result of more than 30 years of research by the Lübke-Hildebrandt family. Humus is helping farmers and scientists worldwide to understand the natural cycles from the building of humus to human health.



Name: HUMUS

Humusmanagement is a concept that can be understood by anyone and can be realized on any scale, on any soil, in every climate. Humusmanagement is a possibility for agriculture to regain its independence.

The farmhouse is built with a wooden frame construction and straw bale insulation. Raw earth was used as a finishing layer.

Story: Twenty years ago (2002), Marc Verhofstede and Bénédicte Versele took the step together to bring back to life a 10-hectare piece of farmland in Zulte that was owned by the family. Marc Verhofstede and Bénédicte Versele grow their organic grains and leguminous plants on plots where Alfred Versele, the great-grandfather of Bénédicte, already had been a farmer. In 1994 they built their wooden/straw bale house. Marc and Bénédicte created Humus in 2002. They were the first in Flanders in 2015 to grow the gluten-free grain product quinoa.

Size of the Place of Learning: The farm is about 10 ha.

Type of production:

- Humus-rich compost
- organic grains (old-spelt, lentils, rye, emmer, quinoa, millet, luzerne, clover)
- vegetable farming on soil in open air
- flower field

Services/options:

- Food packages / flower packages
- Harvesting experience
- Bed and Breakfast

SDG's:

SDG 3 Good health and well-being

SDG 9 industry innovation and infrastructure

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate action

Contact:

Homepage: <http://www.bio-compost.be>

E-Mail: info@bio-compost.be

Insights:



Name: Tuin van Adem en Eten / Garden of breathing and eating

Location: Sint Denijs near Kortrijk

The village of Sint-Denijs is located in the valley of the Schelde. It is a municipality of Zwevegem near Kortrijk. Kortrijk is the second largest city of the province of West-Flanders. It can be found in Belgium near the French border. Originally a roman settlement, the city grew during the middle-ages due to a blooming flax and fabrics industry and became one of the most prosperous cities of Flanders. It is also known for the historical battle of Guldensporenslag.

Farmer/trainer: Steffi Desmet, chairperson of the Gardens of breathing and eating project and Merel Goosens, urban planner at intermunicipal organization Leiedal

Transfer of competences: During Outside classes you can explore the Garden of breathing and eating.

Story: The forest garden (of breathing and eating) was a project initiated by inter-municipal organization Leiedal that creates ecological, societal and spatial value on the regional level of Kortrijk and 12 surrounding municipalities. As a residential expansion area with an agricultural use, the lands were not able to be destined for any function, but an innovative and sustainable project was accepted to become its new purpose. A call was launched to find the best application, which Steffi won. The garden of breathing and eating is a multifunctional open space combining nature with agriculture, and enables citizen participation.

Size of the Place of Learning: 1 ha

Type of production:

- forest garden
- permaculture with different vegetation intensities
- flower meadows
- a pool
- site for some events



Name: Tuin van Adem en Eten / Garden of breathing and eating

Services/options:

- Outside classes for schools and events
- workshops (cooking, yoga, permaculture)
- collaborations
- Voluntary work on monthly or two-weekly open working days on Saturdays or Sundays (everyone is welcome)

SDG's:

SDG 3 Good health and well-being

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

Contact:

- Homepage:
<https://www.tuinvanademeneten.be/>
- Social Media:
facebook.com/tuinvanademeneten

Insights:



Name: Gardens of Stene

Location: Oostende

Oostende is a city located at the center of the Belgian coastline founded around the 9th or 10th century as a shepherd's and fishermen's town. Nowadays its historical center and 19th century developments close to the coast make it a popular summer destination for tourists.

Farmer/trainer: Kathy Belpaeme

Kathy is a food director of the city of Ostend and responsible for food strategy.

Transfer of competences: The new city park of the 21st century for multifunctional land use, searches a synergy between new kinds of recreation, nature, urban agriculture, renewable energy and much more. In this context, Gardens of Stene will become a laboratory for local dynamics.

Story: The Gardens of Stene came to be during a period of developments in that urban zone which was not previously accessible beforehand, which was chosen to become an agricultural zone with many supporting functions, after going into dialogue with surrounding inhabitants and many parties such as Boerenbond, VLM, etc. The farm site sports a CSA (community supported agriculture), cycle path, grazing area with integrated water management, a testing area for new crops and is closely related to a school and a co-housing project. A shipping container serves as a storage zone. An outdoor classroom was made to show agriculture to the students. Two windmills are being built for the energy needs of the farm and a new co-housing project is being constructed.

Size of the Place of Learning: The agricultural park is 35 hectares wide. The CSA farm is a part of it feeding 280 members at the moment and is increasing within a project involving food for elderly homes.

Type of production:

- vegetable farming on soil in open air and in greenhouses
- flower field



Name: Gardens of Stene

Services/options:

- food production
- testing field
- education
- birdwaching
- walking and cycling
- several events

SDG's:

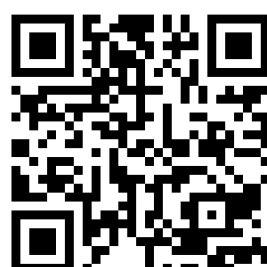
SDG 3 Good health and well-being

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

Contact:

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Insights:



Name: OPG Biomara, veg & strawberries farm

Location: Sveti Petar Čvrstec, near Križevci

The farm is in the pristine nature, hugged by forest from the north and east side, in the beautiful, hilly surrounding. The village is in the proximity of Križevci, a small but important town in the local history. Križevci has a long and rich history worth exploring, first mentioned in 1193.

Farmer/trainer: Željko & Jasminka Iličić, 55 & 56 years old

This couple bought the farm in 2007. After corporate jobs in the capital, Željko fully dedicated his time to biodynamic farming of vegetables and strawberries. Alex Podolinsky was mentoring the farm 2010 until his death in 2019. The farm is run in ecological, biodynamic and pragmatic manner.

Transfer of competences: Željko can transfer the knowledge on soil conversion from hard clay to rich biodynamic soil, growing over 50 kinds of different vegetables and strawberries. Jasminka also has extensive knowledge of biodynamics and medical herbs and foraging.

Story: Željko & Jasminka are city kids, born and bred on concrete streets. After meeting and living together in London in the early 90s, they've returned to Zagreb and did well in management positions in global corporations. In the late 2000s they've decided to explore different options in career and bought a farm instead of a planned holiday house. They were dedicated to ecological way of life and started practicing biodynamics as soon as they found a mentor. After meeting Alex Podolinsky in 2010, they dedicated the whole farm to his methods of growing, and never looked back since. They're currently selling their whole crop through CSAs and basket delivery and want to grow the network of farmers and growers that want to grow food in sustainable way. They're willing to share their knowledge and want to be part in a network of sustainable farmers across Europe.

Size of the Place of Learning: The Biomara farm has a size of 6,5 ha. 50 - 60 different cultures of vegetables are growing on the fields in the season. The farm is also famous for the best-tasting strawberries in the surroundings.

Type of production: Biomara produces primarily fresh vegetables and strawberries. Sales are operated through short supply chains, so orders are processed on daily bases: vegetables and strawberries are picked in the morning and delivered in the afternoon mostly to Zagreb, but also to Rijeka and some other destinations in Croatia as needed.



Name: OPG Biomara, veg & strawberries farm

Services/options:

- **courses on biodynamics**
- **Workshops on medical herbs and their use**
- **Foraging**
- **cooking with fresh vegetables and herbs**

SDG's:

SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate Action

SDG 15 Life on Land

Contact:

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Social Media: facebook.com/Biomara-OPG-Ilicic-1544038815828844

Insights:



Name: OPG (family farm) Šujica
(mixed permanent plantation based on biodiversity)

Location: Križevci

Farmer/trainer: Bogdan Šujica, 70 years old, pensioner

Transfer of competences: Sustainable, regenerative and self-renewable agriculture based on biodiversity for stability of agro-eco system, as close to nature as possible. Bozo created such ecosystem in which there are over 600 plant species from over 120 plant families. Such biodiversity has enabled cultivation without fertilization, without protection and without any outside inputs to the field.

1. Biodiversity according to the habitus (external appearance of the plant) such as herbaceous plants, climbers, bulbs, shrubs and trees.
2. Biodiversity according to the permanence of the plant world can be divided into perennial, annual and biennial plants.
3. Biological diversity according to species or plant families Branch of biology.

Story: After graduating from high school, Bozo worked in the factory "STEEL". In the political transformation in 1991., the factory failed and over 1000 workers lost their jobs and he became redundant. He retrained and opened a photography shop with an emphasis on the analog lab photography. With the advent of digital photography, the disappearance of one technology, his skills were not needed. He again had to look for another job.

By its geographical position, by population structure and by land area per head population Croatia is an agricultural country. He decided to dive in organic agriculture, without any prior knowledge and without prejudice.

Organic farming is socially just because it can employ everyone no matter what gender, age, education and household size.

After 20 years of experience, he shares his knowledge to the national and EU institutions, but not much dialog established. That's why he is very grateful to Rural Academy platform for making this sharing possible.

Name: OPG (family farm) Šujica
(mixed permanent plantation based on biodiversity)

Size of the Place of Learning: The field is 0.75 ha in size and it grows fruits, vegetables, medicinal herbs, spices, livestock feed and various material for household needs.

Services/options: Cooperation with institutions and exchange of experiences and ideas. Furthermore, education on the property in small groups is possible.

SDG's:

SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate Action

SDG 15 Life on Land

Goals such as climate change, environmental protection, healthier food production, fight against poverty, biodiversity conservation, etc., are increasingly used as phrases. Here the emphasis is on restoring biodiversity in agricultural areas that are degraded by the methods of conventional (intensive, chemical) agriculture. Agriculture can be a wonderful industry. Energy is free and ubiquitous (solar energy), raw materials are free and ubiquitous (water and CO₂), processes and cycles are also free (photosynthesis, respiration, and the circulation of matter by nature). Plants in which these processes take place regenerate themselves, agriculture does not consume resources but renews them, does not create waste and supports life on Earth.

Contact:

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Insights:



Name: Križevci Laboratory of Innovation in Climate (KLIK)

Location: Križevci

KLIK is community of citizens who want to create a better climate in their city. Our aim is to create a community that should be a catalyst of change and to create an ecosystem based on generating clean energy as a foundation towards creating a climate neutral city, the best possible place to live, work and visit. We believe that this could happen only by public - private collaboration and co-creation. And this is how we are working, as intersection where public and private needs and curiosity reveal the potential, this potential is creating action, and careful planning of actions is bringing us to creation of the best possible place to live, work and visit.

KLIK is registered as energy cooperative- KLIK, energy cooperative, and as NGO- Križevci Laboratory of Innovation in Climate.

Farmer/trainer: Sanela Mikulčić Šantić, 35, specialist in agricultural management, currently cooperative manager, and president of NGO working on co-designing a process of transformation of the City of Križevci towards a climate neutral city. 3 years of experience in implementation of Horizon2020 and ESF projects in the renewable energy and energy poverty sector, participated in designing innovative financial mechanisms for citizens financing of energy projects in Croatia and establishing energy community.

Transfer of competences:

- community engagement
- development of governing models
- energy projects development
- community transformation
- alternative financing

Story: Studying agricultural management, Sanela was very interested in rural development and protection of rural space. Working in the City of Križevci as an intern, she had a chance to co-develop an energy poverty project aiming to help energy poor households to deal with high energy costs. This project took her into energy topics in rural space. Working in Green energy cooperative, she participated in designing innovative financial mechanisms for citizens financing of energy projects in Croatia, and worked on establishing an energy community in Križevci and she also co-designed a process of transformation of the City of Križevci towards a climate neutral city. Now, she is working back in Križevci in KLIK, leading her local community in energy transition.

Name: Križevci Laboratory of Innovation in Climate (KLIK)

Size of the Place of Learning: KLIK as a cooperative has 11 members with variety of experience. Also, KLIK employs 3 people.

Type of production:

- energy services
- consulting
- project development
- project management
- education
- citizens engagement

Services/options:

- energy services
- consulting
- project development
- project management
- education
- citizens engagement

SDG's:

SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

SDG 13 Climate action

SDG 17 Partnership for the goals

Contact:

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Name: Association CROrk „Center for development and safeguarding of rural areas“

Location: Registered in Zagreb, School will be on different sights

Farmer/trainer: Siniša Pocrnčić builder and Jasna Zmaić architect working together from 2011. We are building and giving lessons in School on wheels. Our kick off happened when we have introduced permaculture. Siniša was working with Simon Dale who inspired him. Jasna was inspired with traditional techniques, while Siniša was developing ready-made straw panels and building straw bale.

Transfer of competences: Topics that we cover are straw bale building, clay plasters and decorative methods, repairing of old wooden houses with clay plaster inside. There are two ways of transferring knowledge: one is on workshop, and the other is on the building sight, methods, contents. Main topic is connecting with natural materials which were used in traditional building and now they are rediscovered as sustainable building materials, not only healthy and beautiful, but also psychologically friendly because they are very easy to work with: from children, woman to old people – everybody can work together and it is like a therapy.

Story: Modern life in artificial environment is no longer psychologically sustainable. People are reaching for nature, simplicity, connection with Earth, and one of the ways is going to countryside to live there. Organizing farm in the sustainable way, repairing old or building new houses with natural materials, that all is possible knowing traditional techniques and materials in combination with new knowledge, Permaculture, Geomancy. Reason why we love this work is connecting with nature and its beings, with people, different skills, improving that skills, techniques and systems for sustainable way of living in countryside, repairing and preserving cultural heritage of our country, improving intangible heritage and spreading that love among as many people as possible.

Size of the Place of Learning: For now we have School on wheels. We have property with 4 hectares of land and wooden house which is going to be school on sight.

Name: Association CROrk „Center for development and safeguarding of rural areas“

Type of production:

- making house and farm projects
- School on wheels

Services/options: Courses on sustainable building with earth, design and building of sustainable properties.

SDG's:

- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 15: Life on Land

Contact:

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Name: Satelit – team for education on sustainability & regeneration

Location: We are based “in between”: Some of us live in Zagreb, while for others time is divided between the rural area close to Zagreb and developing a regenerative farm in the remote countryside. We are, however, active as educators all over Croatia and abroad, both offline and online, from urban centres to rural municipalities and ecovillage communities.

Farmer/trainer: We are Ana Armano Linta (31), Cvijeta Bišćević (39) and Veljko Armano Linta (39). Ana is a product designer, manager for transition projects and an educator in the fields of integrative sustainability/regeneration, participatory collaboration and ethical design. Cvijeta is an architect, urban planner, permaculture designer, expert on soil regeneration and an educator in the fields of permaculture, soil regeneration and regenerative urban water management. Veljko is a licensed architect, Gaia Education certified trainer, development leader for teaching materials on sustainability, and an educator in the fields of integrative sustainability/regeneration, participatory collaboration, sustainable architecture and biophilia.

Transfer of competences: Satelit can support you in the following areas:

If you are considering creating a regenerative landscape/farm/garden, or a sustainable house, or a sustainable product/packaging, and would like to find out about all the things you should keep in mind.

If you are considering creating a sustainable/regenerative project with other people or as a community, and would like to gain the skills to build a culture of collaboration (consent-based decision making and role elections, governance by sociocratic circles, facilitation skills, constructive communication and feedback).

If you would like to align your project with the Global sustainable development goals and use them as a tool to find synergies and maximise impact in the local community.

If you would like to learn some practical skills and/or the theoretical background on how to compost, how to regenerate your soil and how to manage water cycles based on nature.

Name: Satelit – team for education on sustainability & regeneration

Story: Working in the professional mainstream as designers, architects and planners, we discovered that the socioeconomic system was not designed to take care of the wider consequences of one's work. We wanted to do things differently. Cvijeta met the world of permaculture. Ana and Veljko met the world of ecovillages and participatory education. We all decided to contribute to the transition towards a regenerative human presence on Earth. How? First, by how we do business: We design agroecosystems, houses and objects in close, transparent and participatory collaboration with clients, other stakeholders and other professionals. Second, by treating Earth as one of the stakeholders: whether through soil and water-cycle regeneration in farms and cities, designing near-zero-energy buildings or developing products that are made locally and in a fair way. Third, we decided to spread this awareness: by designing and facilitating numerous trainings, workshops, lectures, webinars and learning/teaching materials for a variety of audiences, while paying continuous attention to our own personal development. And finally, we united our efforts behind the idea of Satelit, supporting people, organisations and communities on their regenerative paths. One of the reasons to be a part of the RuralAcademy is to offer this experience to other people. The other is to get inspired by this community of practitioners and "transitioners". Cvijeta has big dreams for the regenerative farm she started with her partner Igor Zlojtro (Master of ecological agriculture), while Ana and Veljko dream of creating a place of co-learning and co-living. They feel like complementary dreams and the RuralAcademy like a step on the way.

Size of the Place of Learning: Cvijeta and Igor are regenerating about 10 ha of farmland. The sizes of agroecological landscapes/farms that we have designed range from little regenerative gardens to areas of several dozen hectares, including those in nature reserves.

Type of production: Cvijeta and Igor have started with organic honey and mushrooms, as well as an organic orchard. Soon to follow are organic vegetables. The designed agroecological landscapes/farms include an extremely wide variety of agricultural products.

Services/options: Satelit services are focused on education and design. We can offer lectures, workshops and consultations related to integrative sustainability, soil regeneration, water-cycle management, agroecological landscape/farm design, sustainable buildings and products, and collaborative teamwork.



Name: Satelit – team for education on sustainability & regeneration

SDGs:

SDG 4 Quality education

SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

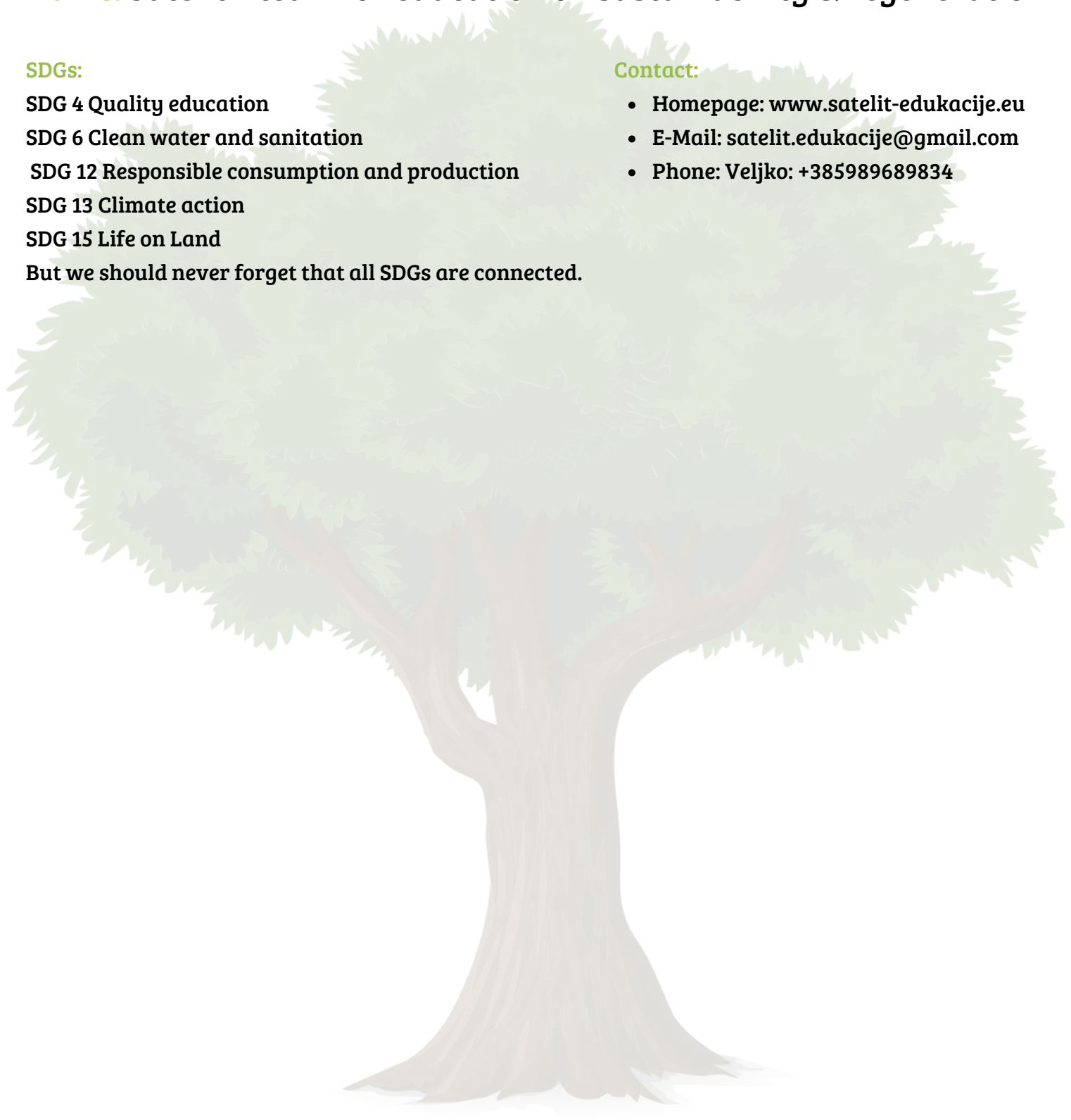
SDG 13 Climate action

SDG 15 Life on Land

But we should never forget that all SDGs are connected.

Contact:

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Name: Accademia valdarnese del poggio

Location: Municipality of Montevarchi, in the city's historic center, is home to a paleontological museum, the "Upper Valdarno Study and Documentation Center," the library and the Poggiana audio library.

Farmer/trainer: The director and guides of the museum and academy, a team of people, passionate about the history of the upper Valdarno, who have designed and proposed innovative educational formats also aimed at people with disabilities and social hardship.

Transfer of competences: Through tours and experiential paths in the museum and library, the Accademia valdarnese del poggio offers the public the history of the upper Valdarno. from geological history to prehistory and to recent history.

Story: One of the Academy's primary tasks is to preserve and enhance, providing for it with its own resources and scientific knowledge, the precious fossil vestiges of Valdarno's oldest and most fascinating history: unique evidence of distant epochs in which the present-day characters of Valdarno were formed.

Many tourists from all over the world visit the Museum every year. Pupils from Valdarno schools make guided tours there, attending educational workshops and courses where they are also given the basic concepts of ecology. Seminars and lectures on topics related to the history of climate, fauna and flora are held each year as part of the Museum's activities.

Size of the Place of Learning: The academy is housed in a large historic building in the center of Montevarchi, recently restored.

Type of production: Experiential and cultural sustainable tourism.

Services/options: visits, guided tours, experiential museum and library tours



Name: Accademia valdarnese del poggio

SDGs:

SDG 4 Quality education

SDG 10 Reduced inequalities

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions

SDG 17 Partnership for the goals

Contact:

• **Homepage:**

<http://www.accademiadelpoggio.it/>

• **Via Poggio Bracciolini, 36/40, – 52025
Montevarchi (AR)**

• **Phone: 055 981812**

Insights:



Name: i Giusti

Location: Municipality of Reggello is a farm at the foot of Pratomagno. The main production of the farm is extra virgin olive oil with a recently started agritourism. Furthermore, there is a large and well-structured didactic vegetable garden on raised boxes.

Farmer/trainer: Francesco Merli is an entrepreneur with a passion for agriculture and for the history of the Upper Valdarno.

Transfer of competences: Agroecology and rural tourism, in collaboration with RuralAcademy.

Story: Francesco Merli decided to start the agricultural activity and the agritourism to give space to these passions and combine his talent as an entrepreneur. Furthermore, he wants to give economic sustainability to a piece of the Valdarno rural area. His family had lived in the building that now houses the agritourism and lived off the farm's fields. So, the farming and economic activity is experienced as a true continuation of the family history. Francesco has promoted a network of olive growers, the 'black bear' consortium and a business network, which is promoting the product and social work. In fact, they have created a network of workers, the vast majority of whom are refugees, sharing human resources between the various farms, optimising costs and giving many people a job opportunity.

Size of the Place of Learning: The farm cultivates an extensive olive grove, producing high quality extra virgin olive oil.

Type of production: Cultivation and direct sale of extra virgin olive oil



Name: i Giusti

Services/options:

- Sustainable tourism
- traditional Tuscan cooking courses and other experiences, also in collaboration with RuralAcademy
- offer of holiday flats and rooms

SDGs:

- SDG 3 Good health and well- being
- SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy
- SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production
- SDG 13 Climate Action
- SDG 15 Life on Land

Contact:

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Insights::



Name: Il Poderaccio farm

Location: Municipality of Figline and Incisa Valdarno in the hills that divide the Arno valley from the Chianti valley, at an altitude of approximately 400 metres. The farm is surrounded by oak woods in the typical context of the Tuscan hills, where vineyards, olive groves, woods and arable land alternate. The buildings have been renovated according to sustainable building principles, obtaining klima house certification.

Farmer/trainer: Francesca Bellacci, 51 years old, a past in international cooperation, decided on a radical change of life. He put down roots on the farm and together with Francesco carried on the cultivation and agrotourism.

Transfer of competences:

- Traditional Tuscan cooking courses
- Agroecology in collaboration with RuralAcademy

Story: Francesca has decided to offer her guests the entire adventure that food takes from cultivation to the table. She graduated as an agri-chef at coldiretti, the largest Italian farmers' association and at the University of Taste in Pollenzo, founded and run by Slow Food. With this spirit and training, she offers her guests courses in traditional Tuscan cuisine, explaining the origin and processing techniques of cereals, olives, grapes and vegetables. It has found a collaboration with RuralAcademy that allows it to complete the offer of experiences with courses in ecological agriculture held by RuralAcademy guides, offered to its guests who desire training in the self-production of their own food.

From the website, Francesca's words:

"Taking care of a piece of land represents for me an act of love for what surrounds me: the soil, the water, the plants, the animals, the people; it sums up everything that I have always sought in my life so far and represents essentiality at the same time. I have travelled the world and now that I have finally put down roots, I would like the world to come here, to enjoy the well-being that contact with the earth inevitably brings and to share a supreme luxury: that of simple things. A very strong call of the earth that involves physical and mental effort but gives a sense of harmony and fulfilment when you lie down in the evening with sore legs and back.



Name: Il Poderaccio farm

Francesca Bellacci

Il Poderaccio is dedicated to my mother Luisa who would never have lived in the country but loved nature, to my sister, a wonderful woman mediator in my family conflicts, to Pietro and Niccolò, my guardian angels, to my father, the true farmer of the farm, and to my daughter Stella so that she can live there happily. Thank you to my brother-in-law, who is sceptical but cooperative, and finally a particularly heartfelt thank you to Francesco, my partner with whom I share every day the fatigue and satisfaction, happiness and pain that life offers. Without them, the project would not have been possible. A great tribute to Mother Earth."

Size of the Place of Learning: The farm covers 35 ha, one hectare of which is cultivated with vegetables and a total of 800 olive trees. The rest of the area is woodland.

Type of production:

- Cultivation and direct sale of vegetables and extra virgin olive oil
- Sustainable experiential tourism:
 - traditional Tuscan cooking
 - self-production courses
 - offer of holiday flats

Services/options:

- Farmhouse flats (12 beds) furnished with care and passion, with Francesca's welcome as a guarantee for the quality of the holiday
- Traditional Tuscan cuisine for guests



Name: Il Poderaccio farm

SDGs:

SDG 3 Good health and well- being

SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy

SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

SDG 13 Climate Action

SDG 15 Life on Land

Contact:

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Insights::



Name: La Fonte di Pinti

Location: Municipality of Montevarchi, in the hamlet of Rendola

The farm "La Fonte" produces vegetables, olive oil, jams and provides its spaces to spread the peasant culture.

Farmer/trainer: Sara Pinti, along with her family, carries on the family farming tradition, cultivating the farm's land, and managing the events held in the outdoor and indoor spaces.

Transfer of competences: An exhibition of the works of artist Attilio Tatini has been set up in the spaces of the small farm.

These are reproductions of scenes from the life and work of farmers as it was until after World War II. The works were donated by the artist to Associazione Veraterra, which collaborates with La Fonte to display them to the public.

Many workshops and activities are offered, related to what is depicted in the works: carpentry, farming, and product processing activities, in which thousands of school children in the area have participated over the years.

Story: Sara and her family carry on the cultural legacy of her grandfather, Pietro Pinti, to whom a book has been dedicated, reporting on events, techniques, and stories from the life of Tuscan farmers.

The motivation to do sustainable agriculture also comes from this legacy, from the concept of food as something sacred, obtained with sacrifice, that should build the human body, and not harm it.

The desire to do cultural events and actions such as hosting the exhibition also come from this strong ethical charge.

Size of the Place of Learning: The farm is about 3 hectares. The rooms where events and cultural activities are held are on the ground floor of the main house and in the attached barn, as well as in the outdoors and in a large shed.

Type of production: vegetables, olive oil, jams, sustainable experiential, and cultural tourism



Name: La Fonte di Pinti

Services/options:

- **tours**
- **guided tours**
- **experiential paths to the exhibition**
- **venue for training courses**

SDGs:

SDG 4 Quality education

SDG 10 Reduced inequalities

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions

SDG 17 Partnership for the goals

Contact:

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