"Strengthening civil society organizations linked to food production in the targeted countries"

2022

Narrative report



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1. Objectives

The Services contributed to the following Organizational objective *Strengthening civil* society organizations linked to food production in the targeted countries

The Service Provider produced, achieved or delivered the following outputs:

Output 1: Social and economic role family farmers played in support countries during the disruption of food value chain reported

Output 2: Policymaking guidance to strengthen the family farmer (stallholder) to support national food security developed

Output 3: Developing Gender-Sensitive Community of Practice in the ECA region

Output 4: Raising awareness and advocacy of small holders and rural activists in using SDGs indicators

Output 5: Develop a guideline and training Programme on multi-risk preparedness plans for local governments, and communities.

2. Activities

The Service Provider (SP) has undertaken the following activities

The different outputs of this project (except output 5) relied on the development of emerging agroecology schools in the ECA region. The activities have been conducted as a mean to "Strengthen civil society organizations linked to food production in the targeted countries" through the implementation, support and development of knowledge sharing activities.

Output 1 activities of data collection (activity 1.1), SWOT analysis (activity 1.2) and action plan design process (activity 1.3) and **Output 2** Policy guidance activity are closely articulated with the discussions and exchanges on agroecology schools' development in the local context of the ECA Community of Practice on Agroecology Bilim.

Output 3 activities of organization of 4 webinars have been directly conducted by the organizations as part of their knowledge sharing activities. It has been a mean to develop the agroecology schools' activities, along with other activities implemented withing their organizations in local language.

Output 4 activity of raising awareness on the SDGs indicators (activity 4.1) and the report developed on the use of data (activity 4.2) are both directed to smallholders' organizations so strengthen their advocacy and knowledge related actions.

Output 1: Social and economic role family farmers played in support countries during the disruption of food value chain reported in 13 target countries Ukraine, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Albania, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Georgia, Serbia, Bosnia, Moldavia

Activity 1.1 Using the agroecology schools (based on the Schola Campesina methodology) data has been collected on the role that family farmers played in support countries during the disruption of food value chain due COVID and other restrictions in the targeted countries.

Development of Agroecology schools have been facilitated in target countries through the organization of 2 training workshops, conducted in English and Russian (2 in person, and 4 online).

- 1. Online meeting on 16th of February on Agroecology schools
- 2. In-person training in Italy 29th of April 5th of May 2022
- 3. In-person training in Turkey 30th of May 5th of June 2022
- 4. Online meeting on Sept 13th on Bilim Digital tool for the Community of Practice
- 5. Online meeting on November 17Th on Tools to build Agroecology schools
- 6. Online meeting on December 13th on Further collaboration in 2023

In addition to these trainings, field visits have been organized in Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia (between June28th and July 3rd, 2022)

Agroecology schools activities -including the above mentioned in-person workshopsallowed to collect data on the role of family farmers in disrupted value chains and to share these data amongst agroecology schools. Data collection has been made possible through the mobilization of the information, knowledge and reflections of different emerging agroecology schools from all over the ECA region. Special field visits by the SP to support Agroecology schools training activities, including data collection and analysis occurred in Kosovo, North Macedonia and Albania in June-July 2022

It led to the gathering of the following information's:

Elements of context:

- The ECA region is characterized by an agriculture based on small-scale family farmers who practice agroecology.
- Family farming engage the great majority of people active in rural areas.
- They are orientated toward territorial markets.
- Small-scale family farms of the region are promoting through their practice the sustainability of the food systems they contribute to.

- They are orientated toward territorial markets, and employ an important part of people, consolidating local economy.
- Covid crises generated an increase of prices of food and labor.
- Covid crises generated lockdowns and difficult access to land and markets (including seed and seedlings markets). Long food chain and in-city large farm management were greatly affected.
- Lockdowns generated an increase in domestic violence affecting mostly women.
 Difficult access to medical services affected greatly women and increase the number of births.
- Crisis situation generated an increase of the demand to grow food locally, and an increase of the concern for the origin of food. Online corporate food procurement was expensive and of low quality.
- Crisis and war generated fear and wish to migrate. It generated an urban exodus and an increase of rural population.

Element describing the abilities and role of family farmers in crisis time:

- Family farmers were able to provide food to the populations and increase their production
 - Even if the demand increased a lot during Covid pandemia and the war in Ukraine
 - Even if there facing many obstacles like movement restriction to plan, harvest and sell products
 - Even if solutions were thought and found for large scale farmers and not small scale farmers, at legislation and policy levels
 - Family farmers were able to continue farming, as they are not depending much in external inputs
 - o Family farmers were able to welcome in their farms relatives and migrants who were leaving urban areas in time of covid or were leaving conflicts zone
 - Family farmers showed solidarity to in-demand people (e.g. Provision of seeds to Ukrainian farmers to feed Ukrainian population in Romania, or increase production to feed Ukrainian guests in Poland)
 - Family farmers were able to quickly adapt to the disruptive situation and for example create new ways of marketing (online shops, CSA)

In-person training in Italy (29th of April – 5th of May 2022) Of the Community of practice in Europe and Central Asia region on Agroecology « Bilim »

From April 30th to May 5th (2022) Schola Campesina welcomed the meeting of the Community of practice on Agroecology in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. Farmers organizations and networks, along with researchers and activists from 15 different countries gathered in Italy, in Bio Bagnolese and Casale Loreto farms members of the Biodistrict of Via Amerina e delle Forre and of Schola Campesina.

The meeting aimed at strengthening the network of organization beyond borders and conflicts, the circulation of knowledge and experiences amongst them, and the facilitation of the development of agroecology schools throughout the region. A specific digital platform is being co-designed by Jengalab and the Community of practice on Agroecology- to facilitate the exchanges amongst the Agroecology schools, in a digital but suitable and safe space.

Past collaboration (2020, 2021) made valuable local practices coming up, thanks to TAPE (Tool of Agroecology Performance Evaluation, developed by FAO). Local agroecology – unveiled through the use of TAPE- has to be protected and developed. Agroecology schools are a tool for small-scale food producers' organizations to make sustainable local practices recognized, valued, protected and strengthened.

See the List of Participants and Agenda in Annex 1 See the Report in Annex 2

Activity 1.2 Based on the result, a SWOT analysis to define areas to be strengthened taking into consideration women and youth needs has been developed

The SWOT analysis on the role of family farmers in times of crisis has been conducted collectively in the training in Italy (April-May 2022).

Strenghts

Family farmers were **able to provide food** to the populations and **quickly adapt** to the disruptive situation (rapidly increase their production).

They were able to continue farming, as they are not depending much in external inputs

They were **able to welcome** in their farms **relatives and migrants** who were leaving urban areas.

They showed solidarity to in-demand poeple

Weaknesses

In some contexts, farmers organizations did not react to the

Knowledge on how to market and distribute differently due to the crisis was not disseminated enough.

Marketing-related logistic added additional burden on smallscale food produceers.

SWOT

Opportunities

Supportive policies: approval to open local markets, facilitation of the marketing, permission to reach land and transports products, etc.

Closer linkages with urban citizens

Better use of social media and delivery services, as well as innovative way of marketing

Threaths

Unsupportive policies such as selective permission for markets to remain open (supermarkets only while territorial markets in rural areas had to close).

In consideration of the sub-regional specificity of the Region, a specific training of 7 days for the agroecology schools for partners in Ukraine, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey has been organized in Turkey. You will find in:

Annex 3- Methodology tool: Agroecology schools principles, (in English and Russian)

Annex 4: Questions on the role family farmers played in support countries during the disruption of food value chain due COVID and other restrictions in the targeted countries; to prepare a SWOT analysis to define areas to be strengthened taking into consideration women and youth needs.

In-person training in Turkey (30th of May – 5th of June 2022)
Of the Community of practice in Europe and Central Asia region on Agroecology « Bilim »

During the week of the 30th of May, Schola Campesina Aps (Italy), ADI (Kyrgyzstan), and Çiftçi-sen (Turkey), with the financial support of FAO, hosted agroecology trainings with the aim of sharing knowledge and raising awareness within the participants' organisations on the opportunities brought by Agroecology. Overall the event was successful in building capacity and a stronger network amongst organisations of the region and introducing various tools and concepts related to Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, the Nyéléni declaration as well as the UN Declaration on the rights of Peasants and other Rural Workers (UNDROP).

See List of Participants and Agenda in Annex 3 See Report in Annex 4

Activity 1.3 An action plan for each targeted country has been developed, during training session held in Italy in May 2022.

Action plan for target countries:

The action plan for the region seeks to support and enable small scale food producers - through their organizations- in their everyday agroecological role and activities. The action plan seeks to unlock the potential leverages that family farmers can bring to society in terms of resilience, sustainability, food security and nutrition as well as decent rural livelihoods. In this context, it primarily supports food producers' organizations; considered as main agent for developing agroecology in the region. It can be summarized into three points:

- Strengthening the Community of Practice on Agroecology in the region and include more organizations rooted in the very wide and diverse region Eastern and Central Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia. The organizations involved are women organizations or characterized by strong women leadership.
- Strengthening the existing agroecology schools, and develop new projects of knowledge exchanges. Bilim digital platform which facilitate knowledge and experience sharing among the network members- will be a supportive tool for agroecology schools' development.
- Support the advocacy work of the network to advance agroecology and implementation of UNDROP at the national and regional level through media and social communication, publications and participatory action research.

Concretely, the action plan to be implemented by the organizations of the Community of Practice is to:

- 1. Support the activities and functioning of local agroecology schools,
- 2. Facilitate the development of a network of agroecology schools in the country or subregion, focusing primarily in women's organizations to strengthen their work and autonomy.
- 3. Strengthen the coordination and implementation of the agroecology schools' activities and actions with a clear gender perspective, through the design of appropriated methodology, curricula and flow of communication
- 4. Enhance the capacity and facilitate the active involvement of the local organizations in the regional and national political processes to ensure public support to agroecology in Europe and Central Asia countries with a special focus on gender sensitive issues
- 5. Facilitate the active involvement of the local organizations in the "Nyéléni 3" and FAO Regional consultation processes to enable the full participation of this region

- and especially of the women's organizations, in the gathering of the food sovereignty movement planned for 2023 and the FAO regional conferences¹.
- 6. Produce tools (video, podcast, reports, manuals, tool kit) to support the agroecology movement in national and local languages

The service provider organized the training and made available a methodology expert and a facilitator and content manager to be shared (included in the proceedings of the workshop).

Output 2: Policymaking guidance to strengthen family farmer (smallholder) to support national food security developed

Activity 2.1 Policy guidance based on the results of outputs 1 has been developed

Policy guidance has been identified based on the results of output 1 and is described as follow:

Public authorities in the target countries should:

- Elaborate and strengthen legislation in favor of family farming and agroecology.
- Enable the development of policies and measures to facilitate territorial markets and short food supply chains with the public food procurements at kindergartens, schools, hospitals and other public institutions from local producers. This include stopping trade agreements that undermine local economies.
- Enable the development of policies and measures to guarantee the right to save, exchange and reproduce local seeds (ITPGRA, UNDROP)
- Facilitate knowledge circulation amongst small-scale food producers, recognizing their central role in agroecology.
- Ensure that formal education system and professional trainings (schools, farmers courses, etc.) include curricula on agroecology (FAO 10 elements) and skill professionals that will support local processes of agroecology.
- Facilitate the dialogue between food producers (including indigenous people) and others knowledge hubs to implement innovative socio economic and political approaches rooted in the agroecological principles.
- Create spaces and mechanisms for the local civil society organizations to participate, influence and get their voices heart in policy processes at national and regional level.
- Support local communities in their cultural identity with respect to food culture through agroecology

¹ This Region is very often marginalised at international level and the scope of this proposal is also to give a voice to organization that are not heard at international level strengthening their capacities and implementing communication tools more effective thanks to the strength and credibility of a regional wide network.

- Adopt a systemic approach and enhance cooperation among different sectors (health, nutrition, environment, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, rural development, social protection) giving a specific attention to the agency of rural women and youth.
- Raising awareness on agroecology role in sustainability and resilience among society, farmers, NGO, local and national authorities

Output 3: Developing Gender-Sensitive community of Practice in the ECA region

Activity 3.1 organise 4 webinar on Gender-Sensitive actions

The SP organized 4 webinars on Women's economic empowerment and gender-sensitive agri-food value chains development"

1. Central Asia sub-region

Title: Women's initiatives linking producers and urban consumers and their importance in times of crisis

Led by Agency for Development Initiative (ADI) (Kyrgyzstan).

Involving organizations from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

Date: 12 April 2022

Number or participants: 67

2. Western Balkans sub-region

Title: Women's role in agrifood value chains in the Western Balkans Led by Albanian Network for Rural Network (ANDR) (Albania).

Involving organizations from Albania, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Kosovo.

Date: 9 June 2022

Number or participants: 58²

3. Eastern Europe sub-region

Title: Seeds and Knowledge: agroecology to strengthen the autonomy of rural women Involving organizations from Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus

Led by Gradina Moldovei (Moldova).

Date: 17 June 2022

Number or participants: 50

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² 15 participants are representatives from Albanian Network (ANRD) and its member organisations;
13 participants are representatives from other Rural Development Networks in other countries of WB, including Kosovo, BiH and North Macedonia; 11 participants are (most of them) students from Agriculture University of Tirana (AUT) and AUT academic staff; 6 participants are Local Development Agents (members of our Rural Youth Hub) and supporters of ANRD work, and experts the remaining participants are FAO's representatives and others

4. South Caucasus and Turkey sub-region

Title: Agroecology for Women's Economic Empowerment and Strengthening their Autonomy

Involving organizations from Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey

Led by Biological Farming Association Elkana (Georgia).

Date: 25 October 2022 Number or participants: 50

The webinars have been the opportunity for valuable exchanges and discussions amongst key actors of agroecology in the region. It allowed, amongst others to identify **seeds** and **access to markets** as **key issues for women in the ECA region** and are intrinsically linked to gender relations and inequalities. These two fields are crucial for women in all the countries of the partners that took part as speakers in this serie of webinars.

The webinars have served as a unique platform for **exchange of experiences** and practical solutions to address gender equality in food production and marketing, specifically in context of crisis or war. It gave visibility to **women-led organizations** that design, implement and monitor projects that recognize and valorize the role of women in health, nutrition, household livelihoods, trust relationship with consumers, innovative way of marketing, etc. It showed the extraordinary leverage that women organization represent. Beyond giving visibility to the silent role of women, the webinars also highlighted the variety of actions that are made possible thanks to organizations, and specifically women-led organizations.

Additionally, it also highlighting **the role of data** to defend and make visible the role of women. FAO REU colleagues presented why gender-related data are so important, how to use it and what is kind of gender-related data is missing.

This serie of webinars, thanks to the fruitful exchanges that occurred between agroecology local actors of the diverse ECA sub-regions (see list below), allowed to identify **common policy priorities** in developing agri-food value chains that benefit rural women and enable the achievement of relevant SDG:

- Recognize -and adapt policies to- the central role of women in local food production and consumption, on children nutrition and health, on social cohesion and solidarity, on household livelihoods (specifically in time of crisis where men are away, not contributing anymore to the household livelihoods).
- Enable and regulate equal access for men and women to resources and specifically to land.
- Support women-led organizations and cooperatives to produce, process and sell their products.
- Collect more and more adequate gender-related data

It has been commonly agreed that a **systemic approach of food systems** and cross-sectors collaborations and common projects on food and agriculture are greatly needed in the region (between agriculture, nutrition, health, economic development, gender equality, social protection and education).

Experiences shared during the 4 webinars are:

- Kyrgyzstan: Farmer's market and bistro and potential to face shocks and crisis situations, by ADI
- ♦ Kazakhstan: From **"Cow on the balcony"** to the current crisis situation, by Zher-Ana Astana
- Tajikistan: activities on mulberry's snack, cultivation of unique lemons, Tomiris NGO
- Uzbekistan: women-artisans and their importance in the new context
 - North Macedonia: "Enabling rural women's economic empowerment in North Macedonia", Liljana Jonoski, organization Rural Coalition, North Macedonia
 - Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Cooperative a model of social entrepreneurship for economic empowerment of vulnerable groups", Željana Pjevalica, ŽENA cooperative, Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - Kosovo: "It suits you a lot Ganimete's farming story, from survive to thrive",
 Edisona Franca, Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo
- Albania: Albanian Network for Rural Development: "Rural women empowerment a perspective from ANRD", Evelina Azizaj, National Coordinator of ANRD
- Moldova: Liliana Botnaru, Executive Director, NGO Avânt, Republic of Moldova.
 Engaging community through agroecology
- Moldova: Anatolii Albin, Business consultant, agroecology and seed-saving practitioner, member of NGO Gradina Moldovei, Republic of Moldova.
 Strengthening food through the right to seeds.
- Ukraine: Anna Danyliak, Expert in sustainable agricultural development, Ecoaction, Ukraine. Why does agroecology matter when it's war outside?
- Ukraine: Anastasiya Volkova, Head of NGO Permaculture in Ukraine, a coordinator for the project 'Green Road of Ecovillages', Ukraine. Food and safety: family farms in times of war in Ukraine.
- Belarus: Olga Shiglins, Director and Head of Experimental Direction and Implementation, NGO Agro-Eco-Cultura, Belarus. Agroecology and human rights: paving the way for food sovereignty
- Armenia: Emma Hakobyan. Gandzaqar women's group. Young women organic production group
- Armenia: Lusine Nalbandyan, Organic Armenia. Innovative Market access strategy of women-led agroecological initiative

- Azerbaijan: Olqa Babayeva "BEREKET" Vegetable Seeds Cooperative, Women-led seed production
- Azerbaijan: Saadat Dibirova, "CHINAR" Women Group, Innovative Market access strategy of women-led agroecological initiative
- Georgia: Marika Kapanadze, Biological Farming Association Elkana, Women-led seed production
- Georgia: Marika Kapanadze, Biological Farming Association Elkana, Innovative Market access strategy of women-led agroecological initiative
- Türkiye: Selin Gürsan, Nilüfer Development Cooperative & EKODER (Ecological Life Organisation) Women-led seed production
- Türkiye: Selin Gürsan, Nilüfer Development Cooperative & EKODER (Ecological Life Organisation) Innovative Market access strategy of women-led agroecological initiative

In Annexes you will find the concept note & agenda as well as the presentations of case studies for each webinar (note that the presentations of FAO on SDG indicators are referred to in Output 4 > Activity 4.1):

Annex 5	Central Asia webinar concept note & agenda
Annex 6	Central Asia webinar presentations of experiences
Annex 7	Western Balkans webinar concept note & agenda
Annex 8	Western Balkans webinar presentations of experiences
Annex 9	Eastern Europe webinar concept note & agenda
Annex 10	Eastern Europe webinar presentations of experiences
Annex 11	South Caucasus and Turkey webinar concept note & agenda
Annex 12	South Caucasus and Turkey webinar presentations of experiences

The webinars are a mean to develop knowledge related activities of the agroecology schools in the ECA region. There are accompanied by another kind of training directed to the local farmers in local languages. Here below are some examples:

North Macedonia
 3d of November 2022,
 Workshop: Lucerne in the circular economy.

- o Kosovo
 - 24 and 25 of September 2022

Workshop: Increase the capacities of the women of the association "Stina" in the field of Agroecology

Kyrgyzstan17 June 2022,

workshop: Biohumus and compost fertilizer for Dyikan Muras seed savers' network

Output 4: Raising awareness and advocacy of small holders and rural activists in using SDGs indicators

Activity 4.1 Raising awareness actions on the SDGs indicators targeting of small holders and rural activists

Awareness raising on the SDG's indicators for smallholders and rural activists took place back-to-back to online and in-person workshops of the Community of Practice on Agroecology. Giorgi Kvinikadze (Statistician, FAO REU) trained participants on the importance of SDG indicators 5.a.1 and 5.a.2 and other data and on how to assess, interpret and use them to influence policy making process and better defend family farmers in the region.

- The in-person training of the Community of practice in Europe and Central Asia region on Agroecology « Bilim » in Italy (no powerpoint presentation)
- The in-person training of the Community of practice in Europe and Central Asia region on Agroecology « Bilim » in Turkey (no powerpoint presentation)
- The webinar of the Central Asia sub-region 12 April 2022
 - Presentation in **Annex 13** SDG awareness raising during webinar CA (also available in Russian language)
- The webinar of Western Balkans sub-region 9 June 2022
 - Presentation in **Annex 14 -** SDG awareness raising during webinar B (also available in Russian language)
- The webinar of Eastern Europe sub-region 17 June 2022
 - Presentation in **Annex 15** SDG awareness raising during webinar EE (also available in Russian language)
- The webinar of South Caucasus and Turkey sub-region 25 October 2022
 - Presentation in **Annex 16** SDG awareness raising during webinar SCT (also available in Russian language)

Activity 4.2 Developing a report on how of small holders and rural activists can use SDGs indicators and other statistic data to advocate for a sustainable and inclusive food system.

A report on how small holders and rural activists can use SDGs indicators and other statistic data to advocacy for a sustainable and inclusive food system has been prepared

in accessible language. The report links the SDGs indicators and the role they can play in influencing changes in the food system focusing on smallholders. It is available in **Annex 17.**

Output 5: Develop a guideline and training Programme on multi-risk preparedness plans for local governments

Activity 5.1. Review of emergency response preparedness mechanisms and tools in the European Union and in one EU selected country, with special focus on the agriculture sector.

A review of emergency response preparedness mechanisms and tools in the European Union and in two EU selected country (Italy and Albania), with special focus on the agriculture sector has been developed. The two case studies include a review of what is existing at EU level and at country level.

The review of emergency response preparedness mechanisms and tools in Italy is available in **Annex 18.**

The review of emergency response preparedness mechanisms and tools in Albania is available in **Annex 19**.

Activity 5.2. Design guidelines and training programme on emergency response preparedness and contingency planning in the agriculture sector

Guidelines and training programme on emergency response preparedness and contingency planning in the agriculture sector has been designed and developed.

The "Guidelines on multi-risk preparedness in the agricultural sector. How to improve preparedness of the agricultural sector to climate shocks?" are available in **Annex 16.**

The training module "Climate multi-risk preparedness in the agricultural sector. Training module manual to improve awareness and understanding of the Guidelines on multi-risk preparedness in the agricultural sector, at State level" is available is **Annex 17.**