Social Farming as a multifunctional activity for sustainable development in Catalonia

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• Social Farming (SF) is an activity that...

  o Contributes to **multifunctional agriculture**
  o Promotes **employment opportunities for groups at risk of social marginalization**
  o Collaborates in **local development** efforts and in **environmental preservation** in rural and periurban areas
  o Encourages **diversification in products** and land uses in rural European spaces as a strategy for local development and employment policies. It is instructive to consider how we arrived at the current situation

• The objective of the research is to explore whether SF is...

  o The current rural situation is the result of a **global process of agro-industrial Integration** that makes it difficult for rural areas to remain viable
  o An **economically viable activity** that enhances the local development of rural areas that are not very competitive
  o An **employment opportunity** for individuals at risk of social exclusion
  o An **innovative activity** with major ‘**Social Return on Investment’** (SROI), leading to environmental, economic, and social benefits for societies that promote SF initiatives
A – THE CONTEMPORARY COUNTRY TRANSFORMATION IN EUROPE

• Green Revolution (1960-69 and 1970-79)
  o Intensive use of productivist factors, prioritizing production over social and environmental considerations

• The mechanization of agriculture, increasing use of chemical products, reduction in manual labour, etc., led to two distinct rural settings in Europe:
  o **Productivist agriculture** was integrated into the global market with decreasing protection from EU Agricultural Policy
  o **Marginally productive agricultural areas** such as mountainous, arid, or periurban zones where people were diversifying their activities, mainly to accommodate tourism or quality agricultural products with *denominación de origen* branding, proximity to consumers (“Farm to Table”), and especially value-added products, the focus of the structural policies of EU agricultural agencies
The emerging awareness of the need to avoid the environmental impact of intensive farming activity began to be taken into account at the end of the 1980s by EU and other public policy agencies. Through the end of the 20th Century there was discussion of a ‘post-productivist transition’ with policies on the diversification of production and the pluriactivity of tourism and recreational activities. Farmers were subsidized to improve the environment by planting trees, to raise livestock, use extensive agriculture techniques, and develop high-quality agriculture products. Funds were available for the transition to ecological or organic farming. The most important change was the diversification of activities and land use that came with the conversation about the ‘multi-functional nature of the contemporary countryside’.

A multifunctional countryside means that rural activity can obtain multiple results, not only the production of food products and raw materials but also environmental and social benefits.

Agriculture can also contribute to the sustainability of the rural landscape, the protection of biodiversity, the creation of jobs along with the diversification of agro-industrial activities and services, and therefore contributes to the viability of rural areas. This new situation is “the commodification of the countryside”, in which consumers, who mainly live in cities, are prepared to pay more for the value of certain goods.

A simple example is a cost comparison of farmland, where the price is based on its production value, with land occupied by second homes or tourism-related activities, where the price depends on what the consumer is willing to pay. In this sense, we often talk about a double market for piece of land, depending on what it will be used for. The only solution is that territories implement planning policies for the activities and land use they require, thereby avoiding this double market. Some traditionally rural activities such as cycling, fishing, horseback riding, boating, and hiking have become experiences to sell tourists, often with the addition of new technologies.

B - SOCIAL FARMING (SF): CONCEPT, EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY, AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

7 defining elements of the SF concept:

1. ACTIVITY
2. OBJECTIVE
3. SUBJECT
4. RESOURCES
5. LEGAL ENTITY, PROMOTERS AND TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS
6. LINKS TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS
**ACTIVITY:** basically farming, sometimes originating in gardening; may also include processes of agrifoods transformation if this can be traced.

**OBJECTIVE:** employment of individuals at risk of social exclusion and offering these groups the treatment or rehabilitation services they need, along with education or training.

**SUBJECT:** groups at risk of social exclusion include people with disabilities, mental disorders, a history of incarceration or drug addiction, living in poverty or long-term unemployment, or school dropouts, the elderly, survivors of domestic violence, or the homeless.

**RESOURCES:** may include buildings and land, but it is very important to have technical specialists and investment capital, which are often provided by donors or humanitarian organizations. In certain cases, public assistance is available for residences, social security costs for employees at risk of social exclusion, or the use of buildings or cultivable land.

**LEGAL ENTITIES, PROMOTERS AND TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS:** organized as foundations, cooperatives, public or private businesses (Special Work Centres, for example)

**LINKS:** organized as networks with links to public administration or large foundations and other nonprofits with SF experience

• Development of community policies in SF setting:

- [2009] Shared thematic Initiative
- [2013] CESE ruling
• Development of SF in EC policies:

  – [2009] Shared thematic Initiative:
    • SF is an emerging in Europe
    • SF is associated with multifunctionality, diversification, viability, social solidarity and well-being
    • Contemporaneous with PAC 2007-2013

**PARTICIPANTS**: 7 National Rural Networks (Belgium, Flanders (Belgium), Finland, Ireland, Sweden and United Kingdom)

**OBJECTIVE**: To identify and analyse opportunities and obstacles for rural development policies related to SF
• Evolution of EC policies on SF

– [2013] SF ruling by the European Economic and Social Committee

• Social Farming: ecological support services and social/pubic health policies, Initiated in January 2012 and approved in February 2013

• SF is an innovative prospect that fuses multifunctional agriculture and social/support services at the local level

• Main diagnosis: SF is a heterogeneous sector without the pertinent legislation

**Recommended actions**

1) Institutional recognition and a framework of specific standards
2) Creation of BdD on SF in the EU
3) Inclusion of SF in research and training programmes
4) Creation of networks and reinforcement of the role of civil society
5) Inclusion of SF in rural development strategies and in the common strategy framework
Evolution of SF in EC policies:

  - In accordance with the plans for common agriculture (2015-2020) and the Europe 2020 strategy. EC Integration policies are needed to achieve economic growth that is intelligent, sustainable and inclusive.
  - Objectives
    - Improve agricultural competitiveness
    - Manage natural resources sustainably
    - Achieve balanced development in rural zones
  - Priorities
    1) Strengthen knowledge transfer
    2) Improve the competitiveness and viability of SF projects
    3) Strengthen the organization of the food chain (farm-to-market, farm-to-table)
    4) Preserve and improve rural ecosystems
    5) Use resources efficiently and fight climate change
    6) Strengthen social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
SF in Catalunya (June 2015). 146 total entities

- SF; 73; 50%
- SF and Garden centers; 26; 18%
- Garden centers; 31; 21%
- Garden centers and others; 14; 10%
- Others; 2; 1%
• **01. ACTIVITY**

- Agriculture; 69; 70%
- Food Processing; 11; 11%
- Forestry; 9; 9%
- Services; 5; 5%
- Cattle; 2; 2%
- Crafts; 1; 1%
- (Not classified); 2; 2%

![Map and Pie Chart showing the distribution of activities and their percentages]
02. LEGAL STATUS: private entities

- *non-profits entities:*
  - foundations (23%)
  - associations (15%)
- *economic entities:*
  - private companies (19%)
  - cooperatives (14%)

03. INTEGRATION MODEL:

- Special Work Centers (CET); 36; 36%
- Companies; 15; 15%
- Occupational center; 2; 2%
- Inclusive company; 0; 0%
- Others; 5; 5%
- Association; 1; 1%
- (Unclassified); 40; 41%

04. OBJECTIVES OF SF INITIATIVES:

- Promote employment opportunity; 62; 63%
- Provide food for people with limited resources; 10; 10%
- Deliver education and training; 7; 7%
- Therapy; 3; 3%
- Others; 5; 5%
- (Unclassified); 17; 17%
03. GROUPS THAT BENEFIT:

- Other socially vulnerable groups; 27; 27%
- Unemployed individuals; 8; 8%
- Individuals living in poverty; 24; 24%
- People with physical disability or mental disorders; 41; 41%

04. ECOLOGICAL CRITERIA

- Yes; 43; 44%
- No; 25; 25%
- (Unclassified); 31; 31%
METHODOLOGY:

PHASE 1 – Planning (study design and method)
PHASE 2 – General information about the entity
PHASE 3 – Field work
PHASE 4 – Data analysis
PHASE 5 - Results and evaluation (SROI and CANVAS)

Interviews with 3 entities

7 pendents d’entrevistar:
(2010) **Sustainable agriculture** in Collserola Hills near Barcelona. 20,000 m² under cultivation: olives, and grapes. Two distinct legal entities: a cooperative (educational activities for schools, adults, and a project in collaboration with social services personnel to encourage social engagement for individuals living in poverty; and a Limited Society (SL) productivity functions: ecological garden-basket service / administers consumer / producer groups for the local market

(1974) **Cooperative** at Vallbona de les Monges (Lleida). Social integration project for individuals with difficulties (psychological disorders). Provide employment activity along with training and like skills support in a social housing context in a **natural, agricultural setting. Acquire vitiviniculture skills**. Since 2010 project at Masia de Can Calopa de Dalt, taking on new tasks such as working in the vineyards of the Agrarian Park of Sabadell and making wine. They also work for other vintners or farmers, providing catering
Organic Farming Production at Can Salas (Terrassa). Began in 1994 as a Garden center and in 2013 start the organic farming project, providing an employment resource for individuals with physical and/or mental disability. Organic farming production to consumer groups, catering and direct sale. There is also an educational program in the teaching gardens (school classes) and training for adults and families.

Organic Farming Production in Manlleu (Osona). Cooperative born in 2010 that provides employment for individuals living in poverty, organic farmers that produce, serve and cook vegetables from garden to the restaurant at the City Market in Manlleu, and other catering services. More recently, the project has expanded to include space for drying aromatic and medicinals plants, ecologically for herbal infusions.
Mushroom cultivation quality (shiitake and maitake) that reproduces the natural cycle that make mushrooms into the forest by following the principles of organic farming. 

Bolet Ben Fet take part of TEB Cooperative Group, whose mission is social and professional intergration of people with disabilities. During the 45 year history of TEB Cooperative Group it has been created 600 jobs, which 450 are people with intellectual disabilities.
PHASE 1 - Planning (study design and method), relying on economic analysis and SROI of the SF projects, using two methodologies: the CANVAS business model and SROI evaluation

PHASE 2: General information about the entity, getting to know the characteristics of each of the entities interviewed from the file compiled for each

PHASE 3: Fieldwork to develop the CANVAS model, define each step, and collect the documentation needed to develop the SROI assessment

PHASE 4: Data analysis, including all information from field sessions. A file will be developed of all relevant information about the entity, the CANVAS model and an assessment of economic viability based on data about the activity carried out by each entity interviewed. The final product of this phase of the methodology is to develop a complete draft of the SROI assessment, which will be evaluated by the entity and by external consultants

PHASE 5: Knowledge transfer to all interested groups of the results obtained. After the SROI is finalized, it will undergo another evaluation by the entity. Finally, the study will be submitted to external evaluators accredited by “The SROI Network” for verification
**CANVAS del Business Model Generation**

**CANVAS** is a methodological tool that permits the analysis and visualization of a proposed activity in a clear, flexible, and simple model, along with the value chain of any business. This helps to define a model for a profitable and sustainable business with 9 key elements:

| ① | CLIENTS |
| ② | VALUE PROPOSITION |
| ③ | RELATIONSHIPS |
| ④ | CHANNELS |
| ⑤ | INCOME |
| ⑥ | KEY ACTIVITIES |
| ⑦ | KEY RESOURCES |
| ⑧ | ALLIANCES |
| ⑨ | TOTAL COSTS |

![The Business Model Canvas](image-url)
• **SROI – Social Return on Investment**

This methodology measures the social impact of investing in a project with social service characteristics, focusing on three broad dimensions: economic, social and environmental. The objective of using SROI methodology is to demonstrate how SF projects make a major contribution to society, generating changes in the individuals they work with, in the immediate surroundings, and in the broader society.

The end result of SROI assessment is a number that reflects the multiplication factor of the investment in a given project, showing the return to society of each euro invested.

*Example result SROI Home Care Service of the City of Barcelona*
CONCLUSIONS

• SF has become an activity with increasing presence in the Catalan context, responding to the current needs of society.

• SF has become a sector with a clear social innovation component that is economically profitable, socially justly and in which the investments yield a social return.

• In SF, the social return is achieved through several channels: support from social and health services, provision of services and infrastructure, environmental improvement, and the promotion of agro ecological activity and local consumption.
Thank you very much!

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