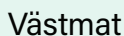


HOW DO WE STRENGTHEN LOCAL ACTORS WHEN TRADE BECOMES GLOBAL?





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In the lead-up to the European elections in June 2024, it's more important than ever to raise awareness about the pressing challenges surrounding sustainable food production and distribution.

That's why we hosted an engaging debate to dive deep into these crucial issues.

This however wasn't a typical debate! We brought together experts, activists, and passionate individuals from Gothenburg to spark meaningful conversations and drive positive change.

COMING TOGETHER

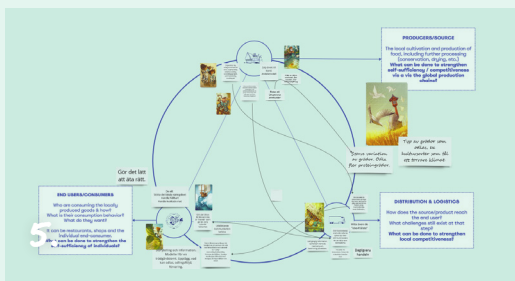


KICK-OFF TALKS

Our event started with a series of short introductions to set the agenda while shining a light on existing efforts to build a local, independent, food production and distribution network.

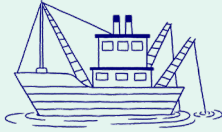
The talks were kicked off by Anne Franze-Jordanov (1) who shared spoke of the intent of the event. This was followed by a short

presentation by Johannes Wahlström (2) to present his latest project Nätet who will likely be using the venue the workshop was hosted in to create a new hub for local food ecosystems. The talks were closed by Joel Albertsson (3) to speak of the emerging local food producer network Västmat.





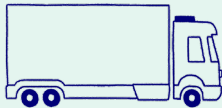
STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS



PRODUCERS

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN SELF-SUFFICIENCY / COMPETITIVENESS VIS A VIS THE GLOBAL PRODUCTION CHAINS?

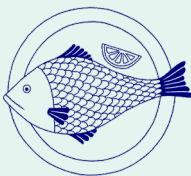
Conversations in the PRODUCER group, revolved around creating new infrastructure for the local ecosystem, by among other things rethinking procurement systems, and identifying partners that could help scale up demand.



DISTRIBUTERS

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL COMPETITIVENESS?

DISTRIBUTORS wanted to significantly invest in marketing and consumer education through the creation of maps and information points to be made available online but also in existing customer touchpoints like grocery stores.



CONSUMERS

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF INDIVIDUALS?

Conversations in the CONSUMER group, explored new experiences of food consumption and purchases such as auction houses but also supporting the development of shared gardens.

KEY INSIGHTS



REORGANIZE THE INFRASTRUCTURE

PRODUCERS and DISTRIBUTORS shared an interest in forming their own infrastructure to gain autonomy from global markets. This will require significant investment which in turn necessitates collective action and the ability to scale demand.

IDEAS:

- Distribution cooperative where the growers themselves control the distribution
- Invest through co-financing in shared procurement and machine park



STRENGTHEN & INCREASE DEMAND

All groups spoke of the importance of finding key partners like school systems, but also gain independence from the dependence on city funding by strengthening the ecosystem's connection to the private consumer market and finding effective ways to reach those customers.

IDEAS:

- Find new business models with larger players such as hotel chains (Lilla Jordbruket / Radisson), a group of restaurants or grow your own food for your restaurant (Hagabion)



NEW EXPERIENCES FOR CONSUMERS

All groups also raised interest in creating new experiences for customers ranging from auction houses, to showrooms, to kitchens, in order to appeal to a wider audience of customers and reduce their dependence on existing touchpoints.

IDEAS:

- Open auction houses for fresh produce
- Encourage the development of crowd-farming and co-cultivation to help hobby farmers communities mature



BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH CUSTOMERS

Visibility and engagement with customers is seen as a key objective across stakeholder groups and will require significant investments to identify the best places to intervene.

IDEAS:

- Create user-friendly centralized online map and catalog of local producers and distributors
- Find clever ways to raise awareness where customers already go: grocery stores.

CHALLENGES OF FOOD SUSTAINABILITY IN SWEDEN

Sweden has taken significant steps to promote urban agriculture and ensure sustainable land use. However, several challenges remain that need to be addressed to fully realize these goals.

SEED SELECTION:

→ There is relatively small activity in selecting seeds and plants that can be produced in Sweden, considering climate and soil characteristics.

SOIL FERTILITY:

→ Low efforts to preserve the soil fertility in order to grow more nourishing vegetables.

RESEARCH RESULTS ARE STILL LIMITED CONSIDERING CLIMATE CHANGE:

→ Risk or opportunity? (possibility to grow a different variety of plants in different times of the year, increased pests).

SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

→ Only 60% of the food consumed in Sweden, is produced in Sweden.

CENTRALIZED PROCUREMENT PRACTICES:

→ Current procurement systems are often centralized and favor large-scale suppliers, making it difficult for local producers to compete. This limits their ability to secure stable income streams and discourages investment in local agricultural ventures.

REGULATORY BARRIERS:

→ Complex regulations and bureaucratic hurdles make it challenging for municipalities to source food locally. The complexity of procurement laws and the need for competitive bidding processes can limit opportunities for small local farmers to participate in public procurement contracts.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT:

→ There is a lack of investment in the necessary infrastructure to support modern local marketplaces and distribution centers. This includes facilities like farmer's markets, refrigerated shelving, and delivery boxes, which are crucial for maintaining the quality and accessibility of locally produced food.

CONSUMER AWARENESS AND ACCESS:

→ Consumers lack education to consume more seasonal food and local food, rather than imported food. Many consumers are not aware of or do not have easy access to local food markets. This limits the reach and impact of local producers, who need strong community engagement and consistent customer bases to thrive.

DOMINANCE OF LARGE DISTRIBUTORS:

→ The food distribution system is dominated by a few large players who control the market, creating barriers for small and local producers to enter and compete. This reduces market access for local food products.

LOGISTICAL COMPLEXITY:

→ Scaling up municipal distribution systems to support local producers involves overcoming significant logistical challenges. This includes coordinating transport, storage, and delivery in a way that is efficient and sustainable, which requires substantial planning and investment

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort from policymakers, local governments, and community stakeholders to create an enabling environment for sustainable food systems in Sweden.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION IN SWEDEN (SUMMARY)

NEW PROCUREMENT METHOD

→ adapt the procurement system for food so that it becomes more democratic and gives greater opportunity for municipalities and regions to buy locally, this would provide secure sources of income for local producers who could then invest more, which would favour locally produced products on the broader private market as well.

CITY-BASED PRODUCERS

→ set requirements for efficient land use around and in cities with a focus on food production. This would allow more producers to operate in the city, providing a greater interface with the market.

LOCAL MARKETPLACES

→ support the development of modern local marketplaces and distribution centres for local producers. Farmer's markets, modern shelving with coolers, delivery boxes in residential areas and similar.

HELP SCALE DISTRIBUTION

→ encourage municipal distribution of goods to level the playing field and break oligopolies and non-transparent distribution systems.

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION IN SWEDEN (DETAILED)

→ Half of the agricultural land should be used organically by 2030, as well as climate-smart, local and organic food in schools, health care and social services should become a standard.

→ Municipalities and regions should set clearer requirements for purchasing food that meets Swedish requirements for animal welfare and environmental considerations.

→ Provide more support to agriculture for conversion to organic farming, recreation of natural pastures and other environmental initiatives.

→ Combine strengthened animal welfare requirements and reduced use of antibiotics with policy instruments for reduced and more conscious consumption of meat, and promote plant-based alternatives.

→ Strengthening the efforts to prevent food waste at all stages - from farm to fork, accelerate the transition to fossil-free agriculture, increase resilience and phase out fossil fuel subsidies.

→ Strengthen Swedish agriculture for increased self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs, and support the transition to organic and sustainable agriculture with fossil-free machinery. -Improve food labelling and increase information regarding the origin of food, including in restaurant settings, to empower consumers and promote transparency.

→ Increasing research funding for environmental technology and the bioeconomy in the green and blue industries.

→ Expand training programs linked to food production to ensure future skills and nurture the younger generation's interest in these sectors.

→ Implementing measures to increase output in a sustainable way.

→ Establish a comprehensive program for organic food production.

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EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Participant:	Comparative Research Network e.V ([CRN])
PIC number:	949534359
Project name and acronym:	[EU24 – 4 the Planet] — [EU24]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	5
Event name:	Climate debate: Food production
Type:	Debate
In situ/online:	In-situ
Location:	Sweden, Gothenburg
Date(s):	18 th April 2024
Website(s) (if any):	https://engage4theplanet.com/2024/06/27/eu24-event-promotes-food-sustainability-through-mindful-debate/
Participants	
Female:	25
Male:	36
Non-binary:	1
From country 1 [Sweden]:	39
From country 2 [Germany]:	4
From country 3 [Italy]:	3
From country 4 [Ireland]:	2
From country 5 [Cyprus]:	2
From country 6 [Greece]:	2
From country 7 [Finland]:	2
From country 8 [Netherlands]:	2
From country 9 [Lithuania]:	1

From country 10 [Croatia]:	1		
From country 11 [Belgium]:	1		
From country 12 [France]	1		
From country 13 [Hungary]:	1		
From country 14 [Poland]:	1		
Total number of participants:	62	From total number of countries:	14

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The goal of the debate was to discuss and formulate possible policies that can be put into place in order to strengthen local producers in a global market which is currently dominated by a few big competitors.

Participants were key stakeholders working on different levels of the food chain in Sweden (production, distribution and consumption): local entrepreneurs; representative of institutions and associations; politicians, international students and guests bringing their diverse point of views.

The event was based on two different methodologies: mindfulness debate and creative thinking.

The scope of a mindfulness debate is to be focused on the goal of the discussion, reflect before talking, let the other participants express their point of view before replying, try to visualise what you are talking about.

The event started with a series of short introductions to set the agenda while shining a light on existing efforts to build a local, independent, food production and distribution network.

Two speakers presented their local initiatives and shared opportunities and challenges. These insights created a common fundament of knowledge to be able to take part in the discussion.

Besides the onsite event with 62 participants, a parallel online event with 5 participants was held, to make the debate inclusive even for participants from other parts of Sweden.

The online participants listened to the introduction speeches together with the onsite participants, and then worked separately, online in a small group.

Whilst the online group has been guided by a facilitator and a MIRO-board that supported the facilitation of the debate, the off-line group split up in 3 groups/3 topics.

The offline participants discussed topics focused on key stakeholder needs, with one facilitator for each group. Participants were asked to choose the topic they could most relate and contribute to: producers, distributors, and consumers, seeking autonomy from the global system. In order to visualise the discussion, participants had the possibility to create a model of their thesis, using DIXIT cards from the DIXIT card game, pencils and paper.

The event closed with mingle and informal discussions along with a vegan food buffet prepared with local produced food and food waste ingredients by Corina Akner's Värt an organization seeking to foster responsible circular food production and informing consumers.

Online participants discussed the same three phases, proposing solutions and possible policies that would help local producers to distribute their products in a more effective way.

The event was hosted at a large, representative, old building (a former bank) in central Gothenburg. It is owned by a local administrative organisation that is maintaining and managing all historic buildings in Gothenburg. One of the event's main actors is planning to use parts of the building for local food distribution. The outcomes of the debate can support their brainstorming and solution finding in how they can use the facilities in the future.

During the event, the posters participating in the Art poster competition, and related to the topic "Food production" were exposed. The participants voted for their favourite artwork and the winner was announced.

Outcomes:

The debate focused on three links in the food chain: production, distribution, consumers. For each of those three phases, participants proposed possible solutions and policy strategies.

Conversations in the PRODUCER group, revolved around creating new infrastructure for the local ecosystem by rethinking procurement systems and identifying partners that could help scale up demand.

DISTRIBUTORS wanted to significantly invest in marketing and consumer education through the creation of maps and information points to be made available online but also in existing customer touch points like grocery stores.

Conversations in the CONSUMER group, explored new experiences of food consumption and purchases such as auction houses but also supporting the development of shared gardens.

The final policy recommendations discussed by the participants were:

- to adapt the procurement system for food so that it becomes more democratic and gives greater opportunity for municipalities and regions to buy locally, this would provide secure sources of income for local producers who could then invest more, which would favour locally produced products on the broader private market as well.
- set requirements for efficient land use around and in cities with a focus on food production. This would allow more producers to operate in the city, providing a greater interface with the market.
- support the development of modern local marketplaces and distribution centres for local producers. Farmer's markets, modern shelving with coolers, delivery boxes in residential areas and similar.
- encourage municipal distribution of goods to level the playing field and break oligopolies and non-transparent distribution systems.

The event was realised in collaboration with a local network composed by local entrepreneurs, producers and policy makers. Other European organisations active in the circular economy, and sustainability were actively involved in the debate, giving their valuable point of view.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).