

SUPURBFOOD is a research project funded by the European Commission's 7th Framework Program. It aims to contribute to the development of sustainable modes of urban and peri-urban food provisioning.

About the project

Until recent, short food supply chains and multifunctional agriculture were considered to be part of the rural development realm. However, this project looks at these topics from the perspective of urban rather than rural development. Short food supply chains have been advocated as a means to reduce the environmental impact of the agro-food system. However, to improve the ecological performance of the agro-food system other flows (e.g. nutrient, water, and urban waste) need to be considered as well. In the current context these aspects are usually treated separately. This project will treat them in an integrated manner.

Approach

Research will be carried out in seven European city-regions (Rotterdam (NL), Rome (IT), Ghent (BE), Vigo (ES), Bristol (UK), Zürich (CH) and Riga (LV)) in collaboration with a diverse group of SMEs to further innovate in urban and peri-urban food provisioning, nutrient, water and waste management, and multifunctional use of urban and peri-urban space. Finally the project will also establish links with researchers, policymakers and SMEs in these domains in developing countries. This will be organised through a process of dialogue, sharing of experiences, exchanging of best practices and joint learning.

More information

www.supurbfood.eu



What are the garden cooperatives about?

Ortoloco and Dunkelhölzli are two different consumer-led garden cooperatives within the city region Zurich aiming at producing local, seasonal and organic food with and for consumers. They were installed in the last 4 years. Both were initiated by a core group of people of some having agricultural background. The cooperatives are organised in terms of weekly vegetables boxes. Each consumer holds a share. Consumers can choose between different sizes of boxes. Ortoloco also offers a "neighbourhood share" for 100 households.

The cooperative Dunkelhölzli cultivates around 0.75 ha whereas Ortoloco has gone from 0.8 ha to 1.4 ha. Ortoloco is installed on a farm; the fields are rented, the farmer supplies the fields and infrastructure as rooms, but is not involved in the gardening activities. Dunkelhölzli is installed on a field provided by the Zurich City department in charge of agriculture.

Who is involved?

In both cooperatives, there are about 100 to 230 consumers holding a share. The consumers are very much involved in the gardening processes. Consumers are motivated to regularly help in the cooperative. However, they are obliged to work for several half days a year in the cooperative and carry out activities as working on the fields, washing and packaging of the vegetables or transport of boxes to town. At Ortoloco, consumers are obliged to choose two working areas/working groups out of 14 (e.g. herbs and flower group, friday's group). In terms of Dunkelhölzli there is an online calendar where consumers can see when and in what area help is needed.

The cooperatives run democratically, decisions are made in a general assembly. In both cooperatives, there is a core team of five to nine members that are in charge of administration. Currently one to two professional farmers and gardeners are employed. They are building the backbone for the food production.

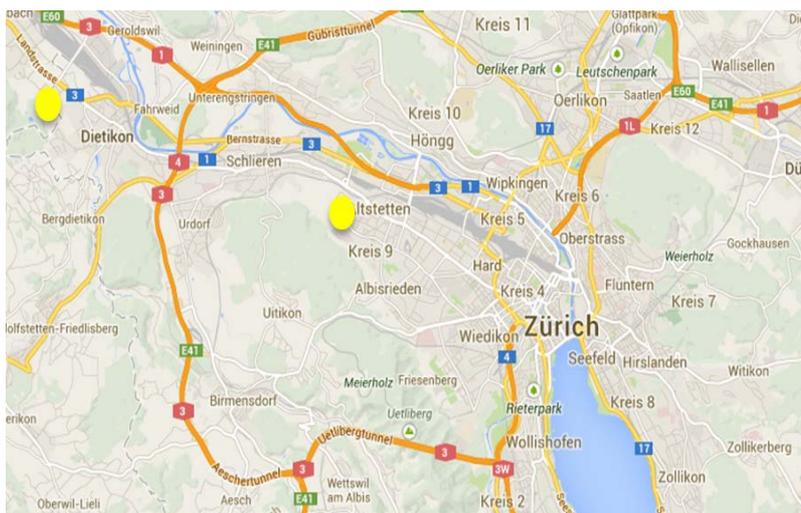
Which activities are carried out?

Both cooperatives are sharing good cooperation with other food cooperatives and urban gardening initiatives, in the city region Zurich and Swiss wide. They share knowledge and experiences but also garden material as seedlings. Ortoloco plans to install a knowledge platform where other initiatives that are just about to start can get information and learn about their experiences.

Ortoloco especially functions as a role model for consumer cooperatives within the German speaking parts of Switzerland. Generally speaking, urban gardening initiatives currently have a strong media presence. Media has shown much interest in garden initiatives, and initiatives run blogs and newsletters.

Where are Ortoloco and Dunkelhölzli located?

Ortoloco is located in Dietikon, outside Zurich. Dunkelhölzli is located within the city of Zurich (below marked in yellow). Consumers are mainly located within the city of Zurich. There are cooperations with local farmers which provide produce as eggs, cheese or fruits for the boxes.



Lessons from Ortoloco and Dunkelhölzli for SUPURBFOOD

- ✓ Ortoloco and Dunkelhölzli are good examples for consumer-led initiatives aiming at shortening the food chain.
- ✓ There is good cooperation with other cooperatives/initiatives and farmers.
- ✓ Ortoloco is an interesting model of integration within an existing (organic) farm with synergies for both sides, consumers and farmers.
- ✓ Ortoloco and Dunkelhölzli have many young people participating with great enthusiasm searching for new social relationships, overcoming the traditional poles between producers and consumers.

Contact details of Ortoloco and Dunkelhölzli

For more information:

<http://ortoloco.ch/>

<http://www.dunkelhoelzli.ch/>

Contact details of SUPURBFOOD

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