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HANDBOOK

Rural Facilitator Training in Agricultural Short Food Supply Chains



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Introduction

This Handbook is one of the main outcomes of The Rural Facilitator Training in Agricultural Short Food Supply Chains project (funded by the European Commission, Erasmus +, KA2 2019-1-CZ01-KA202-061270). The project aims to provide a better understanding of the working SFSC ecosystem in the partner EU countries (Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Poland, Romania) at the national and European levels. Researches have highlighted the problem that small producers have difficulties separately, so they need to work together to gain market access. In this cooperation, the role of the intermediate players is to have taken over some of these activities from producers. These are supply chain organizers who understand market and agricultural processes thus helping farmers to gain market access. In the first part of our project experts agreed that it is necessary to start a special SFSC organizer training and to develop special eligibility conditions, as well as the training of SFSC advisers, however, these development and support directions are still missing in practice.

Therefore, the partnership committed to exploring the possible ways on how to generate the position of a so-called Rural facilitator, who can plug these gaps across the value chains, and develop the necessary learning materials and training tools to train individuals who intend to take under this new profession in their career.

This handbook is based on research and surveys conducted in all partner countries among target groups and stakeholders of the SFSC field. One of the previous outputs of this handbook was to collect competencies that are necessary for elaborating rural animation and training, which can identify who will be rural facilitators in the short food supply chain specialities. From these competencies the main topics were defined: the facilitators shall understand the key driving forces of farmers' cooperation, its historical background, psychological processes, conflicts management, food safety risks, consumers' demands, markets' changing and logics, other actors, and roles of food chains, regulations, and support systems. As rural animators will be local business angels, they shall know how to be the best partner to farmers and other actors of SFSC (like cooperatives, consumers, municipalities, local craftsmen, local shops, suppliers, etc.). In that way, they can manage the SFSC initiatives to become more sustainable (in the sense of social, economic, and environmental). Due to new competencies in rural areas, farmers will be able to improve their business because they will have strong support in the food process, market increase, traceability, labelling, and rural tourism development.

The knowledge and skills set mentioned in this Handbook are determined by the results of desk search and competency catalogue questionnaires among SCFC participants. All chapters were adjusted to the SFSC area and contain many topics such as marketing approach, business thinking, basics of leadership, negotiation skills, decision making, risk management, and current context of SFSC situation on the market – domination of multinational corporations, low prices pressure, growing interest of consumers in a food origin and quality, growing preference of local products, or establishing short food supply chains, etc.

All chapters have a unified structure, that starts with main goals, learning objectives, keywords, and then follow with the main body alongside lucid figures. Where necessary the chapters will have country-specific information provided by the partner from the respective country.

Rural Facilitator

There is no legal definition for “SFSC animators”/ “SFSC facilitators” in any of the partner countries, this position/occupation does not exist as such in the Rural Facilitator partner countries. However, it should be mentioned that market organisers, animators of civil organisations, coordinators of LEADER local action groups and advisors of rural development programmes work on SFSC development in each European member state who more and less do similar activities to the planned rural facilitator programme. These services collected and presented in previous stages of the project (including some best practice examples presented from each country) can help define what the future job of the “rural facilitator” could involve:

- leading the territorial, local food strategic plan, and its operational program, implement strategic and pre-operational studies,
- proposing and implementing sustainable governance, prepare, facilitate and coordinate monitoring bodies,
- contributing to networks of shareholders (European, national and local), organize and facilitate actions to raise awareness and mobilize food and consumer stakeholders,
- preparing all documents: draft deliberations, partnership agreements, technical reports, reports, carry out administrative and budgetary monitoring,
- organizing info days, social events, conferences, meetings, study tours, other professional events,
- organizing farmers' market and mapping other sales possibilities (online marketplaces, open farms programs, touristic events, box sales, direct sales, sales to wholesale consumers, etc.),
- networking: organizing festivals and other open events,
- offering legal consultancy to farmers,
- assistance with sales practices and building up a brand,
- managing PR and communication: editing publications, websites, databases, articles,
- organizing training, lectures, seminars, information exchange,
- providing administrative services (accountancy, access to credit and subventions),
- assistance in IT and other technological solutions,
- monitoring and reporting on the benefits of SFSCs,
- business management, tender writing, and control of projects,
- mapping and sharing successful management and logistic models, legally sound solutions

As a conclusion of the present research, we can affirm that one solution might be a sort of “rural business angels” who can plug the gaps across the value chains, namely the rural animators or rural facilitators. These specially trained persons will be able to:

- facilitate the access to the market of small farmers because they will be able to organise farmers' associations,
- to promote dialogue between farmers and consumers- maybe there are no conflicts)
- look for special supports,
- analyse the changes of markets
- identify territorial needs to develop the most suitable short food chains.

The broad spectrum of knowledge and competence areas relevant for the human resource aspect of the SFSCs as identified in the present research:

- Knowledge concerning **SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT** (environmental sustainability, social sustainability, local development methods and opportunities, issues related to community development, job creation, diversification of local income opportunities in the countryside, human ecology, small-scale food production, substantial knowledge in SFSCs, ecological production, environmental aspects of transportation, farmhouse keeping, food processing, hygiene, and health, agritourism).
- Very good **KNOWLEDGE OF THE THREE SECTORS**: public, private, and civil society, including a good understanding of their expectations and potential contributions to the partnership, as well as of potential conflicts of interest and ways to deal with them, understanding the potential and dynamics of civic groups.
- Knowledge and competencies regarding **BUSINESS PLANNING** (strategic thinking, ability to plan, identifying resources, resource management, financial management, recruitment, performance monitoring, supportive supervision, tender writing).
- Knowledge and competencies regarding **SALES, MARKETING and USE OF TRADEMARK** (sales channels, reaching out to potential consumers, logistics, building up a brand, use of social media, new trends in diet and tourism, symbolic, material, cultural, and ethical factors in food and other goods' consumption).
- **PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS**, including resource management and evaluation, needed to identify projects with a high potential to achieve strategic objectives and carry out the animator's own activities (e.g., community meetings), which should be managed professionally.
- A wide range of **SOCIAL COMPETENCES, SOFT SKILLS**, including "facilitator" skills, motivating skills, skills to engage and mobilize potential partners, capability to reach out and involve also the most disadvantaged groups, educator skills, ability to stimulate and managing active learning processes, "integrator" skills, developing community bonds and communication, conflict resolution, networking, communication, teamwork, negotiation.
- **KNOWLEDGE OF LEGISLATION** (legal framework for SFSCs, applying legal requirements, verifying authorizations, verifying farm conditions, applying legislation regarding food security).
- Knowledge of **IT AND OTHER TECHNOLOGIES** (building a website, IT marketing solutions, IT sales solutions, IT distance learning/development solutions, Technological solutions for food production and processing).
- **PRACTICAL SKILLS** related to such issues as the organization of meetings, moderation of workshops/discussion, methods of ensuring public participation, basic knowledge of agriculture, etc.
- One person cannot possess all the competencies, nevertheless, we listed all the needs which are relevant to the present SFSC era. The trained rural facilitators must identify those competencies which are necessary for forming cooperation between local farmers and consumers and support all the stages of the working supply chains. Thus, they will be able to invite other experts to provide better knowledge for production, sale, processing, logistics, communication, and organization.

Innovative short food supply chains

AIMS OF CHAPTER/ABSTRACT

The present chapter introduces the short food supply chain through the best practices, and case studies to provide a better understanding of innovative short value chains which become available in all the European Union member states. It also aims to present the differences between traditional direct selling and new alternative food chains. Finally, it gives a practical guide for setting and boosting up a new group of farmers and describes the main steps of organizing farmers' markets.

KEYWORDS

short food supply chain, alternative food system, direct sale, cooperation, innovative good practices, facilitator

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this chapter are to understand the different definitions of short and alternative food supply chains and to identify different types of short chains. The chapter describes the main steps of setting up SFSC groups which will provide an easy-to-use guideline for facilitators. Some tips and practical advice help the better understand the process of market organisation and give a wider picture about the role of rural facilitators.

INTRODUCTION

The long food supply chains raise several issues such as sustainability of European small-scale farming, environmental damages due to long distribution channels, transparency, and loss of confidence in industrial food processing. That is why farmers, rural development experts, and in some cases consumers, local communities are looking for new, innovative ways to relocalize food chains. The development of short food supply chains and the involvement of small-scale farmers in alternative food systems may be an effective response to the above-mentioned challenges ([Kneafsey et al. 2013](#), [Ilbery et al., 2004](#), [Benedek et al., 2018](#)).

DEFINITIONS OF SHORT FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS AND THEIR MAIN TYPES

The globalization of retail, and thus of food retail, was a long and organically integrated process that began in developed Western countries as early as the 1960s. Due to globalization, the small-scale producers had to face challenges to be able to join the modern supply chains thus they lost a great part of their market. This process was reflected in Central European countries at the beginning of the 1990s. The small farmers in this region still suffer from the volatility of markets and the vulnerability of long supply chains. Nowadays these traditional channels are living their renaissance - more and more people get to know the benefits of that way of consumption - but it is complicated to be able to operate a short supply chain and the importance of facilitators is getting more recognized.

Reflecting on the actual situation, it should be also mentioned that the SARS-COV-2 global pandemic had a predestined influence on food chains and an emerging focus was given to local food systems. In 2020 we were witnessing the improvement of local community-based food supply thanks to the valorisation of local goods. As farmers must continue the production the role of facilitators is important to make available the local foods for consumers.

DEFINITION

Hereinafter we will discuss the most relevant definitions which are related to short food supply chains. These are the local food system, the alternative food chains, short food supply chains, and direct sales. In this subchapter, the most frequent categorizations of SFSCs will be presented to identify the differences between direct and independent sales and collaborative SFSCs.

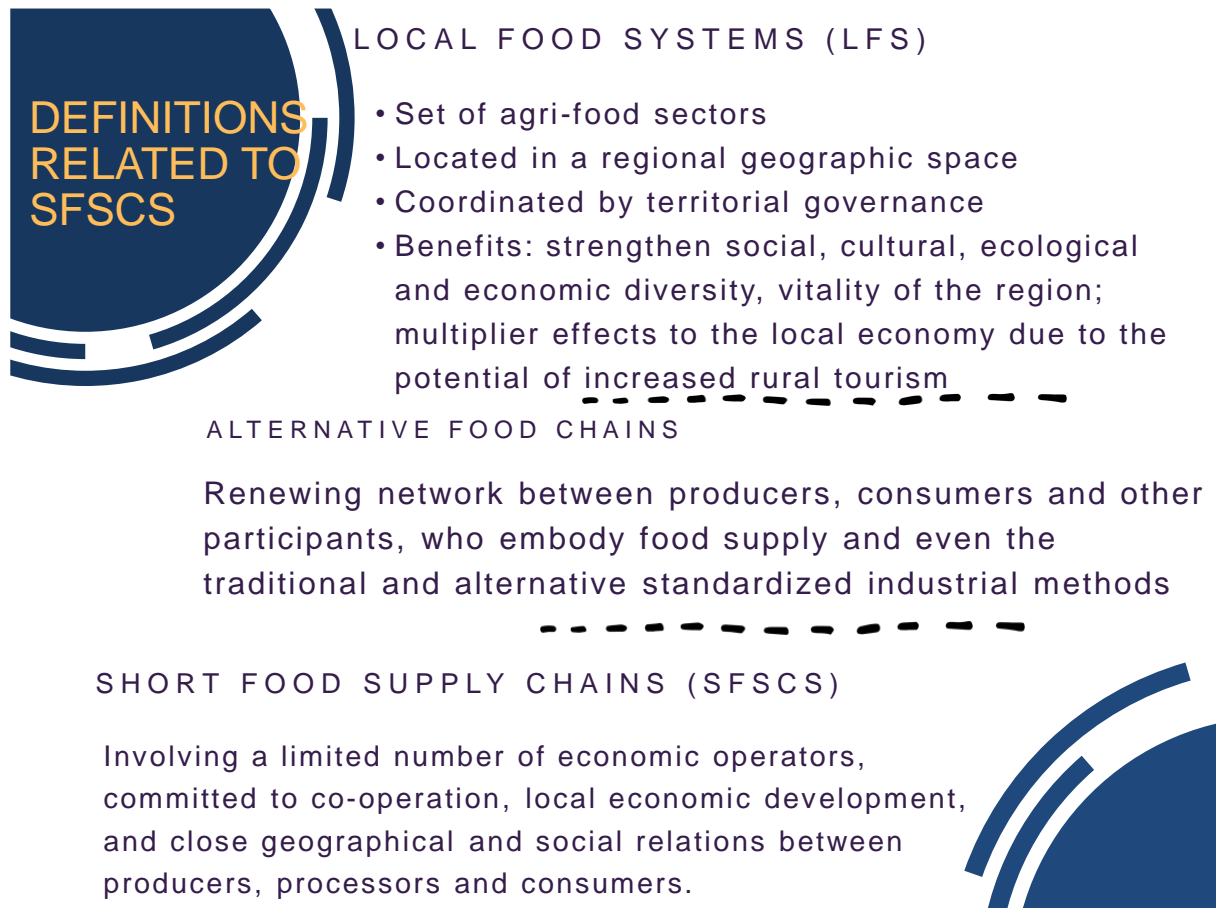


Figure 1 Summary of relevant definitions related to short food supply chains. Source: Rastion (2015), Murdoch et al. (2000), and Kneafsey et al. (2015), own composition.



Figure 2 Definitions of direct sale and short food supply chains without (1) and with (2) one intermediate Understanding the different definitions. Source: own composition.

LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

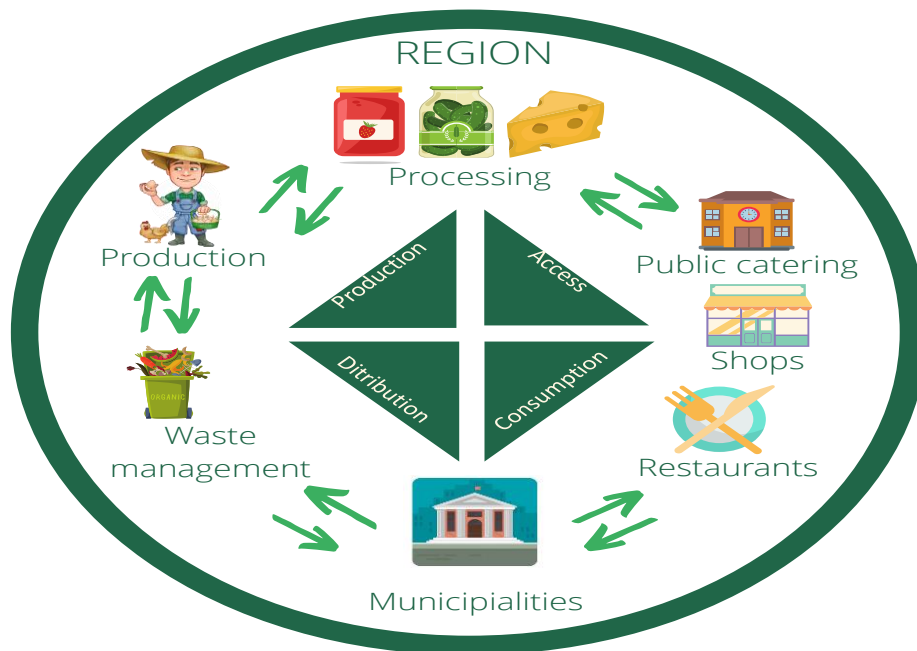


Figure 3 Systemic approach of the local food system. Source: own composition.

The definition of a short food supply chain (henceforward SFSC) explains the relation system between the farmers and consumers in a narrower sense, however, severe differences can be shown among the member states. To sum up the aim of short food chains:

- Decreasing the distance – both physically and personally – between the small-scale farmers and consumers
- Stabilizing the income of agricultural producers
- Supplying the consumer with healthy and locally made food
- Decreasing environmental pollution
- Creating a food supply policy based on real funds
- Fighting against the further decreasing of agricultural lands.

Besides, it can be an advantage for the local economy, that the number of jobs in the area can even increase due to the consumer demand of labour-intensive cultures.

It is hard to find the perfect definition but the main characteristics are the same from every perspective. The mainly highlighted issue is the proximity (economic, social, environmental, spatial) in most of the used terms in literacy.

According to the regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (*Regulation (EU) No. 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005*), a 'short supply chain' means a supply chain involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to co-operation, local economic development, and close geographical and social relations between producers, processors, and consumers. It is important to note that this regulation recognizes the importance of social relationships between all people involved in the food chain and this point is also very important for understanding how collaborative SFSCs operate. A Commission delegated regulation stipulates that support for the establishment and development of

short supply chains shall cover only supply chains involving no more than one intermediary between farmer and consumer (**Article 11**) (Kneafsey et al., 2015). This definition must have been implemented in every country in case of support of short food supply chains under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. Although it must be emphasised that more authorities use it as a generally accepted definition.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SELL IN SHORT FOOD CHAINS

From farmers' markets to box systems or community-supported agriculture, there is a wide variety of short food supply chains and local food systems. The typology can be as wide range as the definition itself. Two main categorizations are used in practice: the first sees the chains if there are 0 or one or a few intermediaries between producers and consumers, the second one observes the SFSCs from the point of view of sales categories.

A. Number of intermediaries

From this approach, we can distinguish direct sales and short chains when the consumer and the producer contact directly and the second type is when one (or as few as possible) intermediate actors are between them. From the aspect of this categorization, it is very important if the producer makes sales individually or in the group because the diverse activities need different competencies and factors, which influence investment and motivation (**Table 1**). In the case of the individual sale, we can still speak on short food supply chains if farmers work with other farmers or stakeholders to cooperate to produce, process, transport, or sell together. However, these definitions are not covered by regulatory frameworks. The principal is always the place where the added value is created and how farmers and consumers can be in a win-win situation.

Direct sale	Methods of individual sale methods	Sale at farms (farmer shop) Sale on the local market Roadside sale Mobil shop (van) Home delivery service Sale to a permanent group of regular customers Internet Pick your own Installed food machines
	Collective sale	Shop (common) operated by cooperates or non-profit association Common association production, processing and/or marketing and /or common sale Consumer supported agriculture (CSA) Cooperatives' shops
Short-term sale methods	Sale to retailers in the region	Home delivery system via an intermediary Food retailers Regional business chain Farmers' shops Bio department store Retailers' sale of healthy food Shops selling meal/food specialities Discounts Cooperatives' shops
	Sale to kitchens in the region	Restaurants School canteen Workplace canteen

Table 1: Categorization of the alternative food supply system. Source: Restructured by Altafoods report (2012).

B. Logistical aspects

The classification by logistical aspect indicates which participants shall travel to realise the sale. It is important for determining the marketing and logistical development needs. Besides, according to the lightened SFSC regulations applying for small-scale producers, the different marketing forms can be used in different geographical distances by small-scale producers. Door-to-Door selling and temporary relocations, for example, among the most restricted forms while marketplace sales and delivery are the least limited ways. It means that the nationally implemented food hygiene regulations¹ (*the General Hygiene Requirements for all Food Business Operators Regulation (EC) 852/2004*) do not permit transport of local food more than 40-50 kilometres in some cases. From this point of view, the distance and the logistics are important, thus who will move in the chains, the consumers, or producers.

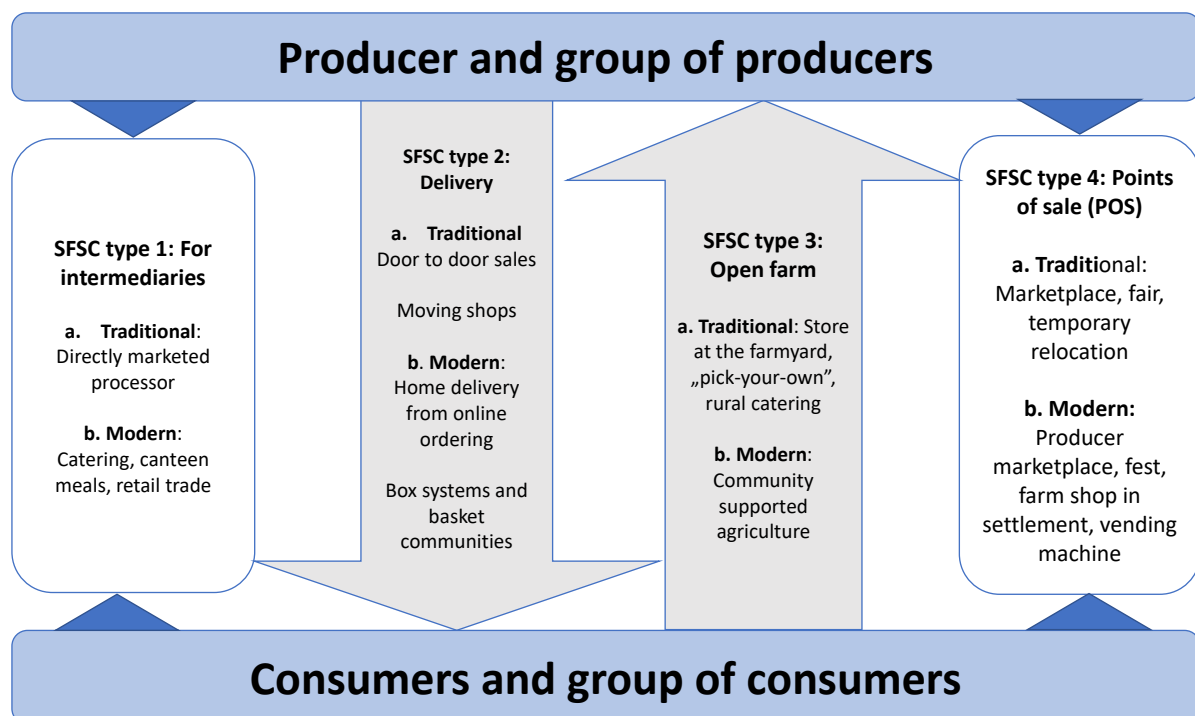


Figure 4 Marketing types of SFSC and the framework of SFSC. Source: Hungarian RDP 2014-2020 Juhász (2014.) based on Nihous (2008), Kneafsey et al. (2013) and Juhász et al., (2012).

The determination of products typically marketed in short supply chains is tightly connected to the definition of SFSC. We distinguish three types of SFSC products that determine the applicable short chains for example niche markets can be sold on touristic or city markets (Juhász, 2014).

Self-sufficiency SFSC product: unprocessed products originated primarily from social enterprises and self-sufficient farms. These products are utilised mainly in the institutional catering of local governments aiming to reach self-sufficiency.

Economy development SFSC product: reliable farm products that represent part of the usual food consumption of households:

¹ This regulation was interpreted according to the national or local interests and endowments so please check your country's regulatory framework before starting SFSC.

- unprocessed product: basic product of plant origin, fresh meat (greater demand, more frequent purchase, lower unit value, the effect of seasonality is strong)
- processed product (smaller demand, less frequent purchase, higher unit value, the impact of seasonality is weak)

Niche market SFSC product: unique products with high added value. These products can be marketed for special occasions as presents.

THE FACILITATOR

One of the key success factors of setting up and getting support for collaborative SFSCs is the presence of a coordinator who often must act as a mediator/facilitator/animator rather than a leader ([Kneafsey et al., 2015](#)). For a successful SFSC, it is necessary to coordinate the relations among the actors, and planning is also important to be able to supply the needs of the consumers. These specially formed persons shall be able to facilitate the access to a market of small farmers because they will be able to organise farmers' associations, solve conflicts between farmers and consumers, look for special supports, analyse the changes of markets, help marketing actions. This activity is one of the key drivers of social cohesion, social innovation because the reform of local farmers', consumers'/citizens' cooperation is essential for the development of short food supply chains. These qualified persons shall be able to generate social innovation activities in their territories. Locally qualified people can build new networks, diversify local cooperation, and create added value by bonding local farmers, consumers, and rural stakeholders. They all will become social entrepreneurs as they will contribute to rebuild and re-identify the local cooperation matrix for a better quality of life and more attractive rural areas.

In many countries, facilitators are responsible for setting up SFSC groups and organizing them. The main steps of the establishment are the following:

- Inventory making
- Food system analysis
- The preparatory phase of alignment
- Training and education
- Planning common activities

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF EUROPEAN SFSCS

As it was discussed in the previous chapters the high number of steps, and the increasing distance between production and consumption, are at the basis of the "revolution" brought by Short Food Supply-Chains initiatives, especially in Europe. The content is based on 18 case studies in the frame of the Smart chain project and former EU-funded programs.

SFSCs have gained increased political attention considering the beneficial outcomes they are likely to provide for the economy, the environment, and society ([EIP-AGRI, 2015](#); [Kneafsey, 2013](#); [Galli and Brunori, 2013](#)). However, the extent to which SFSCs contribute to sustainability is still an open question on many issues. Environmental benefits of SFSCs - regarding food miles, carbon footprint, using chemicals - are still under consideration by researchers.

The main characteristics of European

The role of SFSCs in food distribution differs greatly across the continent

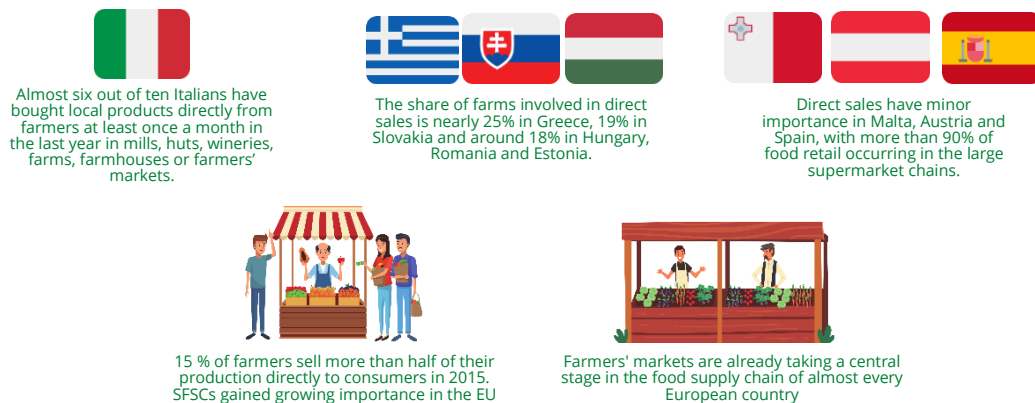


Figure 5 Main characteristics of European SFSCs. Source: Euractive (2018) and Augère-Granier (2016), own composition.

Economic benefits

Social benefits

of Short Food Supply Chains

contribute rural development and economic regeneration

(Du Puis and Goodman, 2005)



strengthen social capital in local communities through the creation of new networks engaging both farmers and consumers

(Mundler and Laughrea, 2016)



buying local preserve small farms and sustain rural communities

(Gale, 1997)



enhance mutual trust and respect between producers and consumers

(Kneafsey, 2013)



via multiplier effect it strengthens local demand, preserve local jobs, and enhance local economy

(Otto and Varner, 2005)



increase the food awareness and culinary education of consumers

(Torjusen et al., 2008)



increase tourism due to local branding and recreational shopping opportunities

(Pearson et al. 2011)



strengthen cultural/regional identity, food provenance, sense of trust and of being food secure

(Galli and Brunori, 2013)

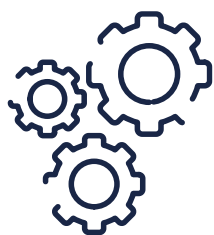


Figure 6 Economic and social benefits of SFSCs, Source: own composition.

PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS TO FACILITATE SFSC

This subchapter deals with the practical aspect of SFSC organization. As it was already mentioned the key persons of the successful SFSC collaborations are the coordinators who are defined in our handbook as facilitator or organiser. Firstly, we will give tips for the market organisation than among “Exercises” European best practices will give an exact presentation on adaptable solutions.

Main steps to set up short food supply chain groups



Multi-step process for the establishment of SFSC's groups



Figure 7 Multi-step process for the establishment of SFSC's groups. Source: own composition based on Kujáni, 2018.

Step 1: Define your and the community's objectives

Identify common and local motivation

First, we should answer some questions before starting the collective actions in our territory:

- Why do we want to initiate this project?
- What is the interest of our community?
- What are my objectives?

Within these questions, we try to find out the focus of our plans. Finding partners for our aims will be easier if we can determine the objectives which fit our and the communities' interests.

- Support small farmers (whose main activity is not agricultural production)
- Strengthen the multifunctional family farms
- Recognise local products
- Help the farmers and local actors to cooperate
- Increase consumers' interests and serve the demands of local consumers
- Include tourist destinations
- Boost local economic development
- Build an own company
- Increase urban farming

Identify the local stakeholders

The identification of local stakeholders is a key step to reach our potential partners. The wider the range of cooperative stakeholders, the stronger will be the local embeddedness of your project. Try to collect more and more enthusiastic stakeholders, volunteers, and certainly farmers, food producers, or craftsmen for your project.

Identify the local stakeholders

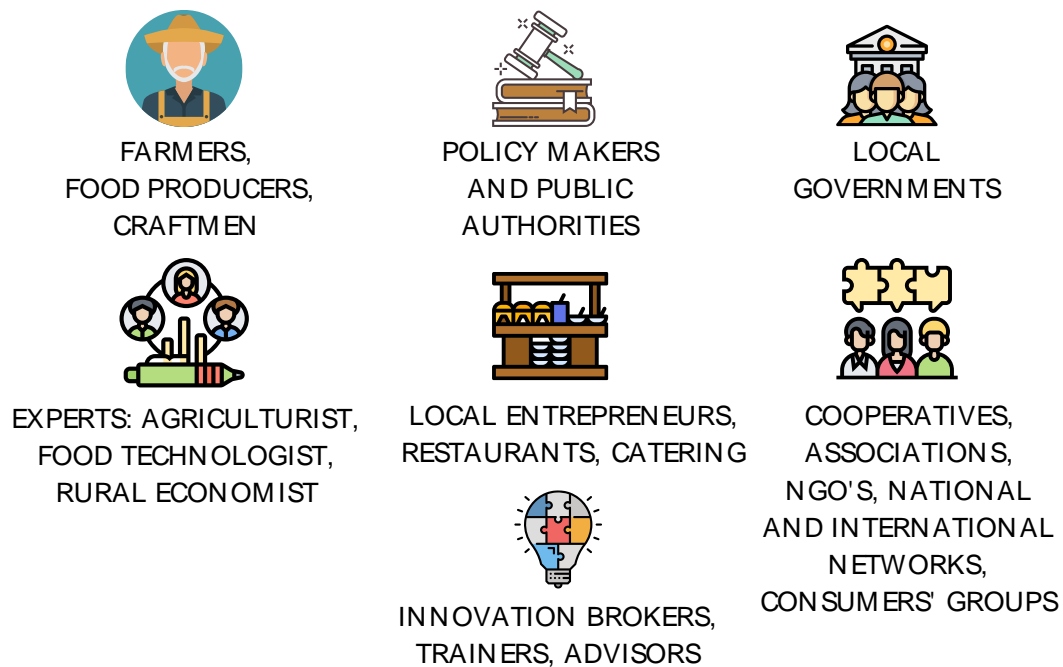


Figure 8 Types of local stakeholders. Source: own composition.

Step 2 Make a food system analysis

Analysis of local endowments

In this step we study the local circumstances to know with which tools can we achieve our main objectives. It can be a summarized feasibility study that can describe the possibilities for local actors besides, later you can use it for financial claims.

In this step the further questions shall be raised:

How is the agricultural production in our territory? Is there any traditional local food or protected food? What are the main produced vegetables and fruits, breeding animals?

- Who are the processors e.g.: slaughterhouses, bakery?
- Who are the farmers and how big is their production potential?
- Who are the actors of the chains (long, short)?
- Where people spend their money on food?
- What are the main barriers for farmers during their sales?
- Who are the potential consumers in our area?

If we have the opportunity to lead a consumer perception questionnaire, we could get more knowledge on their purchasing habits, expectations about food, and attitude regarding local food. In this step, the **making value proposition** (see the chapter “Business thinking for Rural Facilitators”) is a tool for more precise business planning.

Examining the already working short food supply chains helps to understand the barriers and insights of local food sales. We can also determine which channels can work locally. At the end of this step, we get to recognize the real problems of local stakeholders and define possible answers; to identify local stakeholders and partners. Furthermore, we can know and define our territory, and the location of our project. We can get the response if it is wide enough to provide our consumers with a wide assortment of fresh local products or should it be widened?

b) Selection of farmers and products (control system)

In this step, you should create a selection and a control system for your activity. In this phase, you will just identify the criteria for how you will select your partners. We suggest doing it together with farmers and other stakeholders. This criteria system will allow you to control farmers and maintain the pre-identified quality level. You can determine criteria as basic conditions to enter into the group. In many SFSC we can see that facilitators help farmers to use national and EU support to be eligible for SFSC conditions. It is also a good tool to strain the cheating farmers or retailers to build trust with consumers and partners.

How to select farmers

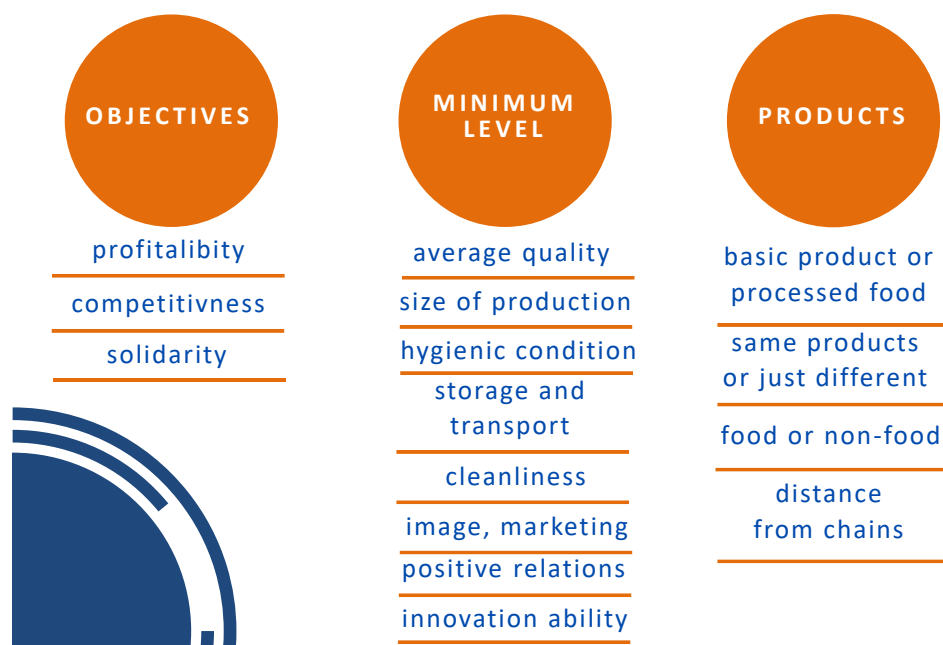


Figure 9 Criteria system. Source: own composition.

During the cooperation building up, you should clearly define your expectations from farmers and define the joining criteria which will ensure transparency for your group. It is important to make the decision

together on these benchmarks and write them into a common agreement/Charte/intern policy to avoid a further clash of view. These criteria must be controlled regularly and warned for misalignments.

Step 3: Preparatory phase of alignment

After the first decision that you want to cooperate and do an SFSC, you should choose between the most fitted legal forms which can serve your purchasing and collaboration purposes. Moreover, you must overview all the connected regulations step-by-step. As a facilitator, it is your task to warn farmers and sellers about regulations regarding food production, labels, vignettes, and trade. In many cases, the understanding of a complex regulatory framework means the biggest challenge for the groups and sometimes the barriers as well. The EU and states try to provide guidelines for small farming regulations and catering which can help at the starting point.

Regulatory framework

- Appropriate legal form
- Tax system: VAT categories
- Trade law: what kind of short chains do exist?
- Food safety regulations
- Labour Law
- The special direct sale or SFSC regulations
- Labels
- Vignette
- Promotion

Diversification

- Formal and informal organisation forms
- What kind of legal forms exist?
- What is the objective of the cooperation?
- Resources sharing, increasing negotiation power, cost-sharing
- What kind of activities do they want to share?
- Production, processing, packaging, promotion, storage, distribution, selling, advertisement.
- Who are the consumers?
- What kinds of relationships are between the actors?
- Food or non-food

Step 4: Recruit and mobilise farmers

To get in contact with your group you must take your time and visit all the farmers in person. You can create a group of farmers and other stakeholders who can organise the visits where you can make sure of the fulfilment of criteria and mainly the cleanliness.

If you want to involve the farmers you can organise tasting events, workshops where they can present themselves and their products for consumers, chefs, restaurants, and so on.

We recommend you to create a strong community from your farmers, to discuss and to listen to them. Every opinion counts. You must take care of your farmers' opinion regarding the common work and be a good leader not only a boss.²

Some tips about creating a team from your farmers:

- organize study trips to visit good practices (expend time on social activities)
- organize social events, workshops, training regarding the development of your activities
- celebrate birthdays, anniversaries of your group

Step 5: Manage your group

If you already have a strong community of farmers, don't let it collapse. Don't forget, it is hard work to maintain this status quo, but it's worth it!

Everyday activities for an excellent facilitator:

- Acting as the main contact person of „market“
- Overseeing day-to-day market operations
- Collecting user fees
- Obtaining proper permits and insurance
- Enforcing rules and regulations
- Recruiting farmers and local volunteers from enthusiastic consumers
- Controlling farmers and product mix
- Excluding cheat
- Handling complaints and disputes
- Working with markets'/SFSCs' board
- Establishing strong community contacts

ATTRACTIVE LOCAL MARKET ORGANIZATION

As it could be seen in previous chapters, a short food supply chain has various forms, however, they all have one purpose, bringing closer locally made products to local citizens. Farmers' market is one of the most important forms of direct selling. But setting up and operating such a popular way of SFSCs seems not so easy. There are more questions to be considered when starting a new farmers' market. This part of the chapter intends to give some practical advice for SFSCs' organizers setting up a successful farmers' market.

Location and opening hours

Choosing the right place for the market means a key element to our success. The place of the market must be reached easily by public transport and by car. You need an appropriate parking place if it is possible without any parking fee. Close parking places for vendors are required. The number of customers can be increased by finding a place close to other shops.

Some questions for consideration

- Is it on grass or stable ground? How can you protect your ground in extreme weather conditions?

² The leadership skills are presented in chapter 9.

- Is it possible to use the location for the long term? Market entering is a long process, so if you do not have permission to use the place for several years, you should look for other options.
- Is it a covered place or not? If not, can farmers' tents be fixed easily? Can the market be organized in bad weather conditions? Do the farmers have any tents or do you need to install some of them?
- How many vendors would you like to invite to your market? Do you have enough places for them?

Before choosing a location for your market, please check the regulation of your country regarding hygienic requirements!

Before defining opening hours, you must examine other markets in your surroundings

- Do not organize your market on the same days as your rivals do.
- Determine your consumer's target groups and set your opening hours to their expectations.
- If you have chosen the appropriate day or days and hours, do not modify it often! Customers cannot tolerate it.
- Extraordinary market days must be announced long before it and promoted parallel on more marketing channels.

Before promoting and opening your market, be careful and get every license that your country's regulation requires!

Farmers and consumers

All farmers in farmers' markets are selling their products. Market organizers have to check if farmers are selling their own crops or not. Visiting the farms is the best tool for checking and it deepens the trust between farmers and organizers. You have to maximize the number of farmers and the distance from when they could come. Selling distance from farm to market is regulated usually by the government.

Consumers like markets that offer variety. You need to supply the core foodstuffs throughout the year. But consumers like specialities as well. So, pay attention to recruit your producers!

Examine your consumers' demand, prepare market research!

Rules

For successful operation, you need written documents that regulate rights and obligations. Some rules come from your state authorities, some rules come from your common decision with farmers. Common decision-making increases engagement. Rules must be accepted by all farmers.

Do not be afraid of expanding your list. The market is changing, you cannot forecast every situation.

As a market organizer, you must predict and mediate conflicts between farmers or even between consumers and farmers. Conflict management knowledge will be useful.

Some rules are valid also for customers, like smoking rules or wearing masks, etc.

CHECKLIST FOR RULES

	OPENING HOURS		HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASUREMENTS FOR FARMERS AND CUSTOMERS
	MAXIMIZED NUMBER OF FARMERS		USE OF MARKET'S EQUIPMENTS, CLEANING
	PLACES FOR EVERY FARMER		USE OF LOGO, MARKETING AND PROMOTION MATERIALS
	VALIDE LICENCE FOR FARMERS		QUALITY CONTROL, FARM VISITS, TYPES OF PRODUCTS
	FEES		PARKING AND CONNECTION WITH FARMERS' TRUCKS

Figure 10 Checklist for farmers' market organizers. Source: own composition.

Coordination and financial background

First, you need an effective team to coordinate the market. You can involve several organizations like the chamber of agriculture, NGOs, local public authority, church organizations, garden clubs, seniors, and enthusiastic volunteers. These stakeholders can help you not only in the organization but in the financial background.

You need a plan for annual business operation, listed the expenses and incomes. It should be in balance. If not, you must consider increasing the fee. But you should take care of your farmers' incomes on the market. Different sized farms can pay different fees. Or you can ask some organizations in your surroundings to support your market.

Promotion and special events

Be visible!

Use marketing channels according to your customer's target groups! Younger people can be reached by social media, seniors like fliers or radio podcasts better. Permanent signs, banners at the market's location are effective for every target group.

Holding a special event at your market can generate free promotion and win new customers. A market is a meeting place for the local community. Do not go only shopping in the market, but meet old friends, discuss and try new recipes, or take part in cultural events.

Suggested types of events

- music
- food tasting

- cooking with local chefs from local ingredients
- events for holidays (Christmas, etc.)
- activities for kids, handicraft workshops

Generate special events for the whole family!

COVID tips

The year 2020 brings a new experience with the Covid-19 situation and the farmer's markets must react to the new set of intern regulations. That is why we collected some suggestions from practice to ease the organization:

Inform your farmers and customers about the relevant health situation! Check the current regulation of your county!

Recommendations

- ensure physical distancing
- require face covering from everyone
- ensure hand washing or disinfection
- clean and disinfect surfaces regularly
- ensure the opportunity to pay by card

CONCLUSION

The chapter presented that the short food supply chains do not mean new actions, it is the renewal of traditional purchase interactions, however, farmers must adapt to the new trends and consumers' demands. That is why the innovative way of sales could provide more possibilities for a more sustainable, less vulnerable, and economically viable small farming system. In many cases, farmers need external help for cooperation and marketing actions. This chapter helps to initiate these projects together with local stakeholders by understanding the main process is SFSC.

Short food supply chain and ecological transition

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will search for an answer if short food supply chains have a positive effect on greenhouse gases, pollution, and biodiversity. Let's see a carbon balance in the SFSC when the half-empty vans and consumers travel to a farm outlet to distribute or buy a few kilos of products. In this case, they contribute more to global warming than long-distance transport by truck or boat. This characteristic linked to short circuits serves as an argument for industrial lobbies to promote the industrial food chain. Short circuits are the spearhead of a re-localized economy but also of a new, more ecological, democratic, and social economy. The different elements that will compose it are not yet connected, unlike the globalized economy. There is therefore still a great deal of progress, organizationally and environmentally. In the topic of the last kilometres of products, for example, we will examine how cities are mobilizing to establish the "Low Emission Zones" to meet the environmental criteria. To achieve the European environmental objectives in 2030 rural facilitators can (and must) support the SFSC stakeholders to cut off their CO² emissions and work on agro-ecological transmission. We suggest in this chapter: to review the elements that can influence the environmental balance of short food supply chain projects, to illustrate good practices for promoting their local implementation.

AIMS OF CHAPTER/ABSTRACT

The rural facilitators will find information about the impacts of SFSC on ecological transition because future facilitators must know and use the most environmentally friendly practices to reduce CO₂ emissions, other air pollutant emissions, non-reusable packaging, and applications of harmful chemicals. Thanks to this chapter, they will have solutions to minimize these impacts in the projects they animate at the local level. This subject is based on the French legislative and theoretic movement called ecological transition, which will be detailed to raise the focus on a more sustainable agri-food system.

KEYWORDS

ecological transition, greening agriculture, agroecology, reuse packaging, local processing, pooling logistic, local economy

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The facilitators are aware of the "weak links" of short circuits from an agroecology point of view. They will gain knowledge of how to argue with their partners (intermediaries, farmers, consumers, local municipalities, etc.) to convince them. They will get to know how to make the decisions (or stimulate dynamics), which will make it possible to improve the environmental assessment of the project(s).

The factors that impact the environmental balance and what needs to be done to improve it

In this chapter, we will examine the possibilities for environmentally friendly techniques through the main stages of short food supply chains. The aim is to present to future facilitators where they shall intervene in the practices to reduce CO² emissions, other air pollutant emissions, non-reusable packaging, and applications of harmful chemicals. The short food supply chain provides an alternative way to enhance these activities as its consumers are often open-minded and sensitive to environmentally friendly products, moreover, most of them are willing to pay more for eating organic food or using more deliberate farming and transport technologies. This trend requires more knowledge

and assistance from facilitators from the environmental aspect to gain better insight into agroecology, biodiversity, food sovereignty, organic production which are often required by conscious consumers and farmers.

First, we shall define the French term of the ecological transmission which importance and future role in the European Common Agricultural Policy is highlighted by the European Parliament ([European parliament, 2016](#)) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) ([Savigny, G. 2019](#)). Savigny argued that the EESC would like to see the agroecology project rolled out across the EU, based on a structured action plan along with various forms of leverage at local, regional, and European levels. She mentioned some measures which would contribute to ecological transitional and development of short food supply chains such as accessible finance in CAP second pillar, the application of food legislation to small farmers in a flexible way for small-scale production, setting up or strengthening appropriate education and advice services for direct sales and agroecology, encouraging exchange networks between farmers; gearing research to agroecology and producers' needs in short chains, an adaptation of competition rules to make it easier to supply community catering through short, local chains.

These points strengthen the role of this chapter and the environmental approach which shall be considered and gained by those actors of short food supply chains who would help farmers to produce, process, and sell.

In the last decade, the French governments started strengthening measures to make agriculture more ecological. Since the “Ecophyto 2018” ([European Commission, 2018b](#)) plan adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2008, and up until the new agricultural framework law (the Loi d’avenir of 13 October 2014) that makes explicit reference to agroecology, institutional measures have been strengthened to encourage farmers to adopt more sustainable practices. In the framework of these legislations’ producers are urged to implement alternative production methods to reduce synthetic input use and to combine economic, environmental, and social performance ([Magrini et al., 2019](#)).

Magrini et al. (2019) described this political, environmental, social, and at least economic process in their studies which is cited below to have a better understanding:

“This agricultural transformation also calls food into question ([Francis et al. 2003](#); [Barbier and Elzen 2012](#); [Hinrichs 2014](#); [Gliessman 2015](#)). The FAO (2012) defines the sustainability of our food as being closely related to that of our agriculture, according to the following five criteria: (i) protects ecosystem biodiversity; (ii) is accessible and culturally acceptable; (iii) is economically fair and affordable; (iv) is safe, nutritionally adequate, and healthy; and v) optimizes natural and human resource use. The sustainability of agriculture and food systems thus simultaneously involves technical changes and the values that govern them: it requires the implementation of “non-technological changes such as those in consumer behaviour, social norms, cultural values, and formal institutional frameworks” ([OECD 2010](#)). This is even more relevant, given that our “agricultural practices are not primarily determined by agronomic or ecological science, but by markets, regulations and agricultural support programs” ([Weiner 2017](#)).

This systemic transformation consisting of ecologizing our agriculture and food, which concerns multiple stakeholders (farmers, supply chains, or natural resource managers) and which is marked with a deliberate political will to change, is qualified as an agroecological transition ([Duru et al. 2015a](#)). Note that it is a transition and not a revolution, because it does not explicitly entail the need for other changes relative to the capitalist foundations of the societal model underpinning our agriculture and food (*cf.* [Hinrichs 2014](#) or [Brown et al. 2012](#)). It is a transition in the making within our capitalist regime, to move towards a more sustainable agricultural and food system.”

THE OTHER DEFINITION THAT WE MUST CLARIFY IS AGRO-ECOLOGY.

" The term agroecology was first used in the 1930s by Bensing, a Russian agronomist, initially about applying ecological methods to research on crops. Agro-ecology can broadly be defined as a coherent whole that makes it possible to devise agricultural production systems that harness functionalities provided by ecosystems, reduce pressure on the environment, and protect natural resources. In scientific terms, agroecology can be defined as a discipline at the crossroads between agronomy, ecology, and social sciences, with a preference for systemic approaches. Lastly, when they occur, agroecological movements tend to do so on the fringes of the predominant trend towards modernizing agriculture and promote rural development, food sovereignty, and environmentally friendly farming" (Schaller, 2013).

In the following subsections, we will give an overview of the main stages and practices of ecological transition based on the steps of the supply chains: production, processing, packaging, logistics, consumers, governance.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES: THE PRIORITY

AGRICULTURAL production contributes more than 50% to the overall CO² emission balance sheet, well before transport, packaging, processing (Schaller, 2013). The challenge for a facilitator is therefore both to work with farmers who have the best agroecological practices and to encourage the change of practices among others. Here are some elements on which it can rely:

A. Inputs

The use of external inputs instead of local resources generates the outsourcing of bodies of knowledge. This knowledge does not depend anymore on local indigenous communities: it comes from outside, being received following a top-down approach from the hands of inputs suppliers and external experts (LRD, 2007). Farmers tend to be reduced into no-choice passive recipients of technology (Medina, 2009). It also reflects a radical shift of relations with nature compared to traditional peasant agriculture.

Mineral fertilizers (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus), widely used in conventional agriculture, come from fossil energy. Their use is often correlated with practices that favour monoculture. That is why these new forms of solidarity will involve managing livestock effluents at the territorial level and replacing mineral fertilizers with organic ones.

The other often highlighted topic is the origin of **proteins**. European soybean imports have multiplied by 5 since the early 1970s. Soy plays a driving role in the deforestation of the Amazon and the tree savannahs, moreover, there are mainly genetically modified (GM) which means unpredictable risks for human and animal health. The European Union imports 17 million tons of vegetable crude protein each year (soybeans, pulses, sunflower, etc.), including 13 million tons of soybeans, making it the second-largest importer in the world behind China. These huge numbers are governed by monopoly agrifood corporations growing links between food and fuel economies, a 'supermarket revolution', liberalized global trade in food, increasingly concentrated land ownership, a shrinking natural resource base, and growing opposition from food movements worldwide" (Holt-Giménez and Shattuck, 2011).

The seeds are selected for yield more than for resistance to disease or water stress. The "seed - phytosanitary products" couple is perfectly illustrated by multinational firms which develop both (ex. Syngenta). However local seed variety can promote resilience against climatic risks by enriching biodiversity, pest-resistance.

B. Energy autonomy (and source: fossil or renewable)

Anything that saves fossil energy will improve the farmer's environmental balance. Each territory in Europe has productions adapted to the seasons. Producing tomatoes in winter in the Netherlands, even if they are consumed nearby, will have an environmental impact linked to the heating of a greenhouse and the material investment that goes with it.

The solution for the facilitator relies on farmers engaged in agroecology and territories in the greening of agriculture.

C. By-product approach

Some agricultural production can have other uses than food, its name is the by-product. Such as straw can be used to build houses in addition to produce wheat, hemp to make tissue in addition to produce oil, the leather of the cows to create bags in addition to produce meat or milk, sheep wool in addition to meat³. This “by-product” approach allows to increase the impact of SFSC in ecological transition: less pressure on land, less impact on pollution compared to similar products from industry (biodegradable), less transportation (if the products are used mainly in the territory). Additionally, it brings additional revenue. However, the EU and national legislation framework often means a big barrier to use the by-products and second income and to make added value. As a facilitator, it is important to consult on the national regulations mainly in the case of animal by-products.

D. Agricultural practices

These are some good practices that can guide a facilitator during his exchanges with producers ([Osez agriculture, 2020](#)).

- A rotation that includes legumes to fix nitrogen in the soil
- A presence of animals (or the existence of cooperation between growers and breeders) to have manure and to enhance the co-products of harvest
- A use of peasant seeds for better resistance to diseases and pests
- Non-plowing (or minimum tillage) contributes to the improvement of natural soil fertility
- A presence of plant cutlery in winter to limit erosion
- A choice of cultivation techniques that require little or no irrigation to preserve the water resource
- A presence of hedgerows (or agroforestry practices) to promote biological balance
- Production choices adapted to the seasonality of the territory
- Energy-efficient techniques, such as solar drying in fodder barn; animal traction, mechanization
- Integrated pest management (IPM), which uses ecosystem resilience and diversity for pest, disease, and weed control, and seeks only to use pesticides when other options are ineffective
- Agroforestry, which incorporates multifunctional trees into agricultural systems, and collective management of nearby forest resources
- Aquaculture, which incorporates fish, shrimps, and other aquatic resources into farm systems, such as into irrigated rice fields and fishponds, and so leads to increases in protein production

³ *We don't include land dedicated to non-food production, which can lead to competition with the food needs of the territory*

- Water harvesting in dryland areas, which can mean formerly abandoned and degraded lands can be cultivated, and additional crops are grown on small patches of irrigated land owing to better rainwater retention.

Using agroecology techniques, a farmer will both improve the energy balance of his farm (and its autonomy), promote biodiversity, reduce, or eliminate the use of pesticides. But implementing and completing an agro-ecological approach involves going beyond the farm stage. The majority of environmental issues are played out at higher spatial scales: the maintenance of biodiversity at the level of habitats and landscapes, the quality of drinking water at the level of collection supply area, erosion at the level of a watershed, the sustainability of varietal resistance at the level of territories and production or collection basins, the reduction of GHG emissions to a global level, etc. These spatial scales are thus delimited by both physical factors (basin side) and in connection with human activities. It is a question of "designing Spatio-temporal organizations of agricultural activities and landscape structures, adapted to the characteristics of the environment so that farmers benefit from the services rendered by biodiversity, environments and reduce impacts on the environment" (Mzoughi, 2013). This approach to greening agriculture requires, for its implementation, the involvement of all the actors of a territory (Colin, 2018).

The facilitator must therefore take an interest in this territorial scale, either to cooperate with its actors or to motivate them to act.

PROCESSING LOCAL PRODUCTS: THE MISSING LINK

The effects of product processing on the environment balance remain weak if isolated from its context, compared for example to production methods. Life cycle analysis for bread from organic peasant wheat for example (according to the Recipe H 2016 method) indicates that, apart from the production of fine particles (linked to wood cooking), the impact is 5% on the whole cycle (Colin, 2018).

Imagining local production without the processing units nearby has consequences on the environmental, social but also the economic balance of the entire value chain and the farm in particular. For example, the income for a beef producer (who sells local) could vary from 1 to 4, depending on whether there is a nearby slaughterhouse (Chiffolleau 2020).

In Europe, due to the climate zones, most of the agricultural production is seasonal. It is, therefore, necessary to process raw materials during periods of high production, both to avoid importing the rest of the year and to allow prices of local products to be supported during periods of high production. This also contributes to improving the economic viability of local small producers.

Even if the energy efficiency of a small processing unit is partially worse than an industrial production reduced to a kilo of product, it is necessary to compare with the creation of local jobs, the reduction of the distance between his work and his home, the food autonomy of the bioregion or change the indicators: to measure the energy consumed no longer to the kilo of product but to the number of jobs created/maintained, euros generated (Loiseau et al. 2018).

Small local fruit and vegetable, meat, and milk processing units will allow the establishment of entrepreneurs engaged in the development of the local economy, even in rural regions they can attract other entrepreneurs for generating a virtuous economy. They rely on the facilitators who can support them through short supply chains, to encourage ecological, social, economic transition.

Butchers, bakers, cheese makers, cooks -these food professionals also can buy locally, on condition that they go beyond apparent competition (e.g., breeders may be tempted to set up a cutting and processing plant to control the entire upstream-downstream chain without needing the local butcher, this is the

case for the sale of meat in boxes). They can become mutually associated by the support of the facilitator and local craftsmen set up clever processes (or are inspired by traditional techniques), which contribute to improving the environmental balance:

- Brewers value the brewery breach to make aperitif cookies or for supplying herds, and recover the hot water linked to the manufacturing process for other uses.
- Natural leaven bread bakers do not use a growth chamber (energy saving and less investment), others recover heat from the wood oven to heat water or choose wood ovens with particulate filters and heat optimization.
- Distillers, producers of essential oils, heat the still with local wood.
- Craftsmen use lacto fermentation to store vegetables, a process that does not require cooking and allows for an interesting nutritional balance.
- Cooking in a wood oven with a particular filter (for bread or pizzas) if energy is renewable and local (as wood pellet which rejects fewer pollutants), allows to reduce CO² and fine particles.

PACKAGING: THE SYMBOL OF AN INDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEM

It is a generally accepted statement that reducing the transport distance between places of production and consumption reduces product packaging. In most SFSC raw products do not demand packaging for transport. In addition, in many cases, consumers use reusable packaging such as fabric bags, wooden crates, etc. which has a serious environmental relevance because it does not generate additional transport. This reuse saves money both to produce packaging and in terms of waste ([Ademe, 2017](#)).

Plastic packaging ([French Ministry of ecology, 2019](#)), if only greenhouse gases are counted, has a little weight in the overall climate balance compared to production methods and transport but it often goes hand in hand with industrial, de-localized, de-seasonally systems. Consequently, it contributes indirectly to higher greenhouse gases. Therefore, the facilitator must work on the whole chain to reduce the usage of plastic waste during working with local producers.

We also shall mention that glass packaging is appreciated by environmentalists. However, the study of ADAME ([Ma-bouteille, 2021](#)) carried out that 2,3 million tons of glasses are trashed per year which represents 49,6% of the total waste. The study also pointed out if we can reuse these glasses which are used for local beer, juices, syrups, wine, etc. we can spare 75% of energy, 33% of water, and 79% of CO² emissions per country per year. That is why the French Sommières region and the LEADER (local action group supported by the European Unions' Rural Development Programs) unified to start new projects to collect glasses from consumers and reuse them for local consumption. For example, due to this support, the "Locaverre" enterprise was established who collect glasses and clean them according to the regulations, then the glasses are returned to the farmers. The project is socially sensitive as these activities are operated by disabled people ([Helloasso, 2021](#)).

We can determine that facilitators have a crucial role in this chain to sensitize producers and consumers, to tie them to main actors, and to support them to use European or national funds.

LOGISTIC (AND DISTRIBUTION METHODS): SIGNIFICANT MARGINS FOR PROGRESS

If we only consider the CO² emissions per kilo of transported product, the results of short food chains' delivery systems are not good: approximately 10 times lower for a heavyweight of 32 tons and 100 times lower for a transoceanic freighter than for a van of fewer than 3.5 tons (Ademe, 2017). It means that on-road transport has a higher greenhouse gas impact than other types of distribution methods. Moreover, according to the Environment and Energy Management Agency, the delivery of the last kilometre represents 25% of GHG emissions and a third of those of CO². The last kilometre is also very expensive, thus between 20 and 50% of the total cost of the supply chain is devoted to it (Abdelhai, Malhéné, Gonzalez-Feliu, 2014).

These figures only consider CO₂ emissions per kilo of product, considering then that a local organic tomato from a peasant seed is the same product as a tomato from a hybrid variety, produced under greenhouse out of season and abroad. They compare, in fact, products that are not comparable. In addition, the environmental (and economic) assessment of public investments that allow trucks to circulate is not integrated. More broadly, the multi-functionality linked to the purchase in short food supply chains is not considered. You must walk in the open-air markets to realize how SFSC contributes to social relationships. It would then be necessary to study the overall behaviour of the buyer: is it not at the same time a hobby to pick up his products from the producer, just like a walk in the forest to the sea? If yes, the environmental impact of the purchase of short food chain products must at least be compared to the impact of a supermarket purchase plus the impact of displacement for leisure.

Nonetheless, SFSCs must make progress, especially on the last km in urban areas. The sector is young, a little or not organized at the logistical level. There are very significant margins for progress in this area (Raton et al.2020). The cities, particularly affected by urban pollution, and under the impetus of the European climate plan, create ZFEs (low emission zones) in which it will no longer be possible to circulate polluting vehicles. This encourages them to get involved in innovative projects. The pooling of transport, at least from the entrance to the cities, is a major issue, to provide individuals, purchasing groups, restaurants, shops, and other outlets, also taking into account that many vehicles come back empty.

Several large cities in Europe have "hubs" projects in their boxes (local logistics platform): Nantes with "Le Kiosque Paysan", Lyon with a "Metropolitan Interest Market", Madrid with the Madrid km 0 project. In Marseille, Fab'lim has just completed a study on needs and it also appears that the logistics Hub(s) associated with pooling is the most suitable solution to solve the problem of the last km (Duret,J., 2020).

Private actors are also developing coordination and pooling initiatives (collection with producers and routing to delivery points with different approaches) like blabla car (co-driving in whole France and Europe, La Charrette, Local Food Hub, etc.

Examples for initiatives to improve economically, organizationally, and environmentally the efficiency of short circuit transport in France, from the private or voluntary sector:

- **Mutualization between GRAP intermediaries (local regional food group): trucks never empty**

This organization brings together around fifty local and organic product grocery stores in the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes region.

Innovation: a cheese producer will deliver all orders for grocery stores in the GRAP network to the grocery store closest to home. The GRAP truck that delivers the grocery stores takes the package and dispatches it during its tour, with the grocery stores that have positioned themselves to buy this product. The truck is never empty.

- **Mutualization between producers**

Stéphanie Conrad produces dairy products in Normandy. She collects other products from the surrounding farms and makes the market in Paris, 150 km away - She buys the products from other producers and therefore takes commercial risk. Result: a single trip for a dozen producers.

Be aware of the insurance issue during the implementation. It can be varied in each partner country!

In these 2 cases, it is the relationships that the rural facilitator maintains with the other actors in the SFSC that make a success. These interpersonal relationships, these networks that we create on the territory constitute fertile ground for cooperation towards an "other economy".

Another example of a delivery system is the "Promoted" project. Here refrigerated containers are put on farms where farmers will deposit the products, which are then recovered by carriers. An interesting angle of this story is that the peasants of the Lyonnais Mountains did not join, because this system seemed to be too impersonal for them: short food chains aim at the contrary to re-personalize the economy, to re-enter it in interpersonal relationships to promote an economy more sustainable on all fronts.

To reduce transport, another way is to install the producer closer to the consumer. Decision-makers became aware, particularly during the health crisis of spring 2020, of the food dependence of their city. They engage in actions that will facilitate agricultural production in urban areas or near cities (via for example the provision of land). Conversely, by creating activity in rural areas, the consumer is in fact, if the territory is oriented towards this model of SFSC, near the places of production. The health crisis there too is moving the lines: the number of Parisians for example who want to leave Paris to work and live in the countryside increased sharply in 2020 ([lechemindesmures, 2019](#)). This naturally brings a new clientele closer to the peasants, namely citizens who are often already consumers of organic products.

The facilitators' mission is to develop his relational network closer to those who can help him in the search for the most ecological solutions (elected officials, bearers of mobility projects or/and local logistics centres, and so on). He/she must have in mind elements on the cost of logistics, as farmers often neglect to deal with transport and environmental issues however, the cost of delivery is often a cheap item.

THE CONSUMERS

A. "Third places"

In all CSA, thus consumer supported agriculture or purchasing groups a new definition the "third places" has appeared where citizen initiatives to supply quality local products are flourishing. The idea is coming from the co-working offices which developed for an intercultural meeting point for those persons who want to meet, eat, discuss, gardening and do something together. These places host a variety of activities: popular education, social accommodation, catering, sale in short food chains, agriculture and gardening, circular economy, citizen research, cultural events, and so on. Their characteristics are diversified as they can be free of paying, for citizens or professionals, linked to agriculture, to food, to gardening, to art, and education.

The motivation of the organizers is to seek suppliers of local products from environmentally friendly agriculture, which help to improve the general culture/attitude of local consumers for purchasing local, healthy products. For example, they accept (and appreciate) irregular fruits (which are not marketable on the market, which contributes to reducing pesticides in the end, because to produce a fruit or a vegetable with "zero defects", it is necessary to treat upstream.

These “third places” are common city gardens, kitchens, farmers’ markets, public places, farms where people learn about agriculture, buy local products, gain knowledge on agroecology practices and farmers, sensitize the young generation, and help to develop the small villages.

B. Green public catering

In all of Europe, the reorganization of public catering is an important topic. In France, the Egalim law imposes 50% of durable products, including 20% organic, in public catering by 2022. Buying local in public catering makes it possible to enhance the good sustainable practices already implemented within local agriculture and to encourage - using a contract, for example - the ecological transition with farms who are not engaged in such practices yet. Including in private collective or commercial catering, a cook or a motivated cooking assistant can stimulate the process of purchasing local products and encourage a virtuous cycle in the territory. Parents of students can encourage the local decision-makers to help the transition for organic and local products in public catering.

The facilitator can use this energy to grow her projects, or even depending on her positioning, stimulate approaches of this type.

GOVERNANCE

None of the 5 stages of the supply chains (production, processing, logistic, packaging, consumer) mentioned above can be implemented effectively by a single facilitator. Cooperation between actors associated with regulation is necessary so that undesirable effects do not occur. This governance is the responsibility of the elected officials and all those who animate the territory. SFSC facilitators have a crucial role to strengthen the ecological transition step-by-step regarding the needs of local stakeholders.

Good governance preserves the territorial identity of a product, avoids overexploitation of local resources, facilitates access to external resources, and distributes costs and benefits among involved stakeholders" (Brunori, G. et al, 2016).

The facilitator should possess the systemic approach to be able to overview all the stages of local supply chains. They can assure the ecological transition if they have a good knowledge of their working territory, insights into personal, political, environmental, economic challenges, a wide picture about involved stakeholders. It must be emphasized that they are not responsible to know everything, but they must have the ability to establish links between people to ensure the undertaken actions.

CONCLUSION

Affirming that short food supply chains and ecological transition go hand in hand is not self-evident. When transport, packaging, and local processing are handled one by one, SFSC cannot demonstrate today their environmental efficiency.

The fact that SFSCs are obtained from peasants engaged in agro-ecological practices (we must make sure) but also contribute to the greening of agriculture is however a determining factor.

To measure the interest of short food supply chains in terms of ecological transition, it is necessary to have a global approach. The consumer, for example, who goes to get his basket of organic vegetables by bike, does much more than buy local vegetables. He ensures the last kilometre without emission of greenhouse gases, inquiries about the quality of the products and shares his knowledge with his children, cooks fresh products without adding an additive, recycles his plant waste. The self-builder who makes his house out of wood and local straw does much more than his accommodation. It values the agricultural by-products (straw), greatly reduces waste (biodegradable materials), does not generate

waste, often creates its activity on-site (in telework for example), and then supports the peasant by buying his products.

Large-scale prospective studies have not yet been carried out to show what would be the effects, in terms of ecological transition, of a predominantly re-localized and re-personalized economy.

The multinational distribution companies have for several years felt the wind turn and position themselves on a supply of short chains, on contractualization models which follow the same rules as for long supply chains.

We should expect that short food chains with methods of long supply chain and short circuits of a "re-localized and re-personalized economy" will coexist. No doubt, because demand is growing and it is unlikely that the models set up by the historic players (CSA, producer stores, etc.) will have the capacity to meet them in record time. Short circuits carrying an "other economy" can on the other hand, in the medium term and through a logic of swarming and networking, rebalance the power relations, within sectors as well as territories: the facilitators have a key role to play.

Business thinking for Rural Facilitators

AIMS OF CHAPTER/ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the rural facilitators can find the theoretical background for important questions like how to fund a business idea, how to form this idea into a functional business, and how to plan this business in detail. The main topics of the chapter are the introduction of the main business skills, strategic thinking, and planning, Ikigai concept in business, Business model Canvas, and Business Plan.

KEYWORDS

business, strategy, strategic thinking, strategy analysis, ikigai concept business model canvas, business plan.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Business-oriented thinking is an important part of every successful project and one of the main leadership skills. It is also becoming a key factor for the survival of small-scale farming in this turbulent, increasingly complex global economy. Farmers and rural facilitators have to see their activities as a business and to earn profit. Of course, a passion for what they do is a crucial part of why they are doing it. Entrepreneurs in the rural area operate in a complex and dynamic environment and they need to see the wider circumstances – an external environment without their direct influence, microenvironment (farmers, suppliers, traders, transporters, customers, etc.).

The main learning objectives of this chapter are:

- To get to know an overview of the main business skills,
- To explore the ideas of strategic thinking and planning,
- To be introduced to the Ikigai concept in business,
- To learn how to use Business model canvas,
- To explore the basics of the business plan.

Introduction of the main business skills

Business planning (including strategic thinking, ability to plan, identifying resources, etc.) was pointed out as one of the most important knowledge and competencies in desk research including all project countries. To include a chapter about business knowledge was also confirmed by the results of the competence survey (please see more of the Competence Catalog). Using the strategic management techniques can be a source of extra knowledge for farmers through the facilitators and it can boost their effectiveness and chance of being successful on the market. Business-oriented thinking is necessary for each entrepreneur that produces for the market no matter what field of economy it is. The main characteristic of a successful entrepreneur is creativity, good leadership, ability to seek new opportunities and innovate and expand his business. This part will introduce the most important business skills and point out the connection between these skills and a successful business.

For a rural facilitator, the new “way of life” needs to be clearly defined. It contains many pros and cons that need to be taken into consideration before the business is established.

“I'M MY OWN BOSS”

To be an entrepreneur means, on one hand, to be independent and free but on the other hand, also facing risks alone, work under pressure, and responsibility for the outcomes – good or bad. A rural

facilitator as an independent entrepreneur has the freedom in making decisions about the business and also control over what has to be done, when and in what order. He/she also often work alone in solitude and needs to cover a wide range of managerial and “day to day” tasks. The uncertainty is a part of his/her life, the profit generation is completely in his/her own hands and he/she risks personal assets and security. The level of responsibility and risk failure is much higher than the employee’s status. He/she also often works long and irregular hours to meet demands and fulfil all tasks, sometimes it is very difficult to distinguish between personal and business life. Social status is linked to the success of the business.

All these challenging characteristics of their business demand several important business skills. A successful entrepreneur needs to be initiative, ambitious, focused on problem-solving, creative in thinking, able to take risks, flexible and adaptable, have interpersonal abilities, networking and readiness to learn.



Figure 11 Main business skills of a rural facilitator. Source: own creation based on the project research results and Jones and Rowley, 2011.

Rural facilitators need to understand marketing, risk management, financial management, and the labour market. To be successful and able to establish a good business connection he/she needs to

respect core values such as trustworthiness, truthfulness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and social responsibility.

Some of the above-mentioned skills and characteristics might be trained, but some of them need to be a vital part of a given person. The set of characteristics often determines the final business.

STRATEGIC THINKING AND PLANNING

RURAL ENTREPRENEURS do not exist and work alone. They operate in a complex and dynamic environment including farmers, suppliers, transporters, intermediates, customers but also the external environment – political, economic, social, and technological sphere. This chapter will help you with understanding your position in this complex system and the ability to find an opportunity on the market. It includes a basic analysis of the external and internal environment and demonstrates how to generate possible strategies for your business.

A strategy is an overall long-term orientation for the business. At the very beginning, it sets out the goals that rural facilitators want to achieve in his/her business and offers the ways how to achieve these goals. Strategic management is the process of planning the strategy, implementing it, monitoring the outcomes, and adjusting the strategy over time as conditions change.

Above that, strategic management is also a way of thinking. Strategic rural facilitators are forward-thinking, proactive, and focused on where they are going and how they intend to get there in the long term. It is very important not to surrender to the daily pressure of the operative tasks and also plan in the long-term, with a wider vision and don't be afraid to spend time searching for innovation and news on the market.

Rural facilitators are a part of the complex environment and they are facing the condition of the market every day. Figure 14 shows the levels of the environment and it offers a selection of the strategic analysis which can be used to evaluate the market conditions. How to use these analyses will be elaborated on in the training materials.

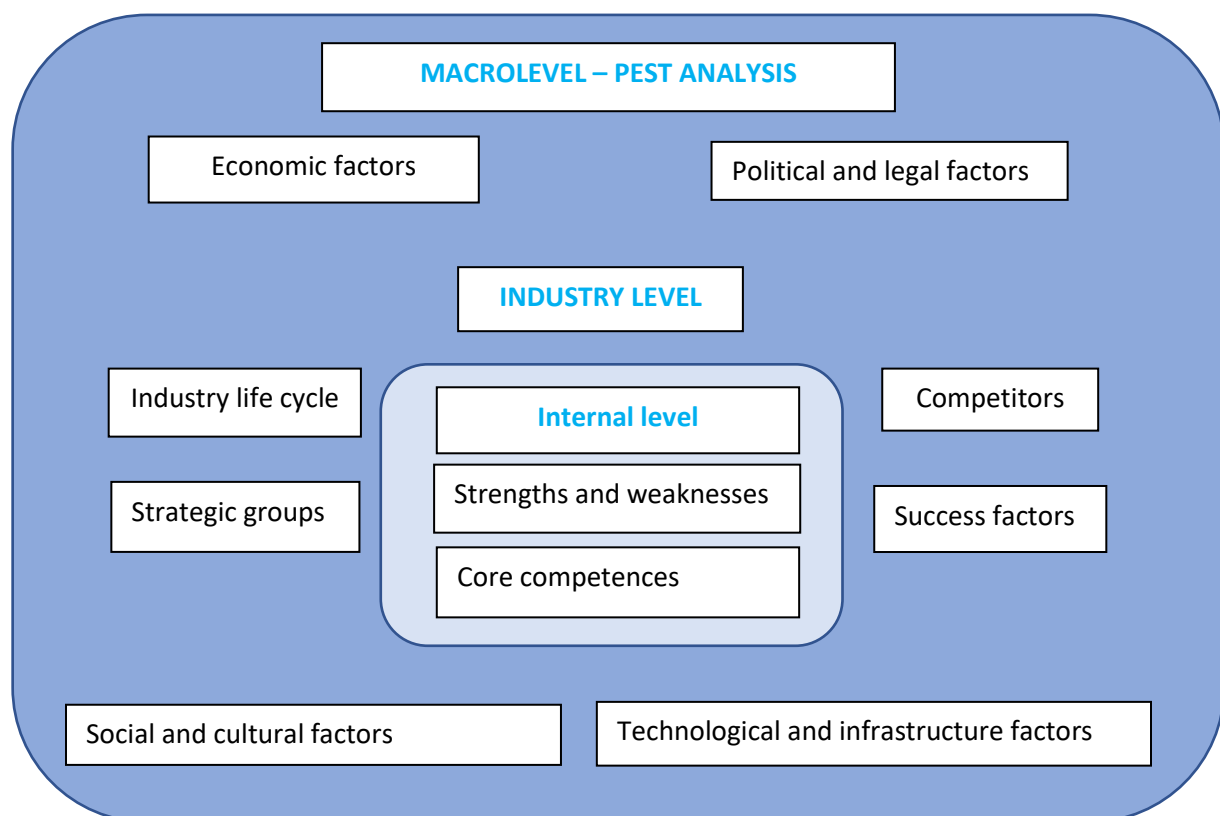


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 12 Environment of rural facilitator. Source: Hill, et.al., 2020.

The decisions made by the rural facilitator should be based on the results of these analyses. He/she needs to seize every opportunity and make the best of it, try to make the whole system work in their favour, and stay focused on their purpose. This thinking brings much more profit and targeted goals than “learning by doing”. Moreover, with the knowledge of these analyses, the facilitator can help farmers to establish a new farmer’s shop that would be targeted for the right customers, help the farmers also use strategic thinking in the decisions where to orient their interest in their production. The ability to overview the whole ecosystem is an important skill for the facilitator and can help to prevent many wrong decisions.

THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Strategic management consists of strategic planning, strategic implementation, and strategic control. Strategic management deals with broad issues and opportunities affecting the rural facilitator business. It is not the same as day-to-day management of the business that deals with the immediate operational issues of the business.

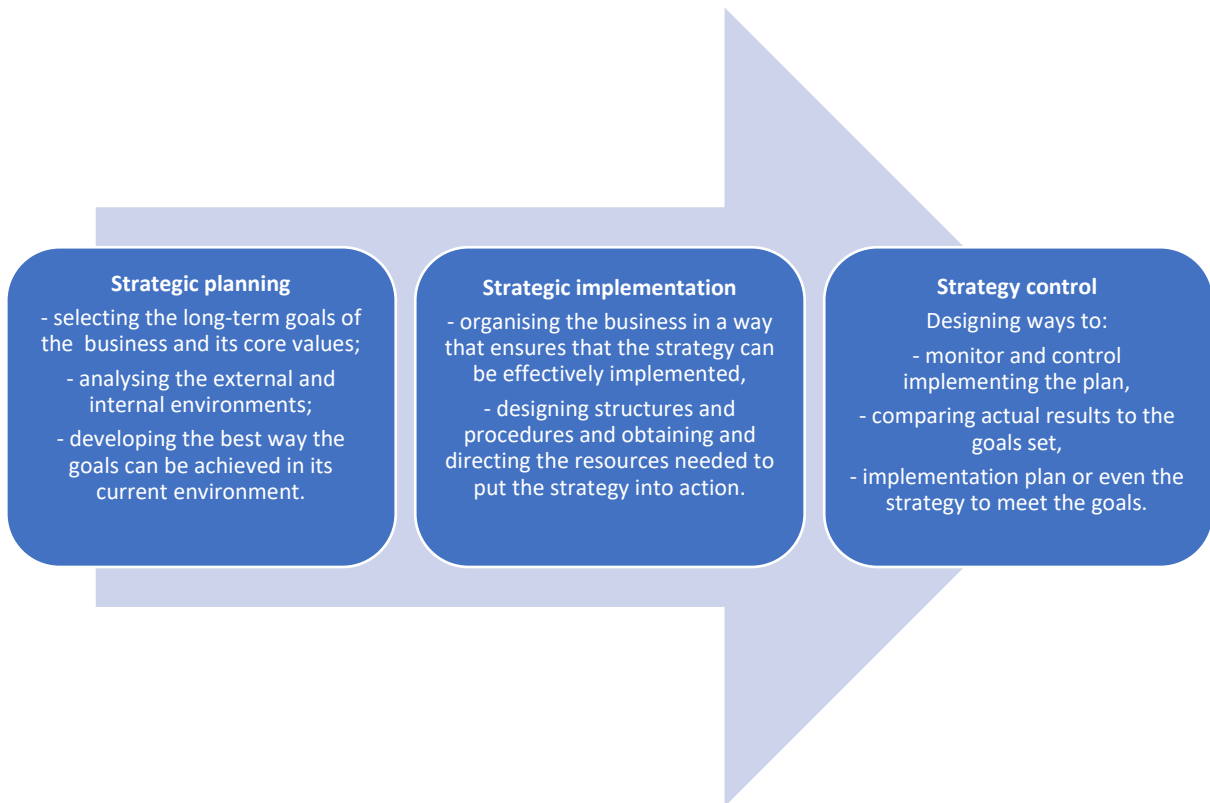


Figure 13 Strategic management process. Source: Hill and Jones, 2020.

Many risks in the market can be avoided by strategic thinking. Market-related risks can relate to the small range of products and the small-scale business focus. To be focused on a local market might be risky due to oversupplied resulting in low prices and low profitability. Other risks can be related to the low bargaining power of the facilitator based on the individual level of business operation, it might be hard for them to negotiate with the producers – farmers and with the final customers. Due to the dependence on the producers, the rural facilitators are also vulnerable to economic shocks such as unexpected low yields or crop failure, the relocation of the markets, the additional market

requirements, or pandemic situation. Such changes can significantly influence profits. The strategy to avoid the impact of these risks can be to diversify, lower costs, expand the size of the business, add value to their business, specialize or integrate. For more information about risk management please see the Leadership Skills.

IKIGAI CONCEPT IN RURAL BUSINESS

As proved by scientific research, especially by the small farmers and rural entrepreneurs, the decision about the area of business is often given by the personal interest of a given farmer. Of course, the best results are reached by the connection between the facilitators' interest and the opportunity on the market. Ikigai is a Japanese tool, which can be successfully adapted for exactly this reason. Rural facilitators can use this tool to be able to find the intersection between what they like, what are they good at, what is needed on the market, and what can be profitable. Using Ikigai is very easy and intuitive. It is broken down into 4 core pillars; what we enjoy doing, the impact we wish to make, is it profitable, and are we focused on excellence? From the business context, these can be focused on: professionalism, impact, business growth, and people development.

An entrepreneur's Ikigai is in the center of all of these and should form the structure of the business focus and overall strategy.



Figure 14 Ikigai concept in business. Source: Mogi, K., 2018.

These four factors of Ikigai can be applied to the business and help balance and align the focus of entrepreneurship. For each person, it is important to find answers to all these factors.

- What you're passionate about – for an individual – what do you love to do, for a company – what work motivates the organization's culture.
- What you're good at – sometimes to love doing something is not enough for a successful business, but the person needs to be also good at it.
- What the world needs – to be focused on what the world and the target market need is a crucial factor of success.
- What you can get paid for – if the facilitator can find something he or she loves, is good at it and people need it, but he/she is not able to charge enough money to cover the costs plus make a reasonable profit, the business is unsuccessful.

How to use the Ikigai concept practically is described more in the training materials that are accompanying this handbook. For the facilitators, it can be a very useful tool to clarify the goals of their business and focus directly on their “ikigai” – the perfect match of the personal skills, interests, and needs of the market. Moreover, facilitators need to be truly convinced about their mission and the ikigai helps to ensure their “good feelings” into the real strategic goals.

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

The next step after a business idea formulation is to create a viable business model, which can succeed on the market. A practical and useful tool was created by Alexander Osterwalder and is called Business Model Canvas. It can be used for developing a new business, documenting an existing one, or its innovation. It is a simple visual strategic management template with elements describing a business's product's value proposition, infrastructure, customers, and finances.

The Canvas has nine elements:

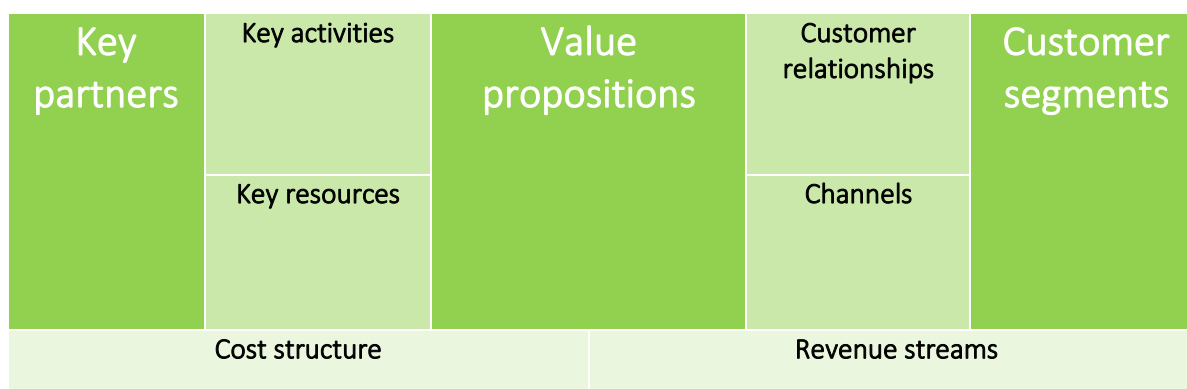


Figure 15 Business Model Canvas. Source: Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010.

Together these elements provide a coherent view of a business's key drivers.

- Customer Segments: Who are the customers? What do they think? See? Feel? Do?
- Value Propositions: What's compelling about the proposition? Why do customers buy, use?
- Channels: How are these propositions promoted, sold, and delivered? Why? Is it working?
- Customer Relationships: How do you interact with the customers through their 'journey'?
- Revenue Streams: How does the business earn revenue from the value propositions?
- Key Activities: What uniquely strategic things does the business do to deliver its proposition?
- Key Resources: What unique strategic assets must the business have to compete?

- **Key Partnerships:** What can the company not do so it can focus on its Key Activities?

Cost Structure: What are the business' major cost drivers? How are they linked to revenue?

The Canvas is popular with entrepreneurs for the business model design and innovation. It allows an excellent focus on what is important and in comparison, with the traditional long business plan it is also very easy to capture the value proposition. It is also more flexible to change the business model canvas and the updates are easily explainable.

VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS

The Value Proposition Canvas is a tool, which can help ensure that a product or service is positioned around what the customer values and needs. It was initially developed also by Dr. Alexander Osterwalder as a framework to ensure that there is a fit between the product and the market. This canvas enriches the Business Model Canvas and helps to have a detailed look at the relationship between the customer segments and the value propositions. It helps to precisely define customer profiles and identify the customer's major jobs-to-be-done, the pains they face when trying to accomplish their jobs-to-be-done, and the gains they perceive by getting their jobs done. The Value Proposition Canvas also visualizes the value that you create, defines the most important components of your offering, how you relieve pain and create gains for your customers. The most valuable output of this canvas is the achievement of the Product-Market fit which is adjusted based on the insights you gained from customer evidence and achieve Product-Market fit.

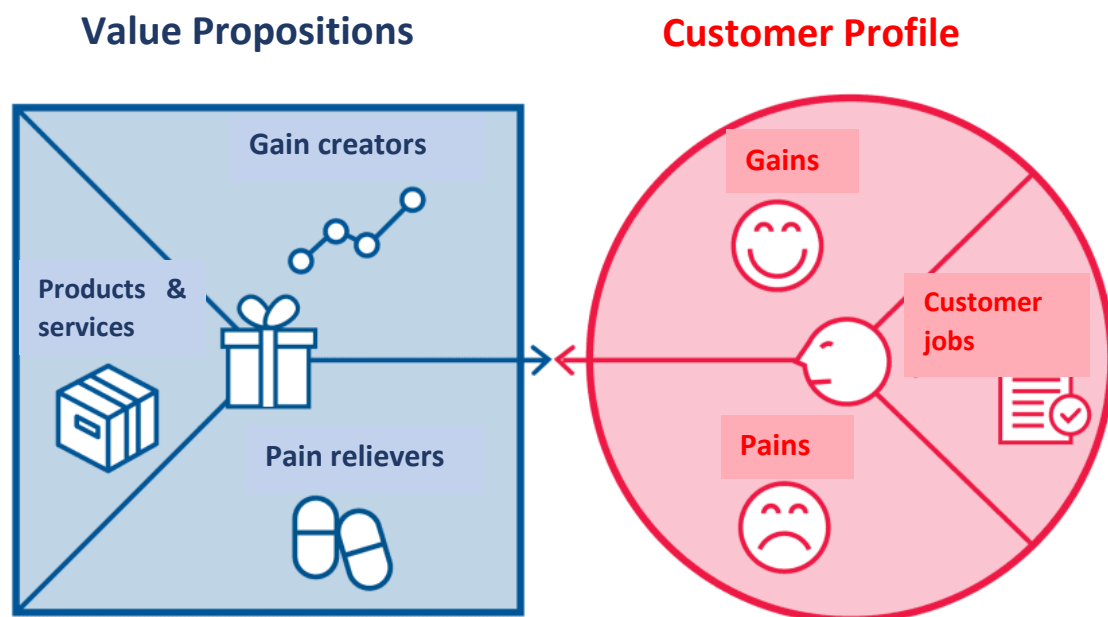


Figure 16 Value proposition Canvas. Source: Osterwalder, et al., 2014.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

- **Gains** – the benefits, which the customer expects and needs, what would delight customers, and the things which may increase the likelihood of adopting a value proposition.
- **Pains** – the negative experiences, emotions, and risks that the customer experiences in the process of getting the job done.

- Customer jobs – the functional, social, and emotional tasks customers are trying to perform, problems they are trying to solve, and needs they wish to satisfy.

A customer profile should be created for each customer segment, as each segment has distinct gains, pains, and jobs

VALUE MAP – VALUE PROPOSITION

- Gain creators – how a product or a service creates customer gains and how it offers added value to a customer.
- Pain relievers – a description of exactly how a product or a service alleviates customer pains.
- Products and services – the products and services which create gain and relieve pain, and which underpin the creation of value for the customer.

ACHIEVING FIT BETWEEN THE VALUE PROPOSITION AND CUSTOMER PROFILE

After listing gain creators, pain relievers, and products and services, each point identified can be ranked from, a nice to have, to essential in terms of value to a customer. A fit is achieved when the products and services offered as a part of the value proposition address the most significant pains and gains from the customer profile.

Identifying the value proposition on a paper is only the first stage. It is then necessary to validate what is important to customers and get their feedback on the value proposition. These insights can then be used to go back and continually refine the proposition.

BUSINESS PLAN IN NUTSHELL

ALTHOUGH A BUSINESS model canvas can give you an exact idea of how to form a business, it is still very important to form all findings into a business plan. The business plan is an exact recipe for how to create a business step by step. Also, it is a necessary part of some funding requests. The correct business plan should contain:

- Executive summary - a snapshot of your business
- Company description - describes what you do
- Market analysis - research on your industry, market, and competitors
- Organization and management – your business and management structure
- Service or product – description of your main activity
- Funding request – how many sources you would need from external partners
- Financial projections – the financial story of your business
- Appendix – documents and other supportive materials

A good business plan guides you through each stage of starting and managing your business. You'll use your business plan as a roadmap for how to structure, run, and grow your new business. It's a way to think through the key elements of your business. For rural facilitators, the need of creating the business plan might appear the moment they are taking a loan from the bank, applying for subsidies, or a development grant. Facilitators may help farmers who want to change their production and sale strategy. E.g.: Milk producers desire to start direct selling instead of sell to milk collectors, in this case, facilitators may help in the decision by overviewing the strategy step-by-step. The Canvas might provide a deeper preview of how new chains (farmers' market, milk/cheese automat, on-farm sale, farmers' shop) can open new doors for new consumers and which steps (investments) are needed to achieve the purchasing of a new model.

Business plans can help you get funding or bring on new business partners. Investors want to feel confident they'll see a return on their investment. Your business plan is the tool you'll use to convince people that working with you — or investing in your company — is a smart choice.

CONCLUSION

Business-oriented thinking is an important skill of every entrepreneur that wants to be successful in the market. It is highly recommended to use some of the strategic analysis to know what is going on in the market and adapt the business plan according to the situation in the external and internal environment. For setting up the new position – rural facilitator – the given person needs to know his or her skills and adjust the original business idea to the given situation. With that, the ikigai concept and the business model canvas can help. This chapter offers a theoretical background also for the creation of the business plan and demonstrates the usage of the business model canvas on a real farm example.

RESOURCES

<https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas/business-model-canvas>

<https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas/value-proposition-canvas>

(free download of the business model canvas and value proposition canvas)

<https://www.swotanalysis.com/13474/Ikigai-Reason-for-Being>

(online template for ikigai)

<https://www.startuploans.co.uk/business-plan-template/>

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>

(business plan description, template and examples)

Marketing tips in short food supply chains

AIMS OF CHAPTER/ABSTRACT

What is marketing? Putting the right product in the right place, at the right price, at the right time.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the rural facilitator with adequate knowledge about the marketability of smallholder food products. It provides clues in interpreting market expectations, reaching customers, marketability of products, sales channels, and provides traceable practical ideas for the sales process.

KEYWORDS

marketing, product, price, promotion, brand, food safety

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In a short supply chain, the producer is very self-reliant: he/she must recognize the needs of customers, the market, know the legal regulations in the field of packaging, food safety, environmental protection, be able to innovate the product, be able to serve the customer directly and online, and needs to shape his image. The rural facilitator can help him/her in this difficult process.

Communication and marketing are crucial in direct sales however, farmers often miss these competencies or they miss time to do so, that is why SFSC animators can play an important role in the organization of common or private communication.

What sort of animator, in which short-chain types can use it? We provide the facilitator with a curriculum that he/she can use in both direct sales and online commerce to help guide smallholders in marketing.

The present chapter is giving practical tips on:

- how to create the identity of a food business
- how to reach out to potential customers
- how to treat customers, by presenting at least 2 best practices for intermediaries and animators within this chapter.

Marketing and Rural facilitators

Marketing is the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and managing customer relationships, to sell products or services ([Miles and Brown, 2005](#)).

Rural Facilitators need to understand the importance of the theory of 4 elements for the Marketing Mix, to keep them relevant and up-to-date because monitoring trends and changes on the market is vital.

THE 4 P'S OF THE MARKETING MIX

"Marketing mix" is a general term used to describe the different types of decisions you will need to make to bring your product or service to the public. The 4Ps are a way - probably the best known - characterization of the marketing mix.

Over the years, the four elements of a marketing mix have been developed and conceptualized by marketing experts around the world to create and implement effective marketing strategies.

At the forefront of the marketing mix strategy should be an experienced marketing manager. This person should be able to use all variables and forces to achieve the desired result. However, cultural institutions in rural areas will not be able to hire or fund a qualified marketing manager. Therefore, this handbook gives you enough information to understand the basics.

Always remember that the consumer is the most important part of any marketing mix. The total value of the product is determined by the perceptions of consumers.



Figure 17 The 4Ps of Marketing Mix. Source: own composition.

PRODUCT (BRANDING, TYPES OF NUTRITION AND TOURISM, FOOD HYGIENE)

In a farm, the "product" can be either an intangible service or a tangible good. A product should meet the specific expectations or needs of consumers. Products usually follow a natural life cycle and therefore the rural facilitator should strive to help the farmer in understanding and planning appropriately for each step, identify what his/her product expectations are, and foresees the benefits as well as the characteristics of the product itself. Once he/she understands the product itself, can continue to develop it to identify targeted visitors, consumers.

BRANDING

Rural facilitators can help farmers to distinguish their business from the competitors and clarify what it is their offer that makes a better choice for consumers. Their brand is built to be a true representation of who they are as a business, and how they wish to be perceived.

STEPS TO BUILDING UP A SUCCESSFUL BRAND

DEFINE A BRAND STRATEGY ALIGNED WITH YOUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

- define your BRAND'S MISSION
- determine your TARGET AUDIENCE
- know your competitors



DEFINE ALL THE TOOLS

YOU WILL NEED TO COMMUNICATE THE BRAND

LOGO:

- defines your brand identity, separates you from competition

YOUR BRAND PERSONALITY:

- define its characteristics

BRAND REPRESENTS

- who YOU ARE AS A BUSINESS
- how YOU WISH TO BE PERCEIVED



CREATE CORE BRANDING ASSETS



LOGO:

- in several different versions (transparent, coloured, black and white, etc.)



GET A WEBPAGE:

- with a domain name and good design



CREATE A SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE:

- highly used most by your customers



INTERNAL AND MARKETING COMMUNICATION MATERIAL - E.G. LETTERHEADS, BUSINESS CARDS OR ALL OTHER TYPES OF STATIONARIES

Figure 18 Steps to building up a brand. Source: <https://99designs.com/>

NEW NUTRITION AND TOURISM TRENDS

More and more people are allergic, and a lot of people are paying attention to what they are consuming. The rural facilitator needs to look for this and teach producers to develop a new product range accordingly.

Nutrition trends in 2020 (Source: Nutrition Hub, available at www.nutrition-hub.com/post/top-10-nutrition-trends-in-2020)

Nutrition trends in 2020



Sustainable & environmentally friendly nutrition

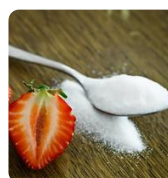
Personalized nutrition

Alternative Proteins



Health at Every Size & Mindful Eating

Meal Replacement & Nutrients on the Go



Sugar-free nutrition

Ketogenic nutrition

Vegan and plant-based nutrition



Figure 19 Nutrition trends in 2020. Source: own composition.

SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY NUTRITION

Consumers prefer to purchase food products with little to no packaging, ideally from local and social businesses. They also increasingly choose regionally and seasonally grown fruits and vegetables and some of them even grow fruits and vegetables themselves at home or in community spaces.

VEGAN AND PLANT-BASED NUTRITION

The nutrition experts observe that vegan and plant-based nutrition will move to the mass market with increased demand for vegan convenience products, which ideally are packed in environmentally sustainable packaging. Vegan and plant-based diets will expand to fields of sports nutrition and clinical nutrition.

PERSONALISED NUTRITION

We observe an increase in allergies, intolerances, and the desire to optimize body performance: therefore, consumers choose to follow their health scheme more and more often by using (digital) health trackers, performance supplements (such as “advanced probiotics”), or diagnostic tests (DNA, biomarker, microbiome, metabolome).

ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS

Consumers increasingly look for alternative proteins, especially convenient plant-based foods that replace cheese, sausages, and meat. According to our expert panel these products, however, will only succeed in case that they are natural, low in preservatives, and have a clean and clear ingredients list. Furthermore, the acceptance of clean meat will increase once no more fetal bovine serum is required to grow meat cells (apart from a competitive price, obviously).

HEALTH AT EVERY SIZE & MINDFUL EATING

Health at every size (HAES) and mindful eating are two of the important buzzwords here. HAES helps people of all sizes find compassionate ways to take care of themselves and is a result of the “fat acceptance and body positivity movement”. Mindful eating is a concept that describes actively paying attention to our food, moment by moment, without judgment. Both approaches focus on the individual itself and his/her intuition, leading to a sustainable, positive mindset.

MEAL REPLACEMENT & NUTRIENTS ON THE GO

Traditional food habits have progressively changed: In modern families, both parents work which leads in turn to full-time care of kids in kindergarten and schools. A couple of decades ago the most important meal in families was lunch – today it is dinner. Therefore, employees increasingly search for meal replacements and “nutrients on the go” supporting them during long working days. In addition, they want to be able to follow a healthy diet rich in nutrients. “Nutrients on the go” include solutions that provide foods or supplements based on natural ingredients that enhance the body's performance.

KETOGENIC NUTRITION

Ketogenic diets will be used by a broader range of consumers. For population groups such as athletes, there is a trend to reduce supplement intake and implement specific diets instead. A ketogenic diet, being one of those, is a high-fat, low- carbohydrate but normal protein (20% of energy intake) diet that

forces the body to burn fats rather than carbohydrates to generate energy. The “classic” therapeutic ketogenic diet was developed for the treatment of pediatric epilepsy in the 1920s. Today its benefits are investigated in patients suffering from Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer’s, and Acne among others (Keto Kompass, Ulrike Gonder).

SUGAR-FREE NUTRITION

Parents are well-informed about the adverse effects of products high in sugar. Due to the desire of providing healthy eating habits, the anti-sugar movement will continue and needs to - according to our expert panel - be accompanied by evidence-based campaigns educating parents and children about sugar, sugar substitutes, and sweeteners.

NEW TRENDS IN TOURISM

Regarding the number of tourists who practice rural tourism, the trend is an upward one, while they seek a form of responsible or ecological tourism. At the same time, the tourists turn their attention to certain areas which offer unique and specific experiences, and consequently authentic ones, in which the promoted lifestyle is primordial. In this way, the globalised nature of mass tourism can be avoided.

TOURISM AND MARKETING

Smallholders need to be able to sell their products and create a livelihood for the family. Another opportunity for sales lies in tourism. In addition to the products of small producers, service packages can be ordered, with which both the producer and his product are included in the tourist cycle. That is why we consider tourism to be important as an opportunity to discuss in the marketing chapter. The producer may become an active participant in tourism services, but it needs to be prepared for this.

One very new approach to tourism is nanotourism, which provides an experience for tourists based on the environmental crisis on Earth: „Nanotourism is a constructed term describing a creative critique to the current environmental, social and economic downsides of conventional tourism, as a participatory, locally oriented, bottom-up alternative. “ (<https://nanotourism.org/>). It touches the full range of human senses, encouraging tourists to engage in manual, artistic activities.

According to the marketing theory, “customer segmentation is the process of dividing customers into groups based on common characteristics so companies can market to each group effectively and appropriately.”

In business-to-consumer marketing, companies often segment customers according to demographics that include: Age, Gender, Marital status, location (urban, suburban, rural), Life stage (single, married, divorced, empty-nester, retired, etc.)

Segmentation allows marketers to better tailor their marketing efforts to various audience subsets. Those efforts can relate to both communications and product development. Specifically, segmentation helps a company:

- Create and communicate targeted marketing messages that will resonate with specific groups of customers, but not with others (who will receive messages tailored to their needs and interests, instead).
- Select the best communication channel for the segment, which could be email, social media posts, radio advertising, or another approach, depending on the segment.
- Identify ways to improve products or new product or service opportunities.
- Establish better customer relationships.

- Test pricing options.
- Focus on the most profitable customers.
- Improve customer service.
- Upsell and cross-sell other products and services.

www.shopify.com/encyclopedia/customer-segmentation

In practice, the better the producer knows his customers, the better he can sell his products. For "marketer" producers, this is a self-evident process, as it receives face-to-face feedback from customers during markets and fairs. Anyone looking to sell through other sources needs to find the best way to segmentation: phone interviews, questionnaires, focus group meetings, paid targeted ads. The rural facilitator can help a lot in this process.

SEVERAL TYPES OF TOURISM CAN BE DEFINED (Sasu and Epuran, 2016):

Agritourism – this form of tourism uses the farm as the main place for activities, is organized by farmers, usually as a secondary activity, agriculture remaining their main occupation and source of income. The tourists spend the night in the peasants' households and participate in the everyday farm chores actively.

Ethnic tourism – it is highly based on involving the locals, especially the minority population of a rural settlement, by displaying their way of life in front of tourists.

Ecotourism – tourism to be eco, it must fulfil certain conditions, such as: to help protect and preserve nature, to use local resources (both human and material), to have an educational purpose, the activities should have a less negative impact on the environment (Nistoreanu, Dorobanțu, and Țuclea, 2011). Some of the eco touristic activities are hiking, skiing, biking, canoeing, trips to local communities where people can buy and learn about the traditional foods and drinks, visit the cultural attractions, etc.

Creative tourism – the tourist learns "new skills and undertake recognizably creative activities" (Cloke, 2007, p. 43). Moreover, UNESCO adds an important element, that is "creative tourism is travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience". (UNESCO, 2006, p.3).

Culinary tourism – food and wine routes – culinary tourism is part of cultural tourism, but because of the nature of its activities and principles, it can be perceived from a rural perspective, as well. The tourists' main motivation for travelling is the desire to discover traditional dishes specific to a certain place. In her work on food, authenticity, and tourism, Sims (2009) argues that the food and drinks consumed by the tourists, but which are locally produced, play an important role in the development of both economic and environmental sustainability, especially by helping farmers produce and sell the foodstuffs.

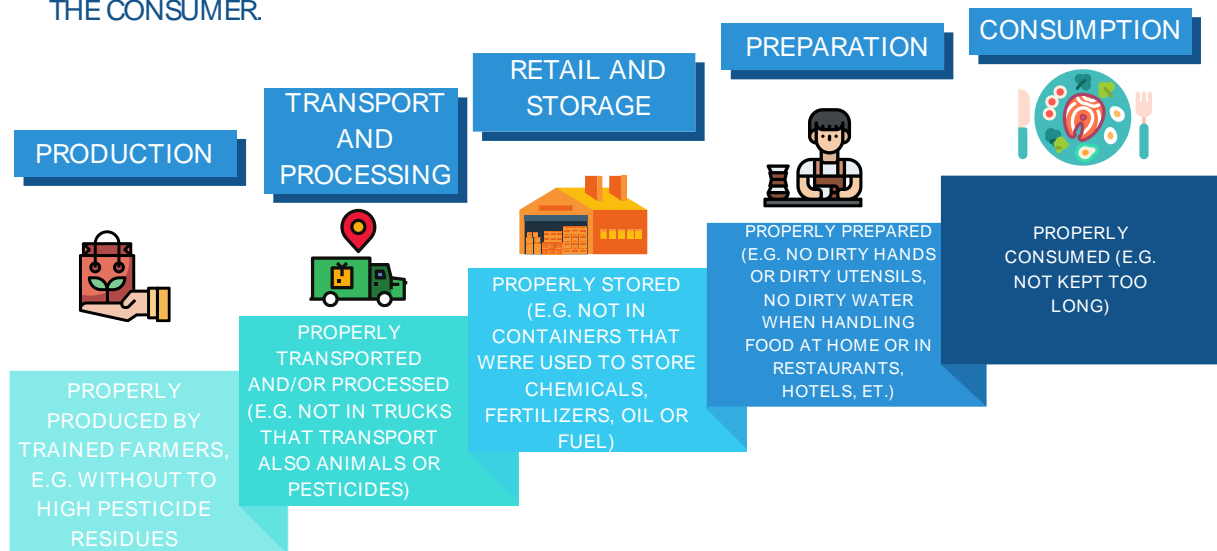
FOOD HYGIENE

According to the Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004, the safety of the food chain has to be controlled from farm to fork, each step in the food production chain taking its responsibility to deliver a safe food product to the market. The safety is to be controlled based upon the principles of 'Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)', 'Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)', and 'Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)'. This regulation is valid for all food production, including the production by the short food supply chain. (Nagyné Pércsi, 2018) However, in many European Union Member States, the reduced regulations are applied for marginal local production which allows small farmers to use traditional processing methods.

STEPS IN FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

- FOOD HYGIENE ARE THE CONDITIONS AND MEASURES NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF FOOD FROM PRODUCTION TO CONSUMPTION.
- FOOD CAN BECOME CONTAMINATED AT ANY POINT DURING SLAUGHTERING OR HARVESTING, PROCESSING, STORAGE, DISTRIBUTION, TRANSPORTATION AND PREPARATION.
- LACK OF ADEQUATE FOOD HYGIENE CAN LEAD TO FOODBORNE DISEASES AND DEATH OF THE CONSUMER.



Source: <https://www.who.int/foodsafety>

Figure 20 Steps in the Food Supply Chain. Source: WHO.

There is a lot to talk about food hygiene with producers.

They need to be made aware that without a good product one cannot do good marketing because the market will soon filter out the gimmick. The rural facilitator can make the producer aware of the responsibility that comes with placing food products on the market, as bad food can cause huge harm to the consumer. The producer should not be frightened, he should only be taught that the possibility of error can be filtered out with due care.

SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION OF

FOOD

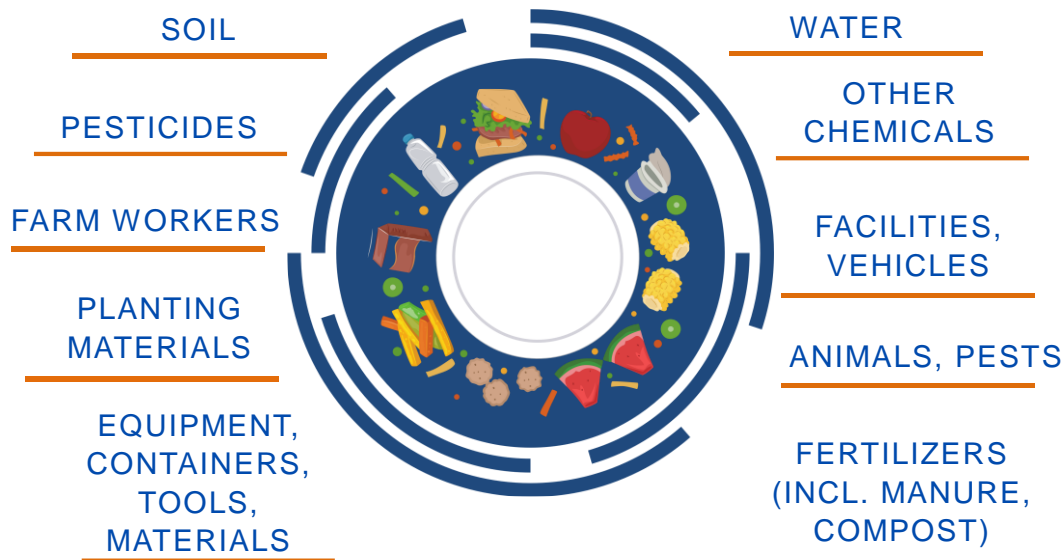


Figure 21 Sources of contamination of food. Source: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-at509e.pdf>.

PRICE - METHODS, STRATEGIES, BALANCE BETWEEN COSTS-ORIENTED AND MARKET-ORIENTED METHODS

One of the most difficult tasks of a rural facilitator is to teach the producer how to set the right price. Since this task presupposes economic knowledge, it is worth calling for the help of common sense and the literature available on the internet, and even price calculators.

Price reflects the farmer's expectations that consumers will pay a certain price for their products or services. Pricing can have a positive or negative impact on the sale of the products.

This depends more on how consumers perceive the value of this product than on the real value of the product itself. Therefore, if a product is priced higher or lower than the perceived value, it may not sell as expected. Therefore, it is important to understand what consumers perceive before the producer decides to set a price for a product. If the consumer's perception is positive, the product will likely sell even at a price higher than its real value. On the other hand, if the product has very little or no value to the consumer, it may be beneficial to underestimate the product just to make some sales.

Producers need to be made aware that it is worthwhile to calculate a price for a product on an annual basis, as for them the production of a cereal/vegetable/fruit product starts with the autumn ploughing of the previous year (in fact, years earlier in the case of crop rotation). The same applies to meat and dairy products.

In a very simplified formula: Selling Price = Cost Price + Profit Margin.

Here are some of the many costs that farmers need to take into account when determining market/selling price:

- **Labour**⁴: liveable wages, payroll taxes, housing needs
- **Equipment**: machinery, tractors, tools
- **Inputs**: seeds, compost, packaging, fertilizers
- **Capital expenses**: farmland, infrastructure, property taxes
- **Overhead**: maintaining buildings, professional services, administrative duties, advertising, marketing, wholesale costs
- **Hidden costs**: managing labour, accounting, working overtime/not getting paid
- **Water quality issues**: planting riparian buffers to help control nonpoint pollution and improve water quality
- **Food safety upgrades**
- **Certifications** (www.vtfarmtoplate.com/features/true-cost-of-local-food#.X5hwY4gzblU)

There are **three main aspects** to consider when **pricing**:

- Demand (price cap)
- Costs (price cap)
- Competitors' prices (information point) (*Marketing / Digitális Tankönyvtár, 27.10.2020*)

At producer fairs, a price agreement is usually reached between producers. In the case of food hubs, the price is set jointly with the producers, the producer gives a discount to cover the fixed and staffing costs of the store, and then the store price will not be much higher than the market price. It is very important to pay attention to the fact that in the market the buyer likes to bargain and the producer can let him out of the price, but in the case of a shop, food hub this is not applicable, because the goods are sold at a fixed price in accounting.

PROMOTION

Promotion means disseminating the information about the product, product line, brand and company, service to the potential buyers with the intent to generate sales and develop brand loyalty.

Promotion refers to the marketing strategies and communication techniques used to review products/services to target customers. The promotion includes activities such as special offers, advertising, public relations, and also sales promotions.

The rural facilitator has to make aware the producers/farmers that any promotional channel used should always be suitable for their product or service, and also for the price. Marketing is different from promotion because promotion only refers to the communication aspect used in marketing.

⁴ It is very important to stress that producers often do not include their own labour in the price of the product. Of course, this is not a simple calculation, but the more products you can define, the easier it will be over time. We can suggest that the producer keep a work diary for a season, recording exactly how many hours a week he spends working and what, how many products he produced during that time. It must be averaged for the first time and then the producer realizes the value of working hours, as there are more labour-intensive products. Records are also important because they show how valuable your own product is.

ADVERTISING

Types of advertising



PROMOTION

Disseminating the information about the PRODUCT, PRODUCT LINE, BRAND and COMPANY to the PROSPECTIVE BUYERS with the intent to GENERATE SALES and DEVELOP A BRAND LOYALTY

Figure 22 Types of advertising: Source: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/online-advertising>.

PERSONAL SELLING (FAIRS, MARKETS, FESTIVALS, ETC.)

Smallholder markets are organized in different forms in each region. The rural facilitator can help producers map these. The great advantage of markets and fairs is that the product comes into direct contact with the buyer, he receives immediate feedback on, for example, the packaging, the physical aspect of the product, and even, if it is appropriate, the taste of the product, if tasting is possible.

At these fairs, festivals, and markets, a recurring customer base can develop, with loyal consumers looking for fresh, healthy, local products. Most often, an agreement is reached between the producers at the fairs about the prices, and they do not bid on each other out of honour either, because they will meet next time as well. The rural facilitator should draw the attention of producers to the legislation in force in the given region or country.

SALES PROMOTION LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM

When to use sales promotion?

The goal of sales promotion is to increase demand for a particular product.

When you want to:

- launch a new product
- attract new clients
- stay competitive. Researching and analyzing your competitors will not only help you attract new clients but constantly improve your product and customer service.
- make existing customers buy more. It's always easier to make an existing customer buy more than attract new clients.

- sell during the off-season, by offering time-limited discounts, "1+1=3" campaigns, and other marketing tricks.
- run clearance campaigns, when dealers need to make room for a new collection, they often run total clearance campaigns when users can buy goods from old collections at extremely reduced prices.

TYPES OF SALES PROMOTION

- **Price deal.** It is a temporary cost reduction.
- **Loyalty reward program.** This means that customers collect points or credits when they buy a product.
- **Bonus-pack deal.** It means that a customer can get more products paying the original price.
- **Giveaways.** These tactics aim to increase brand awareness. It means giving some items for free in exchange for personal information to use in further marketing.
- **Coupons.** You can sell a product for the original price and give a coupon, which will make the next purchase 5% cheaper.
- **Mobile couponing.** It stands for coupons received on mobile phones via SMS. To get a discount, a customer needs to show the coupon on their smartphone.
- **Sampling.** Choosing this promotion type, companies give a sample of the product.

PLACE

Placement refers to how the product or service will be made available to the consumer. An appropriate placement strategy will evaluate the best and most appropriate distribution channel for the product.

With a successful marketing strategy, you can expand your customer base and increase your profit.

Marketing is any activity that leads you to sell a product. When you decide what products to sell, what price to ask, where and how to sell them, and how to promote them, you are marketing. Your strategy is your means of doing something - how you will meet your objectives of selling this year's products. Depending on the type and size of your farm, and whether you are farming full or part-time, you have several options for how to market your operation.

ORGANIC FARMING

Organic farming is a product strategy. Farmers select organic farming for several reasons, because they may believe in the concept of organic foods and/or because the consumers have demonstrated a willingness to pay more for organic food, which leads to a larger profit.

<https://www.organicwithoutboundaries.bio/category/from-the-field/> there are a lot of very diverse examples.

Benefits of organic farming: Safer working conditions, less food and drinking water contamination, Greater biodiversity, Reduced leaking, Reduced erosion, and better water management, Low use of non-renewable resources (<http://grolink.se/resources/oa/benefits-of-organic-farming/>)

According to The Rodale Institute's research program which involves nearly 40 years of organic/conventional farming comparisons. Among the many advantages, it has found that organic farming systems:

- yields match conventional yields after a five-year transition
- outperforms conventional farming in years of drought by up to 40%

- earns 3–6-time greater profit for farmers
- leaches no toxic chemicals into waterways
- uses 45% less energy
- releases 40% fewer carbon emissions
- water volumes percolating through soil were 15–20% higher than the conventional systems
- systems are more profitable than conventional ones.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Selling at a farmer's market is a distribution and sales strategy that is ideal if you are a small or medium-sized agricultural producer. It can also be a stepping stone to larger markets if you want to grow, but with the popularity of these markets, many farmers sell at a different market every weekend within a reasonable distance from their farms. It allows you to sell several types of produce, provide recipes and offer taste samples. Another benefit is that market operators or local communities handle much of the promotion, saving you time and money.

FOOD HUBS

The Food Hub is a food integrator that supports small and medium-sized producers, giving them a market. As a promoter of the short agri-food chain, the Food Hub brings together, on the same platform, local food producers. A food hub is a cooperative effort among farmers in a certain region. Using this model, you address your pricing, selling, and promotion marketing strategies. The hub manager handles the logistics of selling to the consumer or commercial customer and gives you a commitment to purchase a certain amount of your product. This marketing strategy allows smaller agricultural businesses to share and minimize risk, while also allowing them to compete as a group with large food wholesalers.

CONCLUSION

This chapter aims to introduce the rural facilitator into the wonderful world of basic marketing elements with 4 elements of the marketing mix, case studies, nutritional science, tourism innovations, personal product personalization techniques, to help small producers to work in the short supply chain as thoroughly as possible.

RESOURCES

<https://99designs.com/>

<http://szekelytermek.ro>

<https://trademark-search.marcaria.com/en/>

<https://nanotourism.org/>

<https://www.mindtools.com/>

<https://www.who.int/foodsafety>

<https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/features/true-cost-of-local-food#.X5hwY4gzblU>

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newSTR_94.htm

<https://www.brandingmag.com/2015/10/14/what-is-branding-and-why-is-it-important-for-your-business/>

<https://www.nutrition-hub.com/post/top-10-nutrition-trends-in-2020>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/online-advertising>

<https://sendpulse.com/support/glossary/sales-promotion>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/definition/marketing-mix>

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brand.asp>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/food-science/food-hygiene>

Communication and conflict management for Rural Facilitators

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the rural facilitators get information on the elements of communication and conflict management techniques. The facilitator works mostly in groups with different people. To create working groups and working in teams is more than necessary, it is a must if we are looking for a successful democratic operation in a community. The facilitator plays a very important role in moderating and leading the organization of network building. He has got the survival of the chain in his hands.

KEYWORDS

communication, active listening, effective communication, conflict resolution, conflict management

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completion of this module, the learner will know the basic elements of communication and possible reasons for a failing communication. In the work of the SFSC animator's communication is crucial, the useful tips provided in this chapter, more effective communication could be achieved, these tips can be spread amongst farmers. The DISC behaviour assessment tool is briefly presented in this chapter (the types: D-Dominance, I-Influence, S-Steadiness, and C-Conscientiousness), the 4 basic behaviour types help to categorize and manage the people around the animators, it can be used both in communication and in conflicting situations. The second part focuses on conflict management, discovering 5 main conflict resolution strategies, and providing tips for more effective treatment of conflicts. These can help in everyday situations or could be passed to the farmers.

- What is communication;
- Different elements of the communication process;
- Different types of communication;
- How to improve the communication process in an organization;
- What is effective communication;
- How to improve your skills for effective communication;
- What is listening and how to promote active listening;
- How moderate a conflict.

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

The ability to communicate is one of our most important skills as a human. It is of common understanding that communication at all levels in life and in all ages is one of the key competencies. It is vital for sharing any kind of information, and to understand the information shared with us. Communication at its core is all about passing information from one place to another. We communicate with colleagues, with members of SFSC, with customers, with providers. Good communication skills are mandatory for effective management.

We all have realized several times in our lives that it is not so easy to pass on a relatively ordinary task to someone who does not, or does not exactly understand the concept we have in our mind. You are likely to recall from your own lives, cases in which a misunderstanding — that is, a misinterpretation of a concept, word, or saying — has caused difficulties.

WHAT MAKES US THINK THE OTHER PARTY UNDERSTANDS EXACTLY WHAT WE SAY?

How can we make sure that what we say is really “on target”, and the other party understands what we want to say (communicate)? These are the important and fundamental issues in everyday communication.

Before you despair that if you may have made mistakes in communication, we have good news for you; one’s communication can be developed. It is worth having a go in the development of communication as it brings relief in all areas of life.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

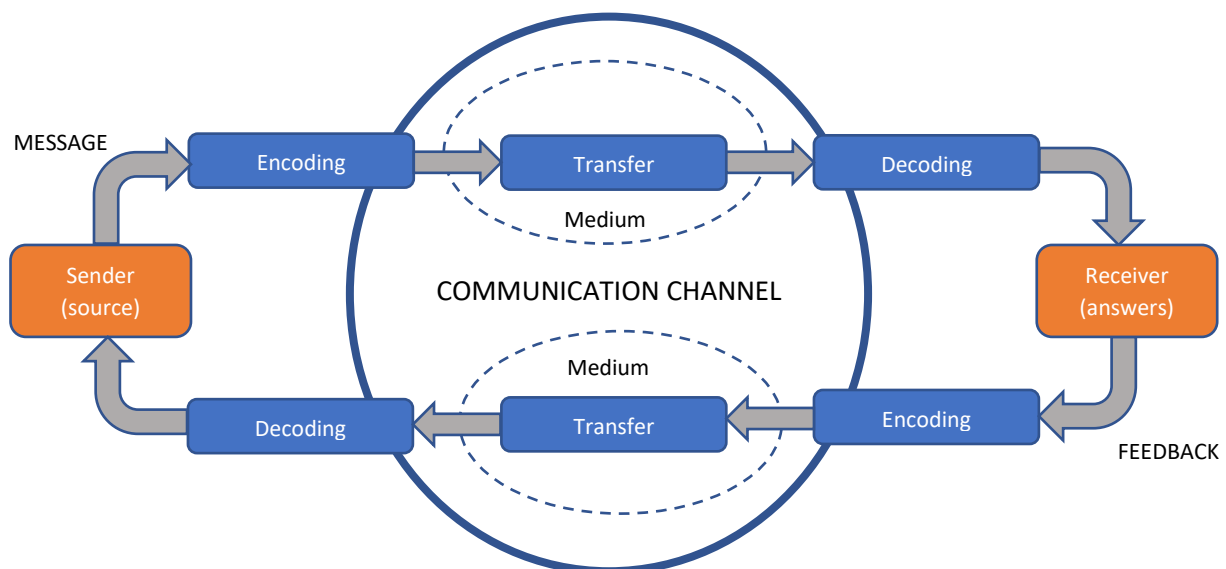
Everyday conversations, texting, writing emails, business meetings, reading newspaper articles are all communication processes. Although it may seem simple, the process of communication is quite complex and has several aspects, components. According to a definition, communication is

“a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour”. (Merriam-Webster.com, 2020)

Communication itself is a two-way process where a sender and a receiver convey messages to reach a **common understanding**. Messages could be thoughts, opinions, ideas, feelings, commands, requests, etc. Any time two or more people are exchanging messages, they are engaging in this basic communication process.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS DEFINITION

„The term communication process refers to the exchange of information (a message) between two or more people. For communication to succeed, both parties must be able to exchange information and understand each other. If the flow of information is blocked for some reason or the parties cannot make themselves understood, then communication fails.” (Nordquist, 2020)



SENDER

The sender (communicator/source) is the party who intends to transmit some sort of a message to others. To have successful communication, the sender first must encode his/her message in a form that is mutually understood, such as common language, and then pass it on.

Example: A local suburban municipality decides to start a market for small farmers in the area on Saturday morning in the main square of the settlement. The municipality wants to spread the information to have sellers on the market, the municipality is the sender/source in the following communication process example. A good and bad example will be shown on how this municipality can manage this situation.

ENCODING

In the encoding process, the sender uses words (or non-verbal methods like body gestures in some cases) to form a message from the information he/she intends to share. The success of the messages partially depends on the skills and competencies of the sender.

Bad example

The municipality writes a short information sheet full of legal terms, and with references to regulations, and places it only on their website. The text is hard to understand for everybody who is not a lawyer, with no highlights, no pictures, just plain text, no contact number.

Good example

The call for sellers is written in simple, understandable language, the main points are highlighted, some nice drawings/pictures are added. The poster is nice and understandable, with the pictures in the eyes. A contact telephone number is given for more information.

COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

The communication channel or medium is the form the sender chooses to pass information through. The channels could be oral, written, or visual. For example, the medium of text messages is cell phones. The effectiveness of different channels varies depending on the characteristics of the communication. Oral channels are good when you need feedback immediately, but for addressing a larger pool of people, written channels might prevail. However, using both written and oral cases in some instances could amplify each other.

Bad example

The information is only placed on the municipality's website, nowhere else. They don't put it to social media or any other communication channel, they use only one single communication channel, the website.

Good example

The poster with the call for sellers is placed on their website, in social media groups and pages, and put the poster in paper form on several advertising surfaces in the streets. The municipality also contacted the local SFSC animator and some other local organizations and asked them to spread the market possibility amongst farmers in the settlement and the neighbouring settlements. They used several and various communication channels, they also focused on personal communication through SFSC animator – word-of-mouth communication is very important.

RECEIVER

The receiver (interpreter) is the person to whom the message is addressed to. To achieve the communication's common goal, the receiver party must be able to understand the message by first decoding it.

Bad example

The municipality's website is not frequently visited, only 3 people have seen the information about the market who were not farmers. Only one of them was able to understand the legal text, but he was not interested in the local market. Finally, the message did not reach anybody who would have been interested in the market.

Good example

A nice group of local neighboring farmers have heard about the market and understood the practical details because of the various communication channels, the clear message, and word-of-mouth communication. The SFSC animator was able to involve them, finally, about a dozen sellers reserved a table in the market, and another 5-10 farmers are thinking about it, maybe joining later. A group of receivers did arise in this example.

MESSAGE

The message is the information the sender intends to share. The message can be verbal, non-verbal, written, or symbolic. Body gestures, nods, yawns, or even silence could be a message. Any signal that elicits a response from an interpreter can be considered a message.

Bad example

The message in the bad example was difficult to understand (legal terms, references to regulations), therefore it has almost failed as a message.

Good example

The message(s) in the good example was understandable and attention-grabbing, the effect was multiplied by placing it at several sites. By including personal communication with the SFSC animator, another message was also used in this example.

NOISE

The so-called 'noise' in the communication channel can also interfere with the transmission and reception of the message. We interpret noise as any factor that interferes with the transmission of the message, and as a consequence, it disturbs the process of communication, destroys understanding, and in some extreme cases makes communication inefficient or impossible.

Bad example

The noises in the online world made the communication process ineffective (too many inputs for the readers, the municipality website is not frequently visited, interested people were not reached because of the noises and other mistakes in the communication process.).

Good example

Noises were minimized through the several channels of communication the municipality used. The possibility to ask was also a good way to minimize the noise in the communication process, asking, clarifying is a good opportunity to minimize noise and get the real message.

FEEDBACK

Feedback is the final component of communication. It ensures that the message reached the receiver and he/she could successfully comprehend it as it was intended. Feedback is crucial for the sender to acknowledge that the transmission of the message has been successful.

Bad example

No feedback was in the bad example, nobody has reserved a table for the market. The communication has failed in the bad example.

Good example

A dozen sellers who reserved a table for the market and the other 5-10 farmers who were thinking about it are all signs of feedback. Some of them called the municipality on the telephone to clarify details, others did ask the SFSC animator – feedback was present in several forms in the good example.

FILTERS

The encoding and decoding process is influenced by the encoder/decoder person's filter. One's filter includes culture, subculture, experience, family norms, education, beliefs and expectations, fears, emotional status, etc. – a wide range of personal background and present condition. The same message through different filters may end up having opposite meanings.

"Studies have shown that we tend to give people more benefit of the doubt when we're in a good mood and less when we're in a bad mood. When we're in a bad mood we are more likely to perceive whatever, our partner says or does more negatively no matter how positive he/she is trying to be."

"We all have filters; become aware of yours." (Greenleaf Counseling Service (2016))

Bad example

To use legal terms in a message for farmers is a bad example for filters, this was one of the reasons why the communication has failed in this example.

Good example

The appropriate form of the message (simple, understandable language, main points highlighted, nice drawings/pictures) was one feature of the success, it considered the background of the farmers. By contacting the farmers personally by animator(s) was the other part of the success, fears and bad experiences could be avoided by this.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

There are multiple ways of communication. Distinct situations require different methods of communication. The success of communication heavily relies on choosing the appropriate way to communicate. Most sources distinguish four types of communication, which are the followings: verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual:

Verbal communication

The act of speaking, using spoken words with meaning associated with them to share information is considered as verbal communication.

Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication is everything else we do while we are speaking. Body posture, physical interactions, facial expressions, both our intentional and unintentional behaviour while communicating counts as nonverbal communication. Understanding people's nonverbal communication brings us closer to a greater understanding of what they are communicating.

It is important to know that based on studies, in communication the words themselves are giving only approx. 7-8% of the message/meaning, another 38% is coming from voice and tone, and the rest is body language, - nonverbal and metacommunication. The same study also states that facial components count at 60% and vocal components at 40% when determining a person's attitude.

To sum up verbal and nonverbal communication: the words themselves may have less impact than the signs of metacommunication, and nonverbal communication plays an important role in communication.

Written communication

Written communication is writing or typing symbols with associated meaning (like letters) to transmit a message. A letter, an email, a text, or any other form of written communication serves the purpose of disseminating information.

Visual communication

Using photographs, art, visual tools like graphs or charts, are all part of visual communication. As people share pictures on social media, advertisers use images to sell products and ideas, visual communication has many occurrences.

AN EFFECTIVE VISUAL & VERBAL COMMUNICATION METHOD: INFOGRAPHICS

The use of infographics is a combination of visual and verbal communication and an efficient way of communication. Through this easily decodable method, we can quickly deliver important messages, especially in today's fast-paced and ever-accelerating world.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

„Effective communication is a process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, knowledge, and information such that the purpose or intention is fulfilled in the best possible manner. In simple words, it is nothing but the presentation of views by the sender in a way best understood by the receiver.” (Prachi M. Effective Communication (2018))

The information in a message is not enough by itself, it must meet a purpose. The message has to be complete, clear, and easily understandable to keep its meaningfulness. A precise message can facilitate the desired interpretation.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS THAT FACILITATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Conscious communication and the usage of communication skills can help to raise the overall quality and effectiveness of the ongoing communication.

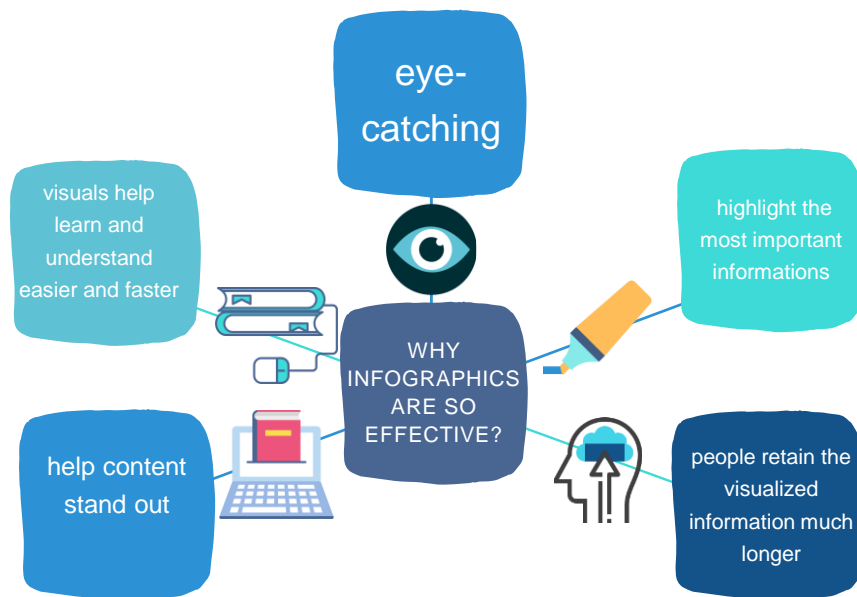


Figure 24 Why Infographics? Source: Rural Facilitator Project, Kislépték (2021)



Figure 25 Effective Communication Skills. Source: Raiha Malik (2019).

These features are shown in the figure above facilitate effective communication:

Verbal and nonverbal communication skills	Attitude and feedback communication skills
body language eye-contact and visible mouth, smiling face, silence,	checking for understanding, summarising what has been said, encouragement to continue, some questions.

How to Improve Your Communication Skills - Tips

Here you can find some useful tips to improve your communication skills:

Think before talking: Having a clear idea of the information you are transmitting will help you in presenting a well-structured and trustworthy message.

Be honest: Honesty is the most important factor when communicating with others. It helps you create a bond with the other person and at the same time will help you in gaining the respect and admiration of the receiver.

Practice active listening: Effective communication is not only the way we communicate with others – it also includes the way we listen to them.

Ask questions: To have a better understanding of the topic of discussion, you need to ask questions.

Watch your body language: Body language is as important as any other type of communication.

Don't judge: Pretty simple – don't do to others what you don't like done to you. Describe the situation instead of judging others.

Provide constructive criticism: If you feel like you need to criticize other people, make sure you use constructive criticism.

Express your emotions and personality instead of hiding behind rigidity and impersonal expressions.

Use "I", the first person instead of general statements or blaming others. "I-message" or "I-statement" is a statement about the feelings, beliefs, values, etc. of the person speaking.

Be yourself: To successfully communicate with others you have to show them who you are.

THE DISC MODEL

So far, there has been a theoretical background and practical suggestions for communication. In the following part, we show the basics of DISC, a commonly used behaviour assessment tool:

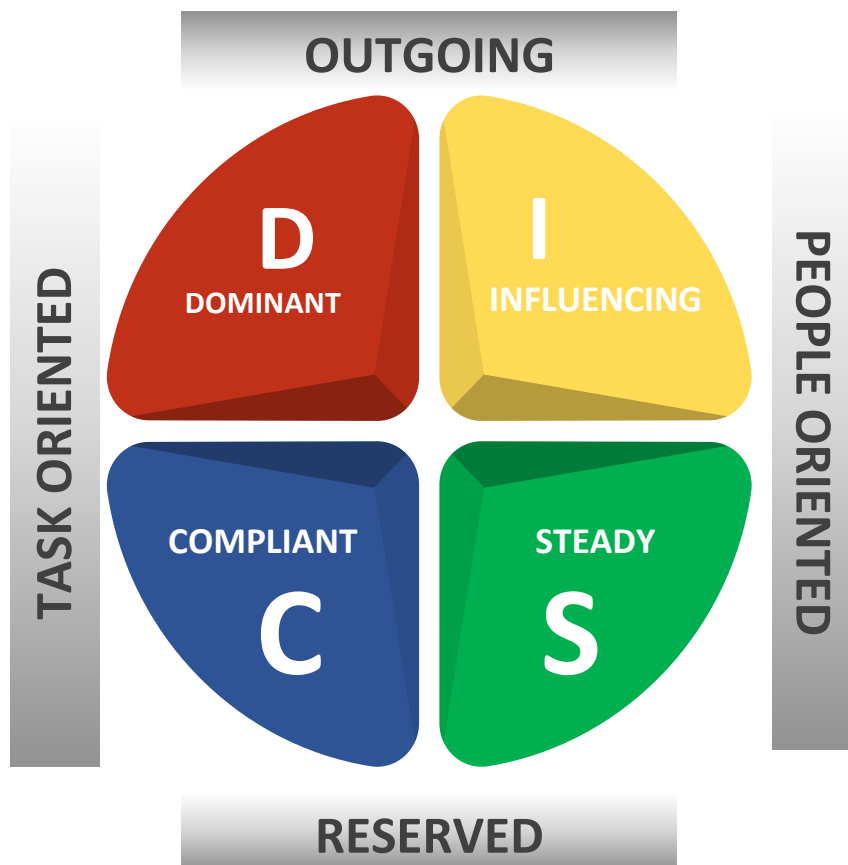
"DISC is a behaviour assessment tool based on the DISC theory of psychologist William Moulton Marston, which centres on four different personality traits which are currently Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C). This theory was then developed into a behavioural assessment tool by industrial psychologist Walter Vernon Clarke."

Nowadays it is one of the favourite tests/models of HR consultants, companies, it is widely used in different areas, such as improving communication skills, developing teamwork, or promoting leadership.

Before we immerse in the details of the DISC model, it's important to know that the 4 style is not good or not bad, just the way people are, all styles have characteristics that are regarded positive or negative in different situations.

The test classifies people into 4 types. It is important to know that the "pure" type is very rare, in most cases a mixed type is relevant.

As a Short Food Supply Chain animator your most important task is to discover the Dominant behaviour style and make sure that the "Red" behaviour is not over dominating the other parties in the conflict.



Typically, 2 dominant styles appear in the examined person.

Regarding the possible adaptation to other types, there are two main rules in the practical application:

- it is relatively easier to adapt to neighbouring types (ie. red to blue and yellow), and
- it is much more difficult to adapt to opposite types (ie. red to green and vice versa, or yellow to blue and vice versa)

However, you should not be afraid of this at all. Why? From these 2 important reasons:

- communication can be learned and developed - it is worth getting involved! The result is first and foremost a matter of determination and then it is the only practice that will get you to success.
- better and more effective communication is not through a total adaptation to the partner's (communication) style, the communication partner does not expect it. We just need to change some of our communication manners towards the partner's manner. We do not yet know

exactly why, but this “step towards” is already being perceived by our partner, and communication is becoming easier and more efficient.

Main characteristics of the four different styles:

RED (DOMINANT) + prefers to lead + risk-taker + self-confident + result-oriented - argumentative - strong-willed - oversteps authority	YELLOW (INFLUENCING) + optimistic + emotional + dynamic + creative - not good with details - impulsive - superficial
BLUE (COMPLIANT/ CONSCIENTIOUS) + precise, accurate + detail-oriented + think analytically and systematically + completes the task - avoids conflicts - lost in details - fear criticism	GREEN (STEADY) + team player + stable, predictable, even-tempered + strive for consensus + listens well - change-adoption is slow - avoids conflicts - sensitive to criticism

Figure 27 DISC Styles, based on PeopleKeys (2020).

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Let's start with some quotes on conflicts:

“The existence of two opposing views already provides a common ground. The better we get to know the collision surface, the better the chances of resolving the conflict.” (Shirley MacLaine, US actress)

“Peace is not a lack of conflict, but the ability to deal with conflict.” (Dan Millman, US writer)

WHAT IS A CONFLICT?

The word conflict comes from the Latin word *confligo*, which means collision. Because it has entered the historical consciousness as an unpleasant event, conflict is often associated today with negative interpretations, feelings, and undesirable events.

The parties of the conflict never decide their actions based on the real picture: the decision is always based on the perception of how they see the situation and the other party themselves. A common approach in the literature on negotiation techniques states that negotiation is an opportunity for a peaceful settlement of conflicts.

There are several strategies for resolving conflicts, the following categorization focuses on the winner-loser aspect:

- Winner - Loser strategy:
- Both sides strive for victory;

Because one party wants to defeat the other, they pay less attention to the original purpose;

The losing party may even seek revenge, his loss is not final, he usually returns after gathering strength, which can lead to deepening the conflict.

Loser - Loser strategy:

Neither party achieves its goal, but they can reach an agreement by compromise. However, a deal is not a real result, so it is a loser-loser strategy. Loss of trust and discouragement after the conflict is common.

Winner – Winner strategy:

Usually, both parties get more than they imagined; this entails a strengthening of trust.

In this case, the parties do not necessarily achieve their original goal, but they find a solution that is right for both parties, so they may feel victorious.

How to behave in a conflict situation? What can be expedient? Tips, advice in conflicts:

Seek to	To avoid
Keep calm Active listening Respectful language Differentiate the problem from the person Focus your attention on the problem Defend your interest with respect to others in the conflict Apologise if needed Propose solutions Look for agreement and respect it when it is found Take enough time Arrange a proper room or place to meet	Insult others Threaten others Accuse the other party Despise/Ridicule Judge others, making judgments Focus only on your point of view Generalize, making general statements Restrain from different topics other than the actual conflict Hit each other (of course not)

The process of conflict resolution is based on several stages, keeping the following steps can lead to a solution where all involved parties have the opportunity to express their point of view.

Process of Conflict Management



Figure 28 The Process of Conflict Management. Based on: Budavári-Takács, Ildikó Dr. (2011).

Let's look at some ideas - thought-provoking - for two specific situations:

EXAMPLE

The situation in brief: One of the producers does not deliver the usual, expected quality goods to the community producer's shop (the product is processed and the taste is not usual).

Definition: Buyers give feedback, in fact, there are those who bring the goods back. The store manager also tastes the product and he also finds that it is certainly not the usual high quality.

Tip: since not everyone involved in this situation is present, there is time to think further! Let's do it!

We thank our customers for their trust! It is important to know that complaining to most people is not easy at all!

Exploration: In this case, the perspectives of both the buyers, the store, and the producer must be considered. Needs: Customers must be satisfied; the store retains its customer base. Supplier satisfaction is also important - but the result of their work (their product) should serve customer satisfaction. Customers and business: can be disappointed, frustrated, we don't know about the producer's side until we ask.

Tip: Contact the producer personally or call him/her and talk about what happened. If necessary, (s)he must also taste the product.

By phone: „Dear X, do you know that the latest shipment does not taste as usual? Some buyers unfortunately complained...”

Search: In such a situation, an immediate and a long-term solution must be also considered.

Immediate: complainants receive some form of compensation; the goods on the shelf can be taken off if the quality is so poor, or a discount can be given in case of less poor quality.

Longer-term: the producer must be able to deliver in the usual quality - there are many possible solutions for this. For example, in the next period, we take a sample from each shipment.

Tip: We ask complaining customers, what can we do for their satisfaction? (Many people will not answer this question, give them some discount or gift as well.)

We ask the supplier what solution he sees for avoiding such problems in the future? (You'll probably have a suggestion we didn't even think of.)

Evaluation: For both customers and suppliers, we think through what they said and what we thought, and - for example - rank them in order of solvability or simplicity.

In this example, this step can be done in consultation with stakeholders, or the store may consider the options on its own.

Selection: In this phase, it is worth consulting and talking to those involved. With customers, this can be done either at the same time as the complaint, or in a later phone call, or even during the next purchase.

Tip: people love to choose! So it can be good for buyers e.g. offer to refund the price of the product or choose another product of similar value.

The solution with the supplier is a conciliation meeting (this can also be done by phone, considering the options.)

Implementation: We will do what we have agreed.

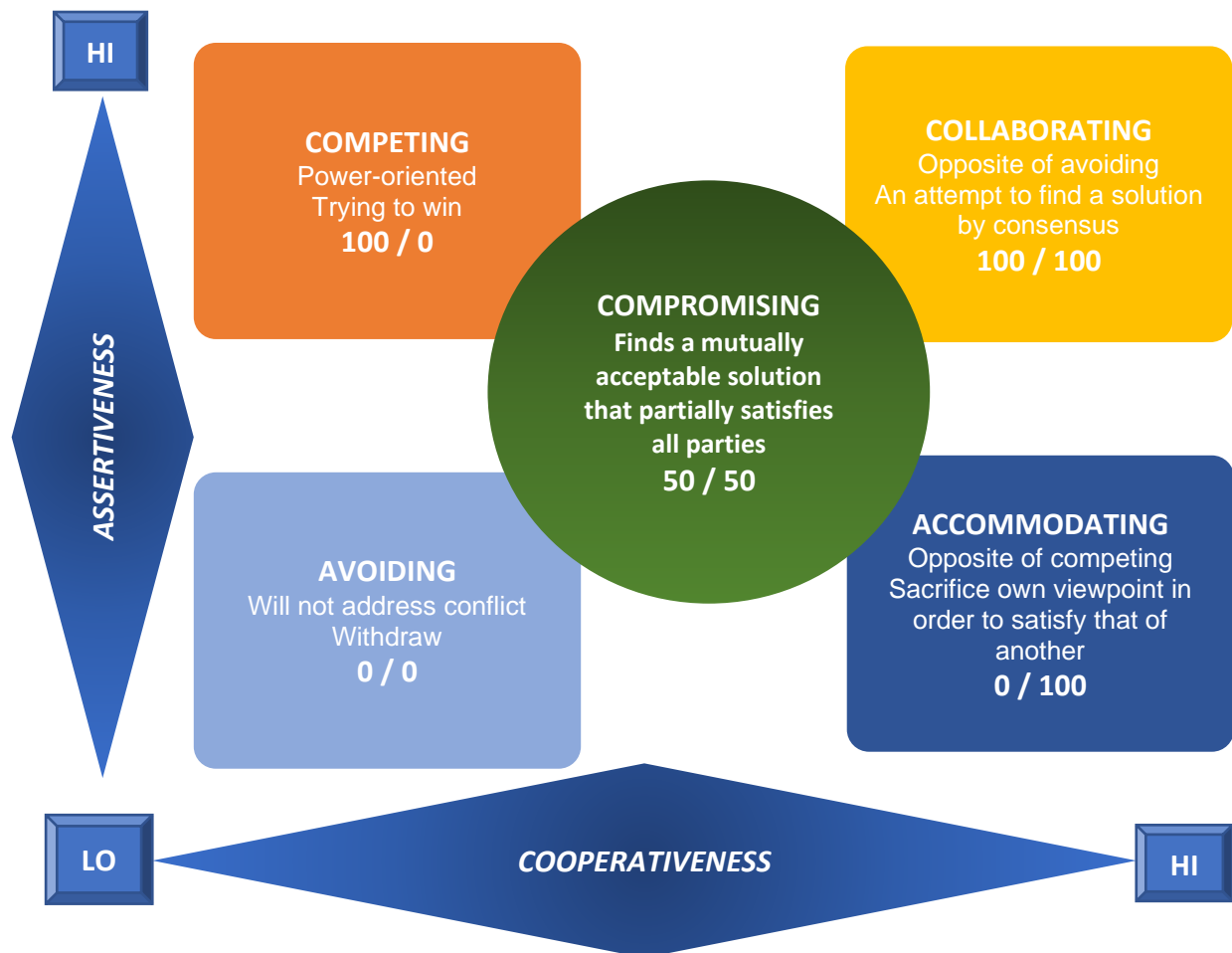
Evaluation: In our example, e.g. a few more times do we ask the complaining customers if everything has been okay since then?

Ask for regular feedback on the supplier's product from the customers. In case of newer problems, we can even think about whether it is worthwhile to continue working with the given supplier (producer), or what training is needed for the supplier to avoid further problems?

If we think through these steps and use the basics of communication (communication according to personality, style; understanding attention - ie. active, empathic listening) effectively, sooner or later we will not be afraid of conflicts.

There is another famous model on conflict management: Thomas - Kilmann's model of conflict management. This can also help to understand the way people manage conflicts and enable parties to apply the right strategy accordingly.

The 5 typical conflict management strategies identified by the authors are the following:



COMPETING STRATEGY

- High self-assertion
- Low collaboration
- Seeking dominant position

According to the competing party, only one person can be a winner in a conflict, so he will do his best to be the winner.

Typically, unable (not distracted) to listen to the other party.

ACCOMMODATING STRATEGY

- Low self-assertion
- High cooperation
- The complete opposite of a competing strategy

The adapting party fully accepts the interests of the other party and waives its interests, not expressing its own needs during the negotiation.

AVOIDING STRATEGY

- Low self-assertion
- Low collaboration
- The individual retreats before the problem ignore it, does not want to solve it
- Avoids discussion, does not give an opinion, escapes the situation.

COMPROMISING STRATEGY

- Medium self-assertion
- Medium cooperation
- It is halfway between the competitor and the adapter
- Its purpose is to find a solution that is acceptable to both parties
- The solution only partially meets the needs

The focus of problem-solving (conflict management) is on the people involved - you can already listen, you can already express an opinion, but the main goal is not to hurt the other and not hurt yourself (in your feelings).

COLLABORATING STRATEGY

- High self-assertion
- High cooperation
- The goal is to find a solution that works for both parties, without giving in to needs,
- The focus here is on the participants for the problem to be solved, and a truly creative solution process can unfold, as the goal is shared and the participants can listen to each other and are ready to express their arguments and needs.

This table summarises the typical behaviours of the 5 styles.

	The style	Typical behaviour
Thomas-Killmann's conflict management model <i>It examines typical ways of resolving conflicts. Indirectly, it indicates the motivations behind it.</i>	Competing	You have to win, the most important is your truth.
	Accommodating	He/she pushes his/her own needs into the background - slowly learning from him/her what motivates him/her.
	Avoiding	He/she gets away from the problem/conflict, he/she also needs to know what moves him/her.
	Compromising	He/she can stand up for himself/herself somewhat, and he/she is also able to listen to the other party to some extent. The focus is on the people in conflict (don't hurt or be hurt).
	Collaborating	He/she can stand up for himself/herself and be able to listen to others. In a conflict situation, the focus is on the problem.

Table 2: Thomas-Killmann's conflict management model.

CONCLUSION

Since humans are social beings, communication and conflict management are key areas in our life.

Almost all activities we do is some kind of communication, therefore the way we do it is of key importance. The common understanding is the basis for effective communication, it is essential to be aware of all features that may divert us from reaching it. Filters, noises in the communication process,

beliefs, fears, prejudice, assumptions in the background are all trying to distract us from understanding the other party and the situation, so be cautious when communicating! Also, the focus is not only on **what** you say but **how** you say (voice, body language, etc.). The good news, that communication skills can be developed in all ages, so just be open and emphatic and do things differently than before and success will follow.

Conflicts are also unavoidable, so don't be afraid of them. In most conflict situations it is much better to identify it than to keep it under the carpet for weeks/years, but how you do it is the key to success. If you are open to others in the conflict, respect them and understand them with empathy, and leave behind the intention to win 100%, a cooperative approach will lead to a better situation where all parties are happy after the conflict. Through conflicts, hidden mistakes and misunderstandings may be also resolved. Maybe a piece of good closing advice for conflicts could be, that after settling it, go out for a drink with the people involved, making friends eases everything.

RESOURCES

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/types-of-communication>

<https://medium.com/@raihamalik/effective-communication-5321d663ee5a>

<https://theinvestorsbook.com/effective-communication.html>

<https://greenleafcounseling.org/communication-filters/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/beyond-words/201109/is-nonverbal-communication-numbers-game>

<https://templaradvisors.com/blog/storytelling-effective-communication>

<https://discinsights.com/personality-style-d> , <https://discinsights.com/personality-style-i>,
<https://discinsights.com/personality-style-s>, <https://discinsights.com/personality-style-c>

https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop412A/2010-0019_konfliktus_kezeles/ch12.html, (in Hungarian)

https://regi.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop412A/2010-0019_konfliktus_kezeles/ch11.html (in Hungarian)

Leadership Skills

ABSTRACT

This chapter enumerates those skills which should have for a successful Rural Facilitator namely, time management, risk management, decision-making, and negotiation skills. These are individually and collectively helpful in building the SFSC, which is the ultimate goal in short food supply chain management. This chapter will explain why they are useful, and how these qualities may be used.

KEYWORDS

time management, risk management, decision-making, negotiation, leadership

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Rural facilitators assume the role of leaders for those whom they are assisting. It is therefore important that they develop certain skills which will empower them to be good leaders and affect greater changes. This chapter will explain which skills Rural Facilitators should focus on, as well as how they can practically use them.

The learning objectives of this chapter are:

- To develop a basic knowledge of what skills Rural Facilitators should have;
- To understand how these skills help Rural Facilitators assist their customers;
- To understand the ultimate impact of effective Rural Facilitation.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and explains the necessary leadership skills which should be possessed by a Rural Facilitator. The globalized nature of the modern world has caused the priorities, values, and needs of countless people and communities to change. Entire sectors have been forced to reevaluate the practices which have supported them for years, and the futures of many have been placed on a precarious precipice of uncertainty. In light of the expectation of modern reality, there is a need to adapt to globalisation and new purchasing trends. This chapter will seek to shed light on the concept of the successful leadership of “rural facilitators” and demonstrate how their particular skills, in the areas of especially time management, risk management, decision-making, and negotiations, help enable this adaption. This chapter will break down the qualities of covered topics and explain why these are especially helpful for ensuring the existence of an SFSC (short food supply chain) in areas that lack access otherwise to markets or products.

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Time management is an important component of modern life. Effective time management allows users to efficiently complete work in an organized, logical manner. It allows businesses and people to plan their operations in such a way as to maximise their workday and achieve optimal results. With better results, observers of time-management practices have an improved chance of surviving business competition and flourishing.

An organization’s leadership is its visible decision-making body, and so it should represent the operation and its workers. Time management begins with this leadership, as they can develop plans for envisioning and accomplishing goals that ultimately lends an operation success. In the agricultural sphere, leadership has to be keenly aware of the agrarian aspects of their work; preparing the land, planting,

harvesting, and delivering produce to the market must all occur on time with precision to avoid harming the product and gain maximum profit. Agricultural leaders are individuals whose experience and knowledge of the sector allow them to design plans with consideration of these details, an understanding of their manpower capacity, and awareness of financial constraints and goals. These plans will facilitate better cooperation with the rural facilitator, and so benefit the farmer, his workers, and consumers.

The concept of time management is similar to that of investments; the result of time management is to exploit resources to gain their maximum usage and attain the greatest return on invested funds and efforts (Adebis, J.f., 2012). It starts simply, with leadership organizing the workday as a reflection of the best usage of workers' time and in connection with their daily targets. Each team member should have personal goals which complement the group's goal - which in turn reflects the business's goal. In agriculture, this especially can be important as individuals may be part of a farm that is independently owned or community-owned. The latter calls into question the futures of families and communities, who rely on the farm and, ostensibly, on good operating practices.

In SFSC good time management patterns are crucial for success if more stakeholders work together. Just think about a farmers' shop where the shelves must be filled up every day and the logistics of fresh products require fast solutions.

TIPS FOR BETTER TIME MANAGEMENT

Marketing, administrative duties, market planning, and goal-projection are the main points that must be addressed. 50% devoted to the core function of the market, like interacting with vendors and customers. So, the main task is to prioritize these tasks and spend the appropriate time with the most and the less important ones.

First of all, categorizing tasks and dividing work time among them may help the Rural Facilitator to stay on-task and to use time wisely. The second step is to schedule activities and assign them a specific time for each of the specified categories so that none of them are overlooked. As a third step, the schedule can then feed into a list, which will ensure that nothing is forgotten or repeated. In this way, all activities which are necessary for the construction of a well-working SFSC cooperation can be properly conducted, and the chain will not have any missing links (Conney, F., 2018).

In all organisations leadership must have a vision for the organisation, be determined to achieve this vision, and remain focused on their end goals. And as a final note, time management can increase fidelity to the organisation, as those employees who feel their energies and capabilities are being taken into account may feel more connected with the work they are doing and so ultimately be more invested in the success of their employer.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The occurrence of risk is something that may be linked to negative effects in agriculture. It has been defined as the possibility of a catastrophic event that can cause a situation to change (Quinn, F., 2006). The change might result in something positive, but it could also have unfortunate economic or security impacts. Risk threatens the supply chain as its occurrence can touch people or processes anywhere, from the supplier to the consumer to the end-state goals of the farmer/individual/company, and it can affect more than one part of this chain at any time (Paulson, U., 2005). The risk may happen in both the operations themselves or their strategic plan. It may occur to the operations or to the partners, and it is shrouded in uncertainty, which makes it all the more dangerous.

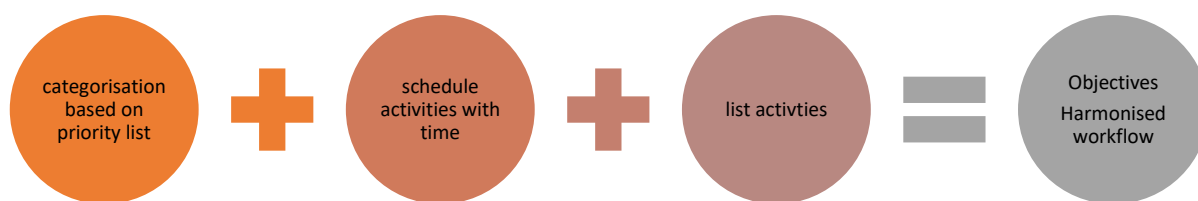


Figure 30 Harmonised workflow. Source: own composition.

In agriculture, risks to the supply chain may affect the output, the volume of the output, the value of the output, the consumers, and the suppliers themselves. Supply chain risks involve danger to the chain, damage to the goods, and injury to the consumer and producer (Harland, C., Richard B., & Helen, W., 2003). Further, these risks may even be internal elements of the chain, and thereby involving the producer and production, or external- thus extending to and involving consumers (Bryceson K. P., & Smith C. S., 2008). As the members of the supply chain work closely with each other to facilitate outcomes, risks ultimately impact each person and area. Agricultural risks may be classified as natural (i.e. environmental, weather, biological, etc.) or market- related (including logistics, infrastructure, policy, etc.). In and of themselves, these risks are problematic enough. Compounded together, they can be devastating to farmers. For example, a flood might immediately impact crops and livestock. But at the same time, it may also severely impact the transportation means a farmer uses to transport his products to consumers. The farmer is thus unable to sell, and consumers are unable to buy. Both sides of the food chain are affected by one original cause that triggered additional risks (Jaffee, S., Siegel, P., & Andrews, C., 2010).

One method of combating risk which might prove helpful is the formation of a board that can monitor clients and watch for growth or loss trends, observe client-producer relations, and estimate the risk producers are agreeing to when engaging in the market. This acts as a type of risk prevention as well as risk management. Board members should be SFSC or agricultural experts who can offer advice and guidance for Rural Facilitators and producers. A board can be a helpful way to mitigate potential risks and address current risks. Rural Facilitators must strive to maintain situational awareness and understand the regulations, legislation, and needs of the market and the producers involved in this particular step of the SFSC (Market Manager's Training Manual, 2010).

NATURAL RISKS

Weather-related problems are a persistent threat that immediately affects farmers, consumers, and the economy. The economy suffers as a result of the supply chain's weakening from weather patterns and unexpected events (Maccini, S., & Yang, D., 2009). Even though poor weather conditions are beyond the control of mankind, they may still significantly interrupt the operations of communication, transportation, and the energy industries. Each of these impact farmers and consumers considerably, especially as they struggle to cope with the subsequent loss of market availability (Jaffee, S., Siegel, P., & Andrews, C., 2010). In 2012, this was visible in the United States. 80% of agricultural land was affected by drought, which in turn caused the buyers, processors, and traders to suffer. The entire American supply chain was compromised in some way by the uncontrollable ecological occurrences (USD, 2012).

Aside from the weather, biological risks are also naturally occurring problems. These are most often visible in gene expressions or diseases, the latter of which is often seen taking place in dairy, pig, and

poultry farming but pests can affect plant production as well (Baltussen et al., 2006). Of the many maladies which might affect livestock, those which are especially concerning are contagious diseases, as their impact can be easily echoed all across the supply chain. This, in turn, endangers markets and consumers. Such risk is not new and may most recently be pinpointed at the Wuhan fish market, where the infamous COVID-19 is believed to have originated from. However, we can mention some European examples which take this topic into account. For example, in 2011 E.coli infection on cucumber origin from Egypt caused 53 deaths in Germany, or the fear from bluetongue disease (Lebeau, P., 2021) launched the short food chains in France in the 90s'. To mitigate the effects of disease the most important rule to follow is hygiene. This could also positively impact the environment, as good hygienic operational practices will ensure cleaner workspaces and more cautious waste eradication.

MARKET-RELATED RISKS

Having explained possible natural risks, it is now important to consider „man-made” risks which threaten the SFSC. These are categorized as „market-related risks” since they are associated with and impact directly the market, the consumer, and the producer. These include:

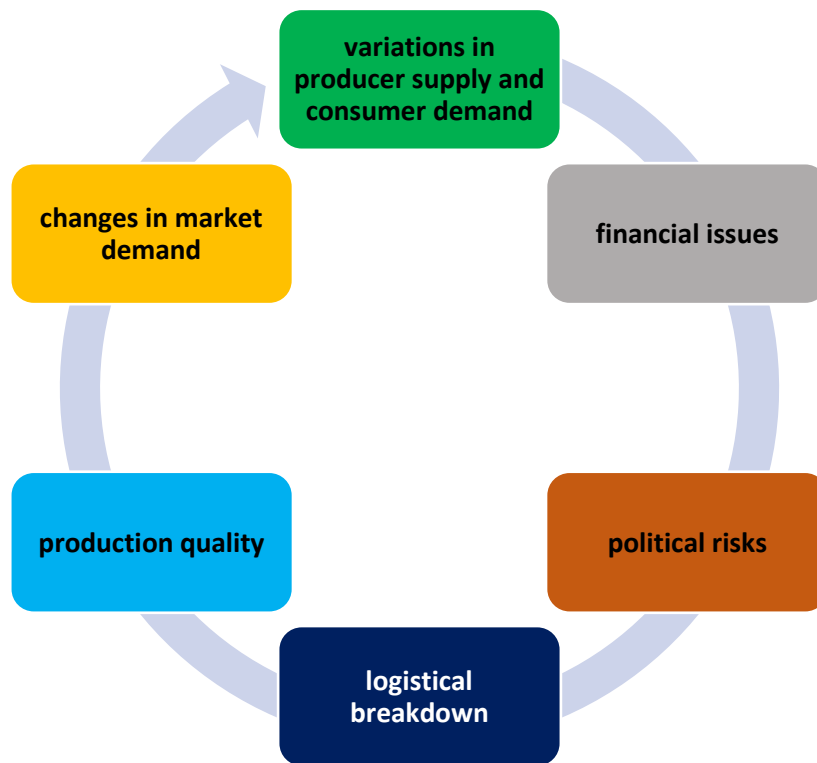


Figure 31 Market Related Risks. Source: own composition.

Agriculture's supply chain is the result of supply versus demand. Some risks related to the supply chain come from either physical occurrences, such as disruption in production thanks to mechanical malfunction, or problems with demand, such as customer needs, customer beliefs, food safety regulations, supply chain reputational changes, supply chain dependability, and price changes (Jaffee, S., Siegel, P., & Andrews, C., 2010). These factors then distort the previously made projections (devised by farmers and companies) which were planned following the market's demonstrated needs. The consequence is that marketing campaigns, pricing schemes, promotional efforts, and quantity rationing are disrupted and must be recalculated. The supply chain is also calculated in such a way that it should reflect the needs of the market. When these needs are reconfigured (by natural occurrences, population

mobilization, change of dietary preferences, etc.) the supply chain must also be redesigned to again meet the demands at the chain. In SFSC the main risk is the lack of knowledge on consumers' habits and trends and the way to adapt effectively to these factors. In many European countries, researchers pointed out that those farmers could operate their business adequately who had deeper marketing knowledge or whose cooperation was able to pay for experts.

The quality of the means of production, as well as of the product itself, has the potential to affect agriculture. Rural facilitators may wish to stop this problem before it starts by understanding the farmer's production capabilities. Consumer demands should be ostensibly compared with the quality potential of producers to determine if these demands may be feasibly met.

Logistical risks may be coupled with infrastructural risks. A good's availability and its arrival to the market are closely interconnected with available means of energy and information, as both of these tools affect its transportation. Logistics ensure primarily that production can occur on a scale that is large enough to meet consumer demand. However, they also aim to guarantee that the outcome of this production is successfully delivered to consumers and thus becomes a financial success for the producer. Logistics address how a product will be shipped, where, when it will be delivered and what the cost of delivery will be (Aghazadeh, S., 2004). Logistics are more encompassing than just delivery, though. They also determine how orders are processed, produced, marketed, and commercially used (Jaffee, S., Siegel, P., & Andrews, C., 2010). Logistics must be used to consider everything from labour (which includes costs, type, and usage) to transportation (encompassing costs, type, and usage) to legal issues (such as tariffs, taxes, border crossings, and regulations). They must be considered at every point on the supply chain, as their effective usage will have positive outcomes for all involved. In SFSC the maintenance of the cold chain must be also considered as it required special facilities from farmers. Facilitators should help producers to use the most adequate equipment based on their products. It shall be mentioned here that the market provides many innovative solutions for farmers to decrease the risk of logistics like farmers' vending machines, drive-in, drive services etc.

A brief mention regarding political risk factors must also be made. The political risk factor is often mentioned as the most difficult factor in the organization of short food supply chains. The reason is that the stakeholders of the SFSCs are generally the smallest producers who use traditional knowledge, methods to produce local foods. The traditional methods are not widely used due to their hygienic risks so the sale is permitted on the local basis where the sellers and consumers know each other. These diverse local and traditional methods make the harmonization of policies complicated as there are no rules which fit all. The other side of the policy risks is the innovative properties of logistics, sale solutions which would demand innovative tax, labour, trade laws too. The third point is the supporting policies that fit bigger producers whose main income comes from conventional agricultural products. They are the main beneficiaries of European and national grants. Since the farmers of SFSCs are generally small farmers or diversified family companies who live from rural tourism, other rural services, processing etc. To sum up the facilitators have a crucial role to mitigate the political risks by following rules and policies. Moreover, political risks are generally difficult to predict and measure and the support and possibilities of European small farmer and SFSC actors depend on two levels: national and European.

Risks are ever-present elements in life. In the agricultural sector, risks are either natural or man-made. Rural facilitators must confront these risks to effectively fulfil their obligations to producers and consumers. To effectively address risks, the rural facilitator should consider which other spheres the risks affect, who may be impacted, and what the level of impact will be. As with the case of natural risks, it is not always possible to completely avoid the occurrence of something negative. However, identifying the risks and understanding their potential is the first step in effectively addressing risks.

NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiation “is a process where the interests of two or more parties are harmonized to achieve a common outcome” (Worldagroforestry, 2013). For Rural Facilitators, this is the process of communication between rural producers and suppliers. They are used to grant farmers access to markets which they would not otherwise be able to enter. To understand how this happens, it is necessary to use what may be seen as “diplomacy”. In this sense, diplomacy is the effort of the rural facilitator to open and enable communication between the farmer and the markets, using their understanding of the farmer’s needs and abilities and the market’s needs and capabilities.

Regarding the farmer, diplomacy needs to recognize the farmer’s reality and his farm’s capacity and capabilities. From the market’s point of, this demands a knowledge of what is otherwise available to the consumers and what they lack.



Figure 32 Farmer's market. Source: <https://www.slowfood.com/slow-food-earth-markets-a-farmers-market-like-no-other/>.

One such way to build this relationship is through the organization of farmer's markets. These gather small farmers together in specific areas and use advertisements to let consumers know about the availability of fresh produce and fruits. The advertisement which is both external and internal to the farmer's market may allow consumers to know the certain aspects of their farmers which inspire trust in the farmer's products and foster a bond between the farmer and the consumer. Points that highlight the farm's originality, such as farms being organically run, managed by women farmers, or implementing novel agricultural methods all make the farm attractive to the consumer (Buila, S. B., 2014). When consumers can see the farmer, taste the difference in the food they have purchased, and learn about what makes their supplier unique, it encourages the growth of a psychological bond that builds customer loyalty. Over time, the bond will become stronger, and the consumer's loyalty will spread to others via “word of mouth”. As more people are drawn to the farmer's market, the farmer has a chance to make higher profits locally, and so reduce his transportation costs. This also benefits the farmer, who

will gain more insightful knowledge of his customers and be able to determine what they are more likely to buy, what their preferences in purchases are in the long-term, and so be able to plan his future planting in such a way as to accommodate the needs/desires of the local market.

Farmer's markets are not the only answer to finding outlets for farmers to sell their products. But they are a beginning solution that uses diplomacy. Rural facilitators can use them to gauge the needs of the local market and determine other possible methods for allowing farmers to sell their produce directly to customers. Through the usage of diplomacy, and thereby taking the time to understand farmers, customers, and the needs and goals of both, markets can be established, and long-term relationships fostered which will allow both parties to benefit.

Negotiation is a crucial part of the Rural Facilitator's work as the prices associated with the Short Food Supply Chain (SFSC) impact both ends of the supply chain- affecting the suppliers and the consumers. Farmers themselves may not be aware of the importance of negotiation, nor be well-versed in how to effectively negotiate in their favour. In these cases, Rural Facilitators may introduce the farmer to the idea of "increased negotiating power". According to the European Commission, "increased negotiating power" gives the party in question a greater weight in negotiating their contracts. With this weight, they can guarantee themselves fair terms in the contract and effectively gain the access necessary to engage in public markets or markets which exist on a larger scale. Further, their voice will gain the required strength to attract the attention of decision-makers to those particular issues which are most pertinent to their own lives ([European Commission, 2015](#)).

Although negotiating is attractive, it is worth noting that this advice is generally intended for medium and large suppliers, as smaller suppliers would be unable to afford the negotiating costs for their products. Price negotiating is not only extended to suppliers; the consumer is also regarded as a part of this process. The SFSC price may even be agreed on (through negotiation) by the consumers and the farmers after their interactions have become frequent and a relationship has been built ([Belletti, G., Marescotti, A., 2020](#)). The services of Rural Facilitators may be used in this area to provide logistical assistance to the local markets who are looking for goods and the devising of marketing techniques on the part of producers. Further, Rural Facilitators may prove invaluable especially in the delicate process of forming joint marketing platforms. These will allow producers to have a meeting place where they can interact with stores that are looking to carry their products. The final point of negotiation where Rural Facilitators are quite needed in the retail world, where negotiating over costs, prices, and supplies is a delicate process. Farmers need not undergo this process alone, especially when they might be unaware of any procedural guidelines which may be of assistance to their efforts. Rural facilitators will ensure that both the farmer and the retailer receive compensation for their efforts that is fair and equal to the efforts expended ([Belletti, G., Marescotti, A., 2020](#)).

Conflict management is an important part of the Rural Facilitator's job. Conflict may not appear as obvious as two individuals shouting at each other; it can be manifested in differences in billing, organizational failures, disagreement, and cultural differences. Wherever there is more than one opinion there can be conflict. What is important is for the Rural Facilitator to be the calm intermediary, using their knowledge of the problem, the involved parties, and the desired solution. They must act considerately, regardless of personality differences or feelings. This is best done when actively listening, as once the Rural Facilitator understands all parties (their opinions, their reasons for disagreement, and their end goals) they can more surely formulate a solution to the conflict. When the conflict is resolved, the parties and the Rural Facilitator will find themselves another step closer to securing the SFSC's formation ([Farmers Market Manager Training Manual, 2009](#)).

NEGOTIATIONS AND RISK

Although farmers markets are a great way to connect farmers with consumers, the formation of an SFSC may not be straight forward. There can be several mishaps in approaching the farmers market idea. Farmers may be enthusiastic about selling their produce but unsure of how to display their products, advertise their offer, or appeal to customers. Rural Facilitators can foster a greater understanding of the market and solidify this step in the SFSC by working with farmers to develop their knowledge of advertisement methods, as well as local government regarding the selling of goods. This requires knowledge of local rules, local markets, and a personal connection with the farmers and producers. The personal factor gives the farmer or producer the feeling of respect or understanding which will encourage them to open up to the rural facilitator and discuss their knowledge deficits or needs so that the Facilitator may better assist them. Such a relationship is built over time, and patience is needed, especially when the selling environment may seem less than ideal. Important points to remember are communication and patience, as local intricacies may not be obvious and the farmer's personality and needs must also be considered. The Rural Facilitator gives expertise to the farmer but is also a sort of support system to help them through the bureaucratic and practical aspects of the farmers market step in the SFSC ([Farmers Market Management Skills: Farmers Market Management Series, 2005](#)).

Associations may be formed between farmers, between farmers and the government, and farmers and entrepreneurial groups. They are often formed locally and are not part of larger, official agricultural systems ([United Nations, 2020](#)). Each of these partnerships can focus on a specific aspect of :

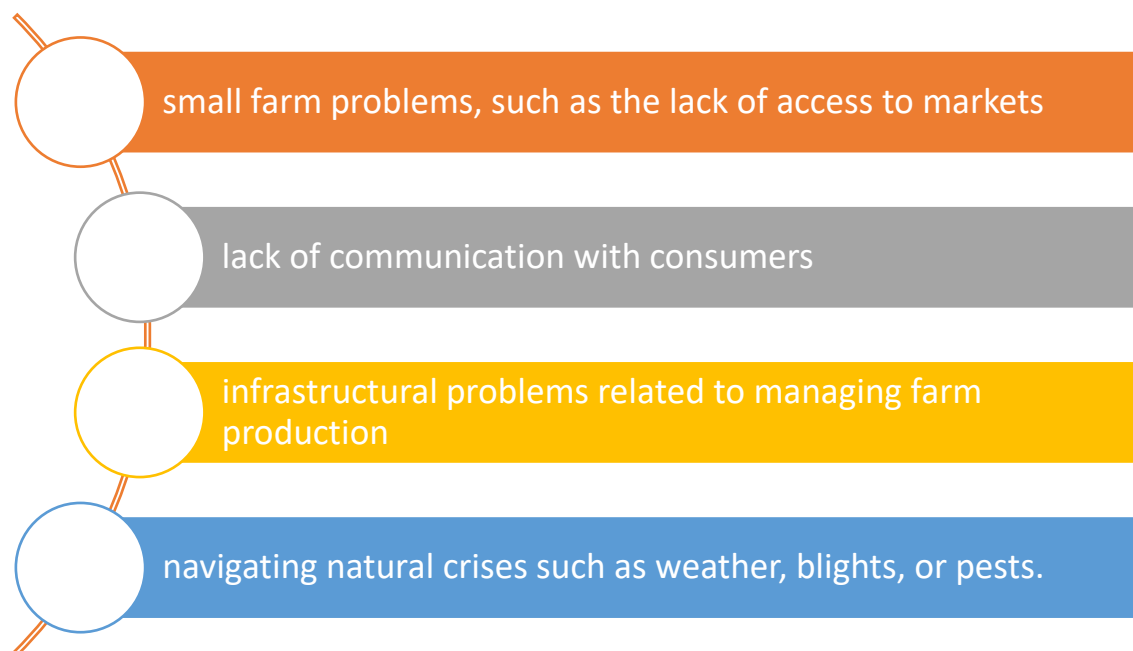


Figure 33 Specific aspects of partnerships. Source: own composition.

These crises can be devastating to the livelihood of farmers. However, with the assistance of larger groups and overseeing bodies, farmers can navigate these times and recalculate their projections. Rural facilitators can work to not only overcome current problems afflicting farmers, but also to look into the long-term and anticipate problems, develop plans to overcome them, and so give farmers some degree of control over otherwise uncontrollable elements. Having control could have manifold results; the United Nations's World Food Programme (UN WFP) suggested that if solutions and support were made available to agricultural partners in the case of female farmers, for example, their farm production alone

would increase output which could ease the food security needs of nearly 150 million people ([World Food Programme, 2021](#)).

Rural Facilitators are faced with the issue of expanding the customer base of farmers, who often rely on local bases. In larger cities, this problem is just as critical as many consumers who wish to have healthier dietary habits might not have access to fresh produce. Rural Facilitators can therefore utilize smallholder programmes, such as the “Purchase for Progress” initiative or the “Market Alliance” group, which plan and implement investment initiatives that bring farmers to markets and educate them on consumer needs which motivate them to implement crop diversification practices and investigate different business prospects ([World Food Programme, 2021](#)). The result is a win-win scenario, as farmers will become increasingly more secure in their commercial prospects and consumers will gain access to healthier foods. On both sides of the equation, lifestyles will have the possibility to be improved and altered for the better.

Rural facilitators may also increase a farmer’s transactions by exploring alternative markets. Generally, when one considers a “consumer base” for produce, the immediate thought is of individuals or families. However, there are numerous other consumers on the market for whom Rural Facilitators can be the means of connection for farmers. Schools, hospitals, homeless shelters, and even armed forces groups all require nutritious food in large amounts. The problem is how to contact the farmers, and for the farmers how to negotiate their way into contracts. Rural facilitators can effectively be the “go-between” which connects these two groups and puts them into a mutually beneficial partnership.

Rural facilitators can be utilized to increase the market access of local farmers by raising consumer awareness and forming partnerships between consumers and farmers, as well as between farmers themselves. In this way, market-customer relationships are established and grown, partnerships between farmers are encouraged, and food-chain stability is assured. Entrepreneurial groups may be used to foster these relations and continue developing innovative ideas to connect consumers with producers. Farmers need customers, and customers need healthy food which is reliably produced. Rural facilitators can make sure these two groups meet. The challenge is to use diplomacy to build sustainable relationships that operate in the long term.

DECISION MAKING

The final point for discussion regarding the necessary leadership skills of a rural facilitator is the ability to successfully engage in the decision-making process. With their background knowledge and professional approach to commercial endeavours, Rural Facilitators can be strong advocates for the farmers with whom they work, and useful for the commercial enterprises they facilitate communication. They can expedite and conclude decision-making processes that might otherwise be left unresolved for long periods. Decision-making acts as a summarization of the Rural Facilitator’s skills, as the ability to secure a decision that benefits the farmer and his market comes from strong leadership, an understanding of risk management, and effective negotiation skills. Capable leaders can weigh the risks and negotiate optimal deals.

Conclusion

The Rural Facilitator uses the skills of time management, risk management, decision- making, and negotiation skills to ensure the existence of an SFSC in those areas which are unable to access fresh markets or products. Time management allows the Rural Facilitator to take count of all necessary tasks and formulate them into manageable lists. Decision-making skills help to decide from that list what is immediately important and what can be done later to keep the momentum moving towards the achievement of goals. Finally, negotiation is something necessary to successfully achieve the SFSC.

Negotiations between producers, suppliers, transportation, and markets all must be concluded with a respect towards the individuals and businesses involved, as well as a keen consideration towards final goals. By using time management, risk management, decision-making, and negotiation skills, the Rural Facilitator can ensure the usage of the SFSC and so benefit the farmers and consumers, as well as all associated parties.

Resources

Negotiations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxNglyucl70>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RW3TiF-OTRc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkKObd3wFVc>

Decision making

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7Jnmi2BkS8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkyzYjPuxK8>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPIhAm_WGbQ

Risk management

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o80PflGYVvI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JwnRF-6YOI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWvq7RGD5eU>

Time management

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tzL7azr_Hw

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9sQQ8lQYdM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PiHGTZJvmw>

GLOSSARY

Active listening: a process of analysing and evaluating what another person is saying to understand the speaker's feelings or the true meaning of the message.

Box scheme: the consumer purchases a box of goods every week, or in a defined period, which was produced at the given farm.

Brainstorming: a technique designed to foster group productivity by encouraging interacting group members to express their ideas in a non-critical fashion.

Brand: a brand is an identifying symbol, mark, logo, name, word, and/or sentence that companies use to distinguish their product from others. A combination of one or more of those elements can be utilized to create a brand identity. Legal protection given to a brand name is called a trademark.

Business Model Canvas: is a strategic management tool that lets you visualize and assess your business idea or concept. It is a one-page document containing nine boxes that represent different fundamental elements of a business.

Business Plan: is a written document that describes in detail how a business — usually a startup — defines its objectives and how it is to go about achieving its goals. A business plan lays out a written roadmap for the firm from each a marketing, financial, and operational standpoint.

Code: a set of rules or symbols used to translate a message from one form to another.

Communication competence: an ability to take part in effective communication, which is characterized by skills and understandings that enable communication partners to exchange messages successfully.

Communication flow: a direction (upward, downward, horizontal) messages travel through the networks in an organization.

Community-supported **agriculture:** consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or philosophically, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. (US Department of Agriculture)

Conflict: a disagreement or argument between two or more people.

Culture: traditions and patterns of thought which are passed down through generations of people.

Decision Making: the individual or group process of choosing a preferred option through the identification of a decision that needs to be made, gathering and analysing information related to this decision, and weighing all available options before making a selection.

Decoding: a process of translating a message into the thoughts or feelings that were communicated.

Food hygiene: food hygiene is defined as 'the measures and conditions necessary to control hazards and to ensure fitness for human consumption of a foodstuff taking into account its intended use'.⁹ EU food law is science-based.

Food system: all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the output of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.

Ikigai: is a Japanese word whose meaning translates roughly to a reason for being, encompassing joy, a sense of purpose and meaning and a feeling of well-being. In business, the incorporation of the elements of ikigai to an entrepreneur's focus is thought to yield the highest levels of entrepreneur's engagement and productivity while also fostering job satisfaction and the highest possible value to the customer.

Interaction: an exchange of communication in which communicators take turns sending and receiving messages.

Intermediary: is a third party that acts between two or more trading parties and as a conduit for goods or services in the supply chain.

Market-related **risks:** a risk concerning the potentiality of an investment decreasing as a result of market fluctuations.

Marketing mix: a marketing mix refers to the set of actions, or tactics, that a company uses to promote its brand or product in the market. The 4Ps make up a typical marketing mix - Price, Product, Promotion and Place.

Message: a stimulus to which meanings are attributed in communication.

Motivation: a desire or willingness to do something, such as to change behaviour.

Natural risks: a risk resulting from natural occurrences which can negatively impact the world and its inhabitants.

Negotiations: a formal discussion method by which people seek a tolerable compromise to avoid devolution into a conflict.

Organizational structure: the formal configuration between individuals and groups concerning the allocation of tasks, responsibilities, and authorities within organizations. The formally prescribed pattern of interrelationships existing between the various units of an organization.

Pick your own: Is a type of farm gate direct marketing (farm-to-table) strategy where the emphasis is on customers doing the harvesting themselves.

Relocalization: is a strategy to build societies based on the local production of food, energy and goods, and the local development of currency, governance and culture. The main goals of relocalization are to increase community energy security, strengthen local economies, and improve environmental conditions and social equity. The relocalization strategy developed in response to the environmental, social, political and economic impacts of global over-reliance on cheap energy.

Risk Management: the process of identifying, understanding, evaluating, and ordering actual and possible risks to best determine how to act and how to use available resources in such a way the most positive result is achieved.

Role: a typical behaviour that characterizes a person in a specific social context. A position, or status, within a social structure that is shaped by relatively precise behavioural expectations (norms).

Rural Facilitator: an individual who stands between rural agricultural producers and markets and facilitates the supply and purchasing process.

Short food supply chain: a configuration of the food production-distribution-consumption process tailored to enabling local producers to place their goods on the market in a manner accessible to all potential customers.

Small-scale (smallholder) farming is defined in different ways that also vary from country to country. The most widely used definition of smallholder refers to those farms of less than 2.0 hectares.

Team: a group whose members have complementary skills and are committed to a common purpose or set of performance goals for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.

Time Management: the process of understanding time needs and planning accordingly to increase the overall efficiency of work, effective completion of work, and productivity while at work.

Value Proposition Canvas: is a tool that can help ensure that a product or service is positioned around what the customer values and needs.

Value(s): relatively general cultural prescriptions of what is right, moral and desirable. Values provide the broad foundations for specific normative regulation of social interaction. A general, relatively long-lasting ideal that guides behaviour.

Vending machine: is an automated machine that provides products, typically fresh milk from local producers, located in several points of the city.

Vulnerability: people exposed to the possibility of being physically or emotionally harmed.

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