Good Practice Report

AGROECOLOGICAL FARMERS' MARKET - ZARAGOZA

Premises

0.1) Describe the Social and Economic situation in the Country

The economy of the Spanish State, like that of most of Southern European countries, is immersed in the economic cycle initiated with the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008, which reached its peak in 2011 with the property bubble burst. These events had a decisive impact on the economy due to the strategic weight of the financial and housing sector in Spain.

However, the Spanish economy has been experiencing changes since 2014 regarding the main macroeconomic data, which has generated major discussions between the main economic analysts in the country, ranging from imminent catastrophe scenarios to encouraging sets of arguments. At present, these scenarios are still further polarized, if possible, due to the intense election year with four electoral processes (regional elections in Catalonia and Andalusia, regional and municipal elections in the entire Spanish State and general elections for the Presidency of the Government[1]), marked by the emergence of new political forces that can undermine and reshape the political balance on which the party system was built since the establishment of the liberal parliamentary democracy in Spain.

Concerning the main macroeconomic data, the year 2014 was a turning point from the recessionary trend and stagnation that characterised the years preceding the economic crisis. For the first time in five years, the Gross Domestic Product grew by 1.4% as compared to the previous year, maintaining the trend during 2015 with an estimated annual growth rate of 3.1%.[2] The contribution of domestic demand to GDP growth has equally improved, mainly due to the effect of private consumption, which registered an annual growth rate of 2.2%; while the contribution of domestic demand was negative in 2013 (-2.7%) , it reached positive numbers in 2014, contributing

[1]Within the framework of the Autonomy Statutes that underpin the territorial organization and the legal relations of the different Autonomous Communities with the central government, Andalusia and Catalonia have powers allowing them to call elections to their corresponding parliaments independently.

[2]The macroeconomic data were extracted from the Bank of Spain's Annual Report for 2014 and the Bank of Spain's reports for the first and second quarters of 2015.

to the GDP growth by 2.2%. Conversely, foreign demand maintains a negative balance of -0.8% in 2015, unlike previous years when it played an important role. This has led to a certain downturn in terms of growth expectations estimated by the country's Government and main economic institutions.

These data allowed the Bank of Spain and the government-related sectors to forecast a scenario of "economic consolidation and recovery" that is largely in contrast with the rates of unemployment and quality of the new jobs. Although the employment rate increased by 2.1% in 2014 and 2015, the unemployment rate is still extremely high compared to the period preceding the outset of the crisis (21.8%), with 4.8 million unemployed people - a figure establishing Spain as the country with the second highest unemployment rate in the European Union behind Greece. At the same time, employment remains immersed in a process of progressive precariousness reflected in the Social Security contributions, which for the first time in ten years registered higher levels of labour force having temporary or part-time contracts (52%), as compared to 48% of permanent and full-time contracts.

As a result, the economy is growing at an approximate annual rate of 3%, while wage depreciation continues to deteriorate, ramping up all the inequality indicators. In 2013, Spain occupied the fifth position in the Gini index[3] only behind Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Greece and Portugal. During the period 2007-2011, Spain ranked first among OECD countries in terms of growing inequality. The number of people having assets over EUR 1 million in Spain has increased by 24% during 2014, i.e. 13 percentage points above 2013 [4]. At the same time, around 42% of Spanish households reported not being able to bear unexpected expenses of more than 650€, while 17% of households reported difficulties in making ends meet. [5]

0.2) Describe the Social and Economic situation in the territory

Aragón has an area of 47,719 Km2, which is equivalent to 9.4% of the national territory and 1.1% of the total area of 28 EU countries. With a population of 1,325,825 in 2014[6], the population distribution of the region by provinces is very unequal. 72.4% of the population of Aragon lives in

[3] [1] FEC Foundation report (2014), Eurostat data.
[4] Idem.
[5] Idem.
[6] Aragon Institute of Statistics.

the province of Zaragoza, whereas 17% lives in Huesca and 10.6% inTeruel, the two least populated provinces of Spain. Comparing this data to the size of the Aragon territory, Zaragoza comes out as a region of low population density in relation to the whole country, with an average of 28.3 persons/Km2. The population pyramid of the Autonomous Communities, and also of the State, has an inverse character showing that in elderly groups the indicators are above the national average, with the aging index in Aragon being 110 (compared to the Spanish total of 88.5) and the overageing index of 16.6 (opposed to 14% at the national level).

Regarding the economic situation of Aragon, the main macroeconomic data establish Aragon as a region with very unequal GDP per capita based on the territorial zones and a GVA shows a high concentration of the economic structure of the region in the service sector. The rates of annual variation of the GDP in Aragon are very similar to those throughout Spain. The recession starts in 2008 with an important fall of the GDP with 3.7% points in comparison to the previous year. The development of the GDP stays negative until 2014 (with a minimal increase in 2010), when, for the first time in sixs years, the indicators begin to show positive economic growth. In 2014 the economy of Aragon grew 1.7%, mantaining positive in 2015 with a variation rate of 2.8% in comparison to the previous year. This establishes Aragon as the tenth of all the Autonomous Communities in terms of absolute GDP and below the national GDP in 2015 (3.1%). In terms of per capita GDP, which indicates the amount of money the population has at disposal for consumption and savings, Aragon gets to the sixth position of all Antonomous Communities.[7]. Regarding the GDP per capita in Aragon, the numbers are similar to those of the State, although slightly over the national average. In 2010 Aragon was positioned as the fifth Autonomous Community in GDP per capita. Disaggregating the GDP by provinces we get a more detailed picture of one of the peculiarities of Aragon region; the strong inequality in the generation of wealth at internal level by provinces. While Huesca and Teruel contribute to the regional GDP by 16% and 10% respectively, Zaragoza concentrates 74% during the last two decades. This shows a strong concentration of wealth in the urban area of Zaragoza and its suburbs, a quite different economic situation compared to the rest of Autonomous Communities.

[7] However, it is important to take into account that this indicator does not measure either the inequality between the inhabitants of a same region or the negative social and ecological externalities that can produce the economic growth, which is why that last data should be downgraded, since it is an economy with the important extractive sector as well as an important concentration of population and economy in the province of Zaragoza.

In regard to the productive structure and its relation to the entire economy of Spain, the service sector is the one with the highest contribution to the Gross Value Added in 2014 (60.6%), Aragon maintains a certain degree of industrial specialization above the national average (1.4% more), whereas its manufacturing industry has up to four percentage points above the average. In terms of the contribution to the national GDP by sectors, the agricultural sector (5.5%), the energy sector (5.2%) and the industry (4.2%) are the most outstanding sectors. The importance of the extractive industries based on wood, energy and water plays an important role in the economy of Aragon.

In terms of employment, all sectors have been directly affected by the economic financial crisis, in particular since 2008. The data show en increase of unemployment rates since then[8]. In 2008, the unemployment rate in Aragon was at the same level as the EU average. Nevertheless, at present time it is almost double than EU average. This data show the impact of the crisis on Aragon, which, nevertheless, is minor than the impact on Spain as a whole, with an unemployment rate of 17%, quite below the national average and which in the third trimester of 2015 was 21.8%. Between 2014 and 2015, the employment rate increased 4.4%, and the service sector offered most job opportunities, with near 329,900 jobs, 66.6% of total employment in Aragon. However, if we look at the increase rates by sectors between these two years, the sectors that created the most jobs in 2015 comparted to 2014 are agriculture, with 6,900 new jobs, which means 25.4% of new jobs in this sector, followed by the construction industry with 4.300 jobs, with an increase of 14.78%; while the service sector decreases 0.63%.

Since the conditions of paid employment got more insecure in Spain, in 2014 for the first time in ten years the rate of insured persons with indefinite work contract was inferior for the first time (48%) to the persons with temporary contract or part-time contract (52%), this trend seems less drastic in Aragon. The annual variation in comparison to 2014 shows an increas of 8.49% in persons employed full-time while the workers with part-time contract decreases by 5.57%. However, if we compare the data in 2015 with 2008, the year of the outbreak of the crisis, the data show a sharp downturn in the hiring conditions with an increase by 21.8% in temporary and part-time hiring while the full-time jobs were reduced by 18.21%. [9]

[8] Aragon Institute for Statistics.
[9] Source Trade Union (Comisiones Obreras - CCOO) Aragon, 2015.

In the matter of Social Services, the indicators for Aragon are positioned at the intermediate level compared to the Spanish total. In education, it is important to point out that Aragon[10] is the Autonomous Community with the highest variation in spending compared to 2013, cutting budgets by 10.75%, which could have a negative impact in the long run. In the health sector, according to the Federation of Associations of Defense of Public Health, in 2014 Aragon had one of the best health services in Spain, right after the Basque Country and Navarre[11].

0.3) Describe the Social and Solidarity Economy Organizations´ role in this context

In 2013, Social and Solidarity Economy institutions represented approximately 3.5% of the regional GDP, creating 20,000 jobs[12]. In that same year, there were 69 Employment Centres, 10 firms for providing jobs for the unemployed, 1.499 worker-owned businesses and 390 Foundations. Cooperatives are the most common legal framework in Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in Aragon, with 2.075. The worker cooperatives were the most numerous (1,293), while the agricultural cooperatives had the highest number of partners (39,810), far above the rest.

Since the agricultural sector is still an important one in the region, above the national average, cooperatives play an important role being a direct supplier of the agro-food industry, providing inputs in cattle production, as well as being a direct exporter. At the same time, the number of organic product suppliers in Aragon has been growing constantly since 1995. Based on the data by the Aragon Committee of Organic Farming, since the beginning of the economic crisis, organic farming has grown as a sector, although we have no access to official data regarding the percentage of organic farming carried out inside the SEE framework.

In any case, there has been an important progress in the field of Social and Solidarity Economy in Aragon. While the Alternative and Solidarity Economy Network (REAS) -ARAGON was founded in 2001, in the past five years some initiatives and new organizations related to Social and Solidarity Economy have emerged. On the one hand, the Social Market of Aragon was established in 2009. It is a cross-cutting cooperative that includes several Social and Solidarity Economy organisations, and its goal is the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services based upon

[10] Report General Union for Workers (UGT) 2015. Cost by Autonomous Communities in Education.

[11] Report FADSP 2015. Health service of the Autonomous Communities.

[12] The Spanish Enterprise Confederation of the Social Economy (CEPES) ARAGÓN, 2013.

solidarity criteria. Its member organisations, fundamentally associations and cooperatives, carry out a wide array of different activities (from energy services to cultural activities). Cooperation networks had already been developed by REAS, but this enabled Social and Solidarity Economy in Aragon to make them even stronger. On the other hand, in 2014 CEPES (Enterprise Confederation of the Social Economy) also gets established in Aragon, joining already established platforms with certain organisational structure able to promote Social and Solidarity Economy in the region.

Also in 2014, the First International Congress of Social and Solidarity Economy is held in Zaragoza, enabling strong networking between all the organizations and other established initiatives in the country and on international scale in the region, and among the participating organisations, only 30% were from Aragon. The importance of adding to the institutional framework the Solidarity Economy principle, i.e. to promote public procurement as a mechanism of growth for the sector, and to establish an agenda on public policy and its implementation in municipal contexts, were the two main conclusions of the congress.

In conclusion, Social and Solidarity Economy sector in Aragon is far less developed than in other regions of Spain like the Basque Country or Catalonia, nevertheless, the emergence of the mentioned initiatives creates a solid ground for its consolidation and expansion.

0.4) Describe eventual public/legislative initiatives to support/which affect those sectors (about 3.000 characters)

After several years of negotiation and with the collaboration of the International Centre for Research and Information on Public, Social and Cooperative Economy (CIRIEC)-Spain as a supervisor, **a state Law 5/2011 on Social Economy was passed. Even though the new regulation did not change the specific legislation for each one of the "legal categories" of Social Economy, it did enable the realisation of certain important goals. First of all, it established institutional recognition on the basis of the economical and social framework already implemented in Spanish society by Social and Solidarity Economy organisations. Second of all, the organisations comprising Social and Solidarity Economy were defined more accurately. Finally, there is a paragraph on strategic development and support for the sector. Despite the law being groundbreaking, in terms of the definition of the organisations comprising the Social and Solidarity Economy, the framework is still restrictive.**

On the autonomous level in 2007, under Law 5/2007 (Article 71.31) within the reform of the Autonomy Regulations of Aragon, the competencies of promotion of social economy organisations were acquired for the first time. In 2013, the Decree-Law 109/2013 regulated subsidies requirements for the development of promotional activities and the diffusion of social economy in the Autonomous Community of Aragon.

On the municipal level, in 2014 the City Council of Zaragoza set up a project with REAS-Aragon, “Promotion of initiatives of social innovation and citizen participation”, to promote Social Economy. Thanks to this joint initiative, about 41 project proposals in the field of Social and Solidarity Economy were supported.

Description of the SSE Good practice

1.1)Name, Organization and/or network responsible for the practice, Location, Sector.

NAME: AGROECOLOGICAL FARMERS MARKET OF ZARAGOZA.
ORGANIZATION: Organic farmers´ market with municipal permission for sale in public places.
LOCATION: Zaragoza. Currently located in Plaza Sinués Urbiola.
SECTOR: Organic farming agriculture.

1.2)Proposed activities

Organic farming: All producers participating in the Agroecological Farmers’ Market of Zaragoza (MAZ), or those who want to be part of this initiative, must have the organic certification. CAAE (Aragon Committee for Organic Farming), which was one of the promoters, and the organisation in charge of issuing the certification and monitoring the producers.

Short distribution channels and establishing direct relationships between the producer and the consumer: All producers must be part of the MAZ in order to market their products. Only the producers involved are allowed to participate in sales within the market. The reason is to avoid any possible intermediaries that could affect one of the basic principles of the farmers’ market, which is fostering direct communication between producers and consumers.

Raising awareness and revaluation in the region: Numerous activities take place simultaneously to the implementation of the project of the MAZ: workshops, food tasting and information desks on local products of the area and on biodiversity of the region. Besides the farmers’ market, the social capital and the reputation earned in the past years are one of the most important assets of the MAZ to be used in campaigns to raise awarness on responsible and environmentally-friendly consumption. All kinds of activities could be found on the website (seeds networks, training on organic food production, biodiversity, etc.). There are also collaborations with institutions of public education through Red de Huertos Escolares (Network of School Gardens), which organises visits to MAZ producers.

1.3) Management model and stakeholders involvement

The MAZ is a result of collaboration between:

Institution: City Council of Zaragoza (Environment Department); licenses, permissions and granting the minimum legal structure.

Social organizations and movements:

CERAI: diffusion and raising awareness activities in the MAZ.

UAGA- COAG: contact, organization and management of the producers.

CAEE: monitoring and evaluation of the MAZ.

Producers: At present, there are between 25 and 30 organic producers (individual farmers or cooperatives) involved.

In terms of the management model, there is a regulation for the MAZ agreed upon by the actors mentioned above. This regulation defines the market structure, its operation and participation rules of the market. At the same time, the decision-making process is decided in general meetings where all the desicions to be implemented are made and the meetings are open to all the parties involved. To give this project a greater push, a Board consisting of one municipal representative, one representative of the social organizations and two representatives of the producers was established. All adopted measures must comply with the regulation set up as a municipal norm for the MAZ.

1.4) Turnover and job creation/quality

The MAZ does not provide jobs directly due to its structure and the fact that it does not have the legal basis for hiring. In terms of indirect hiring, the MAZ **includes about 25 to 30 organic producers**. Currently, the Agroecological Farmers' Market is one of the most important sale events for these producers. Due to a lack of space on the square where the market takes place, new producers are subject to a rotation system, whereas "senior" producers keep their stalls. This subject will be discussed in next year's general meeting. Most of the farmers present their products individually as self-employed; nevertheless they are getting organised in cooperatives to reduce transportation costs and to gain a greater organisational structure.

The remaining human resources come from the social organisations and the City Council, still they are provisional with no legal bonds to the MAZ. This causes work overload issues. Volunteers are also very important in this process, but it is difficult to assess their role. In any case, there is a network of social organisations that work with responsible consumption and organic farming and they are of a great support to the MAZ.

1.5)Social and ecological externalities

Ecological externalities:

- The initiative was so successfull that it caused **a "pull effect"**, meaning that many local producers decided to switch to organic farming, focusing their investments in quality rather than quantity.
- This **helped the organic farmers already established in their practice to grow** their business as organic certified producers.
- **Waste minimisation.** There is a municipal waste managment service. Unsold Food is donated to public kitchens and social organisations.

Social externality:

- **Promotion and structuring of the social fabric between the producers in Social and Solidarity Economy.** The producers begin to organise themselves under the legal provisions of Social and Solidarity Economy, cooperative being the most common one, in order to share costs and create a better sales structure.
- **Expansion and raising awareness in ecological practice.** In terms of consumers, the threshold of "activists for organic consumption" has been expanded to a wider range of people who buy organic food and other organic products.
- **Implementing environmental sustainability in public spaces.** The market is not only a trading place, but also a place to learn, exchange experiences and create synergies, and that is due to the idea of encouraging direct communication between producers and consumers along with the implementation of activities to raise awareness.
- **Social innovation in participation subjects and the relaionship between institutions, civil society and productive framework.** The collaboration between previously mentioned actors results in a horizontal relationship meaning all the participants have a more active role.

1.6)Communication and advocacy

The MAZ stems from the needs of the society in Aragon previously explained, related to the organic farming and sustainable practices. (Social organizations, consumption groups, social movements, etc.). Related information can be found on the MAZ website, its most important information point. Besides the information on the development of this initiative, there are many links to similar organizations (CERAI, UAGA, CAEE, SLOW FOOD, ARAGÓN SIN TRANSGÉNICOS, RED DE SEMILLAS, etc.), addresses of organic food shops in the city and information about talks and workshops.

It is important to mention that at the beginning of the project, the initiative was facing administrative challenges related to selling fresh produce on the streets which resulted in local citizens putting pressure on the authorities and the support City Council experts. This pushed a new legal framework for selling fresh produce in public spaces through, which is defined in the regulation of the MAZ. Currently one of the active promoters of this project is Teresa Artigas, Councillor for the Envirnoment in the City Council of Zaragoza.

1.7)Networking, affiliations and openness of the Good practice to the existing networks

The MAZ has been implemented thanks to the decisive participation of the organisations CERAI, UAGA and CAAE. At the same time, the MAZ has become a place for spreading information and disseminating similar initiatives like Plataforma por unos Comedores Escolares de Calidad (Platform for in-School Quality Dining), Red de Solidaridad Popular (Network of Mass Solidarity), Red de Semillas de Aragón (Network of Seeds of Aragon), Slowfood, ECORED ARAGON (network of consumption groups), etc. Besides the MAZ´s successfull project, what helped to create a positive and strong feedback was the participation of people that went beyond “activists circles” and, at the same time, social organisations find it easier to promote their work through the MAZ.

One of the strategies of the project is a better organisational structure and good budgeting in order to get the organisations like REAS-ARAGÓN to collaborate, and to go further with the promotion and implementation of cooperative models among producers through orientation and training programs.

Evaluation of the good practice

2.1) The Good practice' s economic and social impact and potential

Recovery, promotion and development of a productive framework related to ecological practice. The economic and social impacts have had outcomes in various directions. First of all, as the project grew bigger and the number of producers got greater, a sustainable economic context was created, which allowed many small local and regional producers to become self-employed and who had already started investing in organic farming. At the same time, the good running of the project encouraged many local producers in the region to go organic; not so much a consequence of the process of raising awareness, but rather as a result of market demand in Zaragoza. There is no systematic financial analysis of the project and its size based on numbers, however it is estimated to about EUR 100,000/200,000 per year. It is also one of the most important points of sale for all the producers involved.

Accessibility and proximity, bringing together all participants in the chain value. Up until recently, trade relations in this business were poor and took place exclusively among activists of the organic food movement, but the MAZ has helped to establish relations of good trade and exchange of goods among a broader circle of consumers. The Agroecological Farmers' Market has enabled the producers to get in contact with the network of organic food shops in the city. On the one hand, take advantage of the possibility of supplying these shops located in the urban area. Furthermore, for the shops, the MAZ is a place where they get to grow their business through raising awarness on organic food among consumers and accordingly get their feedback. Direct contact between consumers and producers has also been a decisive factor. The MAZ has also created new consumers.

Raising awareness and going beyond the barriers of activist networks. The MAZ also leaves room for all kinds of activities related to organic farming and responsible consumption. This also allows organizations like Red de Semillas, Slow Food, Aragón Sin Transgénicos to present their products not only to the movement's activists but to a broader audience by focusing on more diverse clients. The market has grown from a marketplace for consumers with strong awareness of sustainable and organic farming, to a marketplace for a wide range of consumers who relate the MAZ with healthy, quality and local products. The MAZ has also been a link between producers and public education institutions, like Red de Huertos Escolares (Network of School Gardens), which is of a great importance in education, and at the same time, it helped restore bonds between generations that have been weak in this sector for decades.

2.2) The transformative impact on the territory and beyond

A new approach in sustainable development using local resources and biodiversity of the region. In the past ten years, economic growth in Zaragoza, like in many other Spanish cities, was based on urban development and the value increase of property assets determined by the financial industry. This economic approach has changed with the onset of the economic crisis and the outbreak of the property bubble in 2011. In that sense, the MAZ has been a great factor both in the transformation process with its **innovative social approach and the political appropriation of local public spaces for** socio-ecological transition.

On the one hand, **the collaboration between** the three key elements: the City Council, producers and Social Organisations has undergone difficulties and conflicts. However, they have managed to establish a framework in which producers also play a significant role in the decision-making process. The Regulation of the MAZ has not been set from the top down, but defined and adopted by various parties involved based upon legal constraints and the needs of the producers.

All the parties agree on the **importance of the concept of "open-air market" in the use of public space,** in other words, being out on the street. In addition, at the early stage of the project, a system of rotation by the city neighbourhoods was implemented. The use of public space and building social relations are two things any collective project of political transformation should have clear from the outset. In this regard, its promoters have insisted on the importance of producers selling their products themselves in the MAZ, not only to avoid the intermediaries, but also to build and strengthen the relationship between producers and consumers in a sustainable territorial development.

Territorial cohesion and sustainability of rural areas. The MAZ is considered one of those projects of Social and Solidarity Economy that contribute to the territorial development by creating new ways of relating urban and rural spaces. The initiative was a successful experience in terms of establishing a public policy to recover the "green area" of Zaragoza both in creating new jobs and emphasising the value of the region's ecological heritage.

2.3) Policy impact of the Good practice

The MAZ is more than only a marketplace for organic products; it is also a place for discussion and information used by many social movements to make their project proposals. All this information can be found on the MAZ website, its most important information point. Besides the information on the development of this initiative, there are many links to similar organizations (CERAI, UAGA, CAEE, SLOW FOOD, ARAGON SIN TRANSGÉNICOS, RED DE SEMILLAS, etc.), addresses of organic food shops in the city and information about talks and workshops.

It is important to mention that at the beginning of the project, the initiative was facing administrative challenges related to selling fresh produce on the streets which resulted in local citizens putting pressure on the authorities and got backed up by the specialists from the City Council. This pushed a new legal framework for selling fresh produce in public spaces, which is defined in the regulation of the MAZ. Currently one of the active promoters of this project is Teresa Artigas, Councillor for the Envirnoment in the City Council of Zaragoza.

2.4) Sustainability of the practice

Environmental sustainability:

Production processes related to the BP. Every producer involved has the organic certification authorized by the CAAE (Aragon Committee for Ecological Agriculture).

Waste management and reuse of surplus products. There are practically no waste products within the framework of the MAZ. The City Council provides a waste managment and recycling service, while farmers' logistics, besides transportation, have no ecological impact. Unsold food is donated to public kitchens and social organisations.

Energy consumption. Besides the transportation costs, the MAZ does not require any additional energy use.

Economic sustainability:

Lack of result classification and work overload. The MAZ has no classification system of the results, except for the networking numbers between the promoters and the producers and their exchange of guidelines. This fact has no significant importance for the MAZ and its internal functioning, however, when it comes to sharing the experience of this project with other initiatives and using the indicators to classify the most important achievements in terms of numbers, it could be of a great value to help increase its socio-environmental effects and use it as a good example of rehabilitation of urban areas. On the other hand, the work overload within the groups that depend on the support of the MAZ prevents its growth. In that sense, there is an increasing need in two important issues: defining a legal framework for hiring and more funding for the support team.

2.5) Participatory space open to the territory

The MAZ has become a place for spreading information and promoting similar initiatives like Plataforma por unos Comedores de Calidad (Platform for Good in-School Dining), la Red de Solidaridad Popular (Network of Mass Solidarity), la Red de Semillas de Aragón (Network of Seeds of Aragon), Slowfood, ECORED ARAGON (network of consumption groups), etc.
One of the strategies of the project is a better organisational structure and good budgeting in order to get the organizations like REAS-ARAGÓN to collaborate, and to go further with the promotion and implementation of cooperative models among producers through orientation and training programs.
Furthermore, the oficial MAZ website is also used to give rise to many initiatives related to the Social and Solidarity Economy and the consumption of organic products. There is also a section for open participation to post news, articles and all kinds of references and publications related to the subject, information about discussions and events. Direct links to organisations like Friends of the Earth, ANSAR, Ecologists in Action, Global Food Justice (VSF), Greenpeace or Vida Sana can be found on the website as well.

What can we learn from the described Good practice?

3,1 Please identify and analyse the areas in which lessons can be learnt, the key factors of success/failure, role of specific actors.

- Good cooperation between the three parties and the follow up of important processes of their participation.

KEY ACTORS:

<u>The City Council</u>: project pomoter, also a negotiator, providing a small committee of specialist who have stimulated the political aspect of the decision-making process. Basically, it is in charge of issuing permits and waste managment.

<u>Social organizations</u>:

CERAI: raising awareness and promotion of the project.

Association of Farmers of Aragon (UAGA): management, organization and contact with the producers.

CAAE (Accredited Certifying Agent): control and legal monitoring.

Local and regional producers:

Only the producers are allowed to sell the products and they must produce according to organic farming criteria. Learning capacity and adaptation. More participation through group meetings based on an agreed regulation.

FACTORS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE:

Positive aspects:

- **This type of project has a slow pace progression**. Learning from practical aspects and the results of the project as it evolves, defining the goals along the way according to the development of the project and the capacities of those involved. A progressive and coordinated promotion.
- **Good relationship between the key actors** ,each one of them being familiar with their function, also making enough room for everyone´s independent work. The willingness of the City Council has played an important role, although there have been certain conflicts and moments of stagnation. The specialists from the City Council played a key role due to their awarness of the issue.
- **Price monitoring**. Since this is something that cannot be imposed, promoters have engaged in raising awareness among producers regarding pricing issues in order to establish a balance between the market and a growth in the number of participants. This was rapidly accepted by producers.
- **Wider range of consumers**. The existing barrier of responsible consumption has been overcome by reaching those consumers who want to purchase healthy products, but who do not necessarily have a particular awareness of social and environmental issues. This has helped to grow the business, creating a sustainable network of producers.
- **Quality and consistency of product offerings**. It is important to stick to a clear strategy, not only for ideological reasons, but also because it helps to educate the producers which gives the consumers a clear picture of the MAZ.

Shortcomings and aspects to improve:

- **Work overload** and shortage in human resources.
- **The project has been so successful it grew over the lines of its initial form**, which has led to its necessary reformulating, especially regarding the producers issues. Greater integration of new producers and creating a positive atmosphere between more experienced and more recent producers.
- **Regulation on selling fresh produce, limited to fruits and vegetables**. It keeps other kinds of products organically produced from the market.
- **Due to the size of the project and a lack of space, new locations are needed**. To avoid any kind of absence or discouragement of the producers in terms of thier participation, it is important to find a good balance in that respect.

Individual story

4.1 If possible, enclose an individual story/testimony which exemplifies the practice you describe. NB. This will help clarify the process you are describing and/or add qualitative information to it

Currently one of the active promoters of this project is Teresa Artigas, Councillor for the Envirnoment in the City Council of Zaragoza.

I have been very interested in environmental issues for many years now along with the issues regarding cooperation in internationl development and solidarity. Then one year, I don´t remember exactly when, I got the opportunity to be part of a summer project in Latin America and after I got back, I started focusing more on local issues rather than those abroad. In other words, I realised that, in order to change something, it was much more important to act locally since this is where all the necessary tools to change our reality are. I did my thesis on the ecological footprint of Zaragoza and ended up working for the City Council.That was something more due to a series of circumstances rather than the fact that the City Council calls for open collaborations of that kind. Since then, I have been getting more involved with issues related to Zaragoza. I have been a member of a consumer group called REDECO ARAGON since 2008.

In terms of the MAZ and its role, it is true that there has been a need for such organisation since 2008 coming from many sectors involved in organic farming, such as consumption groups, social organisations for raising awareness on organic farming, social movements, unions, etc. Still, this kind of social fabric had already existed before the MAZ was founded. When this initiative started I was working in the City Council and we experienced it firsthand, so as specialists in environmental issues we really believed in this project and therefore decided to fight for it.So we started promoting the project from within the City Council.

The said truth is that the main difficulties we had to deal with were related to bureaucracy. There is a very restrictive regulation in Zaragoza on selling fresh produce in open-air markets. Back then we had a specialist from the department of politics in our team who really believed in this project, so we set up our first market with an excuse of the Enviroment Day. At the beginning it was a great success, but after a couple of months we started struggling with legal issues. The MAZ was facing threats of getting closed down which caused public demonstrations. In the end, thanks to the pressure put on the City Council to resolve the situation, coming both from the outside and within the City Council, the legal framework was found to keep the Agroecological Farmers' Market going. In that sense, several converging factors helped to keep the project alive: political will, specialists from the City Council who promoted the project from within, public demonstrations and a civil society network of organisations.

Additional information

Website references, contact details of the reference person if available, links to publications, press reviews, images, videos.

Web sites of reference:

- http://mercadoagroecologicozaragoza.blogspot.com.es/
- www.uaga-aragon.com
- cerai.org
- www.caae.es
- https://www.zaragoza.es/ciudad/medioambiente/centrodocumentacion/quienes.htm
- ecoredaragon.blogspot.com

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Related articles and publications:

- **https://www.zaragoza.es/ciudad/normativa/detalle_Normativa?id=3883**

- http://www.heraldo.es/noticias/zaragoza/la_muestra_agroecologica_zaragoza_cumple_dos_anos.html
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