Supplementary 3:. Description of the story of the initiatives and their motivations, enabling factors, barriers and consolidation factors that helped seeding and growing

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| **Agrolab** | |
| **Story**: The initiative started with the intention to revitalize abandoned rural areas outside Madrid that are known to be very fertile. From a previous academic study they were aware of the problems the area was facing that contributed to its abandonment. The three main reasons were economic, administrative and psychosocial barriers. With AgroLab, they aimed at overcoming these problems by providing land and education, enhancing revalorization of rural areas, as well as establishing rural-urban connections. Among the founders they had different expertise, from Ecosystem Services to running innovation labs, that were incorporated in the new project. They benefitted from the new elections in 2015, as the creation of open agriculture labs was supported. A further advantage was getting to know the Red Terrae: AgroLab benefitted a lot from their expertise. Challenges on the way consisted in their collective and non-hierarchical structures of decision-making and participation, because many people are not to working in such. Another difficulty was to involve the municipality to a greater extent. Due to the overall success, the reproduction of the 'seed' has taken place in form of a new AgroLab in 'El Escorial'. | **Motivation for foundation:** social-ecological values |
| **Enablers for foundation:** new legislation favouring and supporting open agriculture labs; support by the surrounding communities; pre-study identifying local needs; expertise of founders in social-ecological systems and ecosystem services; Networking: Red Terrae |
| **Barriers for growth:** New structure of decision-making and participation within the initiative requires learning by the target audience of the initiative and can create conflicts; legal and administrative; decision-makers (i.e. municipality) commitment; rivalry and mistrust with other initiatives |
| **Consolidation factors:** Networking: Red Terrae |
| **Asociación La Troje** | |
| **Story**: The initiative was born when a group of different people with interest in recovering old varieties and move to the 'sierra' of Madrid coincided with a small funding grant that two of the co-founders had gotten after a volunteer year. With this money they were able to buy the material to build a green house and other material to start the project. In the beginning, all members of the initiative were volunteers, in peak time they were around 15 members, and seeds and sapling they had produced was given away for free. But after some time they had an internal crisis, they were too big to keep the same organizational. A few members wanted to take the initiative forward in a more professional way. After their realignment, they divided tasks more clearly in order to professionalize and earn a living from their activity. They benefited a lot from joining the national 'Red de Semillas' and connecting with other projects. Challenges they faced was getting land to grow their seeds, getting the trust of the local community and municipality. Through their long-term presence in the territory they have now managed to build trust, but need more commitment from the municipality in order to accomplish their future projects. | **Motivation for foundation:** social-ecological values |
| **Enablers for foundation:** availability of small funding grant; return of the country-side |
| **Barriers for growth:** tensions created when maintaining or evolving the identity of an initiative while the group becomes bigger; professionalizing the initiative and making a living from their activity; legal and administrative barriers; conflicts caused by different motivations and attitudes towards the initiative by its members (work vs passion); juggling family and professional life; availability of cultivation land; mistrust of the commercialization of the concept of organic |
| **Consolidation factors:** Red Nacional de Semillas; evolving organizational structure |
| **Club Gastronómico KM0** | |
| **History:** KM0 started their activity in 2012 due to two reasons. On one hand due to the founder’s interest and knowledge of the sustainable gastronomy scene in Málaga that she had gained during her work as journalist, on the other hand due to her partner's unemployment that was caused by the economic crisis. They benefitted a lot from growing interest in gastronomy and the fact that many people after the crisis became aware of the need to support the local economy. The initiative had to realign their structure over the time: they first started off as a small restaurant with a daily changing menu featuring local products, but they soon realized that was not working. Due to their small budget they had to immediately adjust and inspired by the Basque 'Sociedad Gastronómica' they changed to being a non-profit gastronomic club. Like this they were able to incorporate many different activities and projects in conjunction with other local actors, giving them a broader profile and more financial stability. | **Motivation:** social-ecological values; interest in gastronomy |
| **Enablers for foundation:** co-founder was unemployment due to crisis; founder had extensive previous knowledge of the context; interest among the population for local consumption in times of crisis; network and collaborative spirit in the agro-alimentary sector after the crisis; growing interest in gastronomy; return of the country-side |
| **Barriers for growth:** professionalizing the initiative and making a living from their activity; shortcoming in funding; lack of experience in business development |
| **Consolidation factors :** evolving organizational structure from restaurant to non-profit gastronomic club inspired by other similar initiatives in the Basque country; ability to analyse the activities and quickly change strategy if not working" |
| **Aponiente** | |
| The chef of Aponiente, Ángel León, a passionate fishermen, has cared for the environment since his childhood. When opening his first restaurant he wanted to take the opportunity and teach his restaurant visitors about the pristine marine ecosystems. He has therefore chosen to use marine ingredients that do not harm the environment. In the beginning, people did not understand his restaurant concept. When not finding any of the big and famous species on the menu many left the restaurant. He was almost forced to close the restaurant when he received his first Michelin star. Thanks to the award he received a lot of attention and recognition. Now, his innovative cuisine is having immense success and he has received his 3rd Michelin in 2018. | **Motivation:** social-ecological values; interest in gastronomy |
| **Enablers for foundation: /** |
| **Barriers for growth:** difficulty of the society to accept new ideas (incomprehension) |
| **Consolidation factors:** official external recognition (Michelin stars) |
| **Suralgas** | |
| **History**: The initiative started due to a couple of coinciding circumstances: The founder of Suralgas was studying marine biology when her brother, a restaurant Chef, asked her about the composition of algae for cooking purpose. She started to be interested herself in algae and took courses with some of the professors at the university that shared her interest in the culinary use of algae. When she finishes her studies the labour market is very bad due to the economic crisis and she decides to start her own algae company with two other friends. Although the idea has great success none of them has experience in managing a company and they have to close it after 5 years. After teaming up with new partners that are experienced with having food related businesses' she re-opens again, this time with a successful business strategy. | **Motivation:** interest in gastronomy |
| **Enablers for foundation:** founder was unemployment due to crisis; founder had extensive previous knowledge of the topic; growing interest in gastronomy |
| **Barriers for growth:** professionalizing the initiative and making a living from their activity (especially in times of crisis); conflicts caused by different motivations and attitudes towards the initiative by its members (work vs passion); lack of experience in business development; administrative and legal barriers. |
| **Consolidation factors:** evolving organizational structure;  capacity to reopen the business |
| **Asociación Montaña y Desarrollo** | |
| **Story:** The initiative was founded as an alternative to the current educational system that supports the capitalist and patriarch system. It is a twin-initiative of the Universidad Campesina Paulo Freire in Ronda. It benefitted a lot from allies of the national rural platform. A big challenge of the association is their dependence on external funds and subsidies. Especially in times with lack of funding there were tensions due to different motivations and attitudes towards the initiative by its members, as not all shared the same ideologic commitment. Nevertheless, the high commitment of certain members always ensures that the initiative keeps going. | **Motivation for foundation:** social-ecological values |
| **Enablers for foundation:**  Networking: national rural Platform |
| **Barriers for growth**: conflicts caused by different motivations and attitudes towards the initiative by its members (work vs passion); legal and administrative barriers in access to funding  professionalizing the initiative and making a living from their activity; patriarchal structures are more present in rural areas |
| **Consolidation factors:** having a dedicated team |
| **Veta La Palma** | |
| When the company HISPARROZ bought the property in 1982, the land was already under an environmental protection status. Thus, the original plan, rice cultivation, was not possible. It obliged the company to look for other business models that are compatible with the nearby Doñana National Park. After a pre-study they saw the opportunity for aquiculture. As they are financially very strong business, they could invest large sums to implement the sustainable aquiculture model all at once. They did not have to be economically viable in short run, their goal rather was the viability in the middle and long run. Over the years the business model was refined, and the ratio of extensive and semi-extensive ponds was adjusted, as in the first years, migrating birds fed too much on the fish stocks. The creation of a brand was very easy due to the excellent quality of the fish. The marketing strategy also included showing people that Veta La Palma not only produces high quality fish, but at the same time biodiversity and improves the water quality. | **Motivation for foundation:** Expand their business |
| **Enablers for foundation:** company bought the land without knowing it was under an environmental protection status, which pushed them to develop a sustainable business model; large financial resources and being a consolidated company; administrative support by public authorities |
| **Barriers:** change of environmental feedbacks due to the new activity in the land (attraction of too many birds); slow administration |
| **Consolidation factors:** ability to analyse the activities and quickly change strategy if not working; good marketing strategy: ability to make consumers see the ecological value behind the product |
| **La Cuina a Sils** | |
| **History**: The initiative started after having a conversation about traditional dishes at a party in tribute to senior citizens. Inspired by this discussion, they started with two-weekly meetings with a small group of women. For two years the group only gathered to talk about what people used to eat back in the days and the associated traditions. As a lot of exciting memories and information was shared, they decided they wanted to write a publication. However, this publication was more a historical document and contained no recipes. To facilitate photo material for the publication they organized a big dinner, that was institutionalized as a yearly dinner due to its big success. After it got published, they received a lot of positive feedback and interest from people wanting recipes. When they committed to the idea to publish a recipe book, they were already 18 women in the collective. Since then they have grown a lot (now over 100 women) and published many recipe books with different focus. They have been invited to a lot of different national and international cooking events, starring with high-cuisine chefs such as Ferran Adrià. | **Motivation for foundation:** interest in gastronomy; heritage |
| **Enablers for foundation:** / |
| **Barriers for growth:** Interest in special dishes for festivities and not the daily traditional diet |
| **Consolidation factors:**  Facilitator role within the large group to prevent conflicts;  Growing interest in gastronomy; Large media attention, especially after having cooked at Ritz |
| **La Platjeta** | |
| **History**: The founder of initiative started La Platjeta, taking over the family fishing business of her father as means to preserve the fisher families' heritage and raise awareness to their work known. They benefitted a lot from the support of the administration outside the fishing sector that gave them mentors and advice how to change and redefine their products. At the same time the administration of the fishermen's guild has always hindered their work as they perceive them as potential rivals. Moreover, they struggle with missing generational replacement and stagnating prices in the fishing sector. Their activities and products are directly aimed to change this by generating additional income and rise the interest in fisheries to potentially recruit new staff. | **Motivation for foundation:** heritage |
| **Enablers for foundation:** administrative support by public authorities that are not from the fishing sector |
| **Barriers for growth:** rivalry and mistrust with the Fishermen's Guild;  missing generational replacement within fishing sector;  stagnating prices of fish |
| **Consolidation factors:** Networking: support from other fishing families |
| **Parque agrario de Gallecs** | |
| **History**: The story of Gallecs goes back to the Francoist dictatorship when people suffered expropriation of their land in order to construct a city (Plan ACTUR). This plan was never realized, also due to the return of the democracy, and in the 80' the land was handed over to the Catalan government. The initiative starts in 2005 with the launch of a reconversion plan that aims to reconvert the land to ecological agriculture and revitalize the territory. It is led by the consortium of Gallecs, consisting out of 6 municipalities and the Catalan government. For their success it was critical that their work embedded in collaborative efforts as this ensured the acceptance in the territory. It was furthermore important that the driving figure was also from the territory. A further important enabling factor has been a large number of partnerships with universities, other municipalities via the AGRIURBAN network and Slow Food. A barrier to their work has been the necessity to create a new market and gain costumers, this was addressed through marketing strategies and partnering with ecologic school canteens. Another barrier is the delay when reconverting to ecological agriculture: the certificate and with it the monetary benefit is issued significantly later than the starting date of the conversion process. | **Motivation for foundation:** heritage; social-ecological values |
| **Enablers for foundation:** consortium planning to reconvert the land to ecological agriculture; collaborative work; support by the community (people are willing to collaborate); driving figure from the territory within the consortium; |
| **Barriers for growth:** delay from starting to implement organic agriculture until having the certificate; need for new customers and markets (in the beginning); New structure of decision-making and participation within the initiative that requires learning by the target audience of the initiative |
| **Consolidation factors:** Networking: collaboration with universities; AGRIURBAN; Slow Food; marketing strategies; Ecologic school canteens as steady customers |
| **Espigoladors** | |
| **History**: The founder wanted to initiate a project that has a positive social and environmental impact. Food waste was always important to her, as she has a strong link to the primary sector. When the crisis hit, she saw lots of people deprived from healthy diets in need of quality food. With this and the food waste problem in mind she started piloting Espigoladors. A facilitating factor was the support she got from La Caixa as she got chosen to be part of a social entrepreneur programme as one of 20 participants. Their moral support and expertise helped them a lot. Difficulties are that, due to shortage in funding, they put their personal situation at risk and have to improvise a lot (also in terms of having an office to carry out their activities). It was difficult to find people that wanted to commit to this, but now she managed to gather a team that is more interested in the good cause of the project than in gaining lots of money. A further barrier is the lack of experience in business development which makes everything an experiment. | **Motivation for foundation:** social-ecological values; heritage |
| **Enablers for foundation:** founder had extensive previous knowledge of the context (background in social education and business); support by La Caixa that had chosen them for a social entrepreneur programme |
| **Barriers for growth:** shortcoming in funding; lack of experience in business development; conflicts caused by different motivations and attitudes towards the initiative by its members (work vs passion); administrative and legal barriers: lack of support |
| **Consolidation factors:** having a dedicated team |
| **Menjadors Ecològics** | |
| It started when the founder wanted to change the school menu in one particular school from a conventional to an ecologic menu sourced from local producers. During her attempt, she realized that there was no existing structure to do that. As a response she decided to create Mejadors Ecologics and hence, be able to support and help other school with the same endeavour. When creating the initiative she profited from coinciding with other people sharing her passion, that she connected to via a platform a ecologic school canteens. However, Menjadors Ecologics has faced many barriers: From shortcoming in funding and administrative barriers to disinformation around what constitutes a healthy diet, incomprehension and difficulty of the parents to accept new ideas and fixed prices of the school menus, that are too low to be healthy and sustainably sourced. The growing interest in organic and local food has been facilitating change on one hand but the initiative also observes the commercialization of the concept of organic. | **Motivation for foundation:** social-ecological values |
| **Enablers for foundation**: Networking: platform of ecologic school canteens; pre-study identifying local needs |
| **Barriers for growth:** difficulty of the society to accept new ideas (incomprehension); mistrust of the commercialization of the concept of organic; shortcoming in funding; legal and administrative barriers; disinformation around healthy diets;  price of the school menus is too low to be healthy and sustainably sourced |
| **Consolidation factors:** interest in organic products has grown; official external recognition: validation of the menu by the Catalan health ministry; external funding by foundation Carassò; Networking: part of different platforms, also on an international level, facilitates the exchange of experiences |