



Agro4SDGs

Agro4SDGs: Reinforcing community mobilization and support of female lead entrepreneurship in the agroecology sector

Sprints Joint Report



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Contents

Contents	2
1. Context	3
2. Country reports summary	4
2.1. Spain	4
2.2. Hungary	6
2.3. Slovenia	10
2.4. Poland	14
2.5. Italy	19

1. Context

The Agro4SDGs Sprint Events, held over two dynamic days, were conducted in each of the five Agro4SDGs project partner countries. These events brought together a diverse group of participants, including agricultural stakeholders, rural women, female entrepreneurs, experts in agroecology, and students, to address the most pressing challenges in agroecology. The goal was to foster the creation of new ideas and solutions while enhancing participants' green and business skills.

Organized to meet the urgent need for sustainable agricultural practices, each country-specific sprint provided a focused platform for intensive problem-solving. Participants, leveraging their diverse backgrounds and expertise, collaborated within their national teams to brainstorm and develop actionable solutions tailored to their local contexts.

Throughout the events, participants were encouraged to think creatively and work collaboratively, harnessing the power of collective intelligence within their respective countries. These sprints not only facilitated the generation of innovative ideas but also aimed to equip participants with the necessary skills to implement these solutions effectively in their regions.

This joint report encapsulates the outcomes of the two-day sprint events across the five countries, highlighting the key challenges addressed, the innovative solutions proposed, and the valuable skills gained by participants. It serves as a testament to the collective efforts and dedication of the Agro4SDGs community towards advancing sustainable development goals through agroecology.

2. Country reports summary

2.1. Spain

Location	Extremadura, Spain	
Timeframe	December 2023 - February 2024	
No. of participants	146	
Profile of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, • Men, • stakeholders 	
Learnings and Recommendations	<p>The most important learning that they can take away is to know the realities of businesses and entities that work in the agroecology value chain.</p> <p>It is important to disseminate business models that show people other realities, that it is possible to create sustainable businesses, that they can contribute to more responsible consumption habits that have a positive impact on the environment.</p>	
Identified challenges and solutions	Challenges	Solutions
	Lack of water	Responsible irrigation systems
	Increase in pests and diseases	Use of pheromone traps and chromatic traps
	Loss of soil fertility	Use of regenerative cultivation
	Poor economic performance	Direct sales without intermediaries
	Lack of young people on farms	Create training in the agricultural and livestock sectors
	Difficulty to access organic products	Create responsible consumption groups
	Farms with old facilities	Innovation and policies to support research in the agroecological sector

Future potential of
the defined
solutions

The solutions will be carried out with the realization of sustainable business models, for example pest control and responsible irrigation systems on their farms. They will continue to work on solutions as a team, since the training planned in the project will be aimed at training female farmers and/or aspiring ones in soil care, responsible irrigation systems, taking care of biodiversity, etc. Mainly, training is essential to continue developing these solutions, and when these people are trained they can become agents of change from your sustainable business model. It is also important to make stakeholders aware of this change and involve them in our project.

Those women who want to continue learning about business models and who have an idea that they want to continue developing will participate in the following learning modules.

2.2. Hungary

Location	Balaton Uplands, Hungary	
Timeframe	November - December 2023	
No. of participants	34	
Profile of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • female experts, • entrepreneurs, • female farmers, • stakeholders working in agriculture and agroecology 	
Learnings and Recommendations	<p>By setting a common goal, having the right professional background, strict time limits and keeping an agenda, very useful results can be achieved in these sprints. It is also important to bear in mind that everyone's opinions and experiences are very important, so we need to pay close attention to them and allow enough time to discuss them.</p>	
Identified challenges and solutions	Challenges	Solutions
	<p>Ecological-Environmental challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water conservation • flash flooding • Near-natural tillage lack of knowledge of natural soil management techniques • Wildlife overpopulation • Wildlife damage due to overstocking • Homestead farming decline • Climate change, weather factors • Water scarcity, water problems • Plant, animal life, biodiversity 	<p>Ecological-Environmental solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flash flood recovery, water conservation • Training, knowledge sharing: trainers from the same region • Large-scale agriculture not interested in introducing more sustainable, close-to-nature farming) - subsidies could be used to encourage

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergence of Mediterranean species 	
	<p>Social challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to knowledge about agroecology • Difficulties in reaching target groups • Poor perception of agricultural work • Conflict between agricultural and tourism functions in rural settlements • Difficulties in developing partnerships • Youth emigration • Education, training (apprenticeships) • Fear (workers) • Covid impact • Change of mindset • Inadequate information flow, communication (media distortion) • Lack of partnership • Lack of trust 	<p>Social solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to practical knowledge • Training in semi-natural soil cultivation techniques • Experiential education out in the gardens, on the ground • Training in business start-up and management skills - from women to women (legal and financial knowledge, guides) • "Small garden programme" - Promote and support home gardening, municipal or regional support programmes • Improving the image and image of farming - promotion campaigns from an early age • "Unlocking the 'knowledge divide' - improving and promoting local cooperation • Education and awareness-raising campaigns in schools and kindergartens
	<p>Economic-Technical challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Start-up Skills From women to women • Support opportunities • Lack of short supply chains 	<p>Economic-Technical solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy involvement - support scheme for organic farmers • Large-scale agriculture not interested in introducing more

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different tools for, limited access to different tools and machines access • Difficulty of forward planning • Price variation • Shortage of raw materials • Labour shortage, skilled labour • Administrative burden (still too much too much paper) • Open world (everything better more accessible) 	<p>sustainable, close-to-nature farming) - subsidies could be used to encourage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Small garden programme" - Promote and support home gardening, municipal or regional support programmes - Supporting and promoting the development of short supply chains (the role of local authorities as intermediaries is also important here). In many settlements, more of the fruit and vegetables produced are sold to tourists than to local residents.
<p>Future potential of the defined solutions</p>	<p>Based on the solutions proposed in the workshops, several ideas seem particularly promising and align well with the themes of ecological sustainability, social empowerment, and economic viability. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flash flood recovery and water conservation techniques: These are critical given the ecological challenges noted and are likely to receive continued attention. • Training and knowledge sharing initiatives, particularly those led by trainers from the same region: This approach can foster community-based learning and is vital for empowering local stakeholders. • Promotion and support of small garden programs: This offers both economic benefits and enhances food security at the community level. <p>The report highlights the active involvement of women experts, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders in agriculture and agroecology. These individuals, especially those with prior experience in facilitating workshops and who have shown commitment to the project's goals, would</p>	

be ideal candidates to continue this work. Typically, those who led the initial discussions and had significant input in proposing solutions would continue their involvement.

To further develop the chosen solutions, the following needs were identified:

- **Knowledge and Training:** Ongoing education on sustainable practices and the latest agricultural technologies will be essential.
- **Support of Trainers:** Trainers, especially those from similar regional backgrounds as the participants, need empowerment through resources and perhaps advanced training modules to help them effectively transfer knowledge.
- **Contacts and Networking:** Establishing and maintaining connections with local authorities, potential sponsors, and other relevant stakeholders is crucial for gaining support and resources.

Participants in the subsequent modules should ideally include those who attended the initial sessions and demonstrated a strong grasp of the issues and proposed solutions. Involving new participants could also be beneficial to broaden the impact and integrate fresh perspectives. Specifically, stakeholders from related sectors like local government, education, and non-agricultural businesses could be invited to participate in future learning modules to foster interdisciplinary cooperation and community-wide engagement.

The continuation of these initiatives depends significantly on effective project management, continuous feedback loops, and adaptability to emerging challenges and opportunities within the community and broader environmental and economic contexts.

2.3. Slovenia

Location	Gorenjska, Slovenia
Timeframe	January 2024
No. of participants	34
Profile of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female students, • Male students, • Stakeholders.
Learnings and Recommendations	<p>Learnings</p> <p>Nowadays women have unequal positions compared to the man in professional, public, and family positions, especially in rural areas. The role of the farm woman changes in the young generation and on the farm situated near towns and with good transport connections. Women are more active in the farms with complementary activities, where they can transfer their knowledge, skills, and competencies from domestic work to entrepreneurship. Women have a lot of entrepreneurship skills: perseverance, adaptability, ingenuity endurance, bureaucratic tasks, lifelong learning, preserving tradition. One of the important lessons was also that we must preserve the environment nature and population in rural areas.</p> <p>The concept of agroecology must be expanded by peer-to-peer methods, building a network with neighbours in villages and other stakeholders of the rural enterprises and farms. Rural becomes more and more interesting for the people from towns. They build new houses, but they have less tolerance for farms.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Women should be considered as equal partners with men managing the farms or other enterprises and be involved in public life. They must have more time for their personal development and some domestic tasks they can split with a partner or get another paid workforce. Step by step the rural areas in Gorenjska can start developing regions on agroecological</p>

	principles. After analysis of existing good practices and on principle co-creation of knowledge extend the knowledge, skills, technology, and business models.	
Identified challenges and solutions	Challenges	Solutions
	Ecological/environmental challenges	Ecological/environmental solutions
	Climate change: floods, droughts, soil erosion	Arrangement of watercourses and embankments, irrigation systems, agroecological solutions in production: mulches, mixed crops, circular economy, crop rotation
	Conservation of biodiversity	Agroecological solutions for maintaining soil fertility, organic fertilization (composting), populations of natural enemies, diversity of cultivated plants, and adaptable varieties
	Agricultural production in protected areas	New agricultural practices and agroecological principles - using new mechanical, physical, and biotic methods of control, connecting good practices and scientific methods
	Social/societal challenges	Social/societal solutions
	Rural areas: sleeping or tourist settlements	Educational activities related to life in the countryside and integration into the rural community
	Population aging	Various forms of protection and care for elderly people and people with special needs

	Lack of public infrastructure: schools, kindergartens, health care, etc.	Rural and community revitalization: education, health services, traditional crafts, cultural events, personal growth...
	Economic/technical challenges	Economic/technical solutions
	Small farms with elderly owners	Young acquirers of farms, favorable tax policy, involvement in projects for new business models
	Financial incentives and encouraging legislation to maintain agricultural production according to sustainable principles	Financial incentives and encouraging legislation to maintain agricultural production according to sustainable principles
	Poor transport connection	Improvement of roads and cycle paths, accessible public transport, well-organized parking lots, etc.
Future potential of the defined solutions	<p>Agriculture production with agroecological principles (organic farming): managing the natural resources in the perspective of climate-changing - soil protection, economical use of water and energy, conservation of biodiversity with biological protection of pests, using organic fertilizers, crop rotation...</p> <p>Tourist settlements - places for camping and glamping to take advantage of living in nature, farms for family activities, and pupils, with holistic approaches to healthy and peaceful lifestyles.</p> <p>Population aging - various forms of protection and care for elderly people and people with special needs in rural areas, especially in different farm activities.</p> <p>For now, no team has been identified for further work on solutions but there is a chance that some of the students will make the diploma on these solutions/ideas.</p>	

Knowledge of agroecological principles and good practices, making alliances for agriculture production between farmers, and awareness arising for agriculture. Training of agricultural principles using in-practice.

Knowledge of green and sustainable tourism, activities linked to nature, sports, health... Training in sustainable agrotourism and holistic approach to health habits. Knowledge of aging populations, their needs, and expectations, living with new technology, young and old generations - understanding each other, etc.

Training in intergenerational responsibility and training in rural areas is a chance for old people to be active and useful. Trainers should be supported by new knowledge and possibilities to visit the best practices, supported by local authorities.

Participants will be young women from the region of Gorenjska who attended Higher Vocational College in the agriculture sector in BC Naklo and men students who want to participate.

2.4. Poland

Location	Lomza, Poland	
Timeframe	December 2023	
No. of participants	26	
Profile of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female entrepreneurs, • female farmers, • stakeholders 	
Learnings and Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry insights: participants gained a deeper understanding of trends, challenges, and opportunities within the agri-food sector. • Business Skills: female entrepreneurs (current and future) would have enhanced their business expertise. • Networking and collaboration: through networking sessions and team-building exercises, participants developed valuable connections with experts and enhanced their skills. • Resilience and persistence: participants gained insights into the importance of resilience, perseverance, and maintaining a positive mindset in the face of setbacks and obstacles 	
Identified challenges and solutions	Challenges	Solutions
	Significant amounts of food are wasted throughout the supply chain, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and resource depletion.	Implementation of strategies to reduce food waste at all stages of the supply chain as well as utilization of food waste for composting, animal feed, or energy generation to minimize its environmental impact.
	High energy consumption associated with agricultural machinery, processing, and transportation, leading to carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels.	Promotion of energy-efficient practices and technologies in agriculture and encouraging the use of sustainable biofuels and alternative transportation methods

		to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation of agricultural products.
	Erratic weather patterns, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and shifts in temperature and precipitation affecting crop productivity and livestock health.	Development of climate-resilient agricultural practices, including crop diversification, drought-resistant crop varieties, and improved livestock management techniques.
	Women, who comprise a significant portion of the agricultural workforce, often face systemic barriers to land ownership, access to resources, and decision-making power.	Promotion of gender equity and women's empowerment in agriculture through initiatives that provide women with access to credit, training, and leadership opportunities, but also implementing gender-sensitive policies and programs that recognize and address the unique needs and contributions of women in the agri-food sector.
	Rapid urbanization and rural-to-urban migration lead to depopulation of rural areas, loss of agricultural land, and increased pressure on urban infrastructure and services.	Development of policies and programs that promote sustainable rural development and create economic opportunities in rural areas that support initiatives that strengthen local food systems, promote agri-tourism, encourage entrepreneurship in rural communities, and reduce migration to urban centers.
	Rapid modernization and globalization threaten traditional	Safeguard and promotion of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge

	<p>farming practices, indigenous knowledge, and cultural heritage associated with agriculture.</p>	<p>systems related to agriculture through initiatives that support indigenous farming practices, preserve heirloom seeds, and celebrate cultural diversity in food production and culinary traditions.</p>
<p>Future potential of the defined solutions</p>	<p>Solutions/ideas that will be pursued further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of strategies to reduce food waste: This solution is likely to be pursued further due to its direct environmental and economic benefits. Governments, businesses, and NGOs interested in sustainability and resource efficiency will continue to prioritize initiatives aimed at reducing food waste. • Promotion of gender equity in agriculture: With increasing recognition of the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment, this solution will also be pursued further. Organizations focused on social justice, women’s rights, and agriculture development are likely to champion this cause. • Development of climate-resilient agricultural practices: Given the growing impacts of climate change on agriculture, the development of resilient practices will remain a priority. Agricultural research institutions, universities, and government agencies concerned with food security and environmental sustainability will continue to invest in this area. <p>The needs to develop the solution further (in terms of knowledge, training, support of trainers, contacts, etc.):</p> <p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of waste reduction techniques, supply chain optimization, waste management technologies, and policy frameworks. • Understanding of gender dynamics in agriculture, gender-sensitive approaches, leadership development, and gender mainstreaming strategies. 	

- Understanding of climate change impacts on agriculture, climate-smart agricultural practices, crop breeding techniques, and adaptive management strategies.

Training:


- Training programs on waste auditing, resource optimization, inventory management, and waste-to-resource conversion technologies.
- Training programs on gender analysis, gender-responsive planning, gender-sensitive data collection, and communication skills.
- Training programs on climate risk assessment, drought-tolerant crop varieties, soil conservation practices, and water management techniques.

Support of trainers:

- Access to experts in supply chain management, waste management, environmental science, and policy development who can provide guidance and mentorship.
- Engagement with gender specialists, women's rights organizations, community leaders, and policymakers who can provide expertise and guidance.
- Collaboration with climate scientists, agronomists, crop breeders, extension workers, and agricultural researchers who can provide technical expertise and guidance.

Contacts:

- Collaboration with industry stakeholders, waste management facilities, research institutions, and government agencies involved in waste reduction initiatives.
- Collaboration with women's organizations, NGOs working on gender equality, government agencies responsible for gender mainstreaming, and international development agencies focusing on women's empowerment.

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- Partnerships with climate research institutions, agricultural universities, extension services, farmer cooperatives, and international organizations focusing on climate adaptation in agriculture.

2.5. Italy

Location	Bressanone, Italy	
Timeframe	January - March 2024	
No. of participants	12	
Profile of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female farmers, • agricultural stakeholders, • women interested in farming, • stakeholders from a research institution 	
Learnings and Recommendations	<p>Learnings:</p> <p>It was difficult for most participants to put themselves in the position of an entrepreneur and to take over a certain perspective. Although this was emphasized several times, this perspective was lost in the discussions.</p> <p>During the elaboration on challenges, the participants addressed mainly mayor societal ills that are difficult to address as an individual entrepreneur. They also jumped directly into solutions without a clear problem definition.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>For more concrete outcomes it would be necessary to supervise the groups more closely and guide them towards manageable business ideas.</p>	
Identified challenges and solutions	Challenges	Solutions
	Attractiveness of the farming profession (profitability, quality of life, job description, ...)	"Open farm" meeting point for farmers and consumers
	Preservation of mountain farming in South Tyrol	
	More regional supply	
	Using innovations / new ideas to operate sustainable agriculture economically	

	Sustainable production that guarantees fair sales prices for farmers and affordable purchase prices for consumers	Communication campaign for an honest but optimistic presentation of the production of agricultural products to increase the appreciation of sustainably and regionally produced products (closing knowledge gaps, consuming less, enjoying more)
	Conscious consumption, communicating renouncing consumption as added value. With examples from companies, stakeholders, etc.	Through education and innovation to an economic and sustainable agricultural business
	Reduce crop protection without decreasing production volumes leading to increasing imports and consumers resorting to "nicer" goods produced in other EU countries (outsourcing of our environmental problems)	
	Social, societal structures (in agriculture) with regard to gender role distribution, no role models	
	Land consumption, land use problems: our diet is too land-intensive (unhealthy diets)	
	Lack of regional supply (unhealthy diets)	Consulting services for gastronomy businesses Delivery service from surrounding farms to Gastro

		Platform for networking between farmers and gastronomy
Future potential of the defined solutions	<p>As of now it is not sure who will continue working on which topic. Some participants showed a strong interest in wanting to be involved in the learning path depending on their availability.</p> <p>There is a need to rethink some solutions in terms of their business potential.</p> <p>In general, the insights gained from this workshop can serve as valuable resources for fostering continued engagement and innovation within the agricultural sector and beyond.</p>	