

Social Farming and Organic Farming: A different perspective for multifunctional agriculture in Italy

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Abstract

This paper synthesizes for the Italian situation the first results of the SoFar project funded by the VI EU Research Framework on Social farming (SF) (<http://sofar.unipi.it>). The aim of the SoFar project is to support EU agricultural policies related to multifunctional agriculture by exploring the use of agriculture in order to support local livelihood conditions and to improve local pathways of rural development. From a methodological point of view, the project uses a research action methodology by combining a survey in seven EU countries regarding local practices of SF with a more participatory approach in the construction of policies. In a way, the project would improve the knowledge and the awareness regarding SF. At the same time, it would increase the topic evidence in the political arena and to re-address policies. SF enlarge the idea of multifunctionality of the social field, and builds more than one bridge with a diverse view of local economy and a bit further from the market/policy dualism of the economy of public goods. At the same time, it implies a diverse attitude of farmers –in many cases organic– a different idea of the welfare system in rural areas, and an ethical attitude of consumers.

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