

ICRPS 2013: Italy

Agri-food systems and rural development: tradition, innovation and green governance.

Preliminary Concept and Programme

January 2013 – Version 1

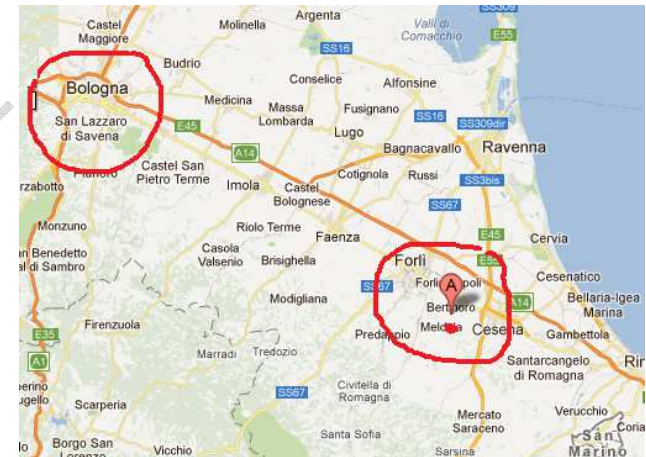
Draft Concept

Host: University of Bologna

Proposed period: 16 – 30 June 2013

Main venue: Centro Universitario di Bertinoro (http://www.ceub.it/index_en.cfm)

The Centre is composed of three large historical and monumental buildings few metres far from one another. They form a unique block on the top of the built-up area of the ancient town, in a quiet and hospitable place, surrounded by a very pleasant and peaceful atmosphere. The Centre was conceived and founded in 1994 by Ser.In.Ar. Ltd (the company which promoted and supported the decentralization of the University of Bologna to Forlì and Cesena towns) in order to host residential training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences as well as cultural and research initiatives. A partnership set up on purpose by Bologna and the Campus of the region Romagna, local Institutions and Bertinoro Town Council runs the whole Centre.



Themes:

1. General Themes

The general **themes** which characterize the Summer Institutes include:

a. Making policies for sustainability

The summer institute focuses specifically on the concepts of sustainability and “sustainable rural communities,” and the key institutional and governance issues involved in policy making, implementation, and delivery based on different national and international contexts. Concepts and institutional issues are dealt with at the beginning of the summer institute, while recurring in several case studies and lecture during the following two weeks.

b. Sustainable rural communities - contemporary policy challenges

In this framework the “issues” that contemporary policymakers face are grouped together. The sub-themes are the following ones: demographic change; poverty and inequality; climate change; developing rural economies; assets and development; agri-food systems; food networks; food security and health; food losses and waste; renewable energy; water and waste management; sustainable tourism; public services; population and migration; culture, language and identity. Running through the programme, these sub-themes provide rich material for international comparative analysis, and are also clearly key challenges that need to be met to build sustainable rural communities.

c. Research and analysis methods

The Summer Institute provides knowledge about, and practice in, conducting comparative research and analyzing data for policymaking. Thus we include sessions on comparative policy analysis, research design, evaluation, the uses (and abuses) of qualitative and quantitative data, and systems modelling. The in-class sessions will be supplemented by field experiences, group projects, individual projects, and a comparative policy exercise. The Group project will continue throughout the Summer Institute and be completed by the end of it, when it will be presented to a mixed audience of faculty, students, and local and other policy makers. Individual assignments will be discussed between students and their own faculty representatives, will start during the Summer Institute, and may continue after it. Assessment will be provided by their relevant Faculty member. Second year students will play an important role in the group project, and in all comparative policy exercises. This will provide practical experience in field visits and interviews, note-taking and reporting, as well as group work, rapid rural appraisal, and presentation. Further, through the “knowledge exchange” format we aim to give students a different experience from the standard interviewing, and also stimulate them to reflect on their experiences through an international comparative policy lens. Finally, the field experiences will provide an opportunity to explore policy relevant issues related to land and other assets, livelihoods, and culture, language and identity enabling students to address the broader dimensions of human and environmental ‘sustainability’ in a particular context.

2. Italian Themes

Specific Italian topics proposed for 2013 edition of the Summer Institute include:

a. Italian agri-food, rural, and regional policy

Italy is one of the least “rural” countries within the OECD. According to the OECD classification only 27% of the national territory is predominantly rural. These regions host 10% of the national population and produce 8% of the national GDP. A large part of the territory is classified as intermediate rural, which hosts 37% of the national population, and produces 34% of the national GDP. Nonetheless, many of the international products identifiable by the “Made in Italy” brand are produced in rural areas in the North and in the central part of the Country. The competitiveness of Italy’s rural areas depends on the continued strong entrepreneurship, good accessibility, and great cultural and natural amenities characterizing rural Italy that spur a successful tourism industry. Although the contribution offered by the production stage of the agri-food chain to employment and GDP is rather limited, food and agri-food systems still play an important role due to their integration with

territorial resources, cultural values, landscape and natural amenities, tourism. However, despite the good average performance, a number of structural treats are undermining the sustainability of rural Italy. For example, rural areas have persistent demographic challenges: the concentration of elderly population is very high and the immigration of foreign workers is only a recent trend.

Potential field visits: LAG Altra Romagna <http://www.altraromagna.net/home/en/gal/la-storia-del-gal.html>; LAG Delta 2000 <http://www.deltaduemila.net/> and Delta Po River Natural Park <http://www.parchideltapo.it/taglio.del.po/E12.html>.

b. Agri-food systems and food networks

In recent years the link between quality and locality has become evident to both academics and experts/stakeholders working in the agri-food sector. At the same time also the complexity of agri-food systems is emerged as a relevant aspect, also related to the number of stakeholders involved. Partly thanks to this growing number of actors, attention to food sustainability in its most diverse and deeply interrelated forms is increasing. A clear example of this so-called “*food democracy*” is the growing number of interlocutors participating into the debate on food sovereignty and decentralisation of supply chains (short chains) and of those involved in *slow food presidia* and *convivia*, an alternative food networks, important for raising awareness about food in terms of health and hygiene standards (Brunori G., 2007). A growing number of actors are involved in food and food politics (academics, civil society, health workers, local administrators, food businesses). They interact in a complex and dynamic system, in which blogs and the web have opened up new spaces for participation in and the creation of networks and groups, which interact with traditional forms of communication.

Proposed workshops: Slow Food Foundation.

Proposed field visits: Azienda Agricola Faggioli (ref. in rural tourism section); Cooperativa Alce Nero; Agriturismo Dulcamara; Local weekly market (to be identified); Local fair dedicated to a product (to be identified); Producers of Fossa cheese, wine, oil: Museum of the traditional balsamic vinegar <http://www.museodelbalsamicotradizionale.org/ita/index.htm>; Acetaia Caselli - Balsamic Vinegar producer <http://www.acetaiacaselli.it/eng.html>, Food Museum of Parmigiano Reggiano.

c. Food losses and waste

The focus on waste will be based on the campaign “A year against waste”. It is a multi-year project aiming to raise Italian and European public awareness on the causes and consequences of waste, on how to reduce it and how to promote a sound scientific culture and civic principles oriented towards sustainability and solidarity. Each year the overall theme of the waste has been focused on a specific topic: food (2010), water (2011) and energy (2012). This three-year program that will culminate in 2014, with the ‘European Year against Waste’. The overall objective of the campaign is to contribute to the spread of a new culture and a better use of the resources. A better design of goods and services would contribute to reduce the problem of waste (<http://www.unannocontrolospreco.org/en/>)

Special session on “Food-Energy” Nexus: a special session will be organized in order to present the results of the campaign and the “The Green Book of Food Waste in Italy: the case of Energy” (Il Libro verde sullo spreco di energia in Italia, eds. Segrè A. and Vittuari M., Edizione Ambiente), which will be published in early 2013. This session will thus focus on the increased interrelation between the energy and the agro-food systems, from the perspective of both energy consumption and renewable energy production (see also topic d.).

Links with the FP7 Project FUSIONS: Food Use for Social Innovation by Optimising waste prevention Strategies .

Potential workshops: The Blue Book of Food Waste in Italy: the case of Water (eds. Segrè A. and Falasconi L., Edizione Ambiente).

Other related events: documentary “Taste the Waste”.

Proposed field visits: meeting with local authorities who joined the campaign through active initiatives (i.e. Association of the Virtuous Municipalities, Literature Festival – Mantova city); dinner in a “zero waste” restaurant.

d. Renewable energy (in farm and off farm)

In recent years, this sector has been characterized by a fast-paced development growth in Italy, also due to the former feed-in tariff policy. Nevertheless this growth has also caused some drawbacks, especially in rural areas. Some examples are the diffusion of solar fields on agricultural soil (now forbidden) or the diffusion of biomass/biogas systems based on food crops, which caused a number

of local protests. Indeed, the integration of renewable energy sources (RES) in the Italian rural economy could provide many benefits, such as employment and income generation, especially in the case of agriculture. Nevertheless, given the specific relevance of traditional landscape, local food productions, as well as tourism, many trade-offs could arise between different sectors and stakeholders, but also among different levels of government.

Links to OECD: The whole topic is subject to a recent trans-national comparative study: Linking Renewable Energy to Rural Development. Green Growth Studies, OECD, Paris, 2012.

Proposed workshops: a) the relationship between energy and rural development policy; b) benefits and trade-offs of the integration of RES in agriculture (on farm) and in rural areas (off farm); c) the social acceptance of RES (democracy issues; not in my back yard - n.i.m.b.y.; local vs. global)

Links with the FIRB (Future in Research) Project: Multidisciplinary and innovative methodologies for sustainable management in agricultural systems.

Proposed field visits: Mengoli farm (milk and biogas producer); Bondeno (different biogas plants); Bando d'Argenta (biomass combustion plant); CISA Centre (various innovative projects: <http://www.centrocisa.it/>).

e. Rural tourism

Rural Tourism as an instrument to promote local socio – economic development in rural areas preserving natural resources. The sector is strictly connected to other regional and local policies aimed at the valorisation of an area and involve a large number of actors (academics, regional and local administrators, farmers, local associations). Furthermore rural tourism includes several branches, with their own specificities: nature based-tourism, eno-gastronomic tourism, cultural tourism, wellness and active tourism. Improved understanding of tools and methodologies to assess rural tourism destination's potential for sustainable development is a challenging and strategic issue. In Italy the agro-tourism is one of the most important structure and key-actor/structure in the frame of rural tourism and the first Italian law on agro-tourism (L. 730/1985) is considered a pioneer for the European Agenda 2000.

Proposed field visits: Azienda Agricola Faggioli <http://www.fattoriefaggioli.it/>; Agriturismo Le Pradine <http://www.lepradine.it/>.

Related festivals: Medieval Festival of Brisighella <http://www.festemedioevali.org/> (2012 edition).

f. Cooperatives

Italy has long tradition in cooperatives (i.e. workers' cooperatives inspired by socialist or Christian traditions) in particular in some regions from central-northern Italy. Cooperatives have the obligation of no profit activities, but operate as an entrepreneurial organisation, producing important results in terms of economy and employment on the territories in which they are active. Social cooperation represents one of the most structured segment of the "third sector, even if it is a relative new phenomenon, created with a national law in 1991 (L. 381/91).

Proposed field visits: Legacoop Bologna <http://www.legacoop.bologna.it/lbsen/Index/>; CLAI Cooperative of Agricultural Workers from Imola, <http://www.clai.it/>; Cooperative Dulcamara (ref. in social farming) ; Alce Nero <http://alcenero.it/>.

g. Social farming

Social farming represents a peculiar case of promoting social innovation in rural areas and in peri-urban contexts and multifunctionality in the social field. The involvement and commitment of both the rural community and public institutions is an important aspect, considering that social farming includes "those farming practices aimed at promoting disadvantaged people's rehabilitation and care and/or towards the integration of people with 'low contractual capacity' (i.e. psychophysical disabilities, convicts, drug addicts, minors, migrants; SoFar Project)". In Italy the regulation allows social cooperatives to work for the rehabilitation (education and labour integration) of disadvantaged persons. Social cooperatives for labour integration often come out from pre-existing care services social cooperatives. The instrument of public works to social cooperatives for labour integration have also allowed to manage relevant environmental interventions with limited costs, thus producing significant saving of public expense.

Proposed field visits: Cooperativa Il Forteto <http://www.forteto.it/>; Colombini's Farm <http://www.biocolombini.it/>; Cooperativa Dulcamara <http://www.coopdulcamara.it/>

h. Diversity & Migrations

Italy has recently been characterized by a major transition from being a country of emigration to a country of immigration. This phenomenon has been particularly relevant in rural areas, which were pools of Italian workers for other EU countries until 40 years ago. In terms of employment, the condition of migrants is characterized by subalternity: non-EU workers are often involved in underpaid or heavy activities. Thus there has been an increasing use of non-EU labour force in intensive agriculture, mainly for seasonal job related to the collection of crops (i.e. fruit and vegetable pickers) or for specific tasks which are culturally connected to the country of origin (i.e. Sikh milkers). Nevertheless, the importance of migration in rural areas is not limited to food production. Indeed, the ageing of rural population also created a strong need for personal care services, which is a relevant sector for the occupation of women migrants.

Proposed field visits: Parmigiano Reggiano dairy farms & Sikh milkers; trade union providing services and (bureaucratic and administrative) assistance to migrants.

3. Key Global Questions for the Summer Institute

We also propose to use a series of key global questions or issues as the basis for broader students' discussion and specific inputs from second year participants. Second year students will have some special sessions: each of the second-year students will have to prepare a presentation and a paper. An outline has to be drafted before the summer school and discussed with the faculties in the sessions during the first week. The presentation and final paper draft will then be prepared during the summer Institute and presented at the end to all Faculties and students. Global questions include:

- Do we need 'Rural Policy'? What kind of rural policy? What should its overarching goals and objectives be? How do views differ on this question (between interests and countries), and why? How are different rural policies implemented and delivered, and how their implementation could be fostered? Which kind of agri-food policies do we need? Which relationship between agri-food and rural policies? How does this relationship differ between different countries, and why? How are agri-food policies implemented and delivered?
- What is the role of innovation and how can it be stimulated in rural regions? What should the goals of innovation be and how should we measure its consequences? What is the rationale for public engagement in innovation processes and systems? What are the connections among innovation, green governance and local resources (territorial capital)?
- Is it more 'sustainable' for everyone to move to cities and peri-urban areas during the 21st Century? If so, what kind of policy framework should support this? If not, how can this tendency be changed in different contexts? What kind of policies would help to reverse the present tendencies?
- Is renewable energy a good option for rural policy? What conditions would make it such a good option or a better option, and what conditions would prevent it being a good option?
- What are the social and political consequences of food price inflation and future assessments of global supply and demand? What about land grabbing? Where is it happening and why? What role is being played by national governments, International Institutions and Global Corporations? What are its local and global impacts in different contexts?
- What impact has the financial and economic crisis on rural areas and people, and on rural policies, in different contexts? What are the possible alternative development possibilities for the post-crisis world?
- Tools and policies for food waste reduction. What is the role of food waste in food systems and what its impact on food security. What are the major drivers of food waste in developing and developed nations?
- Should international migration work, in rural farming, fisheries or food processing industries in rich countries, be encouraged. Why, or why not? With what consequences in sending and recipient countries and regions? If 'maybe' then under what conditions should it be encouraged?
- Can lessons from one (country/regional) context be transferred to another? What are the implications for international cooperation?
- How do international agreements, such as 'Kyoto/Cancun, WTO, etc.', as well as international development cooperation affect rural policies and communities?

Second year students will be asked to select one of these topics before the summer Institute, and advise their own Faculty as well as Matteo. Organizers may ask students to select another topic if duplication occurs.

Draft Programme

Tentative TIME PLAN for lectures in the class room

- Morning: 9-13.00 (9-11.00; 11.00-11.15 break; 11.15-13.00)
- Lunch break: 13-15.30
- Afternoon: 15.30-18.30 (15.30- 17.00; 17.00 -17.15 break; 17.15-18.30)

Notes

1. Field visits

Indicated field visits are in a tentative version, therefore they could change depending further revision of the programme, further ideas and sponsorship opportunities. A visit to the Alma Mater Studiorum in Bologna will be also organized.

2. Session with David Solomons (cultural mediation):

A proposal for the 2013 Summer Institute is the inclusion of two “lessons/workshops” on diversity management/cultural mediation chaired by prof. David Solomons (for his profile: <http://crossculturalcommunication.co/who-we-are/>). These workshops aim at encouraging cross-cultural communication and mediation between students, and it could be an interesting tool to be used during the first days of the Summer Institute, in order to facilitate the integration between different backgrounds. The workshops by prof. Solomons imply to have groups of almost 20 students. The idea is to divide students in 2 groups (group A and B) which will take the lecture with him separately. The work group should take around 6 hours per group. In the programme two parallel sessions are thus devoted to this possible feature, in day 3 and 4.

3. Workgroup:

The different editions of the Summer Institute has been characterized, depending on the adaptation to the local context, by a stronger or weaker emphasis on a number of tools and learning/organization methods. As far as workgroups are regarded, the 2013 Edition could include:

- The introduction of preliminary sessions carried out before field visits in order to guarantee the possibility to prepare research questions;
- Transversal features that could be addressed by all the groups, such as “innovation” and “trade-offs with other themes”;
- The division of students according to themes but also to the scientific profile of participants, in order to have more comparative analysis, an interdisciplinary and multicultural perspective, besides the combination of senior and junior students;
- One of the aim of the workgroups could be the preparation of a collaborative research project with original research questions, a preliminary collection of data, some comparative analysis, an innovative ad appropriate methodology, possible research results: field visits could thus be used both to identify the research problems and to collect the first data.

4. Key dates and activities

Sunday June 16, 2013: Arrival in Bertinoro and accommodation at the University Residential Centre of Bertinoro (CEUB)

Monday June 17 to Friday June 21: class and field visits

Saturday June 22: 10th year conference or class and field visits

Sunday June 23: 10th year conference or free day

Monday June 24 to Thursday June 27: class and field visits

Friday June 28: workgroup presentations and farewell dinner

Saturday June 29: presentation of the next ICRPS edition and field social experience

Sunday June 30, 2013: departure