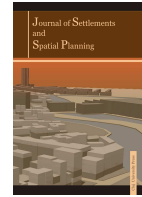




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Analysis of the Potential of Sustainable Development in the Rural Communities

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ABSTRACT

There is plenty of news about Romanian villages which fade away and about the numerous austerity plans that have been imposed to the population. People's welfare, the prosperity of the communities cannot be assured by speculative practices, lack of work, irresponsible consumption of natural resources, and continuous creation of political, economical, social, ecological problems. The persistent crisis leads to the depopulation of the villages, to the aging of the population, the migration of the young population from villages and decreasing of living standards of those who remain there. Today the information is more accessible regarding the impact of the actual agro alimentary system (the pollution connected to the transportation of alimentary products on long distances, food waste, the reduction of agricultural biodiversity, the use of pesticides, of hormone growth, the excessive exploitation of nonrenewable resources, the growth of the consumption of products coming from organisms genetically modified) and the conclusion that such a system is unsustainable. The world forum of alimentation launched in 1996 the ideas of alimentary sovereignty (the states should firstly feed their population, using their own resources equitably and just) which is not attained only by food supply. The reduction of development differences and poverty remains a major problem from ecological reasons and survival of population. The undeveloped rural communities are obliged to affirm their identity, to become more aware of themselves, to value what is specific for them, to integrate in larger spaces, in networks, to renew their vision, to build their visibility to the mass-media, etc., all these in the circumstances where their young people are leaving, remaining only the old people, and others who don't return from the city or from abroad. The construction of their economical, social and environmental competitiveness is important (in communication there are given numerous examples of strategies used by the European rural communities). The possible effect of the associations is analyzed as well, of NGO that intervene in villages (based on a self research in 2011, in 25 villages from a county in Moldova). The migrants can be an important resource for the present and the future of rural communities from Romania. Some characteristics of Romanians' migration are identified (shown with examples from the database of a project financed by Swiss National Science Switzerland and The Executive Unit for Financing of Higher Education of Research, Development and Innovation Romania). By another self research they have searched to identify the potential development of rural communities through biological farming (some results and conclusions are presented). A consistent part of communication is dedicated to the biological agriculture and its forms: permaculture, the biodynamic agriculture etc. There are identified advantages of sustainable agriculture in villages, insisting on the proximity economy, the sustained agriculture by the community (the basket with bio products). All these can diminish the development gaps and create premises of sustainable development of villages. For this the involvement of specialists is necessary in community development, but education and producers' and consumers' training regarding the development of the biological agriculture (examples of policies, practices and actors of education and formation are given in view of sustainable development of rural communities).

1. ROMANIAN VILLAGES THAT FADE AWAY...

Some say that there have been designs against peasantry since a long time, but especially following the Second World War when people started using chemical fertilizers to produce bombs, when agriculture had to buy from the industry agrimotors (the extension of the tanks) and other so called “*agricultural machines*”. The large corporations imposed the practice of an agriculture that was producing “*commodities*” so as to get money and profit on the account of the exploitation of the nature, the destruction of the biodiversity and the microbiology of the soil. The chemicals and the agrimotors with a wide usage reduced the number of the agriculturalists on the corn fields, destroyed the social structure, since many peasants left their natal places for the peripheries of the cities. Lots of villages left deserted. There is always news that witnesses the Romanian villages that fade away¹. On the one hand, there are billions of immigrants in the cities who have to feed; on the other hand, there are deserted villages, in a lack of food producers...

The crisis within the system in 2008 worsens the unbalances at the origin of the economic and financial crisis, to the detriment of the sustainable development (Ghosh, 2010)².

Different governments tried to face the crisis by implementing plans of intervention for... the banks. Some austerity plans have been imposed to... the people, such as the increase of the prices for food (CNUCED, 2009³, Ghosh, 2010)⁴. The welfare, the

prosperity cannot be enhanced if their support consists of speculative practices, laziness, irresponsible waste of the natural resources, the continuous generation of economic, social and ecological problems. The persistent crisis leads to depopulation, the ageing of the population, the migration of youth from the villages and the decrease of the living standards of the agriculturalists who are still there. Romania has the largest rate of rural population from UE (around 50% of the population), the highest percentage of the labor force in agriculture (in relation to the European average); and yet the Romanian agriculture keeps being placed under a “subsistence” level, with millions of “*households*”⁵ on two thirds of the agricultural surface that has been used, together with the “*new agrarians*” (on the rest of one third). Most of the *peasants of the subsistence* eat what they themselves produce. The half backs lived in better conditions for a while on the account of some abundant products, but now they have to observe the standards imposed by UE and they are not capable to do so, therefore many of them leave the villages or even the country. Some of them could be called rich peasants (farmers) due to the fact that they keep up with the European norms and they can be seen in the fares with natural products sold at high prices. The involution of the agriculture following centuries of “*collectivization*”, the des-industrialization of the country, the tertiarisation of the economy have not been followed by measures with a positive impact on the labor and the life of the agriculturalists within villages...

2. THE CURRENT AGRO-ALIMENTARY SYSTEM

The negative effects of the pollution linked to the transportation of the alimentary products or to alimentary waste on large distances⁶ can be felt, together with the negative effects of the reduction of the agricultural bio-diversity⁷, the use of pesticides

¹ The existence at global scale, of a multitude of eco-systems with different characteristics, different from the point of view of the biologic elements (for example, India had 200 000 sorts of rice; after 40 years of Green revolution, it had but 50...)

<http://www.ziarulderoman.ro/47606/aramesti-si-liliac-sate-care-mor/>; <http://www.ziarulderoman.ro/30604/scolile-se-inchid-satele-mor/>; http://adevarul.ro/locale/buzau/satele-buzau-imbatrane-sc-mor-odata-locuitorii-lor-1_50ad23ee7c42d5a6638f728b/index.html; <http://www.viata-libera.ro/satul/44536-galati-viata-libera-sat-sate-care-mor-hantesti-buciumeni>; <http://www.gds.ro/Actualitate/2003-01-15/Satele+mor+incet,+dar+sigur>;

<http://www.ziare.com/tulcea/delta-dunarii/cum-mor-satele-din-delta-crisan-intre-traditie-si-dezvoltare-436218>;

<http://www.zoso.ro/satele-care-mor/>

<http://giurgiu-net.ro/2010/09/09/satele-mor/>;

<http://protv.md/stiri/social/moldova-fara-oameni-satele-se-sting-vazand-cu-ochii-am-ramas-cu---151604.html>

<http://toth.ro/satul-romanesc-moare-ba-nu-se-transforma/>

² Ghosh, J. (2010). “La crise mondiale et au-delà: modèles de croissance durable pour les pays en développement”, *Revue internationale du Travail*, vol. 149, no 2 (2010)

³ CNUCED (2009). *Rapport sur le commerce et le développement*, Genève.

⁴ Ghosh, J. (2010). «The unnatural coupling: Food and global finance», *Journal of Agrarian Change*, vol. 10, no 1, pp. 72-86.

⁵ <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/recensamant-2011-vezi-cati-locuitori-au-mai-ramas-in-ficcare-judet-din-romania-952407.html#ixzz13C8FE8i>;

<http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/rezultate-recensamant-2011-suntem-prea-putini-cum-recuperam-952353.html#ixzz1cduM7C4i>;

<http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/social/satele-fantoma-ale-romaniei-un-fenom-en-unic-pe-care-europa-nu-il-inteleg.html>;

http://www.romania-actualitati.ro/sate_parasite_descoperite_la_recensamantul_agricol-24996;

<http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/cernobilul-romanesc-la-pas-prin-satele-nimanui-964140.html>

⁶ In Bulgarian, the term “*gospodar*” (meaning householder) refers to the person who has the ability and the competences of being in charge of a household (“*gospodarie*” formed by derivation from *gospodar*).

⁷ The current alimentary system encourages the large distances between the farm and the client. In USA, the alimentary system is responsible of almost 16% of the total consume of energy. The gas emitted by automobiles have a direct impact on the human health (around 16 000 pre-mature deaths per year are caused by the air pollution in Canada). CO₂ is a gas with greenhouse effect and it contributes to the over-heating of the planet.

The current alimentary system encourages the specialization and the decrease in the diversity of the alimentary products: the same sorts of tomatoes, bananas and pepper are required. The United Nations Organization for Alimentation and Agriculture (FAO) estimates that 75% of the agricultural sorts cultivated world-widely have disappeared since 1900 until today. There are 13 volumes with all the fruits existing in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century (over 3000). If we refer to apples, today there are only 5 French sorts commercialized. The ones which were not fragile were removed from the market and the Golden apples were imposed which need 36 treatments with pesticides per year...The financial and industrial groups put pressure on Europe to give up the traditional sorts and to

and growth hormones, the excessive exploit of the renewable resources, the increase in the consume of the genetically modified products (OMG), as well as the negative effects on the social tissue inoculated by the competition between agriculturalists from all around Europe and all around the world⁸, the support for the large farms and the fact of putting at disadvantage the small agriculturalists within the chain of the alimentary production, the decrease in the vitality of the rural communities⁹ and the proliferation of the products that harm one's health¹⁰.

This agro-alimentary system is unsustainable¹¹. There are large surfaced of unfertile soil which was not fertilized in a proper way¹². Some time ago there was a balance agro-forestry-pastoral (cultivated soil, animals, forest) which provided the soil its natural fertilizers. Nowadays animals are gathered in a single place, the cultures in another one and forests in other places. The balance between these was stronger at a planetary scale. Now we would need six planets if we wanted to live as Americans do... If we wanted an increase of 3% we would need 30 planets¹³... However, we have but a single planet... On its account many think only about economic increase, whereas the notion of increase in this sense means nothing more than an amount of money with different owners, at the expense of the waste of resources, the pollution of the undersoil, of water and air¹⁴. When a farm, a household no longer exists, when people leave the villages, the consequences affect the school, the services and many other places of work which provided the social tissue and gave vitality to the rural

space¹⁵. The motivations for peasants to work in villages have been torn apart...

MOC, NAFTA, the free exchange zone of America and the European Union sought for the removal of the restrictions at the level of the international commerce. The liberalization of commerce generated the competition between all the agriculturalists around the world, which is however an unfair game for the agriculturalists who live in households whose surfaces are considered too small, not enough modern and too isolated. This had a major impact on the ones who wanted to buy high-quality machines and tools: the difficulty in compensating the baskets. Victims of the spiral with no purpose of the strictly economic efficiency¹⁶, the small agriculturalists did not receive a fair ratio of the price the consumers paid¹⁷ (they sold one liter of milk for 50 bani¹⁸ whereas this baskets 5 lei in supermarkets...). The small households could not and cannot compete with the large companies and corporations, which means that they are prone to disappear, despite the fundamental role they play in the vitality of the rural communities. The instruments being used to protect the internal markets were eliminated. Some negative effects were generated as well by the speculations with regards to the fertile soil – which is a rare resource and by the speculations concerning the prices for corn, wheat, rice, soy etc.

Despite the commitment made in 1996, the state of famine was doubled, did not diminish until 2013 and nowadays it harms 1.1 billions of people at a global scale. The special reporter of the United Nations shows that 70% of the ones suffering of famine are agriculturalists, peasants, out of whom 70% are women¹⁹. On another hand, obesity affects almost 1.2 billions of people...

3. THE ALIMENTARY SOVEREIGNTY

The coalition for the alimentary sovereignty claims that an universal sustainable and fair agro-alimentary system observing the human rights to food, work and health prevails the commercial law and implies the nations' right to the alimentary sovereignty²⁰ (the concept was introduced during the

cultivate Golden apples...Kokopelli distributes huge quantities of seeds to hundreds of associations and communities on all continents, under the protection of the Ministry of Agriculture, The Federation of the Industrial Producers of Seeds etc.

⁸ In 2000 Quebec exported around 7000 tons of apples and imported the double of it...

⁹ "Le plaidoyer en faveur d'un monde soutenable sans OGM" (available on: <http://www.indsp.org/>); "Stop aux OGM et stop aux recherches sur les modifications génétiques!" (available on: <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/NoToGMOsfr.php>); <http://www.notre-planete.info/>.

¹⁰ In order to conserve the products on long distances, many packages and additives are being used. The packages of the alimentary products, the waste, the wastage resulted from alimentary products stand for a third of our garbage. Today we produce 80% more packages than in 1960 and around 200 kg per person, per year. Even if some packages have their own usefulness, the amount of it would be smaller if the distance between the producer and the consumer would be smaller. In many cases what we pay for packages is more than what the producers get for their work...The transport in large distances leads to losses of vitamins affecting the nutritional potential of the products.

¹¹ Annie Langlois. « La sécurité alimentaire est-elle un luxe ? » Extrait du livre *J'ai le goût de la santé, nutrition et équilibre*. http://www.servicevie.com/01Alimentation/Manger_sante/Mange220399/mange220399.html;

L'insécurité alimentaire dans les ménages canadiens. Rapports sur la santé, volume 12, numéro 4 (http://www.statecan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/listpub_f.cgi?catno=82-003-XIF2000004).

¹² "Le plaidoyer en faveur d'un monde soutenable sans OGM" (available on: <http://www.indsp.org/>);

"Stop aux OGM et stop aux recherches sur les modifications génétiques!" (available on: <http://www.isis.org.uk/NoToGMOsfr.php>)

¹³ <http://www.maplanetealimentaire.fr/images/stories/mpa20/Image1.jpg>

¹⁴ <http://alimentation.gouv.fr/dlc-dluo-campagne-antigaspi>

¹⁵ <http://www.etude-nutrinet-sante.fr/>; www.etude-nutrinet-sante.fr.

¹⁶ 4 millions of peasants abandoned their lands and left in France. They are exactly the ones we will need when the chemicals will not be needed any more on the market. This is because fertilizers, the gas, the pesticides, the plastic, need petrol. We created a petrol-based agriculture, or we do know that the resources of petrol are exhaustible.

¹⁷ <http://www.ohmyfood.fr/les-francais-ne-mangent-pas-mieux-que-les-americains>

¹⁸ Romanian currency, subdivision of the national currency LEU, 1 EURO = 4,5 RON, 100 bani = 1 RON

¹⁹ <http://www.ledevoir.com/international/actualitesinternationales/291113/le-droit-de-manger-avant-le-droit-de-commercer>

²⁰ This refers to the alimentary sovereignty of one country. The research was done in order to prove the connection between the international commerce, the alimentary gaps of the agriculture limited to a culture of bananas, meaning a single type of product,

World Forum of Alimentation dating back to 1996). The consolidation of the alimentary sovereignty of nations was the slogan promoted so as to enhance *the alimentary security*. The states concerned were asked to feed at first their own population using their own resources, in a fair and proper manner²¹. Since then there have been lots of research on the alimentary sovereignty, several coalitions were made, there have been proposals of the agricultural policies²², but prospections (*the right to eat before commercializing, the alimentary security above all*) are still a current matter even at the beginning of the 21st century... Not to mention anymore that according to some predictions the world's population will reach 9 billion until 2050, therefore the alimentary needs will increase. The increase in the population of the cities (with different alimentary behavior) will lead to the increase in the meat consume.

There are several potential solutions concerning the alimentary security²³:

- the expansion of the cultivated agricultural surface (which would mean a loss of the forest ground, pastures, or of the surfaces with a high biodiversity);
- the increase in the productivity (of quantities per hectare) in the well-developed countries and the export of the surplus from the countries in deficit;
- the increase in the productivity in the countries in deficit;
- peri-urban agriculture and urban agriculture (cultivating vegetables in the cities) etc.

The alimentary security is not reached at only if the population is provided with food. There are many questions arising, concerning aspects such as: who produces the food, who has the power of buying it, who has access to the information related to the healthy agricultural products, who has the power of buying such information etc.

4. A PANEGYRIC OF THE RURAL COMMUNITIES

The reduction of the gaps in development and of the poorness is still a major issue in terms of ecological approach and of humanity's survival. The new process of *globalization* would pretend a kind of dependence of the countries on a coherent system of laws, principles and values supposed to enhance the globalized ecological coexistence. Such a "*dependence*" is difficult to create *for lack of a choice for the better*

path we should make all together. Every community has to define its own interests, to provide daily replies to some complex internal and external demands. The process of globalization can stand at the same time, for an opportunity and for a threat (*opportunity* because it allows the communities for the commercialization of their products no matter the distances; *threat* since it tends to remove the territorial and identity barriers which provided their protection until now). In order to face *globalization*, the rural communities are forced to assert their own identity, to become more aware of themselves, to value their own specificities, to renew their vision, to build their visibility by catching the interest of medias etc. They should do all these actions, provided that the young people leave, the local people get older and there are no other people coming from cities or from abroad...

The economic competitiveness of villages depends on their nature, on the infrastructure and services, on the existing production activities, the existing technologies and their reasonable use, the quantity and the quality of the products, the real possibilities of bargain sale in profit. Even if agricultural activities date since a long time, the difficulties in practicing it did not disappear, since the competitive agriculture depends on the ability of the local actors to provide de proper management of resources, to value adequate practices and competences, to create and to organize the activities of the farms, to create and organize non-agricultural activities, to facilitate the access to markets with a higher remuneration. Some analyses should be performed at the level of the practices of valuation of resources within villages, the institutions, the organization, the values shared by the members of the community²⁴, the way in which the people's attachment to the rural community and the one of the entrepreneurs is formed and maintained etc.

whereas the others are imported, which is something not everyone could afford.

²¹<http://www.wiki2d.org/enjeux-et-perspectives/alimentation-notre-securite-est-elle-en-danger/>

²²<http://www.maplanetealimentaire.fr/images/stories/mpa20/Image1.jpg>

²³ These instruments, methods and guides are interpreted in different ways, in contradiction with *Codex alimentarius*- the main international reference

²⁴ What attitude do they have in what concerns the risks? What attitude do they have in what concerns the receptivity to new? What role do they attribute to the work, education, cohesion, solidarity? What role do the public funds have? Are they directioned to local key sectors? How are the resources managed at the local level? What are the impediments? Are there any forms of collective reflection on the competences, the knowledge or the local practice? Is the population involved in projects? Do they expect to have everything done by the state? What demographic changes are in progress? Are there young people in the community? Do they intend to stay there? In what conditions? Do they intend to leave? What are the reasons? Are there new residents to come? What are the occupations of the occupied-work force? Are there non-agricultural activities? Or seasonal activities? Are the family associations predominant? Or the large farms? How are the local actors organized? Is there any system of professional formation provided? What can be done to value, to restore and to modernize the traditional know-how? What are the connections between the rural community and the university or the centers of research? Is there a social dialogue to identify the needs of the appropriate formations? What is the real and the potential offer of the community? What other possibilities to enter the market can be found? To what extent are they familiar with the market? Or the mechanisms of penetration on these markets? Are they coming with seasonal products? With niche products? Or unique products? With specific recipes? With a specific technique of production? How are the products promoted and commercialized? Are there special groups dealing with the commerce? Are there specific outlets for the distribution of the local products?

The strategy of the stimulation of competitiveness can be perceived in accordance with the analysis of the opportunities, of the difficulties and of the solutions to overcome them, the analysis of priorities (informing, forming, mobilizing people, successful actions) etc. Is the human capital entirely used? What about innovations, ideas or projects? Or the patrimonial resources that have been abandoned (buildings, landscapes)? Or the non-material resources that are about to disappear (traditions, identity values)? Or the financial resources (the population's savings, the re-invested profits, the remissions of the immigrants)?

Here are some examples of the strategies of increase of the economic competitiveness within European communities:

- diversifying the production and the complementary activities²⁵;
- re-positioning on certain niches of the market²⁶;
- optimizing the communication with the potential buyers²⁷;
- involving owners open to local investment (such as in tourism)²⁸;
- valuing the specificity focused on local targets and target groups of visitors²⁹;
- valuing the local specificity;
- maintaining an integrated vision of the rural life³⁰ and of the image of the community³¹;

- adapting to the local low and dispersed demand³²;
- drawing maps of quality³³;
- re-launching some of the local services in order to avoid the deterioration of the patrimony³⁴;
- fighting against the depopulation of villages³⁵ etc.

The analysis of *the social competitiveness* of the rural communities implies taking into account all the human resources, the collective actors, promoters of projects, the links between those sharing the same values, knowledge of social management and community development etc. There should be identifications of the ones moving to villages after having lived in a city, the ones in possession of knowledge and abilities allowing them to manage efficiently new complex situations, the ones with a clear perception of the necessity of (re)creating social connections, of mobilizing people around a set of common values and projects. The connections between generations gave birth to the present

²⁵ In Sierra de Francia (Spain), famous for the production of cured ham, ("the Black Spot"), a group of local action implemented a strategy focused on the restructuring of other local sectors in order to expand the offer of products, starting with the consolidation of old time practices, the increase of the capacity of high-quality accommodation etc. A multi-functional center of services was created to identify, conserve and develop some traditional resources of know-how and to increase the touristic capacity by re-decorating some traditional houses, forming the peasants to perform such activities.

²⁶ The electronic identification of animals, the development of some new technologies applied in agriculture, in the small farms of cows in a view to help them enter the market was one of the objectives of the projects developed in Pays de Gatine (Poitou -Charentes, France) and Torridge (England). The strategy of the common commercialization was promoted.

²⁷ Improving the quality of the veal and lamb meat was one of the main objectives of the collaboration between the producers from the regions of South Kerry (Ireland) and Garfagnana (Toscane, Italy). A "map of quality" was conceived and some common actions were performed in order to improve the communication with potential buyers from the region and outside of it.

²⁸ In Terras Dentro (Alentejo, Portugal) one of the strategies was focused on valuing the territorial identity and the local culture around the image "Terras de Cante" (The Land of the Song), through the mobilization of a certain number of project representatives interested in the construction of a high-quality tourism. Admitting the limits of such a strategy (targeting rich people), the promoters completed it with activities of construction of the long-term competitiveness, through animation and professional formation of unemployed people, through new strategies of communication etc.

²⁹ In order to increase and improve the touristic offer from the National Park of Tavern (Austria), several touristic operators specialized in the family tourism. Various types of family activities were identified in order to get the children and their parents involved, such as activities in the open space (games in the forest from the proximity, the equipment of the pool, exhibiting some domestic animals, collections of rocks, minerals etc.) or activities in the courtyard (individual or collective games, cooking traditional products in the kitchen tourists have access to etc.). Each architectural and infrastructure element was conceived so as to reflect the preferences of each family member, whereas others attended specific formations in order to attract new customers.

³⁰ In l'Île Crémieux, close to Lyon, (the second largest city of France), the local development was based on valuing the partnership of an archeological site which was transformed into a museum and a "house of the local patrimony", taking in charge the education in the protection of the patrimony, or of the environment. Nowadays it has larger areas of competence, including the management of the patrimony of the closer regions.

³¹ The limited possibilities of occupation combined with the unemployment determined the youth migration in Llandysul and Point-Tywely, villages from Teifi. Worrying about the socio-economic crisis, a groups of inhabitants organized an audit. They composed three working groups based on the social cohesion, life standards quality, economic affairs, environment and tourism. An integrated plan of development was developed, through different actions concerning the re-construction of the activity of the two villages. They created: the youth center (in a large hall of the church), a nursery (in an ancient commercial building), a nautical center (with the possibility of hosting the kayak-canoeing people coming for training and competitions), a center of garbage collection etc. The activity of the association of the two villages is more interesting as they belonged to different administrative entities.

³² In Haut-Allier (Auvergne, France) a project focused on the creation of an enterprise of services (43 services practiced by agriculturalists). There were agreements on contracts with public enterprises and new activities of the enterprises were launched, providing the most various services, including the maintenance of the telephonic cabins, actions of restoration of old pieces of patrimony, furniture production, all kinds of renovations.

³³ In Sommenbygden, in the South-East of Sweden, in the context of the decrease in the price of the agricultural products, the producers agreed on commercializing under the same etiquette products of meat following biologic methods. They signed contracts with small chains of shops ("Hemkop") which at their turn assumed responsibilities concerning the production during the year. The producers created a common website to distribute information on the production, the contacts with different customers, or to reply to the consumers' questions.

³⁴ In the Gulholmen and Karingon (Sweden) islands, confronting with the decline of the services and the deterioration of the infrastructures (consequences of the fishing reduction), the local associations decided to organize in order to maintain some services and to avoid the total degradation of the infrastructure etc. In this way, they started by re-habilitating the houses, the transportation services, or other vital services two prevent the immigration of young people. A global plan of maintenance of the "community" propriety was conceived through specific services and activities.

³⁵ In Jamtland (Sweden) the density of the inhabitants was of 3 inhabitants per km², which lead to the disappearance of services, the closure of the schools etc. Three of the villages from this region were mobilized in 1984 to find a strategy of re-population. Inhabitants built houses for the installation of some young families. The kindergarten and the school were protected. The essential services were then regenerated (pharmacy, gym center, equipment for the spare time etc.) In 15 years of efforts the demographic tendency was reversed.

configuration of our villages (historical models, the way of use of resources, the production method, the attachment to the village, institutions and mother tongue). When the rural community is no longer able to prevent young people from leaving, when there are jobs and activities fading away, the local tissue is torn apart and the village loses its capacity of innovation (provided that it once had one) and the habit of collective actions (if it once had such habits)...

How can we conceive a strategy of optimization of the social competitiveness? By identifying the common element, the common interests of the population, looking for each one's responsibility sense, using techniques of concertation³⁶ in order to overcome the drawbacks of the past, creating and consolidating the reciprocal thrust, determining people to get involved into activities of supervision and evaluation³⁷, capitalizing the acquired experience (learning from mistakes) etc.

Here are some examples of the strategies of optimization of the social competitiveness:

- re-building the thrust throughout successful projects with a demonstrative value³⁸;
- animating the community³⁹, addressing people outside the local community⁴⁰;

- consolidating the identity values⁴¹;
- consolidating the attachment to the local community⁴²;
- encouraging the development throughout courses of formation;
- stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit among students⁴³ etc.

The competitiveness of the environment.

The relationship between the human being and the environments represented for a long period of time the exploitation of the environment. The increase of the problems of the environments coincided with norms and laws penalizing the unreasonable exploit of the environment and the pollution⁴⁴. The environments has a great impact on people's health, due to sanogene and pathogenic factors. The factors polluting the air, the water, the soil harm people's health to the same extent as the effects of the fires, floods, drought, earthquakes, landslides and the unreasonable human interventions. The institutional splits lead to the fragmentation of the approaches and of the interventions of the one responsible of salubrity, of the integrated management of waste. People still throw garbage in the street, in rivers, lakes, in un-surrounded holes, with no drainage and collection system for the infiltrations and the flows... There are laws and "studies of feasibility", strategies, but in practice the situation in villages does not

³⁶ The term *concertation* comes from concert, the verb to concert: a group of instrumentalists play different instruments, different partitions, and there is an overall harmony. Mutatis mutandis, in the domain of the social, we think about consultation, the change of points of view in order to prepare together a project, to take attitude, to take a common measure. "Governance" is a concept that appeared at the same time with the globalization and it represents the form of democratic management at all levels. In the context of the "weakening" of the states and of decentralization, there are other forms of management together with the ones enacted by states and by the local communities: this refers particularly to the democratic participation of the civil society, the formation of new collective actors etc.

³⁷ In Cavado Alto (Portugal) an old woman isolated for a long time became at the end of her life an actor of a cooperative of production of flax linen, since she was the only one who still had some knowledge about the secrets of this ancient practice dating since a long time. In a view to organize a network of the agriculturalists facing difficulties, an association from Haute-Loire (Auvergne, France) recruited a teacher who knew well all the local farmers, was part of the networks of information and had good relationships with the local representatives. Teacher's competences allowed the efficient management of the agriculturalists' problems.

In Bruche valley (Alsacia, France), two women created an ambulant library and the association "Livr'envol" who brings together teachers, parents, students and other persons specialized in the organization of festivals and events having books as theme. In Havelange (Valony, Belgium) a group of young people met regularly in order to discuss their projects for the future. The return of one of them to the old family farm made possible the dream of producing, maintaining and selling farm products. The activity was expanded to the neighbors and the cooperation gave birth to a famous farm in the region. In France, after the Second World War, the inhabitants from Bretagne re-discovered their identity; this lead to the re-vitalization of the agricultural communities, to the discovery of the techniques favoring "a better future to all the children of the land". This strong social competitiveness prevented population from leaving the place. The main concern was to correct some negative effects of the rapid development, especially the damages on the environment. In Alentejo (Portugal), a region dominated for centuries by the great land owners, with a population of 80% of agricultural workers in inappropriate conditions, the traces of the lack of attachment to the land can still be seen, together with the effects of the entrepreneurial culture quasi inexistent, of the solidarity influenced by workers' tradition etc.

³⁸ In Sierra de Bejar (Castilla y Leon, Spain) a region in crisis, there have been some considerable projects to prove that the re-vitalization of the territory was possible. These successful projects attracted the population and created opportunities for new projects.

³⁹ In Sierra do Caldeirao (Algarve, Portugal), a region with a huge rural exodus, the re-construction of people's confidence in their future was possible due to young animators, recruited from villages and instructed to promote economic, social, cultural activities based on the consolidation of the attachment to the territory.

⁴⁰ In Burgenland (Austria) where promoters of projects are very rare, some local actors put their efforts together to settle connections with the University from Vienna; students and teachers-researchers undertook regularly missions in Burgenland for the supervision of the local patrimony, the identification of the local needs, the diagnosis of the level of local development. This fact reanimated people's interest for the region, gave them ideas for essential projects to rebuild the confidence in the future.

⁴¹ In Gwynedd there was a strong feeling of belonging to the Celtic culture and a common desire of the inhabitants to be different from England; a local groups was in charge of valuing the specific economic life, to reanimate the language and the culture of the region. The project received a great support and opened new perspectives of development, especially in the domain of the cultural tourism.

⁴² Lassithi (Crete) was a region strongly affected by the depopulation and the abandon of the agricultural activities of almost 14 000 traditional windmills used in the pumping of the water needed for irrigations. A groups of action mobilized people to recover these windmills as symbols of the local identity. Initially launched at a small scale (300 such mills), the project attracted people from the entire territory and contributed to its economic re-launch.

⁴³ In the Tipperary Committee (Ireland) it was possible to see that students from the secondary school (7-13 years old) were more creative, more entrepreneurial than the adolescents. A GAL decided to focus the attention on 10 primary schools, proposing them a deal. This project consisted of 15 600 euros, involved 600 children who created a multitude of productive activities: producing brochures, video clips on the local patrimony, objects of craft, Christmas cards, gardening, flowers and vegetables sales, paper recycling, organizing places for the breakfast etc.

⁴⁴ Romania is famous for its great bio-geographic diversity (we have 5 of the 11 European regions). There are 783 types of habitats (out of which 196 are specific for pastures and grass, 206 are forest habitats, 90 habitats specific for rocky regions). The total surface of the protected areas is of 1 860 000 ha (13 national parks, 13 natural parks, 981 natural reservations, 28 special areas of fauna protection). Romania is one of the few European countries with virgin forests.

change in a considerable way, even *though the preservation of the environment* could provide the revitalization of villages and could even create some jobs⁴⁵. Many people do not feel (any longer) attached to the village they were born in. Obsessed with the financial profit in a short term, some are not even aware of the negative effects on the environment, they do not mobilize when there are natural disasters or disasters operated by human intervention, they forget about diking and waste on something else the money allocated to the environment projects.

The way in which a *landscape* looks provides useful information on the diagnosis of the community, and at the same time it reveals a lot about the population, the way in which people value their resources and preserve the forests and all the components of the natural landscape. The local products can have a greater impact if they come from villages that do not suffer from pollution, having harmonious landscapes with fresh air and crystalline water...⁴⁶.

5. ASSOCIATIONS IN VILLAGES

After 1990 a great interest was given in our country as well to the intervention of the NGOs, of the associations that could bring their contributions to the modernization and the vitalization of the villages and of the rural life. However, they do not replace nor do they exempt the public power and the population from their attributions. Their activity in our country was juxtaposed with the evolution of some rural communities in the difficult period of the “*transition*” from communism to capitalism, from the state-controlled economy to the liberalized economy, from the Soviet Union to the European Union... There should be no neglecting of the broader context of their

intervention⁴⁷, since the evolution of the communities is related to the historical organizations, beliefs, values, traditions, institutions, structures of the pre-existing morality. The NGOs, the associations can target the people’s involvement and participation in groups of local initiative, groups of local actions, in associations and agricultural farms, but the actual impact can be evaluated only when there is an initial evaluation (before the intervention in communities), when there is certain knowledge of the management and maintenance of the created infrastructures, of the acquired experience in terms of formation for development, following the cessation of projects. The associations can influence the sustainable development of villages, but only in conditions of state support, public-private partnership, plans of actions in a short, average and long term – plans which should be transparent for all the members of the community, with no limitation of the consumerist tendencies, without the efficient utilization of the public funds, the absorption of the foreign investors⁴⁸. After 1990, our country witnessed the expansion of a new phenomenon, *the social assistance* including around ten millions of people for 14 benefits and 5768 social services...

6. (RE) MIGRATION OF ROMANIAN PEOPLE

Migrants can be an important resource for the present and the future of the Romanian communities. How could they be determined to come back in the villages they left from and how could peasants be prevented from leaving their villages⁴⁹? First of all, people should not feel humiliated by poverty, by insignificant incomes, by the poor economic and social situation... The policies

⁴⁵ In Obere Altmühl (Bavaria) the producers of beef meat launched the brand “Frankl” for the meat of the cows breed on the field of the region. A company was created, they got a certification of quality (that guarantees that the animals were fed on natural crops during all seasons, the meat is vacuum-packed for 14 days etc.) This company helped more than 60 families of beef meat producers. In a rural area in crisis with its inhabitants affected by the economic crisis, there were proposals of a project meant to create a National Park (Haute Sure, Luxembourg). The new requirements concerning the environment were in conflict with the practices of the traditional agriculturalists. An expert of the project convinced them that they could obtain a qualitative production even if they exploited the field in conformity with the ecologic norms. Little by little there was a high-quality production and a famous brand (Veium Sei).

⁴⁶ In France the collective actions of consolidation of the natural patrimony and the built one are supported by the local and inter-local authorities, based on the Landscape Chart, the Territory Chart etc. After the unification of Germany, many states from the region of Seelow (Brandenburg) wanted to build projects of re-launch of the local economy. Supported by the local authorities, the district Wulkow chose a model of “global ecologic development” whose essential objective was to create new jobs. In this way new actions of renovation of the village were taken, as well as renovating the buildings, using the renewable sources of energy (biomass), treating the water, diversifying the agricultural production (including fish farming). All the projects were integrated in a network including associations, public authorities, producers, a network guided by Okospeicher (association of the volunteers working in the region, connected with volunteers from all around Europe).

⁴⁷ After the Second World War: the sovietization of Romania, the annihilation of the constitutional state and of pluralism, the annihilation of a social category in the name of “the conflicts between classes”, the deportation of the peasants opposing the collectivization, the extermination of the partisans of anticommunist resistance, the rejection of the Western culture, the legal ban of abortion (The Law 36/1996), “the rational alimentation” (the queues for the basic elements), the paternalist mentality and attitude. After 1989: “the syndrome of the inefficient pluralism”, “the syndrome of the centralized power”, “the chaotic pluri-parties system”, the lateness of the foreign investments (“we do not sell our country”), the bankruptcy of many banks apparently conceived to give un-performing credits (the losses were transferred directly to the public debts), the involutions from agriculture etc.

⁴⁸ The results of an experimental research following a contract of research with the Romanian subsidiary of the World Vision Organization to create a Guide of good practices in the community development (2010-2011).

⁴⁹ <http://www.mediafax.ro/social/migratia-medicilor-din-romania-considerata-alarmana-de-oms-3170525> (consulted on the 7th of October 2011)

The tradition of nomadism influenced the life style (tents, small houses, agglomerates etc.). The permanent group of “new comers” and the difficulty of becoming land-owners contributed to their isolation and to the low life standards. Even if the policies of standardization and assimilation changed the ethnicity, there still exist some parts of the tradition way of organization. Many people do not have a job, they do not have stable incomes, there is no responsibility of a productive life and people save money by stealing, begging, not paying the bills or the rent. Frequently men are financially supported by women’s revenues and the children beg...

concerning the migration should be consonant with the policies of development (the solidary development), there should be policies of assistance of some special categories of the population (Roma⁵⁰, young people, women, old people). Romania is part of the *European Strategy for Migration*, it observes the *Plan of Action from Vienne* (that considers that the countries of origin of the migrants should fight against poverty, improve the life standards, create new opportunities of work, consolidate democracy, observe the state of law and the human rights). The Romanian state should develop long-term strategies and plans of sustainable development, so as to absorb and to invest the migrants' capitals in their communities of origin, in order to enforce the public-private partnership within villages and to get the local authorities involved into the modification of the status of the migrants⁵¹.

How do people coming back in the country spend their money⁵²? Most of them bought or built houses, expanded and modernized the ones they already had, they bought machines and electronic goods. The experience from abroad is often associated in a positive way with the entrepreneurial behavior, but the migrant's capital is not integrated in policies of sustainable development of communities. They should be encouraged to invest their money and their expertise in projects for the community (rural tourism, modernization of the water and drainage system, gas etc.). The government should provide them at least the same fiscal facilities as it does for foreigners. The experience of migration had a great impact on people's mentality: they do not want any more to give bribe, the work is considered very important (61% compared with a national average of 48%), neighbors become important (48%), together with the spare time (44%) and the fact of taking risks in order to succeed in life (15%). There is still hope for the wall of bureaucratic corruption to be demolished...

The situation of the *Romanian children* staying home alone because their parents left abroad was analyzed and presented in the European Parliament (2009). *The National Strategy for the Protection of the Children Rights (2008-2013)* includes special programs for them (such as afterschool, school and community etc.).

Doctors leave cities and the country. Is there any way to persuade them to come in villages? What could be done to prevent them from feeling

humiliated by the low incomes and the degrading position they have as commuters⁵³?

The EU frame for the national strategies of integration of the Roma⁵⁴ includes the following objectives: occupying the work force, identifying the potential jobs, improving the access to decent life conditions, the primary education of each child, supporting the associations involved in the ethnical integration etc. EU suggests the Romanian authorities to allocate more funds for the integration of the Roma ethnical group, but the *common responsibility* of the state, of the local communities and of the Roma minority should be recognized.

Some analysis was done on the migration of the *poor people* from the rural communities⁵⁵, of the ones who struggle to save money for the travel and leave abroad by illegal means. Their chaotic and dangerous migration increases the risks they face with instead of reducing them and this does not bring any benefits to the community.

Is there any strategy in case the Romanian *unemployed persons* come back from the European countries⁵⁶? Are there any strategies against the current and future economic uncertainties? There are proposals coming from some European governments (such as the Spanish or the Italian one) meant to "help" the Romanian immigrants to come back home, since they intend to outsource firms in Romania (ANOFM- the MEDIT project⁵⁷ financed by the *European Social Fund*).

Sociologists made research on aspects such as the circulatory migration as a strategy for life⁵⁸, the networks of the Romanian migrants and their structure⁵⁹, the access to the market of the highly-qualified work⁶⁰, the mobility of the Romanian

⁵³ <http://europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=370&langId=fr&featuresId=132&furtherFeatures=yes>

⁵⁴ <http://www.ziare.com/articole/romania+tara+tigani>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQT8X6vxdM8>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LB18KRmR-Q8>

⁵⁵ D. Gelderblom, "La migration désorganisée des pauvres: les coûts, les risques et les réseaux sociaux", la Congrès MOMIDEM, UNISA, Pretoria, 2012; Boyd, M., "Family and personal networks in international migration: recent developments and new agendas", in *International Migration Review*, 23(3) / 1989, pp. 638-670; Collyer, M., "When do social networks fail to explain migration? In *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(4) / 2005, pp. 699-718.

⁵⁶ <http://www.noiinspania.com/NS/372.pdf>

⁵⁷ <http://www.gazetaromaneasca.com/observator/38-prim-plan/1738-bani-europeni-pentru-a-sprijini-intoarcerea-muncitorilor-romani-din-italia-1000-de-locuri-vacante.html> Transnational cooperation for the return of the Romanian workers – an ANOFM project in collaboration with ACLI (Associazioni cristiane lavoratori italiani) in order to identify the perspectives of the Romanian workers from Italy if they wanted to come back, in a partnership with 200 Romanian companies interested in employing the immigrants with professional qualification, with over 30 associations and organizations of Romanians from Italy.

⁵⁸ Sandu, D., *Migrația circulatorie ca strategie de viață*, in *Sociologie românească*, 2000

⁵⁹ Potot, S., "La place des femmes dans les réseaux migrants roumains", in *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2005, pp. 243-257;
<http://www.revistacalitatevietii.ro/2011/CV-2-2011/03.pdf>

⁶⁰ Nedelcu, M., "Stratégies de migration et d'accès au marché de travail des professionnelles roumaines à Toronto: rapports de genre et nouvelles dynamiques migratoires", in *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2005, pp. 77-106

⁵⁰ The Foundation for an Open Society, *Romanians' economic migration: 1990-2006*, Bucharest, November 2006

⁵¹ http://www.euractiv.ro/uniunea-europeana/articles%7CdisplayArticle/articleID_10156/Dosar-Migrația-romaniilor-in-Europa-trecut-si-viitor.html

⁵² "Migrația medicilor din România, considerată alarmantă de către OMS", (Romanian doctors' migration, considered devastating by WHO) <http://www.mediafax.ro/social/migrația-medicilor-din-romania-considerata-alarmanta-de-oms-3170525> (consulted on the 7th of October 2011)

migrants' children, the receptiveness of the migrants to belong to their society of origin and destination⁶¹, the money transfer of the migrants and their importance⁶², the children left home alone because their parents left abroad⁶³, problems the (re)migrating children confront with⁶⁴ etc.

The conclusions of many reports reveal encouragements for people to leave abroad⁶⁵...

If you had the chance to travel to Western Europe, don't you think that people are much more relaxed, happier, more joyful and more polite? What then? The material conditions dictate people's attitudes and behavior... If you have the least respect for yourself, you seek for happiness until you find it. This is not a matter of lack of patriotism or other similar issues... Imagine how this would feel to see your parents die in hospitals because you do not afford a better doctor, a better hospital, a more efficient treatment... Well, that's true, we should not abandon our parents... But how did they dare to let us such an inheritance?! Many of those who do not leave were not needed to make this step... My parents were telling me all these ten years ago. Today they do not regret anything, they seem even younger, they are more active, more dynamic and optimistic. Many of those who chose to stay in the country seem dead... I cannot see the bad part in leaving abroad to find your place. You are well paid abroad. At least it is worth working hard...

There is a wise saying: what does not kill you makes you stronger! We too want to leave abroad. We had enough of the unfair actions we witness... This is why we take German classes. Both of us have higher studies and we speak very good English. If we leave, we are aware that things will get complicated in terms of the job and a place to stay... But if we do not leave, what solutions do we still have? Life is above anything else!

I could not stand anymore the lack of respect, the laziness and the specific lack of seriousness. Poverty has become depressive, together with the alcoholism, and the pride abounding in a street language... Uneducated people expect us to

share the same air with them... I prefer a country where the citizen is not a vegetable result of the system: paying it to tax him and use him in all sorts of social experiments...

The situation of employment is complicated in the country, at least 30% of the revenue goes to the state. What does the state do with all this amount of money? It seems to mock at us... This is why I am trying to find a job abroad, because I need money. Suggest me a trusty company I could address... I want to work anywhere abroad, in agriculture, taking care of old people, cleaning, anything...

Then let's get down to business! Any new beginning is difficult, but if you do start with confidence, you are more likely to succeed. In order to succeed when you are abroad, work for the local people, eat cheap food, buy products from the supermarket, look for a legal job and several on the black market, drink water from the tap, make saving for anything you can, forget about holidays, work on Sundays too. Good luck!

Is it reasonable to accept such situations for us and our children?! What for should we stay in Romania? For corrupted people? In poverty? People find their satisfaction in eating to survive, without being able to dream... It is nothing but an illusion to hope that the Romanian people coming back from abroad will change the country. The change which needs to be done must be done home, until the migrants return would be discussed in terms of opportunity for them and for their families. Change Romania in its own land and the return will be a natural phenomenon to come! Until then, everyone fights to survive... there are also many encouragements with regards to the remigration.

After having lived here for two years, I understood that having a happy life does not mean only being in possession of money, a house and a car... What matters the most is to feel an inner satisfaction, to have your soul at peace. I prefer not eating the whole day, not having money, nor clothes, I prefer having a thousand of other worries than being far from my family and the country...

Many Romanian people gave up the well-paid jobs from abroad to come back in the country. They had enough of living between strangers. I would not leave the country, not even if they paid me 5000 euros per month. What am I supposed to do between strangers? No matter the country, I would honestly not stay there. It is a good experience to change the climate, to meet new people, new customs, to see how other people live, but this is all. I remember that when I wanted to leave the country I was so excited about going to Spain... I had had enough of the family conflicts, of the job I was paid only the guaranteed minimum wage... I prepared my documents, I am staying legally here, but this is all. Now this is a period

⁶¹ Diminescu, D. (2004), "La mobilité des jeunes roumains à l'heure de l'intégration européenne", in *Hommes et migrations*, no. 1251, pp. 42-50.

⁶² Anghel, R. G. (2008), "Changing Statuses: Freedom of Movement, Locality and Transnationality of Irregular Romanian Migrants in Milan", in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 34, no. 5/2008, pp. 787-802.

⁶³ Dăianu, D., Voinea, L., Tolici, M., *Balance of payments financing in Romania: the role of remittances*, Romanian Centre for economic policies, București, 2001, available online: <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00002165/>

⁶⁴ UNICEF developed this project of research in collaboration with authorities, governmental bodies and NGO, to develop some social policies in the domain of the protection of Romanian children.

⁶⁵ A team of the Social Alternatives coordinated by Catalin Luca performed the research in collaboration with Fondazione Albero della Vita (Italia), Fondazione Iniziative e Studi sulla Multietnicità (Italy), University of Barcelona (Spain), Fundacion Instituto de Reinsercion Social (Spain) to propose methods of work facilitating the integration in the Romanian educational system of the Romanian children coming back after a long period abroad.

of crisis and the laws changed... I do not complain, I still live in proper conditions, I have what to eat, I have clothes, I have everything...but I want to be home! I advise the ones who want to leave the country think twice before leaving...

I do not agree with the opinions of some of my co-nationals. They complain that Romania is not a good place to live in, they want to leave as soon as possible, the furthest they can... But what if everyone had done the same thing after the Second World War? Life conditions are not as bad as some believe, but the problem is that we do not cooperate, we seek for the comfort and for money...What if foreigners had the same mentality? There are many people who do not find the strength to fight for a better country. Fight for your country, do not run away! It would be perfect if everyone lived and worked in their own country...

If we give this a neutral thought, it is clear that from the financial point of view you leave abroad to find a better life, to have a house, a car, an I-pad, a plasma, clothes, a second car, a bank account and paid credits... Some people do not succeed in satisfying these desires and they become frustrated, blaming the others... Others succeed in satisfying their material needs and after a certain period of time they remember the part they ignored: the immaterial part... They miss their families, their friends, the things they found a pleasure in doing in Romania, or now they do not find anymore the time for them and it is too late for this...Many of them think about coming back, some of them even do this, they come back and they find again their place. Others leave again the country because they cannot integrate themselves any more in Romania. To cut a long story short, things are not perfect nor here nor abroad...⁶⁶. What would then be the solution for a happier life?!

7. A POTENTIAL OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE RURAL COMMUNITIES: THE BIOLOGIC CULTURES OF VEGETABLES

A specific research⁶⁷ analyzed *the evaluation of the potential of development of the ecologic*

⁶⁶ Examples extracted from the database of the Romanian Ageing migrants and the Welfare State project, financed by Swiss National Science, Switzerland and UEFISCDI Romania, from the forums of the Romanian migrants, the answers of students and Master students.

⁶⁷ Contrary to the promises and optimistic predictions, the splits between countries, communities, rich and poor worsened. Therefore competent people with an impressive CV are ready to leave abroad, to work on the black market with low incomes, with no medical insurance, social protection, in well-developed countries whose markets are invaded by persons whose education was not integrated. Ubi bene, ubi patria ("where everything is going fine, there is the homeland")... If there is no competitive national offer of values, many young people leave their indifferent countries lying under scandals, rumors and political diseases... These countries lose at their own expense. The rich countries host the strong, healthy and qualified young persons with perspective. It is impossible that all of us immigrate. The above adagio could be reversed: "Ibi bene, ubi patria" (everything is fine in your homeland), but the indoctrination with "patriotism" does not have any effects as long as there are not precise measures to facilitate life conditions and to make the living more comfortable and more predictable...

production of vegetables in the North-East of Romania. 240 peasants from 12 villages were questioned, most of whom perform activities within the conventional agriculture. The respondents have high-school studies (40%), secondary school studies (13,30%), higher studies (10%). 31,70% took classes of truck farmer, 5% studies at an agricultural high-school and 5% have no qualification in agriculture.

The 75% of the peasants are connected to the network providing the electricity, 45% to the network of water, 18,33% to the drainage system and 6,66% to the methane gas network. 31,66% use the stove with wood for pre-heating, and 16,66% have a thermal power station.

The 35% of the respondents claim that they have a private agricultural household, 13,30%- LTD exploit, 3,30%-family associations.

The average of the cattle elevated in the respondents' households is of 3,29, 15 for ovine, 2,87 for porcine, 32 for hen, 84 heads.

The 83,30% of the respondents practice a system of culture of the vegetables in the field, whereas 45%- in serum and solaria. The main culture of the field is the corn (50%). The wheat is cultivated in proportion of 20%, the sunflower -16,33%. 41,66% cultivate vegetables. The average of the surface cultivated with vegetables in serum is of 1647 m² and the average of the surface cultivated with vegetables in solaria is of 1193 m².

The main method of irrigating the crops consists of drip-feeding (41,66%), the water source coming from rivers and fountains. 38,33% fight against herbage through hoeing and weed killers (33,33%). The diseases and the damaging organisms are destroyed through the use of chemical treatments (45%). 83,30% take the seeds from the suppliers and 26,705 from their own production. The fertilizers come from their own production (38,30%), from non-certified suppliers (33,30%) and from certified suppliers (31,70%).

The average number of the persons from one household working in the culture of vegetables is 2,65. 73,30% of the respondents state that the offer for the jobs in their village is extremely limited. If there are persons working "per day", 56,70% take them, paying them with around 50 RON per day.

Preparing the production for the market means sorting out (83,33%), washing (48,33%), pre-packaging (38,33%), transport (78,33%). Only 8,30% of the ones who were questioned have a pre-contract for the sale of the production of the conventional vegetables. Only 1,7% of respondents said that they signed up pre-contracts for the sale of the bio culture of vegetables. Most of them sell the production on the market (the average distance from the closest market from the city is of 49km; some of them travel 400 km for a market where prices are slightly better).

The 88,30% state they do not have any insurance for their cultures in case of natural disasters.

The 13,30% of respondents have their own resources for investment, but most of them do not (85%). Respondents think that they could take the necessary money from loans (26,66%), European funds (15%). Only 20% of them used credits to finance their production.

Most of the respondents (80%) include themselves in the category of *the conventional agricultural production*, and 13,30% state that they are on the verge of converting their production in *the ecologic culture of vegetables*⁶⁸.

The 55% of the respondents state that they do have *some knowledge* about the ecologic agriculture. The 43,30% state that they do not have *any knowledge* about it. The lack of adequate conditions, the commodity, the lack of demand etc. are the main arguments of the ones who are not interested in the biologic system of production. The lack of funds and of the associations of agriculturalists are invoked by the ones who claimed that *“there are no proper conditions”* for the biologic culture of vegetables. The fact that such an agriculture is healthier and can produce higher benefits are the main reasons for which some of the respondents move from the conventional agriculture to the biological one (26,70% said that they are aware of the certification procedure, 86,70% would want to be formed in the field of the biologic agriculture).

8. THE BIOLOGIC AGRICULTURE⁶⁹

In 1946 *the Movement for the Ecologic Agriculture* was initiated⁷⁰ and then in 1972 the *International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement* was created. The European Union provides a legal frame for the biologic agriculture⁷¹.

The tension between *the biologic agriculture* performed at a smaller scale in a solidary, human way and *the industrial agriculture* is stronger⁷². There are

organisations (Union paysanne, Solidarité rurale, Via campesina etc.) trying to reduce the dependence on a way of unhealthy production, in order to move to the biologic agriculture.

*The right to eat, before commercializing...*⁷³ IFOAM⁷⁴ defined the objectives of the biologic agriculture:

- *economic objectives*: encouraging the small farms through decent incomes for farmers; providing a progressive and realistic re-conversion; local, regional, national and international partnerships⁷⁵; distribution in the proximity;

- *social objective*: fighting against the desertification of the villages; encouraging peasants to stay in the villages; taking the bio producer closer to the consumer⁷⁶; promoting the cooperation rather than the competitiveness;

- *ecologic objectives*: cultivating plants and breeding animals in the same farm⁷⁷; aliments with no toxic dangers⁷⁸; with no pesticides nor weed killers, chemical fertilizers, seed from GMO, with no antibiotics, growth hormones, animal flour in the nutrition of the animals, chemical substances, artificial flavors, chemical additives, irradiated aliments, preserving the humus and observing the specificity of the soil at cultivation; the re-habilitation of natural landscapes.

The *theoretical* basis of the biological agriculture starts from the notion of system: the plant needs to be fed, as well as the system including soil-water-air-plant-animal. The ones practicing the biological agriculture use the soil in accordance with the eco-system (aerating the soil at the surface in order to prevent the aerobe bacteria from being suffocated, and the anaerobe bacteria from being killed by the Oxygen from the air, covering the ground with branches and leaves during winter, using compost, the biological fight against the harmful

⁶⁸ Contract of the Sociology and Social Assistance Department of AL.I.Cuza University from Iasi (Ion Ionescu) with the Romanian Academy (Agricultural Sciences)- the Evaluation of the current state and of the potential of the ecological production in the North-eastern part of Romania (experimental research and data analysis from 12 communities belonging to the regional districts NE-2008).

⁶⁹ Davidescu D., V. Davidescu (1994), *Agricultura biologică, o variantă pentru expoatațiile mici și mijlocii*, Ed. Ceres, Bucharest

⁷⁰ <http://www.fabqbio.ca/>; <http://www.cartv.gouv.qc.ca/agriculture-biologique-historique-et-fondement>

<http://www.equiterre.org/publication/le-maraichage-biologique-diversifie-guide-de-gestion-globale-2011>

⁷¹ Inspired from Albert Howard's theories from the *Agricultural Testament*, 1940

⁷² «An analysis of the EU organic sector» disponibil pe adresa: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/files/eu-policy/data-statistics/facts_en.pdf; Règlement (CEE) n° 2092/91 of the Council, the 24th of June 1991 concerning the method of biological production and the presentation of bio products; Règlement (CE) n° 834/2007 of the Council, the 28th of June 2007, related to the biological production and the labelling of bio products ; ; JO L 334, 12.12.2008 regarding the import of the biological products from different tertiary

countries; Règlement (CE) n° 66/2010 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 25 novembre 2009 concerning the bio labels in UE; the Report of the Commission and the European Parliament on the co-existence of genetically modified cultures, conventional agriculture and biological agriculture; (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0153:FIN:r:PDF>); Codex CAC/GL 32 - 1999 regarding the production, the transformation, the labelling and the commercialization of products coming from the biologic agriculture etc.

⁷³ The plants are not fed with chemicals (pesticides, insecticides, nitrates, fungicides), the seeds are not genetically modified and the final products are not irradiated for the “conservation of the freshness”; the bio products provide immunity against diseases, have a better taste and provide energy since they have a rich content in vitamins, minerals and fibers.

⁷⁴ *Fédération internationale des mouvements d'agriculture biologique*.

⁷⁵ <http://www.franceinfo.fr/europe/infographie-plats-findus-leparcours-europeen-de-la-viande-de-cheval-887755-2013-02-09>

⁷⁶ The strategy consists in connecting the producers and the consumers through projects, groups of local action, agro-tourism, the bio-basket etc.

⁷⁷ Together for the good solution (<http://robin.blog.arte.tv/2012/09/04/bande-annonce-les-moissons-du-futur/>)

⁷⁸ The defenders of the “good, clean and healthy” alimentation from the Slow Food international association identify and re-launch the agro-alimentary inheritance, supporting the education of children and adults etc.

organisms etc). Some analyze and use the limits of this agriculture, but scientists state that it has almost the same results as the conventional agriculture in the developed countries and better results in the developing countries⁷⁹.

A *biological certification* is needed from producers to consumers (here are the steps of the certification⁸⁰: inscription, verification, paying the bill, signing the contract, studying the file, controlling the culture place, reporting, delivering the certificate). At the European level the first regulation concerning the biological agriculture was enacted in 1992⁸¹ (amended in 1999⁸²) and it stipulated the following main restrictions: interdiction of using chemical fertilizers, pesticides or weed killers, or genetically modified organisms etc. The products of the biological agriculture benefit of brands and logos that are protected at the European level⁸³.

Examples of activities in biological agriculture:

- the association including twenty farms that provide the consumers with agricultural products from all of the associated farms;
- canteen for the schools from the city, supplied by the farms in the proximity;
- shops for biological products;
- co-administrated farms: local farmers, consumers etc;
- association including 45 farms of cows that collect the milk and produce cheese in their own section;
- abattoir where farmers sell the products directly at the producer price etc.

There are different forms of the biological agriculture: permaculture, biodynamic agriculture, wild agriculture⁸⁴, natural agriculture⁸⁵ etc.

Permaculture. The humanity survived for thousands of years using knowledge and experiences preserving the natural environment. Then, many people started introducing meat in feeding animals, cramming them in close spaced, breeding species of hen for cubic eggs, cultivating cubic tomatoes... Many people forgot that the soil is alive and they precipitated in intoxicating it with chemical fertilizers, pesticides, killing earthworms, frogs, moles, insects, microscopic insects that cross tunnels and aerate the

soil, allowing for the penetration of oxygen to feed the roots. The forest and the soil survived for millions of years with no chemical substances. Nowadays some people seem to give up the “*industrial*” agriculture in order to come back to the traditional methods.

A farmer planted 400 trees on his land of 1,8 ha producing food for 15 persons per year (in addition, he sells 15 t of fruits, 4 t of cereals, 2 t of vegetables). He does not depend to anyone and he does not waste anything. He produces his own seeds and fertilizers. He has a reservoir to keep the rain water and he has fish in the water. The roots of the trees allow for a better infiltration of the water in the soil. He covers the soil with a layer of plants, branches maintaining the humidity of the soil and preventing the growth of the wild plants. He is practicing the agro-forestry on this field (the animals transform the bio-mass into natural fertilizers).

The change in the mentality needs time. In 1970, Bill Mollison and David Holmgren wrote the *Permaculture, a sustainable agriculture*. The initial term meant “*permanent agriculture*”, but it was fast taken for “a culture of the permanence” when there was comprehension of the fact that the social element is a component of the sustainable eco-system as well as the communities less dependent on the industrial systems of production and distribution. The characteristics of the permaculture are⁸⁶: cultivating sustainable trees and plants, low density of the trees to allow the expansion of the inferior levels, covering the soil with waste of plants to keep the humidity, creating hedges and borders, creating micro-climates, stimulating the apiculture and the pollination, planning the movement of the animals (so that they feed and provide the natural fertilizers etc.).

In the work *Permaculture. Principles and Methods of Sustainability*⁸⁷, the requirements referred to aspects such as:

- producing food (we cannot work without eating);
- using and developing the renewable resources of energy (the nature has to follow its cycle);
- limiting the production of waste (not of unreasonable wasting or the lack);
- auto-regulating and accepting the feedback (the parents sins affect their children);
- observing and interacting (the path we are familiar with is not always the most frequented one);
- creative change and response (vision means seeing things as they will be and not as they are);
- using and valuing diversity (we do not put all we have in a single place);
- acting from global structures level to details (we cannot see the forest because of the tree);

⁷⁹ Mae-Wan Ho, Jacques Hallard, *Des chercheurs scientifiques démontrent que l'agriculture biologique peut largement alimenter le monde* (www.i-sis.org.uk/organicagriculturefeedtheworld.php)

⁸⁰ The regulation of the biologic products (2000) modified on the 30th of September 2013

⁸¹ The regulation from 2002

⁸² The regulation 1804/1999 regarding the production and the labelling of the animal products.

⁸³ CAN/CGSB 32.310-2006 (Systèmes de production biologique - Principes généraux et normes de gestion); CAN/CGSB 32.311-2006 (Listes des substances permises)

⁸⁴ www.agriculturepaysanne.org/rhone-alpes
www.agriculturepaysanne.org/cultivezlocal

⁸⁵ This is a special type of agricultural production which is very efficient energetically and respectful of the human being. It is focused on some main principles: no pesticides, no chemicals etc.

⁸⁶ Method developed by the Japanese Masanobu Fukuoka.

⁸⁷ <http://ressources-permaculture.fr>
<http://dl.free.fr/erw2mo/permaculture>

- supporting the integration instead of the separation (the efforts two persons make together are more successful) etc.

Patrick Whitefield drew a distinction between *the original permaculture* (that reproduces the nature developing eco-systems similar to it) and *the design permaculture* (taking into account the functional connections in an eco-system and using them as a basis for an artificially designed system observing the ecologic principles)⁸⁸.

Another supporter of the permaculture theorized the arrangement of the space of the household in concentric circles: the house, the garden and the elements that need a daily supervision, the lower court and the orchard, the lot of vegetables and cereals to be sold, forests and pastures, the region for indigene plants, wild space.

The Romanian Association of Permaculture was created in 2010. Its objectives include: informing the public on the principles of the permaculture, developing the sustainable and regenerative agriculture, the sustainable development of the eco-systems and of the communities, promoting the specific education, promoting the sustainable design of the natural spaces and the ones the human being built etc. Its objectives are reached at through activities of information, promotion, trainings, workshops, practical projects in collaboration with NGOs from the field of the sustainable agriculture.

Example of activities: site dedicated to permaculture (www.permacultura.ro), information and formation on the subject of the permaculture and the holistic management of the environment, practical workshops (the garden of vegetables, the urban gardens: transforming an internal court from the center of Cluj into a source of food for its inhabitants and in a space of socializing; the garden on the asphalt- activity of improvement and greening of the court of an auto service) etc.

The biodynamic agriculture is based on a deep comprehension of the laws of the “living” environment. Nowadays the natural environment is so much degraded that it cannot recover by itself, but it needs some “*therapeutic*” procedures. Rudolf Steiner (Austrian philosopher and scientist) reminded in *Course for agriculturalists* that the Earth is “*a whole*”, a living creature connected to the basket space that gives it the daily, monthly and annual rhythms⁸⁹. The defenders of the biodynamic

agriculture give a great importance to the works related to the rhythms of the environment (such as the fertilization of the soil with compost, the use of infusions, decoction, products made of different plants and minerals etc.). The farm must be considered an organism which can provide all the necessary materials for the practice of the agriculture. People can produce their own seeds and can control the alimentary chain which integrates the human being, animals, insects, plants in harmony. The etiquette of biodynamic (for instance, Demeter) certifies the products of the biodynamic agriculture such as Biodyn for the agricultural products in conversion to the biodynamic agriculture.

9. THE ECONOMY OF PROXIMITY

The globalization was meant to be a major source of economic increase, but people who always kept a spectator’s role feel as well the global difficulties. They hope that the values of the proximity will come back on the world scene to provide *the sustainable development of the communities*, in order to confront the demographic challenges, the unemployment, the change in the consumers’ behavior. In a crisis context, the economy of proximity shows up as a way of organizing the economy able to generate welfare through the valorization of the territory by the actors that live within it, for them. *The geographic proximity* must be activated through the *institutional, organizational proximity* that refers to the identity connections (people feel they belong to a social entity and this feeling determines the community of behaviors that make them recognize one another). The proximity is based on *the logic of membership* (they live in the proximity, close to each other, the ones who belong to the same social space where they interact) and on *the logic of similitude* (the ones with similar values and identic references they share are close). *The proximity of coordination* is based on exchange and networks. What is important is the articulation of this types of proximity⁹⁰. The involvement of the inhabitants is not enough, nor is the “*leading role*” of the public authorities. People have seen that cities can provide economic increase without sustainable development and the “*peripheral zones*” could enhance the development if there were as well signs of economic increase (which with solve many social and environmental issues). People see that the rural communities do not evaluate, but they hope that it is here that they will find some values corresponding to the current expectations (the urban “*cvartals*” are

⁸⁸ <http://permacultureprinciples.com/principles/>

⁸⁹ The idea is to plan the use of the field depending on the environment, crop and people’s creative potential. There is an attempt to reproduce the functioning and the complex interactions of the natural eco-systems, satisfying the humanity needs. Each element is analysed into details in order to understand its properties and to insert them in the most efficient way in the design. The synergy between elements is generated by removing waste. The permaculture approach needs time, observations, resources, evaluation, projection, implementation, maintenance etc. BOLRADIME – objectives, observations, limits, resources, analysis, design,

implementation, maintenance, evaluation) (<http://patrickwhitefield.co.uk/residential/permaculture-design-course/>)

⁹⁰ <http://www.eurythmiste.com/index.php/oeuvre-de-rudolf-steiner/92/agriculture-fondements-spirituels-de-la-methode-bio-dynamique-detail>

contested, “the progress” conceived only from a materialistic perspective does not make people feel happier...). Furthermore, they have a different conception on work, spare time, re-creation. As consumers they seem more vigilant and they need to trust the producers. They pay more attention to the short circuits of the distribution. If the large-scale distribution favored the product (through marketing means), the defenders of the proximity are interested as well in a proper knowledge of each producer (even by means of personalized relation)⁹¹. There is hope that the economy of proximity will redefine the activities, provoke a transformation of the rural regions⁹², modify its functions (productive, residential, touristic functions, of “return to nature”). The economy of proximity can rebuilt people’s confidence. The term *proximity* means an adequate distance, peacefulness, openness to the others, in a context where warlike terms are used since a long time in macro- and micro-economy: “economic war”, “market monopole”, “fighting against competitiveness”, “delocalization or death”... The stakes of the proximity mean re-placing the human at the core of the new project of the community, of society, overcoming the lack of confidence, rebuilding the confidence. The *face-to-face* relationships have several advantages compared to the anonymity of the relationships at distance. The anonymity often means suspiciousness or even injustice. “We must focus as much as possible on the economic activities of proximity, economic with regards to transport and abundant in social connections that create not only a physical connection at the level of the production of goods, but the networks of producers, the distributors and the consumers, influencing the functioning of the territorialized cooperation”, says Jean Gadrey⁹³. The economy of proximity does not stand for an alternative to globalization. It is a contrary tendency of the standardization generated by globalization. “Living out of the society of liberalized market is a strictly ideological illusion and it turns against you. There is no need to replace the market, but to face it, to find solutions despite of the market, let’s say so, but using to the maximum the mechanisms of the market, creating movable markets where you can short cut the circuit”, says Vintila Mihailescu⁹⁴. “The challenge does not mean destroying the capitalism, provoking a disastrous blow to the agro-alimentary industry, since on these

virtual markets you cannot provide the alimentation of the planet. The main idea is to save a category which is more and more overtaken by a crisis situation, satisfying a category of buyers and providing at the same time an important natural and alimentary diversity... At a global scale if you do not have an agro-alimentary industry in mass, you cannot provide enough food to the population and you take the risk of a world war”.

10. THE AGRICULTURE SUSTAINED BY COMMUNITY⁹⁵

Consumers can become partners of the farms⁹⁶, buying in advance bio products which are delivered weekly. Farmers take in charge the supply of qualitative and diverse products in enough quantities and consumers get ready to share the risks and the benefits with “the farmer of the family”. This financial and human connection can last for almost twenty weeks per year. The confidence and the transparence become imperative. They can be created and consolidated through socialization, festivals, the crop day, day of labor in the farm, community meals⁹⁷ etc.

The consumers from cities form a group supporting a farmer; this one supply them the weekly basket with fresh vegetables. Consumers can visit the farm anytime they want, they can pick the vegetables etc. It is possible to create a harmonious relationship, based on trust, as long as some of them see where their food comes from and the way in which it is produced whereas the others provide the supply, eliminating the time spent in the market or in shops. People can be informed, they should document on other possible ways to produce and value the products etc. *The European conference concerning the partnerships in the agriculture sustained by the community*⁹⁸ brought together representatives of some organizations from more than 20 European countries who had the chance to know each other better, to understand the differences between different models of agriculture and to work on a common strategy of development⁹⁹. The success of such models calls for a reasonable remuneration of agriculturalists, open contacts with consumers¹⁰⁰,

⁹¹ Bellet M., Kirat Th., Largeron-Léteno C. (eds) (1998), *Proximités : approches multiformes*, Edit. Hermès, Paris

⁹² The economy of proximity questions the model based on the transport at large distances, supporting the systems of supply in the proximity, the need to avoid the use of the car to go to the market, the consume of the local products, the demand addressed to local craftsmen.

⁹³ Torre A., 2000, “Economie de proximité et activités agricoles et agro-alimentaires”, *Revue d’Economie Régionale et Urbaine*, n° 3, pp. 407-426

⁹⁴ http://www.growthintransition.eu/wp-content/uploads/2008_degrowth-conference-proceedings.pdf

⁹⁵ <http://totb.ro/agricultura-romaneasca-si-economia-alternativa/>

⁹⁶ <http://www.equiterre.org/projets/>

<http://www.equiterre.org/projet/agriculture-soutenue-par-la-communautaire/>

<http://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Regions/estrie/prodestrie/Pages/ASC.aspx>

⁹⁷ Measures facilitating the interaction between farmers and consumers: postal box, vocal messages, the lists of the farms, conferences etc.

⁹⁸ Software suppliers Agri-Gestion SIGA Informatique (www.agrigestion.ca www.siga.qc.ca); Information and expertise Agri-Réseau CRAAQ (www.agrireseau.qc.ca www.craaq.qc.ca)

⁹⁹ http://www.modele.cries.ro/newsletter_article/conferinta-europeana-privind-agricultura-sustinuta-de-comunitate/

¹⁰⁰ <http://ecoalternative.wordpress.com/2011/03/31/asocierile-de-legume-sau-morcovii-iubesc-rosiile/>

<http://totb.ro/agricultura-romaneasca-si-economia-alternativa/>

honest dialogue and trust¹⁰¹. In this way the farms, the producers and their families¹⁰² can be (re)vitalized.

*The evolution of a bio farm between 1987-2012*¹⁰³

- 1987: F. starts going to the market on Saturdays, with the surplus of products from the family's garden; F. makes a demand for bio producer; control and certification take place;
- 1988-1991: E. learns about the biologic agriculture;
- 1990: F goes to the market on Wednesdays as well;
- 1993-1996: E takes classes of agronomic engineer;
- 1994: opening a shop at the farm; the first employee; increase of productivity;
- 1997: E starts the activity, increasing the volume of the production; E rents 9 ha; E's father comes to the farm;
- 1999: E and F go on Thursday as well to the market;
- 2003: buying 4 ha of land;
- 2004: building the penthouse;
- 2006: buying a truck with a 7 tones capacity trailer; launching the "bio basket" (199 contracts); orders and sales on Internet;
- 2008: buying a new 3,5 t vehicle for delivery; employing another person;
- 2009: recruiting other persons;
- 2010: building a refrigerator of 300 m³;
- 2011: 700 m² of solar panels on the roof of the storehouse;
- 2012: 12 employees during the top season, 6 during winter, 6 ha of cultivated crops, 2000 m² of sere; 267 sorts of cultivated vegetables, 480 contracts for the bio basket.

The Association of Maintenance of the Rural Agriculture: The Agricultural Basket

Partnerships between people living in cities who buy the crop in advance become a current practice in our country; this allows people to make sure that the crop is diversified and of high quality, with no chemicals. 100 of persons living in the cities can form a neighborhood association¹⁰⁴ and the producers from the rural community can create an association collecting and transporting the products. The two associations can meet in the neighborhood where they sign a convention. Consumers can order products by accessing a site (for example www.cosultaranesc.ro). Products can be delivered at the consumer's address, when they will also be paid. The ones who want to sign a convention, to subscribe to these services, must take into account: the minimal

weekly order, the provider of the transport and if this is for free, the supplier of the wrapping of the fruits basket, the delay allowing for changes in the structure of the order, the extent to which the day of delivery can be changed or the conditions under which the reception of the basket can be cancelled etc.

We have to work hard on the implementation of such practices, due to the lack of efficient communication between farmers and clients from cities, the lack of familiarization of the producers and consumers with other alimentary strategies depending on the distance needed to transport the products from the farm to the client's plate... The Western models cannot be "teleported" in our country in such a case. The mutual confidence between rural producers and consumers from cities needs to be built, so as not to have producers who do not send on time the basket of products, nor consumers who subscribed but do not pay on time. The traumatic memory of the "collective agricultural households" stops many agriculturalists to create associations...

11. THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

A long time ago the principles of *the sustainable agriculture* have been outlined (satisfying the needs of the nowadays generation without compromising the possibilities of the future generation to satisfy their needs)¹⁰⁵. The report from 1987 called "*Our future and everyone's future*" called for a global reflection and action in order to preserve the qualitative resources of water, biodiversity, to reduce the soil erosion, to keep a healthy environment, the landscape, to reduce the risks of natural calamities¹⁰⁶. Practicing *the sustainable agriculture*¹⁰⁷ means re-building a reliable, dynamic and sustainable world¹⁰⁸. The ones practicing such forms of agriculture choose less vulnerable seeds, they practice the cyclical crops¹⁰⁹, they make rotations of crops,¹¹⁰ associate and combine the crops, replace the chemical fertilizers with the organic ones, save energy (electric or thermic energy), use the organic waste for production, preserve water (irrigating "*drop by drop*"), change the life and nutrition of animals, use certified practices and valid agricultural techniques¹¹¹. These forms of sustainable agriculture can re-vitalize

¹⁰⁵<http://asat.ecosapiens.ro/>;

<http://bunatatidintarafagarasului.blogspot.ca/2012/03/agricultura-sustinuta-de-comunitate.html>

¹⁰⁶ fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture_durable. 100 sites sur *l'agriculture soutenable*

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7q06BWMpOjU>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.agriculture-durable.org/>;

<http://www.equiterre.org/categorie/agriculture-durable/>;

<http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/L-agriculture-durable-des.html>

¹⁰⁹ Definition of sustainable development provided by Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1987

¹¹⁰ www.agentaac.ulaval.ca/viaagroecologie/jardin/inf_herbes.htm

¹¹¹ Dividing a cultivable field in several lots, in accordance with the number of plants that are to be cultivated and their distribution on a certain lot.

¹⁰¹ lepanierpaysan.com ; <http://www.paperblog.fr/5683714/locavore-en-auvergne-ou-trouver-des-produits-locaux/>

¹⁰² Fair Commerce of proximity

¹⁰³ This can start by mouth-to-mouth; people can just meet and talk.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/LePanierPaysan>

the rural economy, the community relationships, the social tissue, reducing the risks for people's health.¹¹²

Several directives of the *Common Agricultural Policy* support the measures in favor of the sustainable agriculture. Therefore, starting with 2005, agriculturalists get assistance from EU if they observe the norms concerning the environment, the public health, the health of animals and of plants. They get specific assistance if they preserve pastures, reduce the consume of pesticides etc. At the same time, the ones who want to change the agricultural system and to make a conversion of the conventional farms in biological farms can also be supported by EU.

12. EDUCATION AND FORMATION IN A VIEW TO DEVELOP THE BIOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE

In 1960 UNO promoted the idea of the *community development*, in order to outline the need to support the rural communities to create their own resources. Now there are lots of discussions on *the community action, the community assistance, community services, local community development, economic increase with social purposes, socio-community development, sustainable development*. The involvement of the specialists in the social intervention in the community development can make a great contribution in facilitating the participation of the population to the sustainable development of their communities¹¹³. A distinction is drawn between the *intervention with the community* (community development) and the *intervention for the community* (social planning, social action), between different actions of *community intervention: traditional* (top-down, through administrative means) and *community* (bottom-up, looking for people's intervention through groups of action, groups of local action); *short-term actions* (which do not take place after the intervention) and *long-term actions* (that analyze on long-term the process caused by the intervention, involving the quality and the quantity of its effects); *limited actions* (targeting a single issue, a single dimension of the intervention) and *global actions* (connecting different problems and dimensions); *transversal actions* (taking into account the cooperation between services and organisms providing specific solutions) and *process action* (bottom-up, working with people considered citizens). The strategies are various as well: the

strategy of the community development (facilitating the communication between inhabitants and citizens considering their common needs and interests, their assistance in finding solutions to their problems, a process which as much important as the results); the social planning focuses on solving problems by an institution or an organism through some community social services; *the social action-* identifying a disfavored segment of the community and the mobilization meant to reduce and remove the inequalities and the social injustice.

The number of those interested in getting more information is increasing, they want to know more about the products they consume¹¹⁴ and which ask for more restrictive regulations concerning the production and the authenticity of the biologic products. It is important for them to have some knowledge about this, to know basic theories, appropriate practices concerning the functioning of the eco-systems, the fluxes of energy, the cycles and the circuits of the matter, the dynamic of the population and their relationships (symbiosis, parasitism). The educational practices should make them to get familiar with a basic *know-how* allowing the practice of an agriculture at a human scale without damaging the environment or people's health.

The education for the sustainable development involves aspects such as: recognizing the values of the communities and their conservation; learning how to live in an organized world where everyone has a healthy and productive life; learning how to supervise, to maintain the well-being of the environment; learning to build authentic and more secure communities, with responsible and reliable citizens. People need to have a systemic vision of the development, shaped through all the possible subjects of the initial and permanent formation. The efficiency of the national policy of sustainable development depends on the success of the education for the sustainable development. Therefore, all resources could be mobilized in the efforts of formation of trainers who have to educate the ones interested and involved in the sustainable development. It is important to understand the challenges, to form a new way of thinking and acting taking into account: people's interaction with the environment, the major threats (climatic changes), natural dangers (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tornados, flood), the resources (energy, primary materials, water, air), biodiversity, alimentary production, demographic production. The knowledge, the skills and the competences need to be applied in the management of the resources of the community, of waste, saving water, paper, electricity, the decisions with regards to food, health, territorial organization, landscape preserving, tourism.

¹¹² ressources.ciheam.org/om/pdf/co9/96605581.pdf

¹¹³ Several directives of the Commune Agricultural Policy (CAP) support the sustainable agriculture. Since 2005, agriculturalists do not receive their subsidies and European funds if they do not observe the norms concerning the environment, the public health, the animals and vegetables health ("the conditionality of the assistance"). CAP supports the conversion of the conventional exploits in biological farms, the re-centration of the alimentary production on the European market etc.

¹¹⁴http://www.atps.uqam.ca/numero/n4/pdf/ATPS_Motoi_2013.pdf

The formation in the development of the biological agriculture refers to the process of transmission-assimilation of knowledge, skills and competences concerning new methods of biological production¹¹⁵, including: information and communication (Internet sites, mass-media, telephonic contacts), short-term formations, (micro)programs of formation, visits to the farm, works concerning the biological agriculture, supporting some associations in the field, research.

The one who wants to become a rural bio producer can be supported through the construction and the development of a life project combined with a professional project (tutoring)¹¹⁶.

Producers in conversion can be supported in the different steps of the confrontation with administrative, commercial or technical problems¹¹⁷, related to the material used in the ecologic agriculture, finance plans, different assistance services, regulations on the production, conservation and transport of products, fighting against diseases and threatening factors etc.

Some virtual universities can bring together institutions of higher studies providing educational supports for the biological agriculture and formations in the distance. There can be various proposals for (micro) programs¹¹⁸ and sources of (in) formation¹¹⁹. Many public and private operators can develop the informatics instruments with adequate applications in the field (simulations, research navigators for informations etc.).

Many programs of formation available on Internet can allow the assimilation of knowledge, competences and skills of intervention at home, as well as a global vision on the biologic agriculture. The ones who can benefit of them are farmers who want to improve their practices and the quality of the products, to increase the autonomy of their farms, as well as students of the agricultural schools who can discover more efficiently the challenges of the biologic agriculture (visiting the farm, settling common diagnoses for the development of the farm- SWOT analyses etc.). A series of structured and up-to-date programs can be provided to the practitioners of the agro-alimentary domain, of the ones from the market of the agro-alimentary products, by educational institutions, specialized and certified trainers, other non-formal bodies providing activities of formation

etc. The ones attending such micro-programs can complete them with long-term programs of formation: baccalaureate in agronomy, multidisciplinary baccalaureate, higher studies. The micro-programs in the biologic agriculture can be suggested by universities – in partnerships with other public and private institutions – for agriculturalist consultants, technicians, biologists, veterinary doctors etc. (like in the project of the *Formation of the trainers in the socio-economic orientation for the people from agriculture*)¹²⁰.

The assistance of the actors on the field in order to facilitate their actions, to clarify their procedures, to help them in identifying the decisional perimeter implies trainers in socio-economic and ecologic orientation¹²¹ (or agents of community development, consultants in socio-economic orientation, territorial coordinators). They need competences and general knowledge in the field, the capacity, the ability to put them into practice, a specialized section, a career in the domain¹²². They have to work in a space that is easily accessible to the ones they work with, they need programmatic documents, laws, manuals, information organized on paper and on electronic format, periodically updated. They need to plan their visits on the field, the individual and public meetings and events of (in) formation. They can propose farmers to make precise changes in the current practices of organization, orienting them in the construction of a project. They are expected to have the ability of transmitting the information, the easiness in moving from one mood to another, to travel, the capacity of analyzing social symptoms, of identifying the errors or the aspects to be optimized, identifying solutions to problems, being confident in their actions, devoted, assuming the consequences of their own actions. They have to identify a series of objectives at the level of the community in the field of the rural development, the priorities, actions of implementation as well as the existing possibilities at the level of the community (creating new jobs, selling the local products, accessing repayable and non-repayable funds) and the constraints (such as the legal ones etc.).

They prepare materials of information, organize and develop events of (in) formation, public meetings, networking, using various instruments: face-to-face, mouth-to-mouth, door-to-door, written

¹¹⁵ <http://www.wiki2d.org/les-bonnes-pratiques/developpement-humain/mardi-20-aout-lhumanite-a-epuise-le-budget-nature-de-lanee-previent-le-wwf/>;

<http://www.radiocanada.ca/actualite/semaineverte/010923/asc.html>

¹¹⁶ The biologic agriculture in Belgium: ConseilsNutrition.be; IBGE - Institut bruxellois pour la gestion de l'environnement; Bioforum; Certisys; Blaise Hommelen; Nature et progres; Inter-Environnement Wallonie; Réseau Idée; Ecoconso; Union nationale des Agrobiologistes Belges; Centre de Recherche et d'Information des Organisations de consommateurs etc.

¹¹⁷ <http://www.jeminstallepaysan.org/ressource.php>

¹¹⁸ <http://www.agrireseau.qc.ca/>

¹¹⁹ www.distance.ulaval.ca.

¹²⁰ Periodic publications: Maraîchage Bio infos, the newsletter related to the organic gardening of the research group in the ecologic agriculture; Alter Agri, bi-monthly magazine of the Technical Institute of Agriculture, Infos CTIFL, monthly magazine with articles and studies concerning techniques of production, the conservation and the distribution of fruits and vegetables; the Biofil magazine, the Biodynamics, Biopresse magazine- press magazine focused on the subject of the biologic agriculture etc.

¹²¹ *Complimenting eu support for agriculture restructuring* IBRD Loan no. 4875RO, "Training the providers of Socio-Economic Guidance Services (SEGPS) to the Agricultural Population", Contractul C.E.S.A.R. nr.2311/26.11.2012

¹²² www.madr.ro, www.apdrp.ro, www.animmc.ro, www.finantare.ro

messages (letters, billposting), participating at local fares, events.

The programs proposed by universities can include: introductions to the theory and the constraints of the biological agriculture, basic principles, requirements of the transfer from the biological agriculture, basic principles of the formation of the compost¹²³, biological methods of production of the vegetal and animal products, as well as techniques of diagnosis of the opportunities of development of the farm, of the community, of the relationship with the public institutions, the orientation services etc. These programs can also insist on: the development of a series of abilities of identification of the efficient solutions, efficient information, analysis and synthesis of the information, analysis of the state of the farm and identifying the solutions for development etc.; the development of some abilities of efficient organization: behaviors at work, work efficiency, team work, management of the activities, evaluation of resources and of the effort, analysis of the risks, techniques of motivation, mediation of conflicts etc.; the development of the abilities of involvement and responsibility: the characteristics of the activity within the community, the farm, the social and professional trajectories of inhabitants, their personal and professional profile, the capacity of managing the difficult situations, the ability to inform and learn from the others etc.

"The alimentary sovereignty" places the producer individual, the consumer and the local community in the center of the speeches, giving them the right to make choices on the food they produce and consume, as an encouragement for the persons having no land, "household" women, ethnic minorities that can play a role of stakeholders in the alimentary system.¹²⁴ In this context there are some strategies at the farm that can be proposed¹²⁵.

The farm can provide jobs for trainees, accommodation and meals (the lunch prepared in the farm brings together all the workers at the same time), as a space for the preparation of the food and spare time activities, Internet connection etc. The trainees are unpaid, but trainees have the possibility to work in a variety of domains of the agricultural production (producing bedding materials, production in serum, preparing the soil, weeding, preparing the baskets with products for the families the farm has

conventions with, selling the products on the market). The trainees are thought to integrate in the community space to prepare the meal, or in other activities in the free time. The trainers from the farm can be graduates of agricultural schools (with experience acquired in the domain of the biologic agriculture and experience abroad) or social trainers, cultural animators¹²⁶.

The principles of the active pedagogy can be used in the programs of formation: what we find out by ourselves we will never forget; we can learn better what we do; knowledge is not synonym with copying the reality, but transforming it in order to understand it etc. Trainers can have the role of facilitators, taking in charge the contents of the programs and the needs of the trainees. They can use the potential of learning of the group, the experiments, the testing. In the cooperative environment the respect, the solidarity, the mutual assistance are essential values, as much important as the valuing of everyone's success due to each one's activity.

The lessons during the formation (such as debating, learning to live together, supporting the cooperation rather than competitiveness) can be applied in the transformation of the rural communities.

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¹²³Technical and agricultural knowledge, management and agricultural marketing competences, psycho-sociology skills, regulations in the field, knowledge on the functioning of the agricultural machines and equipment and techniques, procedures and methodologies of development of the analyses and the studies of competitiveness, techniques and procedures of data processing, data statistics, analysis of the investments and of their efficiency etc.

¹²⁴ <http://www.fsaalaval.ca/agribio.html>

¹²⁵ Natural agricultural fertilizer, resulted from the slow fermentation of different vegetal and animal waste mixed with different mineral substances.

¹²⁶ <http://www.ziare.com/economie/agricultura/micii-productori-romani-si-economia-alternativa-1133931> In France, the agricultural farms make coalitions and provide information, formations: <http://www.jeminstallepaysan.org/formations.php> http://www.beekeeping.com/articles/fr/cahier_charges_bio.htm; <http://www.penser-bio.fr/Je-m-installe-en-maraichage-biologique>; <http://www.regardez.ca/penseecritique/>

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