

## **Women's agriculture for a sustainable environment**

21<sup>st</sup> Congresso SIE Firenze 14-16 luglio 2017, Firenze, Italia

### **Anna Paganoni**

Soroptimist Club of Bergamo

Thank you for this invitation to describe the stages of the project **Women's agriculture for a sustainable environment** that now is known as **C&C** in conjunction with the words **CULTURA & COLTURA**.

*“Understanding the links between environmental sustainability and equity is essential if we want to expand human freedoms for current and future generations”*

These are the first words of the United Nations report.

SIE programs related to Sustainable Environment between 2013 and 2015 focused Soroptimists *“to actively improve the environment and to promote sustainability”*.

These are the themes inspiring a project started three years ago in two Italian Soroptimist Clubs: Bergamo and Bolzano.

Both were engaged in two different cultural experiences on those issues, trying to find relationship between women, agriculture or breeding and environmental sustainability.

We have accepted the invitation of Patrizia Salmoiraghi, to coordinate and evolve our projects and to produce a new one that could reach and connect other clubs in a virtuous network. Soroptimists started visiting local small producers with the goal of objectively evaluating, selecting and cataloguing the best women food producers.

We were looking also to the incoming EXPO and now we are proud that C&C “Women's agriculture for a sustainable environment” was selected in 2015 as Best Practice in Expo –Cascina Triulza, and from Italian and European Soroptimist.

The project aims to highlight the commitment of women producers while protecting biodiversity and the environment and the pivotal role of women in a way of cooking loved and domestic.

It aims to identify and promote products with a short chain to encourage the growth of women with a sustainable approach to the environment.

We have known these women, their small companies, sharing emotions, knowledge and tastes, spreading the idea of a healthy food chain that has to be supported by a conscious and regular buying.

Each club selects some local products: for example

- Extra vergine olive oil from specific cultivar, bread prepared with organic grain at zero kilometers. Wines, from grapes growth on specific rocks and soils

respecting beautiful landscapes, vegetables from the Venice lagoon or from Po Plain, cheeses from milk of goats and cows bred outdoors, honeys, jams and so on

The “Milan Charter” signed in 2015 says

“It is not yet universally recognized the fundamental role of women, particularly in agricultural production and nutrition”.

We are trying to work for this gaining an evidence in our network to some food excellences made by women.

In addition, a quality brand is given to these products as symbol of backing from Soroptimist international.

We started in two clubs, after less than two years we are 32 clubs and the project is still going on: we believe in it.

We favored access to healthy food also in the contexts of strong urbanization by sharing knowledge and experimenting alternative forms of production and distribution or by visiting producers directly during our meeting, 14 now, in every part of Italy

We started our journey of discovery and sharing In Dolomites where we met local cheeses but also those sent from Valle d’Aosta and Lombardy with all the flavours and scents of alpine herbs. We had in Calabria few days ago our most recent meeting to taste and know the oil, the one that gathers the flavour of the olives grown in the sun on the Mediterranean coasts but also almonds and Bergamot and wines from Sicily and Ticino Valley.

However, we have met also the tastes of chestnuts, watermelons, candy oranges with chocolate, blueberries and raspberries if I try to remember only fruits.

A singular case of the network concerns women who, in prison, find an opportunity by producing and working herbs in cosmetics and quality food.

This wide-ranging initiative seeks to promote women demonstrating environmental consciousness so that they can move on from selling their products at nearby local markets.

We have found Women who sink the roots of the breeding culture into an extraordinary long history by working with the culture of tradition and innovation thinking of future generations respecting Eco-sustainability.

We shared the care and awareness of the nature of the food we eat, informing us of its origin: how and where it is produced, in order to make responsible choices and behaviors.

We choose consciously the foods from the producers or in agricultural markets, considering the impact of their production; these are key topics of the project C&C.

We want to be active part in building a sustainable world, also through local innovative solutions.

We are also committed to recycling, regenerating and reusing consumer goods by engaging us actively in order to recover and redistribute surpluses, we promote food

and environmental education in families and schools for the conscious growth of new generations.

Our efforts aim to strengthen and integrate the Soroptimist C&C network with actions and initiatives that constitute an important collective resource.

Today we are aware that this network has not stopped. The actions and initiatives we design

- contain the values of the Soroptimist
- support the cultural potential and women advancement
- generate awareness through educational actions
- produce new positive shares
- challenge food waste in the daily life, support and participate in local initiatives.

And...last but not least

the Soroptimists are protagonists in every club on their own territory united in the common goal of a fairer and more sustainable future.

We want to promote instruments that defend and support, women small producers; that work with ecological consciousness, enhancing as the protagonists of an advanced form of development and promoting direct relationships between producers and food consumers

The project continues, the network extends ... join us.

Thank you from the Soroptimists friends of the 32 C & C network clubs

from Anna, Paola, Giusy, Maria Grazia, Giovanna that coordinate the network  
With the support of Patrizia, Vanna, Laura, Maria Luisa