

# Association and Agricultural Cooperative *Casa delle AgriCulture Tullia and Gino*

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*Objectives, scales and organization of rural regeneration*



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# Outline

- ❑ Case study Methodology
- ❑ Context
- ❑ Aims and Actors involved
- ❑ Activities
- ❑ Conclusion



The case studies was executed, from February to May 2021, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods:

- ▣ a desk analysis of secondary data;
- ▣ 21 semi-structured in depth interviews (snow ball method, gender balance);
- ▣ one focus group with local stakeholders to gather further information, useful also for data triangulation;
- ▣ a meeting to present research findings and gather stakeholder's feedback.

# Case study context: Castiglio D'otrantò (Andrano), Apulia Region



## Population (2019)

- Andrano: less than 5000 inhabitants
- Castiglione d'Otranto: less than 1000 residents
- economically active population: 42,91% over 15 years old, less than the provincial (44,91%) and regional level (46,84%);

## Agriculture

- More than 79% of farms minus than 2 ha (Andrano)
- 41% of the holding managers are women (Andrano)
- soil degradation, ageing farm population and land abandonment



# Casa delle AgriCulture: from association to cooperative



- The **Association** was set up in 2012
- Aims: promotion of a sustainable model of rural development, based on natural farming, multifunctional agriculture, maintenance of agro-biodiversity, recovery of traditional crops, accessing abandoned lands and «experimenting novel models of **«remaining» (restanza)** in marginal territories»

*«Production of good, healthy and **accessible** food for the local territory»*

- The Agricultural **Cooperative** was founded 2018 to manage the association's agricultural activities (about 15 ha of land, traditional varieties of grains and vegetables).

*«Now ... the cooperative ... does purely agricultural activities, the association does social and cultural inclusion activities obviously always combined with the agricultural sphere» (IT4A/Int.1).*

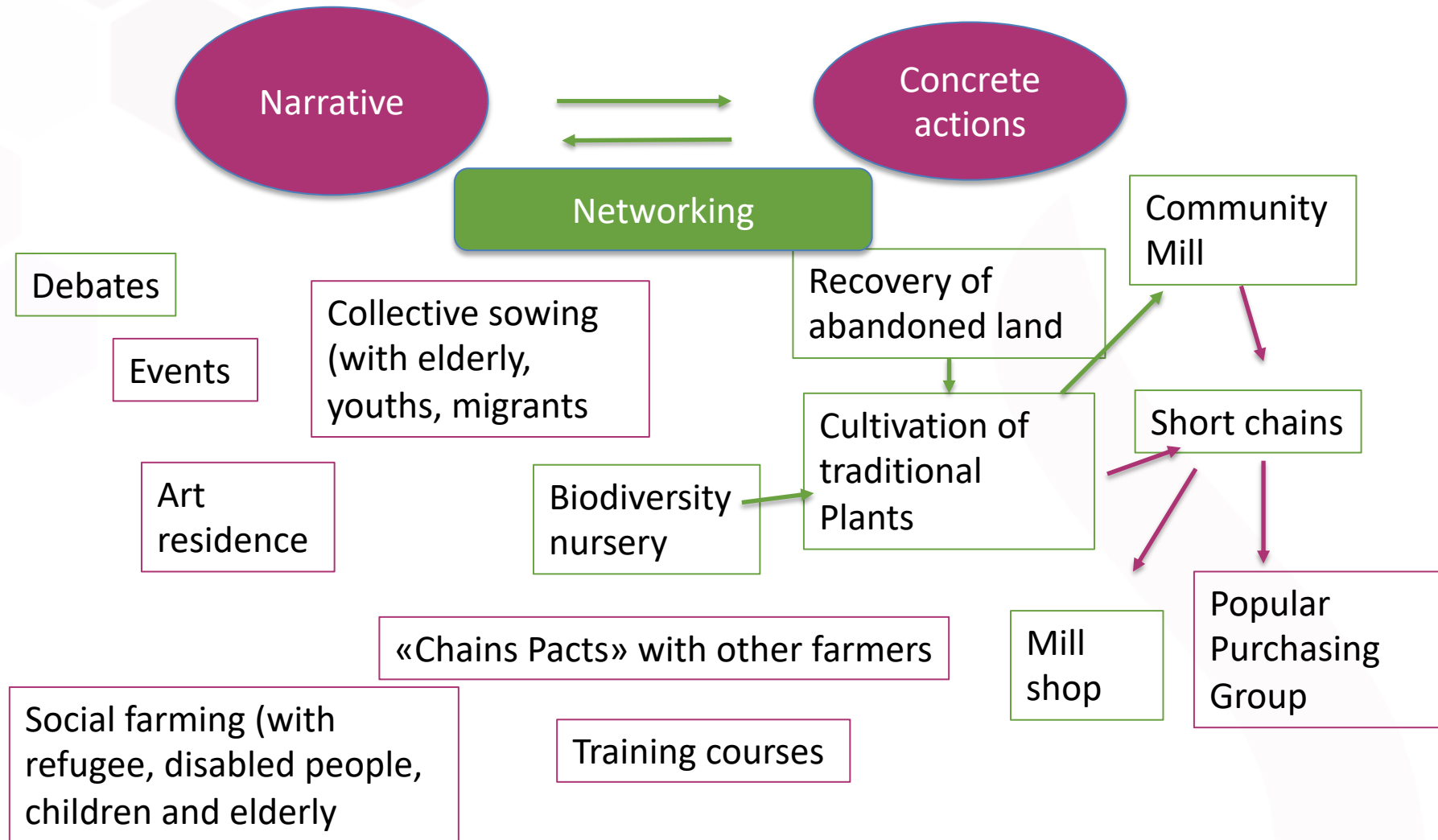
- Promoters: a group of local young friends that want to remain in «Salento» with a strong sensitivity to environmental and social issues, open to contamination and diversity

*When we said okay we want to stay on this territory but also create job opportunities because otherwise we will always be forced to leave, we looked around, we have the abandoned lands (...) and we have young people who do not want to leave, let's combine the two (Int.1)*

- The practice involves several farmers and associations all over the territory of Salento, with connections in other Regions;



# Activities



# Action and Narrative: the Green Night

- The Green Night (preceded by three or four days, known as Preludes) is an event during which concerts, a market of local products and debates on environmental and natural farming issues are organized.
- It is a very successful event and participation has grown over the years to peaks of 30,000 visitors.
- *"It is an event that really strikes... for the quality, for the international openness it has, for the quality of the meetings, of the workshops and for the link with the territory... becomes an exhibition ...of an **idea of development linked to the territory, linked to farmers and their traditions, linked to the quality of products, from food to sustainable tourism, crafts, social inclusion....** " (IT4A/Int.12).*





# Action and Narrative: the Community Mill

- *"We didn't start asking for funds from the region or the European community, but we started with crowdfunding ...from the bottom up **to build a collective narrative that** was very successful...the territory expressed a willingness to build an infrastructure" (IT4A/Int.13).*
- *"The **purchase of a dehuller is a political issue**, not just a matter of, say, agronomic needs.... it is really a matter of **being able to change the production system**, because in the past spelt was not sown because the processing industry was not interested because it cost too much" (IT4A/Int.2).*



# Conclusion

The practice design trajectories of rural regeneration based on the enhancement of local resources and territorials assets

- ▣ recovering uncultivated land
- ▣ returning to traditional crop varieties and native breeds
- ▣ maintaining agriculture biodiversity through an agroecological or organic production model
- ▣ Great networking capacity
- ▣ Making sense of place again: a new narrative on rural areas

The result is a more integrated and innovative approach to rural development based on the enhancement of local resources creating spaces of opportunity for generational renewal in local communities

## A «new polis»

«When a visionary, cultural action stops acting, it also stops experiencing the place; too often economic development and rural development activities are placed at the center of the actions, and very little is understood of the value of cultural actions as regenerative within the territories... **if neither politics nor institutions can deliver it [a narrative of the present and the future], people have to create it by themselves from below, and this bottom-up narration has to shape political agendas» (IT4A/Int.13).**





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# THANK YOU

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