

## Educating the next generation of professionals in the agrifood system

NEXTFOOD will contribute to a transition to more learner-centric, participatory, action-based and action-oriented education and learning in agrifood systems, which are becoming increasingly complex and require an increasing range of “hard” and “soft” skills. The objectives are to

- (O1) identify the skills needed for a transition to more sustainable farming and food systems,
- (O2) develop and test relevant curricula and training methods,
- (O3) assess existing policy instruments for the training and education sector,
- (O4) develop tools for evaluating quality of the training and education sector,
- (O5) develop a platform for knowledge sharing.

NEXTFOOD will employ case-based action research to

- (I) develop relevant and effective education and training programmes for a transition to more sustainable agrifood systems,
- (II) generate new knowledge needed for similar achievements beyond the specific case.

The *case development (I)* will rest on a cyclic, iterative, participatory process consisting of

- (1) observation and description of the current situation in each case,
- (2) visioning of a desired future state,
- (3) analysis to identify key issues, solutions, supporting and hindering forces etc.,
- (4) elaboration and discussion of action plans,
- (5) implementation of plans,
- (6) iteration of steps (1–5) in a cyclical manner throughout the course of the project.

Simultaneously, *research (II)* will be done on qualitative and quantitative data generated during the case development process and analysed to answer research questions that are relevant beyond the specific case. This will produce new knowledge needed to drive the transition to the learning strategies required to educate and train professionals that can meet the very complex future demands in the agrifood sector.

The main research questions of NEXTFOOD are:

1. How can participatory and action-oriented learning strategies focusing on competences required to foster more sustainable agrifood systems, be designed and implemented?
2. What are supporting and hindering forces for such alternatives to establish and develop successfully?

### **Case name and name of contact person/leader**

Experiential and action learning in Agroecology within Gastronomic Science – Italy

Paola Migliorini

### ***Brief description of the case***

Action learning in the education of Gastronomes, the next generation of food professionals.

Main stakeholders involved: Students in Gastronomy, farmers, other stakeholders in the food-value chain, teachers.

Multi-actor approach in case: Students, professors, and agrifood system stakeholders co-create knowledge in real on-farm cases.

Expected outcome: In these Master courses, the Gastronomes achieve holistic and cross-disciplinary knowledge covering the most current trends in the worldwide discourses on EcoGastronomy. The action research in this case will directly or indirectly reveal whether the curriculum and learning methods promote action competency in complex agrifood situations and if it fosters an understanding for sustainable entrepreneurship. Further on, it will identify what it takes for students and faculty to step out of their comfort zone formed by traditional teaching and learning methods and on what stimulates them to take that step. Through the participatory exploration of theory and methods for fostering these important skills the case will contribute to the development of new education and training systems in food studies.

### ***How will the case contribute to achievement of the NEXTFOOD objectives by action research as the main strategy?***

In UNISG several courses will be activated inside NEXTFOOD framework and all of them will be used to develop and test the NEXTFOOD Model and tools

**How will the case study provide evidence to answer the NEXTFOOD research questions?**

The UNISG Course will apply the research methodology and the evaluation of methods will be based on evidence of results based on application of tools.

Some course tools are the following:

- Questions for students during course cycle:
  - o what I would like to learn?
  - o What characterized good learning?
  - o Which competence and experiences can I bring to the group work?
  - o What questions do I have at the end of the course?
  - o Where I can find the answers?
- Self-assessment of student's competence: at course beginning and at end of the course process (Migliorni and Lieblein, 2016)
- Course assessment: 3 things I liked, 3 thing I'd change

**When do you plan to run the first cycle (starting and ending dates) of the educational activities (courses, seminars etc.)?****First year (2018)**

- 14-18 May 2018: "Agroecology" course. 1 week in the Master of Gastronomy "Food and Mobility" (in collaboration with Geir Lieblein)
- End May 2018: "AgroBiodiversity" course. 4 sessions (12 h) at Undergraduate course, I year
- 4-8 June 2018: "Agroecology" course. 1 week in the Master of Gastronomy "Food and Sustainability" (in collaboration with Geir Lieblein)
- July 2018: "Agroecology" course. 4 sessions (12 h) in the Master of Food Culture and Communication
- Fall 2018: "Cropping systems and sustainability" course. 14 sessions (42 h) at Undergraduate course, II year
- Fall 2018: "Sustainable agriculture" course. 6 sessions (18 h) at EcoGastronomy master
- Didactic trip at Ba Gastronomic Science: thematic field visit in a.y. 2018/19. Six study trips are organized by UNISG within NEXTFOOD model. 1 year: coffee, products; 2 year: olive oil, pasta&rice, agricultural food systems; 3 year: alcoholic, Big Organized Distribution.

**Second year (2019)**

- 13-17 May 2019: "Agroecology" course .1 week in the Master of Gastronomy "Food and

Mobility”

- Fall 2019: “Cropping systems and sustainability” course. 14 sessions (42 h) at Undergraduate course, II year
- Fall 2018: “Sustainable agriculture” course. 6 sessions (18 h) at EcoGastronomy master

***What is the planned (expected) number of learners (students, farmers, etc.)?***

At Master level: 25-30 students

At Undergraduate level: 100 students

***What is the level of the course(s)? (BSc, MSc, other)***

- Msc
- BSc

***Who will be the teachers/learning facilitators?***

Paola Migliorini

+ Geir Lieblein in Master of Gastronomy

***A description of the ‘learning arenas’:***

***Where will the activities take place, what will be the processes to enable co-learning between teachers, learners (students, farmers, etc.) and research persons in society (farmers and others)?***

UNISG have a large number of “friends” and “stakeholders” that support in several ways: economically, hosting stage and visits, providing lecture and conference, providing food and products for canteen, ...

The 3 typology of structural and official partners are the following:

<https://www.unisg.it/en/unisg-network/association-of-friends-of-the-university/>

<https://www.unisg.it/en/unisg-network/strategic-partners/>

<https://www.unisg.it/en/unisg-network/contributing-members/>

In addition, there are all Slow food Network and my personal contacts of farms around the area.