



Experiences from TRANMANGO: Pedro

Going back to Tjitske's earlier question, what is that we can do in the face of all those challenges in which we are all collectively engaged? She pointed that we can start by acting from our own spheres of influence, reimagining a different world and that in this, food can be used as a tool for change. Well, I can only agree with her.

In Valencia we are witnessing a rising number of consumer-based food transition initiatives where consumers are making a commitment to sustainable change. At the same time, new productive patterns are emerging everywhere with young women and men following an agroecological way of producing and direct selling. Both, alternative consumers and producers helping to create a more sustainable food system.

Yet for most consumers in the city, shopping is not a transformative action and in many cases the new productive initiatives remain fragile and dispersed.

In this sense, in our research, I have noticed how important civil society is in supporting this transformation (we also saw it this morning in the FIRAB and CORAGGIO joint presentation). Local platforms, NGOs and grassroots movements are strengthening producers and consumers initiatives by giving them greater visibility and voice, raising social awareness, coordinating actions, creating networks with similar movements at regional and national scales or representing their interests when interacting with the local administration. A good example is the Valencia Food Sovereignty Platform that has succeed in promoting a new legislation that loosens current restrictive direct selling barriers and better adapts health and security normative to small-scale producers and food processors.

On the other side, this and other recent changes have been possible also thanks to a more sensible and motivated local administration. It is since not long ago that we have noticed an increasing engagement of the Valencia city council in putting in place mechanisms that promote change in the food system. This engagement started with the signature of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact in 2015, and is now materializing in a comprehensive plan for the revitalization of La Huerta (the agricultural historical landscape around the city). The civil society has participated in the design of this Plan, which includes:

- Raising consumer awareness and modify contract specifications for food procurement in school canteens
- The creation of a purchasing centre and distribution platform (to increase and improve supply capacity)
- Or developing a shared food processing workroom (to increase added value and farmers' bargaining power)

However, the inertia found in the administration and institutional structures is clearly posing some barriers to the implementation of such a systemic approach. As we are witnessing, is being challenging to increase cross-sectoral coordination, for example between the agriculture, health and education departments. Vertical integration within administrations, allowing for information exchange and coordination with regional structures where some key decisions are



taken, also needs to be improved. At the same time, considering the highly interwoven food relationships, it is also needed to broaden participation in food policy to a wider range of stakeholders. Such an approach, although it is not easy task, allows to share each other's points of view, and helps to generate effective change.

It is, though, at this local scale where this multidimensional approach could be in a better position to overcome these barriers. It is precisely at the local scale where TRANSMANGO has been working. For me, one of the most interesting things in our case study has been the opportunity to get involved in some of those actions not only as a researcher but as a full participant. In this sense, I am actively involved in the group designing and constructing the City Food Council.

So, if you ask me, I do believe that we as citizens have the potential to reshape the global food system, or putting it in Galeano's words, I do believe that "many small people in small places, doing small things, can change the world". Yet, during the TRANSMANGO project I have also realized that changes are boost when the dynamism of civil society and the resources of the administration are put together at work.