



SOLINSA

Support of Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture

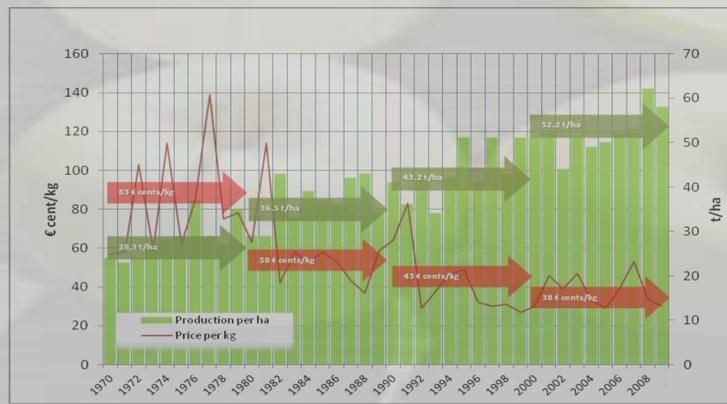
Agricultural Knowledge Systems In Transition: Towards a more effective and efficient support of Learning and Innovation Networks for Sustainable Agriculture

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Smallholder large-scale apple production in South Tyrol, Italy

Introduction

South Tyrol has the biggest single producing area of apple trees in Europe. The various stakeholders involved have organised themselves in an efficient and effective Learning and Innovation Network for Sustainable Agriculture (LINSNA). It is a highly sophisticated and adaptive network of linkages that functions due to the high level of understanding and cooperation amongst all stakeholders. The most important component of the Network is the promotion of members and strict adhesion to the basic principles of self-help, self-administration, and self-responsibility. The apple producers in South Tyrol have created a LINSNA, guided by human relationships, trust, common vision and interest, allowing for information and knowledge to be transferred rapidly and efficiently. Collective action is a rule for innovation.



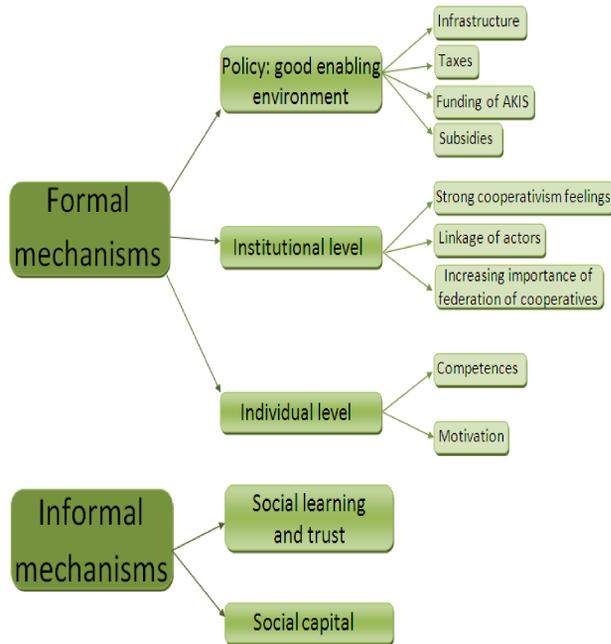
“Techniques and possibilities have changed over time, but not the principles”

Drivers and triggers

South Tyrol is an isolated region with little land available for production. In 1966, up to a 1000 South Tyroleans were emigrating every year. With little land and less people, South Tyrol had to intensify its production to provide a fair income to producers. Cultural identity and co-evolution of all LINSNA actors in South Tyrol created a successful geographical cluster for innovation. In 1972, South Tyrol became autonomous, thus being able to define its own path for progress.

Results

✓ Network development mechanism and group evolution

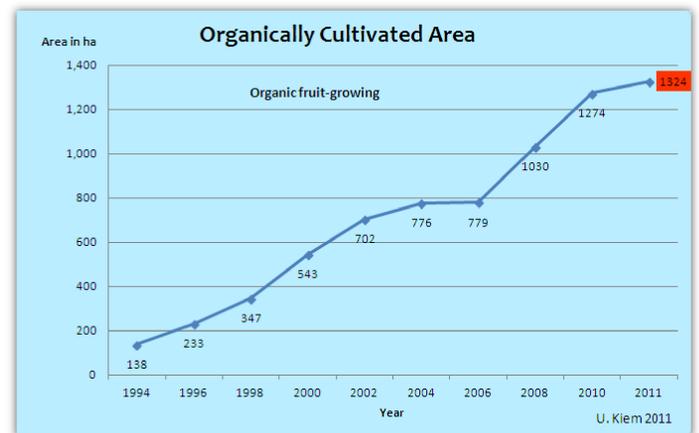


✓ Emergence of cooperatives and links with other actors

Cooperatives in apple production emerged as a bottom up process based on the demands of the producers and a historical cooperativism movement in the region.

- **Integrated Production:** cooperative and farmer’s union linked with the extension system to draft guidelines and develop capacities.
- **Organic production:** a specialised organic cooperative has emerged with the technical support of the research centre. As a consequence, there has been a 56% annual increase of land under organic cultivation.

“Our individuality and collectivity is our key”



✓ LINSNA reaction to natural constraints and conflict resolution

The network currently reacts to natural constraints in two ways:

- Technological innovation to adapt and to mitigate the impact of climate change based on passive and active defense mechanisms, new EU policy subsidies are further integrating the network
- Conflict resolution based on discussion and consensus building on the one hand, and on the basic democratic rule of transparency and “one person one vote” principle on the other.

Further support of the LINSNA

❖ The sources of variability in the system could be identified and challenges addressed at different levels: research, extension, education and advisory services focusing on potential requirements of the markets.

❖ Provide foresight capacities to assist the LINSNA in better analysing opportunities and threats.

“Future will be a single cooperative”

“Young generations are our strengths”

