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E-TOOLKIT



Youth 4 Rural

Youth 4 our rural products

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Introduction

Welcome to the E-Toolkit for Educating Young Rural Entrepreneurs! This comprehensive resource has been thoughtfully created to empower educators in guiding the entrepreneurial spirit among young individuals in rural areas. This e-toolkit is designed to support in equipping the next generation of rural entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills, and inspiration they need to succeed.

Throughout the toolkit, one can find a wealth of resources, including exercises, designed to facilitate meaningful learning experiences. This e-toolkit is a trusted companion in guiding young people towards a future filled with possibility and potential.

In today's dynamic landscape, rural entrepreneurship holds immense potential for driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainable development. However, educating young people about entrepreneurship in rural contexts can present challenges and opportunities.

Module One of the e-toolkit offers comprehensive insights into the fundamentals of entrepreneurship tailored specifically for young audiences. It introduces the concept of entrepreneurship and explores the qualities of successful entrepreneurs.



Module Two delves deeper into the realm of rural entrepreneurship, focusing on key themes such as local agriculture, sustainable commerce, and environmental preservation.

The E-toolkit is divided into two modules, both developed in six points, divided between the three partners and then elaborated.

Module one deals with the following topics:

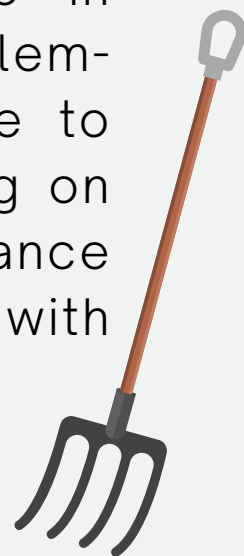
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Module two:

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6. Practical cases.

The final part of each section is dedicated to practical exercises designed for young individuals aiming to understand the module content. These activities will be introduced by educators, who will then guide students through them individually, providing assistance for any questions that arise. This aspect is crucial, as informing students about upcoming tests or activities can motivate them to participate more actively and effectively in the session. Moreover, educators play a pivotal role in encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving among students, offering guidance to overcome challenges without overly relying on assistance. This approach fosters self-reliance and confidence in their abilities, aligning with the objectives of the course.



Educators must ensure clarity in their explanations of topics using the provided text, all while fostering interactive discussions. Given that the target demographic consists of young entrepreneurs unaccustomed to conventional lectures, it's vital for educators to employ engaging methods to sustain their focus.

Here are several strategies they can employ to accomplish this:

- Employing interactive teaching methods to facilitate discussions
- Using the provided text as a basis for clear explanations
- Asking questions
- Asking opinions, thoughts considerations
- Adding examples perhaps of experiences they have experiences directly
- Promoting the exchange of opinions among young entrepreneurs.





MODULE 1

Sustainability,
Entrepreneurship and
Circular Economy:
Boosting Proximity Trade
in a Conscious World



1

What does entrepreneurship mean (start-up concept)?

- **Definition of entrepreneurship and start-up**

What is entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship refers to an individual or a small group of partners who strike out on an original path to create a new business. An aspiring entrepreneur actively seeks a particular business venture and it is the entrepreneur who assumes the greatest amount of risk associated with the project. As such, this person also stands to benefit most if the project is a success. Entrepreneurial pursuits often involve innovation.

What industries do small business entrepreneurs work in?

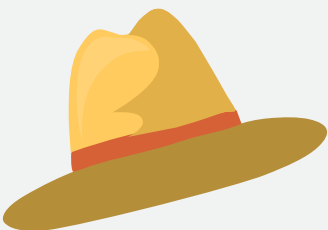
The top three industries for small business startups are:

- Food and restaurant operations
- Retail
- Business services

Other leading industries included health and fitness, finance, insurance, and law. No matter what type of venture a small business entrepreneur is involved in, it's vital that they prioritize innovation and perseverance.

What is a start-up?

A start-Up can be founded by one or more entrepreneurs with the objective of developing a service or a product, the two main characteristics that allow us to speak of a start-Up are innovation and temporariness. This type of company must aim for growth, based on a dynamic model and not on a static model, such as an ordinary restaurant, in addition, a start-up can be defined as an enterprise that has been established for less than five years.



The first phase of the creation of a start-Up can be defined as "Pre-Seed", in this phase entrepreneurs develop ideas and prepare the business project, which, however, has not yet been concretely born. Once the ideas have been consolidated, they have to put them into practice and wait for them to blossom - this is the 'Seed' phase. If the entrepreneurs have been successful, then the first results will arrive and we enter the 'Early Stage'. If at this stage the entrepreneurs choose not to stop and continue to develop projects in order to grow to the maximum of their possibilities by expanding the market, we enter the 'Early Growth' stage. The last stage is then defined as Exit, this is an important turning point and occurs when the start-up is acquired by another company or when the decision is made to make an initial public offering to become a listed company.

What is the difference between a startup and a small business?

The term startup refers to a company in the first stages of operations. Startups are founded by one or more entrepreneurs who want to develop a product or service for which they believe there is demand and expect to grow the business. The vision for the business is usually different from a small business owner's.

- **Start-up is for young people - some beneficiaries for the country- A benefit for the state**

Despite the success of entrepreneurs like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, who were both in their early 20s when they started now wildly successful companies, research finds that those stories are the exception, not the norm. According to Harvard Business Review, the average age of entrepreneurs at the time of their company's founding is 42

One of the main concerns of governments is how to support economic growth and win the battle for jobs, which remains a challenge if they are to proactively develop the business base and stimulate sustainable economic growth and job creation.

The idea of offering state support to start-ups can respond to this concern and aims to create a breeding ground for innovation and therefore stimulate the local economy and ensure that these start-ups participate in the country's economic effort.



Global entrepreneurship injects new money, growth and opportunity into a community, system, and society. Investments into people, skills development, and business startups pay off in exponential rewards.

Here are 7 benefits that entrepreneurship brings to any society:

- **Entrepreneurship is more than just starting up a new business.**

Even without a formal business structure there are so many benefits of entrepreneurship for the individual, like critical thinking, creativity, decision-making, and leadership. Entrepreneurial skills can be used in jobs, other roles in society, and even parenting. The personal growth and skillset benefits grow as entrepreneurs distinguish themselves as leaders, team workers, and provide service for others through transitions and job creation.

- **Entrepreneurship requires a new level of thinking.**

If the entrepreneur's only experience is coming from a trade, for example, then they may be starting with a limited understanding of business management and finance and have to gain higher knowledge and education in those areas. These gains in independence.

- **Increasing entrepreneurial activities supports job creation.**

Entrepreneurship delivers empowerment. Real change comes from empowerment, increases in dignity, and marketplace growth. Recognizing need and seizing opportunity. People become more resilient as they push through tough challenges. It also helps to restore confidence and grow dignity, empowering everyone in the business and their community. Entrepreneurship alone can't solve all the poverty problems but it can help to reduce unemployment because job creation is a natural outcome as the business grows. A thriving business supports the owners financially, the staff and workers (and their circles of spending).

In addition, it supports vendors, contractors, and other businesses that provide necessary products and services such as shipping, transportation, supplies, food and the like. Building these companies provides essential new jobs, and equips others as they build skills.



- **Entrepreneurship creates new sources of wealth**

Creating and growing a business turns resources into value by sharing time, talents and treasures with others. A business becomes sustainable by exchanging markets, skills, and benefits in groups. Job creation can be difficult without access to new markets. People and relationships along with innovation are the real solution to creating sources of wealth. Business owners use their profit to facilitate greater effects in both tangible and intangible creation of financial, knowledge, skills and spiritual wealth.

- **Entrepreneurship works best in community.**

Entrepreneurs can increase the odds of success by working with others. No one can do business alone. Starting and running a business requires creating internal jobs to fill roles in manufacturing or delivering services. It also requires other businesses, partnerships and vendor relationships that grow the local market.



Each community, country, and region is different but entrepreneurship always involves more of the community assets and resources.

- **Entrepreneurship done intentionally creates more than income.**

Raising income and upleveling skills of staff takes dedication and intention for betterment in order to create exponential benefits of a highly productive and profitable medium-sized business. This goal, though, can yield a lot more than revenue. Growing a business stimulates new markets, increases competition, and boosts innovation. It can have a positive impact on community lifestyles while providing new choices and changing consumer demand.

- **Entrepreneurship delivers the hope of seeing opportunity**

As a business grows, the owners, staff, vendors, and customers create their own value, point the direction, and are guided by the organization's goals and visions. With the value exchange along the path of commerce and more jobs created, all sides increase and the collective individuals in the community grow independence, knowledge, and a sense of responsibility. This is where hope thrives and more opportunity grows.

- ***Entrepreneurship = a part of economy where a person tries to do business with his/her ideas***

Founding a company therefore means first of all developing ideas, even better if these ideas have never been developed by anyone before, so as not to have the problem of competition, which in today's globalised world very often leads some companies to lower their earnings. For young entrepreneurs, however, having an innovative project can sometimes be difficult, the fear of being robbed of one's projects sometimes leads people not to put them into practice. However, when it comes to projects with considerable significance, there are ways to protect one's inventions.

- The patent that grants a property right to a new and original invention for a limited period of time, 20 years.
- The utility model which allows the owner to protect the form of a product for 10 years. By form we mean a more convenient and original method of use.



- Industrial design is the protection of the shape of objects intended for industrial production as long as it is not similar to other similar designs already on the market. The protection of a registered design is 5 years renewable up to a maximum of 25.

For a patent to be registered, it is important that the idea has two requirements, it must be completely innovative and therefore not easily understood by an expert in the field, and it must be industrially applicable in at least one field, including agriculture. Patents can be national, European and international, and of course according to the different levels, the subjects to comply with them change.



- ***Creation of something with your ideas (creativity)***

The role of creativity in entrepreneurship

Creativity is a crucial skill for an entrepreneur, and it enables interesting processes to be devised. Now, the question is what makes creativity so crucial and impactful for an entrepreneur. Let's have a look and try to understand the importance of creativity:

- **Optimal utilisation of employee potential:** An entrepreneur uses the full potential of his employees by encouraging creativity in workplace. There might be an ocean of ideas which are being dormant and ready to be utilised. By tapping on such creativities, an entrepreneur can reap results in the form of profitability, financial strength, and effective decision making.
- **Competitive advantage:** Creativity leads to generation of novel and innovative ways of doing business. Exploring new niches and generating new ideas lead to efficiency and eventually give an entrepreneur the required edge over the competition.



- **Product development:** Creativity encourages new ways of developing an existing product or service, thereby optimizing business activities in the organization. A creative entrepreneur knows how to make improvements in the deliverables of an enterprise.
- **Changing the status quo:** Creativity enables an entrepreneur to get new perspectives towards business processes or financial/operational problems. It is creativity that helps an entrepreneur to abandon the status quo and follow a path of immense discoveries. Creativity ignores “usual” or “normal”, and lets an entrepreneur think outside of the box. Traditional solutions are shut and new, interesting, & versatile options are explored. It leads to “Thinking the Unthinkable”.
- **Developing new niches:** It is also very important for an entrepreneur to analyse the traditional business approach and come up with new aspects of doing business activities. This can lead to a change in the methods of manufacturing or service delivery or supply chain, and so on. This all generates new niches for a potential business and leads to success.

It should also be noted here that creative thinking is not the only attribute needed for successful entrepreneurship. Some of the other areas pointed out by researchers include interpersonal skills, personal traits, practical skills, critical thinking, and so on. Nevertheless, creativity is a must-have skill in an entrepreneur. If simply put – creativity involves thinking freely but focusing on the major question to be answered, the product to be developed, or the areas to be improved.



- ***Focus on the economic part-PROFIT***

Profit is in most cases the main reason for setting up a business. This quantity is given by revenues, the sum of earnings from the sale of a tangible or intangible asset, minus costs, all the resources used to produce that asset. Costs are divided into fixed and variable costs, the former being the costs that never change, such as the rent of the building where the business is located, while variable costs are the costs influenced by third party factors, a clear example being the increase in the cost of petrol following the COVID-19, which has greatly affected the profits of transport companies. Thus, profit is an externally variable quantity that depends on the combination of a number of factors, unlike, for example, wages, which are a stable proportion. This is why the entrepreneur must always be careful and never get too comfortable in good times.



2

Decalogue of a good entrepreneur (knowledge, skills and competences)

- **Competences: communication**

During the 20th century, we witnessed the development of a Fordist-style system of corporate production. This system was based on the repetitiveness of tasks and also on a strong division of labour between doers and decision-makers. Today, the labour market has changed dramatically, the demarcation lines between the various roles are blurring considerably, and as a result, the worker cannot be seen as a single unit that is obliged to perform a standardised task, but rather as a person who constantly relates to others, makes decisions and experiments with ideas and actions.

In this context then, the role of communication assumes a fundamental role, an American research by Grammarly and Harris Poll, the 'State of Business Communication' survey reveals that poor communication in the workplace is a problem that generates an annual loss of 1.2 trillion dollars among companies in the USA.

A good specialist must be able to manage two types of communication: an internal communication, within the company, and an external one, with customers. With regard to the former, the main objective is to create a climate of harmony in which each worker feels valued and listened to, as we know that a happy worker is a more productive worker, for the second instead it is important that the entrepreneur develops a communication "intelligent and empathic", because it must be able to understand the problems of the customers and above all to resolve them.

The four main elements for developing effective communication are:



1) Consider the audience you are talking to: the type of language must be adapted according to the target audience, not always a courtly language will be better than a popular one or vice versa. It is important that the audience 'feel at home' and not feel belittled because they may not understand the complexity of certain words.

2) Practise active listening: communication also means listening, and a good leader always tries to give voice to the problems reported by employees and do everything possible to solve them. Listening should not only be limited to verbal language, very often people are afraid to speak and express any discomfort with body language.

3) Use the right medium or platform: we are in the digital age, especially when it comes to external communication, it is essential to understand to which type of audience we want to sell our product. Obviously, if the target audience is particularly young, social media might be the ideal medium; when we are talking about a more adult target audience, media such as television will probably be preferred.





4) Make your message as clear as possible: it is useless to use huge documents that may discourage the possible reader. One solution could be to differentiate the messages according to the field of competence of the interested party, for example, if a document deals with both law and engineering, it would be better to divide it into two different documents to be sent to the respective interested parties.

He/she must have knowledge on this topic/job:

A good entrepreneur, in addition to having knowledge about the issues related to his or her sector, must possess a package of pre-established knowledge:

1) Sustainable economy: with the current climate crisis, developing sustainable forms of economy is a must for everyone. Let us take for example two different sectors, agriculture and the production of electronic objects such as computers or tablets. In both cases there is an exploitation of nature, in agriculture because obviously excessive and unregulated production can lead to soil erosion, while in technology the problem could be related to the extraction of materials.

In any case, an entrepreneur who has the conscience to take care of environmental tactics would certainly be an asset to the planet, in both sectors.

2) Labour law: as we have said before, the world of work has changed so much, precariousness has become a common constant in many professions. Consequently, it is essential for a good entrepreneur to know the different types of contracts and how they adapt to national or in some cases international laws.

3) Customer relations: a good entrepreneur must know or even better devise methodologies for managing relations with his customers. Returning again to the subject of competition, in fact, to give stability to the company it is necessary to implement a kind of customer loyalty. There are many ways to manage customer relations, a clear example being vouchers given by Amazon, or various sites that give you a gift on your birthday.



4- Knowledge of English: this last requirement is obviously not always valid, especially for companies that operate exclusively in a national context. If, however, we are talking about companies that operate on a broader market and want to grow internationally, knowledge of English is indispensable, as it has become established as the main language for international trade and commerce.

Sometimes it is the lack of one of these components that leads companies to bankruptcy, it is therefore important to reiterate that being an entrepreneur is not a choice to be taken lightly; one must study and realise that one has this basic cultural background before investing money. The consequences without one of these components could be very damaging: without knowledge of sustainable economics, the conditions could be disastrous for the planet, with shortcomings in labour law, the conditions of workers, who are already precarious, could only worsen, and finally, if one does not know the basics of marketing and customer relations, the company risks not finding an outlet for its products, leading to the company's bankruptcy.



EntreComp and entrepreneurship competences:

The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework can be understood as a framework for entrepreneurship. Published in June 2016, modifying the old framework of 2006, it lays out a set of competences and requirements that should be possessed by anyone who wants to start an entrepreneurial activity.



The framework consists of three main areas, 'ideas and opportunities', 'resources' and 'action', and for each area five competences are listed for a total of 15.

1. Ideas and opportunities

- **Recognising opportunities:** it is of paramount importance not to miss out on potential opportunities, in today's competitive world an opportunity may not come again. The entrepreneur must be clear-headed and understand situations in which economic and social value could be created.
- **Creativity:** in a market saturated with products, being able to pool one's skills and knowledge to create something new is a decisive step in guaranteeing an outlet for products.
- **Vision:** planning for the future, not just working in the short term, but instead thinking about how the actions of the present might affect the future.
- **Ideas of value:** can you measure the intelligence of a fish by its ability to climb a tree? Of course not! The same reasoning must be made with ideas and projects, these can only be evaluated when they are assigned an appropriate value in terms of structure and form.

- **Ethical and sustainable thinking:** evaluate the impact that ideas can have on the planet and the community. A good project creates decent work and not exploitation, creates opportunities for the planet and not further destruction.

2. Resources

- **Self-awareness and effectiveness:** understanding oneself is one of the first steps in entrepreneurship, understanding what one's goals and needs, one's potential and in what aspects one needs to improve.
- **Motivation and perseverance:** Don't think that the road to the goal is easy and free of obstacles; on the contrary, there will always be obstacles, but it is essential to believe in yourself and walk towards the goal!
- **Mobilise resources:** after writing the project, it is crucial to have the ability to understand how to actually obtain the resources needed. Remember that there are two types of resources, limited and unlimited. By limited resources we mean all those that are not infinite, like money, in which case proper management is vital. Unlimited resources such as 'the will to learn' are managed by those who exercise it according to their own needs.



- **Economic-financial knowledge:** Among the aims of every entrepreneurial project there is always the economic one, it is necessary to ensure that one has the necessary economic knowledge, the financial management of a company is indeed decisive for success.
- **Mobilise others:** a good entrepreneur is a leader for his team, he must succeed in motivating others, bringing out their potential and helping them to overcome their weaknesses.

3. In action

- **Taking initiative:** being proactive is a basic requirement, one must not be afraid to start otherwise no project would have come to life, what would have happened if Mark Zuckerberg had not started facebook for fear of the judgement of others?
- **Planning and management:** leave nothing to chance, set short, medium and long-term goals.
- **Coping with uncertainties, fears and risks:** A leader is the one who, when faced with an uncomfortable situation, is able to indicate a direction and make a decision; the choice is not always easy, it is important to rely on data, statistics and reliable sources.

- **Coping with uncertainties, fears and risks:** A leader is the one who, when faced with an uncomfortable situation, is able to indicate a direction and make a decision; the choice is not always easy, it is important to rely on data, statistics and reliable sources.
- **Work with others:** listening to your team is one of the main steps to build a good project, never be convinced that you are better than your team. Each person can provide valuable ideas and contributions, the best business ideas arise from the contribution of a team.
- **Learn from experience:** every mistake we make is nothing but a lesson, we must not stop, because apart from study it is only time and therefore experience that can improve us.

Stories of agricultural entrepreneurs

Onyeka Akumah

He is the founder of Farm Crowdy a platform that connects small Nigerian farmers with big sponsors. The sponsors finance the crops that are then sold on the market, and finally the profits are divided between the sponsors, Farm Crowdy and the small farmers.



Alli Cecchini Erggelet

This American girl founded a non-profit organisation called First Generation Farmers to provide tours and trips to her own orchard purchased in 2018. The organisation's goal is to educate young people about sustainable consumption. It also provides food and organic food to the local community.

Matt Fountain

He is the founder of Freedom Bakery, an artisan bakery and social enterprise. The enterprise offers an opportunity to former prisoners by teaching them a trade and providing them with a job opportunity, with the aim of reducing the risk of reoffending. Finally, the company sources its supplies from old Scottish barns to promote circular economy practices.

Josh Gilbert

This Australian farmer has created an extensive collection of material on Aboriginal farming systems, defined as sustainable and regenerative. He has also initiated a series of campaigns, addressing issues such as the impact of farming systems on climate change. For his advocacy, he has been recognised as the Australian Geographic Young Conservationist of the Year and the Foundation for Young Australians' Local Legend Award.



3

How to contribute to protect the environment and to promote a circular economy (phases of the circular economy)

- **How to contribute to environmental protection**

Introduce the concept

The circular economy is a regenerative economic model that positively affects all types of capital: financial, human, social and natural. It aims at the regeneration of devastated natural resources, keeping raw materials in use and extending the life of products, by applying appropriate design that allows products to not become waste and contribute to pollution at the end of their life.

Global trends are moving towards the circular economy replacing the deeply rooted linear economy and waste management. The circular economy also includes the protection of human rights through sustainable development, global security of natural resources, combating climate change, energy security, ensuring sufficient amounts of food, reducing inequality, more transparent public finances and social security of citizens, preserving health and a cleaner environment and the rights of future generation on resources.

The circular economy should not be equated with the hierarchy of waste management. Namely, the hierarchy of waste management was created in the linear economy as a measure to reduce the amount of waste generated and return a part of raw materials to production processes through recycling. The circular economy is above the waste management process because it starts primarily from a new way of thinking about the use of resources - the 6-R process.



Digitization and the use of technology can facilitate the introduction of a circular business model. The potential brought by the circular economy are huge.

The inclusion of different countries provides opportunities for global systemic transformation regardless of the economic strength of the society.

The linear production method is based on the TAKE - MAKE - THROW model.

The model of the linear economy was primarily driven by profit making regardless of the negative impact on the environment and natural resources. In economies, based on a linear economy, part of the material is recycled, while other parts that are not recycled (most often due to the design and composition of the material) end up in landfills.

- **Spend less:**

Reducing consumption is key to preserving the environment. Here are some tips on how you can spend less:

Planning: Make a list of the things you really need before you go shopping. This will help you avoid impulse purchases.

Quality over quantity: Instead of buying cheap products that spoil quickly, invest in quality items that will last longer.

Second hand: Consider buying used items. It is more environmentally friendly and often cheaper.

Reduce plastic: Avoid products with excess packaging and use reusable containers and bags.

Recycle: If you must buy something, choose products that have been recycled or can be recycled.

Awareness: Be aware of your consumer behaviour and try to adapt it in favour of the environment.

- **Promote local products:**

The circular economy is an economic system based on the reuse and regeneration of materials or products, with the aim of continuing production in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. It is based on three design-driven principles:

Elimination of waste and pollution: Products are manufactured in such a way that their lifespan is long (or as long as possible), and when their lifespan is over, they can be recycled well.

Circulating products and materials: The circular economy encourages the use of products and materials in multiple cycles, instead of one-time use. This includes repairs, restoration and reuse.

Regeneration of nature: The circular economy aims to minimize the negative impact on nature and supports the restoration of ecosystems.

Through the promotion of local products and the application of circular economy principles, we can contribute to a more sustainable future and support local communities!

Local products are extremely important to support the local economy and community.

Here are some ways you can promote local products:

Buy local: Whenever possible, choose products that are produced in your region. It helps maintain jobs and supports small entrepreneurs.

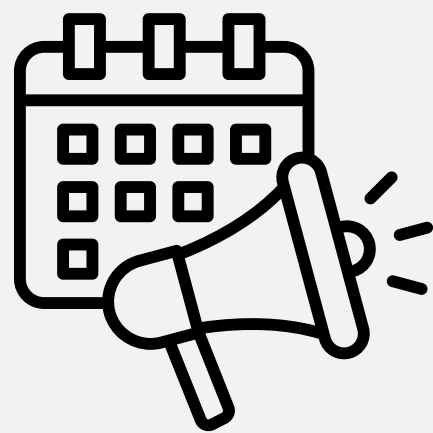
Share on social networks: Take photos or videos of local products you use and share them on social networks. Add hashtags like #Local, #SupportLocal or #BuyLocal.

Organize events: Become an ambassador for local products by organising events such as fairs, tastings or workshops. It attracts the attention of the community and encourages interest in local products.

Cooperation with local media: Contact local newspapers, radio stations or television stations and suggest stories about local producers. This can help make products more recognizable.

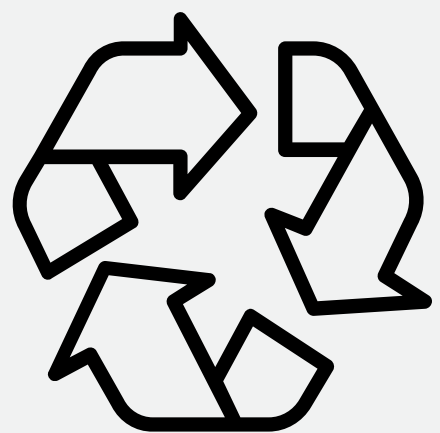
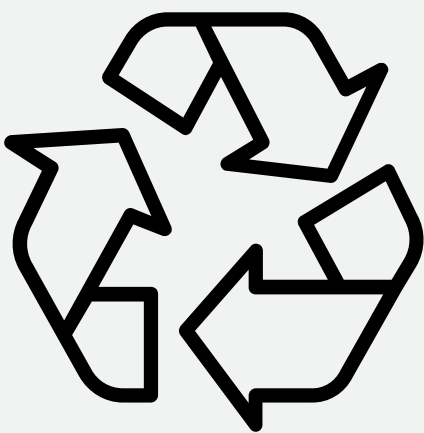
Education: Educate people about the benefits of buying local products. Explain to them how it affects the local economy, reduces carbon emissions and supports sustainability.

Together we can support local producers and help strengthen our community! -



Recycling:

Recycling is the process of extracting materials from waste and reusing them for the same or similar purposes. This process includes collecting, extracting, processing and making new products from used things and materials. It is important to separate waste according to type, because many waste materials can be reused if collected separately. Recycling is a key component of modern waste reduction and is the third component of the waste hierarchy, along with the "reduce" and "reuse" approach. Without the introduction of recycling into everyday life, it is impossible to imagine any complete waste management system. Materials that can be recycled include many types of glass, paper, cardboard, metal, plastic, rubber, textiles, batteries and electronics. Also, composting or other reuse of biodegradable waste, such as food or garden waste, is also a form of recycling. Recycling aims at environmental sustainability by replacing raw material inputs and redirecting waste output from the economic system.



- **Upgrade (value-added product):**

In the circular economy, the concept of upgrading or value-added products is of particular importance. Here, the focus is on extending the life cycle of products, reducing waste and making better use of resources. Here are some examples of how this concept is applied

Repair and repair: Instead of discarding a product that is broken, the circular economy encourages repair and renewal. For example, servicing mobile phones, cars or home appliances allows them to continue to be used instead of ending up in landfill.

Redesign and Personalization: Upgrading can also be achieved through redesigning the product to improve functionality or aesthetics. Product personalization also adds value. For example, customized phones, clothes or furniture.

Innovations and additional functionalities: Adding new features or technological innovations to a product makes it more attractive. For example, smart devices with additional sensors, tracking software or the ability to connect to the Internet.

Recycling and reuse: The circular economy encourages the recycling of materials from old products to create new ones. For example, recycling plastic to produce new packaging or materials for construction projects.

In essence, upgrading in the circular economy aims to create more sustainable products, reduce the negative impact on the environment and make better use of resources.

- **Reduction of energy consumption:**

Circular economy promotes efficient use of resources, including energy resources. By optimizing the use of energy, minimizing waste and improving energy efficiency in production processes, companies can reduce resource consumption and, with it, the impact on the environment. In the circular economy, the goal is to create closed-loop systems in which products, components and materials are recycled, they are reused or repurposed at the end of their life cycle. Energy is needed in all these processes, such as collecting, sorting and recycling materials.



In addition, energy is needed to remanufacture or renew products to extend their lifespan. By using energy-efficient methods during recycling and reprocessing, the circular economy can maximize resource recovery and minimize energy consumption. Replacing fossil fuel production is only one way of applying the circular principle to the company's value chain.

For example, the recycling of iron and steel and aluminum leads to large energy savings compared to the primary production of these metals. Aluminum, steel and copper, can be almost 100% recycled, and the fact is that the production of aluminum from recycled products requires only 5% of the energy required to produce aluminum as a primary metal. The circular economy also promotes the use of renewable energy, which is in line with the principles of sustainability and continuous replenishment.

The circular economy is a renewable industrial economy that has a changed concept of production and consumption in relation to product design, resource use and attitude towards waste generation. In the concept of circular economy, waste does not exist, but only raw materials that can be reused for the same or other production processes.

This approach is in line with renewable energy sources, as they are sustainable and can be continuously replenished. By investing in renewable energy, businesses and communities can reduce their dependence on limited resources while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Renewable energy sources are inexhaustible sources that can be constantly renewed. Here are some examples:

Solar Energy: Energy obtained directly from the Sun. Photovoltaic cells convert sunlight into electricity.

Wind: Wind farms use wind energy to produce electricity. An example is the Vrataruša wind power plant near Senj in Croatia.

Hydropower: Water power used to generate electricity. Hydroelectric plants are a good example, such as the Jaruga hydroelectric plant on the Krka River⁴.

Geothermal energy: Heat from the interior of the Earth. Geothermal power plants use this energy to produce electricity.

Biomass: Wood, plants and organic waste used to produce energy. Biomass can be burned or converted into biogas, biodiesel and ethanol.

All these sources protect the environment and contribute to sustainable development.

- **Consume responsibly:**

The circular economy represents a regenerative economic system in which production resources, waste, waste emissions and energy outflow are significantly reduced by slowing down, rounding off and extending energy and material cycles (life cycles) in production. This concept is in complete contrast to the currently dominant linear economy that promotes the concept of production called "take (from nature), make (in the production process), use, discard (waste)". The circular economy aims to save and renew natural resources and energy, extend the use of materials and products, and reduce waste. A strong argument in favor of the affirmation of the idea of a circular economy is its basic premise that achieving sustainable development does not imply a drop in production and profits, but that a circular model can be just as profitable as a linear one, while preserving the environment.

Here's how you can explain responsible consumption within the circular economy:

Cut back on spending: Emphasize the importance of cutting back on spending and buying only what you really need. This means that you should think before you buy something and avoid impulse purchases.

Extended use of products: Explain that the circular economy encourages extended use of products. This means that you should maintain and repair things instead of immediately replacing them with new ones.

Recycle and Reuse: Mention the importance of recycling and reusing materials. Recycle glass, plastic, paper and other materials, and also consider donating or selling items you no longer use.

Buying from responsible brands: Encourage people to support brands that adhere to the principles of the circular economy. These are brands that use sustainable materials, offer repairs and recycle products.

Education: Educate people about the circular economy. Share information about its benefits and how everyone can contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle.

Here are some examples of successful application of the circular economy concept:

Industrial symbiosis: This model encourages cooperation between different industrial sectors in order to use the resources and waste of one as an input for the other. In this way, the need for new resources is reduced.

Danish deposit and return system for recycling cans and bottles: This system encourages the return of packaging to be recycled and reused. This has contributed to the high recycling rate in Denmark.

The first Danish housing project based on circular economy principles: This project uses recycled materials and has a low ecological rate. It is an example of how circular principles can be applied in the construction industry.

Artificial Grass Recycling: Using recycled materials from old artificial grass pitches to make new pitches. This reduces waste and extends the life of the material.

Closed-loop packaging reuse as a service: Companies offer packaging as a service, not a product. After use, the packaging is returned, cleaned and reused.

Recycling of wind turbine blades: This process enables the recycling of old wind turbine blades to avoid landfilling.

Using old bricks to build a more sustainable future: Recycled old bricks are used to build new buildings, reducing the need for new materials.

These examples show how the circular economy can be applied in different sectors and contribute to a more sustainable way of life.

Here are some examples of how the circular economy concept is applied in the food industry:



Derivation of starch from waste water:

Companies use waste water from the food production process to extract starch from it. This starch is then used in other products.

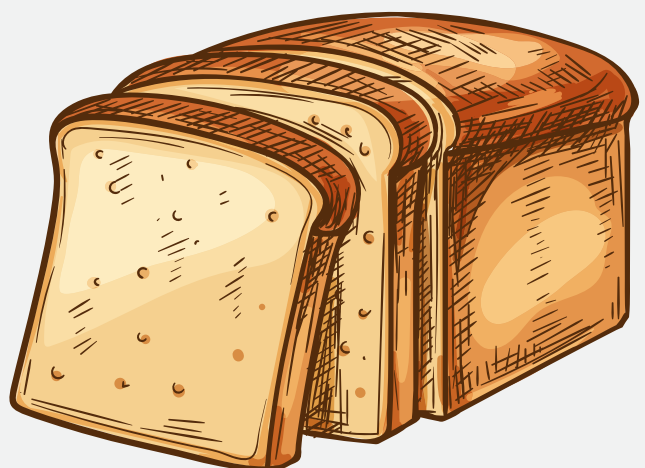
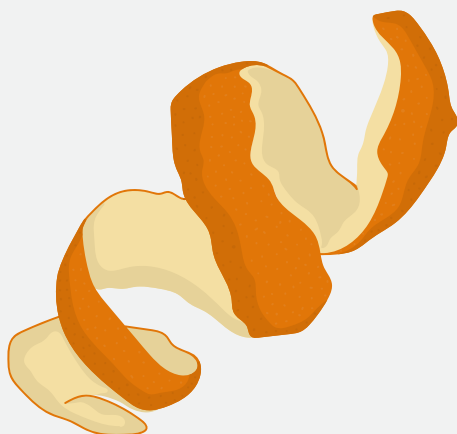
Use of old bread in fermentation processes:

Instead of being thrown away, old bread can be used in fermentation processes, for example for the production of alcoholic beverages.

Incorporation of fruit peel into beer production:

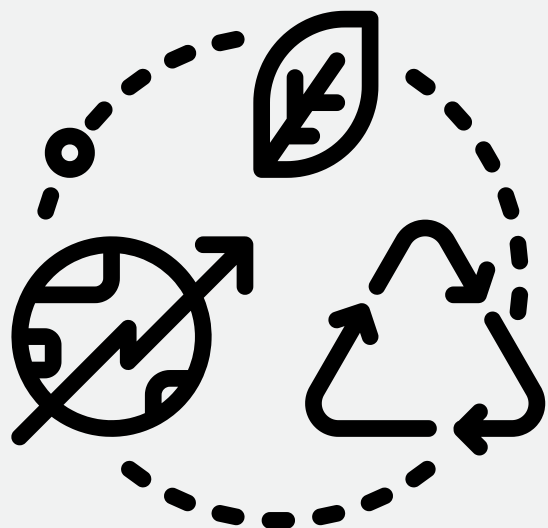
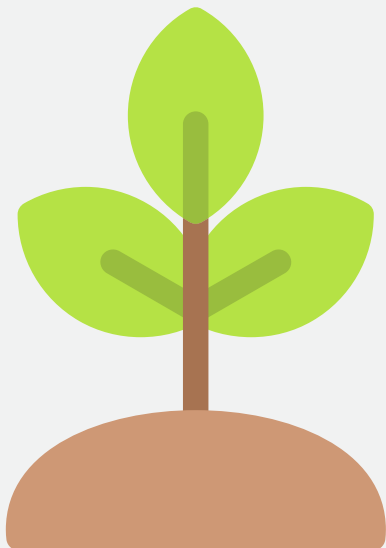
Fruit peel, which usually ends up as waste, can be used as an ingredient in beer production. In this way, waste is reduced and more resources are used.

These are just some of the innovative examples of companies that have developed new technologies, processes and business models to move to a circular economy in the food sector.



- **Definition of circular economy**

Circular economy is a strategy of transition from the existing linear economy to a circular economy. This new economic model ensures the sustainable management of resources, the extension of the life of products with the aim of reducing waste, and the increased use of renewable energy sources¹. In a circular economy, resource and energy flows are maintained in a closed loop, and the emphasis is on products that are easily degradable, do not contain hazardous substances and have a long lifespan. Instead of the concept of "take, produce, consume and throw away", the circular economy promotes sustainability, eco-innovation and regeneration of natural systems¹. In addition to saving natural resources, this model creates new jobs and improves the quality of life on Earth.



- **Circular economy cycle**

In March 2020, the European Commission adopted the new Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) as one of the key elements of the European Green Agreement. This plan aims to reduce pressure on natural resources, promote sustainable growth and create jobs. The circular economy will focus on product design, encouraging circular economy processes, sustainable consumption and waste reduction. The EU will also track progress towards a circular economy through a monitoring framework, including new indicators on material footprint and resource productivity.

1. Raw materials
2. Sustainable design
3. Production/reproduction
4. Distribution
5. Consumption, use, reuse, repair
6. Collection
7. Recycling



The circular economy can be the answer to the growing needs of humanity while respecting the limits that our planet possesses. Sustainable development at its best. The concept is designed to lead to the restoration of the ecosystem, with a large number of innovations and with a significant impact on the habits of society as a whole.

The main feature of the circular economy is that it leads to the concept of "zero waste" and that the biggest changes occur in the design of products and packaging.

Among consumers, there is a trend of increased concern about the products they consume, and an increasing number of them demand products that are safe and friendly to the environment, both in the world and in our country. Those who turn to the concept that provides such products in time are the ones who have a future and who can only expect growth.

Serbia needs to improve the current state of the economy. At the same time, it faces enormous challenges in the environmental protection sector, mainly in the areas of waste and wastewater management. Improving the situation in both areas requires closer cooperation and coordination of different levels of decision-makers (national, provincial and local), as well as synergies with other policies: environmental protection policy, economic and financial policy... By introducing the concept of circular economy, in which economy and life mutual support, which is becoming increasingly important in the EU, would not only transform Serbia's economy, but would also represent a positive step in the process of Serbia's EU membership negotiations.

The circular economy is a renewable industrial economy based on a changed concept of production and consumption. This model differs from the linear model of the economy, which implies uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and discarding of waste.

Here are the key points about the circular economy:

Waste becomes a resource: In the circular economy, waste does not exist as such. Instead, waste is treated as a raw material that can be reused for the same or other production processes.

Three principles of circular economy:

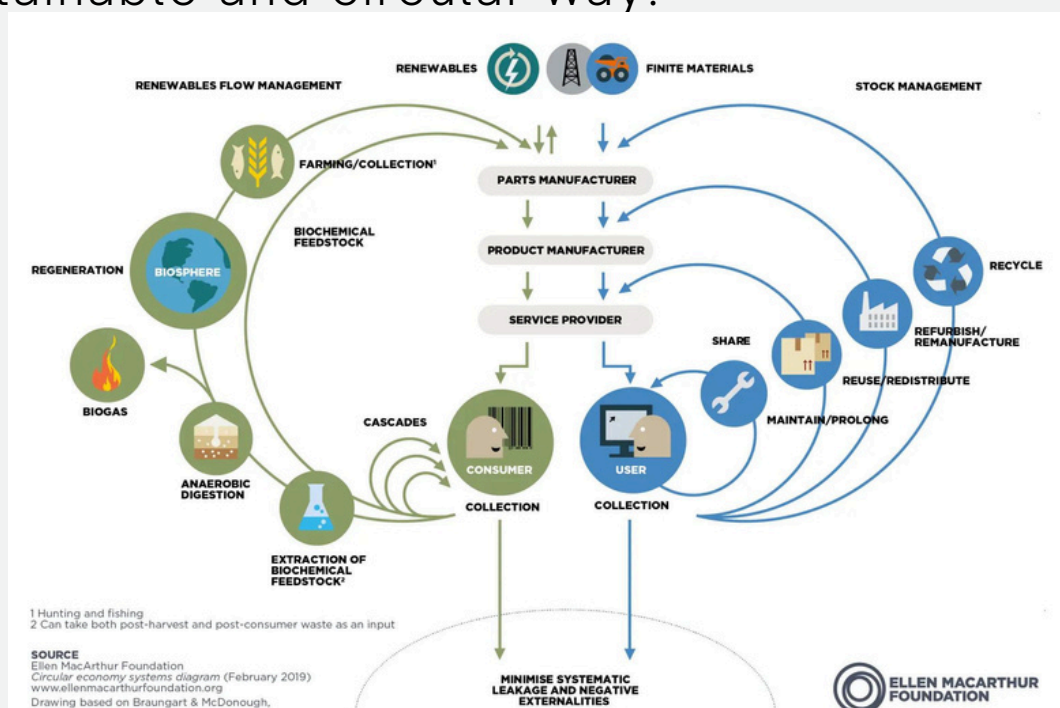
- Reduce: The goal is to reduce the amount of waste and use resources more efficiently.
- Reuse: Products are designed so that they can be used multiple times or in different ways.
- Recycling of materials (recycle): Materials are recycled in order to be used again

Significance of environmental protection:

Circular economy has a positive effect on all types of capital - financial, human, social and natural. In addition, it enables a more sustainable approach to business, reducing pollution and extending product life.

In Serbia, the importance of the circular economy in solving the problem of waste and environmental protection is also increasingly being recognized.", "The circular economy is a renewable industrial economy that has a changed concept of production and consumption in relation to product design, the use of resources and the attitude towards waste generation. in the concept of circular economy, waste does not exist, but only raw material that can be reused for the same or other production processes."

The famous "butterfly" diagram of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation explains the circular economy as a process of rethinking rather than a one-size-fits-all solution. As such, the structure of the process is aimed at closing the circle with materials and products on a sustainable and circular way.



The "butterfly" diagram illustrates the continuous flow of materials in a circular economy.

Technical cycle: In this cycle, products and materials remain in circulation through processes such as reuse, repair, rework and recycling.

Biological cycle: Nutrients from biodegradable materials return to the earth to restore nature.

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation works to accelerate the transition to a circular economy and develops the idea of a sustainable system that enables a continuous flow of materials. If you want to learn more about each aspect of this diagram, you can visit their page that explains the circular economy in more detail.

At the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, we have tried to capture the essence of the circular economy in the diagram above, somewhat understandably called the "butterfly diagram".

The diagram attempts to capture the flow of materials, nutrients, components and products while adding an element of financial value. It builds on several schools of thought, but is perhaps most recognizable under the influence of two Cradle to Cradle material cycles.



A few definitions:

Maintain/extend (and share)

This deepest loop of the technical cycle shows the strategy of keeping products and materials in use by extending their life as long as possible through design for durability as well as maintenance and repair. These longer-lasting products can then be shared among users who can enjoy access to the services they provide, removing the need to create new products.

Reuse/redistribute

Technical products and materials can also be reused multiple times and redistributed to new users in their original form or with little improvement or change. Marketplaces like eBay are proof of this already well-established approach.

Renewal/processing

Renewal and renovation are two similar but slightly different processes of restoring value to a product. When a product is remanufactured, it is disassembled to the component level and rebuilt (replacing components where necessary) to like-new condition with the same warranty as a new product. Refurbishment is a largely cosmetic process that repairs a product as much as possible, usually without disassembling or replacing components.

Recycling

Recycling is the process of reducing a product down to its basic material level, which enables these materials (or at least part of them) to be turned into new products. While this is undoubtedly an important process in the circular economy, the waste of embedded labor and energy, the necessary costs to completely remanufacture products and the inevitable material losses mean that it is a lower value process than those closer to the center of the system. diagram, such as reuse and recycling.

Cascades

This loop, within the biological cycle, refers to the process of putting used materials and components to different purposes and extracting, over time, stored energy and order of materials. Along the cascade, this material order declines until the material eventually needs to be returned to the natural environment as nutrients. A cascade, for example, can be a pair of cotton jeans that are converted into furniture padding and then into insulation material before being anaerobically digested (decomposed) so that they can be returned to the soil as nutrients.

Access against ownership. Do we consume products or use them?

One particular subtlety of the diagram is the distinction between consumers and users. In a circular economy, biological materials are the only ones that can be considered consumable, while technical materials are used. It makes no sense to say that we consume our washing machines and cars in the same way that we consume food. This is a subtle but important difference in how we view our relationship with materials.

Additionally, it raises questions about the necessity of owning products the way we traditionally do. What's the use of having a drill when you just want to make holes in the wall to hang a picture? It is the access to the service that the product provides that is important, not the product itself. Understanding this shift in mindset lays the foundation for many of the practicalities of moving our economy from linear to circular.

Can the material safely re-enter the natural world?

The first thing most people notice about the butterfly diagram is the separation into two distinct halves, or cycles, which represent two fundamentally different flows of material: biological and technical.

Biological materials - represented by the green cycles on the left side of the diagram - are those materials that can safely re-enter the natural world, after passing through one or more cycles of use, where they will biodegrade over time, returning incorporated nutrients to the environment.

Technical materials - represented in blue on the right - cannot re-enter the environment. These materials, such as metals, plastics and synthetic chemicals, must continuously circulate through the system in order for their value to be captured and recaptured.

Economic benefits. What are the macroeconomic impacts of the transition to a new economic model?

The circular economy is becoming increasingly popular with business and government leaders. Their imaginations are captivated by the possibility of gradually decoupling economic growth from the original resource inputs, spurring innovation, increasing growth and creating stronger jobs. If we move to a circular economy, the impact will be felt throughout society.

This impact on employment is largely a consequence of increased consumption fueled by lower prices; high-quality, labor-intensive recycling activities; and more qualified jobs in processing. New jobs will be created in all industrial sectors, within small and medium-sized enterprises, through increased innovation and entrepreneurship, and a new economy based on services.

Innovation

The tendency to replace linear products and systems with circular ones is a huge creative opportunity. The benefits of a more innovative economy include higher rates of technological development, improved materials, labor, energy efficiency, and more profit opportunities for companies.

Advantages for the environment and the system. What impact will the transition to a circular economy have on the environment?

The potential benefits of moving to a circular economy extend beyond the economy and into the natural environment.

Economic benefits in detail:

Economic growth

Economic growth, as defined by GDP, would be achieved mainly through a combination of increased income from new circular activities and lower production costs through more productive use of inputs. These changes in the input and output of economic production activities affect supply, demand and prices in the entire economy. Its effects spread through all sectors of the economy and contribute to overall economic growth.

Material cost savings

Based on detailed product-level modelling, it is estimated that in the medium-duration complex product sectors (such as mobile phones and washing machines) in the EU, the annual net material saving potential is up to USD 630 billion. For fast-moving consumer goods (such as household cleaning products), there is potential for material savings of up to \$700 billion globally.

Potential for job creation

The largest comparative study so far on the impact of the circular economy transition on employment points to "positive effects on employment that occur in the case of the application of the circular economy".

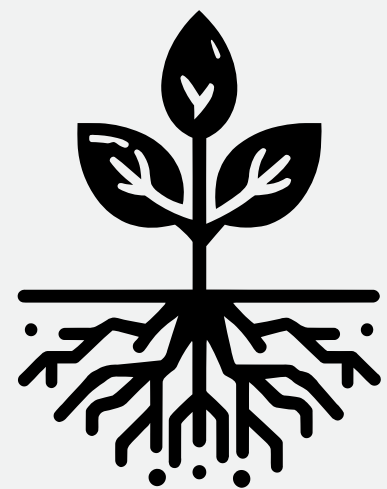
Land productivity and soil health

Land degradation costs around USD 40 billion annually worldwide, not including the hidden costs of increased fertilizer use, loss of biodiversity and unique landscapes.

Greater land productivity, less waste in the food value chain and returning nutrients to the land will increase the value of land and land as an asset. Returning biological material back to the soil will reduce the need to supplement with additional nutrients. Reclaiming all nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium from food, animal and human waste streams globally could contribute almost 2.7 times the nutrients contained in the amounts of chemical fertilizers currently used. This is the principle of the circular economy of regeneration in action.

- **Difference between circular and linear economy:**

Circular economy and linear economy are two different approaches to managing resources and production. Here are the main differences:



The linear economy is based on the "take, use, throw away" model.

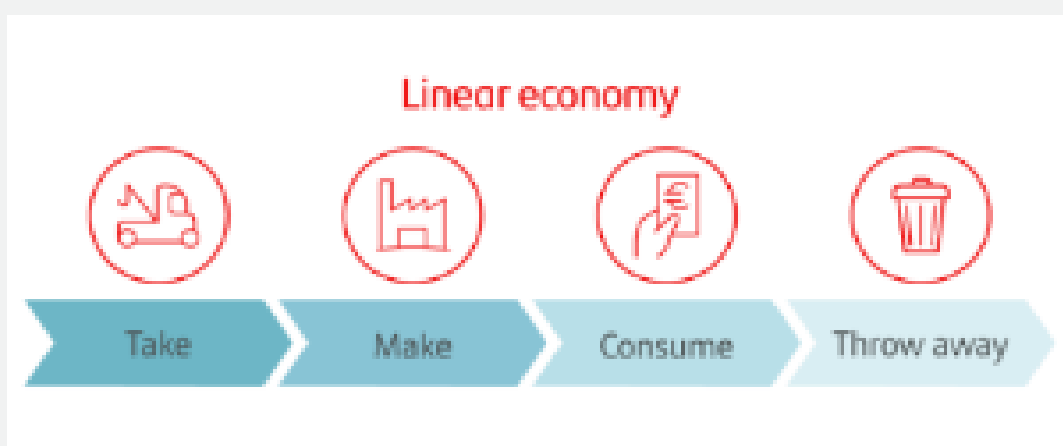
Products are used once and then thrown away. The focus is on the constant increase in production and consumption. This model often leads to resource depletion and environmental pollution.

The circular economy promotes sustainability and waste reduction.

Materials are used as long as possible and then recycled or returned to the production cycle. The focus is on reuse, repair, remanufacturing and recycling.

The goal is to create a closed cycle of materials and resources.

In short, the circular economy aims to reduce the negative impact on the environment and create a more sustainable way of managing resources.



Key features of the linear and circular development model:

Linear model

The focus is on the consumer as the end customer of the product - the focus is on the production of new products

The model is based on the philosophy of take - use - throw away

There is no concern about the limitation of natural resources, renewable energy sources, product design and application of natural materials

The basis of the model is the one-time use of the product

Circular model

At the center of the model is the user of services - the focus is on providing services

The model is based on the avoidance of waste and the circular flow of derived inputs, which are constantly returned to the production through regeneration. proces

The emphasis is on the production of durable and long-lasting products, in the production of which renewable energy sources and natural materials are used

The basis of the model is the repeated use of the product by extending its lifespan (repairs, recycling, etc.)

The aim of the circular economy is to redefine growth by focusing on positive social impacts. The circular economy implies a gradual shift of economic activity away from the consumption of limited resources and the removal of waste generation from the system. With the support of the transition to renewable energy sources, the circular economy builds economic, natural and social capital and is based on three principles: minimizing the generation of waste and pollution maintenance of products and materials in use regeneration of natural systems. The circular economy is based on natural processes in which waste as a category does not exist, but at the end of the cycle becomes a resource again. This concept implies that everything that man needs is produced with the help of nature, and then he takes care of how to return to nature what he took from it in an acceptable (biodegradable) form. The goal of such a production method is twofold - care for the environment and its preservation from excessive human exploitation. In addition to saving natural resources, this way creates new jobs and improves the quality of life on planet Earth.

Zero waste model

Circular economy as a concept proposes the circulation of materials from nature back to nature - but what if there was a way to completely reduce or even eliminate waste production. This is the idea of the so-called Zero Waste model. Zero waste is working on redefining the system. The current waste disposal system is not sustainable and the zero-waste concept offers a solution for the future. The modern system is based on the consumption of a large amount of resources, with the surplus piling up in landfills. The goal of the Zero Waste movement is to create a circular cycle in which waste is eliminated from existence, and non-reusable items cease to be used. Like the circular economy itself, the Zero Waste model sounds simple and sustainable, but it is an apparent assumption - a life without waste requires numerous investments and maximum commitment from both individuals and the community.

The Zero Waste model opens up a lot of challenges and problems. However, solving these problems could lead to new inventions, new ways of packaging and packing products, technologies, clothing and hygiene items.

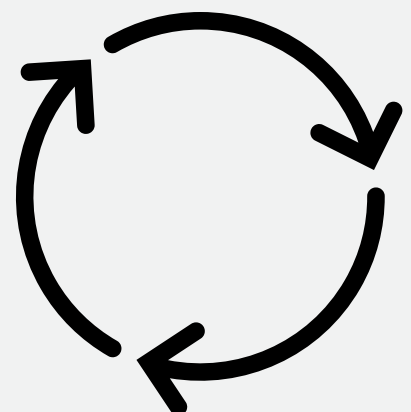
The development and improvement of all the mentioned subjects could cause an additional flourishing of new companies and entrepreneurship in general, and accordingly, an increase in employment and living standards at the world level.

- **How to promote circular economy ?**

The circular economy is key to sustainability and environmental protection. Here are some steps to promote the circular economy in Serbia:

Education and awareness: Get informed about the principles of the circular economy and share that information with others. Raise awareness of the importance of resource conservation and waste reduction.

Legislation Support: Monitor and support laws and initiatives that promote the circular economy. The circular economy development program for the period 2022-2024 was adopted in Serbia.



Innovation and technology: Encourage innovation and the application of new technologies in production. The circular economy relies on efficient use of resources and recycling.

Cooperation with the economy: Connect with companies that support the circular economy. Exchange ideas and support products and services that are in line with this concept.

Waste and recycling: Separate waste properly and support recycling. Participate in clean-up actions and educational campaigns.

Green public procurement: Encourage local institutions to use products and services that are sustainable and support the circular economy.

Consumer awareness: Shop consciously and support products with sustainable design. Think about durability and recycling possibilities.

There are inspiring examples of successful implementation of the circular economy in Serbia. Here are some interesting examples:

Awarded innovations: Recently, awards were given to the authors of 21 innovative ideas for the further development of the circular economy in Serbia. Among the awardees are public and private companies, local governments, civil society organizations and scientific institutions. These innovations contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and more efficient use of energy and resources.

Companies operating in Serbia: Ten large companies in Serbia presented plans to save energy and resources with the aim of sustainable business. These plans are a response to the "Accept the circular challenge" initiative of the Ministry of the Environment, UNDP and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce. Among these companies are Elixir Zorka, Nektar Grupa, Aerodrom Beograd, Coca-Cola HBC and others.

Individual efforts: Although there is no systemic approach to the circular economy yet, many entrepreneurs, artists and innovators in Serbia are working on implementing the principles of the circular economy. For example, there are projects that use pencils and crayons from old newspapers, bags knitted from nylon bags and other creative solutions.

All these examples show that more and more people and organizations in Serbia are engaged in promoting the circular economy and preserving resources.

- **What is greenwashing ?**

Greenwashing is a marketing spin aimed at convincing potential consumers that a brand or company is doing more to protect the environment than is actually true. In other words, companies invest more time and money in marketing their “green” products, instead of actually doing the hard work of being truly sustainable. This phenomenon is often encountered in advertisements and product descriptions, where it is claimed that they are environmentally friendly, although their actual impact on the environment may be significantly less than what is shown. If you want to avoid greenwashing, it is recommended to carefully check sustainability claims and research the actual practices of companies to make informed purchasing decisions.



Recognizing greenwashing can be challenging, but there are some signs to look out for:

Questionable marketing promise: If a company touts its "green" approach without concrete evidence or details, it may be a sign of greenwashing. See if the claims are backed by real actions and certifications.

Use of vague terms: Using phrases like "eco-friendly," "natural," or "chemical-free" without any additional information can be a sign that an attempt is being made to cover up a lack of real environmental efforts.

Inconsistency between words and deeds: Make sure that claims in marketing materials are consistent with company practices. If a company claims to be sustainable but has a poor environmental record, that's a red flag.

Lack of transparency: Companies that are truly sustainable tend to be open about their practices. If a company doesn't share information about its practices, be wary.

Check certifications: Explore certifications like FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), Fair Trade, USDA Organic, and more. They can help identify truly viable products and services.

Remember that critical thinking is key. Research companies and products to make informed purchasing decisions.

Here are some examples of greenwashing:

Coffee capsules: A Canadian company that makes plastic coffee capsules has tried to attract consumers with recycling claims. However, the large amount of discarded capsules is still difficult to recycle

Nuclear power plants: Some brands promote nuclear power plants as environmentally friendly, even though they use high-risk and polluting fuels to generate energy.

Tobacco: Although tobacco has a serious negative impact on the environment, there are cases where the opposite is claimed, which is also a form of greenwashing.

Remember that critical thinking is essential to recognize such marketing gimmicks and make informed purchasing decisions.

4

Advantages of local commerce (environment, sustainability and energy saving)

Introduction : The concept of local trade plays a key role in the sustainable development of communities.

Here are some key aspects :

Boosting the local economy : Local shops support local producers, craftsmen and small businesses. By buying local products, the community encourages economic growth and sustains employment.

Reducing the ecological footprint : Shopping in local stores reduces the need for long transport and packaging. It contributes to less environmental pollution.

Strengthening social ties : Local shops are often the centres of the community. People meet there, talk and exchange information. It strengthens social ties and a sense of belonging.

Support diversity : Local stores often offer unique products and services that you can't find in big box stores. It supports diversity and creativity.

Preservation of tradition and culture : Local shops often sell traditional products that are part of the cultural heritage. By purchasing these products, we support the preservation of tradition and the local community.

In Serbia, there are several successful initiatives and local retail chains that support the local economy and community.

Here are some key aspects :

Domestic Retail Chain (DTL) :

This association brings together 13 domestic retail chains with over 770 stores and 7,000 employees throughout Serbia. DTL focuses on the offer of quality domestic products, supports the development of small local producers and improves its own brand with over 300 products.



DIS : As the largest domestic retail chain, DIS offers the largest percentage of products produced in Serbia. This Serbian company supports the domestic economy and promotes the purchase of local products.

These examples show how local shops contribute to the sustainable development and strengthening of the community in Serbia.



- **Definition of local trade**

Local trade is an economic activity in which individuals and companies mediate between production and consumption as buyers and sellers of goods and services. It includes selling goods and services directly to end consumers.

Local trade in Serbia includes the process of exchanging goods and services. The name comes from the Slovenian word "trg". In addition to traders, producers and consumers themselves (through consumer cooperatives) participate in trade. Trade has the task of organising a regular exchange between production and consumption. The goal is to ensure the supply of goods and services that the market is looking for, in appropriate quantities, assortment and at acceptable prices.



Speciality local stores focus on a specific type of product or service, such as fruit and vegetables, books, sports equipment or clothing.

- **Advantages of local shopping.**

Local trade has a number of benefits that are important for the community and the economy.

Here are some key reasons :

Supporting the local economy : By shopping in local stores, you support local producers, craftsmen and small entrepreneurs. This helps preserve jobs and strengthen the local economy.

Quality and freshness : Local products are often fresher and better quality because they travel shorter distances to stores. In addition, you can talk directly with the sellers and learn more about the products.

Reducing the ecological footprint : By buying locally, you reduce the need for long transport and packaging. It contributes to the preservation of the environment.

Social connection : Local stores are often community hubs. By shopping there, you support local events and initiatives, and connect with your neighbours.



Despite these advantages, it should be noted that local shops also face challenges, including taxation and other levies. Governments must respond to the needs of retailers and adapt laws to support them.

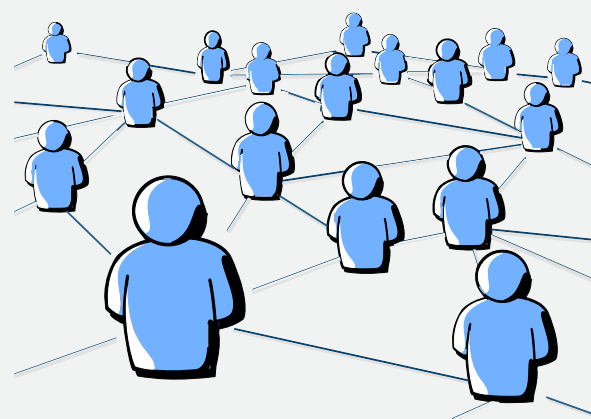
Support for local shops in Serbia has not been institutionally resolved, and it often happens that in small villages there are none, nor is there any form of organization of the supply of goods. The population is forced to go to larger towns or cities for procurement.

- **Reduce carbon footprint**

Local shops contribute to reducing the carbon footprint in several ways, especially by minimizing transport distances.

Here's how :

Shorter transport routes : Local stores source products from nearby, which means they transport goods over shorter distances. It reduces fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions that would otherwise be required for longer journeys to larger distribution centres.



Reducing the need for packaging: By shopping locally, the need for multi-layer packaging and plastic materials is reduced. It has a direct impact on reducing waste and carbon emissions linked to the production and disposal of packaging.

Supporting local producers : Local shops often cooperate with small producers and farmers. By purchasing their products, you support sustainable agriculture and reduce the food imports from other regions.

Promotion of sustainable products : Local shops often have better control over the selection of products. They can promote sustainable alternatives, such as organic products or products with a smaller ecological footprint.

Lower energy consumption : Local stores reduce the need for cooling, heating and lighting of large warehouses and distribution centres.

The impact of shorter supply chains on the environment in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change.

The impact of shorter supply chains on the environment in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change.



Short supply chains have a significant impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change.

Here's how :

Supports sustainable practices : Short chains allow better control over product selection. Local shops often promote sustainable alternatives, such as organic products or products with a smaller ecological footprint.

Reducing waste : By shopping locally, the need for multi-layer packaging and plastic packaging is reduced, thus reducing waste and negative impact on the environment. Overall, supporting local businesses has a positive impact on us and our planet, as well as contributing to environmental protection and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Conservation of natural resources**

How local trade contributes to the preservation of natural resources, such as land, water and biodiversity.

Here are a few ways in which local trade can help protect to the environment :



Support local producers : By buying local products, you support small producers and farmers. It contributes to soil conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Reducing packaging : Reducing the amount of packaging means that it does not end up in the environment. Indeed, these materials take a long time to degrade naturally.

Biodiversity : Conservation of biodiversity is key to maintaining balance in ecosystems. Local shops can support the sale of domestic varieties of fruits, vegetables and plants, thereby preserving the diversity of flora and fauna.

Sustainable consumption : Local shops often promote conscious consumption. By buying only what we need, we reduce the pressure on natural resources. Ultimately, by supporting local shops, we contribute to the preservation of nature and the creation of a more sustainable environment for future generations.

We are going to see the effects of these measures on a specific case with an inspiring example :

In a small town in Sweden, the local store "*Ecological Corner*" has become a centre of sustainability and common awareness of nature.



Local products : "*Ecological corner*" cooperates with nearby farms and small producers. Customers can find fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products and meats that come from the surrounding villages. It reduces the need for long-distance transports and supports the local economy.

Recycling and waste reduction : The store has a special corner for recycling glass bottles, paper and plastic. They also encourage customers to use their own bags and containers for fruit and vegetables to reduce the use of single-use plastics.

Education : Emma and Lars organise workshops on sustainability, composting, growing your own vegetables and similar topics. The local community gathers and shares experiences, raising awareness of the importance of nature conservation.

Social responsibility : The store donates part of its income to environmental clean-up projects, planting trees and preserving natural habitats. Customers feel connected to these efforts and are happy to support the trade.

This story shows how local businesses can play a key role in conserving natural resources and creating a more sustainable environment.

- **Highlight the role of local businesses in promoting employment**

Local businesses play a key role in developing employment in a rural area.

Here are some aspects that can be highlighted :

Working conditions : Local businesses can improve working conditions for their employees, ensuring safety, health and work-life balance

Employee motivation and well-being : Activities such as team outings, training and flexible working arrangements can help motivate employees and improve their well-being.

Leadership perception : Local businesses need to develop transparent and supportive leadership to ensure employee trust and engagement.

Performance management : Local businesses should establish a system for monitoring and evaluating employee performance to ensure that goals are achieved.

Innovative ideas : Encouraging innovation and creativity within the company contributes to sustainable development and competitiveness.



Introducing modern approaches to human resource management can bring benefits to local communities and contribute to sustainable development.

Here are some strategies that local businesses have implemented to make a positive impact in their communities:

Joining the protest: Businesses can use their influence to support marginal causes. It may involve advocating policy changes, necessary programs, and additional resources for problems such as, or unemployment.

Be the change you want to see: Invest in your employees and shape leaders in your community. Create a corporate culture that focuses on personal development, both inside and outside the workplace.

Embedding in the corporate culture: Organise a volunteer day with a local non-profit organisation that shares your values. In this way, you show that your vision is not just an empty story on paper and at the same time you strengthen the team spirit.

Volunteering instead of team activities: Instead of classic team games, organise volunteer activities. This not only strengthens team bonding,

but also allows your organisation to directly impact the local community. Also, sponsoring local events can support youth development. Both approaches contribute to building social capital inside and outside the organisation.

Communities are the key to the growth and success of local businesses, and these initiatives show how a positive impact on the local community can be achieved.

- **Waste reduction and recycling:**

Explore how local commerce promotes waste reduction and recycling through sustainable packaging practices.

Local stores that successfully implement sustainable packaging practices are :

Zero waste trade : Some retailers have committed themselves to the concept of "*zero waste trade*". This means that they strive to reduce or completely eliminate the waste that results from their operations. For example, they use recycled or biodegradable bags, offer products in bulk (without unnecessary packaging) and encourage customers to bring their own containers for fruits, vegetables and other foodstuffs.



Organic stores : Stores that focus on selling organic products often use sustainable packaging practices. It may include the use of paper bags, glass containers for bulk products and the like.

Stores that encourage reuse : Some retailers offer discounts or other incentives to customers who bring their own bags or containers. In this way, the need for disposable plastic is reduced.

Stores that use biodegradable packaging : In addition to using less plastic, some stores use biodegradable packaging materials. It may include packaging made from sugar cane, corn starch or other natural materials.

Each store can adapt sustainable packaging practices to their specific needs and goals. It is important that retailers educate themselves about sustainable options and actively work to reduce their single-use waste.

Supporting sustainable shops in the local community can have a significant impact.

Here are some ways you can contribute :

Use your own containers: When buying bulk products (like grains, nuts or spices), bring your own glass or cloth bags or containers. This reduces the use of single-use plastics.



Ask retailers about their packaging practices : Ask questions about the packaging they use. If you notice a trade using sustainable options, praise them and support their efforts.

Educate yourself and others : Learn about sustainable practices and share your knowledge with others. You can organise workshops or community events to raise awareness about the importance of waste reduction.

Support initiatives and campaigns : Participate in local initiatives that promote sustainability. This can include clean-ups, educational events or campaigns to reduce plastic.

Every small gesture contributes to greater sustainability !

- **Energy efficiency and renewable energy:**

Local shops play a key role in promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. Here's how:

Reducing energy consumption: Local stores can implement energy-efficient methods, such as LED lighting, smart thermostats and insulation, to reduce energy consumption in their premises.

Not only does it reduce business costs, it also contributes to a more sustainable environment.



Promotion of renewable energy sources: Local shops can install solar panels on their roofs or use wind energy to power their facilities.

In addition to reducing their dependence on fossil fuels, the stores become an example to others and encourage the community to think about renewable energy sources.

Education and awareness: Stores can organise workshops, lectures or campaigns to educate their customers about energy efficiency and the benefits of renewable energy sources.

Informed shoppers often make more sustainable decisions and support stores that care about the environment.

Support for local initiatives: Stores can work with local authorities and organisations to support renewable energy projects, such as installing solar panels on schools or public buildings.

It creates a positive impact on the community and encourages the development of sustainable energy solutions.



Ultimately, local businesses have the opportunity to be leaders in promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, in creating a better environment for all of us.

Here are some other ways to reduce energy consumption:

Insulation and sealing: Well-insulated windows and doors reduce heat loss. Sealing cracks and openings also helps to preserve the internal temperature.

Use of energy-efficient devices: Replace older appliances with new ones with an energy efficiency rating (A++ or higher). They use less energy. Unplug devices when not in use.

LED lighting: LED bulbs consume less energy than ordinary bulbs and have a longer lifespan.

Smart thermostats: They automatically adjust the temperature according to your habits and external conditions, which reduces energy consumption for heating and cooling.

Reducing water consumption: Fix leaking faucets and install watertight showers to reduce water use. Use the dishwasher and washing machine only when they are fully loaded.



Light control: Turn off the lights when you leave the room and use daylight whenever possible.

Solar energy: If possible, consider installing solar panels on the roof of your home. It can reduce your dependence on conventional energy source.

Smart energy management not only reduces costs, but also contributes to the preservation of the environment.

- **Economic benefits and creation of new jobs:**

Local trade has significant economic benefits, including job creation and economic development. Through local trade, the community supports local producers, generates incomes for local businesses and contributes to sustainable growth.

For example, in a small town where local commerce was in decline, the community launched an initiative to support local producers and retailers. They organised a "Local Trade Day" in order to attract customers and promote products from the region.



This event attracted a large number of visitors, and local producers had the opportunity to present their products. As a result, several new jobs were created in stores, warehouses and logistics centres. In addition, the community felt an economic boost because local business entities achieved higher turnover.

Besides organising events like "Local Trade Day", there are other initiatives that can support job creation through local trade:

Support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): Local authorities and organisations can provide support to SMEs through subsidies, training and consultancy. It helps those businesses to grow, to employ local people and to contribute to the economy.

Promotion of local products: Campaigns promoting local products stimulate demand and support local producers. It may include purchasing local products for public institutions, as well as educating consumers about the benefits of shopping locally.

Investing in infrastructure: Improving infrastructure, such as roads, utilities and logistics centres, can attract investors and boost job creation.



Linking with educational institutions:

Cooperation with local schools, colleges and educational institutions can ensure that educated personnel are retained in the community and contribute to the local economy.

Sustainability initiatives: Focusing on sustainability and environmentally friendly practices can attract investors and consumers who value responsible business.

All these initiatives together can create a favorable framework for job creation through local trade.

- **Standard quality of local products in local trade**

There are different criteria for judging the quality of local products such as freshness, authenticity, traceability, craftsmanship...

- **Freshness:**

Freshness is key when talking about the quality of local products in local stores. Here are a few reasons why this is important:

Freshness and quality: Freshness is one of the most important quality criteria of fruits and vegetables. When the product is harvested at the right time, it retains more nutrients and tastes better. Locally grown food has the advantage of traveling a shorter distance to the shelves, thus preserving its freshness.

Shorter transport routes: Products that travel shorter distances have better quality because less freshness is lost during transport. Also, a shorter route reduces the need to use chemical food preservatives. Buying locally grown products supports shorter supply chains, which is environmentally beneficial and reduces energy consumption for transport and refrigeration.

Greater control over the source: Customers have better insight into the origin of locally grown products. It enables better traceability and increases confidence in the quality of the food we consume. Also, by supporting local producers, we contribute to a more sustainable way of eating and a lower risk of vitamin deficiency.

In short, buying locally grown produce not only supports the local economy, but also allows for a better quality of the food we eat.



- **Authenticity:**

The authenticity and quality of local products are key factors that contribute to the development of the local economy and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Recently, a round table entitled "Collective trademark as a sign of authenticity and quality" was held, organised by "Ethno network" and NALED. At this meeting, participants discussed the importance of local products, such as Staparski kilim, Somborski cheese, Lemeški kulen and Bezdanski damast, for the local economy.

It is planned to establish common quality standards and register these products as a Collective Trademark, which will enable their branding and protection of authenticity. This step also supports the economic empowerment of the women involved in the creation of these handicrafts.

Identifying authentic local products can be challenging, but there are some steps you can take to ensure their authenticity:

Provenance research: First, learn more about the product's origin. Where was it produced? Is the area known for that product?

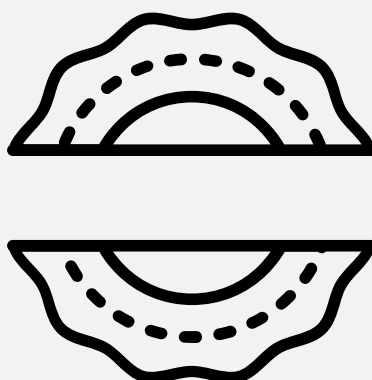
Marks and certifications: See if the product has special marks, certificates or collective marks that confirm its authenticity. For example, some products have the label "Geographical origin" or "Traditional product".

Buying direct: Buying directly from local producers or at local markets can help. Talk to the seller and ask about the origin of the product.

Quality and appearance: Authentic local products often have a special quality and appearance. For example, handmade items may have imperfections that indicate authenticity.

The story behind the product: Get to know the story behind the product. Is there a tradition or special technique used to make it?

Remember that authenticity is important to support the local economy and preserve cultural heritage.



- **Traceability:**

Food traceability is an important process in food production, which is defined through the requirements of food safety standards and food safety laws. The main purpose of traceability **is to enable manufacturers to track three key things:**

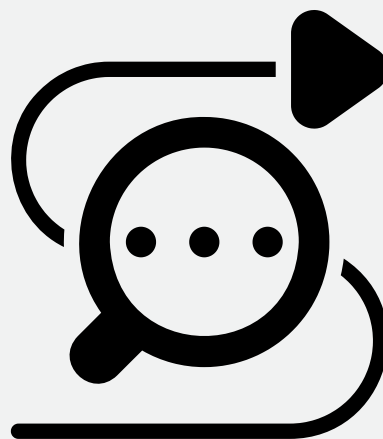
Product quantity and delivery: Manufacturers can track how many products they have produced and where those products have been shipped. This is especially important in the event of potential product recalls or recalls.

Raw materials and their origin: Traceability enables the tracking of raw materials that went into the composition of the product, their quantities, labels (lot, expiration date) and origin (supplier/manufacturer).

Documentation and rules: Manufacturers must keep records that prove that all food safety rules were followed on the day the product was manufactured.

Food safety standards prescribe requirements for the implementation of a traceability system, but the specific implementation depends on the type of production, the type of product and the characteristics of the organisation. Testing traceability systems through simulations is also an important step, and standards often recommend annual testing.

Putting traceability into practice requires linking the physical flow of materials with the flow of information along the entire supply chain. The GS1 system of standards, which uses a common language for identification and bar coding, is often applied to achieve traceability. This system enables a consistent approach to traceability and supports efficiency and transparency in supply chains.



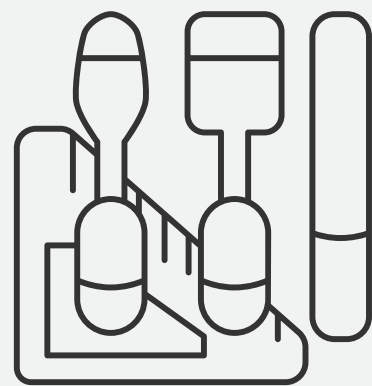
- **Craftsmanship:**

Crafts are an important part of cultural heritage and economic activity in many communities. Traditional crafts include various skills of small businessmen, that is, artisans, who handcraft products for everyday use in households. Here are some key aspects related to the protection of craft products:

Geographical origin designation: This designation identifies products that originate from a specific geographic region and have specific characteristics. The goal is product branding, increasing the placement and consumption of local products in the tourist offer, and encouraging the development and production of groups of local products.

Quality and standards: Protection of craft products includes quality management. Application of standards, such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), ensures food safety and product quality.

UNESCO: UNESCO recognizes intangible cultural heritage, including traditional crafts.



Craftsmanship in Serbia has a rich tradition and diversity. During the 19th century, in the Kingdom of Serbia, there were as many as 126 different trades. Here are some key groups of trades:

Woodworking: This includes carpentry, carpentry, carving, cart-making and other crafts related to wood.

Metalworking: Blacksmiths, horseshoe makers, making knives, guns and other metal objects.

Leather processing: Making shoes, bags, fur coats and other leather products.

Dyers: Artisans who dye textiles, silk, wool and cotton.

Boilermakers: From grinding and repair of boilers and copper objects.

Goldsmiths: Manufacture of silver and gold filigree objects.

Craftsmanship is an important part of Serbian cultural heritage, and even today there are masters who cultivate these skills.

- **Community Support:**

Supporting local businesses plays a key role in sustainable community development. Here are five reasons why it's important to support local businesses:

Strengthening the local community: Local businesses not only employ local residents, but also actively participate in the community through sponsorships, donations and other forms of support. By buying from them, we contribute to the growth of the community and improve the quality of life for all residents.

Supporting the local economy: By purchasing products and services from local businesses, we encourage the growth of the local economy. The money stays in the local ecosystem, encouraging further investment and development.

Creating a unique spirit of cities and towns: The authentic spirit of a place is often reflected in smaller businesses. Their diversity and uniqueness contribute to the richness of local culture and identity.



Creating precious moments for locals and tourists: Local businesses offer unique experiences and products that big chains can't replicate. It enriches the lives of local residents and attracts visitors.

Sustainability and ecological footprint: By buying from local businesses, we reduce transport and encourage a more sustainable way of consumption. It is beneficial for the environment and future generations.

Supporting local businesses is not only an investment in the economy, but also in the sustainability of the community and its future.

- **Environmental sustainability:**

In the 21st century, thanks to raising awareness of the importance of environmental protection, the leading paradigm of business is based on the concept of circular economy.



The circular economy is based on the responsible management of natural resources and the recycling of products for reuse, providing a base for the development and improvement of green industries.

Serbia is also trying to become part of this transformation towards a green industry. The "Green Agenda for Serbia" project, financially supported by the EU, aims to adopt a modern policy, take concrete steps and increase investments for the transformation into a green industry. This includes improving the quality of air, water and land, as well as producing healthier food and recycling, **all with the aim of preserving biodiversity**. During the last ten-year period, Serbia successfully reduced CO2 emissions by 2.6% and became one of the countries in the Balkans that actively reduces the greenhouse effect. With optimised operations and modernised infrastructure that enables rational energy consumption, Serbia strives to continue to follow this positive trend.

One of the examples of good practices in Serbia is the "Nikola Tesla" International Airport in Belgrade. This airport, managed by the company "VINCI Airports", has **become a leader in business modernisation**.

By installing a three-generation heating plant at the Belgrade airport, they switched from heavy fuels to natural gas, achieving huge savings and reducing CO2 emissions. Also, they plan to use a solar power plant to supply the airport complex with electricity obtained from renewable resources.

Environmental sustainability is a key topic, and Serbia is well on its way to improving its practices and contributing to global efforts to protect the planet.

- **Regulatory Compliance:**

Compliance with product quality regulations typically involves the following steps:

Inspection and quality control: Stores and manufacturers should regularly inspect and control the quality of their products. This includes checking ingredients, hygiene, shelf life and other relevant factors.

Certifications and standards: Products that comply with certain standards and certifications are more likely to be of good quality. For example, organic production certificates or designations of geographical origin can be indicators of quality.



Laboratory analyses: For certain types of products, laboratory analyses may be used for quality control. It may include testing for the presence of harmful substances or checking nutritional values.

Monitoring legislation: Traders and manufacturers should be aware of relevant laws and regulations relating to product quality. These include labeling rules, food safety and other issues.

Cooperation with competent authorities: Stores and producers can cooperate with competent authorities (eg sanitary inspection) to ensure that they are in compliance with regulations.

It is important to note that regulatory compliance varies by product type and local regulations.

- **Feedback and improvement:**

How you get customer feedback plays an important role in improving your business.

Here are some strategies you can employ to effectively gather your customers' opinions:

Post-Purchase Surveys: Use surveys that are displayed after a purchase is completed. Ask questions about customer experience, product or service quality.

Service rating pop-ups: On the store's website, occasionally display a window where customers can rate their experience.

Chatbot for feedback: Implement a chatbot that asks questions related to the shopping experience. It can be a quick and easy way to gather feedback.

Fast and professional response: When customers leave feedback, respond quickly and professionally. Thank them for their opinion and offer a solution or compensation if necessary.

Smart use of customer feedback not only improves products and services, but also builds stronger relationships with customers.



5

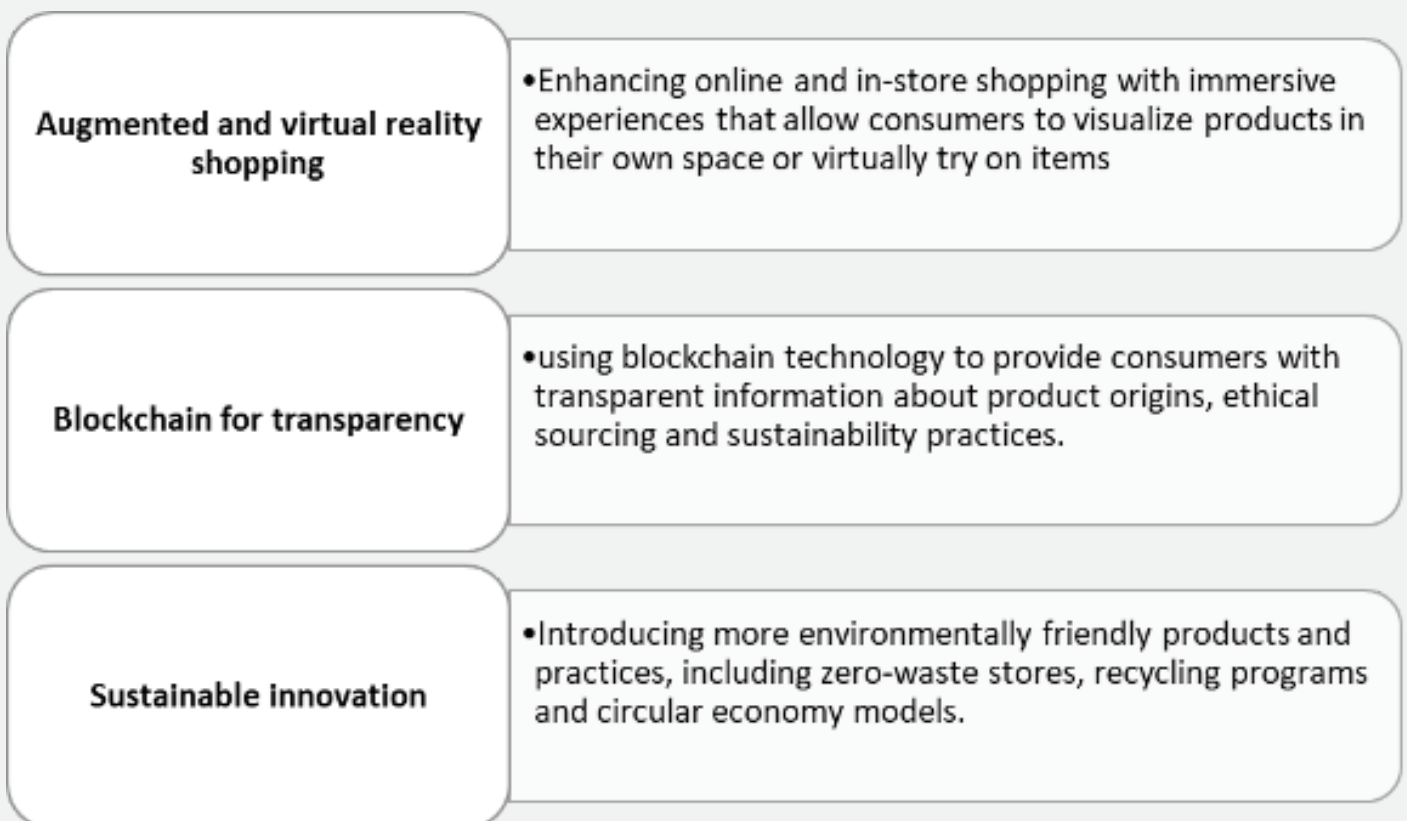
How to innovate in local commerce (e-commerce and local shopping)

- **How to innovate local commerce**

Given the fact that food is mostly produced in rural areas, despite the development of global production, there is a growing desire to improve product placement and market expansion. In order to present their products to the wider local/regional community, local producers are turning to the development of various local food networks and short supply chains such as markets, sales events, the organization of direct sales on farms, the system of ordering and delivering food to customers, mobile stores, etc.

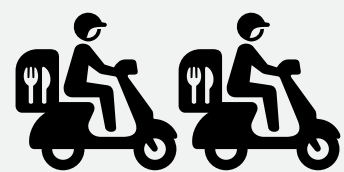
However, despite the long-term existence of the aforementioned supply chains, the development of IT technologies has led to their growth and improvement, and new business models are being developed with the aim of improving operations.

Accordingly, the retail sector is at a crossroads, with technological advances and changes in consumer preferences driving a profound transformation in the way we shop. E-commerce has had a profound impact on traditional business. Many brick-and-mortar stores have had to adapt by offering online sales, reservation systems and delivery services to remain competitive. At the same time, new Internet companies emerged that disrupted established industries. This created a dynamic and competitive business environment.



Also, the **"pick-your-own" trend** represents one of the most widespread trends/strategies of selling, i.e. buying, fruits and vegetables directly from the field ("from the field to the table"), whereby the customer chooses (in some trades and harvests) the products themselves that he wants from the chosen manufacturer. If it is only about the delivery of the product, and considering that it is a very short supply chain, the customer receives his products in a minimal period of time, which is ultimately extremely important for both the customer and the manufacturer/seller, especially nowadays.

"Food delivery" - despite already existing forms of food delivery, a new way of delivering food to the customer has developed on the global market. Namely, it is about ordering a specific dish that the customer wants to prepare for a meal, therefore, the customer selects the dish he wants to cook, and the recipe for the said dish is delivered to him in the box, as well as fresh ingredients in the exact quantities needed for its preparation. The aforementioned food delivery strategy is being intensively developed in the American market. However, given that the goal of sellers is to develop innovations that will make them stand out from a large number of other competitors.



It is unquestionable when it will take root in other world markets.

“E-commerce” - as an example of good practice when applying e-commerce, the company Offer Up is presented, which facilitates shopping and selling for its users with the help of a mobile application. "The user takes a photo of the product he wants to sell with a smartphone and presents it to potential buyers who are filtered by location, and the sale is usually done live. The application offers the possibility of bidding on price offers, seller profiles and other functionalities."

Furthermore, despite the challenges faced by retailers and the entire trade sector, such as inflation and labor shortages, the flexibility of trade towards new trends comes to the fore. Investing in innovation and digitalization development are necessary for successful adaptation and responding to rapid changes. In this context, **retail innovation refers to the development of products, services, business models and customer experiences for retail companies and their customers.** The goal of innovation in retail is always to stay ahead of the competition and retain customers.



- **Local Shopping**

Local shopping is the tendency to buy locally produced goods and services instead of those produced outside the wider local area. When it comes to rural areas, despite the expansion of larger retail chains, a large part of the local population still prefers to buy local products, thus maintaining and encouraging local shopping and its development.

Local producers mainly sell their products at local markets or in their local crafts, family farms, etc., offering their products and services to the wider local community. However, when it comes to the sale of non-food products, local sellers try to cover as large a target group as possible, and for this reason they station their sales points in larger urban areas.

The development of e-commerce greatly affects the behavior of consumers who are increasingly turning to buying products online, however, this has not yet led to the end of selling products in places such as local markets, flea markets, etc.

Furthermore, just as the development of e-commerce affects the behavior and preferences of consumers.

Their behavior and choice can also be influenced by numerous factors, the following is why it is important to sell products locally, and what benefits are gained by the mentioned method of sale:

- **Local stores like to work with local companies** - Considering the increase in demand for domestic/local products, both in rural and urban areas, one of the key factors for marketing your products at the national level is cooperation with local stores. For example, the SPAR retail chain in Croatia, in cooperation with more than 60 domestic agricultural producers and OPGs, offers its customers high-quality domestic products. In this case, the SPAR retail chain buys products from local producers and ensures that they are placed on the shelves of its stores, which are spread across the country. In this way, local producers realize the possibility of marketing their products even at the national level, thus achieving an additional source of income, but also the security of the sale of all products, which reduces waste costs.



- **Both locals and tourists like to buy local products** - Despite the fact that the local population has almost continuous access to domestic local products, the interest of tourists in trying and buying local products is developing more and more. Accordingly, by presenting local products, their methods of production/cultivation can represent an important factor in the development of a good tourist story that will ultimately contribute to the development of the local producer, and ultimately, the entire community.
- **Local store is the first step towards entering large retail** - In order to increase the chance of success across the country, it is important to build credibility and lay a quality foundation for further expansion.
- **Market testing at the local level** - Selling products at the local level, to domestic customers, is much simpler and is already a 'established' business, however, if the manufacturer wants to place his product on a wider market, before its placement, it is important to test his possibilities, analyze the market and test your marketing plan, in order to make further growth and development easier and safer.

All the previously mentioned activities and facts can help new local producers who want to try their hand at improving their local sales, the concept of which changes from year to year.

Ultimately, it can be said that local trade is still one of the safest ways of buying and selling domestic local products, however, it can be expected that in the future its use will gradually decrease (given the development of new technologies and ways of selling products and services) and will replace it with cooperation with local retail chains, or with sales through e-commerce, the development and application of which is expanding at an incredible speed.



- **Integrating online and offline experiences**

Integrating online and offline measurement data enables insight into consumer preferences and their behavior during the selection and purchase process. So, it can be said that it is ultimately data that is used to personalize the shopping experience, optimize inventory and make better strategic decisions. Ultimately, the goal is to take advantage of each medium to offer consumers a seamless shopping journey, whether they're browsing online from home or interacting with products in-store.

Despite the fact that customers are increasingly turning to shopping from the comfort of their homes (online shopping), there is still a large share of those who do not believe in its security, and do shopping exclusively in physical stores. In the aforementioned situation, it is important to maintain a balance, and with equal efforts to develop strategies that will contribute to the online and offline experiences of customers.

- **The offline shopping experience is improved by the online experience** - The best example for the successful improvement of offline shopping through the online experience is primarily a 'loyalty program' that provides both customers and merchants with a consistent experience, both in the store and online. With the loyalty program, the retailer collects information about consumer preferences, while the consumer gains insight into weekly/monthly benefits according to his preferences.
- **The sales service is better** - A large proportion of customers like to receive first-hand all the necessary information about the product, its comparison with other products, and even help in choosing. In order to successfully provide it to customers, it is extremely important to train sales staff who will successfully provide the best sales service.



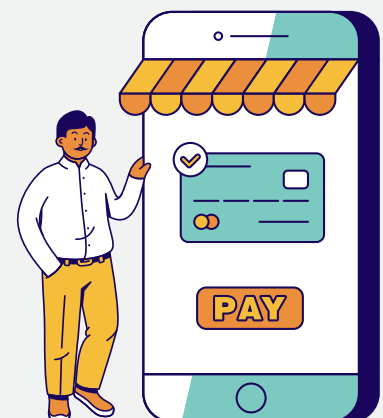
- **How to encourage e-commerce**

Furthermore, in addition to the development of the offline experience, in order to successfully encourage customers to participate online in the programs and benefits offered by retailers, it is necessary to expand the ways and possibilities of connecting with them, and thus provide them with a sense of loyalty.

Therefore, below are tips to help improve user experiences for online shoppers:

For example, there are several reasons why the customer experience in a brick-and-mortar store is just as important as the online shopping experience:

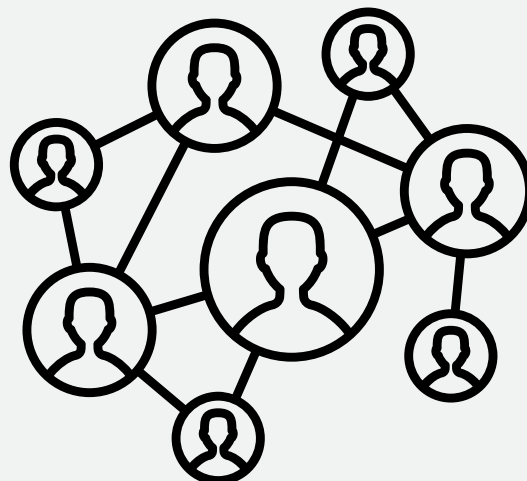
- **Buyers can physically touch the goods** - Despite the fact that the buyer can read all the information relevant to a certain product (such as weight, size, etc.), he cannot get a concrete impression of the product unless he can hold it in his hands, try it on, feel it.



- **Live chat** - Just as in a physical store it is important to educate the sales staff in order to provide the best possible service, so in online sales it is extremely important to provide customers with a 'conversation' with an expert person/employee when selecting/purchasing a product. In this way, the customer receives information about the product at the same time, which leads to a faster sale/purchase.
- **Customer Reviews** - Almost every customer will trust previous customer reviews more than marketing articles or advertisements. For this reason, it is important to allow customers to express their opinion about products/services, which will help a wider target group of customers when choosing them.
- **Loyalty program/mobile application** - by developing a loyalty program, the customer has the possibility of 24-hour access to the merchant's offer, his own consumption/accounts, but also the benefits provided to him as a member of the loyalty program.



- **Simple payment** - Given the increasing use of contactless payments, customers are increasingly choosing to shop online, as long as payment is fast, simple and secure. It is important to develop systems that will successfully contribute to all of the above, and retain the customer.
- **Social networks** - the importance of promotion through social networks can represent a major role in the success of sales/purchases, given that their use is growing impulsively. Product advertising through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, etc. It covers a larger target group. In addition to the above, cooperation with influencers, who through their own experience and promotion, provide potential customers with all relevant information about them, has a great impact on shopping and the credibility of product sales.



Ultimately, it can be concluded that the online-offline customer experience is not a new concept, but **it has been enhanced by the development of new technologies and sales approaches**. With the development of online shopping and the ubiquity of mobile devices and new technologies, a fast pace is imposed that is constantly changing and needs to be followed. Such growth and development can be frustrating for retailers who strive to provide only one form of sales (online or offline), and it is extremely important to **follow new trends and provide customers** with what they want, in order to successfully develop new business strategies and thus attract customers and achieved successful business.



- **Impact of e-commerce on local trade and customers**

As previously stated, the development of e-commerce and its application create numerous advantages and disadvantages, and as such, affect the entire local community. The development and transition to e-commerce creates the **possibility of greater connection with local stores in the form of cooperation and placement of products** from small local sellers through the assortment of larger local stores. In this way, the possibility of placing their products on the national market, but also on the market of nearby urban areas, is extended to small local sellers.

However, perhaps the biggest drawback of e-commerce development is its impact on traditional, local commerce. With the introduction of e-commerce, the volume of trade in traditional trade flows is reduced, therefore, the majority of sales will be sales via e-commerce, the development of which does not necessarily represent a positive factor, especially if it is a question of small sales chains operating in rural areas, and e-store is not an option.

However, if it is a question of larger companies operating in larger, developed rural areas, **e-commerce can create new opportunities**, whereby a certain percentage of sales will take place through traditional means, physical sales, while a part will be sales through e-commerce, which will the amount of business to take place without interruption.

Furthermore, **regardless of the obstacles local people face when it comes to online buying/selling**, such as internet access problems, lack of trust and fear of fraud, the ability to buy and sell goods, **services and information online opens up many business opportunities for businesses and citizens, and many opportunities for customers**. Given that we are specifically talking about deprived rural areas, the introduction and application of e-commerce for the local population represents a wide range of various products/services that until that moment were accessible only in urban areas. Having mentioned the rural deprived area, it is important to emphasize that the mentioned areas are predominantly inhabited by the population with lower living standards and opportunities such as transport connectivity.

Indeed, this last example is one of the leading problems faced by the population of the rural areas, which at the same time affects the accessibility of necessary products and services; the purchasing power of the local population, which, due to significantly high unemployment rates, is significantly low and therefore limits the local population in purchasing basic necessities (regardless of the type of products demanded), etc.

Precisely because of all the previously mentioned problems, it can be concluded that the introduction e-commerce **opens up a large number of new possibilities for customers, and partially finds and provides a solution for shopping that is limited by all the mentioned obstacles.** Therefore, the introduction of e-commerce, in addition to the purchase of limited quantities of products from local stores, creates a potential opportunity and access to new products, which are not found in the assortment of local stores.



- **Empowering local entrepreneurs and startups:**

The growth and development of new technologies, especially the increase in the use of e-commerce in rural areas, is transforming the market to a great extent, thus enabling local traders, retailers and small companies (startups) to access global markets. Rural communities are increasingly involved in the digital revolution, thus encouraging local merchants and new small businesses to direct and realize their sales through several different sales channels. In this way, merchants and young local entrepreneurs strengthen local economies and small businesses by expanding their offer to larger markets, which results in greater commercial supply and demand.

Strengthening of small rural enterprises

E-commerce today represents a significant opportunity for local sellers and small rural businesses, the application of which results in expanding the reach, introducing and presenting new products, and increasing sales by connecting with a global customer base.

Like any new change in the operations of existing companies, but also in the development of new ones, the application of e-commerce results in numerous benefits but also challenges. However, learning and analyzing the success stories of retailers in rural areas provides insight into effective strategies that can also inspire and empower young/new entrepreneurs. Therefore, below are the advantages and opportunities of e-commerce that contribute to the empowerment of small rural enterprises:

"Leveling the playing field" - The application of e-commerce provides small rural businesses with competition from larger urban competitors. Small businesses with production potential can reach customers outside their local circle of activity (they don't just rely on local 'foot' traffic).

"Digital Strategies" - By implementing various digital strategies to expand the market, it encourages the creation of an online presence for small businesses that reflects the quality of their production and encourages interaction. A well-designed website and active social media accounts are essential for small businesses to encourage interaction with people.

"The Importance of Literacy" - Understanding how to navigate the digital landscape is just as important for small businesses in rural areas as knowing how to run a physical storefront, and how to use digital tools that contribute to increasing the visibility of small businesses and their range.

Cost efficiency - E-commerce platforms significantly reduce operational costs for rural entrepreneurs. They eliminate the need for a physical storefront. In this case, entrepreneurs can start with small platforms and expand their digital presence as demand grows without the large costs associated with traditional expansion, such as opening new locations or hiring more staff.

24-hour access - One of the biggest advantages of e-commerce is its availability 24/7. This constant accessibility increases customer satisfaction by providing convenience and flexibility in the shopping experience. It also means that sales are not limited to local business hours, allowing for greater earning potential.



Data Insights – Using e-commerce to expand your sales offers powerful analytics that provide insight into consumer behaviour, precise tracking of sales patterns, customer engagement and website traffic, enabling businesses to adapt their business strategies to demand, optimise their inventory, and receive concrete feedback on the success of their business.

Furthermore, e-commerce in the context of the rural economy can pose a problem for many businesses, especially developing businesses, given its rapid growth and development. Accordingly, it is important to analyse your opportunities, possible risks and their solutions, define the goal and create steps that will contribute to the same. When conducting the analysis, and at the very beginning, it is important to ensure an adequate Internet connection, which is a key factor in the success of e-commerce as a whole, to invest in mobile technology, considering that an increasing number of potential customers are turning to searching on mobile devices, and the most important, build trust. Trust must be built on the basis of transparent practices in the form of clear communication about product quality, price and delivery time.

By using e-commerce, companies break down geographical barriers, and thus gain access to wider markets, enable rural products to reach customers who appreciate authenticity, reduce operating costs, and collect feedback from specific customers that they can use for their own improvement.

CREATE A MORE INNOVATIVE BUSINESS – INNOVATIONS

Innovation is the basis of growth and improvement of any business, therefore it represents the best solution for improving the existing form of business, which ultimately affects the overall growth, development and success of a local company.

Below are important factors and tips that must be taken into account when creating and developing innovations for further business:

- **Starting with small innovations** - When improving local business through innovation, it is important to focus your efforts on small, incremental changes that have the potential to improve existing products, services or business processes.

- **It is important to think differently** - If a manufacturer wants to expand its business, or its product range, it is extremely important to do so in the most unique way possible, in order to stand out as much as possible in relation to the rest of the numerous competition. In order to stand out and create a unique way of doing business, to provide something new and different, it is necessary to gather insights from your customers, suppliers and industry experts and find an approach that will set the manufacturer apart and give it unique value.
- **Market knowledge** - Today's markets and consumer habits are constantly changing, competition is growing, trends, preferences and opportunities are constantly changing, which is a big problem for small producers. It's not easy to keep track of it all, but market research and analysis are key to innovation success. Listening to customer needs, healthy competition and constantly looking for market gaps leads to improvement and adaptation of products and services to meet customer needs



- **Taking the initiative** - In small businesses, innovation often happens out of necessity, especially when finances are tight. Although it may not always be possible, investing in R&D and technology can increase the capacity for innovation.
- **It is important not to be discouraged!** - It is true that not every idea will be completely successful, however, it will ultimately lead to the development of other aspects in business, which, through its improvement, will contribute to the creation of new ideas, the creation of new opportunities and learning, all for the purpose improvement of the situation in which the manufacturer is located. It is important to look at every success or failure from multiple aspects, just like innovation, and extract the best from it that will contribute to the realization of some new idea, if we are talking about already existing manufacturers. However, if we are talking about new companies, the order and factors that need to be taken into account do not change, but a few more are added, all with the aim of successfully developing new stories.

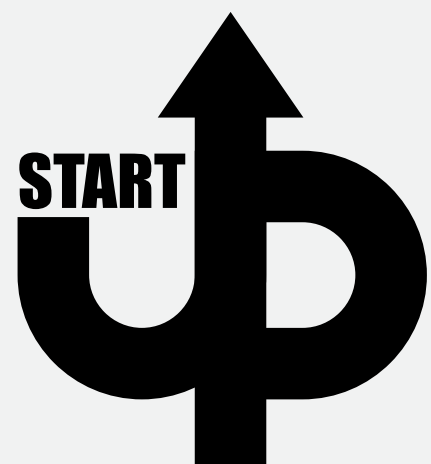
INNOVATIVE START UP

Innovation in today's competitive market is the key to success and one of the most important components when competing with market competition.

Launching an innovative start-up, in addition to developing your own business and standing out from the crowd, significantly affects the development of the entire community and the economy of the local community in the form of finding innovative solutions for problems faced by local stakeholders in rural areas.

One of the biggest advantages of launching innovative start-ups can be the following:

- Opening of jobs,
- Development of innovative solutions for problems that have existed for a long time,
- Development of the entrepreneurial debt of the community,
- Positive impact on the environment,
- Creating a vibrant local economy



All of the previously mentioned factors, i.e., the advantages of starting innovative start-ups, contribute to improving the quality of life, and increasing economic activity and benefits, both for the originators and initiators of innovative approaches to business, and for the entire community. However, **the launch of an innovative start-up for numerous stakeholders is too big a step forward**, and despite the many advantages it creates, obstacles dominate that many do not want to face.

Therefore, in order to determine long-term solutions, it is necessary to **list possible obstacles faced by young founders of innovative start-ups**, with the aim of their timely elimination:

- The problem of expansion outside the immediate area/penetration into a new market,
- Fierce competition from local companies,
- Financial problems,
- Limitation in the form of technology,
- Access to resources,
- Networking,
- Competition with competitors, etc.



Despite the above, entrepreneurs in rural areas can **achieve the desired results and success by developing innovative business approaches**. Therefore, for example, it is important to correctly and qualitatively use the available resources provided by the local community. In this case, the resources do not have to be exclusively material in nature, but they can be used in the form of education or the use of services provided by local organizations or business incubators as a form of mentoring, which will show new entrepreneurs potential opportunities, but also obstacles, with the aim of easier starting a business and entering new markets, looking from the perspective of experienced organizations.

Furthermore, when it comes to the problem of networking, **new entrepreneurs should focus as much as possible on the quality use of available Internet platforms**. In addition, given that we are talking about rural areas, which are characterized by the organisation and implementation of numerous manifestations and events that gather a large number of guests (entrepreneurs and representatives of various institutions/organisations).



It is important to take advantage of the mentioned events in a timely manner, and thus expand the network acquaintances who will contribute in the future stages of business development. After all, an equally important obstacle for which it is necessary to offer a quality and appropriate solution is the problem of competition with existing competition. Regardless of whether it is small rural areas, **competition is omnipresent** and it is necessary to study it well in order to find the appropriate model for the development of one's own business.

However, the most effective solution when competing with the competition is innovation. **Finding innovative solutions** to the problems faced by almost all entrepreneurs in a certain branch of business represents a significant step forward and deviation from the competition, and thus the readiness to leave the 'comfort zone' and seriousness.

Encompassing all of the above creates great potential and forms **a potential solution to the problems brought by the development of innovative start-ups**, which should be the main thought and guiding principle for all entrepreneurs when deciding on the aforementioned step.

6

Examples of successful entrepreneurs in local commerce. Collection of good practices encountered

- *Innovative stories, motivations and help at global (EU) level*

EUROPEAN STARTUP VILLAGE FORUM

In 2021, the European Commission launched the European startup village forum with the aim of collecting data related to the challenges and potential growth of rural start-up companies, as part of the European Union's long-term vision for the development of rural areas.

Encompassing all of the above creates great potential and forms a potential solution to the problems brought by the development of innovative start-ups, **which should be the main thought and guiding principle for all entrepreneurs when deciding on the aforementioned step.**

In addition to the above, the forum was created to contribute to the stimulation of research and innovation in rural communities across the EU, and to the development of entrepreneurship that will attract young, talented people.

“The goal of the Forum is to become an open space where local, regional, national and European institutions and stakeholders can meet, discuss and shape action for innovation in rural areas driven by beginners. The Rural Innovation Forum will connect rural innovation actors across the EU and promote the development of the rural innovation ecosystem. The Start-up Village Forum aims to provide knowledge about rural innovative start-ups, the types of innovation they are involved in, the gaps in the services they expect from innovation ecosystems and how they could be strengthened in the future”.

In addition to the previously mentioned, it is important to mention the following, broader goals of the European Startup Village Forum, which read:

- *Support the further development of rural innovation ecosystems*
- *Identify and analyze triggers for innovation in rural areas*
- *Connect rural innovation actors across the EU, with an emphasis on start-ups*
- *Provide a common understanding of the Start-up village concept and highlight the connection with the concept of a smart village.*

An official website of the European Union How do you know? ▾

European Union EN English

European Startup Village Forum

Home About

Research and innovation play a key role in tackling challenges and reap opportunities for wellbeing and growth in rural territories.

The European Startup Village Forum facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise on how to promote startup-driven innovation in rural areas.

This initiative is part of the European Commission's long-term vision for the EU's Rural Areas, which includes a specific flagship action on research and innovation for rural communities.

Vision for rural areas



**The European
Startup Village Forum**

EU CAP NETWORK

The EU cap network represents through which national CAP networks, organizations, administrations, researchers, entrepreneurs and practitioners can exchange knowledge and information (eg through mutual learning and good practices) on agriculture and rural policy.

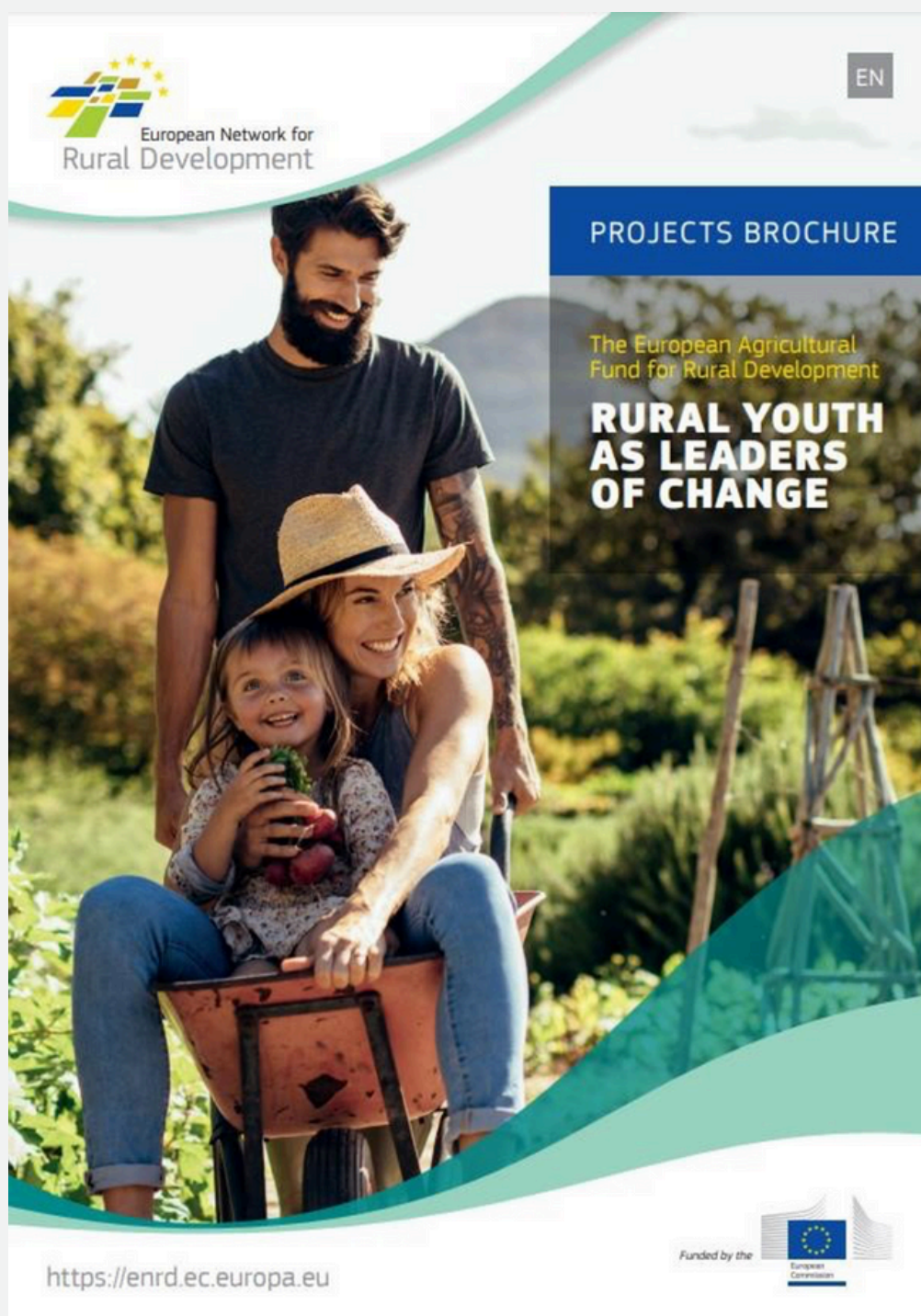
“The EU CAP Network welcomes everyone interested and committed to sustainable agriculture, forestry and rural development in Europe, including:

- National CAP networks,
- Farmers, foresters and rural enterprises,
- Evaluators,
- ZPP management bodies and payment agencies,
- Local Action Groups (LAGs),
- European organizations,
- Agricultural and forestry advisory services,
- Innovation support services”



EAFRD Projects Brochure 'Rural youth as leaders of change'

“The brochure Examples of EPFRD projects is part of a series of ENRD publications that encourage the exchange of information. Each edition of the brochure contains different types of projects that received PRR co-financing from the EPFRD.”

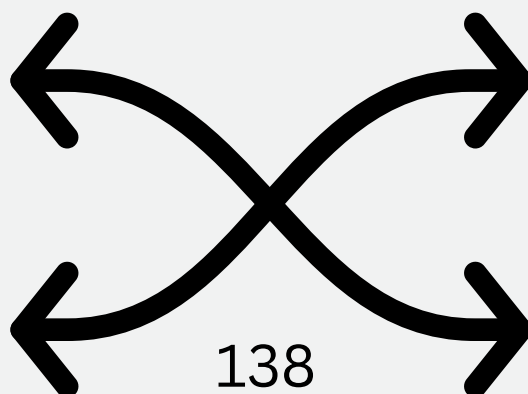


ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT THE EU LEVEL

REVOLUTION OF RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Rural entrepreneurship is revolutionizing rural communities by challenging stereotypes, harnessing local resources, creating employment opportunities, revitalizing local economies, improving quality of life and inspiring the next generation. As more individuals recognize the potential of rural areas and venture into entrepreneurship, the rural entrepreneurship revolution will continue to drive positive change and transform rural communities around the world.

More and more rural entrepreneurs are breaking free from all kinds of stereotypes and outdated ways of living and doing business, and are exploring a wide range of industries and different sectors, from technology start-ups to eco-tourism ventures, rural entrepreneurs are proving that innovation knows no geographical boundaries.



OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE: INNOVATION IN LIMITED INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITIONS

The challenges faced by local stakeholders open up new opportunities in the segment of the rural economy (conservation of natural resources and ecosystems, guaranteeing the safety of food products, impact on climate change, etc.). In response to the above, there is an increase in the number of service companies (which arises as a result of the oscillation of supply and demand); expansion of the tourist and cultural sector, agrotourism, small specialized industrial production, etc.

Also, in addition to all of the above, there is the development of innovations in the agricultural and food processing sectors by finding and devising new ways of production and placing products on the market. One of the influential factors in the development of local products is short supply chains.

However, what happens in resource-constrained spaces?

Innovation is often associated with cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art infrastructure. However, in rural areas or regions with limited infrastructure, entrepreneurs face unique challenges when it comes to fostering innovation.

In this case, entrepreneurs are forced to look for alternative solutions and be resourceful and make the most of what is available to them. In this case, *innovations are closely related to the use of mobile technology, sustainable energy solutions, localized production and sales, and the construction of collaborative networks, which is one of the most important factors in the success of innovations in rural areas.*

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

In order to successfully encourage the creation and development of innovative ventures, below are examples of good practice in order to give potential young entrepreneurs an insight into the opportunities that are developing, and the changes that they bring.

1. PlantOn

PlantOn is a platform that connects buyers and producers by allowing buyers to "lease" land from producers who grow vegetables for them on their land. Customers do not pay for products, but only for the entire cultivation service, and all fruits are free for them.

In this way, customers do not "rent" the actual land, but reserve a certain plot with the producer where they will grow vegetables and send the fruits to the customer's home address. In the case of greenhouse cultivation, customers receive a certain amount of vegetables, because the division into plots is difficult to implement. PlantOn was founded by two entrepreneurs from the field of programming, 3D simulation and visualization who in the last few years have built a team of 20 members that includes experts from different fields.

In addition to offering the possibility of owning your own garden, the PlantOn platform offers a number of revolutionary changes such as:

- **New opportunities for work** - everyone has the opportunity to become part of the system and earn money growing gardens
- **Less stress** - OPG employees do not have to worry about selling and delivering products
- **Increased earnings** - higher income, especially when it comes to organic farming
- **Reduced risk** - the point is to grow quality and health, not to produce a lot

- **No retail chains** - products are delivered to your home address
- **Increased hygiene** - home delivery avoids exposure
- **No price variation** – a one-time payment of the package ensures food for the whole year regardless of market prices
- **Better quality control** - with the help of the application, customers get the possibility to monitor their garden, as well as reports on the activities performed

Like any developed company, PlantOn also has a defined mission: "we want to create a future in which farmers will have stable incomes and business security, and customers will have access to fresh, local and ecologically sustainable vegetables."

In order to achieve it successfully, the appropriate actions that need to be taken have been set, and they are as follows:

- **Encouraging producers for ecological production** – One of the goals is to encourage producers for ecological production by providing direct sales of products to customers, in order to encourage them to focus on quality and sustainability, and not exclusively on the quantity of production.



- **Increasing awareness of the importance of healthy food** – increasing customer awareness of the importance of healthy food by providing direct communication with producers
- **Training of new or young farmers** - PlantOn wants to train new or young farmers to give them the opportunity to gain practical knowledge and experience

PlantOn Početna Zakupi Vrt Ponudi OPG Dostava O nama Usluge Kontakt

Usluge zakupa vrta

Provjerite što je sve obuhvaćeno PlantOn uslugom ukoliko želite posjedovati vrt

1 Aplikacija
Mobilna aplikacija za nadzor vrta, komunikaciju, naručivanje i nutricionističke savjete i recepte

2 Vaša Parcela
Godišnji zakup parcele 20 ili 40 kvadratnih metara ili iz zajedničkog vrta u slučaju plasteničkog uzgoja.

3 Vaš Poljoprivrednik
Poljoprivrednik vodi potpunu brigu o Vašem vrtu od sadnje pa sve do branja i pakiranja.

4 Nadzor Uživo
Pomoću aplikacije pratite svaki trenutak uzgoja i rasta Vašeg povrća koji bilježe naše kamere.

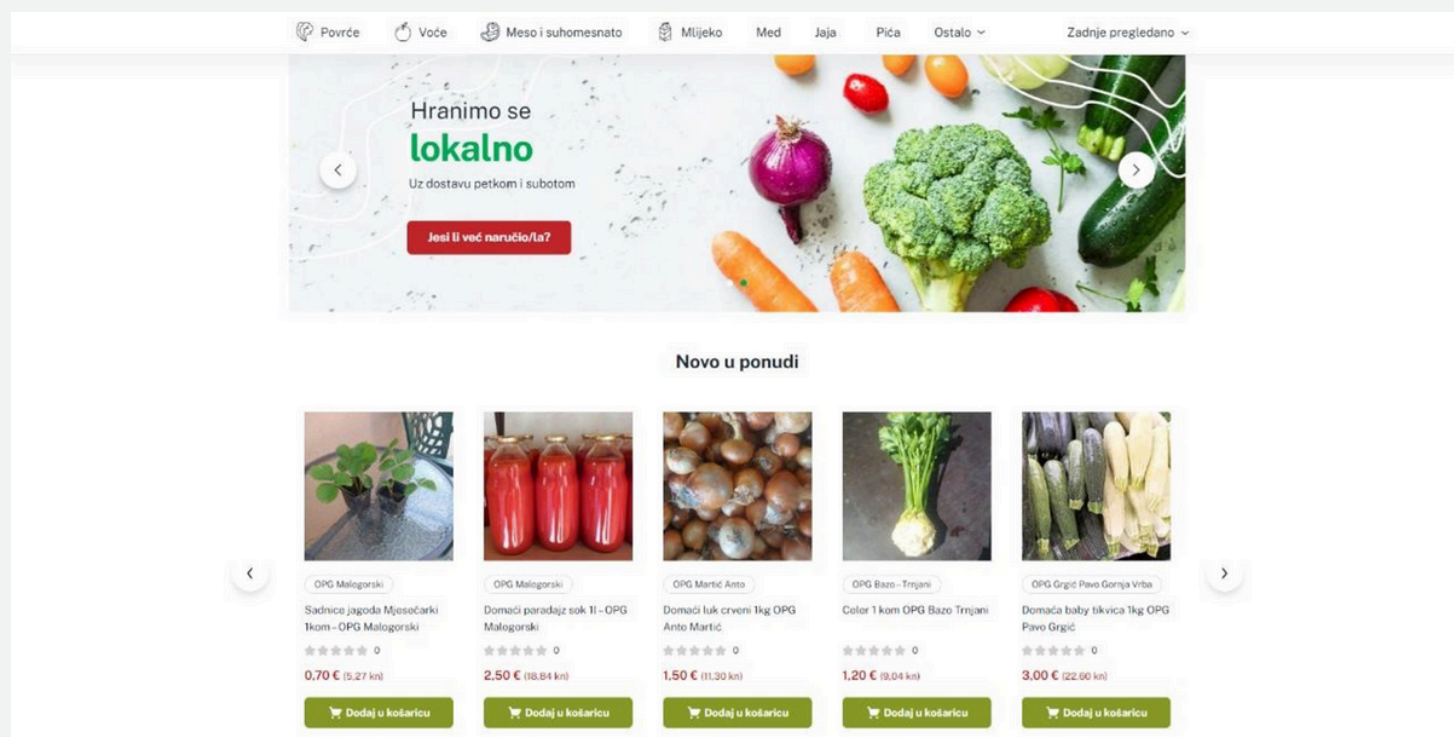
5 Besplatni Plodovi
Na PlantOn platformi napićuće se uzgoj i briga za Vaš vrt, a sav urod je za Vas u potpunosti besplatan.

6 Vaš Nutricionist
Svatko ima dostupne sezonske recepte i nutricionističke savjete prilagođene Vašim potrebama.

2. Lokalno2Go

Lokalno2Go is a platform which goal is to provide manufacturers and processors with a marketing and logistics/delivery service to the end customer at their doorstep, and to enable customers to place orders for different products from several manufacturers.

The platform was created as a great need with the aim of delivering local food to local customers in order to promote and support local producers and processors, support their survival, and provide the customer with quality, safe and fresh local food. In this way, they strive to promote local producers and processors with the aim of ensuring their survival on the local market, and contributing to the local economy, providing solutions to potential problems faced by local stakeholders.

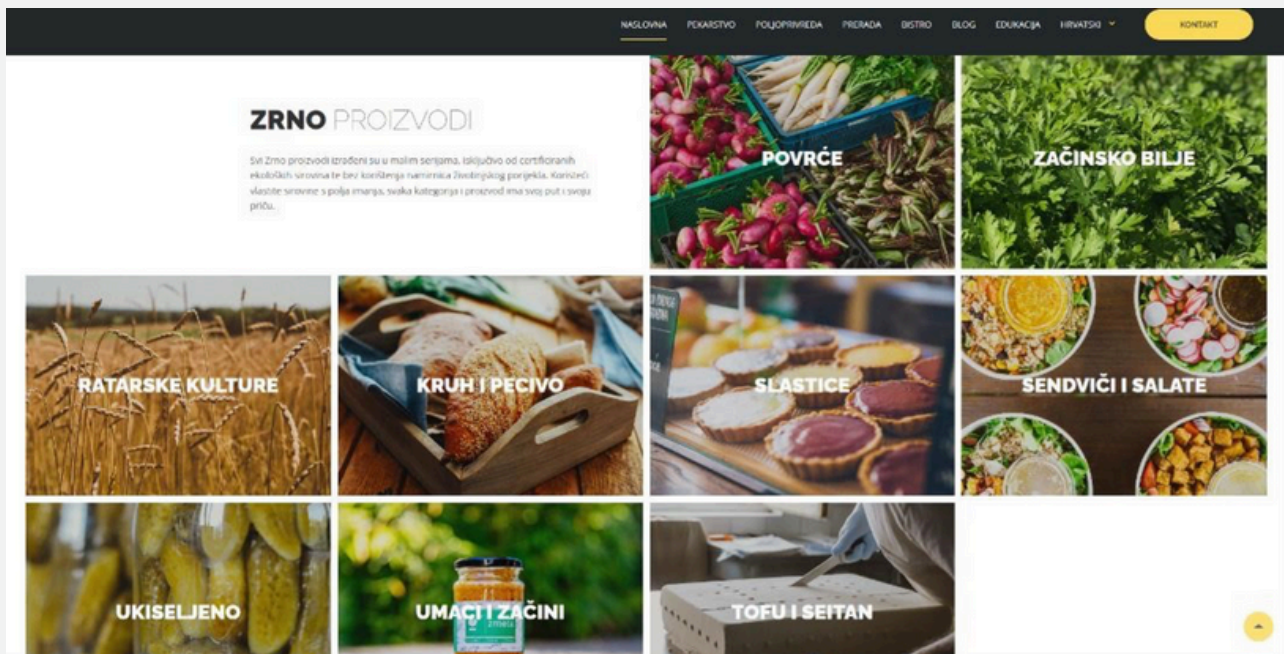


3. Zrno eko imanje

Zrno eco estate is the oldest ecological estate in Croatia, which for more than 30 years has been a leader in organic agriculture and production with more than 100 certified organic products.

In addition to agricultural production, the eco estate Zrno has developed the ecological cultivation of around 60 agricultural crops, its bakery production, retail, and even a restaurant. Using innovative approaches and methods, David Pejić started the largest no-till biointensive garden in the region. The development of the property is focused on energy self-sufficiency, research and innovation, and the concept "from field to table". In this sense, in addition to agriculture, the farm's production capacities include the processing of vegetables into various types of naturally fermented winter meats and the bakery, which produces more than 10 types of sourdough bread, 20 types of desserts, and a number of ready meals such as salads and sandwiches.

In addition to the above, Zrno eco-farm is also a place for numerous educations, trainings and professional consultations where, through educational content, Zrno shares knowledge about its methods and practices. The content is divided into thematic modules that can be combined, and there are possibilities of organizing visits to the eco estate.



In order to emphasise the successful operation of the mentioned estate, it is important to present the success achieved by the Zrno eco estate, where it is important to single out the award of the European Commission for the best ecological farmer in the EU. The aforementioned award is of great importance for the further development of agricultural production in Croatia and is an indicator of the potential of innovative and sustainable practices necessary for the implementation of the From field to table strategy.

Below is a link to the official video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8GC6VLalGs&t=83s>



onsite bakery production,
as well as our own organic restaurant.



MODULE 2

Sustainability,
Entrepreneurship and
Circular Economy:
Boosting Proximity Trade
in a Conscious World

1

What are KM0 products? Distances and intermediaries

- **KM0 products**

Km0 products are characterised by a focus on promoting natural and local foods rather than processed and mass-produced foods. These foods are produced in the same region or city where they are consumed, but the initial objective is that the transportation distance from the point of production to the final consumer should not exceed one kilometer.



This approach promotes both local economies and regional gastronomy, in contrast to industrialized production models and culinary homogenization. These products are characterised by reducing environmental impact by taking into account natural cycles and local rhythms and contributing to the freshness and quality of food through short-distance deliveries. This ensures product authenticity and authentic taste, eliminating preservatives and time-consuming processes. In addition, local products foster a direct relationship between producers and consumers, providing shoppers with a more detailed knowledge of where they come from and how they are produced. This direct relationship facilitates the preservation of cultural diversity and the preservation of indigenous food varieties and traditional artisanal products.

- **Where does the idea behind the Km0 products movement come from?**

This movement has its roots in the Slow Food movement, started by Italian Carlo Petrini in 1980. The idea came about to support traditional and high-quality food and to emphasize the pleasure of eating combined with a more leisurely pace of life.



All this happened in 1986 during protests against the opening of McDonald's in the Spanish Steps in Rome. What was initially a simple notion soon evolved into the formation of an organization that today develops projects in more than 160 countries.

In 1989 the international Slow Food movement was founded in Paris and its manifesto was created. As part of these efforts, the University of Gastronomic Sciences was born. All of them are designed to reduce food waste as much as possible.

- **What is Slow Food?**

The Slow Food movement goes beyond simple gastronomy, its aim is to make all people in the world feel attracted to food that is not only good for the consumer, but also for the producer and our planet. It fights against the uniformity of tastes and cultures and against the excessive power of large corporations in the food and agricultural industries.

For Slow Food, quality food must meet three criteria: quality, cleanliness and fairness. It is good because it offers a delicious and fresh culinary experience and is rooted in local culture.



It is clean because its production and consumption does not harm the environment, animal welfare or human health. It is fair because it offers consumers affordable prices and ensures that producers are fairly remunerated.

To spread this idea, Slow Food organizes various events, from conferences to local events. In addition, the Foundation for Biodiversity was created to support projects dedicated to preserving biodiversity and food traditions. There's also the Terra Madre Foundation, which promotes the development of a global network of sustainable food communities, and the University of Gastronomic Sciences (UNISG), which trains the next generation of food professionals.

One of Slow Food's most prominent projects is the Ark of Taste, an online catalog documenting traditional foods at risk of extinction. With more than a thousand products, including fruits, vegetables, dairy products, etc., the Ark of Taste is an online catalog that documents traditional foods at risk of extinction. This agreement seeks to draw attention to the danger of losing these varieties and promote measures for their protection.



- **Characteristics of Km 0 products**

For a product to be considered a Km 0 product, it must have been produced and consumed within a radius of less than 100 kilometers and must also be seasonal and follow ecological practices in its production, transport and distribution, in line with environmental protection policies.

Likewise, eating more whole food promotes a healthier diet. In addition, the promotion of the local economy strengthens sectors such as agriculture and livestock farming. Marketing close to the place of production is fundamental to consider these foods as more sustainable, as it implies shorter transport distances and lower CO2 emissions into the atmosphere.

- **Examples of proximity or km 0 products**

There are numerous products that promote local consumption and are considered Km0.

Here are some different examples:

Fresh fruits and vegetables: a clear example is tomatoes grown in orchards close to the city and sold directly in local markets, such as in flea markets there are fresh fruits and vegetables from the growers themselves.

- Artisanal cheeses: an example would be goat cheeses are usually made from a nearby farm and sold exclusively in local stores.
- Bread and baked goods: local bakers using flour from nearby mills to make bread, cakes and other baked goods.
- Eggs from hens raised by local farms.
- Local honey: honey produced by beekeepers with hives in nearby areas.
- Wine produced in local vineyards.
- Meat and sausages: fresh meat from animals raised on nearby farms and processed in slaughterhouses. also processed sausages.
- Preserves and jams made from fruits grown in the same region.
- Mushrooms and fungi harvested in nearby forests and sold in local markets.

All these examples illustrate the diversity and richness of Km0 products, all of which contribute to strengthening the local economy and promoting sustainable practices.



- **Benefits of km 0 products**

Consuming local food benefits both, consumers and the environment. Opting for local products means enjoying fresh, seasonal food, reducing the need for preservatives and packaging for long trips. It also contributes to the conservation of biodiversity and the environment by avoiding intensive agricultural practices.

The proximity between producers and consumers reduces the carbon footprint by reducing polluting emissions during transportation and the use of plastic packaging. It also supports the local economy, generating employment and economic development in the community. Consuming local products also means preserving the traditions and gastronomic culture of the region.

- **Challenges and barriers to implementing Km0 product:**

Addressing these challenges and barriers is essential to drive wider adoption of Km0 products and create a more sustainable and resilient food system locally and globally.



This can include implementing supportive policies, public education and awareness programs, as well as collaboration between different stakeholders to overcome barriers and promote local food production and consumption.

- 1. Higher costs:** Km0 products can sometimes be more expensive because they are often produced in smaller quantities and using special farming methods. This can mean that not everyone can afford them.
- 2. Seasonal availability:** Products are available seasonally, which means that you may not always find what you want in the supermarket. Sometimes, you can only get certain foods at certain times of the year.
- 3. Insufficient infrastructure:** In some regions, the infrastructure needed to support the production and distribution of Km0 products may be limited or inadequate. This includes a lack of food processing facilities, adequate storage systems and efficient distribution systems, which can hinder the marketing and supply of local products.
- 4. Lack of knowledge:** Many people do not know what "Km0" means or do not understand why it is important. This may cause them to prefer to buy food from well-known brands rather than support local producers.

Another point is the **competition with large corporations**: Local producers may face competition from large corporations and supermarket chains that dominate the market. These companies often have better financial resources and marketing capabilities, which can make it difficult for local producers to compete on a level playing field.

- **Impact of Km0 products on the reduction of pollution during transport**

As mentioned above, the Km0 product line plays a key role in reducing pollution during food transportation. By prioritizing the production and consumption of local products, the need for long transports of goods from the production area to the final consumer will be minimized. This has positive effects:

- **Lower fuel consumption and polluting emissions**: Long transport journeys require large amounts of fuel, which contributes to the depletion of non-renewable resources and air pollution. By reducing the distance, food is transported, the fuel used to distribute it is reduced, which helps conserve resources and reduce air pollution. As a result, there is less smoke and harmful gases in the air we breathe, which is beneficial to human health and the environment in general.

- **Reducing traffic** is an important advantage when promoting these types of products. As local products become more popular, the need to transport food over long distances will decrease, resulting in fewer trucks on the road. This has several positive effects: **less traffic, less stress and frustration, improved air quality.**
- **Successful cases of companies, cooperatives or projects that promote Km0 products and the reduction of distances in their distribution**

These are just a few successful examples of how companies, cooperatives and projects are actively promoting Km0 products and shortening their distribution distances to help consumers, local producers and the environment. Here are a few companies:

- **La Colmena Que Dice Sí:** This initiative originated in France and spread to several European countries, including Spain. It acts as an online platform where consumers can buy directly from local producers. Farmers, ranchers and artisans sell their products through "beehives" located in various parts of the city, greatly shortening distribution channels.

- **Eroski Group** - Km0 Commitment: The Spanish supermarket chain Eroski has developed the "Km0 Commitment" program to encourage the sale of local products in its stores. The initiative encourages collaboration with local farmers and suppliers to ensure that each store has a wide selection of fresh, high-quality food grown close to home.
- **Mercabarna**: is Spain's largest fresh food wholesale market located in Barcelona. The "Km0 Mercabarna" program promotes the commercialization of local and regional products. It facilitates connections between local producers and traders, making distribution more efficient and reducing transportation routes.
- **Glovo Market**: Delivery platform Glovo has launched its online supermarket service Glovo Market in several cities in Spain and other countries. In addition to offering traditional supermarket products, Glovo Market works with local producers to provide consumers with fresh local food options and also helps promote Km0 products.



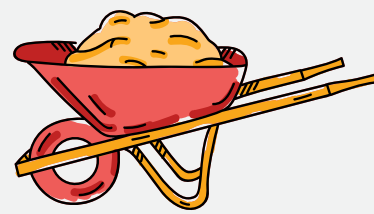
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Agro-ecology, a sector worth exploiting

- **What is agroecology?**

Definition of agroecology

When we talk about agroecology, we refer to the integrative study of the ecological implications of food systems understood as a whole, taking into account ecological, economic and social aspects. Therefore, agroecology is not concerned with a specific food production system, but rather encompasses systems with low environmental impact.



This is the definition of agroecology:

Agroecology is the integration of research, education, action and change that brings sustainability to all parts of the food system: ecological, economic, and social. It's transdisciplinary in that it values all forms of knowledge and experience in food system change. It's participatory in that it requires the involvement of all stakeholders from the farm to the table and everyone in between. And it is action-oriented because it confronts the economic and political power structures of the current industrial food system with alternative social structures and policy action. The approach is grounded in ecological thinking where a holistic, systems-level understanding of food system sustainability is required.

Transforming agriculture

Putting it on a sustainable path - is an enormous challenge. A basic premise of agroecology is that we can only meet this challenge if we address it simultaneously on three different fronts.

Firstly, we must understand the ecological relationships between agricultural species, between species and the environment (especially the soil), and between species and the environment.



The scientific field of agroecology meets this requirement by using new knowledge and methods to obtain information that can be used in the design and management of natural resources.

Second, we need effective and innovative farming practices (on-the-ground systems) that work today to meet our food needs while laying the foundation for a more sustainable system in the future. Meeting this need is the practical side of agroecology, which emphasizes the local, experiential and indigenous knowledge of farmers and the sharing of that knowledge, eroding the distinction between knowledge production and its application.

Finally, context has fundamental implications for how people interact with food, the economic and social systems that determine the distribution of food, and the ways in which food shapes power relations between populations, classes, and nations. We need change. Addressing this need is the social transformation dimension of agroecology, which not only advocates changes that lead to food security for all, but also seeks to understand the means by which these changes can be activated and sustained.



Each of these aspects of agroecology is fundamental, but together they provide a framework for food system transformation. Thus, agroecology as a science, agroecology as a practice, and agroecology as a social movement are all three very relevant to creating the momentum needed to transform our food system.

The main objectives are to reduce pesticide and fertilizer use and increase soil productivity without environmental damage.

Firstly, agroecological agriculture prioritizes limited or no use of synthetic chemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers. Instead, farming practices that promote biodiversity and soil health are employed, such as crop rotation, composting, the use of organic fertilizers and biological pest control.

On the other hand, soil health is fundamental to the long-term success of any farming system. Agroecological agriculture focuses on improving soil structure, fertility and water holding capacity. This is achieved through techniques such as conservation agriculture, terrace cultivation, the use of cover crops and the application of agroforestry practices.



Within the objectives, it is very important to point out the conservation of the environment. One of the pillars of agroecological agriculture is to minimize the negative environmental impact of agricultural activity. This would therefore include the protection of biodiversity, the conservation of water resources and the reduction of soil erosion. By promoting the integration of traditional agricultural practices and modern scientific knowledge, agroecological agriculture seeks to preserve natural ecosystems and mitigate climate change.

The main agroecological farming systems include:

ORGANIC FARMING

This method deals with generating crops without using substances that have excessive environmental impact, but only using natural products. The European Union is working hard to ensure that there is a promotion of these products. Regulation 2018/848, which came into effect on January 1, 2022, defines the production and labeling standards that a food must hold in order to be considered organic. To protect consumers, the so-called, organic logo was created;



it can only be affixed to foods that contain 95 percent organic products, and are responsible for overseeing the entire production chain of an organic product.



BIODYNAMIC FARMING

The biodynamic method was born in 1924 as a result of some farmers' concern about the deterioration of product quality, probably following the first introductions of chemical agriculture. The first theoretician was the German doctor Rudolf Steiner. This technique is concerned with following crops by respecting "earth phases," and irrigating the soil by means of all-natural compounds. However, because of certain spiritualistic overtones, such as the consideration of the stars and the phases of the moon, this method has often been subject to criticism. It is undeniable, however, that to this day this method still has an important value given its low environmental impact. In fact, biodynamic products are subject to a double check, one that attributes them the logo of organic products, and one carried out by Demeter International that attributes them the characteristic of biodynamic.

Demeter International coordinates its agencies in 43 states; these are responsible for monitoring the production and marketing phases of biodynamic products.



PERMACULTURE

The term permaculture, coined by the scholar Bill Mollison in the mid-1970s, originates from the union of two words namely "permanent agriculture" the goal of this methodology is in fact to generate land arrangement projects that can respond in a long and lasting way to human needs but without altering the ecosystem in any way. This method thus integrates various disciplines geography, sociology, planning, ecology and anthropology.



- **Why choose agroecology?**

The shift toward an agroecological system could lead toward significant benefits by ensuring:

- **Diversification of cultures:** intensive land use perpetrated by high-impact systems in fact promotes mono-culture production, potentially generating harm to human health and failing to safeguard biodiversity. Indeed, we know that the best diets are those that contain a wide variety of foods, such as the Mediterranean diet.
- **Soil conservation:** practices such as soil rotation in fact support the proper maintenance of soil health by preventing soil erosion.
- **Community participation:** these systems in fact very often involve local communities, potentially being a tool to combat unemployment especially youth unemployment.



- **Consumption on a local scale**, in an attempt to safeguard the planet in fact agrobiological methodologies also promote production at km 0, thus trying to cut down on pollution given by transport
- **Increased production in the long run**, in fact the report compiled by Slow Food 2020 describes studies from the 1990s to the present on 37 million hectares cultivated with a wide variety of systems and crops, in 57 countries in the global south, showing that with agroecology, average yields per hectare have increased by 79%.

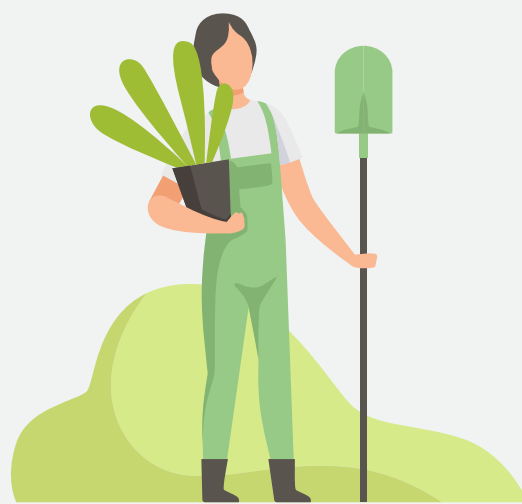


- **Agroecology, demographics and work**

The use of agroecology food systems could probably have a significant demographic impact in rural areas, as pointed out by "Principles of integrated agricultural systems: Introduction to processes and defination," published June 30, 2008.

In fact, in recent decades we have witnessed a strong migration of young people from rural areas to cities for two main reasons: on the one hand, work in the fields with today's high-impact technologies cannot provide stability in production and consequently economic stability, and on the other hand, large companies tend to use less human capital at the expense of intensive and systemic use of land capital.

The shift toward an agribusiness system could likely therefore create more employment, and give greater stability, by being able to land produce steadily. Increased employment could generate an influx of migration to rural areas.



So agroecology can also be considered as a weapon in the fight against unemployment, which is still a problem in Europe today, according to EUROSTAT in fact the unemployment rate, measured in October 2023, would amount to about 6%, which means that in Europe there are more than 11 million people who can be considered unemployed. The highest incidence is in Spain 11.76 percent, Greece 9.2 percent and Italy 7.2 percent, countries that with the right policies could potentially be The promoters of agroecological development, given the Mediterranean climate particularly suitable for cultivation. Here, of course, the role of the state is fundamental, which has the task of promoting development policies aimed at giving the opportunity to young entrepreneurs who are willing to invest in environmentally sustainable projects.

- **Agroecology and Human health**

There is another important link in the field of pesticides that have harmful effects on human health. The European Environment Agency's 2023 report "The impact of pesticides on human health and ecosystems in Europe" highlights the serious use of pesticides in Europe.



From 2011 to 2020, sales of pesticides remained stable at around 350,000 tons per year. In particular, Germany and France are on the rise and have become the countries that use the most pesticides in Europe, along with Spain and Italy. As awareness of the harmful effects of pesticides grows, the European Green Deal strategy urgently addresses the need to reduce reliance on pesticides. Key policy targets to be achieved under the Farm to Fork Strategy 2030, the Zero Pollution Action Plan and the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 include a 50% reduction in the use and risks of chemical pesticides and a 50% reduction in the use of chemical pesticides. Eliminate the most dangerous pesticides and grow organically on at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land. In this context, agroecology plays an undeniable central role and offers a viable path towards ecologically sustainable production methods.

One of the major contributions supporting the link between agroecology and human health is certainly the "Human health implications of organic food and organic agriculture" published by the European Parliament in December 2016.



The report reports the following major studies:

PARSIFAL

This study takes into analysis about 14000 children, in an age range of 5 to 13 years old, from 5 countries of the European Union-Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, and Switzerland. The analysis of these children, all of whom were educated with an organic diet, led to the conclusion that they have a lower susceptibility to allergic symptoms.

KOALA

This analysis, unlike the previous one, does not focus its attention only on children, but rather jointly examines a group of 2,700 mothers, who were fed exclusively organic foods during pregnancy, and their children. The main result was a 36% reduction in the risk of eczema within the first two years of age, Probably this result was achieved because of a higher concentration of fatty acids, which are present in greater amounts in organic milk.



NORWEGIAN MOTHER AND CHILD COHORT STUDY

Survey Conducted among 28000 Norwegian women who had their first child between 2002 and 2008, the study showed that women who consume organic foods are 21% less likely to contract pre-eclampsia. Quests occur during the third trimester of pregnancy and are characterized by elevated blood pressure and large amounts of protein in the urine. Quests can be severe and threaten both mother and fetus.

THE MILLION WOMEN STUDY

This research represents a very important piece in the search for the benefits of organic food, in fact it tries to relate nutrition to the risk of contracting cancer. The examination, carried out by administering damands realtive to eating habits, was administered to 623080 British women who were then monitored for a period of 9.3 years. The results were a 9% reduction in the odds of contracting breast cancer and a significant -21% reduction in the risk of Nn-Hodgkin lymphoma, in women using organic foods.



THE NUTRINET-SANTÉ STUDY AND THE BIONUTRINET RESEARCH PROGRAM

The survey focuses its attention on the study of dietary patterns and their effects by administering tests to about 54000 people related to eating habits and health status, monitoring a period of about 10 years. Those who follow an organic diet turn out to eat healthier, significantly reducing the risk of obesity.

The analysis of previous studies has allowed us to understand how a diet based on an agroecological system, and therefore mainly on organic products, has a positive effect on human health. However, it is important to consider that the previous studies, while reliable, leave a margin of uncertainty this is because different outcomes in the various trials, in addition to diet, could also be given by different lifestyles.



One of the major contributions supporting the link between agroecology and human health is certainly the "Human health implications of organic food and organic agriculture" published by the European Parliament in December 2016.

- **Agroecology and biodiversity**

As reported in the report prepared by the British Think Tank Chatham House in collaboration with United Nations Environment Program and Compassion in World Farming biodiversity is tragically endangered. The rate of extinction is tens of times higher than it has been in the last 10 million years; about 1 million species are at risk of extinction within decades. In total, the extent and condition of natural ecosystems have declined by an average of about 50 percent since early estimates, as has the size of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles since 1970. The current system of food production has a great responsibility with respect to these data, in fact this is characterized by a great environmental impact that then obviously has consequences on biodiversity.



The main causes are:

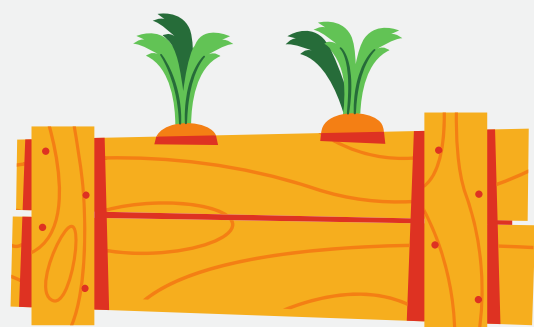
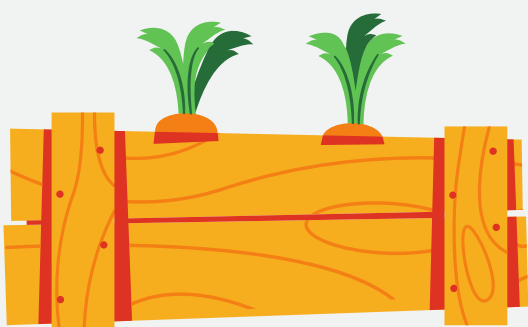
- **Degradation of soils** due to excessive production of monocultures that cause their erosion. The area of land occupied by agriculture has increased about 5.5 times since 1600 and continues to increase. Currently, crops and livestock occupy about 50 percent of the world's habitable land.
- **Destruction of animal habitats**; in fact, excessive production leads to ever-increasing land uses.
- **Extraction of fresh water**, causing water quality to deteriorate with consequent dangers to the species that inhabit these ecosystems.
- **Greenhouse gas production** especially in intensive livestock farms contributes to the alteration of ecosystems.
- **Intensive fishing techniques**, which destroy marine ecosystems, disrupting their balance; in fact, one often hears reports of sharks or other animals, which normally live at great depths, coming ashore in search of food.
- **Intensive allvebantation techniques**, just think that 57% of the birds on earth today are fowl, while wild birds account for only 29% of the total.



The shift toward an agroecological system would certainly lead to greater care and conservation of biodiversity this for the following reasons:

- **Promotion of local diets**, this would decrease pollution given by transportation costs, and promote genetic diversity.
 - **Restoration of natural habitats** by writing cultivation plans that respect ecosystems.
 - **Sustainable water management** to prevent soil erosion.
 - **Elimination of chemical pesticides** by promoting biological control of pests.
 - **Diversification of crops**, which through rotation techniques would give the soil a way to defatiate.
-
- **Farm to fork and EU's biodiversity strategy**

On December 11, 2019, the European Commission unveiled the European Green Deal, which is a package containing a series of strategies, the function of which is to guide Europe towards the green transition.



Following this, the Farm to Fork strategy, and The EU's biodiversity strategy were issued on May 20, 2020, both of which contain a series of measures of a non-binding nature and targets, but which could take on a binding character.

After careful analysis, it can be said that these strategies are the first to comprehensively consider the entire food system in all its spheres, from production to sale, proposing measures that would lead to a more agroecological system, thus benefiting both human health and the health of the planet, they hold that "food systems must urgently become sustainable and operate within the ecological limits of the planet."

Farm to Fork outlines a total of 27 measures while The EU's biodiversity strategy contains 39, the main measures can be summarized as follows:

- **Increase in areas cultivated through organic agriculture**, they should correspond to 25% of the European agricultural area by 2030.



- **50% decrease in the use of pesticides by 2030**, they could be replaced by biopesticides. One of the goals of this measure is to avoid the so-called cocktail effect, that is, the combination of several pesticides used together.
- **Decrease fertilizer use by 20 percent**, with greater incentive to use precision fertilizers, thereby reducing soil erosion.
- **Incentivizing people toward more plant-based and balanced diets**; in fact, 70% of agricultural emissions come from meat production. The goal is therefore to help people understand the importance of following a plant-based diet, starting with schools, universities, reducing advertising campaigns that promote excessive meat consumption.
- **Reward farmers** who use sustainable production methods, methane reduction, replaced by biogas and renewable energy.
- **50% reduction in the use of antimicrobials.**



Often agroecological issues are intertwined with social ones, this is the case of a latest measure in the Farm to Fork plan, which requires that **4 percent of the land always be left fallow in exchange for a European subsidy**. This is one of the reasons that are leading farmers in many European countries to demonstrate in recent months, they criticize the fact that they have to decrease production, believing that the receipt of the subsidy can only benefit very large farms, since the subsidy is proportional to the size of the land.



3

From the field to the table. Educating consumers in new quality standards.

- **Introduction**

Quality standards play a key role in the food industry, ensuring food safety and consumer satisfaction. Here are some important aspects:

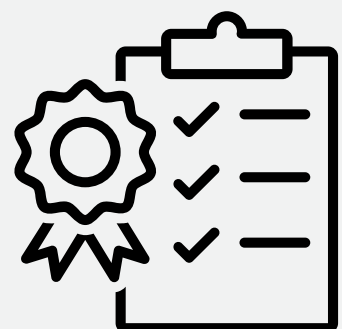
- **Food safety:** Standards define procedures and guidelines for preventing food contamination, thereby reducing the risk of foodborne illness. Examples include HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) and ISO 22001.

- **Product quality:** Standards ensure the consistency and quality of food products. These include organoleptic properties (taste, smell, texture), nutritional value and sustainability.
- **International competition:** Certification to standards enables companies to access the global market. Customers are increasingly looking for certified products.
- **Process efficiency:** Standards help to optimize production processes, reduce losses and improve efficiency.

In short, quality standards are key to successful operations in the food industry, ensuring consumer satisfaction and competitiveness in the market.

The most common standards in the food industry include:

- **ISO 22000:** This standard focuses on food safety management and covers the entire supply chain, from production to distribution.



- **HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points):** Methodology for identification, assessment and control of hazards in food production.
- **IFS (International Featured Standards) and BRC (British Retail Consortium):** Standards that focus on food safety and product quality.
- **Codex Alimentarius Commission FAO/WHO:** General principles of food hygiene.

These standards ensure food safety, product quality and market competitiveness.

Here are some examples of successful implementation of standards in different contexts:

- **ISO 9001:** This quality management standard helps organisations achieve consistency in processes, improve customer satisfaction and optimize efficiency. An example of a successful implementation of ISO 9001 can be a company that reduced the number of complaints and improved the quality of its products after certification.

- **HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points):** In the food industry, HACCP is key to ensuring food safety. An example of a successful implementation can be a restaurant that reduced the risk of food contamination and improved hygiene standards after applying HACCP.
- **IFS (International Food Standard) and BRC (British Retail Consortium):** These standards ensure food safety and product quality. An example of a successful implementation can be a food manufacturer who gained the trust of customers and increased sales after certification according to IFS or BRC.
- **FSSC 22000 (Food Safety Management Systems):** This standard combines ISO 22000 and technical specifications for PrP (Prerequisite Programs). An example of a successful implementation can be a food manufacturer that became more competitive on the market and improved its operations after FSSC 22000 certification.

Each of these standards has its own specific benefits and applications, and successful implementation depends on the context of the organisation and its goals.

The food supply chain includes all the steps and activities required for the production, distribution and delivery of food to the final consumer. Here are some key stages in the supply chain:

- **Production:** This step involves the cultivation and collection of raw materials (such as agricultural products) and their processing into finished products.
- **Transport:** After production, the food is transported to distribution centers, shops and restaurants.
- **Storage:** Food is stored to preserve freshness and quality. This includes cold rooms, dryers and other storage areas.
- **Distribution:** Distributors pick up food from warehouses and deliver it to stores, restaurants and other outlets.
- **Sales:** Food is sold to end consumers through stores, restaurants or other channels.
- **Consumption:** End users consume food.

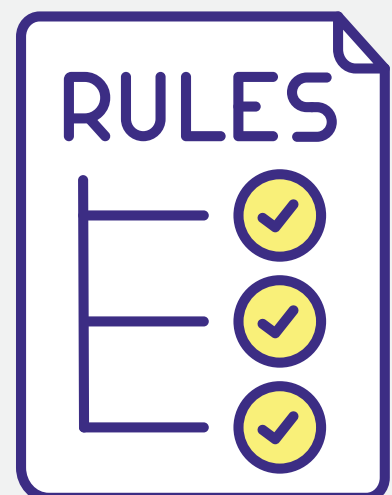
It is important to note that food losses can occur at each of these stages. It is therefore important to establish sustainable practices to reduce waste and ensure food safety ¹. Also, there are seven principles of a safe food supply chain, which are key to ensuring food quality.

Companies in the food industry play a key role in reducing food losses, as they are involved in all phases of the supply chain.

The seven principles of a safe food supply chain include:

- **Corporate responsibility:** Responsibility of companies for food safety.
- **Traceability:** Tracking food through all stages of the supply chain.
- **Official food controls:** Regular inspections and testing of food.
- **Precautionary principle:** Preventive measures to avoid risks.
- **Independent scientific risk assessment:** Use of experts for risk assessment.
- **Risk management:** Active management of potential risks.
- **Transparent risk management:** Public sharing of risk information

Following these principles, we ensure food safety and consumer protection.



- **Understanding the quality standard:**

Food quality standards include a number of parameters that are evaluated in order to ensure the safety and satisfactory quality of food. Here are some key aspects:

- **Physical criteria** include dimensions, volume, consistency and texture of the product.
- **Chemical criteria** include protein, carbohydrate and fat values in products.
- **Biological criteria** include microbial and enzymatic properties of the product¹.

In addition, there are international standards such as ISO 22000:2005, which is based on the principles of good hygiene practice, HACCP and the requirements of the ISO 9001:2008 norm. This norm helps in the implementation of the food safety management system². Also, the European Commission ensures the safety and quality of food through regulations, certifications, labeling and standards.



In Serbia, the plan for the production of health-safe food includes the integrated control of risks associated with food consumption and weighing the risks and benefits of existing and future food products.

- **Factors that contribute to determining food quality**

The quality of food depends on various factors. Here are some key aspects that affect food quality:

- **Safety:** The European Commission ensures the safety of food and agricultural products through regulations, controls and cooperation with other countries. These include monitoring contaminants, pesticide and herbicide use, and antibiotic resistance.
- **Freshness:** Physical criteria, such as dimensions, volume, consistency and texture of the product, play a role in evaluating the freshness of food.
- **Nutritive value:** Chemical criteria, such as protein, carbohydrate and fat values, help to assess the nutritional value of food.



- **Sustainability:** In addition to quality, it is important to consider the sustainability of food production. This includes environmental and social aspects, as well as the impact on the environment and resources.

In addition to these factors, food quality can also be assessed by sensory criteria, microbial and enzymatic properties, and other technical parameters.

Transport and storage:

Good distribution practice ensures that food products are adequately stored and transported and handled according to prescribed specifications. Food production is a complex process that includes a number of factors with the aim of obtaining healthy products. Contamination of food products due to the increase in environmental pollution with chemical and microbiological substances represents an immediate danger to the health of the population. Danger to human health occurs throughout the food chain, in which there is a risk of contamination in many places. It is therefore important to apply universal and clearly defined rules for food control at all stages, from production and processing to transport and distribution.

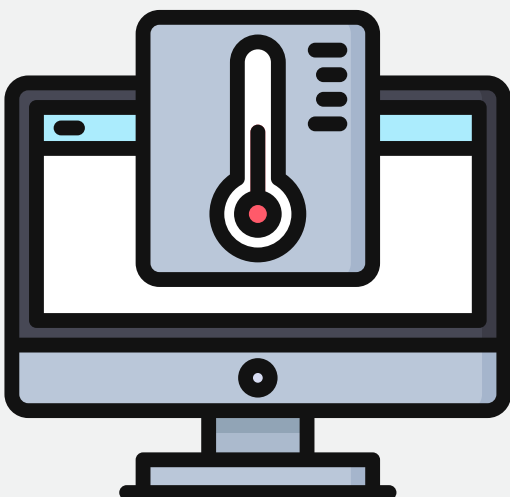
HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) represents a preventive and systematic approach to the analysis of microbiological, chemical and physical hazards in the entire food chain. Also, ISO 22000:2005 is an internationally recognized norm that implements requirements for the introduction and maintenance of a complete and effective food safety management system. Consistent application of these principles throughout the entire food chain results in healthy products. The guidelines of good distribution practice include the organization, implementation and supervision of the delivery and/or shipment of products, which ensures the preservation of food at prescribed storage and temperature conditions, protection against contamination and spoilage, and the correct delivery of products in a predetermined time.

Example: Distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables

- **Storage:** Fruits and vegetables should be stored at appropriate temperatures and conditions in order to preserve their freshness. For example, bananas are stored at a temperature of about 13°C, while potatoes are stored in a cool, dark place to prevent germination.

- **Transport:** When transporting fruits and vegetables, it is important to use refrigerators or refrigerated trucks in order to maintain the optimal temperature. Also, care should be taken that the products are not damaged during transport.
- **Hygiene:** People who handle fruits and vegetables should wear protective gloves and wash their hands regularly. In addition, transport vehicles and warehouses should be clean and disinfected.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor temperature and storage conditions throughout the distribution chain. If a deviation is noticed, take appropriate measures to preserve the quality of the product.

Note: This is just one example, and good distribution practices may vary depending on the type of product and specific conditions.



Here are some more examples of good distribution practices:

Pharmaceutical products: When distributing drugs, it is important to maintain appropriate temperature conditions to ensure their effectiveness and safety. Medicines are often transported in refrigerators or special containers.

Fresh dairy products: Milk, yogurt and other dairy products need to be delivered quickly to the market in order to preserve their freshness. Distributors use refrigerated trucks and monitor the temperature during transport.

Fish products: When distributing fish, it is important to maintain cool conditions to prevent spoilage. Ice baths and fast delivery are key to preserving the quality of the fish.

Fresh fruits and vegetables: Apart from the examples we have already mentioned, fresh fruits and vegetables should be delivered quickly to the market in order to preserve their nutritional value. Temperature monitoring and hygiene are key factors.

Note: Good distribution practices vary depending on the type of product and specific conditions.

Consumer education:

Informing consumers about food, whether packaged or unpackaged, is the most important form of communication between a food business entity (producer, trader, restaurateur and any other food business entity that puts food on the market) with the consumer. This area is regulated by law and aims to enable consumers to be fully and accurately informed about the food offered to them. Food information should be clear, unambiguous and must not mislead consumers, especially regarding composition, quantity, durability, origin, production process, food characteristics and other properties. The responsibility for information on packaged or prepackaged food rests with the entity that places it on the market, usually the manufacturer or brand owner. The entity in the food business that offers or sells food to the end consumer, such as retail stores and public catering establishments, is responsible for informing consumers about unpackaged or unpackaged food. If you want to know more, you can study the brochure on understanding food information and consumer attitudes about food waste, as well as the obligations of food business entities to inform consumers.



Also, EU legislation emphasises 14 specific allergens that are used in the production or preparation of food, and about whose presence information must be provided to consumers.

The most important information on the packaged food declaration includes:

- **List of ingredients:** All ingredients used in food production are listed here. It is important for people with allergies or hypersensitivity to certain substances.
- **Date of Minimum Durability (DMT):** This date indicates when the food is safe for consumption. After DMT has expired, food may lose quality, but not necessarily become harmful.
- **Storage conditions:** Here are the conditions (temperature, humidity, etc.) under which food should be stored in order to remain safe for consumption.
- **Net quantity:** It is the amount of food in the package (eg 200 g, 500 ml).
- **Manufacturer Information:** Name and address of manufacturer or distributor.
- **Nutritional values:** Information on calories, fats, sugars, proteins, etc. is listed here.
- **Special labels:** For example, labels for vegetarian, vegan, halal or kosher food.

Remember that it is important to read the declaration carefully in order to make informed decisions about the food you consume.

Effectively educating consumers about food safety is critical to their well-being. Here are some steps to achieve this:

- **Campaigns and Education:** Organize food safety campaigns and workshops. Education through the media, social networks and information leaflets also helps.
- **Declarations on prepackaged foods:** Consumers need to understand the information on prepackaged food declarations. This includes the list of ingredients, DMT, storage conditions and nutritional value.
- **Critical thinking:** Consumers need to develop critical thinking about the food they buy. This includes checking sources, checking labels and understanding marketing gimmicks.
- **Cooperating institution:** Institutions dealing with food safety should cooperate and communicate regularly in order to ensure the best protection of consumers.
- **Promotion of healthy eating:** Education about healthy eating habits is also important. Consumers should know how to choose a varied and balanced diet.



In Serbia, the European food safety system is rigorous and provides the best consumer protection. Consumers can be calm, but they can be additionally educated in order to contribute to the improvement of that system.

Here is an example of how consumers can be educated about food safety:

- **Allergen campaigns:** Organise a campaign about food allergens. Inform consumers about the most common allergens (such as gluten, nuts, milk, eggs, etc.) and how to recognise the labels on products that warn of the presence of allergens. It is especially important for people with allergies.
- **Organize workshops :** Workshops on proper food storage, food preparation hygiene and proper food handling.

Education through leaflets, websites and social medial.

Remember that continuing education is key. Consumers should be informed about the latest knowledge on food safety in order to make informed decisions when purchasing and consuming food.



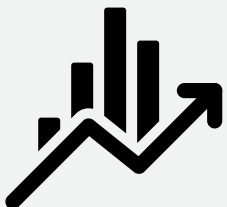
4

How to market km0 products?
Cooperatives, wineries, local markets or small producers

- **Strategies for marketing Km0 products**

A marketing strategy is a key document for every business, and together with a business plan, it forms the basis of a successful business. Here are some steps to create an effective marketing strategy:

- **Defining goals:** The first step is clearly defining the goals you want to achieve. Do you want to increase sales, attract new customers or improve your brand? Setting specific goals helps guide the strategy.



- **Market research:** Understand your market, competition and customer needs. Analyze trends, demand and preferences to adjust your strategy.
- **Target audience segmentation:** Identify different customer segments and tailor your marketing activities to them. Each segment may require a different approach.
- **Marketing mix (4P):** This concept includes four key components: Product: Define what you offer and how you differ from the competition. Price: Set an appropriate price that reflects the value of the product. Place: Choose distribution and sales channels. Promotion: Think about ways to communicate with the target audience (advertisements, social media, PR).
- **Choice of channels:** Identify the most effective channels for communicating with your audience. This can include social media, email, SEO, ads, and other tactics.
- **Budget planning:** Determine how much money you will allocate for each marketing activity. Budgeting is key to efficient resource management.

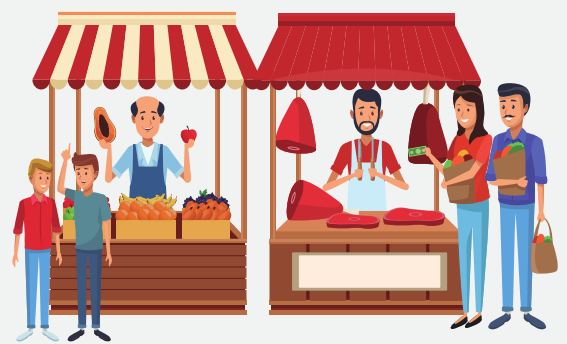


- **Monitoring and optimization:** Regularly monitor the results of your marketing efforts. If something isn't working, adjust your strategy.

Marketing Km0 (or marketing of sources close to the consumer) is a concept that refers to the promotion of products or services that are produced, distributed or sold in the immediate vicinity of the consumer. This approach aims to reduce transport costs and supports local communities.

Km0 marketing usually includes:

- **Local production:** Focus on products that are produced in the same region or even in the same city where they are sold. For example, organic fruits and vegetables that come directly from nearby farms.
- **Local distribution:** Products are distributed through local channels, such as small shops, markets or restaurants. This reduces the need for long transport.
- **Support for local producers:** Promotion of small and local companies that produce high-quality products. This helps preserve tradition and culture.



- **Environmental sustainability:** Reducing the ecological footprint by reducing transport and supporting local resources.

In short, Km0's marketing promotes awareness of local products and supports sustainability, while simultaneously connecting consumers with sources in their immediate vicinity.



Advantages of marketing Km0:

- **Supporting the local economy:** By buying local products, you support small entrepreneurs and local communities. This can contribute to the growth of the local economy.
- **Reduction of transport costs:** Products that are produced and sold in close proximity to consumers require less transport. This reduces the emission of harmful gases and contributes to sustainability.
- **Quality and freshness:** Local products are often fresher because they travel shorter distances. This can improve the quality of food and other products.
- **Connection with sources:** Customers can better understand the origin of products and have direct contact with producers.
- **Environmental awareness:** Focusing on local resources and reducing global impact.

Disadvantages of marketing Km0:

- **Limited choice:** Local products may be limited in variety and availability. Consumers may not be able to rely solely on local products for all their needs.
- **Higher price:** Local products can sometimes be more expensive due to less production and higher labor costs.
- **Competition:** Large companies and global brands continue to dominate the market. Local producers face strong competition.
- **Seasonal restrictions:** Some foods are seasonal and available only at certain times of the year. Ultimately, Km0 marketing has its advantages and disadvantages, and the optimal approach depends on the specific needs and priorities of each consumer and company.
- **Identification of the target market**

Identification of the target market is crucial for successful marketing. Here are some steps to achieve this:

- **Research:** Analyze consumer demographics, behavior and needs. Who are your potential customers? How do they behave? Where do they spend their time?



- **Segmentation:** Divide the market into smaller segments. For example, you can focus on specific geographic locations, ages, interests, or industries.
- **Goals:** Set clear goals for each segment. What do you want to achieve? Increasing sales, acquiring new customers or increasing brand awareness?
- **Positioning:** Define how you want your brand to be perceived in the eyes of the target audience. What is your unique selling proposition?
- **Communication channels:** Identify the most effective channels for reaching the target audience. This can include social media, email, SEO, ads, and other tactics.
- **Testing:** Test different strategies and adapt them according to the results. Tracking analytics is key.

Developing an effective brand and positioning:

Branding is a key part of marketing and enables the creation of a recognizable and strong brand. Here are a few steps for developing an effective brand and positioning it:

- **Brand identity:** Define clearly who you are and what you offer. Your brand should express your values and differentiate you from your competition.

- **Visual elements:** Name, logo and other symbols make your brand recognizable. Design them carefully to make a strong impression.
- **Values and promises:** The brand should communicate the values you provide to consumers. Promises you keep build trust.
- **Positioning:** Emphasize specific functional aspects of a product or service to stand out in the market. Think about what makes you unique and desirable to your target audience.
- **Brand awareness:** Make sure that consumers associate your brand with specific characteristics. This will help you stand out and stay in their minds.
- **Continuous monitoring:** Branding is a dynamic process. Monitor results regularly and adjust strategy to stay relevant and attractive.

Remember that building a brand is more than a visual identity. It's a feeling, a promise and a connection you create with your audience.

Ultimately, a well-built and established brand gives a product or service a special character and strength. It has the power to influence the consumer long before they encounter the product or service. That's why uniqueness and consistency are key to creating a brand that leaves a lasting impression.



Selection of appropriate distribution channels:

Choosing the right distribution channels for your company's products or services is critical to success. Here are some key steps and guidelines for choosing optimal distribution channels:

- **Understanding the market and target audience:** A deep understanding of the market in which you operate and precisely defining your target audience is essential. Analyze the preferences of different demographic groups to adjust distribution channels and maximize reach and effectiveness.
- **Comparison of different channels:** Consider the advantages and disadvantages of different channels. For example, online sales may have lower distribution costs, but may not provide the same personal experience as traditional retail. Analyze how different channels can affect the sales of your products or services.
- **Integration of multi-channel distribution:** Combine different channels to reach a wider audience. Measure the sales performance of each channel and adjust strategies to gain competitive advantage.
- **Customize bargaining strategies:** Develop bargaining strategies tailored to each channel. For example, online sales may charge different prices than traditional retail.



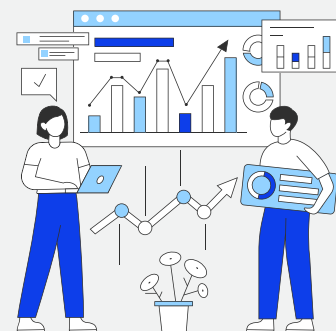
Continuous monitoring and adaptation: Be flexible and follow the changes in the market. Update your distribution strategies to stay one step ahead of the competition¹.

Remember that success is not only in the products you offer, but also in the way you deliver them to your customers. The right choice of distribution channels will allow you to build a strong connection with your customers and achieve maximum performance in the market.

- **Challenges in the marketing of Km0 products**

Marketing strategy is crucial for successful business, regardless of the size of the company. Here are some important steps in creating a marketing strategy for products labeled "Km0":

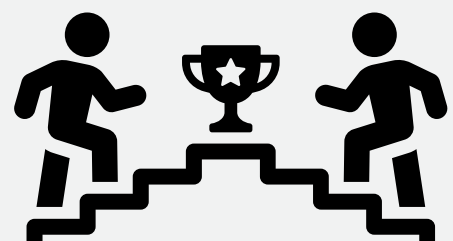
- **Market Research:** Understand the needs and preferences of your target audience. Who are your consumers? How do they behave? What are their challenges and needs?
- **Positioning:** Define the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) for your product. What sets it apart from the competition? How will you present it to consumers?



- **Promotion channel:** Select appropriate promotion channels. Is it social media, influencers, SEO, email or something else?
- **Goals and metrics:** Set clear goals for your strategy. Do you want to increase sales, reduce acquisition costs or something else? Define metrics to track performance.
- **Branding:** Think about the image and values of your product. How do you want it to be perceived?
- **Emotional connection:** Although AI can analyze data on a large scale, it lacks the emotional quotient that humans have. Think about how to build an emotional connection with consumers.
- **Adaptability:** Be ready to adapt the strategy according to changes in the market and feedback from consumers.

Competition with conventional and large products

Competition is a key factor in business, regardless of the type of product. Here are some important aspects related to competition with conventional and large products:



- **Identification of competitors:** Businesses should carefully identify their competitors. This means not only direct competition (ex Coca-Cola vs. Pepsi-Cola), but also potential competitors offering similar products or services.
- **Competitive Analysis:** Competitive research and analysis help businesses understand the strengths and weaknesses of their competitors. This includes tracking products, prices, distribution and promotions.
- **Strategy:** Based on the analysis, companies can develop competitive strategies. This may include avoiding direct rivalry or planning to defend against competition.
- **Non-price competition:** Competition in many services has primarily a non-price dimension. The focus is on quality, service and other factors. It is always important to follow the competition and adapt to changes in the market.



Logistical and distributional limitations:

Logistics and distribution logistics play a key role in efficient supply chain management. Here are some aspects related to distribution centers and their limitations:

- **Distribution centers:** These centers are crucial for the distribution of goods. Their role is to store, sort and distribute products to end users. Distribution centers can be large infrastructure facilities with specific logistics processes.
- **Macro logistics system:** This is a higher order logistics system that includes large distribution centers. They provide logistics services and consist of micro-logistics systems. These centers are crucial for efficient distribution and management during the supply chain.
- **Processes:** Various logistics processes are implemented in distribution centers, including storage, sorting, packaging and distribution. Limitations may arise due to capacity, processing time and other factors.
- **Performance indicators:** Monitoring the performance of distribution centers is crucial. Indicators such as processing time, delivery accuracy and storage efficiency help identify potential constraints and improvements.



Management of distribution centers requires careful planning and continuous monitoring in order to overcome limitations and ensure efficient product distribution.

- **Consumer education and awareness**

Education and consumer awareness are key to successful business and product promotion. Here are some aspects related to this topic:

- **Informing about the product:** Consumers need to be well informed about the product. This includes understanding the features, benefits, how to use and potential risks.
- **Environmental responsibility:** Consumer education about sustainability and ecological aspects of products is increasingly important. Consumers are increasingly looking for products that are friendly to the environment.
- **Health awareness:** Consumers are increasingly interested in health and well-being. Manufacturers need to communicate the health aspects of their products.
- **Transparency:** Companies should be transparent about ingredients, origin and production processes. Consumers value honesty and transparency.



- **Campaigns and education:** Companies can organize campaigns, seminars and workshops to educate consumers.

This can help build awareness and create brand loyalty. Investing in consumer education can bring long-term benefits and contribute to successful business.

Marketing influence of Km0 producers:

Influence marketing, also known as influencer marketing, is a strategy that is increasingly used in the digital environment. This concept refers to cooperation with influencers (influential people) on social media in order to promote products, services or brands.

Here are some key points about influencer marketing:

- **Definition of influencer marketing:**

- Influence marketing focuses on building relationships with influencers who have credibility in a certain area.
- An influencer can be anyone - a famous person, a blogger, an entrepreneur. It is important that they have authenticity and are followed by many people on the Internet.



- These influencers recommend products through their social media profiles, and their audience trusts their opinion more than traditional advertising.

- **Why does influence marketing work?**

- Influencers are trusted because they are experts in their field and constantly follow and create trends.
- According to research, the number of searches for influencer marketing on Google has increased by 1500% over the last three years.
- Budgets for this type of marketing are growing, and 91% of respondents believe that influence marketing is an effective form of promotion.

- **Application in Serbia:**

- Research on the impact of marketing on social networks on customer brand loyalty in the Republic of Serbia shows that this concept is gaining more and more attention in marketing circles.

In short, influencer marketing is an effective way of promotion, especially in the digital environment, where influencers have a great influence on their audience.



Economic benefits for local producers:

Supporting local products has a deeper economic impact than one might imagine at first glance. Here are a few key reasons why support for domestic producers is becoming more and more important:

◦ **Stabilization of prices:**

- Buying domestic products encourages local production, which can lead to stabilization of prices on the market.
- Reducing dependence on imports helps preserve price stability in the local economy.

◦ **Reducing the pressure on foreign exchange reserves:**

- Buying domestic products instead of imported ones reduces the export of foreign currency from the country.
- This contributes to the preservation of foreign exchange reserves and the stability of the national currency.

◦ **Encouraging competition:**

- Support for domestic products encourages competition among local producers.
- Competition leads to innovation, increased product quality and lower prices.



- **Improvement of economic stability:**

- Focusing on domestic products strengthens the domestic economy and reduces external economic shocks.
- The country becomes less vulnerable to price fluctuations on world markets, which contributes to general economic stability and reduces inflationary pressure.

Let's support domestic production - it's an investment in our economic future!

Local SEO positioning is becoming a key element in the digital marketing strategy for companies that want to be one step ahead of the competition.

Here are some steps local producers can take to improve their visibility:

- **Choosing the right keywords:**

- Analyze the competition and research what keywords they are using.
- Understanding your target audience and using keyword tools.
- Include local modifiers (eg city names) in keywords.



- **Optimization of the Google My Business profile:**

- Enter correct information about the address, working hours, phone and customer ratings.
- Add photos and update your profile regularly.

- **Social networks:**

- Share content on social networks to increase local visibility.
- Interact with the local community and promote your products.

Positive implications for the environment

Although people often have a negative impact on the environment, there are also many positive things we do towards our environment. Here are some ways in which we can contribute to the preservation of nature:

- **Promotion of sustainable agriculture and forestry:**

- Practices such as agroforestry and organic farming minimize the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, reducing the harmful impact on the environment.



- Preservation of biodiversity is essential for the balance of ecosystems and the sustainability of our planet.
 - **Care of endangered animals:**
- Many almost extinct species of animals are bred in protected environments.
- Preservation of their habitats and support for protection programs contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and balance in nature.
 - **Reduction of pollution:**
- Reducing the use of plastic, recycling and reducing harmful gas emissions help preserve air, water and land.
- Every small change in our daily habits can have a positive effect on the environment.

Together we can contribute to the preservation of our planet!

Strengthening local identity and culture.

Strengthening local identity and culture has profound benefits for community and society. Here are some ways we can achieve this:



- **Promotion of traditions and customs:**

- Organizing manifestations, festivals and events that celebrate local culture, music, dance and art.
- Support for local artists, craftsmen and musicians.

- **Preservation of language and folk tales:**

- Encouraging the learning of the local language and the preservation of folk tales and legends.
- Writing books, poems and plays that explore local history and identity.

- **Support for local producers and small businesses:**

- Buying local products and supporting small businesses.
- This helps preserve traditional crafts and contributes to the local economy.

- **Education and awareness of cultural heritage:**

- Organizing workshops, lectures and exhibitions on local history, art and culture.

Encouraging young people to get to know their heritage and appreciate it.



Through these activities, we can strengthen local identity, support culture and create a community that is proud of its heritage.

Advantages of cooperation with local cooperatives, wineries and small producers in the market of Km0 products:

Cooperation with local cooperatives, wineries and small producers on the market of "Km0" products has significant advantages. Here are some key points:

- **Preservation of rural areas:**

- Cooperatives are a key organizational form for the preservation of villages and less attractive areas.
- Through better infrastructure, schools, clinics and other necessary resources, cooperatives retain part of the rural population that would otherwise leave these areas.

- **Economic stability and employment:**

- The establishment of new cooperatives and the revitalization of existing ones has a geopolitical-strategic significance.
- Cooperatives provide rapid employment and development of less attractive business areas.



- **Long-term sustainability:**
- Cooperatives enable an even distribution of profits and investment in business improvement.
- Cooperatives focus on long-term sustainability, which is crucial for communities and the local economy.

Cooperation with local producers and cooperatives supports local identity, culture and nature conservation :

There can be cooperation between local cooperatives and small food producers to jointly promote "Km0" products and support the local economy.

Also, wineries and restaurants can collaborate with local artists and musicians to create an authentic experience for visitors.



5

Marketing techniques and strategies for km0 products.

“We are proximity product influencers”

- **Collaborative Marketing Initiatives**



What is Collaborative Marketing?

Collaborative marketing, also known as co-branding, involves the mutual cooperation of likeminded organizations that come together to create campaigns or products that aim to increase brand exposure, awareness, and potential customers.

A key aspect of collaborative marketing involves mutual sharing of resources, combining efforts and exploiting opportunities and advantages to mutual satisfaction.



Who can work with?

The answer is, with almost anyone. Depending on the type and activity of the company/organization interested in cooperation, it is best to identify the Partner that has a similar target audience, products that are considered to be 'combinable', and those that, through joint cooperation, would create a meaningful story that will have a positive impact on the target customer segment.

What are affiliate marketing strategies?

Collaborative marketing strategies represent business strategies whose priority is to ensure that the common goals of the Partners are achieved. Strategies are defined at the very beginning, and are mostly based on implementation through digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, etc.

Depending on the type of partnership, it is important to consider what type of marketing strategy is best for business improvement, accordingly, the most common marketing strategies are presented below:

- **Joint campaigns**

Joint marketing or a joint campaign is aimed at the execution of joint marketing objectives. Two or more brands come together to create a unique campaign that benefits both parties.

- **Product package**

A marketing strategy where companies combine two or more products into one package. The purpose of product bundling is to provide added value to customers through convenient and cost-effective offers.

- **Event collaboration**

Fairs, workshops, conferences and webinars are examples of collaboration at events. Organizations come together to leverage complementary strengths to create engaging experiences. Event collaborations typically offer diverse content, cross-promotion, and networking opportunities.



- **Substantive cooperation/influential marketing**

Brands, companies and influencers alike can team up to create and market co-branded content across platforms and channels. This approach leverages combined expertise and audience to produce content that is more engaging and far-reaching.

- **Influencer marketing**

Influencer marketing or influential marketing is a marketing strategy based on the activity of influencers and their connection with the audience, and the influence they have in the online world with the aim of promoting a brand, company, i.e. products or services.

Influencer marketing focuses on people who have influence in a particular market, instead of focusing on the target market as a whole. He identifies individuals who have an influence on potential customers, and directs all marketing activities around these people.

*For example, if a company is engaged in the cultivation of agricultural products, and wants to expand its market and thereby increase sales and recognition of the company/trade, it can deliver samples of its products to a person engaged in influencer marketing in order to create content for said products,

and on that way to introduce your followers to specific products. In addition, there are people who deal with influencer marketing in the form of food preparation, and this form of promotion can also be taken into account, whereby the influencer would present the products of a certain craft during the preparation of the meal and use them in the preparation.

How to find the right Influencer to promote your products/services?



This kind of partnerships can be a powerful marketing tool for food companies/businesses.

By leveraging the trust, authenticity and reach of food influencers, brands can effectively attract highly engaged audiences and drive sales. In order to maximize the success of these partnerships, it is important to carefully research and select the right influencer, clearly define expectations, and continuously monitor and nurture the relationship. With the right strategies, Instagram food blogger partnerships can unlock new levels of success.

Finally, below are the advantages of using influencer marketing that contribute to the achievement of mutual goals:

- Access to a new audience
- Increased silikness about brand
- Promote rand credibility
- Higher rate engagement
- More authentic and related contents



• **EDUCATING CONSUMERS**

Considering the increase in the amount of import and processing of food products, accelerated lifestyle and consumer preferences, the purchase of locally grown products (km0 products) is still not widespread enough. Their purchase to a large extent can have various benefits, both for producers and consumers, but also for the environment.

However, in order to improve its sale/purchase, it is necessary to raise awareness/educate the local community about its advantages, and in this way try to motivate buyers/consumers to change their buying habits.

The lack of knowledge about the products we buy, their origin, cultivation method, quality, etc. ultimately affects many aspects of life in the long term, both in terms of health, ecology and finance. For this very reason, it is important to educate consumers about the products offered to them and their benefits, emphasizing the bottom line, which is that choosing locally grown food has enormous benefits, from supporting local farmers and boosting the local economy to saving on transportation fuel and conservation open space. Below are the key educations that need to be propagated and encouraged as much as possible, with the aim of making customers aware of the qualities of local cultivation.

- **Consumer education about the quality and advantages of locally grown products (km0 products)**

-At the very beginning of the process of improving and encouraging the purchase of locally grown products (km0 products), it is most important to clarify to potential consumers what locally produced products (km0 products) represent and what are the advantages of their purchase.

Therefore, the producer should let his target segment/consumers know that locally grown products are fresher, tastier and more nutritious food, with a lower price and less impact on the environment, compared to processed products. It is important to emphasize and clarify the method of their cultivation, and the fact that they are harvested when they are ripe and immediately delivered to the market (in practice, they are sold within 24 hours after they are harvested or collected), which successfully preserves their taste and quality.

- **Consumer education on the impact of buying locally grown products (km0 products) on the local economy and community**

Buying local products (km0 products) not only affects consumers to eat healthier, be informed and save money, but also affects those around them,

benefiting the local economy and the environment. Every time a consumer supports a local producer, he helps build a healthier local economy, contributes to the strengthening of the local community and the living environment.

So, it can be said that buying locally grown products (km0 of products), that is, supporting local companies stimulates the local economy. “When you shop local, you're funneling money back into the community, not into shady national chains and corporations. Money that circulates within one's own community finances public infrastructure—things like schools, libraries, roads, and parks. Local businesses also provide jobs and wages to residents and contribute to charitable non-profit organizations.”

In the end, it can be concluded that the purchase of locally produced products contributes to the development of the community as a whole, through psychological as well as financial, i.e. developmental aspects.



- **Consumer education about the impact of buying locally grown products (km0 products) on the environment**

"Buying local means buying 'green'"

The last, but no less important, education refers to educating consumers about the impact of their choices on the environment. Most consumers generally do not think about the ways in which their shopping habits affect the environment, and for this very reason it is extremely important to familiarize them with the same.

Believing that food reached the store shelves in some express, imaginary ways, and avoiding checking the importer/producer (country/place of import), customers ignore the fact that its transportation affects the environment in which we live.

In contrast, locally produced food (km0 products) does not need to travel long, which helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which ultimately contributes to improving the carbon footprint:

'Decreasing the number of intermediaries in the supply chain results in shorter distances and minimization of the necessary transportation, which ultimately reduces the emission of CO2 into the environment.'



According to the above, it can be concluded that the purchase of locally grown products (km0 of products) can reduce waste and save energy, reduce the carbon footprint (ecological transport and practicality), protect wild animals and land, encourage diversity, etc.

- **IMPACT ON THE ENVIROMENT**

Therefore, by educating consumers about the impact of buying locally grown products (km0 products) on the environment, the goal is to educate consumers about the following:

- **Reducing carbon emissions:** transporting products over long distances consumes fossil fuels. Because local products do not have to travel far, they help reduce carbon emissions.
- **Reduction of pollution and waste:** Because local products require little transportation, they need much less packaging than products shipped across the country. Less reliance on packaging helps reduce pollution and landfill waste.



-Encouraging diversity: large-scale production limits diversity because plants and animals must have equal qualities, such as the ability to survive transport. Smaller farmers can produce a wider variety of crops and livestock. Variety keeps your plate interesting and promotes a healthier ecosystem.”

After presenting the importance of educating consumers about buying locally produced products, it is essential to find an appropriate way to educate consumers.

As in most cases, one of the simplest ways of education is the application of educational materials. Depending on the type of product in question, the manufacturer can present its product in the form of educational materials and its advantages and the impact that its application/purchase has. In such cases, one of the more important ways to emphasize the importance of using a certain product is to describe how the product can help the consumer, and in which cases it can be used.



Also, since most consumers prefer a specific example, along with the presentation of the product, its specific method of application can also be presented (for example, if it is a food product that is also an addition to meals, a homemade recipe containing that product can be attached).

In addition to written materials, one of the ways to educate consumers can be audiovisual material, which consumers will notice and remember better than written materials. Through audiovisual materials, consumers will be familiar with all the characteristics of the product and its application in a shorter time, and will make a decision faster.

Furthermore, apart from consumer education, it is extremely important to establish a relationship with your consumers, which ultimately leads to developing attachment/loyalty. In order to achieve the above, the best example for consumer education is educational workshops at the local level (for example, in cooperation with local institutions, or even national ones), fairs, which are still one of the most significant and influential ways of educating the community.



6

Practical cases

SPAR Gardens of Croatia

SPAR Croatia was founded in 2004 and is part of the SPAR Austria Group, and as such contains hypermarkets (Interspar) and supermarkets (Spar), on the basis of which it is present in as many as 52 cities across Croatia.

In the rich offer of SPAR and INTERSPAR you can find top products of different brands, including their personal brand, however, what sets SPAR and INTERSPAR apart from most other retail chains in the Republic of Croatia is the active cooperation with local producers.

"Since coming to the Croatian market, SPAR Hrvatska has developed a large number of domestic producers, which is growing day by day. This third largest retail chain in the country is also the second fastest growing retailer. With such growth, SPAR also provided a great opportunity for Croatian producers who found their way to customers with their products, and SPAR and INTERSPAR are seen as stores with the most domestic products. "

In order to continue the successful and positive cooperation with domestic producers, SPAR new project and new brand called "Gardens of Croatia" with about 30 domestic suppliers and OPGs.



In this way, SPAR wants to encourage domestic production and increase the recognition of domestic products. These are seasonal products that arrive on SPAR's shelves as soon as possible, within 24 hours of harvest.

This form of cooperation enables local consumers to have around 40 products of packaged seasonal fruits and vegetables of local production at their disposal throughout the year, all with the aim of making it easier for consumers to spot and choose Croatian fresh products from local producers.

Ultimately, through the presented project of the SPAR store, it can be concluded that cooperation between local producers and retailers can have a positive impact on several target segments: local producers, retailers, consumers, and the local community.

Producers realize the possibility of marketing their products at the national level, traders make the local community aware of domestic products and thus attract them, while consumers are provided with a diverse range of domestic products, the purchase of which directly contributes to the further development of local companies.



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