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Governance & Upskilling for a
Stronger Bioeconomy

Case Studies in Bioeconomy education, training and skills development

Case study sample: COpAPS – A
Case Study in Social Agriculture

Emilia-Romagna
(ITALY)

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COpAPS – A Case Study in Social Agriculture

1 Abstract

COPAPS is an agricultural and social cooperative committed to the integration of individuals in need. Specifically, it provides support to young people with mental disabilities and vulnerable individuals throughout their journey in education, training, sheltered workshops, and employment both within and outside the company. At the core of COPAPS' mission are relationships; the cooperative offers personalized, tailor-made pathways to its beneficiaries, fostering self-esteem and integration. The cooperative operates within an agricultural environment, placing a strong emphasis on sustainability.

2 Target Groups

People with disabilities and in need

3 Case Study Category

Bioeconomy education, training and retraining and Inclusion of marginalised groups

4 Training Provider

COpAPS

5 Region

Emilia-Romagna (ITALY)

6 Language

Italian

7 Objectives of the education Format

Improving the employability of disadvantaged groups

8 Final objective of the education format

Employment and placement of young people with disabilities

9 Scope and context of the education format

Inclusion of disadvantaged people through the management of educational services, of training and job transition paths, of sheltered workshops, and integrated orientation paths with secondary school.

10 Specific Skills and competencies addressed

Technical competencies

Valorisation competencies

Transversal competencies

Organizational and time management skills; communication skills; adaptive skills; teamwork; creativity.

11 European Qualification Framework level/s

Level 2. Level 3. Level 4.

12 Main benefit of the participant

Participating in social cooperative activities can have numerous benefits for individuals, including improved social support, skill development, sense of purpose, self-esteem, networking opportunities, social capital, and community engagement.

13 Main cost categories considered

The primary focus of COpAPS revolves around aligning individuals with suitable employment opportunities. Continuous investments in economic resources and energy primarily center on identifying professional activities and work situations conducive to integrating and sustaining the employment of individuals in need. The project places particular emphasis on promoting environmental safety, quality, and corporate wellness, all of which form the core of COpAPS certifications.

The overall budget of the COpAPS project, approximately 3 million euros, is derived from diverse sources: 65% from services provided to public administrations, 20% from private sector companies, 20% from private individuals and families, and 5% from cooperatives.

14 Importance and impact

The cooperative's main institutional stakeholders are undoubtedly the Emilia-Romagna Region, the metropolitan city of Bologna, the National Health Service, the Personal Services Companies, and private companies. As of December 31, 2022, the cooperative boasted a workforce of 97 employees, with 25 among them being individuals facing disadvantages.

15 Relevance (of the format)

The social inclusion policy of the Emilia Romagna region endeavors to integrate individuals facing challenges through customized pathways, utilizing gainful employment as a vehicle to improve well-being and promote social integration.

The COpAPS project aligns with local needs and the current situation in the region, operating within the parameters of a sustainable agricultural environment and a relational context that nurtures self-esteem and integration.

COpAPS provides guided employment of disadvantaged people in different areas:

- in agriculture (organic agricultural and horticultural production, direct sale of the products themselves),
- in the agritourism restaurant and in the educational farm,
- in green maintenance,
- in the management of ecological environmental services,
- in the social carpentry workshop.

16 How can it inspire BioGov.net (Why was it designed in this specific way / what are the success factors?)

The success story of COpAPS, dating back to its inception in 1979, has significantly influenced the local community. Its pioneering bed and breakfast, 'il Monte,' stands as one of Italy's earliest established BnBs. Now embarking on a new venture, COpAPS introduces an innovative concept in social and inclusive agritourism services named 'Agriturismo Parco della Chiusa,' scheduled to launch in May 2023. This innovative project is a testament to the powerful collaboration between public administrations and private individuals.

The inspiring journey of COpAPS, spanning decades and encompassing diverse ventures, imparts valuable lessons for shaping new projects, particularly in the realm of including marginalized groups. It illustrates how a fusion of innovative ideas, robust community connections, and collaborative efforts between public and private entities can lead to transformative outcomes. The successful trajectory of COpAPS, from its pioneering BnB to the upcoming agritourism initiative, underscores the notion that bridging sectors and engaging diverse stakeholders can catalyze positive change and drive impactful projects. This noteworthy history of achievements serves as a beacon of inspiration, especially within the context of BioGov.net, offering valuable insights for those initiating endeavors aligned with social, economic, and community development.

17 Data sources

- **Online resources:** <https://www.copaps.it/>
- **Resource persons:** Lorenzo Sandri (COpAPS), Stefano Argentero (COpAPS)
- **Other sources, if any:** -

