

# Dynamic management of networks as revealed by DYNIVERSITY case studies

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## Introduction – Why these case studies?

### *Scope:*

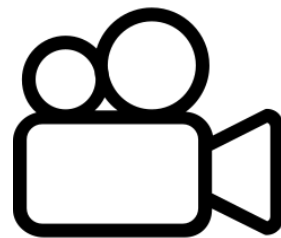
- 1) highlight how **networks** are built and how they develop
- 2) identify their **needs** to secure their development and sustainability

*Objective* : identify **practices which facilitate networking** within and across crop diversity initiatives at different levels and scales, **without crushing the diversity of identities** which are locally anchored, in terms of history, objectives, governance and working mechanisms.



## Methods - How did we study the networks?

- **21 case studies** (19 in Europe + 2 in the USA)
- **Transformative Social Innovation** theory:  
KNOWING – DOING – FRAMING – ORGANISING
- 2 key concepts to identify connectors:
  - ***Bridges*** (Granovetter, 2000)
  - ***Mediators*** (Hennion 2004, Latour 2007)
    - Any human or non-human element allowing initiatives to link up
- Semi-directive interviews with key actors



**6 in-depth case studies** with iterative video material  
→ <http://dynaversity.eu/video/>

# The cases

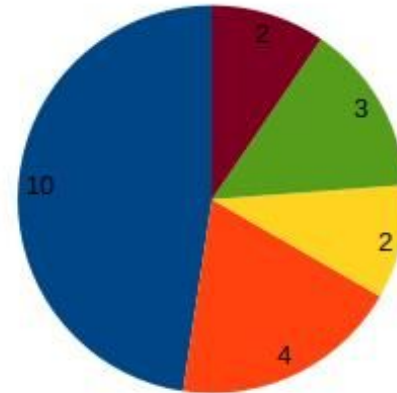


Geographic region



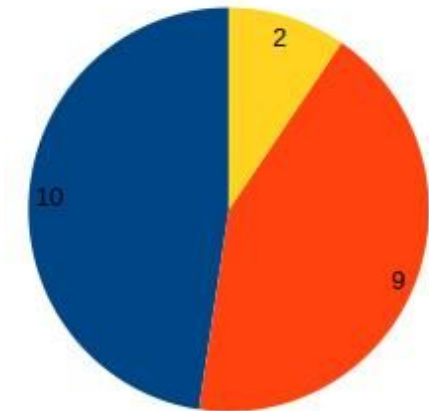
- Eastern Europe
- Northern Europe
- Southern Europe
- Western Europe
- USA

Types of initiatives



- Seed savers (farmers, gardeners)
- Breeders and researchers
- CSA
- National Parks
- Seed companies

Network scale



- (Trans-)national level
- Community level
- Farm level

→ <http://dynaversity.eu/case-studies-full/>



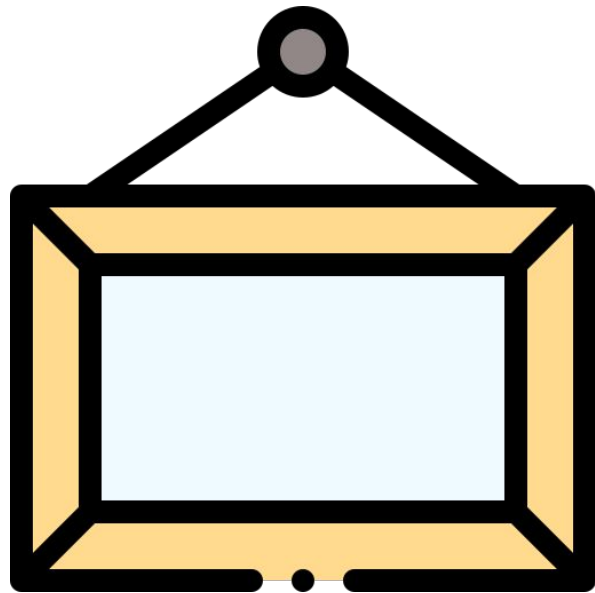
**4 main  
OBSTACLES**



## MAIN OBSTACLES

### O1 - The European legal framework on seeds, more than a legal restriction

- DUS criteria restrain the diversity eligible for variety registration
- As a consequence, restrictions imposed on building alternatives
- Experienced as an injustice (visibility, recognition, legitimacy)



→ By framing a variety as DUS, **other types of cultivars and the associated knowledge are pushed to the margin**, as well as the identities of people working with those cultivars



## MAIN OBSTACLES

### **O2 - Limited financial resources**

- Project-based approach determines priorities of initiatives for a period of 2-3 years
- Lacking opportunities for structural changes to ensure long-term sustainability



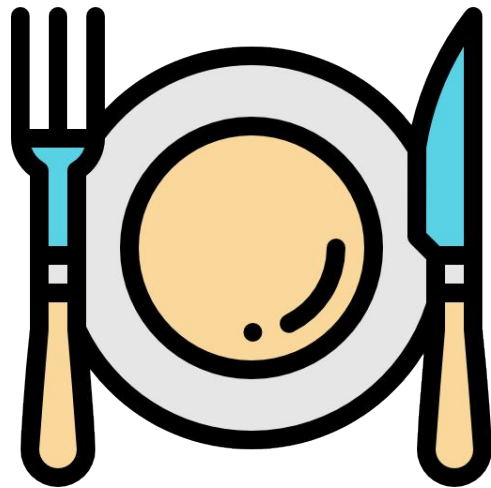
e.g. *Pétanielle*, association in the South of France:  
After experiencing a 3-year research project,  
decided to go back to a 100% voluntary basis



## MAIN OBSTACLES

### O3 - Lacking links along the supply chain (Linking plate to seeds)

- 2 cases on Community Supported Agriculture have shown the difficulties of involving consumers
- Link people to the seed at the origin of their food



Asociația pentru Susținerea  
Agriculturii Țărănești  
(ASAT, Romania):

CSA favouring traditional varieties and  
local seed







## MAIN OBSTACLES

### **O4 - A single language for transnational networking**

- Networking across Europe, working language is usually English (obstacle to the participation of many practitioners)
- ➔ Even with translation, using a single working language poses the risk of “crushing” meanings and identities, losing the richness of exchanges!



*Heirloom / ancient varieties*

*Semences paysannes*

*Semences citoyennes*

*Varietades Tradicionales*

*Open-pollinated varieties*

...



**BUILDING  
BRIDGES**

-

**4 types  
identified**



## BUILDING BRIDGES

### **B1 – Signs of quality and distinction**

= means to promote the value of the products derived from crop diversity,  
**helping people connect** with them

- **Shared living objects**, e.g. SOURDOUGH connecting farmers / bakers / researchers at the *Nordic Heritage Cereal Conference*
- **Taste**, e.g. “VEGETABLES WITH CHARACTER” campaign by *Kultursaat*
- **Labels**, e.g. HERITASTE by *SAVE Foundation*



# BUILDING BRIDGES

## B2 – Events

= essential to create and **embody a common culture** based on exchanges and to **co-construct knowledge**



Nordic Heritage Cereal Conference, Finland, 2018



SSE Summer Campout, USA, 2017



Let's Cultivate Diversity, Belgium, 2017



Kokopelli / Tambours de Gaïa, France, 2018



ASAT, Romania



Maghaz Seed Exchange, Hungary



## BUILDING BRIDGES

### **B3 – History of heirloom, local and regional cultivars**

- Awareness of that history **connects people with plants** and their own history
- **Story-telling** about the history of the crops, but also of the recent history of how initiatives were founded and (re-)discovered crop diversity, communicate a **sense of belonging**
  - Seed history researcher at Seed Savers' Exchange,  
but **narrative** present in all initiatives





## BUILDING BRIDGES

### **B4 – Structural support**

- Of 21 case studies, 14 have a staff **coordinator**, with different configurations. Other actors (researchers, national park staff...) sometimes adopt the role of coordinator
  - e.g. *ECLLD*: coordinator at European level rooted in *national realities*
  - e.g. *Pétanielle* deliberately on a 100% voluntary basis
- Scientists involved in networks may play an important role in launching and sustaining networks, while assisting in the production of knowledge
  - e.g. KaolKhoz (France), Belgian-French Fruit Network, UK CWR Network

# CONCLUSIONS

from the  
case studies

# OVERVIEW

- O1** European legal framework on seeds, more than a legal restriction
- O2** Limited financial resources
- O3** Lacking links along the supply chain
- O4** A single language for transnational networking
  
- B1** Signs of quality and distinction
- B2** Events
- B3** History of heirloom, local and regional cultivars
- B4** Structural support



# CONCLUSIONS

from the case studies

1. Encourage **multiplication**/proliferation (rather than scaling up)
2. Fostering **spaces for trial and error** (living labs)
3. Support the **structural** (time to build a common culture)
4. Strengthen and develop action **research on nutritional aspects** (as a way to connect with consumers)
5. Develop a space for reflecting on and experimenting with **new technologies** (to develop and share knowledge on seeds and genetic resources)

# Contributors



Pictograms from  
[www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)

**Thank you.**



DYNAVERSITY