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Nextfood - Educating the next generation of professionals in the agrifood system

Practice Abstract #53: Observing and reflecting on best practice examples of valorising food biodiversity

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In the 2020/2021 international online student competition FoodFactory-4-Us led by ISEKI-Food Association, students in teams of 3-5 develop a unique project solution to the topic of valorising food biodiversity while actively participating in 6 online action-learning trainings.

In one of these online trainings – the Virtual Visit – we practice the NextFood core competences of observation and reflection. In the “Virtual Visit” students are first presented, in video-format, to three cases related to the valorisation of food biodiversity; (1) vegetable protein to reduce meat consumption; (2) Ethiopian farmers living and working in harmony with nature; and (3) improving biodiversity through the cultivation of old fruit trees in Sicily. As facilitators we ask students beforehand to observe the three cases “out there” in an unbiased manner and reflect about what is most interesting to them and how to relate this to their project solutions. In the deeper reflection session following, we ask students to choose an experience from the videos that made an impression on them, to describe this experience in as much detail as possible, and to reflect on why this experience is important to them. In breakout groups, students have 10 minutes to share their individual reflections and to reflect together on the commonalities between their experiences. In this process, students explore themselves, their perspectives, attributes, and experiences helping them to gain insight into others' experiences.