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PROLOGUE

Creating and educational roadmap for learners, teachers and policy-makers

by **Martin Melin**, NextFOOD Project Coordinator, [SLU](#)



The overall aim of NextFood is to generate an innovative European science and education road map for sustainable agriculture and forestry along the value chain. The roadmap will foster quality education, ensuring that students are taught by qualified faculty, develop the skills crucial for sustainable food and forest production, with the resources needed to support the curriculum.

A roadmap will identify all the barriers and obstacles that are in the way for such a transition and suggest alternative pathways for learners, teachers and policy-makers. The roadmap builds on research outcomes from NextFood, such as the inventory of skills and the audit tool, which you can read more about in this issue of the newsletter.

As we are approaching the final phase of the project, our case studies are gearing up to finish the final learning cycles before the project ends. Until now we have been able to draw extensive learning lessons about implementation of action learning in education. In this issue, the [Greek case](#) presents their experience from organizing action-based learning in an on-line environment during the pandemic lockdown. And from our [case in Ethiopia](#), you can read about best practice for facilitation of multi-stakeholder groups.

I hope you will find our newsletter interesting!

NEWS FROM NEXTFOOD PROJECT

Action learning activities in the form of flipbooks for all cases

by **Maria Soumelidou**, Communications Coordinator, **AFS**



The **NextFOOD** project views dissemination, exploitation and outreach activities as processes that transcend the community and actors within the project's fields. The NextFOOD's overall strategy has from the very beginning intended to communicate the actions and disseminate the results of the project to a multitude of audiences and engage in a two-way exchange with the interested parties.

The project's leaflets aim to promote the project and serve as a communication material for the case studies in where the partners involved will have the chance to inform the public about the various action learning activities involved in each case study.

Partners are encouraged to translate the leaflet in their native language and disseminate the material to maximize the communication of project actions. The leaflets will be circulated by electronic means via our website mostly since the pandemic made it impossible to have them also available in physical copies for project conferences and other public events.

In all of the above material the logo, title and specific keywords of the project will be included, along with the EU emblem and funding declaration. Additionally, links to the project website and social media accounts will be provided in such a way so as to encourage the audience to visit them. Lastly, all of the above material will follow the visual identity of the project brand and use visual elements to attract attention.

The WP6 leader was responsible to develop the template for the leaflet and provide it to all case leaders. They will be responsible to adapt them in the native language if deemed important and disseminate in a local level.

Leaflets were thus created in an electronic form both as a printable pdf but also as a flipbook which makes it more attractive to the reader, providing information material on each case study. A special "area" in the site in each case has been created to host these flipbooks and a button to "guide" the user to the platform and to the relative subcategory titled "Action Learning Activities". The public can thus be informed on the action learning activities or other actions that have taken place within the context of each case study.

So far, 10 leaflets were created for cases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 since partners responded eagerly to WP6's call for the aforementioned reasons. The flipbooks for the remaining two cases are being currently developed.

The flipbooks especially, are easy to read, attract the attention and outline in a short but concise manner the most important action learning activities within each case.





Links for flipbooks:

- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-1-agroecology-action-learning-in-farming-and-food-systems/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-2-students-and-farmers-taking-food-innovations-from-idea-to-market/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-3-learning-from-farmers-training-centres-multi-stakeholder-action-learning-platform/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-4-supply-chain-innovation-competition/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-5-action-learning-agriscapes/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-6-towards-a-profitable-and-sustainable-forestry-chain/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-8-experiential-and-action-learning-in-sustainable-gastronomy-it/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-10-educating-the-next-generation-of-professionals-in-the-agrifood-system/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-11-community-of-practice-cop-for-sustainable-innovation-in-the-agrifood-systems/>
- <https://www.nextfood-project.eu/case-12-improving-sustainability-in-farming-and-food-systems/>



Research Publications in Progress

by *Ivanche Dimitrievski, LU* (Department of Food Technology, Engineering and Nutrition)

What kinds of social relations do people draw when reporting the impact of their work or when addressing the skills necessary to perform it? This question has intrigued Lund University-based researchers Ivanche Dimitrievski and Håkan Jönsson from the very start of the NextFood project. Combining theoretical insights from Science and Technology Studies (STS) and ethnology with empirical material generated within work packages 1 ([Inventory of Skills](#)) and 5 ([Quality Assured Knowledge Transfer](#)), Dimitrievski and Jönsson drafted two scientific articles now accepted for publication.

The first will be published in May/June 2022 as part of the **Routledge anthology Humanities meets business – Shedding light on the human perspective in university-industry collaborations** (eds.: M.S. Mahnke, M. Nielsen and L. Tjørring). It is entitled **Rethinking impact – Unwrapping the social processes behind an institutional term** and examines how and the extent to which “practice abstracts” – the EU format for disseminating project results – make impact and relevance available as readings to a variety of diversely situated social actors.



The second scientific article will be published in 2022 as part of **Skills and enskilment for sustainable food**, special issue of *Kritisk Etnografi* – The Swedish Journal of Anthropology. The paper, entitled **Skills in the making: Agri-food skills, time and social organization**, demonstrates farming skills in the context of sustainability agriculture. Specifically, it shows how farming skills are intimately tied to the social organization of the practices through which those skills are being transmitted and acquired, identified and assessed, oriented to, organized and reported.

The second paper will be presented at the meeting of the “**ValueS**” seminar group (<https://liu.se/en/research/values>), in Linköping University (TEMA – Technology and Social Change), in June 2021.

Through these two papers, Dimitrievski and Jönsson contribute to better understanding the sociopolitical processes entering impact work and skilling, while establishing a firm theoretical argument for two of the NextFood [deliverables](#): the **NextFood Sustainability Impact Framework** and the **NextFood Audit Tool for Research and Education**.

Nextfood Audit Tool

by *Stine Rosenlund Hansen, RUC, Ivanche Dimitrievski, LU, Parthib Basu, University of Calcutta, WHH*

Agri-food and forestry sectors develop rapidly, while facing complex challenges such as globalization and climate change. Educational actors must adapt to facilitate the development of the skills and competences that students need to operate as professionals in these sectors in the future. The NextFOOD project has identified **seven pathways of skilling** that are crucial for future professionals: **Sustainability mindset, Technological adaptation, Network-building, Strategic management, Systems perspective, Multi-perspectivalism and Versatility** (Rosenlund et al. 2019).



To support educational actors, assess how their programmes, modules, courses, and other educational activities perform in relation to each of the seven skilling pathways, we have developed the **NextFOOD Audit Tool**. The audit tool is designed to generate awareness and reflection among educational actors. It consists of **three interconnected parts**:

- In the first part, users provide background information on professional roles, gender, age, work experience, and type of education. This will enable perspectival analyses of the results and comparisons.
- The second part is a self-assessment tool, where users will rank how their programme, course, or other educational activity perform in relation to achieving the needed skills and competences.
- The third part introduces reflection exercises, designed to engage educators in reflection on various ways to develop their educational activities further.

The tool has been through several test phases with students and faculty staff. Overall, the participants reported that the tool **raised relevant, engaged, and enriching conversations**, also of the kind that were not normally raised. **Several potential purposes and outcomes** were pointed out by students and faculty members:

- Evaluating and planning educational activities.
- Identifying gaps in current education.
- To understand the education, its scope, and limitations, in a holistic perspective.
- To reflect on the connections between the education and 'real-life' and the skills needed after finalizing the education.

"I saw it [the tool] as a way for us to evaluate how we think students learn the best and how easy or hard this would be to implement into our education. I think it gave me a more wholesome view of my education and what it perhaps lacks. I feel like part two was quite useful since it gives us an idea of the different aspects of our education and that some parts of it are perhaps more valued than others. It's important to know that your education will prepare you for the working environment that you will face after you've finished your education." (Student)

The Audit tool thereby provides educational actors insights regarding their capacities to contribute towards developing a next generation of agri-food and forestry professionals, by ensuring that education and training systems are fit for purpose and continuously updated.

References:

Rosenlund H.S., Brandt Sørensen, L., Flynn, K., Lindner, L. and Kristensen, N.H. 2019. *Nextfood D1.1: Inventory of skills and competencies*. Nextfood (Horizon 2020, GA:771738)

Read more: *D1.2 Audit tool for education and research at*

<https://www.nextfood-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/d1.2-audit-tool-for-education-and-research1.pdf>

NEWS ABOUT EDUCATION & TRAINING

New round with new students at Skogforsk

by **Malin Juter**, *Skogforsk*, (the Forestry Research Institute of Sweden)

Skogforsk is going to start our last circle in the case to gain a higher understanding about logging techniques, strategies and methods to increase quality and number of micro-habitats in production forests.

Our case is conducted as a vocational course for forestry professionals.

The course now starts before the summer with us getting to know each other and going through the core competencies. Then follows a series of meetings in different places and with different focus during the autumn. Physical meetings in the forest will be mixed with weekly communication on Supertextapp in a forum private to the participants. That way we aim to keep high activity and focus despite the pandemic situation. It will also provide exercise to the core competencies.

We have digitized our documents for reflection in various forms to facilitate data collection and make it easy for our participants. The idea here is that it should be easy to reflect on the basic competencies both before, during and after our meetings.

The learning circles before having taught us a lot, so we hope we can hone and learn even more this last round.



Greeting from the project team at Skogforsk !

Action learning – that too online?

by **Anshuman Das**, *University of Calcutta, WHH*

Lockdown was a new thing for the world. A new experience for the teachers to learn how to deal with online tools, how to give attention to every student, how to keep the learning spirit high in the class. It was particularly difficult for the agroecology course for farmer trainers and practitioners that we do in University of Calcutta.

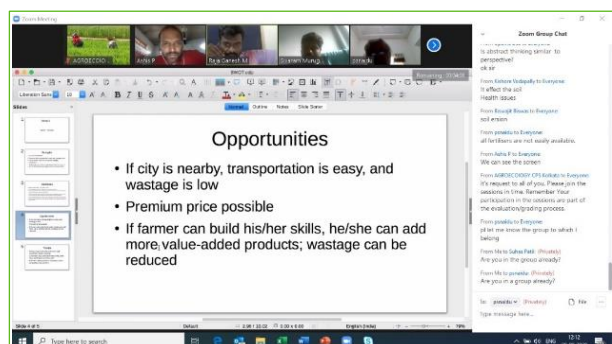
We generally follow a structure of **action-reflection based learning** – where students were divided into multiple groups and attached to a farm to find out challenges & scope and develop solutions together with the farmer. In the process their participation, **dialogue, communication, problem solving, and interpersonal skill** were sharpened.



But how can you do all these in an online course? How do you create an environment where students can have fun of learning together? Well, you cannot!

We tried to simulate the situation only. We invited application from group of students – not individuals. So that they can do group work together in nearby selected farm and the community. They did activities like market survey, food processing study, working out challenges and solutions in a local farm together in their respective small groups. We used WhatsApp group as a space for interaction with images, small videos – so that a virtual situation of togetherness is.

In the classroom, apart from using breakout rooms – we used role play, going out for an hour, and come back with photographs for observation game, peer review of class work, debate, film shows – all possible ways of creating an action-reflection based participatory learning environment. We also did virtual tour to food retail outlets. But let us admit that it lacked on building relationship between the students and teacher and between the peers – which is a necessary component of a good learning experience – going out together, eating together, and the all the things that happens beyond a classroom.



But we innovated a lot, we learnt new tools – we learnt how to squeeze out maximum even form a difficult situation. We could bring in many speakers from outside which would have been otherwise impossible in a physical situation. Earlier, we never realised the potential of online classes. We are thinking of switching to an online-physical hybrid mode to get maximum benefit from both, whenever the globe comes out of this sickness!

NEWS ABOUT CONFERENCES/EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

International Competition in “Developing and Supporting Short Food Supply Chains”

by **Katherine Flynn**, Project Manager, [ISEKI](#)

Students who are passionate about sustainable food and innovative learning in a cooperative international environment, this is for you!
Call for Student Applications

Teams of Master's students from around the world are invited to address the following question in this 2021 Edition of the ISEKI-Food International Student Competition Game:

Contributions to Supporting and Developing Short Food Supply Chains

Teams of 3 to 5 Master's students registered in food-related programmes anywhere in the world are invited. Applications require a title, a description of the problem/solution that the project will address, and an industry mentor. Applications will be available here in late June. The deadline for application submission is 31 AUGUST 2021.

The competition opens in late September 2021 with the first of 6 on-line training sessions and ends in early December 2021 with a Virtual Conference where teams present their projects, and the winners are announced.

Participation in the competition will aid in identifying and solving real problems in sustainable food systems and give action-learning experience as students work together on essential skills for today's job market. All participants will benefit!

This competition is the 4th in the “Sustainable Supply Chain” series of the ISEKI-Food Association as one of the case studies of the NextFOOD project. Read about previous competitions [here](#).

We are also looking for sponsors for more prizes for the winning team. Is your institution interested in the positive publicity of a sponsorship? Contact Katherine Flynn at kflynn@iseki-food.net for more information.

Look forward to seeing you at the “Short Food Supply Chains” competition!



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Horizon 2020
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for Research & Innovation



international
student
competition
game



PRACTICE ABSTRACT

Action Based Learning in an on-line environment during pandemic lockdown

by **Georgie Zafeiriou** and **Elissavet Papadopoulou**, *AFS*

edited by **Katherine Flynn** and **Line Lindner**, *ISEKI*

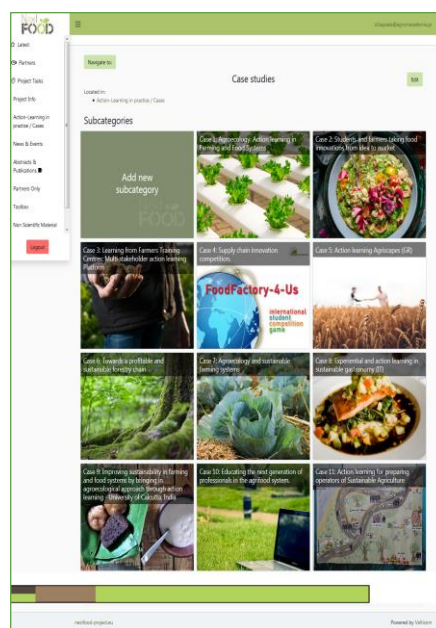
Due to the international COVID-19 situation there was a great need for the American Farm School to shift their learning and advising activities online while maintaining the highest quality. The AFS team found different good practice guidelines useful for different groups.

At an organizational level:

- Place emphasis on positive outcomes of this experience and new skills that are developing.
- Offer ongoing digital skills and digital technology training and offer ongoing support.
- Use already existing Learning Management Systems.
- Continuously investigate new possibilities for long-term good practices.
- Organize frequent team reflection meetings.

With educators/advisors/farmers:

- Demonstrate the value of digital devices/methods and digital skills development.
- Allow for adjustment to online meetings by meeting online unofficially before the first work meetings.
- Be versatile in methods of communication used.
- Simplify the massive online world through the provision of clear instructions.
- Aim for small group sizes.
- Reconsider material, offer more independent study, and engage more personally during online sessions. On-line learning can be more draining than physical presence learning.
- Implement learning by teaching techniques (e.g. student presentations).
- Include group discussion/reflection after each session.
- Work with student-generated case studies.
- Ensure emotional engagement.



How to develop competences to facilitate action learning in a multi-stakeholder platform

by **Mohammed Tilahun, Girmay Tesfay, Zanebe Abraha**, College of Dryland Agriculture and Natural Resources, [Mekelle University](#)

edited by **Katherine Flynn** and **Line Lindner**, [ISEKI](#)

Learning is an important aspect for a sustainable transition among multi-stakeholder actors in the agrifood system. Following the NextFOOD approach, learning can be facilitated through the development of the core competences of **Observation, Participation, Dialogue, Reflection and Visioning**. In addition to technical skills required for practitioners, these competences will enable continuous learning in the learning arena. If learning continues to occur, practitioners can strive to meet their future wanted situation by continuously learning from the present and past experiences.

Learning in a multi-stakeholder platform provides advantages in terms of diversity of views, experiences, and local situations. However, it also requires care to meet the diverse needs of the stakeholders.

To facilitate better learning and competence development in a multi-stakeholder platform requires:

- Establishing manageable group size (<12 members composed of farmers, students, teachers, farmer advisors with gender inclusive team)
- Using easy and common language
- Exercising all competences together at various platforms (meeting, visit, concrete experiencing)
- Assessing the competence development at pre- and post-intervention scales
- Using different methods of assessing competencies as appropriate (interview, self-assessment, group reflection sessions).

You can also find interesting **Practice Abstracts** like this one [here](#)



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Terms

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