

Directed Study S5

English part
Benchmark

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1. Introduction

Les Jardins de Cocagne, located in France, is a group of organic farms. They provide employment to unemployed or disadvantaged people. At the same time, they grow vegetables, which they sell to everyone. People buy a basket each week through a subscription.

This work is important because it helps people and also helps feed the community. In this report, I compare Cocagne to other associations in other countries. I will highlight the positive and negative aspects, then draw a table and conclude.

2. Jardin de Cocagne France <https://jardindecocagnenantais.fr/>

The website for Jardin de Cocagne Nantes presents itself as a socially driven organic farming initiative. It emphasizes its mission of providing professional and social reintegration through organic market gardening, with production distributed via weekly vegetable box subscriptions and local market sales. The layout is rich in sections covering governance, the insertion program, vegetable baskets, recipes, news, and a members' corner offering comprehensive information. However, the design remains functional and informational, with limited visual or interactive enhancements. While content is plentiful, the site lacks dynamic elements such as interactive maps or multimedia content. The mobile experience is passable, but images and layouts appear basic and may not fully adapt to smaller screens. Incorporating testimonials, video content, or interactive features could strengthen user engagement, storytelling, and visitor trust.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Strong emphasis on social reintegration and organic farming mission.	Basic visual design with little graphical appeal.
Clear navigation with rich content on structure, insertion program, and baskets.	Lacks interactive or multimedia content to enhance engagement.
Transparent pricing for weekly baskets (€10.70 small / €15.40 large).	Mobile responsiveness could be improved, some elements don't scale smoothly.
Communicates local distribution options	Layout remains static; dynamic visual

(in-garden market, basket pick-up times).	storytelling is missing.
Detailed organizational info (association governance, team, partners).	Absence of testimonials/videos to showcase impact on beneficiaries.

3. GASAP (Groupes d'Achat Solidaires de l'Agriculture Paysanne) Belgium (<https://gasap.be>)

GASAP is a Belgian network of solidarity purchasing groups. Consumers, often called “consom’actors”, organize themselves into small groups and commit to supporting a local organic farmer. They pay in advance for a season and, in return, they receive weekly baskets of fresh organic vegetables. The goal is to create a fair and stable relationship between farmers and consumers, based on trust and solidarity.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Strengthens the direct relationship between local farmers and consumers.	The structure can be fragile and often relies on public or institutional support.
Works on a contract-based solidarity model, where risks and benefits are shared.	Governance can be complex, as it must balance professional management with citizen participation.
Encourages ecological farming practices and supports sustainable food systems.	Mainly limited to Belgium, with less international visibility compared to other CSA networks.
Includes social innovation projects such as educational programs and participatory guarantee systems.	



4. Solawi – Solidarische Landwirtschaft Germany

<https://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org>

Solawi is Germany's national network of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiatives. The members known as "prosumers" join forces with farmers in a model built on solidarity. Through advance payments or shared contributions, these members help fund the entire agricultural operation. In return, they receive regular shares of the farm's harvest throughout the year. The Solawi network not only facilitates the development of these farms with training and informational support, but also promotes sustainable agriculture, transparency, and social commitment through regional chapters and broader campaigns.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Easy navigation, well organized	While growing rapidly, the number of Solawi farms is still relatively small compared to other CSA systems internationally .
Members pre-finance the farm's operation, allowing farmers to plan ahead with more economic stability .	Coordinating budgets, governance, and participation among multiple stakeholders can be challenging, requiring solid organizational structures .
Fosters direct, respectful connections, assuring trust and transparency throughout production and distribution .	Though many Solawis aim to be inclusive, the model may still be less accessible to lower-income households without strong solidarity mechanisms.
Prosumers often participate in farm work, meetings, and decision-making forums, gaining insight into food cultivation and sustainable practices.	
The Solawi model supports short supply chains, biodiversity, and ecological farming.	
Since 2011, the Solawi network has grown rapidly, offering training, advocacy, and coordination across Germany .	



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5. Good Food Box - Foodshare Canada

<https://foodshare.net/program/the-good-food-box/>

FoodShare Toronto launched the Good Food Box program in the early 1990s as a way to provide affordable baskets of fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income households on a regular basis. The program has evolved over time: initially sourcing produce through the provincial food terminal, then shifting to purchases from local farmers and incorporating variations (online store, Food Rx partnerships). The program is part of FoodShare's broader strategy to promote food security and advocate for fairer public policies.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Very nice website, easy to navigate, fast, and with a good graphic design. For a WordPress site.	Significant dependence on subsidies, funding, and institutional partnerships.
Long history and strong local recognition in a large urban center.	Sensitivity to seasonal variations and supply disruptions.
Affordable prices and multiple distribution options to reach different populations.	Complex logistics to maintain quality, frequency, and low prices simultaneously.
Integration with complementary programs such as Food Rx and food education initiatives.	Geographical scope reduced mainly to Toronto and some Mississauga addresses only
The model is easily replicable in other cities through municipal and community partnerships.	Compared to national CSAs structured as networks, their political reach and capacity to influence agricultural policies may be more limited.



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6. Growing Communities UK <https://growingcommunities.org/>

Growing Communities is a community organization in Hackney (London) founded in the 1990s. Its core activities include a veg bag/box scheme, a farmers' market, and small farms/urban initiatives. The organization promotes local, fair trade, low-carbon food, with a focus on supporting small-scale sustainable producers and local food education.

Advantages	Disadvantages
High transparency regarding the origin of products and their direct relationships with the small producers.	The website is very slow to load each page. It is not aesthetically appealing and does not correspond to their field of activity.
Deep local roots and high credibility within the local community.	Geographical scope reduced mainly to London
A community and event experience that strengthens loyalty and ownership among small producers and customers.	Reliance on volunteers and strong local commitment to function effectively.
	Logistical constraints and high internal costs to maintain standards and distribution frequency.

7. Final summary table

Website	Advantages	Disadvantages
Jardin de Cocagne - Nantes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong emphasis on social reintegration and organic farming mission. - Clear navigation with rich content on structure, insertion program, and baskets. - Transparent pricing for weekly baskets (€10.70 small / €15.40 large). - Communicates local distribution options (in-garden market, basket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic visual design with little graphical appeal. - Lacks interactive or multimedia content to enhance engagement. - Mobile responsiveness could be improved, some elements don't scale smoothly. - Layout remains static; dynamic visual storytelling is missing. - Absence of testimonials/videos to



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	<p>pick-up times).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed organizational info (association governance, team, partners). 	<p>showcase impact on beneficiaries.</p>
GASAP - Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthens the direct relationship between local farmers and consumers. - Works on a contract-based solidarity model, where risks and benefits are shared. - Encourages ecological farming practices and supports sustainable food systems. - Includes social innovation projects such as educational programs and participatory guarantee systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The structure can be fragile and often relies on public or institutional support. - Governance can be complex, as it must balance professional management with citizen participation. - Mainly limited to Belgium, with less international visibility compared to other CSA networks.
Solawi - Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy navigation, well organized. - Members pre-finance the farm's operation, allowing farmers to plan ahead with more economic stability. - Fosters direct, respectful connections, assuring trust and transparency throughout production and distribution. - Prosumers often participate in farm work, meetings, and decision-making forums, gaining insight into food cultivation and sustainable practices. - The Solawi model supports short supply chains, biodiversity, and ecological farming. - Since 2011, the Solawi network has grown rapidly, offering training, advocacy, and coordination across Germany. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While growing rapidly, the number of Solawi farms is still relatively small compared to other CSA systems internationally. - Coordinating budgets, governance, and participation among multiple stakeholders can be challenging, requiring solid organizational structures. - Though many Solawis aim to be inclusive, the model may still be less accessible to lower-income households without strong solidarity mechanisms.
Good Food Box - Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very nice website, easy to navigate, fast, and with a good graphic design. For a WordPress site. - Long history and strong local recognition in a large urban center. - Affordable prices and multiple distribution options to reach different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant dependence on subsidies, funding, and institutional partnerships. - Sensitivity to seasonal variations and supply disruptions. - Complex logistics to maintain quality, frequency, and low prices



	<p>populations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration with complementary programs such as Food Rx and food education initiatives. - The model is easily replicable in other cities through municipal and community partnerships. 	<p>simultaneously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geographical scope reduced mainly to Toronto and some Mississauga addresses only - Compared to national CSAs structured as networks, their political reach and capacity to influence agricultural policies may be more limited.
Growing Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High transparency regarding the origin of products and their direct relationships with the small producers. - Deep local roots and high credibility within the local community. - A community and event experience that strengthens loyalty and ownership among small producers and customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The website is very slow to load each page. It is not aesthetically appealing and does not correspond to their field of activity. - Geographical scope reduced mainly to London - Reliance on volunteers and strong local commitment to function effectively. - Logistical constraints and high internal costs to maintain standards and distribution frequency.

8. Conclusion

This benchmark shows that Les Jardins de Cocagne shares fundamental objectives with GASAP (Belgium), Solawi (Germany), Good Food Box (Canada), and Growing Communities (UK): local and sustainable food systems and positive social impact. Les Jardins de Cocagne distinctive strength lies in social reintegration through employment, while GASAP/Solawi emphasizes solidarity between producers and consumers, Good Food Box targets urban food insecurity, and Growing Communities demonstrates the value of urban agriculture. Common constraints persist: financial dependence, limited geographic reach, and the need for sustained community engagement. By adapting foreign elements (Solawi-style solidarity budgeting, FoodShare partnerships), Cocagne can strengthen its resilience and broaden its social and ecological impact.



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