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Collaborative Enterprise and Sustainability: The Case of Slow Food.

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The current and prevailing paradigm of intensive agricultural production is a straightforward example of the mainstream way of doing business. Mainstream enterprises are based on a negativistic view of human nature that leads to counterproductive and unsustainable behaviours producing negative impact for society and the natural environment. If we want to change the course, then different players are needed, which can flourish thanks to their capacity to serve others and creating values for all the participants in the network in which they are embedded. In the article, through the analysis of the Slow Food movement and the use of recent theoretical and empirical contributions in behavioural sciences and psychology, we
Collaborative Enterprise and Sustainability: The Case of Slow Food

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Abstract The current and prevailing paradigm of intensive agricultural production is a straightforward example of the mainstream way of doing business. Mainstream enterprises are based on a negativistic view of human nature that leads to counter-productive and unsustainable behaviours producing negative impact for society and the natural environment. If we want to change the course, then different players are needed, which can flourish thanks to their capacity to serve others and creating values for all the participants in the network in which they are embedded. In the article, through the analysis of the Slow Food movement and the use of recent theoretical and empirical contributions in behavioural sciences and psychology, we support the collaborative enterprise model as an alternative to the still prevailing, mainstream business models. Evidence shows that caring and responsible efforts of economic agents are acknowledged and reciprocated even in highly competitive markets.

Introduction

Worldwide, the number of people experiencing hunger around 1 billion. In 2010 the undernourished people were 925 million, but in 2011, because of rising and volatile prices, further 44 million persons, mainly in Africa and Asia, have been forced into extreme poverty (FAO 2011a; p. 63, 2011c; World Bank Institute 2011).

Thanks to the Green Revolution and the related intensive crop production between 1961 and 2000 farmers developing countries increased food production from 8 million tonnes to over 2.2 billion tonnes (FAO 2011). However, these achievements have been associated with degradation of land and water resources, and deterioration of related ecosystem goods and services. These, include biomass, carbon storage, soil health, water storage and supply, biodiversity, and social and cultural services (FAO 2011d, p. 9).

Over the last 50 years, around 60% (15 out of 24) of the ecosystem services have been degraded or lost already.
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