Final Project Report: CICERO (Citizens & Communities for European Right to quality and local Food) Reporting Partner: Fundacja Targ Pietruszkowy (Kraków, Poland)

1. Describe the activities performed and the main achievements. For the Final Report, include the outcomes of the action

Overview of Activities The CICERO project brought together citizens, farmers, and local administrators across five European countries (Croatia, Italy, Denmark, Poland, and the Netherlands) to promote food democracy, sustainability, and short food supply chains. While our organization participated in all transnational exchanges, our primary focus was hosting the 3-day study visit in Kraków and the Małopolska region from May 30 to June 1, 2025.
Themed "Local food enjoyed at a green table: farmers' markets as places where farm-to-fork strategy is implemented in practice", the Kraków event included the following key activities:

Day 1 (May 30): We welcomed the international delegations with a guided tour of the city and the Podgórze district, followed by a networking evening at Pub Spoko.

Day 2 (May 31): Activities took place at the Targ Pietruszkowy farmers' market. We hosted the Slow Chef Festival, which served as our opening conference. Many local officials accepted our invitation to attend the opening and addressed the market-goers with short speeches. During the demonstration part of the event, local chefs used niche, local products for live cooking demonstrations, introducing citizens to the project while highlighting local food's potential as an engine for the community and tourism. At the same time, we hosted "Farm to play" workshops for families, featuring practical activities like beeswax candle and food wrap making, constructing habitats for wild pollinators and sustainability-themed board games. We concluded the day with a visit to the second location of the market (Grzegórzki) followed by a networking lunch of traditional pierogi and a crucial experience-sharing session where we discussed our transition from a volunteer-based market to a financially sustainable operation. The session had a format of a short introduction and a lively Q&A session with the active participation of all international delegation.

Day 3 (June 1): We organized a field visit to Białka Tatrzańska. Participants visited an Oscypek cheese-making hut (Bacówka u Krzyśka) to observe traditional sheep herding and the production of this Slow Food Presidium product. The event concluded with a traditional lamb and Oscypek lunch and a project partners' meeting at the Kotelnica mountain summit.

Results our work package in Kraków were successfully delivered:

- 1 major 3-day transnational event hosted in Kraków and the Małopolska region, bringing together local administration, farmers, customers and European delegations.
- 340 registered participants engaged in the event (confirmed by signatures).
- Slow Chef Festival and opening conference at the market.
- Farm to play interactive workshops (primarily families and children).
- Farm visit to Białka Tatrzańska to see the culture of sheep herding and Oscypek cheesemaking.
- Project partners' meeting to discuss project progress and future collaboration opportunities.
- 1 evaluation report produced to detail the findings, outcomes, and lessons learned.
- 49 social media posts/stories and articles about the event.

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Outcomes resulting directly from these activities include:

- **Increased Knowledge on Biodiversity:** Families and children who participated in our "Farm to play" workshops demonstrated a better understanding of biodiversity (and the role of pollinators) and natural food production.
- **Changed Attitudes Towards Local Cuisine:** Citizens and stakeholders gained a stronger appreciation for the cultural and economic value of local food, recognizing not only its health benefits and support for the local community but also its potential to boost regional tourism and community welfare.
- **Improved Organizational Capacities:** European project partners gained actionable, improved skills in market management after interacting with our team and learning how to make a grassroots farmers' market financially sustainable without losing its core values.
- **Enhanced Civic Awareness:** Through the attendance of many public officials and representatives of local and regional authorities during the opening conference, public officials, farmers and market customers became more engaged in the dialogue surrounding EU "Farm to Fork" policies and the importance of active citizenship in shaping sustainable food systems.

2. Describe the results of the project (so far) and (actual and expected) impacts (on target groups, change, procedures, capacities, innovation, etc.). For the Final Report, include an overview of the results

- Survey analysis

During the project, we organised a 'Farmers' Markets and Lifestyle' Survey among market customers. It was a valuable experience that provided us with tangible data. We collected the answers from 98 respondents. The data indicates an exceptionally loyal consumer base, with over 73% of participants visiting the market more than once a month. Moreover, the majority of respondents (54%) visit the market every week which suggests that Targ Pietruszkowy is not merely a novelty but a structural component of the local food system. Regarding the section on Health, Biodiversity, and Sustainability the general sentiment is rather positive (averages between 4.2 and 4.8 on a scale from 1-5), with health ranking first (4.7 out of 5). Consumers view the farmer as a direct guarantor of physical wellness, citing the lack of pesticides and higher nutrition value as primary factors.

A small but distinct minority (approx. 3%) consistently provided 1s and 2s across\ all categories. This indicates a segment of "sustainability sceptics" who, despite visiting the market, remain unconvinced that individual consumption can trigger structural societal shifts or that small-scale farming is inherently superior in protecting biodiversity.

For us as the market organisers it was very reassuring to see an overwhelming majority of customers (97%) appreciate Targ Pietruszkowy's non-commercial activities, such as the Slow Chef Festival and biodiversity workshops. This confirms that consumers value the market as an educational institution, not just a retail point.

Finally, in the open-ended section of the survey the shoppers focused on four themes:

- **Economic** (farmers markets as hubs of economic resistance: they believe that by shopping at the market they are protecting "local entrepreneurs" from "foreign corporations.")
- **Relational** (market serves as a community hub that "restores the habit of conversation. " It is valued for the "human element"—the ability to look a producer in the eye)

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- **Environmental** (the market serves as a guide to seasonality. Participants cited that seeing "real vegetables" and understanding why products aren't available year-round helps reduce food waste)
- **Quality of life** (perceived quality of food impacts long-term wellness and mental health, importance of taste, one respondent noted that after getting used to the "real taste" of farmers market products, supermarket alternatives became "difficult to eat.")

The survey results validate the strategic needs identified in the CICERO Proposal (Part B).

CICERO Objective	Survey Evidence & Strategic Correlation
Food Democracy	86% of respondents feel they are building a "more sustainable model of society." This validates the proposal's aim to use citizen-oriented narratives to shape EU policy.
Food Sovereignty	Direct participant concerns about "dependency on foreign actors" and "pesticides in mass imports" correlate with the proposal's focus on resilience and local self-sufficiency.
Bridging the Gender/Age Gap	The proposal notes a **38% income gap** for female-run farms and that **47% of young farmers** are in Poland/Romania. Qualitative feedback shows a high appetite for "supporting the work of specific individuals," which provides a platform to highlight these underrepresented groups.
Short-Supply Chain Education	Respondents explicitly mentioned "bypassing intermediaries" (middlemen) as a reason for their engagement, proving that the project's educational focus on the CAP's short-supply chain approach is reaching the public.

Impacts (actual and expected)

The actual and expected long-term systemic impacts of the CICERO project on our target groups and frameworks include:

- **Impact on Target Groups (Farmers & Consumers):** By facilitating direct sales at farmers' markets, small-scale producers bypass intermediaries, ensuring they receive a fair price for their hard work. This elevated income allows them to reinvest in sustainable agricultural practices. Conversely, consumers gain direct access to affordable, healthy, local food, which is expected to positively impact public health by addressing diet-dependent diseases and obesity over the long term. Projects like CICERO let market managers and farmers connect, share experiences, support each other and, thus, prevent burnout in carrying out this demanding task of being a market organiser or small scale farmer.
- **Impact on the Environment and Innovation:** By shifting consumer habits towards seasonal, locally sourced goods, the project actively contributes to reducing carbon footprints, lowering greenhouse gas emissions associated with long-distance food transport, and reducing food waste. Exploring traditional practices, like preserving heritage crops and biodiversity, acts as an innovative countermeasure to globalized monocultures. The survey among market customers clearly shows that people want to make sustainable choices if they are given the chance.
- **Impact on Equality and Capacities:** The project empowers marginalized groups in agriculture. By creating viable local market models, it lowers the barrier to entry for micro-entrepreneurs, actively encouraging women and younger generations to take up agricultural business opportunities, thereby flattening demographic inequalities in the rural sector. By sharing the experiences between the project

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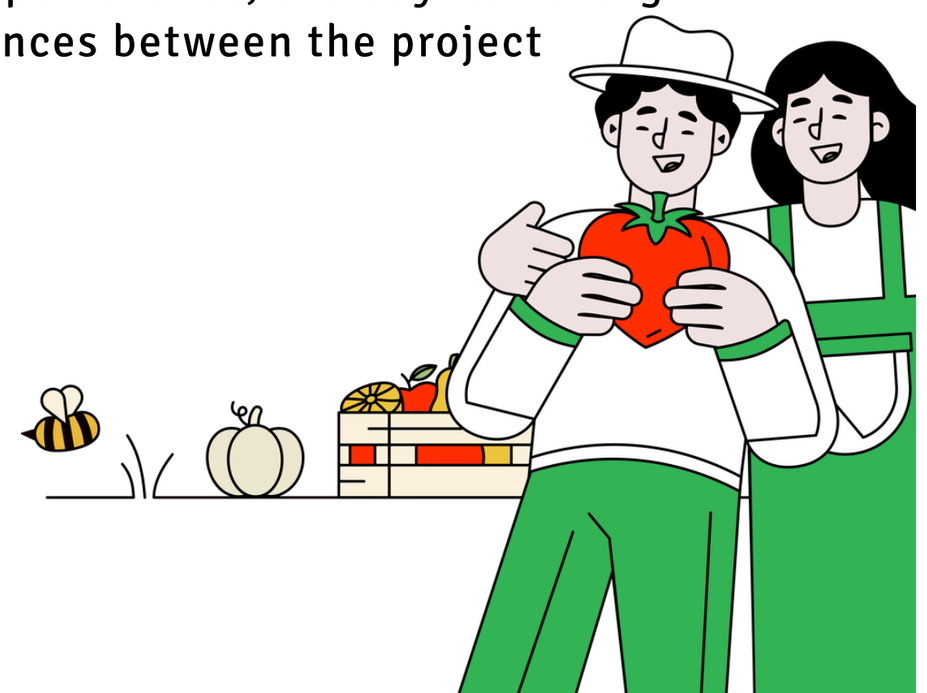

flattening demographic inequalities in the rural sector. By sharing the experiences between the project partners and adapting best practices from our foreign counterparts we can make our local markets even better, run the more effectively and improve financial stability.

- **Impact on Democratic Procedures:** Ultimately, the project promotes enhanced food democracy. By gathering citizens' inputs via the survey the project equips market organisers with the civic feedback necessary to justify more support for farmers markets as backbones of resilient, localized food policies that reduce dependence on volatile global supply chains.

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