



CIHEAM

**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC
INCLUSION WORKING GROUP**

2020-2023

ACTIVITY REPORT



CIHEAM
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Introduction

Food and nutritional insecurities, environmental degradation, climate change, unbalanced development of territories are challenges that question the sustainability and inclusiveness of Mediterranean agri-food systems.

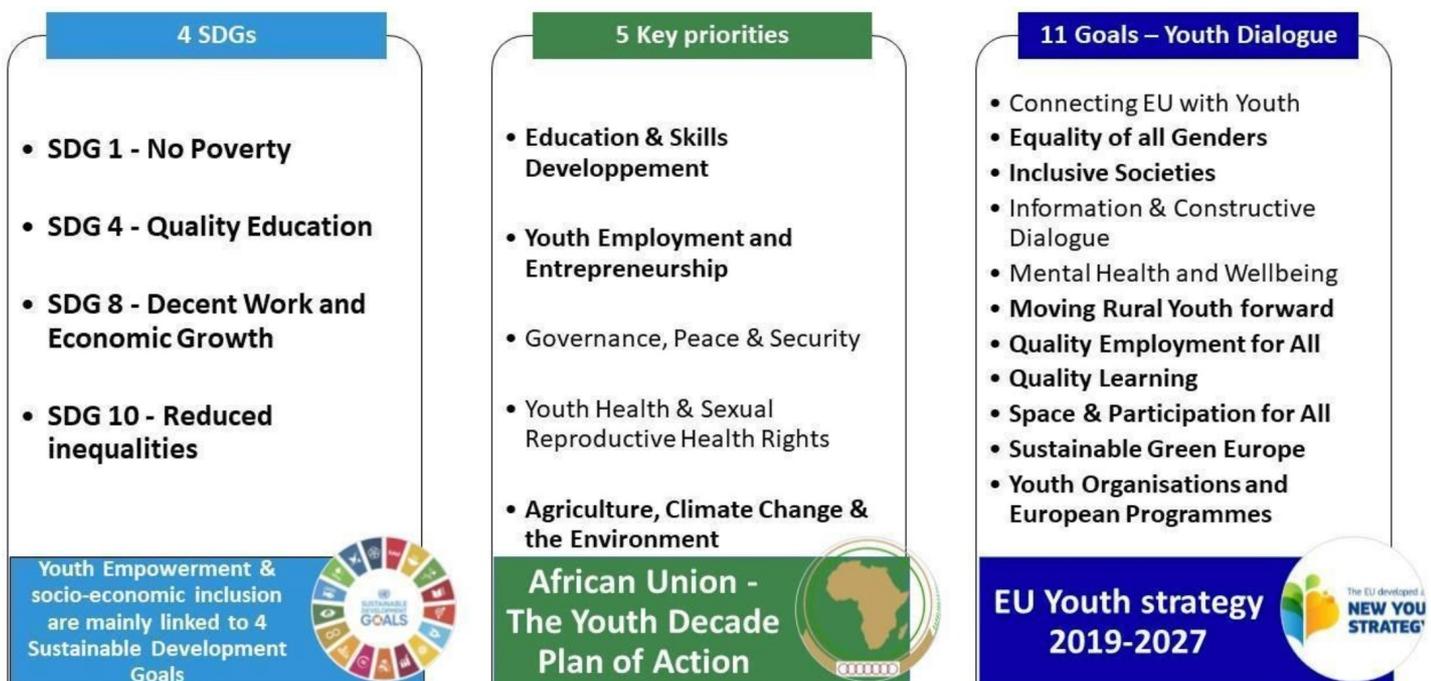
If green climate-resilient agriculture, blue economy and sustainable fishing, short circuits, relocation or even food sovereignty are put forward as possible solutions, they cannot be a sufficient answer to these problematics without the inclusion and effective participation of the Mediterranean youth. Indeed, these transitions towards more sustainable models cannot achieve their objectives without initiatives targeting young people especially in rural areas and agri-food sectors.

Young people represent a large proportion of the Mediterranean population, their energy and potential are the present and the future of the region.

The recognition of their role and their empowerment is a priority, especially with the emerging uncertainties linked to impacts of climate change, wars and refugees' crises, COVID-19 pandemic that are exacerbating existing challenges.

In addition, these recent global and regional crises have recalled the need to strengthen the resilience, adaptation and inclusiveness of Mediterranean agri-food systems. Young graduates or non-graduates must find their place in a constantly changing job market and in sectors that are the most affected by new environmental, societal and economic concerns.

Involving young people in **addressing the environmental challenges** and in the **adaptation and mitigation actions to face climate change**, allowing them to be **stakeholders of sustainable food systems**, and engaged actors in **local development** to strengthen the **resilience of territories** are among the commitments of the CIHEAM. These commitments are translated in its Action Plan for the Mediterranean (CAPMED), which is in line with international, regional and national agendas.



In this respect, the CIHEAM has established a dedicated corporate working group including referents from each institute and from the headquarters to support the joint work conducted by the institutes on this matter. As such, the inclusion of youth and the strengthening of their role in food systems is addressed through 3 key dimensions:

1. **Mobility of people and knowledge** - for a common vision of the challenges facing the Mediterranean and enhancing intercultural dialogue;
2. **Jobs of tomorrow** - Training, capacity building in the green economy and agriculture, the blue economy and fisheries, territorial development, using new technologies, and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation;
3. **The resilience of local communities** – Cooperation projects developed according to a multi stakeholder approach and deeply rooted in the territories.

On May 21, 2022, the CIHEAM celebrated its 60 years!

The initiatives to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the CIHEAM have been developed in such a way as to contribute to the ongoing reflections on facing the multiple crises in the Mediterranean, by involving young people.

As such, the CIHEAM invited young people [to express their visions of the future](#) and the paths to be taken to build a prosperous and positive Mediterranean. Indeed, in partnership with Plan Bleu and as part of its MED2050 prospective study, the CIHEAM notably mobilized its students and ALUMNI to respond to a questionnaire structured around various questions related to the perception of the current situation, probable future visions, ruptures and/or long-term transformations.

Gradually as the exercise was progressing, and with the strength of the enthusiasm shown, the initiative evolved into drafting a white paper that summarizes all of the involved youth's responses and visions for a sustainable and inclusive Mediterranean.

The white paper

Young professionals and students from the 13 CIHEAM member countries have been working since July 2022 on the elaboration of a White Paper to express their visions and suggestions for the future of Mediterranean agri-food systems, answering the following questions :

- Which rural world in 2050?
- Which agricultural model(s) in 2050?
- What training, what research, and what agricultural advice in 2050?
- What regional cooperation and solidarity mechanisms in 2050?

During the event organized in [Montpellier On November the 28th](#), the groups of youth met to finalize their proposals. They had also the opportunity to participate to a seminar organized by CIHEAM Montpellier with high level speakers from different backgrounds, to foster the debate and interact.

Academics, representatives of public institutions and international organisations, ministries, representatives of the Region, elected officials, representatives of civil society and the private sector debated, on the following themes: (i) Sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems in the Mediterranean of tomorrow, in the light of the lessons of history and the scenarios of the future (ii) The management of current crises by governments and the measures that need to be taken to address long-term problems (iii)The adaptation of technical and financial cooperation mechanisms to better respond to future challenges and current emergencies.

The following day, the young Mediterranean were invited to select 4 key actions to present and discuss with the participants of the event. The selection included: the creation of a rural women's office, the development of an action plan to support the transition to agroecology, recommendations for supporting youth innovation and dissemination of the results of applied research, and a system of regional cooperation for youth in the Mediterranean.

The rich discussions that took place during the event allowed the youth groups to continue developing their white paper, which is currently being finalized. Some of the proposed recommendations related to the involvement of young people in the adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change, the reduction of inequalities (North-South, Male-Female, Urban-Rural, Coastal-Inland), the mechanisms of participation and governance or on the promotion of healthy and balanced diets, are being studied for implementation, in close collaboration with CIHEAM partners.

1. Mobility of people and knowledge for a common vision of the challenges facing the Mediterranean and enhancing intercultural dialogue

Since its establishment in 1962, the CIHEAM has been devoted to sharing knowledge and expertise among Mediterranean member countries through post-graduate training, applied research, the development of cooperation projects and the animation of research networks in the Mediterranean. More than 40,000 students and young researchers have been welcomed at the 4 Agronomic Institutes of the CIHEAM (Bari, Chania, Montpellier and Zaragoza). The CIHEAM is a major actor of student mobility and Mediterranean intercultural dialogue. Each year, nearly 1,500 students coming from the Middle East, Africa and Europe are trained (Masters and short-term specialized training courses) at the CIHEAM Institutes. During their stay, they discover the common roots of Mediterranean cultures and the virtues of intercultural dialogue and diversity. Together with science diplomacy, “cultural diplomacy” is a strong symbol of the identity of the CIHEAM.

In this direction, all the four institutes provide grants and mobility possibilities for students of the Mediterranean. Also, in the framework of the Erasmus+ Program, the **CIHEAM Montpellier**, through 2 agreements, provides mobility possibilities for Albanian students to follow a degree/course at the Institute, and to Lebanese students to prepare for a dual degree between CIHEAM-Montpellier and the Faculty of Agronomy of the Lebanese University. Educational support and doctoral grants are also provided to students from the southern shore of the Mediterranean who wish to pursue a PhD degree through the doctoral platform of CIHEAM Montpellier as a first stage where they become part of an international research network.

Simultaneously, in the framework of ERASMUS, the CIHEAM Montpellier contributes to promote better adaptation of young people to the new challenges of the agricultural world through 2 projects:

- [RUR'UP](#) –help 7 higher education institutions in Europe to provide their graduates with qualifications and skills adapted to the specific needs of the labour market and the society of the peripheral rural regions in the EU;
- [SmartAL](#) – implementation of an innovative Master's degree on territorial development in Albania responding to the needs of the labour market, in order to strengthen the employability of young people.

On the other hand, the **CIHEAM Bari** was involved in [strengthening knowledge management for greater development effectiveness in the Near East, North Africa, Central Asia and Europe](#). This project, funded by IFAD, and in collaboration with ICARDA, aims at facilitating and supporting the growth of knowledge management and capacity development

operations within the Near East and North Africa (NENA) and Central Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEN) regions.

2. Jobs of tomorrow - Training, capacity building in agriculture and food systems, the green economy, the blue economy and fisheries with a focus on new technologies, technical and social innovations:

Leverage hard and soft skills at the same time for a better employability of the youth

Through its comprehensive Vocational Education and Training - school-based and work-based learning, the CIHEAM provides its students with the necessary hard skills to achieve their professional goals. The center offers training for the jobs of tomorrow in various specialties with innovative scientific and technological approaches. Also training courses take account of the challenges, current crises (climatic and economic), and innovations ...

The Institutes are also a great environment for developing soft skills and enabling a smooth school-to-work transition. Extra-curricular activities push students outside their comfort zones (public speaking, group debates, competitions) ... and the diversity of profiles of CIHEAM students allows them to easily fit into a diverse team.

The CIHEAM also provides professional internship possibilities within private companies as well as other opportunities such as the Field Research Initiatives. These opportunities facilitate the transition to the Professional life.

In this regard, the CIHEAM Chania has participated in 7 European Work Based Learning Programs, offering training in its premises and in local agro-food companies for two months-placement to 126 young students from European Education Institutions. The project allows to significantly reduce skills imbalances between the labour market expectations and the skills acquired during theoretical training but also to promote the inclusion of young people.

The training provided at the CIHEAM allows students to access a large variety of jobs in the fields of environment, agriculture and food systems, rural development and coastal zones management...etc Each Institute offers various Masters, vocational training and summer courses, as well as e-learning programmes, facilitating and encouraging contact between students and local stakeholders. The training courses are designed to enable future professionals and decision makers to better respond to environmental and socio-economic challenges through innovative approaches.

Finally, and in order to reduce the gap between young graduates and field operators, the CIHEAM opened a call for contribution for its "Field Research Initiative" (FRI) project with 4 main objectives:

- To strengthen interactions between young scientists, rural communities and local organisations, promote knowledge sharing;

- To empower youth with practical skills;
- To share good practices and innovative tools for sustainable agriculture and rural poverty reduction,
- To foster networks and increase employment opportunities for young researchers and PhD students across the Mediterranean region, also through South-South Cooperation.

Adoption of new technologies and scientific innovations

As it is important for the CIHEAM to advance the new technologies and innovation tools that are being developed in its areas of activity, its trainings' offer evolves through the years to respond better to the necessities of the job market. For that reason, training activities related to new digital technologies including: Big data applications in the food supply chain, precision agriculture and livestock farming, social innovation in rural areas, innovative tools and methods for ensuring seafood authenticity, technological innovations for intensive greenhouse production, statistical tools for genomic and phenomic data analysis, and greenhouse gas assessment and mitigation in agriculture have been developed since 2019 in **CIHEAM Zaragoza**.

Also, the **CIHEAM Chania** delivers a programme on Geoinformation in Environmental Management focusing on the use of Geographical Information Systems in decision support systems and the analysis of remotely sensed data for a variety of applications.

In addition, the CIHEAM has set up some new training courses for developing the innovation mindset, for example:

- Innovation broker (October 2020): to strengthen collaboration between research organizations and companies, interpret corporate innovation needs and build bridges with researchers.
- Innovation coach (November - December 2020): where qualified professional figures support teams of aspiring start-ups.
- TTO manager (November 2020): to encourage the enhancement of technology transfer from research organizations to businesses.
- Cooperation between research and businesses (November - December 2020): with the aim of improving collaboration skills for future researchers and businesses, starting from the development of research based on the needs of companies.

Professional integration of young people from various backgrounds

The CIHEAM Chania, within the Project SCOBÉ, has worked towards systematizing collaboration amongst Business and Educational institutions. The project has the objective of allowing young people without expertise who need an extra effort to adapt to real working life in the field of renewable energy sources.

The CIHEAM Montpellier has implemented the project "Creation of jobs in Tunisia to support agriculture and handicraft: solidarity economy and professionalization" in order to contribute to job creation in the agricultural and craft sectors in the governorate of

Medenine. It has promoted the economic integration of young people and women - graduates and non-graduates living in disadvantaged areas by meeting the needs of artisans, farmers and cooperatives in terms of skills and services.

The CIHEAM Bari is leading the project Social Inclusion paths of young people at deviation risk of the Bari Metropolitan area through work placement in the Agricultural supply chain. The project intends to activate an offer of services focusing on social and work inclusion (subordinate work and / or self-employment) and targeting young people aged between 16 and 24 at risk of deviance. In particular, through actions to collect needs, information, training, coaching, tutoring and the setting up of a permanent laboratory of social innovation. The project is supported by a public-private collaboration, the territorial network of social innovation, which will encourage the employment and social inclusion of young people as well as the future sustainability of the project. As part of the project, the construction of a land bank is being considered: available goods and lands that can be valorised through new entrepreneurial activities promoted by trained young people.

Moreover, **the CIHEAM Zaragoza** has a mentoring programme to enable alumni to share their professional and personal experience and expertise with current students, provide academic and professional advice and help them prepare for a successful career.

3. Supporting innovation & youth entrepreneurship

Training for innovation and entrepreneurship

The **CIHEAM Bari** has set up an intensive training course on “Open Innovation and Youth Entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean Agri-food sector” initiating young people to the entrepreneurial culture and encouraging them to create innovative businesses.

This Master programme (CIHEAM Bari in collaboration with the University of Bari) adopts the work- based learning (WBL) strategy. It includes 2 projects - Lean start-up and open innovation including design thinking as an approach. [The programme](#) is in close collaboration with the entrepreneurial system through conferences, projects and internships.

Enhancing Incubation and Innovation

To support innovation, many initiatives were conducted by the CIHEAM institutes, especially in the last few years. The **CIHEAM Chania** has promoted in the framework of [DTRAIN project](#) Design Thinking for Entrepreneurship in Agri- food Sector. The project revitalizes the production in the agro-food sector through capacity building for professionals willing to upgrade their skills in Design Thinking for innovation. The methodology is developed in an innovative educational model based on a learner-centred approach.

The SIMRA project, led by the **CIHEAM Zaragoza** aims for the mobilisation of new technologies and innovation to create jobs. It has compiled a database of social innovations in marginalized rural areas showcasing examples of social innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural development in rural areas across Europe and non-European Mediterranean regions.

In partnership with the Ministries of Agriculture of Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia - **the CIHEAM Bari** contributes to the Water MEDYIN project "Youth and innovation for a sustainable management of water and marine resources" in the Mediterranean. The project aims to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals in the Mediterranean region by promoting youth entrepreneurial initiatives, as well as youth inclusion and socio-economic opportunities in water resources management, in both marine and coastal areas. It also aims to enhance the contribution of youth-led (<35 yo) innovative companies to the sustainable management of water and coastal/marine resources in Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine.

Innovation Centres

Since October 2020 the "[Mediterranean Innovation Hub](#)" - a centre promoted by CIHEAM Bari in collaboration with the University of Bari, Almacube University of Bologna, Confindustria, Legacoop and confcooperative- has been providing an international public-private centre of excellence for innovation and the setting up of new businesses. It combines training, internationalization and open innovation. It involves young people, start-ups and innovative businesses...

Strengthening incubators and networks

In order to encourage and support innovation led by young people, several initiatives were launched by the CIHEAM institutes. The **CIHEAM Bari** has contributed to [FoodSHIFT2030](#), a new European project on the sustainable transformation of food systems that aims at establishing a food-accelerator-lab across Europe to incubate local food system innovative initiatives.

The CIHEAM Bari encourages also the strengthening of incubators and their networks -Cross-over HUBS - developing cross-innovation between agro-food and creative enterprises. In the framework of the project [Food4Health](#) - sustainable and innovative agro-food and fisheries value chain for SMEs cross border market program priority (Italy, Albania and Montenegro), it has put in place a HUB in agrifood processing to [support the creation of start-ups](#) and encourage the development of local micro-entrepreneurship .

Also, in cooperation with Albania and Montenegro through the [FILA project](#) it has contributed to strengthen cooperation between research organizations and the private sector, to support the development of innovative enterprise and start up and guarantee more job opportunities, especially for young people by enhancing enterprises' competitiveness.

Operating also in Africa in collaboration with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), the CIHEAM Bari has let the project [SUSTLIVES](#) - SUSTaining and improving local crop patrimony in Burkina Faso and Niger for better LIVES and ecosystems. This project is a Climate-relevant Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture funded under the 2019 (and 2020) Global Public Goods and Challenges Program, which involves the upgrading of incubators in Burkina Faso and Niger.

As well, the **CIHEAM Chania** through the European project [TOURNET](#), contributes to creating a Network that supports existing SMEs and new entrepreneurs from all the sectors

of the economy, especially agro-food entities that could promote sustainable tourism development. The project seeks, through the collaboration among the SMEs and the exchange & transfer of knowledge, to generate entrepreneurship opportunities for young people, create stable and quality jobs, decrease unemployment rate, increase the income and standards of living mainly in rural areas.

> [The MIP Network](#)

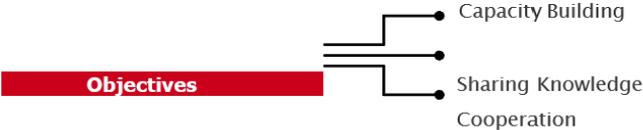
Established in 2016 and coordinated by the CIHEAM Bari, the MIP is the first Mediterranean Network for youth entrepreneurship and technology transfer in the agrifood sector. It is composed of governmental bodies, Innovation Support Organizations and International Organizations operating in the agrifood sector in Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and it intends to extend the partnership to other countries and organizations (public and private) from the Euro-Mediterranean region.

MIP aims to create the Mediterranean Innovation Ecosystem, enhancing the collaboration among public institutions and Innovation Support Organizations (ISOs) to support the creation and innovation of agrifood enterprises of young entrepreneurs through knowledge sharing and transfer, capacity building and cooperation.



BUILDING THE MEDITERRANEAN INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

The Mediterranean Innovation Partnership (MIP) Network for Youth Entrepreneurship and Technology transfer in the Agrifood sector. The strategy of the Network consists in its consolidation and enlargement to new members, public and private (in particular ISO and enterprises cluster) to favour further knowledge sharing and simultaneously increase job opportunities for young entrepreneurs through.



5 activities

- Creation of The Mediterranean Innovation Ecosystem
- Capacity Building
- Reinforce the dialogue between innovation chain actors at local and international level
- Tools for sharing and transfer knowledge
- Cooperation actions

FOCUS

CONTRIBUTING TO THE SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE,
INNOVATION AND GOOD, PRACTICES NECESSARY FOR
THE PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS OF YOUNG
MEDITERRANEAN PEOPLE

MEDITERRANEAN FORUMS FOR PHD STUDENTS AND YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Since 2016, through the organization of these Forums, the CIHEAM intends to set the basis for a Mediterranean initiative aimed at supporting and guiding Master students graduating from its Institutes that wish to further their studies through a PhD. This initiative is also open to young researchers that already completed their PhD within associated national HEI and research intuitions.

- ◆ MEDFORUM 2016: Food security and rural development.
- ◆ MEDFORUM 2018: Research and innovation as tools for sustainable agriculture, food and nutrition security.
- ◆ [MEDFORUM 2021](#): Arid land and agri-food systems
- ◆ [MEDFORUM 2022](#): Mediterranean Agriculture and food systems in time of climate change and Agrofood crisis.

Promoting Mediterranean talents and innovation: Excellence of science and Disruptive approaches

THE CIHEAM'S BEST THESIS PRIZE

This [Prize](#) was established in 1994 to promote the research work undertaken by the CIHEAM students in the framework of their Master of Science and to support the development of their scientific career. It is awarded every year by the Governing Board of the Organisation upon recommendation of its Advisory Board.

OBJECTIVES AND IMPACTS

Promote innovative solutions proposed by young people

Enhance the student network

Allow young Mediterranean people to be agents of change

PRIZE

The awarded prize amounts to 5,000 euros allowing the winner to develop / pursue his professional and/or academic project.

EXAMPLES OF AWARDED THESES

Originality, scientific quality, applicability and contribution to cooperation in the Mediterranean.

2022 – “the design and development of a Novel Organic Yogurt based on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants”

2020 – “Systems resilience analysis of agricultural exploitation in the plain of setif in algeria”
2019 - “DNA--based markers combined with High Resolution Melting analysis for olive oil authentication and adulteration”

2018 - “Assessing agricultural trade integration among EU and Mediterranean countries signed under the Agadir agreement” and “Isolation and molecular characterisation of Xylella Fastidiosa from different host plant species in the Apulia region (Italy)”

CIHEAM's YOUTH INNOVATION AWARD

Launched in 2022, this prize aims at recognizing and promoting Innovation and disruptive projects within the CIHEAM's community.

OBJECTIVE & IMPACTS

CIHEAM is rewarding the innovative, disruptive or most audacious project designed and led by members of the CIHEAM's community (current students and Alumni) and contributing to more sustainable, inclusive and equitable Mediterranean food systems.

THE PRIZE

Both material and promotional. The winner is awarded 5 000 euros as financial support to the project and he/she receives a CIHEAM medal and diploma. Also, the project will be promoted in the communication platforms of CIHEAM and through events.

THE JURY

As the CIHEAM Youth Innovation Award is designed to promote innovative ideas in the largest spectrum, falling within the CAPMED themes, including innovations in the production and in food security, innovations in the implementation of sustainable practices or innovations contributing to the empowerment of local communities...etc. the Jury gathers members from different backgrounds, from the private sector, innovation hubs, international organizations, academia, civil society ...etc

THE AWARDED PROJECT

For this first edition, the winner is Mr. Ezzudeen EISAWI (student of CIHEAM Bari) for his innovative project "INSPOT Innovation". This project aims to improve waste management through insect recycling technology and thus contributes to improving both food security and soil fertility by producing protein for livestock and organic fertilizers .

4. Resilience of local communities through youth socio-economic inclusion and cooperation projects developed according to a multi stakeholder approach and deeply rooted in the territories

The CIHEAM provides a wide range of [master programs](#) and trainings to the youth of the Mediterranean to give them the right tools to help meet socio-economic and environmental challenges of the region and to support the resilience of communities especially in rural and coastal zones, for example: the Sustainable Water Management and governance in Natural and Agricultural Environments Master programme offers key skills and competencies in the fields of water management and governance; the Agricultural Management and Territories Master programme trains students in agricultural production systems management, taking

account of the specific characteristics of territories adopting both a technical and an economic approach... In addition to that, the CIHEAM leads a wide range of project in the territories to increase the attractiveness of the rural and coastal areas for the youth and enhance their socio-inclusion in the rural and coastal areas.

Attractiveness and increased connections between rural, agricultural and coastal areas

The CIHEAM works on the challenges related to the job's attractiveness in rural, agricultural and coastal areas. The CIHEAM **Montpellier** supports the [DEVLOK](#) project which addresses local development of the Kerkennah archipelago by supporting start-ups of young entrepreneurs in accordance with the priorities identified by the population.

The project "Stabilization and socio-economic development of Tunisia's coastal regions", managed by **the CIHEAM Bari**, is designed to support the sustainable development of coastal communities, and set up a planning system for participatory and integrated development of coastal areas that will serve as a framework for future initiatives. The objective is to improve and diversify the production and incomes of fishing operators and coastal communities, to reduce poverty by improving access to support services and management, but also through concrete financial instruments that target young people and women.

Migration and inclusive rural development in the Mediterranean

At a time when food crises are resurging and natural resource tensions in the Afro-Mediterranean region are worsening, migration may also weaken food and water security of the poorest regions.

Co-directed by the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the new edition of the [Mediterra report](#) gives the floor to experts and partner institutions to better understand this complex theme, and identify sustainable solutions.

With the aim of training young farmers, the Institute of Chania also launched the project Farmers: Circles of Circular Economy, [FarmCircle](#). The project is aimed at raising awareness among young farmers to new trends and business opportunities in the bioeconomy in order to produce more added value per agricultural unit. This project encourages the setting up of new activities in line with the main agricultural activity, the creation of highly skilled jobs, social and economic opportunities for rural areas by matching the potential of farms with the appropriate technology and product in order to ensure sustainability.

5. Publications, events & partnerships for youth empowerment and socio-economic inclusion

The CIHEAM has developed diverse partnerships with public decision-makers from the Ministries of Agriculture of member countries in the Mediterranean region and with local

communities to meet challenges, seize opportunities and develop innovative projects. Inter-university partnerships also strengthen mobility across the Mediterranean and at international level. This is necessary to achieve a better understanding of the various dynamics across the region and beyond.

Also, CIHEAM has participated in several international meetings and events on the topic of youth inclusion and youth empowerment through innovation and entrepreneurship.

[The 4th CIHEAM Mediterranean Forum \(MEDFORUM 2022\) for Ph.D. students and Young Researchers](#)

The CIHEAM MEDFORUM aims to strengthen the dialogue and sharing of knowledge and experiences among PhD students, young researchers and project leaders from the Mediterranean region, and discuss recent progress in research and potential collaborative efforts towards the needs of the Mediterranean agriculture and rural areas, including the empowerment of women and youth, enhancing employment opportunities for youth and improving rural livelihoods.

This edition has been co-organized by the Department of Horticultural Genetics & Biotechnology of CIHEAM Chania, and the CIHEAM headquarters, at CIHEAM Chania's Conference Center. on December 4-7, under the thematic of Mediterranean Agriculture and Food Systems in a Time of Climate Change and Agrofood Crisis.

[The International Agriculture Show in Morocco \(SIAM 2023\)](#)

The CIHEAM participated to the 15th International Agricultural Show of Morocco (SIAM, 2-5 May 2023) with a dedicated pavilion to present its institutes, training activities and its broader institutional mission. The theme of SIAM being "Green Generation: for sustainable food sovereignty", the CIHEAM presented its projects in the Mediterranean region but also in other countries where it is operating, with the objective of strengthening food security in rural areas.

Thanks to its diversified training offer, the pavilion has attracted students from different horizons as well as professionals and researches from different scientific fields, to know about the activities of the institutes and the offers. It has also been an occasion to present the last watch letter on youth4SFS to the Moroccan young people that has visited the stand, teachers and researchers who were very keen on sharing the publication with their own students in order to share innovative initiatives from the Mediterranean youth contributing to sustainability. Reinforcing employability The CIHEAM participated in [the 4th UfM Ministerial conference on Employment and Labour](#) and shared good practices during the side-event on "The Employment of Mediterranean University Graduates: Bridging the Employability Gap Between Advanced Skills and Markets". In the framework of this collaboration with the UfM, FAO and PRIMA for promoting the sustainability of food systems, bridging the gap between Science, Policy and Business through investing in specific competences and professional

figures, such as innovation brokers and science diplomacy advocates, connecting with local needs and enhancing the transfer of knowledge from research centres to applied fields, a side event for the 3rd world conference on the revitalization of the Mediterranean diet (Bari, 22nd September) is planned to explore the contribution of higher education and research in supporting a shift towards more sustainable food system models in the Mediterranean, by showcasing some key items in their toolbox, which contribute to support our youth.

The CIHEAM was also involved in a project for reinforcing the Innovation-Employability Nexus in the Mediterranean via the elaboration of a handbook for Academia, Industry and Policymakers.

Through the data analysis of qualitative and quantitative input from 35 organisations around the Mediterranean including the CIHEAM and the mapping of 146 programmes, the handbook presents initiatives and best practices, and a literature review of 1,350 publications. The steering committee chose to focus on a total of eleven themes ranging from Skills (Chapter 3), Teaching & Learning (Chapter 4), Collaborative Doctorates (Chapter 5), International Mobility (Chapter 6) and Internships (Chapter 7) to Career Services (Chapter 8), Knowledge Exchange (Chapter 9), Partnerships for Innovation (Chapter 10) and Digital Innovation (Chapter 11) to Capacity Development inside Higher Education Institutions (Chapter 12) and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (Chapter 13).

The CIHEAM was involved as well in the Digital UfM Research and Innovation Steering Committee meetings and intervened in preparatory seminars on employability and digitalisation, and how to promote entrepreneurship and start-up creation in research and innovation.

Creation of opportunities

With the support of ICARDA, the CIHEAM Montpellier launched a call for applications for doctoral students and young researches for the next Mediterranean Forum 2021. The forum is organised in the framework of the 7th Symposium on Farming Systems Design (FSD) to be held between the 21 and the 24 March 2021 in Tunisia. This symposium aims to discuss discoveries and initiatives for agro-food systems in drylands. With additional growing uncertainties around the world, as evidenced by the recent spread of COVID-19, the issue of food security and self-sufficiency is increasingly urgent and the design of innovative farming systems is becoming essential.

Enhancing human capital

In 2016, the CIHEAM and the FAO published a joint edition of the [Mediterra report: Zero Waste in the Mediterranean](#), highlighting issues related to the waste of traditional knowledge and the potential of young people who must be supported, particularly with regard to study conditions, the lack of vocational training and the difficult conditions of graduates in rural areas.

CIHEAM and FAO field research initiative

The FAO-CIHEAM Field Research Initiative is a competitive grants initiative designed for PhD student/young researcher placement in a rural community-based local organisation (PO, SME, cooperative...), to scale-out and disseminate research findings which can contribute to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, increasing the sustainability and resilience of agriculture, improving livelihoods and reducing rural poverty and supporting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

[Young Leadership Programme Mediterranean Edition 2023](#)

The CIHEAM is a partnering with the EFI for their Young Leadership Programme 2023. This programme offers an opportunity for young professionals with leadership potential to interact with a network of Mediterranean peers and experts, and share practical experience through group exercises. With its scientific expertise in the fields of territorial development, agroforestry, ...etc, but also working with the youth, the CIHEAM is participating in the selection process, in co-designing the programme and also providing experts.

[Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship](#)

[Innovation in the Mediterranean agrifood sector: actors, policies and future prospects in a developing ecosystem - MIP REPORT 2021 - CIHEAM Bari](#)

The MIP report is a collection of information and data used to describe the scenario on youth innovation and entrepreneurship in the agrifood sector in MENA countries; one of the main aspects of the analyses is the direct information collection by MIP countries focal points. The report is based on desk analysis and direct interviews with 295 Innovation support organizations. The main findings of this research refer to their specialization, partnerships, governance, target and year of establishment, the innovation-oriented policies in the MIP member countries, youth entrepreneurship, and the access to funding.

[The CREATIVE CAMPS Project – CIHEAM Bari: “Creative Camps–Cross-over HUBS” with the objective to foster the development of entrepreneurial initiatives](#)

It is a platform where start-ups meet and discuss bilaterally their business ideas with the participants in dedicated exhibition stands set up within the CIHEAM Bari Campus.

Part of the project a Business marathon was held in Bari on the 1st June 2021 and was the first opportunity for the project participants to meet in person, visit the Hub and exchange ideas and perspectives on cross innovation between the agrifood, creative and cultural sectors. Within the [Mediterranean Innovation Agrifood Week](#), Creative Camps project presents the state of the art of project activities, and results achieved.

Also a training was organized starting the 3rd of June 2021 for Hub managers it includes 34 hours of lessons taught by international lecturers, experts and operators from business incubators and start-ups, on empowerment in management skills, promotion of services provided, creation of the local ecosystem, provision of development and support services to youth entrepreneurship, and Cross-Innovation.

[The Agrobiodiversity Innovation Challenge](#)

It is organized by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, with the support of the Italian Government and in partnership with **CIHEAM Bari**, the International Fund for

Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Italian Institute of Technology, the IITA Business Incubation Platform, the Accelerate for Impact Platform, Rockstart, and The Lexicon.

The Innovation Challenge is intended for innovations (technologies, methodologies, and best practices) that could be made available to farmers, consumers and food companies to increase production effectiveness, competitiveness and resilience while conserving agrobiodiversity. It aims to inspire research and ideas in the field of agriculture and food systems and deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

[Mediterranean Innovation Agrifood week | CIHEAM Bari, 25-28 October 2021](#)

CIHEAM Bari in collaboration with MIP - Mediterranean Innovation Partnership, within the project WATERMEDYIN, funded by the Italian Cooperation, is hosting a week-long event on the theme of innovation and creation of start-ups in the Mediterranean area.

The initiative, that will take place from 25 to 28 October 2021, is gathering about 100 guests among start-uppers, trainers, agricultural entrepreneurs - from Italy and from the Mediterranean region – as well as renowned international experts in the field of innovation, with the following objectives:

- contribute to the identification of strategies for the creation of an environment conducive to the sustainable development of the agri-food sector in the Mediterranean, by leveraging on young people and on the combination of innovation and competitiveness;
- support 15 successful start-ups from Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia (selected in the framework of WATERMEDYIN project by an international panel) which will present their business idea to a diverse audience of investors, senior companies and public institutions;
- deepen strategic aspects on the strengthening of the innovation ecosystem.

[Webinar: "Business incubation: where it all began and where we are now. Insights from an industry veteran", 10 march 2022](#)

In the framework of Mediterranean Innovation Partnership - MIP WebAcademy activities, CIHEAM Bari organizes a webinar with Thomas Mancuso, Economic Development Business Incubator Advisor, leader of the Mancuso Group in Batavia NY, to share his insights about the origins, the story and the transformation of the incubation industry.

[CIHEAM Watch Letter: Youth4SFS](#) This special issue on Youth for Sustainable Food Systems is a joint publication by the CIHEAM, the UfM, and CMI-UNOPS where they give voice to young researchers, entrepreneurs and activists with ideas and projects for a different kind of rural and agricultural development.

This watchletter aims to contribute to the debate on the role of youth in drafting new paradigms, it presents promising avenues to respond to the pressing challenges of the

Mediterranean region, where young people must be considered as allies and above all actors of sustainable development, considering that the desired transitions towards more sustainable food systems and fairer models cannot be achieved without involving the youth and strengthening the capacities of young people, allowing them to decide and act in agri-food systems and giving them the recognition and the support they need.

Research and innovation for youth engagement in the water sector: [Arab Water Forum](#)

[The CIHEAM \(Secretariat General and the CIHEAM Bari\) participated in the 5th Annual Arab Water Forum](#) which took place from 21st - to 23rd September 2021 in Dubai (UAE). Involved in two panels: «Water Security in The Mediterranean Region: Sustainable Water Reuse Strategies in Agriculture - Case Studies & Regional Perspectives » in partnership with NRD/UNISS and IWMI, and “Research and Innovation for Youth Engagement in MENA’s Water Sector” , the CIHEAM has stressed the importance of integrating youth and women, especially in rural and agricultural areas and vulnerable communities for a successful regional cooperation.

Le forum des mondes méditerranéens : Mediterranean gastronomic heritage

The CIHEAM has participated in the Forum des [Mondes Méditerranéens](#) that was held in Marseille (France) on 7 and 8 February 2022, and was one of the first signatories of the “Manifesto for a Mediterranean Gastronomic ambition” supported by various actors in the fields of agriculture and fishing, cuisine and gastronomy, culture, tourism and even education and training. This manifesto calls among other objectives to build more adapted, demanding and attractive training courses for the younger generations.

Also a working meeting was held in the presence of the various actors involved in the programming of the culinary component of the Forum to discuss collaborations, and especially to develop synergies between the various actors of the food value chain in the region, with particular attention to the challenges of training and youth employment.

[2nd edition of the Mediterranean Innovation Agrifood week 2022 \(12-16 December, CIHEAM Bari-Valenzano\)](#)

The Mediterranean entrepreneurial and innovation agrifood ecosystems are constantly evolving to better respond to the needs of the entrepreneurial communities they are set to serve, with specific focus on the younger generations. The challenge is particularly complex and the ecosystem players (research, industries, academia, public authority, innovation support organizations, investors...) need to smartly adapt. New and different collaborations need to take place, new and different approaches and support measures need to be designed, engineered, and deployed to support the current and future innovators and entrepreneurs.

10 international organizations, 60 experts, start-ups, and innovative companies from over 10 Mediterranean countries will discuss on the challenges of the innovation ecosystem.

[Masterclass on 'The inclusion for more sustainable \(ecologically\) and more viable \(economically\) food systems: what place for youth, between challenges and opportunities?' \(15 April 2023\)](#)

At the invitation of the association 'Le Tour des Terroirs', the CIHEAM participated in a masterclass on youth inclusion for Sustainable Food Systems. It was an opportunity to recall the utmost importance of youth participation highlighting good practices carried out by youth, some of whom participated in CIHEAM's Watchletter 41 (see above).

During the discussions, the speakers recalled the key role of cooperation, training and the potential of the agri-food industry for youth. They underlined the importance of creating economic ecosystems to serve the sustainability of rural and coastal territories (exemple of DEVLOK project, implemented by the CIHEAM Montpellier). They also, highlighted new ways of thinking about agriculture and food, in particular through the concept of hybrid agriculture which has the potential to attract more young people.



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