

SEeD for Change: The Systemic Event Design Project Applied to Terra Madre Salone del Gusto for the Development of Food Communities

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## Article

# SEeD for Change: The Systemic Event Design Project Applied to Terra Madre Salone del Gusto for the Development of Food Communities

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**Abstract:** In the contemporary era, food plays a key role in balancing environmental, social, and economic balances, not only due to its primary identity as a resource that nourishes living beings and the planet but also through the processes triggered by stakeholders who act at the internal local food systems. In the latter, an orientation towards sustainability is increasingly urgently required, capable of achieving a widespread creation of shared value. In this scenario, the International Slow Food Association operates, which also, through the Terra Madre Salone del Gusto initiative, coordinates communities and events located throughout the world on the theme of “good, clean and fair” food. This article aims to analyze, through the lens of the systemic approach, the interesting and multifaceted impacts of this event, as an opportunity to disseminate and contagion of ideas, attitudes, and behaviors around the themes of sustainability and biodiversity, but also as a moment of consolidation and creation of relationships between and within local food systems and local communities. The research project presented, entitled “SEeD for Change”, was coordinated by the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo with the University of Turin and helped to focus on the actors, relationships and contexts that actually and virtually hosted the event: places in which through a common and shared language, change has been generated.

**Keywords:** systemic food events; local food community; systemic design; slow food; international and local food networks; food awareness; sustainable food systems; food consumer behavior; food community governance; food events in COVID-19



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## 1. Introduction: The Systemic Event Design Project (SEeD)

Food is characterized by a central role in social, economic, and environmental balances, which has made it a subject of increasing interest and awareness. In fact, it is not exclusively a basic response to a physiological need [1] but has a historically recognized function as a critical resource for social stability [2], as well as a central economic factor [3]. In particular, the awareness of food has progressively led to the overcoming of its conception as a commodity, highlighting its meaning as a public good and common good [4,5]. The interpretations that have emerged over the years have increased its readings: food is, in fact, a constituent of a “happy de-growt” [6], a “political act” [7], a product—and process—necessarily “slow” [8], agricultural act” [9], the foundation for democracy [10]. The advent of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has further consolidated the pivotal role of food in the harmonious balance of the environment, society, and the economy [11]. In fact, an orientation towards sustainability is established in them [12–16], capable of realizing a concrete and widespread creation of shared value [16–18]. Through the role of stakeholders in the agri-food chain, with particular reference to local food systems, food can be the basic connecting unit for all 17 SDGs [19]. For example, what we

put on the table based on our lifestyle (SDG 11) determines changes on the thermometer of the planet. Our plate influences the climate (SDG 13) and is, in turn, influenced by it in a relationship of interconnected dualism. Agriculture is one of the victims of climate change, but at the same time, it is one of its architects, contributing  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total to the generation of climate-altering gas emissions released into the atmosphere [20]. In this sense, food events can be seen as a mirror of the continuous stream of changes that characterize human reality, a complex system stemming from the interaction between many variables that can hardly be included in one checklist [21]. By switching a narrow perspective into a systemic vision that considers “all natural and cultural phenomena interconnected and their basic properties, derived from relations with other things” [22]. The factors characterizing a cultural event are related not only as a static configuration of elements but also share common properties and organizational principles created by the interactions between the various parts [23]. The whole is more than the sum of the individual elements [24–26].

In this direction of awareness, enhancement and engagement of stakeholders, as well as rebalancing the role of food and its supply chain, Slow Food, an association present at an international level since 1989, has been working on these issues since its foundation. It is a global organization founded to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, protect food communities, preserve food biodiversity and promote quality products. Since its beginnings, Slow Food has grown into a global movement involving millions of people in over one hundred fifty countries, working to ensure everyone has access to “good, clean and fair food” [27]. The organization is particularly active in this sense thanks to the establishment and protection of over 600 Presidia, “communities [...] that work every day to save native breeds, varieties of vegetables and fruit, breads, cheeses, cured meats, traditional sweets [ . . . ]. They are committed to handing down production techniques and crafts. They take care of the environment. They value landscapes, territories, cultures” [28]. Presidia, food products and, in general, local food communities are also protagonists of the biennial event Terra Madre Salone del Gusto [29]. The literature highlights the importance of similar situations in achieving sustainability in all its aspects by creating socioeconomic effects based on a responsible approach compared to the environment as a precious characteristic resource [30–33]. Internal relationships among stakeholders, with particular reference to local communities, are the focal point of these events and guarantee the above-mentioned sustainable focus and orientation: “a food event can be seen as a living organism: an ecosystem whose behaviours, habits, creativity, opportunity, products and services, reflect the organization of the system and the message it wants to transmit to its participants through osmosis. The boundaries of an event, like those of a city, can change over time: according to the problems faced, new structures of open relationships can change the previously created territorial connections” [21,34]. The interconnections between the involved stakeholders are made possible and strengthened because of a shared vision and interpretation of the food system, in which food events are an opportunity to consolidate connections and disseminate the underlying values and message.

More specifically, food communities can be read as “complex systems that depend on a range of interacting socioeconomic, cultural and environmental factors, all of which have a strong geographic dimension” [35], and in this sense, analyzed for the relational systems (networks) that characterize them through Social Network Analysis methodologies [36], since “the linkages between actors is an important prerequisite to improving the inclusiveness and governance efficiency of food systems for it allows actors to establish strategic links between institutions to pursue individual or collective goals” [35]. The (in)formal networks of actors and their groups, agencies, bodies, companies, producers, associations, etc., are fundamental in the creation of trust and in the circulation and diffusion of information, in the adoption of innovation, the mobilization of resources and therefore in the sustainable management and governance of food systems. In the same way, these networks are the environment and the means through which ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (including, as many analyzes have highlighted, those relating to consumption and eating habits) spread and assert themselves through mechanisms of “complex social

contagion" [37,38]. In particular, exposure to them creates social phenomena of influence and persuasion [39]. In complex social contagion, different and often conflicting opinions and information confront each other, which means that the process of adopting new ideas and behaviors is strongly linked to the intensity and proximity of relationships and to trust in those who expose and practice them. The "strong ties" given by proximity [37] favor the affirmation of beliefs, the change of attitudes, and the consolidation of new habits and behaviors. At the same time, the "weak links" among different actors [40] (in particular conveyed by network nodes that act as brokers, favoring the hybridization of different points of view) allow the creation of new knowledge and push innovation [41,42].

For this reason, this article aims to analyze, through the lens of the design approach adopted and described in paragraph 2, the interesting impacts of the Terra Madre Salone del Gusto macro-event, organized by Slow Food, as an opportunity to disseminate and of "contagion" of ideas, attitudes and behaviors around the themes of sustainability and biodiversity, but also as a moment of consolidation and creation of relationships between and within local food systems and local communities. An event is well designed if it has an educational function, creates relationships with replicable actions and gestures in the daily lives of everyone after the event itself, and results in a sustainable network of actors cooperating towards a common and shared welfare goal [24]. Terra Madre Salone del Gusto plays the role of a meeting point of cultures, fostering contact, exchange, and mutual understanding where all the participants are "co-organizers" (with their choices determining the sustainability of the event) and, in everyday life, "co-producers" (with their choices influencing the market both locally and globally).

#### *Sowing Knowledge to Accelerate Change: The Case Study of the 2020/2021 Edition of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto*

More than 16 years of research, eight editions of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, more than 600 initiatives organized with more than 200 partners and 3000 people are directly involved in the project—these are the facts and figures behind SEED, an acronym for Systemic Event Design, a systemic and circular sustainability project developed for application at Slow Food's principal cultural events. This sustainable project, coordinated by the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo [43], was launched in 2005 with the aim of reducing the negative impact of major cultural events such as Terra Madre Salone del Gusto and of defining a new concept of event-system quality. Planning designed to reduce negative externalities, the attribution of systemic and circular economic value to so-called waste, the creation of synergies to promote local development and employment, and support for access to information—these are just some of the areas in which the research project has touched upon in the course of the years. Since the 2006 edition of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, the impact of the event has been reduced by about 65%, and the ambition is still to encourage the public to replicate every good action suggested in a daily context. The project has made way for many other initiatives, winning numerous national and international event design awards. In 2008 it was adopted as a development model by the British Standard Institute (Standard BS 8901) and in 2013 for UNI ISO 20121, "Declaration of the requirements of an event sustainability management systems". The Italian for Environment, Land and Sea Protection has sponsored various editions of the survey as a project of national interest for the dissemination of cultural messages connected to sustainable development. At the 2018 edition of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, the project was sponsored by ASviS [44] as "SEED for Global Goals" with the new educational function of valorizing and sharing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals—SDGs—on the 2030 Agenda. The activity has thus produced and disseminated knowledge, directing numerous stakeholders toward common objectives and stressing the importance of cultural events as vectors for value-sharing. For the 2020/2021 edition of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, the three Research Units, the University of Gastronomic Sciences, Polytechnic of Turin [45] and the University of Turin [46], helped Slow Food investigate perspectives that evinced the event's morphology as a living organism made up of systems that join



other systems to interrelate and hence generate something more than the static sum of their elements.

A total of 1.146 events were organized in 75 countries, about 38 a week, from 8 October 2020 to 30 April 2021. These are the facts and figures that characterized the last edition of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, an event that uses food to share values and offers examples of how humanity coexists with ecosystems. The food on which human existence depends may be the “reflection” of a sustainable food model in a circular dynamic that transforms matter into energy for life, constantly regenerating the socio-ecological fabric—natural and cultural biodiversity—that sustains it [19]. Speaking in 25 different languages, people from all over the world addressed this subject and how to promulgate it through education and advocacy, namely active support of the public policies that decide upon resource allocation and management. From Italy to the Philippines, from Kenya to Brazil, from the United States to Russia, from Japan to the small islands of Antigua and Barbuda between the Caribbean and the Atlantic, discussion about food and how it is the basic unit of connection among people clearly revealed the relational capital resulting from the sense of belonging to Terra Madre, an international network that develops collaboration—as opposed to competition—between the parties and brings people together around a common table to share knowledge and responsibility. 881 events were organized in 31 European countries, 148 in 16 American countries, 82 in 15 Asian and Pacific countries and 35 in 13 Africa countries (Figure 1).

## Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2021 | Events in the world

**1146** International Food Events

**38** Events/week

**672** Digital World

**474** Real World

**75** Involved States

**Europe** 881 Events 31 States

**Asia and Pacific** 82 Events 15 States

**Americas** 148 Events 16 States

**Africa** 35 Events 13 States

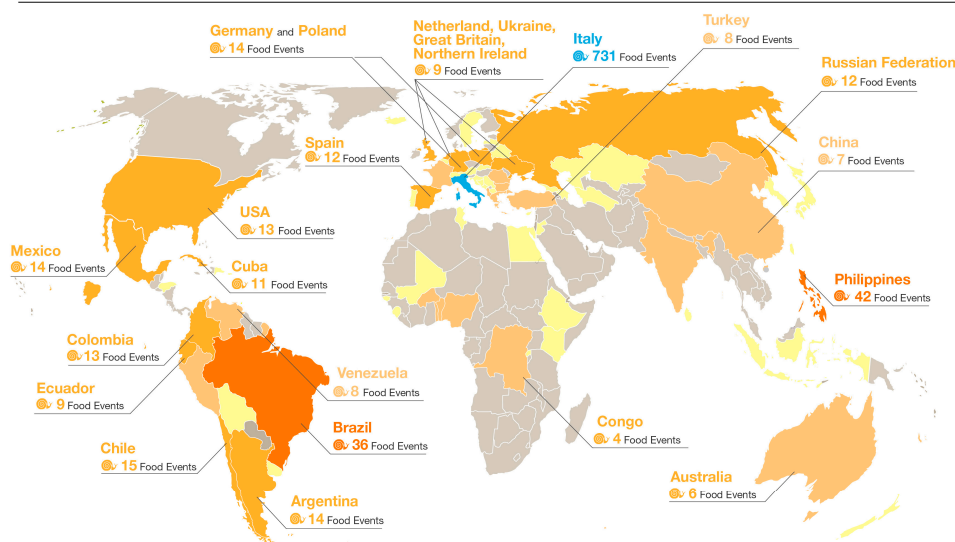
**25** Languages

Italian, English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian, German, Filipino, Polish, Greek, Azerbaijani, Romanian, Turkish, Arabic, Serbian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Albanian, Japanese, Croatian, Korean, Hungarian, Hindi, Slovak, Macedonian.

### Legenda

- Over 100 events
- Over 20 events
- 9 – 20 events
- 4 – 8 events
- 1 – 3 events

### Geolocation of the food events



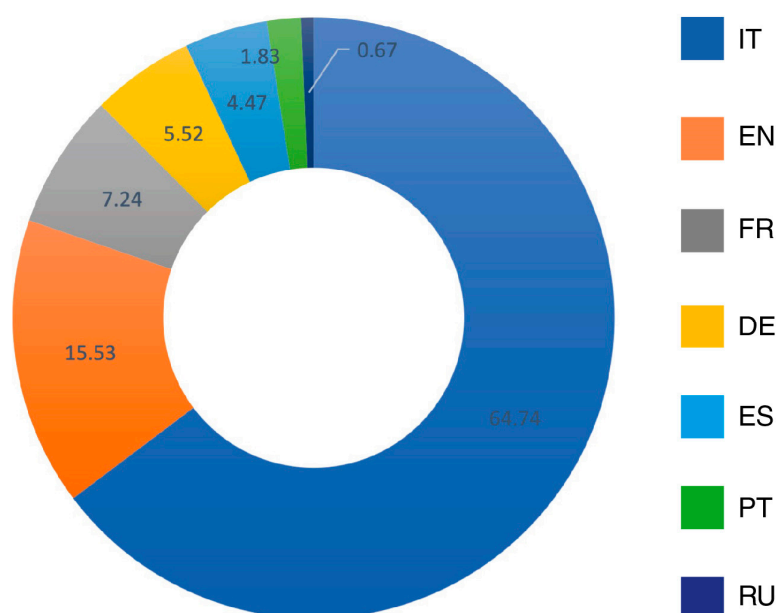
Rank	State	Number of Food Events
1	Italy	731
2	Philippines	42
3	Brazil	36
4	Chile	15
5	Germany, Poland, Argentina, Mexico	14
6	Colombia, USA	13
7	Russian Federation, Spain	12
8	Cuba	11
9	Netherlands, Ukraine, UK of Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Ecuador	9
10	Turkey, Venezuela	8

**Figure 1.** Distribution of the systemic food events of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2021 across the world.

“SEeD for Change”: this is the name of the new edition of the survey, which has brought into focus the actors, relations and contexts that—really or virtually—have allowed the event to be staged, in other words, the places in which change has been changed through a shared common language.

## 2. Materials and Methods

It is difficult to create solid relations with a large number of stakeholders, but the trust that permeates relations between members of the Slow Food movement demonstrated that it is possible to act as a single interconnected system. To better understand the connections between the actors involved in the local system, using the opportunity represented by the organization of 672 digital events and 474 real events, a questionnaire was produced and distributed in 7 languages (Italian, English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian) to the participants, collecting 6888 replies. The survey investigated the relevance of the information proposed by Slow Food in attitudes towards food, consumption, and professional habits, trying to understand, in the pandemic contingency, if the associative proposals had also marked that occasion in terms of an increase in awareness and sensitivity. This made it possible to highlight the qualitative-quantitative framework relating to the impact of the initiative on consumers, producers, and other operators in the food sector (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Languages used in the survey. Italian: 4459 respondents | English: 1070 respondents | French: 499 respondents | German: 380 respondents | Spanish: 308 respondents | Portuguese: 126 respondents | Russian: 46 respondents.

A further source used for the analysis of the Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2020/2021 event was the responses to the monitoring carried out through the «Terra Madre World Events» Impact Form, the aim of which was to understand what the results obtained from the proposals of the association on local stakeholders, recording and measuring the perception of success of the proposal, the number and type of stakeholders who attended, the distribution of online/presence users, the involvement of partners, the benefit, in terms of raising awareness of local food of consumers and producers. A total of 118 responses were recorded. In this way, it was possible to define the qualitative-quantitative framework illustrated below, relating to the impact of the initiative on consumers, producers, and other operators in the Food sector (cooks, technicians, journalists, etc.).

These same data were then used to carry out a network analysis using the Social Network Analysis methodology (SNA) [36], the results of which will be presented in the following paragraphs of the article. Each event was aggregated according to the sequence of nodes and relationships among the organizer, geographical area, country/region, and venue of the event, thus giving rise to the overall network of events. Subsequently, the in-degree was calculated, one of the typical SNA metrics that measure the number of

occurrences of each node, which can be interpreted as the centrality of the node in the network. This calculation was carried out first at the level of the organizer in order to highlight those most active in spreading the messages of change in attitudes, lifestyles and production towards food under the banner of sustainability and biodiversity that have characterized, in particular, the edition of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto taken into consideration. Subsequently, it was calculated at the site level to highlight instead the territories most affected by the events and therefore exposed to these contents. In the graphs produced and illustrated below, the size of each node corresponds to the in-degree value and visually returns the representation of those that can be considered network “hubs” (basically placed by the visualization algorithms used mostly in the center of the graph), and the clusters that characterize it. Through this analysis, we wanted to explore the morphology of the communities (networks) that have come to be established worldwide on the basis of the events organized, therefore, on the basis of the overall network through which the contents proposed by the Slow Food Call for Action have found diffusion. In the same way, the potential that the Terra Madre Salone del Gusto macro-event had in mobilizing people and content, positioning itself as a real collective movement of action, emerged. In this sense, the theme of networks, their structure, and their characteristics once again play a significant role, as emerges in particular from the literature that has analyzed the relationship between social movements and networks [47]. In particular, they recall and are based on systems of relationships, exchanges, and coalitions between networks of actors, understood as a means and environment for training, diffusion, hybridization, and comparison of ideas, knowledge, information, and attitudes, aimed at influencing and modifying actions and behaviors and therefore the agency of the social subjects that the movement intends to reach and influence, in our case, relating to food, its production and its consumption.

### 3. Results

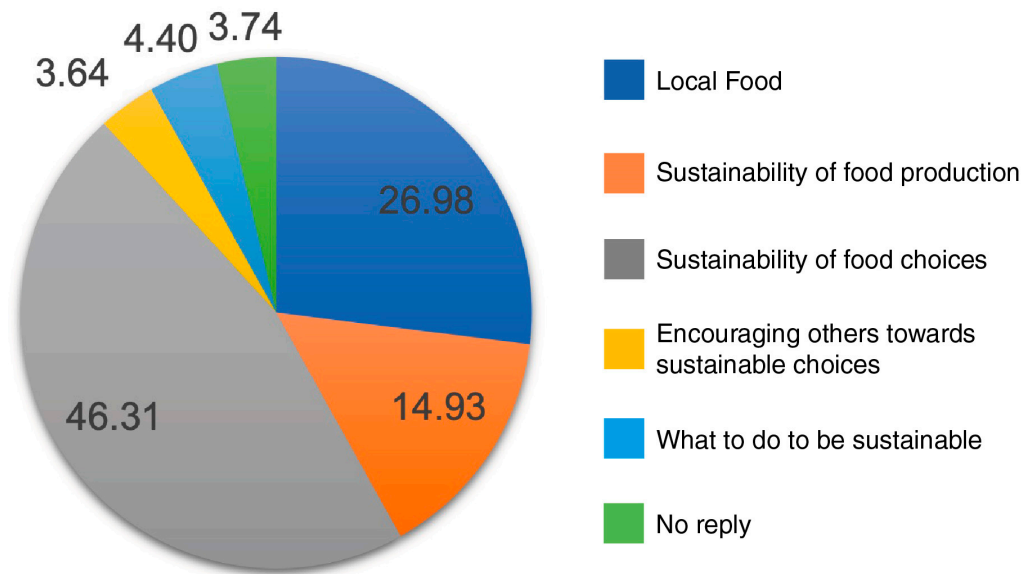
#### 3.1. *The Impact on the Consumers*

Consumers constitute 62.8% of the sample “photographed” by the survey. The question “Would you say that information received from Slow Food has influenced you to change your food buying and eating habits more generally?” was answered in the affirmative by 72.5% of participants. This evinced the Association’s crucial role in occasioning variations in behaviors, which are reflected at a personal level and reverberate across the economic fabric in the form of changes in food buying habits. Slow Food, therefore, positions itself as an agent of change and activator of local food systems in which the socio-cultural orientation impacts the economic field, consequently influencing the production scenario upstream of consumption, which incorporates the variation of propensities and adjusts, in a logic of market response, which is both more sustainable and strategic [12,18].

In reply to the question “What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year?”, online, and offline Slow Food events appear in 31.3% of the answers, another eloquent sign of the positive impact of the organization and its initiatives. During the year of the pandemic, the approach to food of 42.6% of consumers has changed in terms of:

- Interest in local food;
- attention to the sustainability of food production;
- sustainability of personal food choices;
- encouragement of others to make sustainable choices;
- understanding of possible actions to become more sustainable.

Detailed analysis of the most frequent answers (the questionnaire envisaged multiple choices) in Figure 3 (Figure 3) reveals a scenario in which the sustainability of food choices is in the top place at around 46.3%.



**Figure 3.** Variation in the approach to food during the pandemic.

This fully confirms that the knowledge-building and awareness-raising goal—the core and the founding element of Slow Food’s activities—has been achieved to the full. In second place with 26.98%, by way of further confirmation of the scenario outlined above, comes interested in local food, and in third is attention to the sustainability of food production (14.9%), which is also perfectly in line with the association’s aims. In fourth place is the desire to understand the choices an individual can make to be more sustainable (4.4%), and last is the encouragement of others to behave more responsibly (3.6%). Therefore, the individual orientation towards sustainability spreads thanks to awareness and daily action, thus generating a widespread and shared attitude, which is recognized in the values of the association and is based on them. The preference for local food and participation in the control and supervision of the supply chain is the founding foundations of a community-oriented towards sustainable production and consumption.

### 3.2. The Impact on the Producers

Producers represent just under 12% of the sample represented in the survey. To the question, “Did the information received from Slow Food lead you to change the way you approach your work in the field of nutrition?” 61.3% of individuals respond positively, highlighting the role of the Slow Food Association in the variation of the entrepreneurial network.

In reply to the question, “What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year?” Slow Food online and offline events appear in more than 36% of answers. In addition to the specific effects described above, the result also assumes an incremental value and shows the positive and fruitful appropriateness of the virtual medium through which Terra Madre Salone del Gusto was presented to the public.

### 3.3. Impact on Other Actors in the Food Sector

The other operators in the food world category account for more than 23% of the sample represented in the survey. By way of example, it encompasses cooks, technicians, journalists and other actors in the agri-food supply chain, all stakeholders who complete and give concrete form to the intersection of demand and supply, crucial players, and promoters of the associative approach not only in local food systems but in the market and at the media level.

The question “Would you say that information received from Slow Food has influenced you to change your food production habits?” was answered affirmatively by more than 75% of the respondents, further confirmation of the success of the Slow Food Association’s

activities. In fact, the subjects included in the sample play a fundamental role in building an entire supply chain that is mindful, sustainable, and oriented towards an ethical approach. In this respect, the percentage assumes even greater significance. Moving on to the question, “What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year?” Slow Food online and offline events feature in more than 35% of the answers. The figure again clearly reveals the central role of the Slow Food Association—including for food sector professionals—in creating behaviors and a common culture of attention, sensitivity and awareness raising about distinctive topics and values.

### 3.4. *The Perception of Producers and Consumers*

The Impact Form on the events organized offers an interesting perception of subsequent change that may be summed up in the following options:

- “more consumers are more aware and ready to buy good, clean and fair food”, which records 36.44% of preferences;
- “more producers are interested in producing good, clean and fair food”, which records 34.7%;
- plus—only apparently marginal, but actually fundamental in systemic terms and in terms of empowerment for the whole social fabric “more institutions support good, clean and fair food systems”, which records 4.2%.

This perception reveals a balance between the market’s two principal economic actors, namely demand and supply: the change detected is substantially identical in both, outlining an ongoing evolution supported—if not driven—by events and, of course, by the culture promoted by Slow Food. There is notable scope for institutional and political intervention to increase and improve its own impact. Hence, the potential for opportunities, guidelines and support for local systems that are increasingly sustainable, balanced and, as a consequence, fair. This would make the connection and consequent synergy between demand and supply—hence between consumers and enterprises (and professionals) in the sector—perfect, or at least more immediate. A food culture supported in this way, non solum sed etiam with regard to its market and economic aspects, would also send a positive reverberation to similar, close and complementary sectors in terms both of approach and of attitude. It would also constitute a virtuous circle, an emblem of a different socioeconomic paradigm and how it can be achieved and replicated, in this by extending the size and scope, in terms of impact, of local food systems, considering that they “have the potential to strengthen social networks and increase social capital, thereby promoting community resilience” [12]. The hope—partly a photograph of a general change already underway (in demand, in particular)—is for 4.2% growth. This would be a natural evolution and would, in turn, trigger a further leverage effect toward a “better, cleaner and fairer” market. From the semantic point of view, there are, unfortunately, insufficient data for complex processing due to the following:

- The limited number of respondents (fewer than 23%) expressing their points of view on the questions above;
- the very nature of the questionnaire, which typically does not lend itself to long, complex reasonings;
- the different languages of respondents, which makes it impossible to appreciate lexical nuances, but makes linguistic and cultural differences evident instead.

Nonetheless, the fundamental recurring element, present in 11% of cases, is that of growing consumer awareness of the topics proposed, thanks to events and the association’s actions, in confirmation of the considerations made above.

### 3.5. *The Impact of the Events Organized on the Call to Action of Slow Food*

A total of 63.5% of events set themselves the same goals as those stated in the Call to Action launched by Slow Food. In the description thereof, the term that recurs the most is biodiversity. It is possible to note how 39.6% of events respond to at least two goals



(oscillating from two to five), while 23.9% of events fully respond to more than five goals. Classification of events on three levels has also made it possible to elaborate a series of interesting considerations:

- No impact foreseen;
- moderate impact (up to five declared goals);
- high impact (more than five goals).

Events with the greatest potential impact account for a very high number of those organized in Asia and Latin America. The highest number of events without potential impact is to be found in Piedmont (the original Italian region of the Slow Food movement), in Italy in general, and in North America. 93% of the events organized by the Slow Food Network have a high potential impact in 35.9% of cases. The number of events organized by Associations with a high potential impact is also decidedly high. The emerging countries in the network, which over time have become increasing protagonists of the movement launched by Slow Food, starting with a small town in Piedmont in Italy (Bra), represent the realities most launched towards new themes (Figure 4) and those who have made the most use of the opportunities offered by digital, turning a constraint (the limits imposed by COVID-19) into an opportunity.

C&A CONNECTION / WORLD AREA	AFRICA	ASIA	EUROPE	ITALY	LATIN AMERICA	NORTH AMERICA	OCEANIA	PIEDMONT	RUSSIAN FEDERATION	TOTAL
CONNECTION	57.14%	47.95%	53.62	52.63%	55.56%	23.08	66.67	17.10	66.67	39.62
HIGH CONNECTION	40.00%	52.05%	36.96%	25.99%	42.96%	30.77%	33.33%	5.39%	33.33%	23.91%
NO CONNECTION	2.86%	0.00%	9.42%	21.38%	1.48%	46.15%	0.00%	77.51%	0.00%	36.47%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Figure 4.** Table of degrees (%) of connection between system actors in the different countries involved in the Terra Madre Salone del Gusto Events.

### 3.6. Terra Madre Salone del Gusto's Impact on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

The shared values that have generated the change recorded in the SEED survey may be summed up in three keywords, the Slow Food Goals to which the main was dedicated: "Biodiversity, Education and Advocacy". They coincide with the Call to Action that Slow Food has promoted, underlining how the contribution of everyone makes it possible to imagine a different world. The Biodiversity goal represents the content, the Education goal is the tool, and the Advocacy goal is the final aim.

"Defending biological and cultural biodiversity" is thus the first goal. Its final aim is to emphasize the priority of avoiding jeopardizing relations with the greatest supplier of raw materials known to humankind, namely Nature. In its principal initiatives, Slow Food's global network of local communities debated on how to preserve and regenerate Natural Capital, namely the entire stock of natural assets (living organisms, air, water, soil, and geological resources) that help supply the eco-systemic goods and services for humanity necessary for the survival of the very environment from which they are generated. Connected to Natural Capital is Cultural Capital, namely the set of knowledge, values and behaviors that are guarded and handed down from generation to generation as a precious legacy so that it may become a vision integrated with the future, capable, in turn, of generating a well-distributed and fair source of income for the production of Economic Capital. Natural Capital, Cultural Capital and Economic Capital are thus as indivisible as the body and the mind and have been promoted and connected thanks to the Relational Capital generated by the event [48].

"Educating the world that surrounds us", the second Goal, seeks to create enough awareness and understanding to destroy the consolidated habits that are sometimes the greatest obstacle to the testing of new development models. By learning through the senses



and by doing and playing, we understand the world. These emotive sensations change people and shape communities. They are not only effective techniques for transmitting knowledge: here, there is something even more important at stake insofar as learning becomes a relational act. Each one of us is, at once, a teacher and a student.

The third and final goal is “Building a common language with public institutions and the private sector”. The aim is to identify short- and long-term targets as the only strategy possible if we are to hand down the opportunities we have had to future generations. During the organization of the main event, Slow Food thus chose to involve the public and private sectors to create links with other exponents of civil society and defend those most affected by the unsustainability of the food system. Figure 5 (Figure 5) shows the impact of all the events organized globally on the Three Slow Food Goals. Reflecting on it helps us understand how Terra Madre Salone del Gusto has contributed to the direct and indirect promotion of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda signed in New York City on 25 September by 193 countries of the UN General Assembly, an action program for people, the planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships (the 5 Ps) to be shared until 2030. The route of financial reporting of the impacts of SDGs was first embarked upon by the Terra Madre Salone del Gusto event with the SEeD project in 2018. It was then that it first implemented a new way of reporting event sustainability and, according to the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), became an example of how it is possible to interpret the complexity and assess the impact that each single action has on SDGs by building an integrated vision of reality.

## Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2021 | Slow Food Goals

The impact of the food events on the Slow Food Goals



**Biodiversity**

Research and catalog the heritage of biological and cultural diversity linked to food and identify the people. Support and promote those who preserve biodiversity and act as caretakers of local territories. Create opportunities for dialog and exchange between those who work to bring food from “farm to table” as well as with consumers.



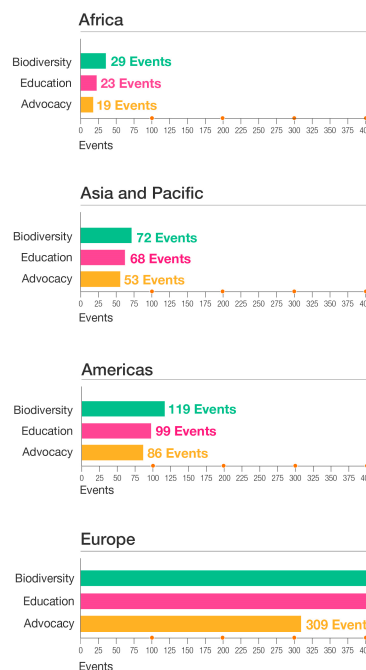
**Education**

Develop communications materials and launch campaigns to increase awareness about the food system and to change behavior. Design and deliver educational and training activities as well as experiences to improve knowledge about food.



**Advocacy**

Influence public institutions and the private sector at every level in order to create policies and models that support fair and regenerative systems of production, distribution, marketing, consumption, and management of food loss. Inform, involve, and mobilize individuals and communities.



The impact of the food events on the Sustainable Development Goals



**Figure 5.** Impact of events on the 3 Slow Food Goals and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

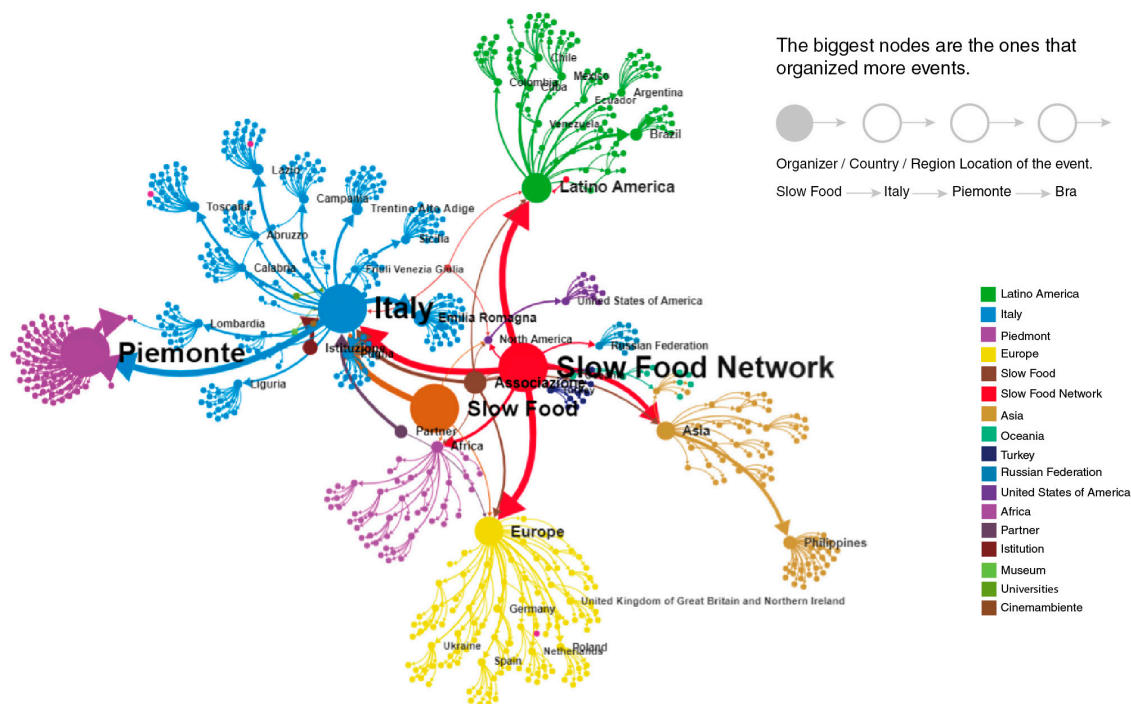
### 3.7. The Network of Events as a Network for Change

The 2020 edition of Terra Madre Salone del Gusto was inevitably influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which made impractical the consolidated model of a centralized physical event in Italy (specifically in the city of Turin, as always happened in the past) and has imposed a widespread model of decentralized events at a global level, strongly based on a non-presence online mode, which represented 58.6% of the total organized events.

This factor has obviously made more complex the goal that Terra Madre has always given itself, namely that of creating a community characterized by a strong orientation towards action and, specifically, as for the 2020 edition, towards changing attitudes and behaviors on the theme of sustainability and the way of relating to food production and consumption.

Despite the new scenario, two positive aspects of these online and offline events emerged: greater accessibility to a multitude of people and the possibility of making a widespread network of actors, and protagonists of the initiatives, compared to the previous centralized editions in Turin. It is interesting to note that the use of online methods was greater in most areas outside Europe, with the exception of Africa and with significant peaks in North America (100%) and Latin America (75%). Italy is below average, with a share of online events equal to 48%, although the share of Piedmont—the original region of the Slow Food movement—has reached 69%.

The reconstruction of the network of events (Figure 6) was carried out, first of all attributing them to each of the entities that organized them and then to the country of origin, which in turn was traced back to the geographical area of origin. In this way, the level of activity of each type of institution and the protagonism of the various components of the Terra Madre community emerge, both in terms of the type of institution and geographical distribution.

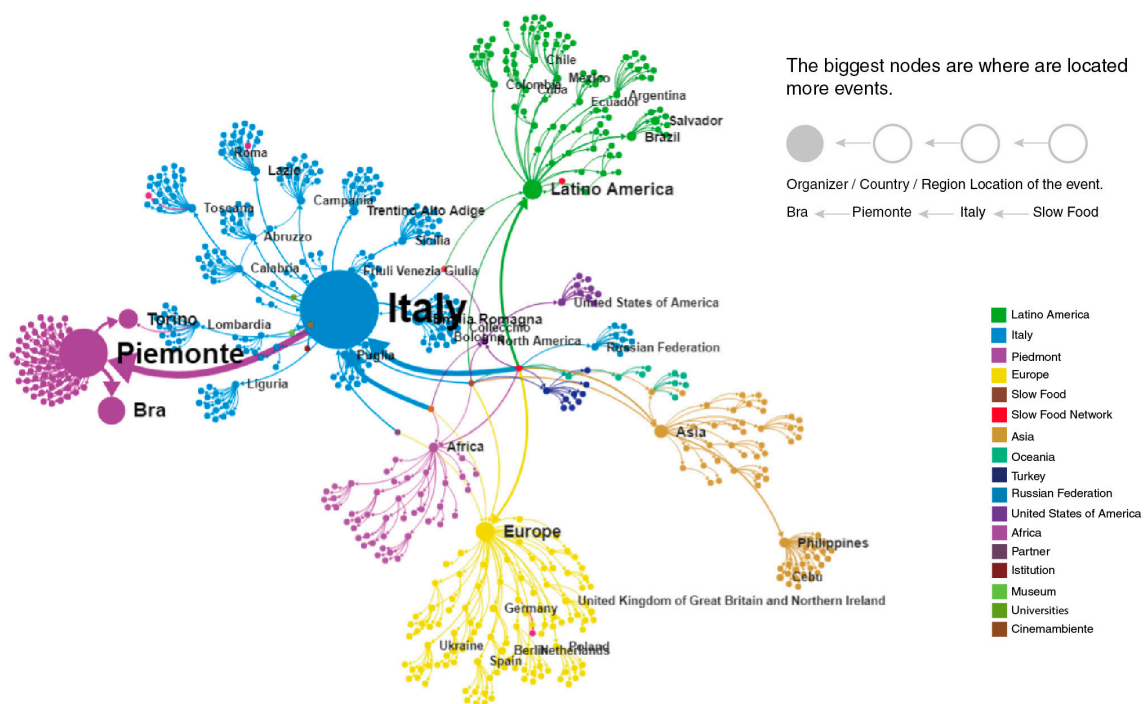


**Figure 6.** Terra Madre Salone del Gusto Events Network by relations among organizers, countries involved and physical or virtual venue.

Reading the network of organized events, it is possible to notice a structure with two poles that highlight as many distinct areas as possible of gravitation: that of Slow Food Italy-Piedmont and that of the international Slow Food Network, which mobilized the largest number of events. The role of the hubs of some emerging countries (specifically, Brazil and the Philippines) was fundamental, already evident in the analysis of the 2018 edition of Terra Madre previously carried out. In it, a phenomenon of progressive growth of areas and points of reference other than Italy and Piedmont had emerged (which nevertheless maintain the most significant share of events). Therefore, a more polycentric structure of the community was emphasized and a progressive trend (which has consolidated over time in the successive editions of Terra Madre) towards a greater protagonism of areas other than the original birthplace of the movement. Thus, it is possible to note a growing

penetration of messages towards ever wider and more widespread territorial areas, in which some local realities take on a highly active role as a hub of the entire global network. However, although the network of events appears more homogeneously distributed at a global level, as already mentioned, the key role of Italy and, in particular, of the Piedmont area persists. To conclude, Europe demonstrates a fairly homogeneous distribution of organized events, without the emergence of particular hubs; North America does not demonstrate a particular protagonism, while in Africa Slow Food still seems to play a “supplementary” role in supporting the growth of projects and the local network.

If, on the other hand, the network is read in terms of territories that host the greatest number of events (Figure 7), the most important weight is always that of Italy, even if the significant share of online events makes the territorial dimension and the link between event and territory. Apart from this consideration, Piedmont, and the city of Bra (where Slow Food was born) maintain a predominant role, as does the city of Turin (capital of Piedmont, Italy), albeit to a lesser extent.



**Figure 7.** Terra Madre Salone del Gusto Events Network for locations, geographic areas, and organizers.

### 3.8. A Network of “Change Agents” with Different Attitudes

Terra Madre Salone del Gusto participates as a protagonist in a broader and more ambitious project with which Slow Food intends to act as an agent of food behavior change (in terms of purchase, consumption, production, etc.) through its actions, such as communication and education campaigns, local projects, and organized events. In this regard, we have previously seen some of the impacts that the interviewed participants declared in their behavior and attitudes toward the topics indicated. However, these attitudes and perceptions have an impact on other information competitors, such as the media and advertising against which Slow Food pits its campaigns and events. The relationship between these actions and the generation of changes such as those mentioned is a relationship in which the role of processes of “complex social contagion” [38] play a crucial role that typically manifests itself in and through social networks [49–53] in which the role of the social influencers is shown to have a significant weight, such as to mark a profound difference compared to processes that do not have them or do not use them deliberately. In this regard, 66.9% of those who responded to the survey declared themselves willing to join a Slow Food group and to be regularly involved in consultation

activities. However, the percentage of interest in participating more actively in Slow Food is decidedly low, a sign of the difficulty in making this opening “militant”.

The declared interests (up to two responses) are shown in the table below (Figure 8). In it, two very different areas of response emerged (but almost of the same weight): the first was more connected to the roots of Slow Food, more attentive to the direct relationship with food and substantiated in the interest in cooking, and the second instead more attentive to the themes marked in the emerging physiognomy of Slow Food and Terra Madre, linked to the great social themes of food systems (sustainability, justice, etc.). Furthermore, a third area declares interest in what has always been one of the historical and constituent affirmations of Slow Food, namely, acting for “good, clean and fair” food systems [8].

ANSWERS		FREQUENCY
First reason	How I can take a more active part in Slow Food	2.3
	How I can support better, cleaner and fairer food systems	14.5
	Cooking	41.3
	The major food system questions (e.g. sustainability, social justice etc.)	41.9
Second reason	How I can take a more active part in Slow Food	8.1
	How I can support better, cleaner and fairer food systems	49.4
	Cooking	0.1
	The major food system questions (e.g. sustainability, social justice etc.)	42.5

**Figure 8.** Table of declared interests.

We are therefore dealing with two very different souls in some respects, with a third in the balance between the two. If, instead, we refer to the reasons for participation in Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2020/2021 (again, two possible answers), a generic interest emerges as predominant in issues related to food, and there is always an orientation to see in the event an opportunity to purchase specific products (10.8% which becomes equal to 40% as a second reason). Ultimately, if, on the one hand, there is a significant interest in greater participation in Slow Food’s activities, on the other, it seems to be guided by motivations that reflect different and articulated basic attitudes, interests, and propensities.

By digging into the most latent dimensions of this set of responses, it was possible to create aggregations useful for identifying “ideal types” of event participants. Using all the questions asked in the survey and combining them through an exploratory Factor Analysis, two background typologies that emerged among the participants who responded were extracted. The heat map (Figure 9), within which the factor pattern after Varimax rotation obtained is represented, allows us to reconstruct the two “ideal types” easily (increasingly greener the more the affirmative answer to the question weighs in particular in being attributed to one or the other of the two latent dimensions that emerged through the factorization, and always redder the farther it is from it). To belong to the first type, it is highly significant to have answered that:

- One’s eating habits have been changed by attending Slow Food events;
- one’s habits in this field have been influenced by Slow Food online events;
- one’s food buying habits have undergone the influence of Slow Food;
- one feels relatively uninfluenced by the media in this regard.
- To belong to the second, it is highly significant to have declared the following:
- interest in major food-related social issues;
- in-depth knowledge of Slow Food;
- a propensity to attend Terra Madre, given the topics addressed in the last edition;
- little interest in cookery.



	D1	D2
Are you a member of Slow Food?	0.210	0.231
Have you ever attended a Slow Food event?	0.123	0.260
How would you assess your knowledge of Slow Food and its objectives? <i>I know nothing about them.</i>	−0.098	−0.034
How would you assess your knowledge of Slow Food and its objectives? <i>I have acquired general information from reading, the internet, other media etc.</i>	−0.242	−0.596
How would you assess your knowledge of Slow Food and its objectives? <i>I am familiar with them, having taken part in a number of activities (petitions etc.).</i>	0.022	0.088
How would you assess your knowledge of Slow Food and its objectives? <i>I have in-depth knowledge of them because I have been involved in a large number of activities, because I'm a member etc.</i>	0.246	0.539
Has your level of Knowledge of Slow Food and its work changed further since sign up for the newsletter?	0.308	0.002
Do you support the Slow Food organization more or less since signing up for the newsletter?	0.296	0.014
Would you say that information received from Slow Food has influenced you to change your food buying and eating habits more generally?	0.532	0.031
Would you say that information received from Slow Food has influenced you to change your food production habits?	0.245	0.007
Would you say that information received from Slow Food has influenced you to change your approach to food?	0.086	0.002
Change in behavior	0.749	0.010
Would you say that your experience during the Coronavirus pandemic has impacted your approach to food?	0.257	−0.066
What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year? <i>Other dealers' and producers' campaigns.</i>	0.066	−0.205
What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year? <i>Slow Food Offline</i>	0.138	0.083
What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year? <i>Slow Food Online</i>	0.674	0.081
What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year? <i>Other/Media</i>	−0.741	0.018
What are your reason for wanting to addent? <i>To buy good, clean and fair food products.</i>	−0.133	−0.236
What are your reason for wanting to addent? <i>The subjects addressed during the event.</i>	0.156	0.512
What are your reason for wanting to addent? <i>Interest in food-related subjects.</i>	−0.034	−0.396
What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year? <i>Networking</i>	−0.041	−0.034
What other factors have influenced your food habits in the last year? <i>Business opportunities.</i>	−0.090	−0.011
What topics interest you most? <i>How I can participate more actively in Slow Food.</i>	−0.01	−0.017
What topics interest you most? <i>What I can do to support better, cleaner and fairer food systems.</i>	−0.038	−0.138
What topics interest you most? <i>Cooking</i>	0.193	−0.553
What topics interest you most? <i>The major questions relating to food systems (e.g. sustainability, social justice etc.)</i>	−0.173	−0.667

**Figure 9.** Profiling of the Slow Food people who attended Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2020. Next to each item, there is a weight that indicates its correlation with the two different types that emerged. Therefore, it allows them to be characterized with respect to the dimensions to which they are most sensitive, and which best represent them. Increasingly greener, the more the affirmative answer to the question weighs (factor pattern) is being attributed to one or the other of the two latent dimensions that emerged through the factorization, and always redder the farther it is from it. Variability (%) | D1: 9393–D2: 7748. Cumulative% | D1: 9393–D2: 17, 141.

### 3.9. The Slow Food “People”

In conclusion, from the previously described analysis, two ideal types would appear to emerge (Figure 9):

- The first (D1) is a “neophyte/newcomer” who is starting to take an interest in Slow Food, seen as having an important role in forming their ideas and behaviors. However, without yet a net profile of interest, in particular towards social issues, towards which it seems to position itself in a more “secular” way.
- The second (D2) might be said to represent the “old guard”, firmly rooted in Slow Food, driven by strong motivation towards social issues, somewhat indifferent to the hedonistic aspect of food but paradoxically, his behavior is little influenced by the Slow Food events in which he participates, probably because he is already very oriented.

## 4. Discussion

The positive response to the question about the Slow Food influence in changing food buying and eating underlines the Association’s crucial role in occasioning variations in behaviors, which are reflected at a personal level and reverberate across the economic fabric in the form of changes in food buying habits. Slow Food, therefore, positions itself as an agent of change and activator of local food systems in which the socio-cultural orientation impacts the economic field, consequently influencing the production scenario upstream of consumption, which incorporates the variation of propensities and adjusts, in a logic of market response, which is both more sustainable and strategic [12,18]. The changes that have occurred in the consumers’ interest in local food, attention to sustainability and related approaches fully confirm that the knowledge-building and awareness-raising goal—the core and the founding element of Slow Food’s activities—has been achieved to the full. The individual orientation towards sustainability spreads thanks to awareness and daily action, thus generating a widespread and shared attitude, which is recognized in the values of the association and is based on them. The preference for local food and participation in the control and supervision of the supply chain is the founding foundations of a community-oriented towards sustainable production and consumption.

Relevant data related to producers’ approach further confirms the role of the organization in the change of attitude of producers too. They have a key role in the food market, and their conduct can contribute to polarizing consumers’ behaviors. This is substantiated in a direct intervention in the economic sector to increase and amplify the change in consumer behavior and make it more effective. In general, virtuous behavior is made possible—or more possible—insofar as supply changes in parallel with demand and a different need for food and sustainability. Further, by modifying the offer producers facilitate change and progressive education. In both cases, the effect is positive and underlines the ethical role and evolutionary potential of—and from—the entrepreneurial fabric, freeing virtuous enterprises from preconceptions and predestination to a «moral low ground, separate from ethics or a moral point of view» [54]. This recalls, from a theoretical perspective, the passage by Porter and Kramer, who frame the difficulties of contemporary companies, to which they oppose—and propose as a solution—the creation of shared value of which a clear line appears to be traced in the survey: “a part substantial part of the problem lies [ . . . ] in companies, trapped in an outdated approach to the creation of value that has prevailed over the last two or three decades. They continue to view value creation narrowly, optimizing short-term financial performance while losing sight of customers’ most important needs and ignoring the broader factors that determine their long-term success” [55]. What has been described applies in general, and even more so, for the year of the pandemic condition characterizing the moment of the event, which also marked the very modality of the Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2020 event [56]. Speaking of online and webinar initiatives, the events organized by Slow Food were recognized as a stimulus for change. From an organizational-institutional point of view, this suggests the need to consider hybrid forms and formulas, also in the future, which can amplify the impact of social and face-to-face events, making the underlying message available through the Web



also to a wider audience, and therefore more inclusive, overcoming constraints and limits of space, time and in general resources available to the individual.

About the perception of producers and consumers, the results reveal a balance between the market's two principal economic actors, namely demand and supply: the change detected is substantially identical in both, outlining an ongoing evolution supported—if not driven—by events and, of course, by the culture promoted by Slow Food. There is notable scope for institutional and political intervention to increase and improve its own impact. Hence the potential for opportunities, guidelines and support for local systems that are increasingly sustainable, balanced and, as a consequence, fair. This would make the connection and consequent synergy between demand and supply—hence between consumers and enterprises (and professionals) in the sector—perfect, or at least more immediate. A food culture supported in this way, non solum sed etiam with regard to its market and economic aspects, would also send a positive reverberation to similar, close and complementary sectors in terms both of approach and of attitude. It would also constitute a virtuous circle, an emblem of a different socioeconomic paradigm and how it can be achieved and replicated, in this by extending the size and scope, in terms of impact, of local food systems, considering that they “have the potential to strengthen social networks and increase social capital, thereby promoting community resilience” [12]. Also, the impact on the actors in the food sector clearly confirms the central role of the Slow Food Association—including for food sector professionals—in creating behaviors and a common culture of attention, sensitivity and awareness raising about distinctive topics and values.

In the 2020/2021 edition, the Terra Madre community-acquired all the characteristics to be defined as a “Glocal” entity, therefore global and local at the same time. It is a context with a mix of short and long networks, of territorial and community-level strong ties between similar actors, which strengthen their cohesion and the rooting of new behaviors, and of weak ties between distant worlds and different actors, which are at the basis of the diffusion of new ideas and innovation [33]. A hybrid between the original territory of the movement and the world, between physical and virtual, delocalized, with a collective and distributed mind and intelligence.

The ongoing evolution (already readable in the two previous editions, through the analysis key of social and relational capital, understood both as an asset and as a network functioning model, increasingly widespread and polycentric) leads towards further perspectives and keys to interpretation, under the impact of forced digitalization. If we address the dual phenomenon in an integrated manner, it is, in fact, possible to note:

- On the one hand, the role played by the international Slow Food Network, which in itself is not a physically and territorially identifiable and localized entity, but is a “virtual” character, a network of relationships that well represents and incorporates the social capital and relational of Slow Food—already highlighted through the analyzes of the two previous editions of Terra Madre—and to which 57% of the events refer.
- On the other hand, the extent of digital events (58.6% of the total) pertaining to a specific territory, but potentially not limited in terms of users, opening up a digitization perspective that could go well beyond the contingent moment and the pandemic emergency.

From this scenario, we can deduce that 78.3% of the events organized have the typical characteristics of a platform, therefore of a virtual context that develops on the basis of local and global networks. Starting from a physical and community presence, these networks are amplified by digitization, acting as a place of exchange and transaction, and generating a positive feedback loop that increases in value as the number of people and organizations involved increases. These feedbacks are, in turn, relaunched by the use of social media and their ability to resonate, also as a new perspective of the action of mass action movements [57]. In this sense, Slow Food seems to demonstrate extraordinary modernity and adaptability in the adoption of models that mark the success of many of the natural antagonists of its campaigns, among which it is possible to mention the agri-food multinationals which are increasingly becoming platform enterprises. On the basis of this

consideration, we can therefore define Terra Madre Salone del Gusto as a hybrid glocal platform, which enhances the capacity for collective action of its reference communities, as well as their ability to influence the issues it places at the center of the change linked to sustainability (and referred to in particular by the Call for Action launched on the occasion of the 2020/2021 edition).

This confirms the capacity that the mobilization of events linked to the themes of sustainability and biodiversity has had in creating changes in attitudes and behaviors towards themes such as food consumption and production. This evidence has emerged specifically from the population of participants to the events with less knowledge of Slow Food, which approaches it in a way that is not yet clearly defined and without particular motivations to issues of a wider nature and of social impact, however proving to be susceptible to the contents transmitted. At the same time, while the interest in participating in events is high, the interest in an active engagement in the organization is much lower. The processes of “complex social contagion”, which underlie the diffusion of new attitudes and behaviors, thus seem to emerge less from what could have been an ideological adherence (such as that manifested by those who declare an “early” knowledge and belonging). What seems to emerge is a sort of “secularization” of the way of approaching Slow Food and Terra Madre initiatives, which poses many challenges to the way in which a movement of collective action can act to develop a process of greater awareness toward behaviors related to sustainability and the development of communities that gather around the themes of food. This trend, which has already emerged in previous editions, is also manifested through the greater heterogeneity of the participants, characterized not only by farmers or breeders, as at the origins, but also by entrepreneurs, professionals and researchers from different sectors and disciplines.

#### *Health at Systemic Food Events in The Time of COVID-19*

In the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was reasonable to ask to what extent the subjects of health, social costs—seen as health costs—and the well-being of communities were addressed through the lens of food at the Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2020/2021. Of the 75 countries involved, 17 welcomed the debate on the intersection of food and health. As Figure 10 shows (Figure 10), in Europe, they included Italy, Croatia, Slovakia, Spain, Germany, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation. In the vaster continents of the Americas, the United States, Mexico, Cuba, and Ecuador, in Asia, Japan and the Philippines and in Africa, finally, Nigeria, Togo and Guinea Bissau. From the analysis of the events developed globally, it is possible to note how the subject of health through the lens of food was addressed in the different geographical areas according to the One Health holistic vision [58], whereby human health, animal health and the health of the ecosystem are closely interconnected. This is confirmed by Europe, the continent that involved the highest number of countries and addressed the most diversified subjects at events. If Italy, for example, addressed the questions of proper soil management to ensure health, of primary prevention of oncological diseases through food, and of incentives for the purchase of healthy food, Germany entered into a broader debate on the connections between food, health and the pandemic crisis, while the UK discussed how the quality of food could revive the immune system. Subjects thus ranged from the general to the particular, closely linked to the places in which events were organized. In the Russian Federation, for example, they addressed the role of fish products in traditional culture and the proper conservation thereof to reduce health problems at the local level.

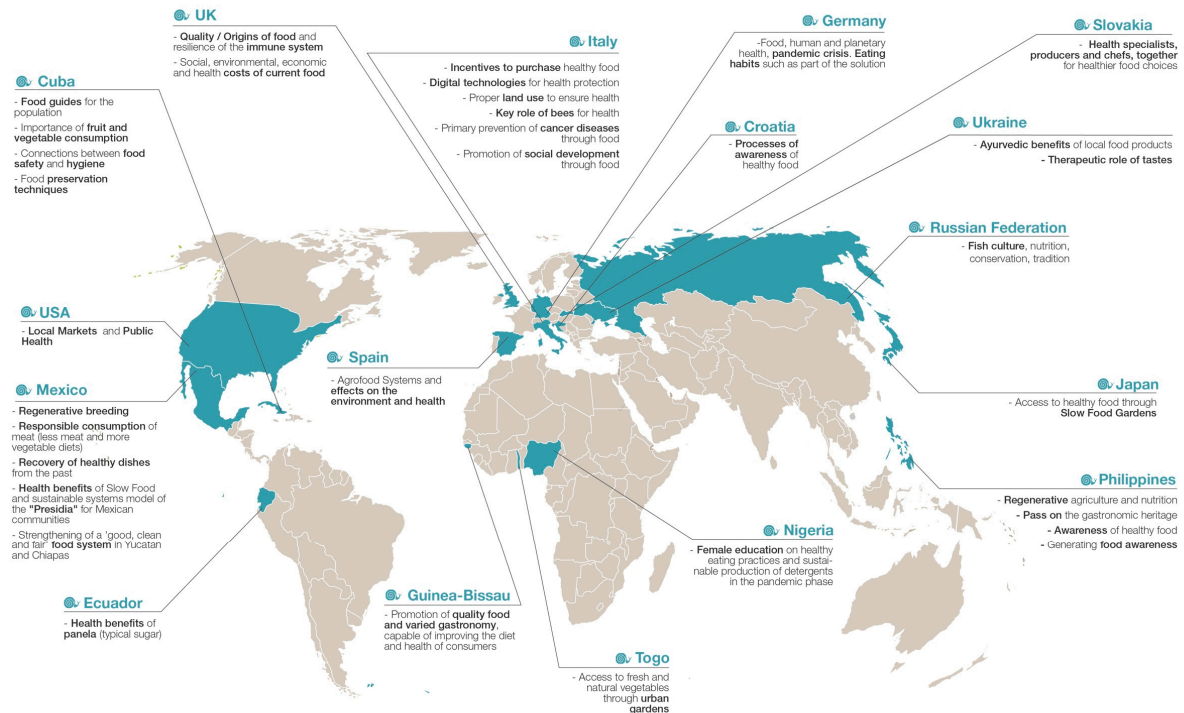
In the Americas, too, the food-health dichotomy was addressed with an approach closely connected to the distinctive characteristics of the places in which initiatives were organized. If in the United States, one of the subjects addressed at events was the importance of local markets for sourcing fresh food during the pandemic, in Mexico, the predominant topics of discussion were the responsible consumption of meat, regenerative livestock breeding, and the health benefits Slow Food presidia can bring to local communities.

## Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2021 | Food and Health contents in the Events

75 Involved States

17 States that have addressed the issue of Health through Food

*Italy, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Germany, Guinea Bissau, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Togo, Ukraine, UK, USA*



**Figure 10.** The food-health dichotomy in Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2020–21 event.

Moving eastwards, the subjects that emerged in Cuba were the connection between food safety and hygiene in terms of microbiological risks and proper food conservation practices. In Ecuador, finally, they demonstrated the health benefits of panela, local unrefined whole cane sugar, over the commonly used refined white sugar.

In Africa—namely Togo, Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau, events focused not only on educating women about healthy food practices and the sustainable production of detergents during the pandemic but also on the importance of designing urban gardens to make fresh, natural vegetables accessible in the various regions.

In Asia, finally, the Philippines was the country that organized most events after Italy. There they addressed the topics of the handing down of traditional cooking by the elderly (therefore of the third age) as a means of immersing the new generation in the local cultural heritage and educating farmers on the negative impacts of OGMs and herbicides on water, biodiversity, and health. The question of young people also extended to Japan, where the young generation was involved in processes designed to raise awareness about access to healthy food through Slow Food local gardens.

From the analysis addressed, it is possible to note how, although, in the pandemic era, less than a quarter of the countries involved by Terra Madre Salone del Gusto 2020–21 addressed health as a question closely connected with that of food production and consumption.

### 5. Conclusions

The results of the survey administered and described in the previous paragraphs, as well as the findings that emerged from the analysis of the impact forms, highlight, and confirm the importance of the Slow Food Association, also and above all, through the systemic events organized, in particular Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, in the structuring

of a widespread sensitivity towards local food, as a factor for the sustainability of the supply chain. At the same time, it becomes a constituent and identifying element of the community that recognizes itself in the founding values of the organization, which settles down as an irreplaceable actor of the change underway and of further positive future impacts in terms of consumption and, upstream, of models and production approaches adopted. Also, from a political point of view, such a direction, in the full conception of local food systems [12–15], registers the double utility of achieving—or striving towards—a sustainable balance in environmental, social, and economic terms and consolidation of a network of local stakeholders who operate with a view to lasting and the creation of widespread and shared value [12–18].

Thanks to cultural events such as Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, as humanity, we can work to create a common language that gives substance to the ecological transition. A vocabulary with which to write an intergenerational pact for reconsidering our relationship with the best supplier of raw material known to humanity: nature [59]. In fact, looking at today's food system, it is clear that food production, in general, is undemocratic and definitively unsustainable. Increasingly long, complex, and standardized globalized food supply and distribution chains have for some time disconnected many of the relationships between ecological units [60] that ensured that food production was the result of a healthy relationship with nature. Our economy is based on exceeding planetary [61] and social [62] boundaries, taking an unchecked predatory approach that is killing our shared home [63]. The erosion of natural capital over many decades, thanks to a linear economic paradigm ("take, make, dispose of"), sabotages the stability of cultural capital [64], meaning that even the simplest dialogue between people becomes difficult. Emphasizing the existence of interconnected systems [22], of which humans should be an integral, non-invasive part, brings us to the concrete understanding that starting from food to develop an economic and social paradigm shift means focusing attention on communities, on the quality of relationships and on the substance of behaviors [19]. We must shift from a consumer society based on permanent dissatisfaction to a "glocal" vision [65], which, starting from local places, reduces food loss and waste along the supply chain and regenerates food sovereignty: all elements that have an important role in the Slow Food events. A sustainable economy can exist only if supported by an adequate knowledge economy [49]. Cultural events such as Terra Madre Salone del Gusto are crucial for putting this knowledge into a circle.

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