



Universität für Bodenkultur Wien
Department für Nachhaltige
Agrarsysteme

Project Report

Develop a Food Co-op at BOKU

PJ Organic farming and regional development 2013

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1 Introduction

This project is the product of the project-based course Organic Farming and Regional Development, held in the summer semester of 2013. It represents a bridge between the theoretical world and the practical world, and it has developed along its lifetime to, at the time of writing, be the initial document of an actual food co-operative at BOKU.

This report covers the project management, such as the breakdown of tasks and work packages; the development and findings of the research conducted, as interviews and as a survey; and also considers the future prospects of a food co-operative at BOKU.

The choice of a food co-operative was one suggested to the project group, however it also has a great significance for the project members, and can be placed within a much wider context.

This project has sought to lay the foundations for a food co-operative (food co-op) at the Universität für Bodenkultur (BOKU).

A food co-operative enables a direct consumer – producer connection. A group of interested people find together and search for interested producers, in the most cases regional farmers, who want to sell their products to this group of people. The group orders in a defined time range and pay the farmer directly.

An university offers an interesting and challenging environment for a food co-op to operate. There is a large population of students and university employees, but many of these may be temporary as students come and go. There are also institutional arrangements, such as university facilities' management and other elements of a bureaucracy required to run a large institution, that separate a university-based food co-op from a simple collective group of interested persons.

In short, this project has laid the foundations: the conceptual development, the market research required, and made contact with key institutional stakeholders within the university and the student-run Tüwi (Türkenwirt at BOKU Türkenschanze), while also preparing resources for a future implementation group to turn these foundational ideas into a functioning reality. This transition process has already begun, based on the information and knowledge developed throughout the life and evolution of this project. This report outlines the processes that were undertaken, the way in which information was gathered from a survey and from interviews with existing food co-ops around Vienna and Europe, and the results of these information-gathering processes. We believe that this project has an excellent and exciting future, and that the work contained in this report will become a reality in the near future.

2 Research aim and research questions

There is a lack of fresh and organic food at the University of natural resources and some people organized themselves and try to change this fact. A food cooperation at the BOKU would fit ideally into this field by providing healthy vegetables, fruits and some other products of farmers.

The idea behind the project food co-op at the BOKU was to investigate the necessity, the interest of students and employees and the possibility of realization of a BOKU-base food co-operative.

At the beginning of the project we collected some main questions we wanted to answer during the project progress. These questions were

- Which groups at BOKU would be interested?
- What kind of Food Co-op would be preferred?
- How could the food Co-op be implemented and by whom?

Some more detailed questions showed up in the proceeding work, like

- Which product groups from which type of production would be preferred by the relevant groups?
- Is there a possibility for a storeroom?
- Do we find some interested farmers/producers?
- Where could we get support?

See Chapter 5.1 Online survey for selected answers.

3 Selected Literature

As this project is very context-specific, existing research and literature was of limited use, compared with interviews conducted with existing food co-ops (see Chapter 4.2). This chapter instead explores some of the wider justifications for food co-ops.

Particularly in the 21st century, there is a growing desire for people to be proactive in managing their food consumption, moving away from large corporate food suppliers, and re-aligning themselves towards locally grown products and a more grassroots approach to purchasing food. Food co-operatives are an important tool, and an important feature, of this food movement. While they can vary greatly from group to group, they all operate with broadly similar goals and values. These include collective and cooperative organisation, creating connections between consumers and producers, financial benefits beyond that of individuals, and giving members an opportunity to take control over their own food consumption.

3.1 An academic view of food co-ops

Jarosz's (2008) article explores some of the history behind alternative food networks, which includes food co-ops, and the development of food networks today. Jarosz defines alternative food networks by the following criteria:

- by shorter distances between producers and consumers;
- by small farm size and scale and organic or holistic farming methods, which are contrasted with large scale, industrial agribusiness;
- by the existence of food purchasing venues such as food cooperatives, farmers markets, and community supported agriculture and local food-to-school linkages;
- by a commitment to the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable food production, distribution and consumption (p.232).

Jarosz also points to the limits to growth that alternative food networks can create. By seeking products and producers with certain characteristics (small-scale, local, organic), there is a risk that an increasing number of alternative food networks will only have limited number of food producers available to meet their needs. While this is obviously going to be a very contextual issue, which some areas will feel more acutely than others, this may become an issue for all food co-ops, as competition for food producers may increase, or farmers may feel overwhelmed (p.232).

In essence, Jarosz sees alternative food networks existing in a way that is both fragile and dynamic. It is this fragility that can be a cause for concern for the development of a food co-op at BOKU, as there will inevitably be a wide range of pressures on the operation of a food co-op, from

the nature of dealing within the university system, to retaining members, to ensuring employee availability, producers and steady supplies, and maintaining an appropriate funding and membership structure for students. However, the other aspect that Jarosz describes in alternative food networks, the dynamism, is also good grounds for the creation and existence of a food co-op at BOKU.

3.2 Cooperative Grocers' Information Network

The Cooperative Grocers' Information Network is a USA-based organisation focused around providing support for food co-ops and food networks. Its manual *How to Start a Food Co-op* is likewise based around the American experience, and also with a more corporate organisational style that is probably not suitable for a BOKU food co-op, or the Austrian experience. In particular, the book is focused on creating legal businesses within that framework, albeit ones which are co-operatively owned. However, it still has some useful information for forming food co-ops, such as information about membership and core groups.

It is, in general, however, a good example of the need for contextual information much more than generic information in developing a food co-op. For instance, because it is an American publication operating within both an American mindset and an American legal and institutional framework, it is of limited use against the knowledge that can be gained from interviews with existing co-ops around Vienna.

4 Methods

4.1 Project scope and -context

The project 'Develop a Food Co-op at BOKU' was an idea of the two lecturers of the course 'Organic farming and regional development' Dr. Susanne Kummer and DI Friedrich Leitgeb. Both of them are members of the work group 'Bio Essen auf der Boku' ('Organic food at BOKU') which tries to improve the organic food availability at the university site 'Türkenschanze'.

During the work process the potential for the real implementation of the food co-op with some participants of the work group got more and more in focus.

4.1.1 Temporary Project scope

The Project was started at 26 of February and will be ended on the 25 of June.

Table 1: Project milestones

Start date	End date
26.02.2013	25.06.2013

4.1.2 Social Project scope

We organized our group in different smaller groups with specific work packages. To coordinate the work packages we all met once a week. Every work group had a folder on drop box where they could save and share the documents they worked on.

Despite there were some main responsibilities most of the time every team member was involved in every step of the project. Every decision was discussed with the whole group.

Table 2: Work packages and Responsibilities

Work package	Main Responsibilities
Online survey for students and employees of BOKU	Katharina Hagenhofer Katharina Trieb Marcel Podstolski
Interviews with knowledgeable people (other Food Co-ops, legal department, facility management)	Isabella Auberger Anne Bauch Katharina Hagenhofer Moritz Hofer Magdalena Pirker
Project organisation, documentation	Isabella Auberger Magdalena Pirker Marcel Podstolski
TÜWI contact	Anne Bauch
Start up Marketing	Katharina Trieb
Financing	Katharina Trieb

4.1.3 Social Project context

Image1 shows the social context of the project. Every group we were in contact with or had a role in our work progress is represented by a circle.



Image1: Project environment (own repr.)

4.2 Online Survey

The consideration at the beginning of the project was for which group a food co-op at the BOKU would be most interesting. There are a lot of students and employees concerning with agricultural and ecological issues at BOKU. Very probably they would be interested. To cover the most different subject of studies, the most different departments of the BOKU and to get the most information out of these different groups we decided to send out an online survey. This kind of survey ensured, at least theoretically the broadest coverage.

We determined the Online survey to be a quantitative online questionnaire with pre-defined answer categories.

4.2.1 Target group

Our target group was all the employees and students of the BOKU. These would be about 2.000 employees (estimation as of 2013) and around 10.000 students (based on 2012 data) (source: homepage BOKU, stand April 2013).

4.2.2 Survey program

In cooperation with the central computer science service (ZID) of BOKU, we have prepared the questionnaires using the survey program Lime Survey and after a correction and pretest period, we released the survey to the BOKU employees and students.

4.2.3 Evaluation program

As an evaluation program for the result we used Excel. The data of the survey were collected by ZID and sent to the survey working group using the agreed file format. With this database we conducted our analysis drew up an evaluation and graphs (see *Chapter 5.1*).

4.2.4 Survey duration

The survey was started on April 15th, 2013, as planned. With cooperation of ZID we wrote up a questionnaire and send the links to all departmental secretary offices of BOKU, which in turn were the ones responsible to pass on the information to all employees. The students we reached with the help of the student representatives.

The planned end of the survey was April 22nd, 2013, the survey was therefore accessible a week online. Following consultation with ZID, the possibility of prolonging the survey period existed, allowing the survey to be kept open for another week, if results were too few or if responses should develop slowly. Justification for prolonging was based on the survey reaching or not reaching a required minimum number of responses, which we set at 1000 responses.

Since after several reminder mails to the studies representatives, we were still unable to meet our desired target of 1000 answers, we decided to prolong the survey period until April 25th.

4.2.5 Contact possibilities

To be able to collect, work on and answer detailed questions immediately, we opened a mail account: foodcoop.boku@gmail.com

This contact possibility also shall serve as the first contact point for potential members, suppliers and interested persons.

4.2.6 Regarding the Questionnaire

During the survey, we got some comments directly about the questionnaire from ZID and the participants. These parts should be done better for future surveys. Two main issues arose:

- Question: Would you be interested in joining a food co-op if there was one at BOKU?
 - Missing Answer: I do not know..., would have been desirable.
- Employees: no exact data about which institute they were part of was collected, which would have been useful in matching demand with institutions, as could be done with students.

4.2.7 Evaluation

We got 829 answers back, and of these 756 were valid responses. 73 responses were incomplete. 500 participants were students and 256 are employees. The rate of reaction from the employees with 8% was nearly three times higher than the average (3%). The rate of reaction from the students with 3% was normal.

4.3 Interviews

It was not clear how the start up of a food co-op can be realized. Especially at an university. That's why it was important to find some 'Experts' who could tell us something about the different steps, the to do's and potentially occurring problems. The idea behind the mostly face to face quality interviews was to collect all the different experiences and use them for the start up of the BOKU food co-op.

The interview questions were developed by the group with the supervision of the course advisors. It was possible to conduct eight interviews with members of other food co-ops. Five interviews were held in person, while three interview partners were contacted via e-mail. The interviews were conducted in a friendly atmosphere and the interview partners also expressed interest in the project. Some even gave tips, especially in areas where there is a need to be particularly cautious. The person who held the interview wrote the given information down. In the end a summary over all interviews with the important information was elaborated.

Bioparadeis, Nuss Co-op, Speis, Möhrengasse and vegan food co-op are food co-ops in Vienna, Austria. ISARAMAP is a food co-op of a school in Lyon, France. Tu-Ess-Bio is run at the Technical University in Berlin, Germany, and Veggie Bag Project is run at the University of Gent in Leuven, Belgium. One interview was held with the founder of the Greißlerei 2.0 of St. Pölten, Austria.

To get a broad insight across various aspects, very different food co-ops were chosen. Bioparadeis is already an older, established one, while a newer example, Nuss Co-op, was also chosen. A very large one was Speis, while Möhrengasse had recent problems in legal and regulatory issues. The vegan food co-op only has vegan food. Another interview partner was currently involved in founding a new food coop in Meidling, Vienna. Through these different food cooperatives a good understanding of the situation in Vienna was given. In addition, the interviews conducted with ISARAMAP, Tu-Ess-Bio and Veggie Bag Project it was possible to see how a food cooperative could work on in an university environment. Greißlerei 2.0 is different to the other food co-ops. It is an online shop, where people can order something but have to pick it up.

5 Results

5.1 Online Survey

5.1.1 General Data

The majority of the respondents were between 20 and 29 years old, female, and live in a household with 2 to 4 people. The reason for the high household members is the living situation at flat sharing communities. Most participants are studying or working at the Türkenschanze campus and the most answers came from Bachelor students. An overview about all questionnaire answers can be found in the document 'Results of Online Survey Food Co-op' which was added to this Project Report and should be available at the Division of Organic Farming.

5.1.2 Detailed Data

Around 60 % of the participants knew the term food co-op before the survey. There was however a difference between students and employees (see *Image 2* and *Image 3*).

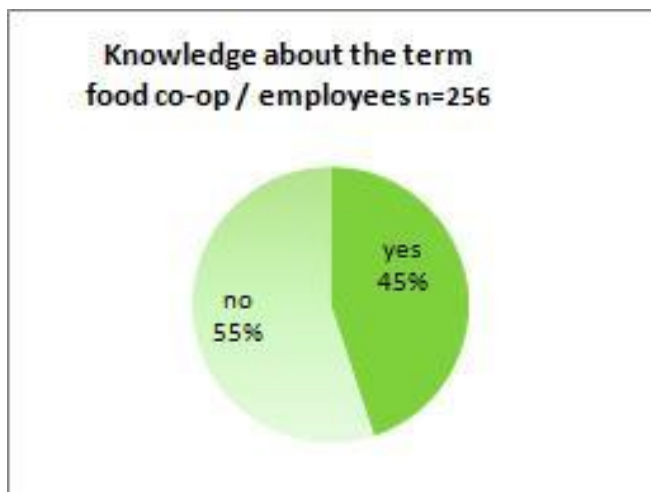


Image 2: Knowledge about food co-op empl.(own repr.)

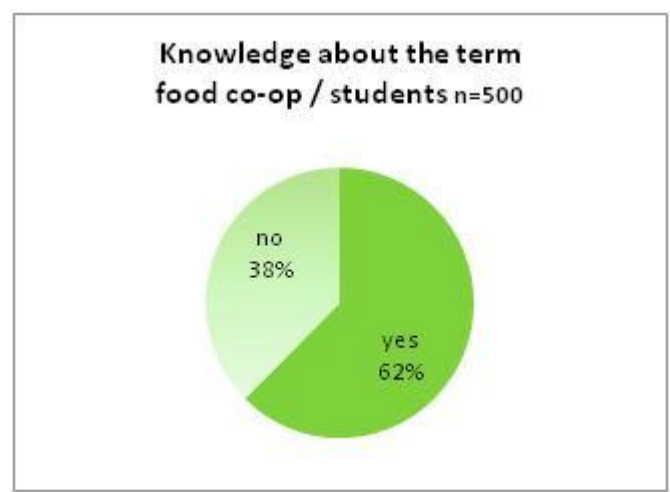


Image 3: Knowledge about food co-op students (own repr.)

More than 80% of the participants were interested in joining a food co-op if there was one at BOKU. In addition, most wanted a combination of ordering/delivery and shop co-op at BOKU.

The time for spending on working at the food co-op was also different between employees and students (see *Image 4* and *Image 5*)

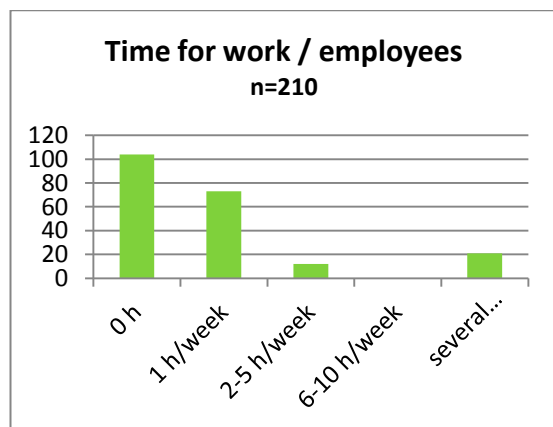


Image 4: Time for work empl. (own repr.)

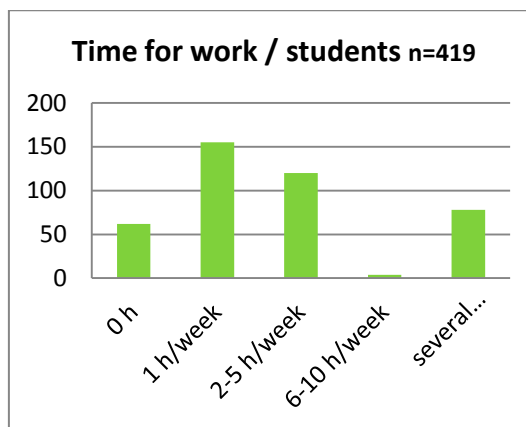


Image 5: Time for work students (own repr.)

Regarding the availability of the food co-op is also a difference between employees and students.

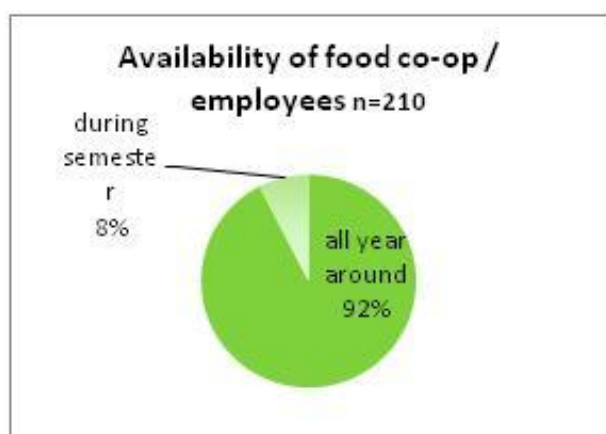


Image 6: Availability of food co-op empl.(own repr.)

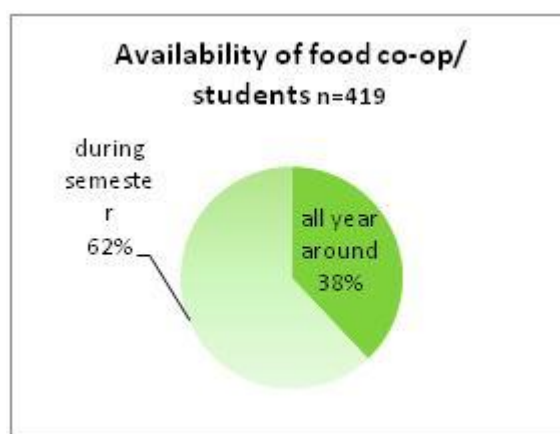


Image 7: Availability of food co-op stud.(own repr.)

Image 8 shows an overview of the groups of products which were preferred by the participants. Further suggestions from the participants were: eggs, nuts, chocolate, coffee, cacao, soya products, goat milk products, cosmetic and cleaning products, snacks and prepared meals.

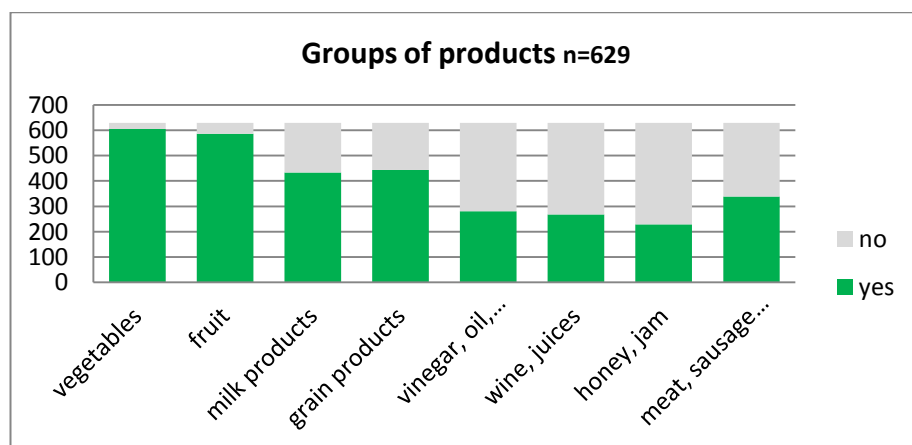


Image 8: groups of products (own repr.)

Most of the participants wanted products from organic and regional producers. The employees and the students were willing to pay a monthly membership up to € 20,-.

Here is an overview about the motivations for, and barriers to, joining a food co-op (see Image 9 and Image 10).

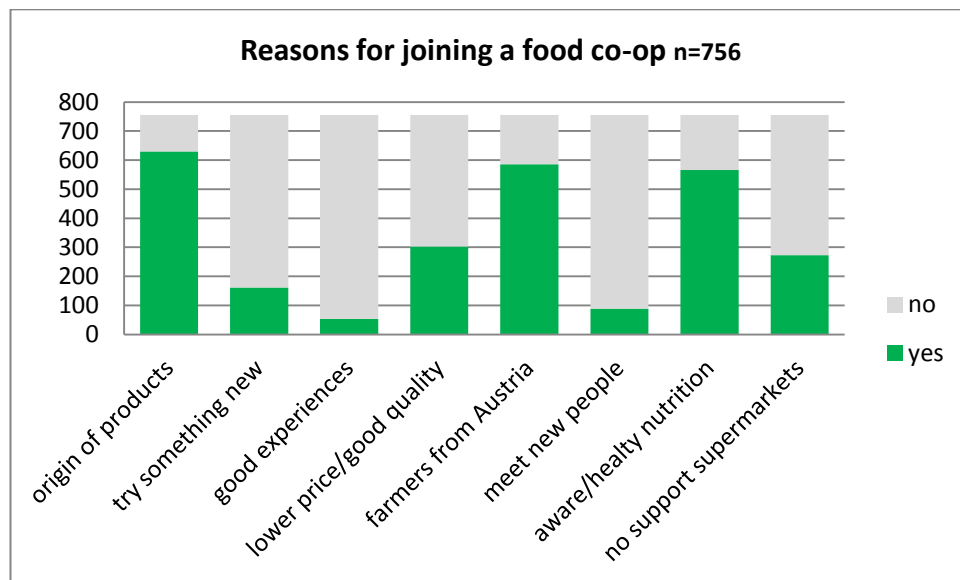


Image 9: Reasons for joining food co-op (own repr.)

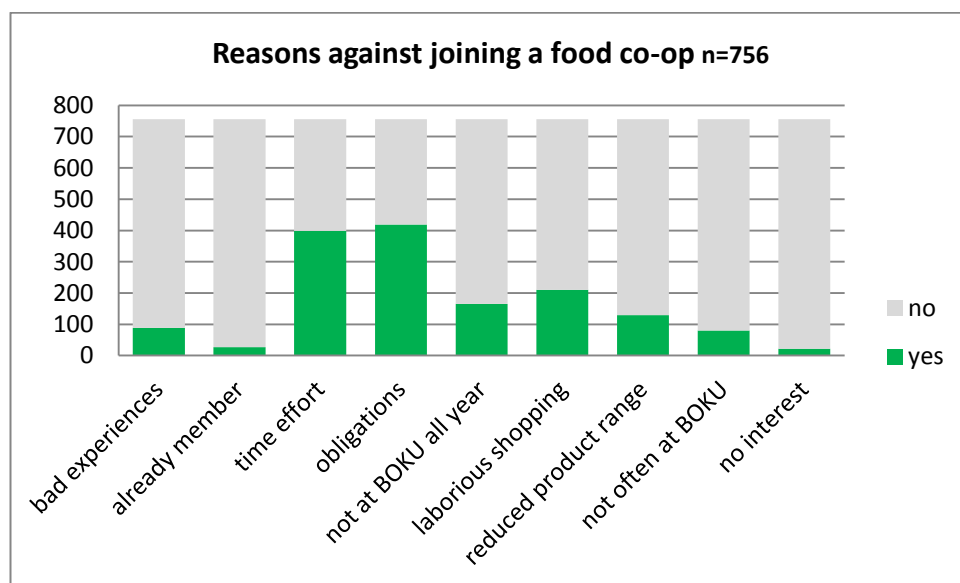


Image 10: Reasons against joining food co-op (own repr.)

We also asked foreign students if they were interested about membership in a food co-op to find contact to other students easily. Around 80% were interested for a food co-op, which matches the domestic students. All used graphs are produced by the work group of the project study.

5.2 Interviews

It was very interesting to see that all of the interviewed food co-ops work a little differently. Most work with the concept of grassroots democracy. That means that everybody in the group has the same rights. This makes the decision-making progress very difficult but also very exciting.

Alternatively, a preferred model of governance is to have a working group of seven to ten people who are responsible for day-to-day management and longer term governance. All of the food co-ops mentioned that communication within the group is the key to success. The more established ones are more experienced in communication however the newer ones are more dynamic.

Finding a legal organisational form for food co-ops turns out to be very difficult. The laws in Austria are very unspecific and are not really suited for private food sharing without the purpose of making a profit. All the food co-ops are thus forced to act in a legal grey area. Due to this and because every food co-op works a little differently, depending on the founding people, there are various forms of organisations. But as you can say they are all associations (Vegan Food Co-op 2013, Speis 2013, Veggie Bag 2013, Isaramap 2013, Meidling 2013, Möhrengasse 2013, Greißlerei 2.0 2013, Tu-Ess Food Co-op 2013, Isaramap 2013).

Some do not have a legal title such as club. They are organized privately. A lot of food co-ops in Vienna were influenced by the statutes and working methods of Vienna's oldest food co-op, Bioparadeis.

Here are some brief insights in some different food co-ops in Vienna. More information can be found in the Annex.

5.2.1 Food Co-op Meidling

This food co-op is in the start-up phase from which they could give advice. They mentioned that for the first meeting everybody needs a lot of time, especially for the group building process. Everyone needs to have the same knowledge and then the group can be forced. In the second meeting first responsibilities and tasks were divided and work groups were formed. One member of this food co-op said, that it is important to know how much to build on other groups' experiences. At the same time you should stay independent and focus on the group's needs and wishes (Meidling 2013).

5.2.2 Speis

The main problem they had was to find a storage room. Speis established a rule of "free prices", so everyone pays as they wish. Unlike Bioparadeis, they manage their orders and communication via a German-designed software. This software was developed specifically for food co-ops, called "foodsoft". In addition they use a communication platform. They have 100 members, making them large for a Viennese food co-op (Speis 2013).

5.2.3 Vegan Food Co-op

Some members of other food co-ops saw the need to found a vegan food co-op, among other things to share knowledge about vegan nutrition, bio-vegan agriculture and so on. They plan to add certain other activities to the food co-op, for instance offering workshops and information about the vegan lifestyle. They have 30-40 members (Vegan Food Co-op 2013).

5.2.4 Möhrengasse

This food co-op has products like grain products, spices, oils, milk products, soy products, coffee, potatoes, herbs, beer, eggs, bread spreads, honey, vegetables, wine and others. They had problems with the law and have now to change some aspects of their operation, including meeting hygiene regulations.

Some weeks before the interview, Möhrengasse was visited by the market authorities, and is now facing the problem of either having to change their shop-like system in order to argue that it is privately organised, or to fulfill hygiene regulations (which is costly and partly difficult in their current location). Our interview partner would argue that hygiene regulations are legitimate, and make sense, but their implementation may be very expensive. He hopes that the next few years and the current prospering of the idea of food co-ops will bring changes in the relevant laws that will allow for a legal status more suitable for food co-ops than the ones available at the moment. (Möhrengasse 2013).

5.2.5 Nuss Co-op

The communication in this food co-op was one of their biggest problems in the beginning. They developed some sort of communication, where voting (= yes, no and veto) and group decision-making are mixed together. But the process of finding an organizational structure is still not finished and probably never will be (Nuss Co-op 2013). One member of this food co-op mentioned that communication is nearly the key for everything.

5.2.6 ISARAMAP, Veggie Bag Project and Tu-Ess Berlin

The interviewed food co-ops of the school/universities of Lyon, Berlin and Leuven are very similar. ISARAMAP and the Veggie Bag Project were founded by students as part of a course and with university advisers (Veggie Bag 2013, Isaramap 2013).

Students of the Technical University in Berlin founded Tu-Ess, but they had problems in the beginning. It was difficult to find a storage room at the university, because it was the idea of the students and they were independent from a course or study programme, which limited the institutional support that they could use. But then a person at the central room allocation department supported them and they got a room (Tu-Ess Food Coop 2013).

The farmers of ISARAMAP and the Veggie Bag Project have to organise the packaging and distribution system. They prepare boxes depending on the seasonal availabilities of, for instance,

vegetables or fruits (Veggie Bag 2013, Isaramap 2013). All the products are sold at the university at so called pick-up points (Veggie Bag 2013, Isaramap 2013, Tu-Ess Food Coop 2013).

Some food co-ops have already reached an optimum number of members. It depends, but they suggest around 40-60 people to be ideal. Speis as the biggest food co-op has around 100 members which is not a problem for the producers, but does have issues for the group dynamics (Speis 2013). ISARAMAP counts 100 members (Isaramap 2013).

The problems these food co-ops had, laid either in finding a storage room or in the communication or both of them. Some still have temporary solutions for the storage room. It is also important to be careful with the legal situation (Vegan Food Co-op 2013, Speis 2013, Veggie Bag 2013, Isaramap 2013, Meidling 2013, Möhrengasse 2013, Nuss Co-op 2013, Greißlerei 2.0 2013, Tu-Ess Food Co-op 2013).

The given good tip was to contact the BOKU law department to see if it is possible to implement the food co-op into the BOKU structures was given. From this suggestion, there was a meeting with the people in charge, the BOKU law department and the facility management (see Chapter 5.4 Boku Internal Communication). A very useful thing which was learned was that if the food co-op would be a BOKU club, they would then not need to pay, if they would put up a table with the offered products for example in the assembly hall.

To give a short summary of the gained information is that there is no fixed solution for any group or even for the same problem. All of the food co-ops work a little differently although their goals seem to be quite similar.

5.3 Practical implementation Outputs for BOKU

The main output of the project will be a start-up meeting organized by the project team for the future implementation group of the actual BOKU food co-op. This meeting can be seen as the point in time when the knowledge, insights, and ideas from the lecture project are handed over to a new group, which will consist of several members of the project group, and other interested volunteers. This group will then use this input for the real implementation of a food co-op at BOKU.

In order to advertise for this meeting and to recruit volunteers, the project team will produce flyers, to be distributed at BOKU Türkenschanze, and send e-mails to the continuously updated list of people interested in the project. Furthermore, a short article about the project was posted on the website www.foodcoops.at, where there is a list of new food co-ops being founded.

Another output is the application for funds at two different sources: On the one hand the FSI (fund for student initiatives), and on the other hand the 'Widerstandspreis' (resistance award) of the ÖH. These provide funding for student initiatives, especially ecological-related ones. If the application is

successful, these funds could be used by the implementation group for investments necessary in the start-up phase, e.g. for purchase of boxes, fridge, scales etc.

Also, project team members will advertise the project by conducting a radio broadcast about the group's findings and about possible future steps. This broadcast will probably take place in July.

5.4 BOKU internal Communication

In the course of the BOKU- Filmreihe 2012/2013, on the 8th of May, 2013, the film "In Transition Movie 2.0" was shown. After this was a podium discussion and some projects were presented which take place at BOKU and have something in common with the film. Therefore also two members of the food co-op group were able to present our plans. The audience was interested and some of them also signed in a list to get information as the project transitions towards implementation.

The facility management of BOKU were contacted. Two of the Project group members met the head of the BOKU facility management on the 22nd of May, 2013. It came out that there are no possibilities to get a room in the facilities of the university. There is also unfortunately no possibility to have space made available in the planned building, in the future. However, it may be possible to hold a stall in one of BOKU's buildings (for instance, for one-weekly deliveries or brief storage), however this is only possible if rent is paid to the university.

Contact with the legal department of BOKU was established around the same time as with facilities management, and the meeting was also conducted on the 22nd of May, 2013. The legal advisor unfortunately could not really help. She did not know a lot about food cooperatives or about the way to organize it. The only useful information she gave us was that if the food co-op would be a BOKU club they would not need to pay if they would put up a booth with the offered products.

6 Conclusions and Future Prospects

6.1 Conclusions

This project report has detailed the process by which the foundations were laid for the food co-op at BOKU. In it, we have recorded the key information, for future readers to see the processes that we used, the questions that we asked of the project, the interviews that were held with members of other food co-ops around Vienna, and Europe. Furthermore, there were discussions with key stakeholders within the university system, which has its own unique challenges, such as the logistics of operating a food co-op on university property with limited space. Perhaps most important were the questions that we asked in our surveys of students and employees of BOKU in order to gauge the demand for a food co-op. That there was substantial demand, and certainly enough to begin a food co-op has in turn changed the nature of the group conducting this project, from one focused on conducting a feasibility study of a concept, to one implementing an actual food co-op.

6.2 Future Prospects

From this project group, five members have indicated that they will continue with the implementation of a food co-op at BOKU. In order to ensure a stable and continuous operation, there are also plans to find other interested people who would help and work with the food co-op. Some have already contacted the group themselves, for example through the email address provided during the survey. On the 12th of June, 2013, the first meeting or information event will be held to get in touch with these people and hopefully some more, in order to begin the foundation group that will lead the project from concept and plan into reality.

The plans are to start with the food co-op during the summer only for the employees at BOKU, as a pilot trial. This should allow for systems to be developed, and a lot of the implementation work to be undertaken, while also preparing the group for wider membership. If this would work well, it should naturally go further. Therefore, students should have the possibility to become members in autumn. The most difficult steps will probably be logistics (especially finding a storage room) and getting producers.

There are still some talks under way with Tüwi (Türkenwirt BOKU Türkenschanze), in particular with Michael Kowar as our main coordinating contact. Maybe there is a possibility of working together and cooperation, which would be mutually beneficial, because there is no interest to compete with their existing food sales. To get financial support, an application for the “Widerstandspreis” of ‘ÖH BOKU Umwelt- und Alternativreferat’ was submitted. In future, another option is an application for ‘Förderung

studentischer Initiativen', which would assist with diversifying funding during the start-up phase. Nevertheless, we feel that this project has a good future, and we hope to guide it into its next phase.

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10Annex

10.1 Online Survey

10.1.1 Questionnaire

Question 1

Deutsch / English

Introduction

Dear students! Dear employees!

In the context of the lecture “organic farming and regional development (course nr. 933316)“ we would like to ask you about your interest and the possibilities of the implementation of a Food Cooperative at BOKU. This questionnaire should take less than 5 minutes.

A food cooperative (food co-op) is an association of persons who organize together in order to be able to purchase their food products directly from the producers. There are different models of food co-ops which should make lower-prices, and specific purchasing of organic and regional products possible. Most of these food co-ops finance themselves by monthly membership fees which cover the regular operating costs (room rent, equipment etc.).

This interview is of course treated anonymously and confidentially and no personal information is passed on!

Question 2

Please indicate your age.

[text field] years

Question 3

Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Other

Question 4

Please indicate the number of people who live in your household.

[text field] persons

Question 5

Affiliation to BOKU

- General staff
- Scientific staff
- Regular student
- Prospective student
- Incoming / exchange student

Question 6

Main place of study or work

- Türkenschanze (Peter-Jordan-Straße)
- Muthgasse
- Tulln

Question 7

For students

Under which programme do you study?

- Bachelor Agricultural Sciences
- Bachelor Forestry
- Bachelor Wood and Fibre Technology
- Bachelor Environmental Engineering
- Bachelor Landscape Architecture and Landscape Planning
- Bachelor Food Science and Biotechnology
- Bachelor Equine Sciences
- Bachelor Environment and Bio-Resources Management
- Bachelor Viticulture, Enology and Wine Economics
- Individual Bachelor programme
- Master Agricultural and Food Economics
- Master Agrobiology
- Master Alpine nature dangers / Torrent- and avalanche development
- Master Applied Plant Sciences
- Master Applied Limnology and International Joint Master programme Limnology & Wetland Management
- Master Biotechnology
- Master DDP EM in Animal Breeding and Genetics
- Master DDP MSc European Forestry
- Master Environmental Sciences – Soil, Water and Biodiversity
- Master Forest Science
- Master Wood Technology and Management
- Master Horticultural Sciences
- Master Land Management and Civil Engineering
- Master Landscape Architecture and Planning
- Master Food Science and Food Technology
- Master Mountain Forestry
- Master Natural Resource Management and Ecological Engineering
- Master Animal Sciences
- Master Organic Farming
- Master Phytomedicine
- Master Safety in the Food Chain
- Master Material and Energetic Utilization of Renewable Resources (NAWARO)
- Master Management of Environment and Bio Resources
- Master Water Management / Environment Engineering
- Master Wildlife Ecology and Wildlife Management
- Individual Master programme
- Doctorate
- Universitätslehrgang

Question 8

Have you heard of the term 'food co-op' before?

- Yes
- No

Question 9

Would you be interested in joining a food co-op if there was one at BOKU?

- Yes
- No [if no, then to question 19]

Question 10

Which of the following types of organization would you prefer?

- Order food co-op: Weekly Internet order with collection at a central place at the BOKU.
- shop food co-op: with a shop as location to collect order and additional shopping possibility.
- Combination of order and shop food co-op.
- Other [text field]

Question 11

How much time can you spend to contributing to the food co-op's tasks (e.g. shop-keeping, deliveries, ...)?

- 0 hours
- 1 hour per week
- 2 – 5 hours per week
- 6 – 10 hours per week
- Several hours, but not every week

Question 12

At which times should the food co-op be open for you?

- all year round - including holidays
- only during the semester

Question 13 (multiple answers)

Which groups of products would you be most interested in buying from the food co-op?

- vegetables
- fruit
- milk products
- grain products
- vinegar, oil, spices
- wine, juices
- honey, jam
- meat, sausage products
- other [text field]

Question 14

Which type of production and origin of the products would you prefer?

- Regional and organic
- Regional, but no matter which type of production
- Organic, but no matter which origin of products
- Products from BOKU members who have a farm or other site of production
- Doesn't matter

Question 15

Do you have a farm or other site of food production?

- Yes
- No

Question 16

If yes, would you like to market them through a BOKU food co-op?

- Yes
- No

Question 17

How much would you be ready to pay, for the monthly membership (room rent, equipment, ...)?

- < 10 Euro
- 11 – 20 Euro
- 21 – 30 Euro
- 31 + Euro

Question 18

How much money are you spending weekly per person at present?

- < 10 Euro
- 11 – 20 Euro
- 21 – 30 Euro
- 31 – 40 Euro
- 41 – 50 Euro
- 51 – 60 Euro
- 61 – 70 Euro
- 71 + Euro

Question 19 (multiple answers)

What are the reasons why you would like to participate in a food co-op at BOKU?

- I want to know where my food comes from.
- I want to try something new.
- Good experiences with other food co-ops.
- Lower prices for good quality regional products.
- I want to support farmers in Austria.
- I want to meet new people.
- Aware and healthy nutrition.
- I don't want to support supermarkets.
- Other *[text field]*

Question 20 (multiple answers)

What reasons would stop you from joining a food co-op at BOKU?

- Bad experiences with food co-ops.
- Already member of a food co-op.
- Time effort for the food co-op.
- The obligations related to being a member.
- I am not at BOKU all year.
- It's more work than other shopping.
- Reduced product range in a food co-op.

- I am not often at BOKU.
- I am not interested.
- Other [text field]

Question 21

As an incoming / exchange student would you be interested in joining a food co-op during your stay at BOKU?

- Yes
- No

Question 22

Further remarks
[text field]

Thanks for your support!

Should you have any further questions or remarks, please contact us at **foodcoop.boku@gmail.com**

We appreciate your comments and suggestions!

10.1.2 Results

See document 'Results Online Survey'.

10.2 Interview Summaries

10.2.1 Greißlerei 2.0, St. Pölten

Interview April 11th, 2013

The „Gleißlerei 2.0“ is not a food co-op, it's an online shop. You can order the stuff via internet and then you have to pick it up on your own.

Two women were involved in the founding. They didn't have a lot of problems. The difficulties rather were that it was a long way till it worked and that they had to think about so much, like tax authority, hygiene or national insurance.

To have no problem with the law, they had to find the right organization form. First they were an association, but then they made a business because they wanted to earn money.

The customer size is growing more and more. In the beginning there were 20 customers and now 400-500 are registered. For the people it's more and more important to get healthy food.

The main person of the shop is Maria, but she has also three helpers who receive the products and prepare the boxes.

They found the producers with a list of farmers of Bio Austria, with searching on the internet and recommendations. Then they went to the farmers and contacted them personal. Now it's different, some farmers ask Maria, if they could provide some products.

All products come from a distance not farer away than 40-50km, except the salt is from Salzburg.

10.2.2 ISARAMAP food co-op, Lyon France

Interview with the current secretary, Lyon (May 2nd 2013) & with the former secretary, Vienna (May 13th 2013)

The food co-op Isaramap is located in the school (Isara) in Lyon. The food co-op was founded in 2007 by students from Isara, who were in the 3rd year. It was founded to permit the students of Isara to have organic local food for a good price. They create the association 'Isaramap' which was registered at the administrative center. Isaramap's team changes every year because the association is only managed by students in the 3rd year.

The focus subject is to make a direct link between farmers and students or working personal from Isara.

There is no intermediary and the farmers can sell their products for a good price. They recruit farmers if they produce local organic food.

This year different food products are delivered: vegetable and bread (every week); apples, eggs, cheese (every second week). For every product there is only one farmer who delivers. The farmers prepare the boxes and bring it. It's not possible to choose f.i. which vegetables you want. Every box has the same quantities and things.

The team counts ten members: a president, a secretary, a treasurer, a head of communication (facebook and website), a head of visit of the farms and five heads of each production. The legal form is an association; they have regularly meetings and decide all together. If there are some disagreements, the president has the final word. There is one working group-the team with ten members, who also help each other.

They can use the hall in front of the lecture hall for the distributions of the food product. The distribution takes place on Monday and/or Tuesday during 12h15 and 13h15. They also have a room at the school to make all the office work and to store all the documents.

The members are the students of the school or the working personal of Isara. Their food co-op isn't available for persons apart from Isara. Students/working personal inscribe themselves if they want. They also have to help once a year and pay 5 € for the membership. Now they have around 100 members.

10.2.3 Vegan Food Coop, 1150 Vienna

Interview April 19th ,2013

The group running the vegan food co-op have been meeting for about a year, and are at the moment using a room at Perpetuum Mobile, but are not sure if this is a final solution or not.

The group formed itself after some members of other food co-ops saw the need to found a vegan food co-op, among other things to share knowledge about vegan nutrition, bio-vegan agriculture and so on.

They have about 30-40 registered members, of which around 10 come to the meetings regularly. They are organized as an association (Verein), based on the example of Bioparadeis.

The group would be interested to add certain other activities to the food co-op, such as offering workshops and information about the vegan lifestyle, or organizing a work group to make soy milk for the food co-op in the kitchen at Perpetuum Mobile. They would also be interested to cooperate with other projects, like guerilla gardening, to share produce and move away from a producer/consumer logic. They also suggested this idea as a possible approach for a food co-op at BOKU to differentiate from the TüwiHofladen.

10.2.4 Speis (1150 Vienna) / Bioparadeis, 1180 Vienna

Interview April 22nd, 2013

The interview partner is currently a member of Bioparadeis and was involved in founding the food co-op Speis. She is writing her thesis on food co-ops.

Speis was initiated by Bioparadeis members as Bioparadeis got bigger; after the initial phase in 2009, Speis started operating in May 2010.

Speis had some difficulty with finding a room, as the first room turned out to be too damp and there was a mould problem, and in another one there was no electricity.

They had originally planned to involve more different population groups (rather than just students), but have found this difficult. However, the idea led them to establish a rule of 'free prices', so everyone pays as they wish.

Unlike Bioparadeis, they manage their orders and communication via a German software developed specifically for food co-ops, called 'foodsoft'. In addition to this, they use Open Atrium as a communication platform.

Like many other food co-ops, they have based their rules as an association on those of Bioparadeis.

Following a discussion of the legal status of food co-ops and the lack of fitting legal frameworks, Ulrike suggested that a BOKU food co-op would have to be either informally organized, or incorporated in the institutional structures of BOKU. She would find it particularly interesting to combine the food co-op idea with people's places of work, i.e. establishing a food co-op systems for institutes or departments at BOKU; this way, tasks like room-finding, opening times etc. would not be necessary. Another interesting possibility at BOKU would be to include produce from BOKU's 'Versuchsflächen'.

Until recently, Speis did not have a limit on the number of members, but now they have reached 100 members, they also put a stop. While more members are good for the producers because they can deliver larger amounts, it is problematic for the group dynamic.

10.2.5 Food Co-op Meidling, 1120 Vienna

Interview April 23rd, 2013 (in founding process)

In Meidling, a group of friends initiated the founding process for a new food co-op. Though none of the core group members have been in other food co-ops before, they all come from a background of social work and/or volunteer work, and were interested in starting a project together. After first planning steps since October 2012, they have had public meetings and extended the group since February 2013.

New members were found via personal contacts, facebook, the site foodcoops.at, etc., and at the first meeting 25 people attended. It is important to the initial core group to put a lot of time into the group building process, getting everyone to the same level of knowledge and so forth. At a second meeting, first responsibilities and tasks were divided and work groups formed.

The food co-op will most likely be vegetarian, though some members may wish to use the structures for individual meat orders. For the interview partner, it is important to stay as regional as possible, at least in the beginning. He stressed the importance of being aware that the initial phase is very different from later phases when the food co-op is fully functioning.

An important point to consider is how much to build on other groups' experiences and at the same time stay independent and focus on their own group's needs and wishes. They will most likely found an association like other food co-ops, however, and use an online communication forum such as rise-up.

The group is very mixed, the initial core group (several students) being the youngest members. At the moment, 70 people are on the e-mail-list, and so far they have not considered whether or not to have a limit on the number of members.

For our interview partner, an important challenge is the right balance between basic democratic decision making processes and what he calls a 'healthy initiative and decision power of the individual'.

10.2.6 Möhrengasse, 1020 Vienna

Interview April 23rd, 2013

The food co-op at Möhrengasse was founded in spring 2011, after being initiated by a group of people living together who were active in various food co-ops. After some meetings, work groups were formed.

For Möhrengasse, organic producers do not have to be certified; the food co-op is mainly vegetarian, though some individuals order meat through its structures under certain rules. Many rules and agreements were based on those of other food co-ops.

As for regionality, there have been many compromises, which not all members agree too. E.g. the milk products are distributed by a trader, but it has not been possible to find a better solution; for the interview partner, it is against his reasons for joining the food co-op if he doesn't know where his products come from anymore. On the other hand, looking for producers is a lot of work, and the concept of trade was probably developed to help make this easier.

The charter of the association was based on a food co-op in Graz, but the initial goal of being an association without an official managing director did not work out.

Products include grain products, spices, oils, milk products, soy products, coffee, potatoes, herbs, beer, eggs, bread spreads, honey, vegetables, wine and others.

At the moment, the food co-op finances are still based on a cash system, but the group wants to switch to an account system (like other food co-ops) soon.

After a newspaper article published 2 weeks prior to the interview, many people are interested in joining food co-ops, which our interview partner sees as a bit problematic. There is no upper limit for the number of members. At the moment, around 10 people are very active in the food co-op, while 20 come by regularly, but less often, and another 20 not regularly. Initially, the group wanted to include other social groups (not only students), but it was difficult to focus on this goal, and it was only partly reached.

Some weeks before the interview, Möhrengasse was visited by the market authorities, and is now facing the problem of either having to change their shop-like system in order to argue that it is privately organized, or to fulfill hygiene regulations (which is costly and partly difficult in their current location). Philipp himself would argue that hygiene regulations are legitimate, and make sense, but their implementation may be very expensive.

He hopes that the next few years and the current prospering of the idea of food co-ops will bring changes in the relevant laws that will allow for a legal status more suitable for food co-ops than the ones available at the moment.

10.2.7 Veggie Bag Project, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

Interview May 15th, 2013

The university of Leuven has a project that enables students to order regular vegetable deliveries directly from a local farmer, via a team of volunteers. The project is supervised by the university's advisors for student housing culture, environment and mobility, and run by 7 volunteers responsible for one pick-up point each. Pick-up points are located in university buildings and student restaurants, so the project does not have to pay rent. The package and distribution system is entirely organized by the farmer, and payments go directly to from the consumers to the farmer.

One of the goals of the project is to encourage students to integrate sustainability in their lives already during their studies.

In the start-up phase, around 10 people were involved; the project benefitted from the Belgian system of 'Voedselteams' (regionally organized food co-op system) and a similar project at the university of Utrecht (Netherlands). Important challenges in this phase included organizing the locations, establishing an online ordering and payment system, and finding a solution for a bag/box system. Important steps included negotiations with all stakeholders (such as student restaurants and faculties as pick-up points), and finding volunteers.

The project team consists of 1 coordinator and 7 volunteers. It is not embedded in any official legal structure. As for financial issues, the project works with cash and the private bank accounts of the 7 pick-up point responsables.

There is a yearly evaluation; complaints of the customers are communicated to the farmer via the coordinator.

Looking for the producer was simple because there is only one farmer in the region who provides packages within a social project. The producer is visited one a year.

The product range is limited to vegetables and fruit, and customers get a surprise-package depending on the seasonal availability of products. Prices are set by the farmer.

The project became stable after 3 years of promotion, optimizing the offer etc. There is no limit on the number of customers.

For the interview partner, it is of vital importance that this kind of project is started with a group of very engaged and enthusiastic people.

10.2.8 TuEss Food Co-op Technische Universität Berlin Deutschland

Interview May 21st, 2013

The Food Co-op at TU Berlin was refounded in the year 2007 by four persons after broad campaigns and protests at the G8 summit in Heiligendamm. These four people who were very excited about self-organisation found together at TU Berlin. The ideas behind the reactivation of the food co-op that existed some years before were manifold: consumption criticism, the wish to buy cheap organic and regional products, the excitement about self-organisation and the impulse to build up something meaningful after the G8 summit. The university seemed to be the perfect place for that.

The three main parts of the start up phase were (work groups were formed to work on these parts):

- To find producers.
The group scanned (weekly) markets, the internet, looked for it at organic associations and contacted other food co-ops (other food co-ops helped a lot)
- To organize a room
This was a difficult part because every department that could share a room was afraid to lose it when they would let the food co-op in. They thought it would be the wrong message they spread with this action. The official university administration could understand this as 'we don't really need this room and that's why we share it with a food co-op'. In the end they found a person at the central room allocation department who supported them. With the help of this person they got a room.
Important points for the room were: access road, in best case accessible every day, no nasty neighbours, capable for food, not too warm and vented.
- Setup the food co-op software at a private server to be independent

Some financial support for the start up came from a 'Fachschaft' of the university. They could buy some boxes and pay the print and advertising costs.

At the beginning of summer semester 2008 they invited some interested people to a first meeting. At this time they already had the room, some producers (dairy farmer with every now and then sausage and meat delivery; vegetable farmer; bakery; coffee and tea trader). A short time later they ordered for the first time for some existing order groups (flat share, single persons).

One important thing was to form the impersonal location 'university' to a nice location for meeting people. They don't have limitation of membership and it's not a must to join a work group. 20€ bond is a 'I seriously want to join the co-op' barrier. Positive was and is that TU Berlin is very open to student initiatives. Financial basis is a private account on which money is deposited by every member. The responsible person records the incoming amount at the account in the food software account for the members. Different tasks are discussed in the plena. But some people are responsible for fix tasks like every producer has a fix person who orders and another fix person who accounts. In addition there are some communication tasks like intern (organize Plena) and extern (website, flyer,...). Flat hierarchy is important. First there was no special form of organization, just a few students who had an idea and wanted to be independent. But later it got more important to create a sustainable form of food co-op. A 'Registrierte Vereinigung an der TU Berlin' like an association or club was founded later. More because this provided the food co-op a fix room – every 'Vereinigung' has the right to get a room at TU Berlin. Newer principles changed that right but the organization form still exists and makes some things easier but also more difficult – e.g. election of the management and so on.

10.2.9 Nuss Co-op, 1070 Vienna

Interview April 24th, 2013

The founding process of the Nuss-Coop started in the end of 2012 with a start up meeting, around 40 People were attending. The idea was to start a food co-op in the 7th, 8th or 9th district. The motivation was to do something on their own, to take politicking accountability, and of course to have good food.

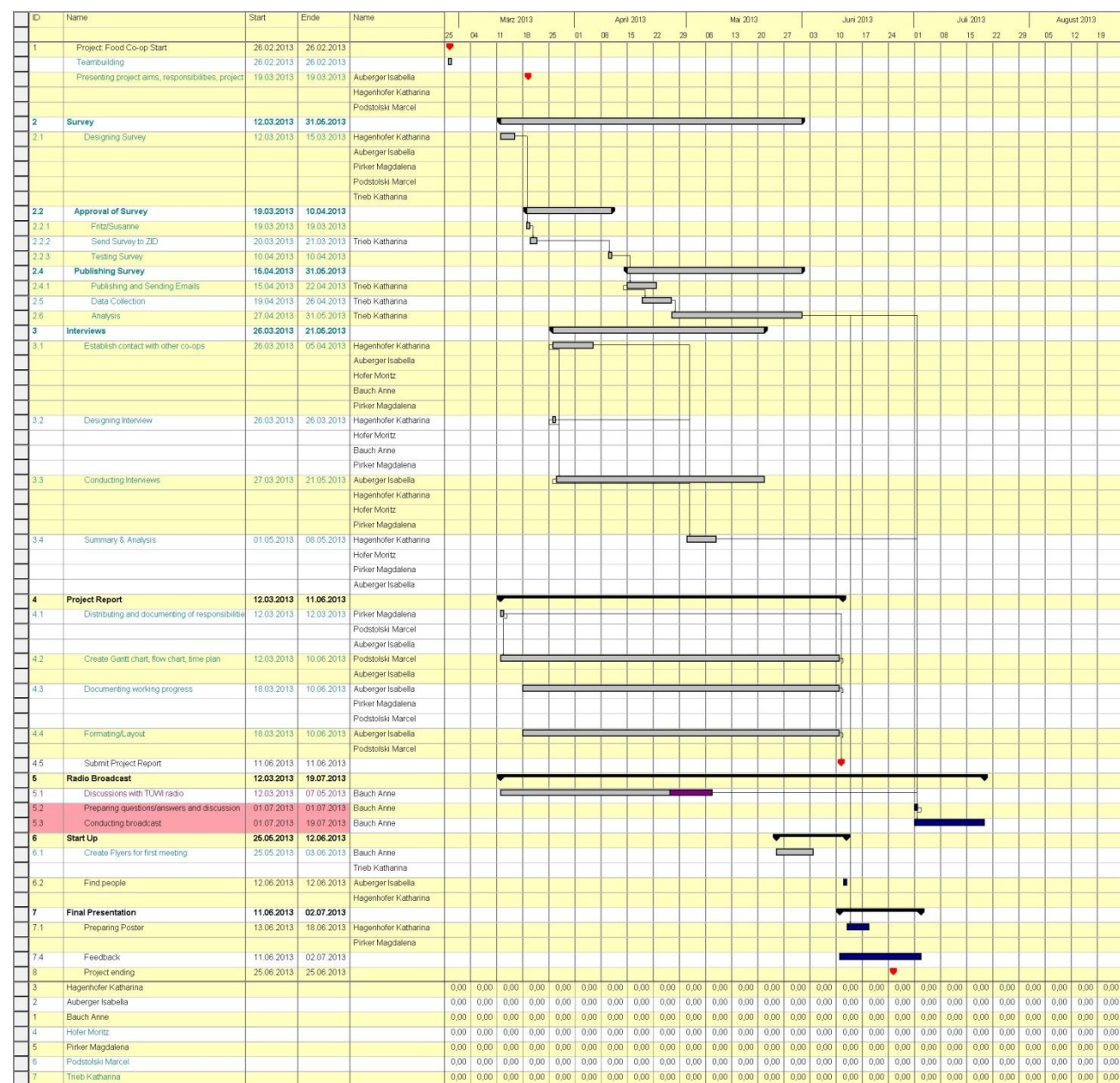
In the beginning the people started very quickly to organize themselves.

They founded work groups, to find a storage room and the necessary producers to fill the room up with good food. They planned to start as soon as possible but then it was very difficult to find a room. But not only that, also the communication within the group was very complicated.

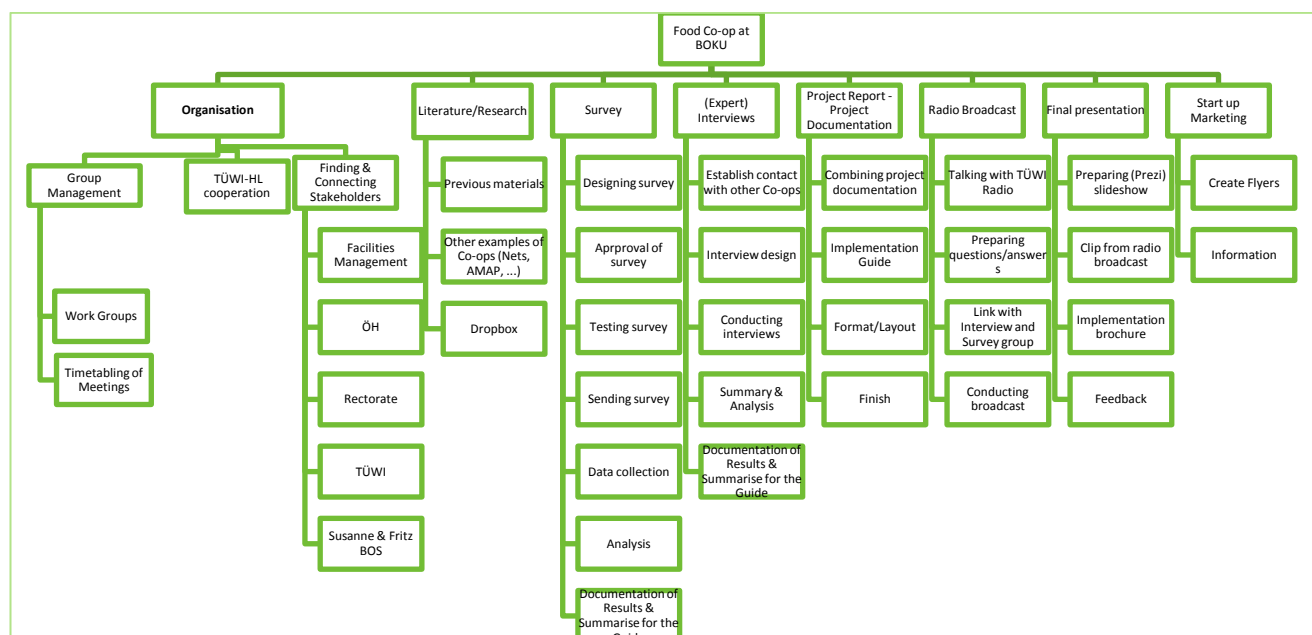
After solving the room-finding problematic, the next thing was how to organize themselves. They didn't want to copy the statutes of the "Bioparadeis", as they wanted to create something on their own. This was and still is very important to the people of the Nuss Co-op. The only thing that's for sure is that they are basic democratic. They developed some sort of communication were voting (= yes, no and veto) and ambiances are mixed together. Therefore the process of finding an organization structure is still not finished and probably never will be. In the interview it was very obvious that the communication is the key to everything, in nearly every answer this aspect was mentioned! It's also important to watch out about knowledge monopolies and coming with it hidden hierarchies. For the producers they were more practical orientated. The producers should work social, organic and local but they didn't need to be certified, as they visit them and create a picture for themselves. The Nuss Co-op is still mostly vegan, except honey, because they don't have a fridge.

10.3 Project plans

10.3.1 Gantt chart & time plan



10.3.2 Work breakdown structure



10.3.3 Project Flow Chart

