

T5.2 Case study report (Code FR6B)

Training in “nature professions”: a driving force for the rural regeneration of “Pays Coutançais”



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Context

Regional context

Manche department (Nuts 3) in which this promising practice was selected has been chosen because of its interesting properties when trying to find the new capability of a territory to face the multi-crisis – ecological, social, economic and cultural – which characterizes the first two decades of 21th siècle.

Three reasons legitimate this choice and explain our hypothesis on the relation between rural regeneration and local combination between the population settlement model (dispersed/centred habitats), agriculture and farm systems, practices and social representation of individuals inhabiting the territories as well as of politicians, professionals and associations in charge of the “territorial governance”.

First, despite the general trend so called RURBANIZATION and its correlative “peri-urbanisation” (rurbanisation) this department still have keep the structure of settlement inherited from the French Revolution: based on the “commune” level and a hierarchical distribution of “chefs-lieux” (head of places) so that distances between towns; burgs, and villages are regulated by a principle of “just” proximity (Mathieu, 1996, Mathieu, Leblanc, 2020).

This is why – second reason – Manche is still a “rural” dominant department (density: 83,5 inhabitant/km²) where still exists a network of towns (“little” or “medium” for the French “territory management” policy) so that it could be heuristic to question the category of ‘rural’ and “urban” among local people, farmers and non-farmers, newcomers and natives or long time inhabitants. Who identify himself as rural or urban? What materiality or sociality distinguishes rurality from urbanity? These questions are easier to deal when a visible difference between towns and countryside remains and when local population still understands the relations between them. It gives also the opportunity to check the vocabulary – richer in French than in English - used to name and characterize each living place and type of space.

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Thirdly Manche specificity is to have a strong and diversified agriculture. With 73% of the space devoted to agriculture, Manche gives a large place to products from the land. First of all, it is milk: a herd of 246,000 dairy cows raises the department to the first national rank and provides raw material for well-known labeled products (cheese and cream). It is also meat: bovine (61,500 tons in 2017, 1/3 of regional production), pork (63,500 t., More than half) and sheep (50,000 heads) of which 10,000 are raised on salt meadows. Renowned, the Mont Saint-Michel country lamb has the PDO label. It is also the vegetable production of the sandy soils of the Val de Saire, the region of Créances and the polders of Mont-Saint-Michel which provide 165,000 t. of vegetables per year. Leading department in terms of volume for leeks, turnips and cabbages, the carrots and leeks from the sands of Créances have acquired a sign of quality. Finally, described as the "homeland of the horse", the Manche is home to the largest number of equines nationally (21,300), among which trotters and gallopers ensure an international reputation.

Behind these productions arises the future of a profession. In four decades, the loss is close to 27,000 farms (from 38,000 in 1970 to just over 11,000 in 2010). In the productivity race that began in the 1960s, small dairy farms disappeared to intensive and "productive" expansion. Over the period 2000-2010, 4 young people settled for 10 departures. And despite public aid, the end of milk quotas has caused the installation curve to plunge again. Conversely, the Organic Agriculture labeling continues to gain ground even if it remains marginal compared to so-called conventional structures: 593 labeled farms in 2019 for 24,189 ha (5.5% of the UAA). However, the resulting dynamism for processing (142 labeled units) and distribution (64 sites) shows new avenues that testimonial illustrate. Map X illustrates this land use and farming diversity (Atlas de la Manche, 2018, Madeline, 2020) combined with a strong orientation on agro-industries with international and local size (well-known cheeses, cider etc.)

So that it offers the possibility to check what roles are playing in the "rural regeneration" the agricultural dynamic compared with the "rural" inhabitants dynamic as we know that in France, except very few ancient industrial rural areas, there is no more rural population decline from the 1970th years.

As a final point, the fact that Manche looks like a big peninsula bordered by the sea on three sides gives the opportunity to take in account the littoral dimension from the rural regeneration' point of view as well for the ecological transition perspective.

The promising practice context

It is not so easy to delineate a “context” frontier in our world where mobility affects individuals, families and collectives through long and short travels and when administrative découpages always change in order to be more adapted to the best economic and societal governance. Coutances' case study choice in Manche department was based on the idea that we should not separate the question of rural regeneration - linked (or not) with successful entries of a new generation of farmers (successors or new entrants) - from the territorial background in which these social phenomena were embedded. But in what territorial découpage the case study had to be decided? The pragmatic and by stage approach followed to arrive at this choice deserves to be recalled.

Preceding the choice of the “promising practice” in Community of Communes Coutances Mer et Bocage for WP5 CNRS team yet had a long term knowledge of two research field (terrain) included in it. The first one was Canton de Gavray as this level – the canton regular mesh inherited from the administrative system of French revolution - has been a strong methodological tool for following rural societies changing trends and “re-composition” (Mathieu, Duboscq, 1985). The “small town” of Gavray, a rural commune having less than 2000 inhabitants, with all the public facilities and shops of a “chef lieu of canton”, attractive for farmers and rural neighbourhood with its weekly calf fair and biweekly market became from the 1990th¹ one area of continuous observation of the (rural) locality in order to identify and characterize “milieu rural change” in time and space (Mathieu, Robert, 1998). Initiation to research traineeship for UMR Ladyss students were organized around key issues like farms and dairy industries facing milk quotas, successors and new entrants in agriculture, non-agricultural jobs, newcomers and foreign residents (called locally “horsains”), rural towns and municipal politics, role women in rural areas in crisis, new rural

¹ Gavray Canton has been part of a “Comparative Local Diagnosis” established for the Commissariat au Plan

poverty, etc. Gavray canton attracted other researchers for a thesis (Jaime Escribano, 2006) or for a survey on immigrant women in Normandy (Chambron et al, 2009).

But as CNRS team does not separate “Ruralisation” - that is to say rural dynamics’ issue - from the Rural Urban Relations question (Rural and Urban Relations Observatory), the field of research was widened as much as the notion of “Pays” rose in the political sphere¹. “Pays” de Coutances became the second research area for analysing rural canton, communes and villages’ transformation in link with the transformation of the capital City giving its name to the pays. Though slowly declining (- 1 % between two inter census from 1982 to 2018) Coutances, a middle town (9705 inhabitants in 2020), still organizes the neighbouring territories nearly with the same mode as the Von Thunen model of urban/rural relations though an increasing mobility (endogenous and exogenous) has disturbing effects especially because of the proximity (about 30 Kms) of the others small sized but more dynamic like Granville and even Villedieu-les-Poëlles (both with a more important station on Paris-Granville line). Head of the “arrondissement” administered from the central state by a “sous-préfet” and situated in the centre of the peninsula Coutances is a high catholic place (bishopric) with a dense past and heritage testified by one of the most beautiful Gothic cathedral of France. For this it was rejected to be the “Capital” of Manche in 1790 when National Assembly created the Department. But though less developed than St Lo the capital it remains an attractive place for surrounding local people looking for its administrative, commercial and cultural functions (Cf. “Under Apple trees Jazz Festival”). “Country of bocage but also coastline, Coutances is a popular holiday destination thanks to its seaside resorts, such as Agon-Coutainville or Hauteville-sur-mer, both labeled “Family Plus” and to its long sandy beaches; Pays of Coutances has many heritage treasures: from the Gothic cathedral of Coutances, to the lime kilns of Regnéville-sur-Mer, passing by the manor farms, the castle of Gratot and that of Pirou, the abbeys of La Lucerne, Hambye and Lessay, churches and chapels, gardens and parks...” (Coutances Tourism, www.tourisme-coutances.fr).

¹ The Pays is a French administrative category of spatial planning designating a territory presenting a “geographical, economic, cultural or social cohesion, on the scale of a “basin of life or employment” in order to express “the community of its members’ economic, cultural and social interests and to allow the study and implementation of development projects. This statute was created in 1995 by the Orientation Law for Land Use Planning and Development (LOADT), known as the Pasqua Law of February 4, 1995, reinforced by the LOADDT (known as the Voinet Law) of June 25, 1999.

What can be extracted from all the observations we did and papers we published before entering in Ruralization project that are useful to understand some of the main features characterizing the promising practice context? It is obvious that though it never has been a specialized investigation the physical context and landscape of Gavray' canton and Coutances' Pays was always present (Mathieu, 2006¹). A strong contrast opposes:

- the hilly landscape (Appalachian relief) of the bocage marked by the deep gashes of the Sienne and Vire rivers; the churches of the villages and the city are always perched on the heights to be seen from afar, while the villages nestle near dams along these rivers, a landscape also marked by the marquetry of plots of meadows (more and more planted with corn) surrounded by hedges themselves planted with oaks and beeches (hedges often pulled up by farmers to enlarge their plots and enhance mechanical work), also typical with its so-called bocage communal paths (some of which are classified but including many are eaten away by farmers who no longer use them)

- the sandy plains of the coastal communes where the rivers flow into majestic "havens" (La Vanlée, Lessay...) covered and discovered with the extent of the tides which reveal the landscape of "portholes" where mussels and oysters are cultivated. There the market garden crops are cultivated on recent land taken from the sea (polders) while protected by dunes weakened by climate change, the "salines" drowned during high tides are the domain of the sheep of "salt meadows" so prized by gastronomes and restaurateurs. During summer time, many cars registered in other French departments than Manche (50) and often in foreign countries (many English, Germans, Belgians) invade the modest tourist facilities that are scattered along the coast while the villas, themselves modest, are left empty from the last week of August due to rainy and windy weather in the region.

But the main contribution of the research that we have carried out from 1990th until the beginning of the Ruralization project lies in bringing to light the functioning of these local rural micro-societies, the transformations that are taking place within them to respond to economic, ecological and social changes, in short, to new sustainable issues to which they must adapt. Living in the midst of people and places in the ethnographic way of "participant observation" is the heart of the method that we have used to the point of – as Nicole Mathieu did - standing for municipal elections in her commune of residence St Denis le Gast. But we also started with questions organizing our surveys with individuals, families, groups

in civil society and of course political staff, whether elected or professional in charge of territorial management.

Among our results we would like to pinpoint some of them that are directly linked with both the general question of the project: - what is rural, ruralisation, rural regeneration?-, and the WP5 specific request: - Do newcomers, generational renewal of farmers (new entrants or successors) contribute positively into the diverse “transitions” (agro-ecological, low carbon energy, biodiversity, sustainability...) that are necessary to reach and construct sustainable milieu rural (and urban) to inhabit for them as for the others.

- The first "social fact" to note is the resistance of rural municipalities to demographic decline, whatever their size (See Table 2 and 3 in Annex 2). The demographic stability of the administrative territory comes from the fact that the slight increase in the population of rural municipalities and very small towns compensates for the small but continuous decline of the town of Coutances. This development is based on a positive immigration rate while the particularly low birth rate accentuates the significant aging of the population. This slowly but regular increasing trend of the small rural communes and burgs population is sufficient to compensate the continuous decline of the number of farms and farming active population. The peculiar settlement (dispersed habitat) of the bocage, the ordinary and diverse “natural” aesthetic of landscapes, proximity from all continental places to the seaside, the old agricultural buildings of high quality mixing stone and rammed earth which has been re-appropriated by lovers of old stones and peasant architecture fleeing the standardization of suburban housing, all those properties explain the “rural” attraction of nonnative population (French but mostly English and German) as well as the return to the native land when they retire.

It was therefore important to explore both the reasons for which these newcomers settled in this rural environment as well as the way in which they "inhabit" in the proper sense (Mathieu, 1996) by introducing their lifestyle and their cultures but also how they were received by the "locals" for whom their place of birth and their family origin were the mark both of their identity and of their legitimacy of belonging to this rural micro-society with precisely identified names (*lieux-dits*). In the article entitled "Who is a 'stranger' in French

rural communities? For whom and for how long?" (Mathieu, 2006) the survey carried out in Saint Denis le Gast highlights the different categories of newcomers, those that are accepted by local rural dwellers, those that are rejected and in general the time taken not to be treated as a "Parisian" which is the very sign of the closure and inhospitality of this local "community"¹. It is obvious that the demonstration, made at that time, of the existence of cleavages between locals and to varying degrees, newcomers. We were in the presence of a local "fragmented" society far from the idea of "community" with a tendency to fall back on "sweet home" or "between oneself"² while being satisfied when "living together" with times of frequentation of markets, local events such as flea markets (organized one a year in every commune organizes one a year), the feast of communal associations, the communal ball of July 14 and its fireworks or regional well known fairs (Lessay fair or Saint luc in Gavray) etc. Later, with the rise of the ideology of "return to nature", "animal welfare", healthy food, "revegetation" to fight against the erosion of biodiversity our interest focused on the analysis of "relationships with nature" and "ways of living" (Mathieu, matieu, 2012) to be observed in our territory of continuous observation of the Pays de Coutances. The issue of a conference at the Chateau de Cerisy: "Garden foods in urbanized societies" gave us the opportunity to conduct a survey on the place of gardens and vegetable crops in the Coutances region. Was cultivating a garden a fashion or a social movement, new or old, anchored or not in the question of healthy food and proximity or even in that of even partial autonomy in food? This survey made it possible to renew our knowledge of the different categories of inhabitant considered being "rural" and in particular that of farmers for whom the question of their relationship to places and to nature seemed to us insufficiently studied. What was our surprise to find that while farmers (apart from retirees) had completely

¹ Abstract of this article: "In France, researchers and political discourses actually underline an uprising anti-immigrant, anti-ethnic and even racialism thinking and practices demonstrating them-selves exclusively in urban areas. But this phenomenon is never related with rural areas though, analysing case studies in different rural regions, we noticed that "hostility" against foreigners and ethnic could be also observed. Based on a long-time observation of a rural community – Saint-Denis-Le-Gast- located in Normandy (Cotentin) the paper is an attempt to identify who are identified and named as a "stranger", by whom, in order to foresee towards what kind of local society (fragmented, gated, community minded etc.) was going on and how long an individual, a household have to be excluded before being considered as a member of the civil local society." (Mathieu, 2006, p. 18).

² It was also observed through the survey Immigrate Women in Basse Normandie (Cerf, 2009) where a Kabyle' network was discovered showing straight relations between Kabyle men and women originated from the same villages and installed in towns and villages of Manche in diverse activities like restaurants, doctors, bars and shops, camping management etc.

abandoned cultivating a plot for their own food while, on the contrary, the number of vegetable gardens had continuously increase. And this, whether among the “natives” locals or among newcomers just arrived or since a long time, whether it is among the old ones as among the young households, the abandonment of "*courtills*" (local name for gardens) share places within the small towns-centers or private plots adjoining the houses and isolated farms holding only 'at the age of the gardener or the gardener and his or her inability to do the gestures for "land cultivating" (Mathieu, Molnar, 2016).

We can therefore understand the interest shown by the CNRS team in the RURALIZATION project and in particular in the WP5-T5.2 “Case studies on promising practice of rural newcomers, new entrants and successors”. It allows us to revisit this field of research and especially to deepen it. It is first of all because the project gives us the opportunity to study categories of "rural" inhabitants who were not sufficiently studied in previous research. These are first of all the young people targeted by WP4 but who must also be part of this case study. These are also the farmers for whom we must not only deepen the conditions of their installation as successors (family or in other legal forms) or new entrants without agricultural, peasant or rural background, but also their capacity to adaptation to the current challenges of agro-ecological transition as well as that of their place in French society and in particular in their neighborly relationship with rural inhabitants who are not farmers.

It is then because the new survey is at a historical "turning point" where several events seem to be the precursors of social, economic and environmental changes which will upset relations between town and country, even in rural micro-societies. The beginning of the second decade of the 21st century is that of the Covid pandemic, of worrying signals in relation to climate change (extreme temperature contrasts, floods, worsening coastal erosion, etc.), of uncertainty and even political and economic climate crisis calling into question territorial governance etc. At the same time, however, tendencies appear and / or are confirmed which favor what is now called "rurality": return to nature, preference for life in the countryside, development of teleworking which favors working at home, etc.

That is why as WP5 of Ruralization is led at this specific time we decided to choose the more recent administrative decoupage Coutances Mer and Bocage (CMB) as the territorial frontier for choosing and studying the selected promising practice (The Coutances Nature Trades Campus). Interesting by its name each “Community of Communes” (NOTr ley august 2015)

must cluster the number of communes necessary to reach a total population near 50 000 inhabitants which is the optimal governance size for the French last territorial reform ley. In this new delimitation Coutances Mer et Bocage (CMB) gathers 48 communes and 46.981 inhabitants (Cf. carte) and gathers “continental” and “littoral” municipalities under the chief head of Coutances. It gives the possibility to enlarge the survey on what is rural and what is rural regeneration and at the same time to measure the perturbation (positive and/or negative) produced by the new territorial governance on the current agricultural and rural challenges.

Coutances Nature Trades Campus: a promising experience for rural regeneration?

Circumstances of the choice

Previous research therefore provided a solid basis of knowledge of the functioning of local rural micro-societies in the Pays de Coutances and, to a certain extent, of its development trends since the 1990s. But we had to choose the promising experience with relevance, that is to say by trying to identify a practice that brings about a change at the height of this "moment" when a more radical change was necessary to face the worsening crises (environmental, social, public health, economic...). Certainly, some existing key avenues of evolution could be developed: did fleeing even more from the atmosphere of large cities during a period of lockdown lead to what has been called a new "rural moment" where the preference for " countryside ", contact with" nature "and" living "already spotted (" the unloved city, Salomon Cavin) was becoming a heavy trend? Was it necessary to focus on portraying these young newcomers choosing the inhabitancy mode (*mode d'habiter*) in a rural area and as a profession that of "peasant"? Was the enthusiasm for gardening and self-production of food among rural inhabitants a weak signal of a change in behavior and the emergence of individual and collective "ecological" responsibility? But these ultimately banal practices weakened the character of innovative "promise" required to achieve the concept of "rural regeneration".

We had to focus our case study rather on a more complex social fact or rather on an experience carrying more complexity and whose effects are not only social but territorial, driving a transformation of all categories of inhabitants than they are farmers, rural and even urban. The choice therefore fell on the Coutances Métiers de Nature Campus, which made it possible to link both the question of dreams and the future of young people (the Campus subtitle is: pupils, apprentices, adults), that of farmers of the conditions of their installation (successors and new entrants) in a period when ecological constraints (reduction of pesticides, animal welfare, biodiversity, reduction of GIES ...) are more pressing and finally that of the place of agricultural education in agricultural policy in France and in Europe or

rather the place of education in nature and sustainable development in territorial policy itself.

To these theoretical considerations we must add practical circumstances which strongly weighed on this choice. It was first of all when achieving the survey on the dreams of the future of young people (Cf. WP4) that made us aware that we had very little knowledge - apart from that concerning young people in difficulty of the Missions Locales Rurales (De Lafont, Mathieu, 2003) - on rural youth and this at all ages of their development from primary school and college until their installation in working life often linked to household and the arrival of the first child. It was by carrying out this survey in the Pays de Coutances case study that we pinpointed some differences between young "active" people (farmers, often temporary employees in shops and supermarkets, determined young women setting up their business in a rural commune of less than 2000 inhabitants, young men and women accepting low-skilled jobs to stay "in the country" close to their parents etc.) and young "school" (Cf. Teachers and students of the college of Gavray) more intensely penetrated by new ideologies ranging from "happy sobriety" (Pierre Rahbi) to "animal welfare" including of course the fight against climate change. But above all counted the meeting and exchanges with Edgar Leblanc (interview 1), a neighbor of the village of Livée in Saint Denis Le Gast, historian by training, who spent most of his career at the Ministry of Agriculture as Inspector of Agriculture, then after his retirement devoted himself to writing academic articles, participating in the Rural History Center of the University of Caen and directing an Encyclopedia of Agricultural Education. Writer of the historical part of the work *1968-2018 50 ans de savoir-faire* (Campus Coutances, 2018) he undoubtedly played a role in the choice of the promising experiment and became in a way a discussing-expert to check the added value of our case-study Education to nature as a driver of rural regeneration.

From the agricultural high school created in 1968 to the Campus Coutances Métiers de nature

A French specificity: the dominant role of Ministry of agriculture on education

To understand the innovative character of the Lycée Agricole de Coutances, created in 1968, it is important to situate it in the legislative history of agricultural education, the legal form

of its establishments and the missions assigned to them over time and according to the problems that French Agriculture and Society had to face. The agricultural orientation laws of 1960, 1962 which built a legal apparatus on which should be developed a strong agricultural economy responding to European and global challenges did not pay much attention to the issue of educating farmers. Numerous establishments of various statutes which had been created from 1920 were left and among us only stayed Rural Family Homes (*Maisons Familiales Rurales*) and Household Schools for girls. The existing or created public agricultural establishments took the names (high school, college) and the territorial model of the reform of National Education and its school map without going back on their missions. The new law of 1980 enshrines the objectives of the previous laws: "to increase the competitiveness of agriculture [...] by strengthening its export capacity" (art 1) and assigns to education, continuing training, research and development as a priority objective "to increase the productivity and competitiveness of agriculture, agro-food and agro-energy industries" (cited by Leblanc, 2020).

With the laws of 1984, accompanying the laws of decentralization, there is a real break with the conception of the previous laws. They create the basis of the administrative, financial and pedagogical autonomy of the agricultural education establishment. "Undoubtedly, establishments are now legally and practically capable of intervening in their environment and have become major" actors "in their territory (Leblanc, 2018). The law of July 19, 1999 strengthens and broadens this model by transforming Agricultural high schools (*Lycée Agricole*) in Local Public Agricultural Education and Training Establishment (Etablissement Public Local d'Enseignement de Formation Professionnelle Agricole).

The text below illustrates the extent of this renewal which affects both the "profession" (*métier*) of new farmers facing sustainable development and agro-ecological transition but also young people and inhabitants of the countryside through the objectives of rural and territorial development.

"Public education and vocational training in the professions of agriculture, forestry, nature and territories aim to provide, by associating them, general training and technological and professional training in the professions of agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, processing and marketing of agricultural products as well as in other trades contributing to their development, particularly in the areas of services and development of agricultural, rural and

forest space, water management and the environment. They contribute to education for sustainable development, the promotion of health and the implementation of their principles, as well as the promotion of the diversity of agricultural production systems and awareness of animal welfare. They contribute to the personal development of pupils, students, apprentices and trainees, to the raising and adaptation of their qualifications and to their professional and social integration

They fulfill the following missions:

- 1 ° provide general, technological and vocational training, initial and continuing;
- 2 ° participate in the animation and development of the territories;
- 3 ° contribute to the educational, social and professional integration of young people and to the social and professional integration of adults;
- 4 ° contribute to agricultural and agrifood development, experimentation and innovation activities;
- 5 ° participate in international cooperation actions, in particular by promoting exchanges and hosting of pupils, apprentices, students, trainees and teachers.

Public education and vocational training in agriculture, forestry, nature and territories are organized as part of lifelong education, along the lines of initial training and continuing training. They constitute a component of the public education and training service. They participate in the public service of digital education and distance education ... They report to the Minister of Agriculture. They are provided in accordance with the principles of secularism, freedom of conscience and equal access for all to public service. They also participate in the fight against gender stereotypes and in the health promotion mission ... The regions are involved in the implementation of the missions provided for in 2 ° to 5 ° (Hervé Savy, Dictionary of Agricultural Education, 2021).

Coutances Agricultural High school: a pioneer for pedagogical renewal and rural social innovation

At the starting point of the Lycée Agricole de Coutances (LAC) there is a history of access to land for “public use”. On April 15, 1964, the Coutances Hospital (formerly Hôtel Dieu) sold the Quibouquière farm and the Bois des Vignettes to the town of Coutances, which represented a total area of 52 ha extending over several municipalities contiguous to the

town. The extract from the deed of sale mentions that the request for this acquisition by the town of Coutances comes from the fact that it "envisages the creation of an agricultural school [... on the land of] Ferme de la Quibouquière, which, because of its situation and its nature corresponded to the necessary requirements for establishing such an establishment "(1968-2018, op cited, p 31). The town of Coutances immediately conceded the land by donation to the Ministry of Agriculture, which allocated by Decree (December 1965) the land for the construction of the LAC as well as the "civil personality" to the future establishment. Site work began in 1967 to achieve "'an exceptional architectural ensemble in an exceptional setting" (1968-2018, op cited, p 32). Standing at the top of the Quibouquière hill, the LAC faces the town of Coutances and overlooks Bois des Vignettes. The site is vast and not fenced, the volumes of the buildings are imposing but low (administrative buildings, buildings for classrooms and laboratories, documentation center, Socio-cultural center, CFPPA building, interns' accommodation, official accommodation, sports complex...) but arranged in a green setting in the manner of Normand dispersed habitat, access is via a private road and traffic is rational to access these dispersed places. The events of May 68 having led to delays on the site, the start of the school year was postponed to November 1968 (for low numbers: 58 pupils (boarders) including a single girl divided into 2 classes (4 ° and 2 °).

This historical reminder calls for two remarks which outline the originality of this establishment at the very moment of its creation.

First remark: With the opening of the LAC, Manche department has the particularity of being the only one to have two public agricultural high schools on its territory. This is not without significance. This presupposes that the city of Coutances wanted to reaffirm its central position in the department (it could have been the capital). This also assumes that Coutances, well known for its urban heritage and its cultural aura, defined its identity as the pole of an agricultural and rural region dense in farmers, farms and various nourishing products, also rich in rural communities of bocage and seaside with whom she forged many relationships. Convince the central administration or even the Region to derogate from the rule = 1 high school per department¹ had to demand that the mayor of Coutances but also

¹ The agricultural high school of Thère, previously titled National School of Dairy Industries, was created in 1954 and bears the name of Saint Lo from which it is however distant of more than 10kms.

the surrounding municipalities hardly fight and find arguments to justify this not so legal arrangement. This also supposes that there was support from local farmers and above all, as one of the interviewees said (FR6B/Int.5), the support of young peasant unionists who dreamed of making agriculture a “renewed” profession anchored in local and national society. This is why from the start, the LAC stood out for its position in the heart of the city, its specialization in teaching agriculture and market gardening and for its desire for openness and innovation.

Second remark: The pioneering character of the LAC is also due to its first director, Claude Jactel, a graduate in philosophy and professor of literature, who is the first director of a public agricultural education establishment not to be an agronomist engineer, "which is not without arousing some disputes and greed." (1968-2018, op cited p. 33). This "newcomer" of the time founded in 1965 the National Union of Public Agricultural Education. Passionate about pedagogy and thinking in the spirit of 68, he is a pioneer of multidisciplinary¹ and advocates a free and fraternal relationship between teachers and students as well as with all the staff of the establishment. The LAC is a place of training and also a place of life. The students (85% of them are native and 80% are children of farmers) receive general education equivalent to that of National Education but at the same time follow biological and technical training which prepares them for the Agricultural Technician Brevet (BTA) or the Agricultural Baccalaureate D'. Interns for the most part, they appropriate the space and the socio-cultural center where their free time introduces them to “Socio-Cultural Education.” The teachers (young people just graduated from their university) also reside on site with their children. The farm adjoining the Lycée is preserved and a project to build a new farm is part of the shared reflection they have undertaken to build a common project whose goal is "to educate by giving meaning to what has been learned" (op cited, p. 36) There is a utopia community atmosphere in the settlement area.

¹¹ Cf. The testimony of B F. professor of History and geography (1969-2007) enhancing the experimental way of multidisciplinary studying of the “milieu” through a pair of teachers (natural and social science) and collective field internships. She also notices that though the libertarian spirit of the first years decayed “but there remained a taste for educational innovation, multidisciplinary and field studies which lasted for a long time.” (Op. cited p.51-52).

Continuous innovation

Continuously innovate, extend training offers, link practical workshops, teaching and research to make LAC a CAMPUS, complex system where Nature ethics, Cultivate differently, Employment for young people, Education for Sustainable Development come together.

Since that founding moment of an unexpected and innovative image of an agricultural school, many events have taken place within and outside it. It would take too long to list them, especially since, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the LAC, which became Campus Coutances Métiers Nature in 2017 the actors involved not only took stock of the institution's history but defined its prospects facing the future and facing the great change necessary for the agro-ecological transition and the effective implementation of sustainable development in rural and urban areas and in city / countryside relations (1968-2018, op cited).

Let us content ourselves with highlighting the main changes that have taken place since the first years of the creation of the LAC. It is first of all the extension of training "centers" keeping certain autonomy in their objectives and their audiences but which, because of their interactive functioning, are gradually building a composite institution which is nevertheless recognized as unique. The Lycée with its administrative offices, its classrooms and collective meeting rooms, its annexes (boarding house and kitchen, sports complex, socio-cultural center) is the center. With his successive directors, he continues by amplifying his orientation towards an interdisciplinary and finalized teaching. The natural sciences (ecology, biology and even genetics) are introduced very early in the curricula, while in the social sciences an important place is given to economics, to the holistic study of environments and to case studies as well as " exchanges with European countries (Italy, Germany, Poland). Teachers who constantly keep abreast of advances in research in their field make a close relationship between teaching and creative practices providing the "trained" with motivation and well-being in the choice of their future profession, and their place of life.

We can find the same state of mind at the CFPPA which is aimed at adults and especially young farmers (successors or new entrants) who wish to settle in lands near or further from Coutances. The important thing is to support innovation and the right choice of profession for young (or less young) adults through training. Moreover, depending on the needs and

opportunities, a high school professor teaches at the CFPPA and reciprocally professionals from the CFPPA or from agricultural and horticultural farms (detailed below) can find themselves teaching in the high school classes. And it can even "go further" as expressed by biology teacher Michel Le Guillois, who became a trainer in Zootechnics at the CFPPA. As part of the aquaculture sector created to meet the local training needs of Manche and Norman oyster and mussel farmers, he succeeded in setting up a "marine culture" laboratory and a hatchery. *"Our initial objective was to respond to a demand for training for applicants for installation. We went much further: the CFPPA of the Lycée Agricole de Coutances trains shellfish growers and future shellfish growers and carries out experiments for them."* (Opus cited p. 110-111). A little later the new director, reproduced the same "promising practice" by entrusting one of his adult trained at CFP with the creation of a Professional Farming Certificate "Peasant Boulanger" (FR6B/Int.21). As said by the newcomer "Young shepherdess"¹ trained at CFPPA in 2009, the success of this establishment is due to its construction of "professional, realistic, solid and viable projects". She becomes mayor of the municipality of Lessay (belonging to CCMB) since the election of 2020.

Knowing how to anticipate new professions which provide employment for the younger generations, as well as constantly adapting training offers to the reality of the territory and to the evolving needs of acquiring new skills of local workers having to do with "nature", "living" plant and animal, the landscape and the quality of food products, these are the principles of action that can also be found at the Learning Training Center (CFA) created and installed at the opposite of the CFPPA and close to horticultural greenhouses and to the new farm created on wasteland (a former landfill) and by clearing part of the Bois des Vignettes. Innovation and improvement of local knowledge go hand in hand. To demonstrate this, it is sufficient to list the wide range of options offered by the CFA: landscapers (JEV Gardens and green spaces); in Horticulture: flower growers, nurserymen, market gardeners, vegetables; in breeding: cowherds and breeding employee, groom and horse groomer (Cf. passion for horses in the region), machinists and tractor drivers....

But the heart of LAC's innovation and pioneering character are its lands - one could almost say its "lands in the city". It is from the experiments and technological innovations carried out in the horticultural farm (created in 1995) that the excellence of the Lycée's horticultural

¹ Cf. The Film 2019 by Delphine Pétrie : Sophie Maubé : *Quitter la ville pour la campagne, Jeune Bergère.*

training is recognized regionally and then nationally. Extending the greenhouses, a Botanical Garden became the place for experiments in plant and landscape creations in which the high school students participate each year through a concourse in which the public has the right to vote. At the instigation of the President of the French Dahlia Society, the garden lengthened (1500 m² in 1993 2 ha in 2009) and gave a place of honor to this "prince of gardens". It became one of the most beautiful collections from France of dahlias; its presentation in landscape scenes during a Festival of Dahlias and Gardens (the first one in November 1996) gave to it great notoriety both with the national and regional authorities of culture and agriculture and with a local public such as come from afar¹.

A same emphasis on land and sustainable innovation can be pinpointed when we look at the "High school" new farm. Deliberately oriented towards diversification, the farm breeds several species of animals and experiments alternative and ecological models like outdoor pigs breeding. From 2008 she volunteered for the total conversion to organic. Moving out of standardized models, renovating the production tool with pragmatism, producing differently, these are the principles on which its practices are based. For a respondent involved in the farm, it is "*the beginning of a response to societal issues*"(FR6B/Int.9),. It is understandable why the new name given to the LAC in 2017 is that of "Campus" referring both to the agricultural Latin word of "field" and to the term used by the Universities to illustrate the relationships between teaching, research and local social link.

¹ « The primary interest of this flower festival is in fact its raison d'être: the training of young people. All training! Technical education of course but also the transmission of a certain philosophy ... good humor, love for a job well done, respect for others ... The garden then becomes a space where education for citizenship happens quite naturally”

2020-2021: A shared style of work with the ambition to serve the agriculture of the future in connection with the territory of the Coutances Pays

Continuity or new breath? A decisive turn

At this stage of our analysis we must state that the Campus Coutances choice as a promising experience for rural regeneration is yet legitimated by its origin and insofar as everything that has happened since the LAC creation clearly shows the originality and the avant-garde quality of the style of activities of the actors involved. It is obvious that over the years a complex and ambitious educative system has been constructed by personalities sharing values and committed in developing a novel agriculture sustainable through an innovative link between ecological, economic, societal and cultural knowledge anchored in the Coutances Pays diverse territories. But as the beginning of the second decade of 21st century looks like a turn initiating perhaps radical change or mutation we must now ask the question again: Is Education for Trades of Nature as it was conceived and has evolved a relevant and effective driver for rural regeneration? Are the current conditions in promoting (or pursuing) this style of activities still favorable? Do not new ideas, a new breath, spread among the members of the Campus and their partners to face new trends, some of which are so critical?

It is therefore to these questions that we must now answer while concentrating our questioning on the more precise ones suggested by the problematic of WP5. In other words; what role does education in the Coutances Campus way play - today and in the future - on the installation of young people (women and men) in agriculture (or other "nature profession") whether they are successors issued from farming families or not, or whether they are newcomers with a previous non-agricultural occupation or without a profession, whether they have an agricultural or rural origin, even distant, or whether they are "urban by stock"? But this question of installation must not be dissociated either from that of access to land (smallholding) or from that of the production model (agro-ecological, concerned with the food quality of products, etc.).

A second question, less obvious when examining the scope of the past innovations of the LAC, remains to be asked: does education in trades likely have a positive effect on the "rural" in its definition which does not assimilate it to "agricultural"? Certainly "Rural Animation", "Anchoring in the territory" were promoted among the pioneering objectives of the LAC. But what Rurality, what Territory was it? As stated in the § "Context of the Practice" a strong social break has developed between farmers "locked" in their problems and their isolation both geographically and from the point of view of local sociability on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the "rural" inhabitants who are not farmers or shellfish farmers, a large number of whom are "nature practitioners" in their gardens and vegetable gardens and if only because they live in rural areas where physical phenomena are more daily sensitive than in urban areas. When renewed and/or adapted to the novel critical challenges of the Ruralization, will Education to Nature be able to reduce the emerging gap between the rural and agricultural worlds?

These main questions have organized our survey, the type of actors we wanted to interview and the questioning grid that was behind our semi-structured interview done in person and lasting from 1 hour to 2:30 (See Interviews list in Annex 1).

The Campus' Actors: continuity for the shared values, renewal of innovations for a better adaptation to the younger generation needs

Our investigation, which began at the end of 2019, obviously focused on what in popular "local" language was called "The agricultural high school of Coutances". All the Directors of the establishments responsible for the three types of learners who make up the Campus subtitle – "pupils, apprentices, adults" - Lycée, FPA, and CFA were interviewed. Their points of view on the period they lived and on the future of the practice in which they were engaged were supplemented by those of their assistants (or secretaries) as well as by those of several teachers or trainers, the interview of the students or former students having been limited by the repetition of lockdowns. The observation of horticultural and agricultural farms and the interviews of their directors were obviously central points of understanding not only of the state of renewal of the teaching / practical relations but also for checking our hypothesis of a new breath affecting all the Campus actors towards the political utopia of

building sustainable (regenerated) rural "milieus" (territories) sustainably reconnected with Coutances city.

From all these interviews (FR6B/Int.3, 20, 21, 19, 9, 14) first emerges a first statement proving that the promising practice not only keeps its previous promises but renews them. Indeed, all the actors involved in the Campus, whether they belong to the old team or whether they are new (recent) comers, whether they are "foreign" to the Pays de Coutances or even to Manche' department or whether they were born in one of its municipalities, stayed "in the country" or "returned" to this country which they had left for their studies or to find work corresponding to their training and then to exercise their profession in a "Big Town" or in distant countries like Senegal ..., all these actors share the same enthusiasm and the same commitment for values that are common to them. Thinking and acting for a Sustainable Rural Future (which is called in our project "Ruralization" or "Rural Regeneration") requires working daily in a network around apparently contradictory goal:

- ensuring the **continuity** of previous innovative and successful experiences by making them progress in such a way that they are adapted to new realities;
- In an anticipatory and forward-looking state of mind, imagine and **create** new social innovations and in particular by deepening what it means to "put oneself at the service of a territory and its sectors" (Cf. the strategic plan of the establishment project ").

As an example of "innovation in progressive continuity" we could cite the common desire to promote "teaching methods and practices in the service of greater success for learners" by moving from multidisciplinary to inter or even transdisciplinarity (especially FR6B/Int. 20). Or we could use the expression of objectives to be achieved heard from all the interviewees: "*Innovation and permanent adaptation of our practices towards an agro-ecological model*"; or "*put the learner at the heart of our training system and education* "; or even "*evaluate our systems to engage in a process of continuous improvement in the service of users and our partners* ". As a concrete practice we can also mention is the remarkable effort done by the three centers to continue to reach learners (scholars, apprentices, adults) coming from local familial farms and potentially successors as the proportion of farmers' sons learners was strongly and regularly decreasing (from 80 % to 27 % in the year 1998-1999). Through deepening the knowledge of the local young' desires for installation in "nature professions" and through offering adapted training options, they tried to compensate the dominant trend:

attraction of urban inhabitants and without any rural or farming culture to use their educative organic and market gardening specialties.

During our investigation, the invention of new practices to overcome the weak points of the innovative complex Campus system and/or to anticipate those which might arise was observed and confirmed by the in-depth reading of the interviews. These new innovations (based on the deepening of what "new relations with nature" means) almost all concern the question of how to "put oneself at the service of the territory." Therefore "Putting oneself at the service of the territory" cannot be limited the service of sectors "or" to create an educational and working community in the broad sense "but to forge relationships of real sharing with local partners at all levels who manage the territories of this territory and especially with their rural inhabitants, whatever their nature, their status and age. To illustrate this type of practice, renewing in depth the previous one, we choose to present two kinds of exemplary experiences in progress among all those that exist. The first one was spotted in the agricultural and horticultural farms of the Campus. In both cases, the aim of the experiment is to create or develop practices that respond, as closely as possible, to the new needs of the inhabitants of the "territory" of the CMB community of municipalities. Thus among the new experiments launched on the agricultural farm we can notice that one which aims to reach the gardening inhabitants of the "territory" whether they are rural or urban (but also potential farmers tempted by the greening of their living and working environment) through testing the creation of a new species of hedge composed only of small fruit trees which would meet both environmental objectives: hedges' reconstitution which contributes to the fight against biodiversity erosion and climate change deregulation but also to that of self-producing and/or self-consuming "healthy" and "local" food products. In the same sense, the development of the sale (at competitive prices) of "organic" greenhouse products (vegetables, fruits, plants and processed (transformed) products, etc.) is a response which takes into account the emerging aspiration of less fortunate inhabitants to "eat differently" food products "grown differently".

Also illustrating the invention of tools that strengthen and/or renew the Campus's relationship to its home territory, we can cite the example of experiences that aim to link trainers and teachers, elected representatives of rural communities, young people or less young aspiring to settle on the land of the territory in a common "nature" and / or "rural" project.

This is the case of the "Biopousse" experiment which links CFPPA training with the municipality of Lingreville and some of its market gardeners to build and maintain a training space in organic market gardening techniques on a "land" which is tending to pass from private property to a "common good"(FR6B/Int.19). This is also the case for the project to create a "test space" open to all citizens where the conditions for creating a "sustainable environment" would be discussed and tested, "environment" not being defined only by its physical dimensions (of nature) but also by its social dimensions (local societies and inhabitants). We can also mention the support of an elected representative of a rural municipality who is also a teacher at the Campus given to "natural and peasant" projects such as that of the association entitled "Food supplies, Places of art and peasant and rural practices".

Reactions face to Coutances Campus and effectiveness of its renewed “promising practices”

Farmers, “Nature” Enterprises: diversity of point of views on Coutances Campus, a same aspiration to a renewal

Seen from the point of view of the actors involved in the Campus, we have therefore just seen their ability to respond in the 5 main points of innovation (CFPPA, LAC, CFA and the two farms) to one of the main promises of rural regeneration: train young people by giving them a taste for the profession of farmer concerned with environmental issues whether they are future successors or new entrants, extend this eminently practical training to other professions which concern natural resources, innovate to reconcile obtaining fair income with an awareness of the effects of their practice on the natural environment, finally tend to not dissociate this conception of the "profession of nature" from a solidarity with the most deprived (Cf. solidarity days for all learners) and with the emerging developed countries (cf. exchange with Madagascar).

But what is the scope of this set of actions? Evaluating on farmers the direct and indirect influence, strong or not or even rejected was the main focus of our survey. Of course, in the choice of our interviews, we had to take into account those advised by the Campus "involved actors" who appointed us former students and particularly successful installations. But we also tried to reach virtually random farmers who were not reported and for whom the response was not predictable. The survey was carried out among about fifteen farmers. It should be noted that in this sample, which is far from being representative, we interviewed as many women as men.

First result: among all the farmers interviewed, it is undoubtedly the young, and sometimes not so young, newcomers who affirm the positive and direct impact of the Campus' action. This is obviously because, living in the city and tired of a first job which did not satisfy them, they chose to become "peasants" and to benefit from the training courses of the Campus which allow them to settle on small surfaces. Installations are predominantly achieved in

market gardening farms, but the Campus is also reaching out to new people installed in breeding there also for small herds due to lack of easy access to land (FR6B/Int.12, 23).

Thus, in parallel with the drop noted previously in the percentage of pupils who are the sons of farmers compared to those who had no family farming background, it seems that the promising Campus experience is benefiting more and more this generation - without origin nor agricultural culture - determined to settle in a rural environment (small town, close to nature, doing an activity in relation to the land and the living). Sometimes the interviewee recognizes that in this choice there may be the influence of a childhood spent in a Norman "country" quite far from the "Manchese" one where she was able to settle (FR6B/Int.16) but most of them have no ties, neither peasant nor rural. Because they are open to inventing and finding the job that suits, Campus training brings them both technicality and monitoring their adaptation to this new life project. This can even go further, as in the case of this goat-herd installed for 2 years in organic conversion with sale on the markets of processed products. He explains his installation by an event - the death by cancer of his young sister - which convinced him of a radical change in his inhabitancy mode in all its dimensions: way of working and producing, way of moving, care for what we eat and consume, care also for others (human and non-human). His wife nurse fully supports him in his decision - in high season he works 17 hours a day - and helps him in the preparation of cooked products. As for the son, after having visited several agricultural high schools with his father, he chose the one in Coutances to take a BTS and he already sees himself working with his father and succeeding him. Should we conclude from this that the Campus training courses affect local farmers less and less and especially at this time when the retiring farm manager must ensure his succession? Or is the drop in the number of these "sons of farmers" trained by the Campus simply explained by the drop in the number of farms to "take over" at the time of succession due to the generalization of allocation of land for retirees to existing farms for which the expansion of land (and therefore quota rights) is the only solution not to disappear? Finally, is it not a phenomenon to be attributed to the preferences of "indigenous" farmers hostile to the "left" trade union movement which advocates "peasant agriculture", direct sales and AMAPs for "conventional" training of the Agricultural College of Thère / St Lo?

To have a solidly established answer to these questions we would have needed a longer survey exclusively focused on this issue and not on the direct effect of Campus' training. We

will therefore content ourselves with extracting from the interviews assertions which give the beginning of an answer to these questions.

First of all, none of the young successors that we met showed hostility towards the LAC of which they knew the "organic" orientation without changing their choice for Lycée de Thère which is the first high school created in St Lo, capital of the department. Moreover, many of those who are or have made their organic conversion went for their installation training in Thère because they do not believe in the educational role of this compulsory training which only gives them the right to receive subsidies. On the other hand, for their organic conversion, they use the advice of experts outside the Chamber of Agriculture and the information found online and on social networks (all the farmers encountered consult their mobile phones and computers for their information).

Among the farmers more advanced in their careers, some did their training in Coutances and others in Thère but they do not give an explanation for this choice which distinguishes them from the positions of the youngest.

A final case deserves to be reported to show the subtle mental change taking place in the young generation of local successors. The need for autonomy and to give a personal meaning to their work - which coincides with the spirit of Campus training and that of new entrants with no agricultural background - also characterizes most of them. Let us take the example of the one who succeeds the farming couple who locally supported the creation of the LAC (FR6B/Int.5 and 6). After higher education and obtaining a job as an engineer in the Paris region, he decided on his own to take over the farm from his parents who had reached retirement age. Certainly, he respects his father's "post 68" values on which the farm has been built: "Stay in the country" "Farmer / worker solidarity" "Peasant agriculture" "Home at the farm" "Direct sale of farm products" (His father is at the origin of the creation in Coutances of a shop "the Coutances Farm" which sells local products for a healthy diet). But he introduced into "his" farm a new conception of peasant activism more oriented towards the transformation of products (he created a workshop for processing the meat of his animals), on the use of digital technology (for communication with customers), social link with the local inhabitants ... Finally, he plans to find by collective subscription the financing of a "mobile slaughterhouse" to get out of the dependence of farmers for the slaughter of their animals (FR6B/Int.13).

It is therefore very difficult to distinguish between the direct and indirect influence of Campus action on 'rural agricultural' and "nature trades" regeneration. Here again the example of this nursery company created by a Belgian newcomer, environmental activist, who settled in one of the rural communes of the canton of Gavray (FR6B/Int.7) illustrates our statement. During his interview, this business manager recognizes the important role played by the Lycée de Coutances in the choice of the staff he has recruited in the first years of its development: *"You need people who know botany even if they work in offices, a fortiori in nurseries and the sale of their products"* (FR6B/Int.6). For him, the training received in Coutances among the majority of his staff is strength for the reputation of the company and the 3 branches (2 in France in the Bordeaux and Ile de France regions, 1 in Iraq) created when developing the company. This analysis was confirmed by his son who succeeded him two years ago (FR6B/Int.17). The latter did his horticultural studies in Angers high school rather than Coutances and considers that the location of the head office in a rural commune *"where we are close to nothing and far from nothing"* could appear a handicap. But he is attached to it because *"despite a life marked by the many trips that his job requires"* it is *"here"*, in the *"ecological"* house of his childhood, in this *"natural"* atmosphere which characterizes the *"country"*, surrounded by his *"local"* staff who reflect this atmosphere, that he manages to *"revitalize"* its energy *"and"* *organize the future of the company"*.

We can therefore conclude from this part of our survey that the direct and indirect effects of the Campus promising experience are mixed when analyzing the reactions of rural people exercising a "nature profession". But we can also pinpoint that the emergence (or even the deepening) of a "eco-consciousness" and aspiration for a sustainable "inhabitancy mode" takes place in parallel with this experience without being neither directly nor indirectly linked to it.

Elected actors and territorial professionals: weakness of power on agricultural policy

Let us start from the observation already mentioned above: The institution and the style of activities of the Campus Metiers Nature de Coutances have obtained and still obtain very strong support from elected politicians at several levels.

At the national level this support is all the more important when these elected representatives combine elective mandates and ministerial functions. Thus Stéphane Travert elected to the National Assembly of a Manche department constituency where he was born was Minister of Agriculture under the Macron presidency. It closely follows the "progression" of the Campus centers and the events organized there. He reinforced the agricultural professional influence on local farming.

But inversely, Philippe Bas with a similar position -Quaestor of the Senate, Senator and departmental advisor of La Manche, Former Minister and Secretary General of the Elysée Palace - dedicates himself to the development of Manche' rural tourism and heritage rather than to the problems of agricultural renewal.

There is therefore at this level of elected officials in connection with rural territories an difference of understanding of what rural is and consequently of what "rural regeneration" is.

With regard to the elected representatives at the "territorial" levels: Department Council, Community of Municipalities and mayors of rural municipalities, their interviews reveal another problem related both to the status of their powers and to the territory in which they exercise them.

Among elected officials and professionals of the Departmental Council, only those who are specialized in agricultural issues have the possibility of dealing with issues of access to land, farm successions and new installations. But their power of action is relatively limited due to the difficulties encountered in applying the action programs of institutions such as Safer or Chamber of Agriculture which respond neither to the action of economic and trade union lobbies, nor to the new aspirations of the agricultural youth.

At the proper level of "local" authorities the situation is even worse except for those who are at the same time elected and teachers in Coutances Campus (FR6B/Int.14, 19). In fact, politicians at this level (FR&B/Int.10, 11) do not legally have official powers to manage the agricultural sector and therefore do not influence the attitudes and choices of their "citizen" farmers. Of course, they can act by allocating subsidies to replant the hedges in the name of restoring the Bocage and protecting biodiversity. But their success depends on the goodwill (and economic interests) of the farmers whose "ecological fiber" is clearly less developed than that of the rural inhabitants who take care of their gardens and the typical landscape of the bocage (sunken paths, oaks and ash trees in the hedges and in plots, birds, squirrels,

deers etc.). Greening the countryside is only at the margin in their hands. All that remains for them is the hope that the new legal arrangement, the Territorial Food Project¹, the aim of which is to re-territorialize food systems through alliances between urban and rural territories will enable them to renew relations with the local agricultural world by contributing to its "agro-ecological transition.

Rural inhabitants, newcomers and natives (local), social and environmental associations

To assess the impact of the Lycée Agricole de Coutances and its style of nature education on the non-agricultural population of our rural territory, we interviewed a certain number of "rural non-farmers" in order to test their knowledge of the promising experience that we had chosen to study. In doing so, it became possible to highlight their interest in agricultural issues as well as how they understood what is "rural regeneration". We needed to understand the reactions of young working people, couples in the middle of their careers and their lives, and elderly people living at home or in retirement homes. We also had to reach various trades typical of the jobs offered to young women and young men in rural areas: local businesses, partial jobs in supermarkets, personal services in the medico-social fields, crafts and building trades.

The results of this survey are both surprising and convergent. First observation: all the respondents, regardless of their age, whether they are natives, not originally from but settled for many years, whether they are newcomers most often urban but sometimes having a rural origin, whether they are a return to the countryside at the time of retirement or to change activity, whatever their level of training, all of them show an attachment to this "rural" living and working environment where Villages, Bocage and Mer are always "near". The vegetable garden and the weekly markets are part of this well-being and of the reasons to "stay here" even if, named or recruited by chance in such or such rural commune, "one did not think to settle definitively". To illustrate this determination to "anchor one's life in the countryside", we can cite the example of this young woman born in a coastal village of Coutances Pays who, after having deliberately chosen to interrupt her studies after her college

¹ PAT in French Cf. T62 report

years, undertook a beautician training with the intention of opening a Beauty Institute that she succeeded to set up in Gavray "*because this rural center is at a sufficient distance from the towns where this type of establishment already exists*" (FR6B/Int.8). Moreover, this taste for rural life ends up being contagious as for example in case FR6B/Int.2: this young woman born in the country (municipality of 226 inhabitants) found accommodation in the Parisian suburbs and work in Paris (medical secretary); there, she married a "*Parisian who knows nothing about the countryside*"; they had two children but "*the apartment they own is small, raising children in the city becomes difficult*". The return to the country is done "*by reason*": his mother will be able to look after the children and pamper them when they are at work; they rented a house with a garden in Gavray, she was a "*home help*" for several elderly patients, he was recruited as an IT specialist in the "*big local town*". Family life becomes so pleasant that the husband's parents came to settle in Gavray. Despite their modest salaries and the cost of their two cars, essential for the work, the fourteen years old couple sealed their plan to live in the countryside by purchasing a "*house*" in property and with a garden! Rural non-farmers therefore seem as "*rural place attached*" as native farmers and newcomers who claim to be "*peasants*".

The second finding resulting from this survey is even more unexpected and interesting. Certainly, these inhabitants know that there are agricultural schools where future farmers are trained, certainly also they consider that the rural environment they inhabit is marked by the presence of farmers, often their neighbors and whom they see crisscrossing the departmental roads from the top of their tractors. But, with the exception of mixed couples (agricultural worker together with a non-agricultural worker), almost all of the respondents declared that farmers form a separate category that they exclude or who exclude themselves from the society they call "rural". For them, they are not "real" good neighbors because they do not clean the roads after the passage of the cows, do not associate with anyone outside their families as their work is so demanding in time... Moreover their relationship to nature is different from theirs: they no longer cultivate a vegetable garden, tear up their hedges and modify the hedgerow landscape by planting corn in huge plots, are not very concerned about the maintenance of their embankment and the circulation of water which erodes the paths and increase the risk of flooding... In short, two separate worlds, indifferent to each other now make up the rural micro-societies of the Pays de Coutances and CMB territory.

To conclude this section of this case study we would like to underline two important points. The first one is this dichotomy which runs through almost all the answers of the interviewees: the "rural" of some is not the rural of others; one definition emphasizes agriculture, the other rural society reflecting the very particular settlement system of the department and of the new CMB Community of Communes. The second refers to the evaluation of nature education as a motor for rural regeneration. We have shown that the education style of the Campus has a certain direct influence on the settlements of young non-native farmers but also an indirect effect on the territory through the jobs created in professions of a nature other than agriculture (landscapers, nursery workers, etc.) but the most important contribution of our analysis is to have shown that education in nature as a factor of rural regeneration is not the monopoly of agricultural education. The idea cuts across all social categories. Educating children from an early age in the gestures of caring for nature, its nourishing and environmental functions is considered as an essential activity in several "rural schools" depending on the Ministry of National Education. The project of the director of the nursery and primary school in Gavray is a magnificent illustration of this (FR6B/Int.22). Education in caring for nature becomes the corollary of caring for others. It is easier to put it into practice in rural areas.

Conclusion: what is rural regeneration? What lesson can be drawn from the role of nature education in this regeneration?

At the end of the analysis of this case study based on the hypothesis that nature education as it was conceived and implemented by Coutances Campus, we must conclude by answering the central question of the project: what is rural regeneration?

During our survey, the answers to the question: what is "rural" for you?, were obtained with ease and spontaneity, as the term "regeneration" did not give rise to comments except for a few elected officials who knew the emerging use of this expression "urban regeneration" in the high political and scientific sphere of "all urban". There, in fact, "urban regeneration" seemed to be able to reinvigorate the meaning of the dominant but now commonplace "urbanization" by giving a temporal dimension to those in vogue but static "smart city" or "intelligent city".

The answers to the "rural" question confirmed our initial hypothesis: the definition of rural and "rurality" varies with the "people" interviewed as well as with the "places" they spontaneously designate because knowing and inhabiting them. For some people, mainly farmers and retirees from agriculture, "rural" or "from the countryside" was equal with "agricultural" while for others, native local inhabitants or newcomers, "rural" does not refer to "agricultural" but is rather associated with this settlement system, the characteristics of which were given above: a town named Coutances well distinct from the "countryside" with its small towns and rural communes. Some of them are in "Bocage" (FR6B/Int.11 which affirms the equivalence between Bocage and Rural) and others along Sea shores are more difficult to designate as "rural" except when their capital (a "Burg") are obviously placed "inside the land".

The ambiguity or even the duality of the concept of "rural" must therefore be taken into account if we want to answer the "central question of the project". This dichotomy also exists among the actors involved in the promising Campus experience since the dominant

words (equivalent?) are those of "nature", "agro-ecology" and with a poorly defined meaning that of "territory".

"Ruralization" perhaps because it intuitively refers to the opposite dominant and irreversible Urbanization was a word that looks understandable so well accepted. Indeed, groping and in a step-by-step approach, almost all of the women and men who responded to us have expressed the desire of change, the need to adapt in thought and in action to the new problems they have to face. But they did not know precisely what could be the driving force of a real social and global renewal. For some farmers, this should be more research by INRA on issues of reduction of phytosanitary and animal management to face the rise of the promotion of "eating without meat" and the ideology of "animal welfare". But as seen before no consensus could be detected among farmers.

As for elected officials, they grope in the choice of a political perspective of "regeneration" (a word they do not pronounce) between the grants obtained by the project "Small towns of tomorrow" where the rural is considered as a system of settlement or those becoming from environmental policies mostly targeted on a particular problem: the energy renovation of housing, the management of water as a "common good" taking more and more importance for individuals and local authorities. Powerless, or almost, on everything related to agriculture and therefore on the implementation of a policy of "agro-ecological transition" (apart through the acquisition of a skill on the aid to "hedges replanting") they try, without too much believing because of the weakness of the financial support, to launch a Territorial Food Project on the scale of the CMB, hoping that by this means meeting more the needs of "consuming healthy food, organic and produced nearby", they will find the opportunity to act in connection with the "world" of local farmers.

In short, no one says with a clear conscience what a rural regeneration would be. Perhaps it is because there is no consensus neither on what rural is nor on what a real change could be, the respondents struggle to speak of or even to define what rural regeneration is.

That is why, without a clear answer from the respondents on the meaning attributed to the term "regeneration", our conclusion is based on a deductive interpretation of what has been said implicitly when observing, interviewing, and confronting all the discourses and documents we had collected.

Therefore, we offer our answer to the question "What is rural regeneration?" by drawing it from the results of the hypothesis we have chosen to test: education in nature at any age, through learning the gestures of work conscious of its effect on nature (the abiotic and plant life and animal) and on others, what we also call the culture of "cultures of nature" (Mathieu, 2016) is probably the most powerful "regenerative" force of this turn of the 21st century. Indeed, in the idea of rural regeneration as it is put into practice in the Campus, supporting the new generations in their hope for change is something very important. Whether they are successors, newcomers, destined for nature trades ("green trades"), to create a small business or an artistic, cultural or service association, whether they accept low-skilled and low-paid jobs (personal services or cashier for example) if only to "*stay in the country*" or "*live in the countryside*" more "*close to nature*" etc., the young people we met aspire to give meaning to their life and their "*way of living*". The ethics to which they aspire is not reduced to environmental issues; it is also the requirement of a new relationship with the society in which they want to live. The sentence that ends the interview with one of them, who is nevertheless "successor" of a family farm (FR6B/Int.13): "*it is we who will change society*" could have been pronounced by more than one young woman or young man being investigated.

Faced with social inequalities, Covid, all these problems which confirm the multi-crisis character of the period of their youth (late since employment and life as a couple with children are in their thirties), part of this generation which calls itself rural, affirms that it will change the "society" where they are, in the village or the borough where they are "established" even if it is the fruit of chance, of opportunity. Neighborhood is appreciated in "physical" terms, but it is also done in a network interspersed with collective times.

It is the new utopia of the generation that is bringing about the renewal. This new utopia is to adapt one's behavior and actions to the new context of environmental transition and sustainability. This renewal is not achieved only by the stereotype of the "new peasants", but by ways of working and living on the land. It is the emergence of an ethic of inhabiting it, a certain relationship to nature, places and others. Especially since these new aspirations of young people join those of the oldest by giving the social bond the momentum of the possible.

This generation does not link the question of sustainable development to the agricultural question alone, but also to the relationship with cultural and artistic activities, all kinds of collective activities which are a matter of anchoring oneself in the territory. As for the question of local development, this youth sees it as a new contract between the inhabitants and the elected officials. Young people propose initiatives that open up the field of local development as it is conceived by local authorities. We can cite the example of this director of a rural school (nursery and primary) under the supervision of National Education; who, supported by a municipal councilor teaching at the Campus, interprets education in "*nature trades*" by creating small vegetable gardens and flowers "*grown*" by children ranging from 2 ½ to 10 years old.

Through its direct and indirect impact, nature education, Campus de Coutances style, is therefore undoubtedly a lever for rural regeneration because it has anticipated and continues to develop what the new generation aspires to. But, attentive listening to interviews, in particular with non-farm rural dwellers of all ages, leads us to give other content to what they might have called a desire for "rural regeneration". Indeed, the problem often evoked by them that encounters "rurality" is this break which emerged in the 1980s and which continues to deepen between two worlds which are nevertheless neighbors: the "world" of farmers and the "world" of rural people.

Related to our case study, this would give the question: what is rural regeneration? - another perspective, more ambitious but also more uncertain - It would be defined as a kind of reconciliation between all the separated bodies, a new way of "remaking society" in this myriad of small towns, villages where, as we said at the start, the tendency is to withdraw into oneself and into one's home. This is true between neighbors of plots who, however, do not speak to each other because they do not have the same profession and the same local origin. Can education through nature trades be a lever for reconciliation between all separate parts of societies, between farmers and rural dwellers, each locked in his "sphere"? Is education sufficient to make this reconnection between behaviors and points of view that currently do not work between groups and individuals of diverse origins? Is a so-called "happy" peaceful cohabitation possible between the different categories, when they do not aspire to be truly united? Observing the moments of collective events: the dahlia and garden festival at the Campus, the "Courant d`art" salon in Gavray and even the weekly markets,

which are nevertheless so lively, does not seem to give a positive answer to the question asked. They only show the existence of a temporary, superficial sociability, or else they bring together only partial "communities".

What is the weight of education through the culture of nature if we give to "rural regeneration" the meaning of a regeneration of the societies themselves, of a mutation of these "municipalities", micro-societies whose inhabitants keep the name even when it no longer exists administratively because they have merged with a municipality more populated than it? Can education by putting on the new clothes of nature become "popular" again, by reestablishing the links between all categories of society: rural, urban, here or elsewhere? This total regeneration is an uncertain prospect even if it remains an aspiration of a few individuals and families that we interviewed. This aspiration is also found among elected officials who make the terms of "cohabitation", "connection", and above all "proximity" at the heart of their conception of politics. This is in line with the political utopia of sustainable development aimed at reconciling the social and the environmental aspects, however, so often entering into contradiction. There are places where education and society go hand in hand, the Coutances campus is one of them, and others are emerging. Rural regeneration taken in this sense can only be partial, without broad convergence. This aspiration does not seem to have found its form of action yet. There are leads that are sometimes individual, family or associative, there are leads for communities (PAT for example), weak signals of a possible profound change that we are not sure will happen.

So if we admit that all regeneration occurs in time and step by step, if we also admit that there is rural regeneration when partial changes take shape in the concrete, we can conclude that education in nature coupled with the particular settlement system of the Pays de Coutances will weigh heavily to build in a utopian sense new ruralities where "agricultural" and "rural" will have only one meaning and which will be sustainable rural areas in lasting relationship also with the city of Coutances, already a model through its Campus. This construction is in gestation.

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May 1992: introductory research course, canton of Gavray (Manche), farms and dairy industries facing milk quotas, non-agricultural jobs, new settlers and foreign residents, rural towns and municipal politics, role women in rural areas in crisis.

D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

Jaime ESCRIBANO, doctoral student in geography at the Faculty of Geography and History of the University of Valencia (Spain) Public services in rural areas under the supervision of Javier Esparcia February 2006-2009; Discussion of the subject: September 6 and 19, 2006; Preparation for the field survey (canton of Gavray) September 23-25, 2006; Valencia 2009: participation in the Jury for the defense (rapporteur).

In 2009 Nicole Chambron for a five-day investigation in the canton of Gavray

Annex 1. The list of interviews

Code	Gender	Role	Place and date of	Other information
FR6B/Int. 1	M	Key informant,	St Denis le Gast – 27/11/2020	
FR6B/Int. 2	F	Inhabitant newcomer	St Denis le Gast – 17/02/21	
FR6B/Int. 3	M	Key informant, Actor involved, came back	Coutances – 25/02/2021	Campus nature
FR6B/Int. 4	M	Farmer, successor	St Denis le Gast – 15/03/2021	
FR6B/Int. 5	M	Actor involved	Coutances – 16/03/2021	retired farmer
FR6B/Int. 6	F	Actor involved	Coutances – 16/03/2021	retired teacher - farmer
FR6B/Int. 7	M	Local nature entrepreneur	Hambye – 13/03/2021	
FR6B/Int. 8	F	Local entrepreneur,	Gavray – 19/03/2021	
FR6B/Int. 9	M	Key informant, actor involved	Coutances – 13/12/19	Campus nature
FR6B/Int. 10	M	Local mayor	Gavray – 22/03/2021	
FR6B/Int. 11	M	Politician	Coutances – 25/03/2021	CMB, local representative
FR6B/Int. 12	M	Farmer – New entrant	Gavray – 29/03/2021	
FR6B/Int. 13	M	Farmer - Successor	Coutances – 30/03/2021	
FR6B/Int. 14	M	Actor involved -	Gavray – 07/04/2021	Campus nature
FR6B/Int. 15	F	Key person, environmental network	Coutances – 04/05/2021	
FR6B/Int. 16	F	Newcomer, NGO, rural cultural association	Gavray – 13/05/2021	
FR6B/Int. 17	M	Local nature entrepreneur - successor	Gavray – 25/05/2021	
FR6B/Int. 18	F	Newcomer - Inhabitant	Gavray – 29/05/2021	
FR6B/Int. 19	F	Key informant, actor involved	Coutances – 04/06/2021	Campus nature
FR6B/Int. 20	F	Key informant, actor involved	Coutances – 04/06/2021	Campus Nature
FR6B/Int. 21	M	Key informant, actor involved	Coutances – 04/06/2021	Campus nature
FR6B/Int. 22	F	Key informant Local,	Gavray – 08/06/2021	schoolteacher
FR6B/Int. 23	M	New entrant - farmer	Cerences - 15/03/2021	Goatherd-

Table 1. Interviews

Annex 2. Statistical Data

Municipalities	Belonged to the Bocage coutançais community	Geographic code	Population in 2018	Population in 2008	Variation (%)
Agon-Coutainville		50003	2790	2820	-1,1%
Annoville		50015	662	605	9,4%
La Baleine	yes	50028	96	93	3,2%
Belval	yes	50044	318	305	4,3%
Blainville-sur-Mer		50058	1637	1590	3,0%
Brainville		50072	213	187	13,9%
Bricqueville-la-Blouette	yes	50084	548	536	2,2%
Camberton	yes	50092	699	698	0,1%
Cametours	yes	50093	423	409	3,4%
Camprond	yes	50094	409	359	13,9%
Cerisy-la-Salle	yes	50111	1023	1024	-0,1%
Courcy	yes	50145	593	537	10,4%
Coutances	yes	50147	8454	9436	-10,4%
Gavray-sur-Sienne	yes	50197	1963	1847	6,3%
Gouville-sur-Mer		50215	3198	3032	5,5%
Gratot		50219	661	660	0,2%
Grimesnil	yes	50221	60	70	-14,3%
Hambye	yes	50228	1127	1176	-4,2%
Hauteville-sur-Mer		50231	690	633	9,0%
Hauteville-la-Guichard	yes	50232	469	449	4,5%
Heugueville-sur-Sienne		50243	526	551	-4,5%
Lengronne	yes	50266	420	450	-6,7%
Lingreville		50272	1015	942	7,7%
Le Mesnil-Garnier	yes	50311	226	220	2,7%
Le Mesnil-Villeman	yes	50326	235	223	5,4%
Montaigu-les-Bois	yes	50336	227	232	-2,2%
Montcuit	yes	50340	187	194	-3,6%
Monthuchon	yes	50345	685	594	15,3%
Montmartin-sur-Mer		50349	1356	1292	5,0%
Montpinchon	yes	50350	524	557	-5,9%
Muneville-le-Bingard	yes	50364	699	653	7,0%
Nicorps	yes	50376	399	423	-5,7%
Notre-Dame-de-Cenilly	yes	50378	634	690	-8,1%
Orval sur Sienne		50388	1155	1232	-6,3%
Ouville	yes	50389	448	440	1,8%
Quetteville-sur-Sienne		50419	3187	3035	5,0%

D5.2 30 CASE STUDIES ON RURAL NEW COMERS, NEW ENTRANTS TO FARMING AND SUCCESSORS

Regnéville-sur-Mer		50429	738	833	-11,4%
Roncey	yes	50437	797	799	-0,3%
Saint-Denis-le-Gast	yes	50463	526	541	-2,8%
Saint-Denis-le-Vêtu	yes	50464	626	604	3,6%
Saint-Malo-de-la-Lande		50506	477	426	12,0%
Saint-Martin-de-Cenilly	yes	50513	179	217	-17,5%
Saint-Pierre-de-Coutances	yes	50537	410	395	3,8%
Saint-Sauveur-Villages	yes	50550	3593	3323	8,1%
Saussey	yes	50568	462	501	-7,8%
Savigny	yes	50569	448	372	20,4%
Tourville-sur-Sienne		50603	781	736	6,1%
La Vendelée		50624	472	412	14,6%
Ver	yes	50626	376	368	2,2%
Total CCCMB			47841	47721	0,3%

Table 2. Detailed figures per municipality - Community of Municipalities Coutances Mer Bocage

Source INSEE - Séries historiques de population (1876 à 2018)
<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/fichier/3698339/base-pop-historiques-1876-2018.xlsx>

Municipalities	Population in 2018	Population in 2008	Variation (%)
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MUNICIPALITIES >5000				
1	COUTANCES	8 454	9 436	-10,40%

MUNICIPALITIES > 2000				
3	CM	9 175	8 887	3,24%
1	CB	3 593	3 323	8,10%
4	TOTAL	12 768	12 210	4,57%

RURAL MUNICIPALITIES				
12	CM	9 693	9 466	2,40%
32	CB	16 926	16 609	1,91%
44	TOTAL	26 619	26 075	2,09%

49	TOTAL GENERAL	47 841	47 721	0,3%
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Table 3. Community of Municipalities Coutances Mer Bocage – Population

Source INSEE - Séries historiques de population (1876 à 2018)
<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/fichier/3698339/base-pop-historiques-1876-2018.xlsx>