

# From niche to volume with integrity and trust CASE STUDY FACT SHEET

## The Danish Food Communities

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### INTRODUCTION

The Food Communities was chosen as a case for HealthyGrowth because they constitute a major novelty within the Danish foodscape. The Food Communities have emerged as the latest incarnation of a series of attempts to forge alternative food networks operating beyond the supermarket system. Denmark is distinguished by a large market share of organic food being sold via supermarkets, but The Food Communities are a novelty due to two factors, (1) they have experienced a rapid growth since the outset in 2010, and (2) they are organised in decentralised manner, where they continue to split up the network in chapters, each operating within their distinct local area. This can be described as a matter of 'upscaling by multiplication'. The Food Communities are a predominantly urban phenomenon, as the farmers are not formal members of the organization.



Food Community members prepare vegetables for distribution at one of the Danish Food Communities in Copenhagen.

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### *The 'Ten Commandments' of the Danish Food Communities (kbhff.dk)*

"Food shall be grown and produced in organic quality – Food shall be as local as practically feasible – Food supply shall mirror seasonal variation – Trade shall be fair and direct – Production and consumption shall be environmentally friendly – The Food Communities shall raise awareness about food and organics – The Food Communities shall be economically sustainable and independent – The food chain shall be transparent and trust-building – Food shall be widely accessible and affordable – The Food Communities should be powered by local, collaborative communities"

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND BACKGROUND

Denmark is distinguished by a highly modernized food and agricultural sector. The modernization of Danish agriculture was based on close collaboration between the state, agricultural and veterinary science and the farming sector. The result was a food sector distinguished by highly efficient farms, and a relatively centralized supply chain. Contrary to many other countries in Europe, organic and other 'alternative' foods are primarily sold via supermarkets. Still, Denmark has seen a lot of different initiatives regarding the establishment of supply chains operating outside the established retail system. Examples include box schemes, specialty shops, and various consumer supported agriculture projects.

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**Legal form:**

Network of cooperative associations

**Date of foundation:**

2008

**Homepage:**

see portal at [døff.dk](http://døff.dk), and [kbhff.dk](http://kbhff.dk) or [aoff.dk](http://aoff.dk)

**Turnover:**

The turnover developed from initially 9700 € to 2.9 Million €, today (estimated).

**Product range:**

mainly vegetables, supplemented with occasional supply of other types of products

**Number of Members:**

Number of members has increased from 15 members in 2008, to 4500 in 2014 (estimated)

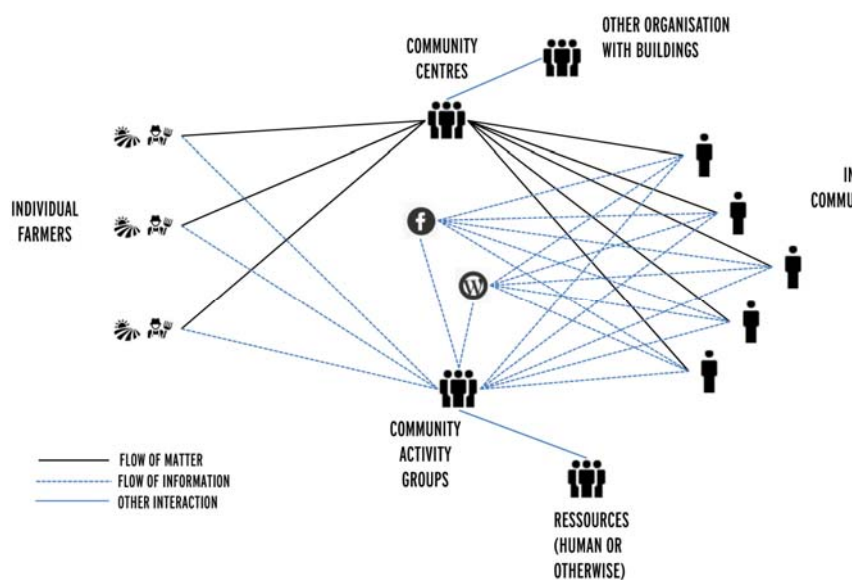
**Distribution channels:**

Primarily via farmer deliveries to community centres, where products are being packaged by food community members, who volunteer to work 3 hours every month for the community

**ORGANIZATION OF THE FOOD COMMUNITIES**

Organic food has a large market share on the Danish food market, with a market share of roughly 7 percent. The Danish Food Communities first emerged in the Copenhagen area in 2008. The first Danish food community was started by a group of concerned customers, who wanted to establish a direct link to regional producers of organic food. Organic vegetables were chosen as the main product (meat and other products such as dairy products are yet to emerge in the food communities). From the outset, the consumers organized the food community as a cooperative association, where the highest authority is the annual general assembly. After the initial general assembly, the food community activists started the search for producers interested in supplying the food communities on a weekly basis.

From a modest start in Copenhagen, the movement has spread to several major as well as medium-sized cities of Denmark, including the second-largest city of Aarhus where a Food Community was initiated in 2010. The food communities in Denmark now count more than 4.000 members, organized in local networks within different neighborhoods of major and medium-sized cities.



*Organizational structure for the Food Communities – networks linking producers and consumers in peri-urban contexts*

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