

From Turin to Fadiouth: An Exchange Based on Couscous

From December 16 to 19, representatives from the City of Turin and Slow Food visited the Senegalese community of producers of salted millet couscous, a Slow Food Presidium. The producers live in Fadiouth, a village on a seashell-covered island connected to Joal (150 kilometers south of Dakar) by a long wooden bridge.

The island is inhabited by the Serer people, who have long been the main growers of the traditional Sunnà variety of millet. The grain is used to make an unusual couscous, which Fadiouth's families eat every evening, mixed with baobab leaves and often accompanied by sauces of mangrove flowers or peanuts and meat or shellfish.

The visit was part of the European project 4Cities4Dev. Joal Fadiouth's mayor and town council welcomed the Italian guests, who were hosted by the island's community and the couscous producers over the next few days.

The visit allowed the City of Turin to really get to know the Presidium and to visit the site where a workshop for millet processing and storage is being built with funding from the 4Cities4Dev project.

"We need much spirit and courage," said Elisabeth, one of the youngest of the Presidium's producers, "but we have plenty in Senegal! We're very dynamic. We work together with a group of farmers so we can have millet grown naturally, without chemicals, and we're organizing ourselves to start selling the couscous on the local and national market."

Thanks to the new workshop, the women will be able to produce and sell the couscous in a clean and safe way. This will help them protect the local Sunnà variety of millet and the ancient processing technique used to make couscous in Fadiouth.

The Senegalese couscous Presidium will be presented in Turin at the Salone del Gusto and Terra Madre (October 25-29, 2012).