



Schola Campesina



International Training on Peasant Agroecology and Food and Agriculture Global Governance

25th of September – 7th of October 2017, Rome and Lazio region

Methodology Note

The training seeks to bring together members of peasants' organizations from around the world to share experiences and discuss issues related to, amongst others, the global governance of food and agriculture, peasants' knowledge, peasants' autonomy, agroecological practices, peasants' global struggles, local and global food policies, and women's empowerment.

The two week training course will take place in Rome, where all UN bodies that work on food and agriculture are based, thus allowing the participants to benefit from peasant and activist knowledge from all around the world. The training will be held at the *Città dell'Altra Economia* (CAE) in Rome, as well as at partner farms in the countryside, and will combine both theoretical and practical activities.

The training course is directed to approximately 20 international participants – mostly small-scale food producers from the Global South. Three members of academic institutions will also join the programme so that participants may benefit from their inputs – the goal is to foster dialogue between researchers and farmers. A further aim is to achieve gender balance and geographical diversity amongst the participants.

Methodology

The course content and pedagogical principles are based on previous experiences at La Via Campesina's Agroecology Schools.

The project can be viewed as an international meeting of members of peasants' organizations to promote and share peasants' knowledge. Therefore the participants are expected to share knowledge and experiences from a **peer-to-peer** perspective as well as to learn from other participants, including academics and invited speakers. The invited speakers are expected to learn from the participants, and vice-versa, in a **horizontal dialogue** or "*Diálogo de Saberes*".

Each session with an external speaker will be introduced by a participant. The session will have the following structure:

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| Introduction of the topic by a (prepared) participant: | max 15' |
| Speaker A | max 30' |
| Collective discussion (10 participants x 3') | max 30' |
| Speaker B | max 30' |
| Break | 30' |
| Collective discussion (10 participants x 3') | max 30' |
| Speaker A | max 30' |
| Speaker B | max 30' |
| Reporting of the session by 2 participants supported by an academic | max 15' |

The topics covered during the course will be complemented by the participants' own **case studies**, where possible.

Each session will cover **relevant documentation** published by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), civil society organisations and others. The external speakers will seek to make reference to relevant documentation (mentioned in the bibliography that has been provided to the participants).

Five sessions of **farm work** will be held on several farms of the area. Participants will take part in daily farm activities in groups of 2 or 3 people following the needs of the host farmer as well as the interests of the participants. They will stay several days on the same farm in order to become familiar with the work and to build a solid relationship with the Italian farmer.

Role of academics

Three academics from the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR, Coventry University, UK), the Sam Moyo African Institute of Agrarian Studies (Zimbabwe), and the Institute for Social Studies (ISS, The Netherlands) will take part in the training. Their inputs throughout the learning process will be essential in better understanding how to connect scientific knowledge to peasants' knowledge. The three academics are not expected to take part in farm work.

The three academics will complete the following functions:

- Accompany the participant that is in charge of presenting a topic at the beginning of a session;
- Support the participants in charge of reporting back from a session;
- Take part in collective discussions by sharing information on current research with others;

- Subsequently communicate with their institution and colleagues on potential future research areas that would serve peasant agroecology.

Educational material

All educational material used throughout the training is related to the modules as described below – this includes collective readings, farm work and the pedagogy itself (i.e. horizontal learning, exchanges, knowledge sharing, and innovations). Collective thinking and discussions will be underpinned by popular educational initiatives by civil society organisations that have experienced popular learning processes and informal education and/or horizontal movement of knowledge (e.g. the "Peasant Agroecology School" toolkit and the "Peasant-to-Peasant Method of Horizontal Learning"). The educational material will include publications, experiences and videos.

Suggested programme

(Please see the detailed programme)

The training course (13 days) will include both **theoretical and practical activities**. It will mostly be held in the countryside on two farms (9 days) and in the city of Rome (2 days). The weekend (2 days) will be dedicated to **"cultural" activities**, including a trekking on Via Amerina to explore the relation with nature and with the community, cinema, music, popular dancing, collective cooking, poetry and literature ("Agroecology and feelings").

Four evenings will be dedicated to **collective readings**. We will operate in two different ways: 1) all participants read the same text (or listen to one reading /or the interpretation); 2) the participants read different texts on a same topic (in their own language). The collective readings will be on the following topics:

- 1- Food chain concentration (at production, processing and distribution level);
- 2- Criminalization of social movements;
- 3- The history of the food sovereignty movement;
- 4- Environmental and social impacts of agro-industrial models (environmental pollution, migration, hidden costs etc.)

The training has been developed and structured around **5 non-sequential modules** that represent 5 "kind of knowledge" and are entitled as follows:

Module 1- Get to know each other and presentation of the training process, framework and methodology;

Module 2- Socio-economy of food systems. This module will focus on global governance and decision-making processes related to food and agriculture at the global level. It will also cover how food policies are set up at regional and sub-regional scales. The module seeks to highlight the structure, the logics and the power relations that characterize the current corporate food system.

Module 3- Agriculture and livestock agroecological production and processing. This module will address agroecological practices including seeds and biodiversity, the farm's relation with the ecosystem, life cycles, composting, multi-cropping and agroforestry, agroecological management of natural resources, processing of raw products. This module will mainly be explored through farm work.

Module 4- Territories and Communities. This module will deal with peasants' knowledge and the recovery of popular memory, peasant collective identity, rural sociology, rural extension and peasants' autonomy. The module will focus on ways of disseminating agroecology (scaling up as well as scaling out). The Italian system of Biodistretto will provide a case study that highlights the role of territory. Another point discussed in this module is the importance of women's empowerment in our organisations and in agricultural activities in general as key to disseminating agroecology.

Module 5- Peasants' empowerment. This module aims at sharing and learning tools that can be taken back home. It will provide a clear picture of the networks and initiatives that are linked to the training, such as La Via Campesina's Agroecology Schools IALA, "Collective on Agroecology, Seeds, and Biodiversity", European Peasant Agroecology Exchange Network, Nyéléni etc. The module will set up media and IT tools for knowledge capitalization and sharing, and will aim to improve skills such as organisation-building and peasants' autonomy.