



**Schola  
Campesina**

Sharing knowledge  
for food sovereignty

# International Training on Agroecology

With Çiftçi-Sen & the Agency of Development Initiatives

Jade Farm - Agroecology Training Centre  
Maksudiya (Sakarya)  
Turkey  
30th of May - 5th of June



## Acknowledgements

Our thanks to our noble hosts, Berin Ertuk and Çiftçi-Sen as well as Aida Jamangulova and Madina Sadirdinova from the Agency of Development Initiatives (ADI) without whom none of this would have been possible. Our special thanks also go to Carolina Rizzi Starr (FAO REU) for her endless energy, sensibility, and passion and for funding this training. Finally we thank our participants who brought their energy and passion and shared their experiences and helped make this training a success.

## Partner Organisations

Schola Campesina Aps (Italy)  
Çiftçi-Sen (Turkey)  
Agency of development initiatives  
(Kyrgyzstan)

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**Text by:** Lucas Sebastián Worsdell

**Photos by:** Lucas Sebastián Worsdell



## Executive Summary

During the week of the 30th of May, Schola Campesina Aps (Italy), ADI (Kyrgyzstan), and Çiftçi-sen (Turkey), with the financial support of FAO, hosted agroecology trainings with the aim of sharing knowledge and raising awareness within the participants' organisations on the opportunities brought by Agroecology. Overall the event was successful in building capacity and a stronger network amongst organisations of the region and introducing various tools and concepts related to Agroecology, Food Sovereignty, the Nyéléni declaration as well as the UN Declaration on the rights of Peasants and other Rural Workers. This document outlines what occurred and was discussed during the trainings as well as highlighting a few of the methodologies and outcomes.





### 30th of May

The week of trainings began on Jade farm - Agroecology Training Centre in Maksudiya, Turkey, with the aim of sharing knowledge and raising awareness within the participating organisations on the opportunities brought by Agroecology. With the financial support of FAO, Schola Campesina, Çiftçi-Sen and the Agency of Development Initiatives (ADI) brought together farmers, farming organisations, NGOs, and researchers from: Turkey, Romania, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan & Russia.

After the introductions of all of our participants and training coordinators, we dove into the history of FAO's work with Agroecology and the challenges they have faced engaging with governments to promote Agroecology. We then discussed that these trainings are part of an effort to step back to





*Opposite*

**Above:** Berin Ertuk showing participants some seeds during a tour of her farm

**Below:** Adnan Çobannoglu shares some delicious Fava beans with the participants

*On this Page*

**Above:** Berin Ertuk welcomes participants to Jade farm

**Across:** Jade Farm's team, driving the tractor, watering the garden and preparing lunch

map, assess, and connect farming organisations, other civil society organizations and FAO in Europe and Central Asia in order to organise grassroots movements and support their efforts to advance agroecological policies at the national level.

*“We are coming here for knowledge, we are flying here for knowledge, it has taken is two days with 3 hours of sleep. We work by connecting family farmers to urban spaces.”*

*“We had special gardens to preserve our grains and seeds which we need but all these genetic banks are owned by the ministry of agriculture. If you are a researcher or representative of a company you can get seeds from this bank, yet farmers do not have access to the seeds in that bank. But the more people are in charge in the reproduction of seeds and grains the better, to provide the security to our food chains.”*

#### *On this page and Opposite*

Koray Nurtug showing us around his family farm, where he works with circular farming practices to increase his autonomy by avoiding inputs.



### 31st of May

On the morning of the 31st of May we did a collective exercise to address the 11 pillars of the Nyéléni declaration. The declaration was written by many different organisations coming from different backgrounds from all over the world, with the intention of highlighting how everyone has their own approach to Agroecology but share certain unifying principles. This exercise showed us how the work the participants do relates to the pillars of the Nyéléni declaration as well as reveal the overlaps between participant's organisations. During the entirety of the week the Nyéléni declaration, and the experiences shared, acted as an anchor and a starting point from which our discussions would emerge.

After lunch we went to the home of Koray Nurtug. There he showed us his small livestock farm where he uses 16 varieties of wild herbs for pastures as well as clover and corn to produce fodder for his animals. We also visited a small yet successful and expanding chokeberry farm. In the afternoon Giorgi Kvinikadze spoke to participants about the importance of data and evidence to make changes at the policy level. He discussed the characteristics and foundations of objective statistical research. As a group we also highlighted the potential of the FAO Tool for Agroecological Performance Evaluation (TAPE) for analysis.



*A participant places a post-it note on one of the corresponding posters of the Nyéléni principles.*



## PARTICIPANTS EXPLORE WHAT THE NYÉLÉNI DECLARATION MEANS FOR THEM...

### What Is Agroecology Is For You?

- Care For Resources And People
- Clean Ecological Products
- Agrobiodiversity
- Development Of Tools Health Of A Nation
- Cooperation, Understanding, Giving And Receiving
- Bridge To Connect Humans And Nature
- Seeds

### What Does The Word Territory Mean?

- Independent And Autonomous Of Land
- Geographical Position And Sphere Of Life, Man, Technology, Peoples And Animals
- The Place Which Protects, Culture, Tradition And Home Where We Are Glad To Be Back
- Land Of My Fathers
- A Plot Of Land Which Belonging To Someone Of Something
- The Place Where I Live. Its Ethereal And I Am Temporary
- Its A Gift And My Duty Is To Preserve, My Responsibility Is To Give Its To My Children
- All Living Creatures Have Their Rights
- Places Where All Living And Not Living Live And We Can Bring Together Sustainable Life

### One Political Demand That You Are Addressing...

- Clear Vision Of For Small Farmers
- Invest In Access To Water
- Improving The Interpretation Of Government Laws Protecting Indigenous Rights
- Provide Access To Finance For Organic Producers
- We Need To Fight For Simpler Documentation For The Farmers
- We Need To Reduce Prices Of Agricultural Supplies
- We Want To Be Able To Sell Our Local Seeds
- Support To Access Local Grains, Breads, Seeds And Plants For Agricultural Production
- Expropriate The Land From The Big Land Owners

### Collective Organisations...

- Association Of Small Farmers And Seed Producers
- Association Where Each Member Is An Expert On A Certain Topic Effecting Indigenous People
- Association Of Agricultural Economists Which Exchange Information With NGOs
- Ecological Association With Different Commissions...

## Where Are Your Basic Rights Not Respected?

- Access To Water
- Access To Rights To Fish For Indigenous Peoples
- Access To Information
- Access To Investments
- Access To Politics
- Access To Raw Materials
- The Negative Influence Of Climate Conditions
- Access To Local Seeds
- Access To Energy
- Access To Labour
- Access To Land

## What Is Your Relationship With Knowledge?

- Sharing Knowledge, Mistakes And Experiences With Different Farmers
- Our Farmers Lack Knowledge And Courses Are Very Important. We Need To Have Experts Teaching Agroecology
- Publishing In Newspapers And Magazines And Partnerships With Organisations That Unite Farmers
- Small Farmers Cannot Get Information
- Face To Face Communication, Education For Agroecology, Teach Students, Constant Dialogue
- We Attend And Host Trainings To Share And Distribute Knowledge

## Write Down One Ecological Practice...

- Vermiculture
- Non-Irrigated Plants
- Biogas
- Non-Chemical Products
- Using Non-A Grade Mulberry Into Food Bars To Reduce Waste
- Rotational Grazing
- Follow The Seasons With Deer
- Production Of Milk With Natural Pasturing
- Correct Uses Of Natural Resources
- Green Fertilisers And Compost

## What Is Your Market?

- We Get People To Come To The Farm
- Weekend Fairs For Farmers
- Deliver Products Directly To The Customers
- Educate Our Farmers With E-Commerce Tools To Optimise Delivery Chains
- Farmer Shop Where Farmers Bring Their Products To Our Shop
- Organise Exhibition With The Camber Of Commerce And Ask Us For The Products In The Market And Connect Us To Exporters
- Connect City With The Nearby Villages For Collaboration And Work

## The Role Of Women..

- Trainings For Women Entrepreneurs
- Interview Successful Indigenous Women In Business And Publish In Our Newspaper And Different Mass Media.
- Showcase Successful Project For Women To Believe In Themselves
- Financial Support And Support For Sell The Products

## Feelings And Love...

- Change
- Knowledge
- Solidarity
- Clear And Transparent Business
- Exchange Experiences
- Responsibility
- Creation Of Community

## Youth Are Critical...

- We Need To Show To The Youth That Farming Can Be A Job
- Give Knowledge To Youth About How Important Food Without Any Chemicals Is
- Free Financial Support For The Youth To Not Leave The Cities. Especially Young Farmers
- Young People Are Very Into Ecological Farmers But We Need To Connect With Them
- Lack Of Social Environment For Young People In The Village, We Don't Have Enough Social Events In The Countryside.



***On this Page***

**Top Left:** The municipality of Bursa welcomes all the participants to Bursa that morning

**Middle left:** Varieties of corn and sunflowers hung to dry

**Bottom Left:** Gulmaira Baimakova has a look at the compost produced by the municipality

**Top and Middle Right:** Arca Atay leads the group through a garden run by the municipality and used to produce seeds

**Bottom Right:** The group looks on as our guide takes us through the garden.

***Opposite***

**Left & Right:** Ramona Dominicioiu leads a workshop on Rights as well as international frameworks regarding the rights of Peasants and other rural workers

## 1st of June

The field trip to Bursa began with a long bus ride through the countryside. We were welcomed by the municipality of Bursa who proudly presented the work being done in the region to advance Agroecology. Arca Atay, led us through the history of his work in the region as well as the streets of Bursa to various municipal gardens, seed banks and a farmer field school. These various gardens and seed banks preserve local varieties of seed, and distribute these seeds to community members. The project sites also act as spaces for workshops and trainings for citizens, farmers, and children. Other activities involved the construction of a farm, a lab for food product development, an olive press, and social spaces for public use. Farmers markets to facilitate direct purchasing of crops are also a central pillar in the work done by the municipality of Bursa to connect citizens to their local food system.

The evening ended with a spirited trip to the Bazaar of Bursa and a wonderful expedition to the seaside for dinner. The field trip was an excellent example of how local governments can support agroecology and include various sectors in the process.

## 2nd of June

We began Thursday morning unraveling the importance of the UN Decade on Family Farming and UN Declaration for the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in rural Areas (UNDROP) in relation to how agroecology and the rights of peasants may be promoted and protected on an international and national level. Ramona Dominicioiu, from Romania and part of Eco Ruralis, led the group through a discussion on peasant



rights and how international collaboration between farming organisations which are part of La Via Campesina were inspired by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDIP) to advance peasant rights at the international policy level. Their work over the past years has focused on moving public policy away from economic objectives which favour industrial farming for rich farmers and rich companies towards food system that does not discriminate against small holder farmer practices, knowledge, and rights to use natural resources. Ramona spoke with a particular emphasis on how UNDROP can serve as the foundation for rural organisations to create alliances and capacitate civil society.

In the Afternoon, Adnan Çobannoglu, a Turkish wine producer and leading member of Çiftçi-Sen spoke at length about the history of agricultural production in modern Turkey, the organisation Çiftçi-Sen, and their struggles representing peasants from different sectors of agriculture. State intervention to changes agricultural practices increased farmers dependency on inputs and the privatisation of state-backed institutions that controlled market price also had a devastating impact on farmers and rural populations. This stimulated the formation of Çiftçi-Sen to stand up against these significant policy challenges at the local, national, and international level.

Dr. Zerrin Çelik, a rural sociologist and agricultural economist, then spoke about the importance of acquiring and sharing knowledge. She spoke particularly about the

*On this Page*

**Bottom Left:** Berin Ertuk explains how they spray their crops with natural pesticides made on the farm.

**Bottom Right:** A Natural fungicide of fermented garlic water used at Jade farm.

*Opposite*

**Left & Right:** Oguzhan Çoban leads a traditional pastoralist call to get all the sheep to return to the Shepard. 'Geççi!'



extensive generational history of peasant knowledge and how NGOs and Academics can play a key supporting role in documenting and facilitating the sharing of that knowledge. Participants shared their experiences of knowledge sharing.

*“After the soviet union fell we started working with women, and we work with these women farmers to teach them to grow vegetables. We also teach them to get quality seeds of their own.”*

*“We track all kinds of information and we plant according to our customs. It is a spiritual issue, for a greater harvest we tell fairytales to the seeds to insert more spirit and dedicate the seeds to the people who will enjoy their fruits.”*

### **3rd of June**

On Friday Morning Berin Ertuk spoke about the agroecological practices she has developed over the years at Jade Farm to promote soil health, reduce the need to purchase inputs by using natural pesticides and fertiliser produced on site, and manage pest populations. Compost tea made from nettles for fertility, garlic water as fungicide and natural barriers for pest control, were just a few of the examples she shared. The common theme that was woven throughout these discussions was the autonomy of the farmer and how, by looking for solutions from within the context of your own farm, farmers will help achieve this.





*On this Page*

**Top Left:** Paola Fava of Jengalab demonstrates how digital tools can increase access to knowledge and collaboration

*Opposite*

**Right:** Azamat and Madina work through the beta version of the new digital platform developed by Jengalab

The morning continued with a talk, led by Oguzhan Çoban, about Transhumance in southern Turkey. Despite a constantly reduced grazing area for these communities, around 150 families and their livestock continue to practice nomadic pastoralism and campaign to preserve the regenerative practices that support the territory's environmental health. Oguzhan stressed how global food markets force farmers to compete on a global level, leading to the depletion of farming workforce and the destruction of the environment.

*“I met a peasant in a village wearing a t-shirt which said ‘I feed the world’. I asked him what does he grow, and he told me that he grew ‘hybrid corn and hybrid beet’. I asked him if he eats his products and he said he is forced to sell his crops. I then asked him ‘how can you feed the world if you can’t even feed yourself?’ ”*

*“The solution of the question is in the question itself - we should not look for the support of the state for subsidies... but see how to change our methods to increase autonomy and not rely on the state.”*

The day finished with Paola Fava of Jengalab leading a demonstration of the digital platform being developed for the Community of practice on Agroecology in the region. This important part of the training was a good way for Jengalab to test run the software with users using multiple languages. Above all, it was also a good demonstration of how digital tools can ethically support the exchange of knowledge when in the hands of those whom the service is developed for (mainly rural women farmers organization).



#### 4th of June

During the morning of our penultimate day of trainings, participant Bisar İçli presented the work his organisation does with refugees using agroecology. In their context, they found that around 90% of refugees worked in agriculture before war engulfed their communities so the organisation started to collect seeds in rural areas to give away these seeds to women refugees. They created gardens with the refugees they found a positive impact on their mental health and ability to share important knowledge during times of crisis. The work of Bisar and his colleagues also has a strong program focused on seed storage and preservation.

Members of ADI also shared their experiences with regards to seeds, and the subversive ways in which seeds are propagated, stored, and shared. Working with members to run seed banks, providing seeds to schools, and filling a YouTube channel with useful information, the group has managed to operate as an educational group despite not being an official school or training centre.

*“We used to package our seeds in bright colours but then we didn’t want to be associated with hybrid seeds so now we use just plain packaging.”*

In the afternoon we shared information on the global institutional food landscape, the various UN bodies involved, and the sectors of non-governmental organisations involved in the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, and the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism. We ended the day with a wonderful traditional evening where participants celebrated their agricultural traditions with each other.



## 5th of June

On the final morning of trainings, Irina Kurilova of Aborigen forum led a beautiful session on indigenous dance and local farmers shared their insights on the strength of the solidarity economy. This can take many forms yet is most prominent when farming networks and groups of farmers work together to trade goods, lend tools, and promote each others products. We discussed what are Agroecology schools and what their role can be in building resilient territories using the framework provided by the workshops.

The morning ended with the closing of the workshops, parting thanks and a final lunch by the lake.

### *Opposite*

**Across:** A series of photos in which Bisar İçli demonstrates how we stores and administers his seed collection

### *On this Page*

Irina Kurilova leads the group in a traditional dance from Yakutsk

