



Agroecology for Europe (AE4EU)

Deliverable report D4.4 – Agroecology Training Guidelines

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Table of Content

BACKGROUND	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
2. THE BASICS: OBJECTIVES AND TARGET GROUP	8
2.1 TRAINING OBJECTIVES:	8
2.2 THE LEARNING OUTCOMES:	8
2.3 THE TARGET GROUP	9
2.4 BUILDING A TRAINING TEAM AND PREPARING THE TRAINING	10
3. THE CONTENT OF AGROECOLOGY TRAININGS	12
4. PEASANT AGROECOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAMME CONTENT	14
5. METHODOLOGIES	23
5.1 PEASANT TO PEASANT (P2P) METHODOLOGY AND THE DIALOGUE OF WISDOMS	23
5.2 COMBINING THE POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF AGROECOLOGY	25
5.3 INTEGRATING FIELD VISITS AND FIELD WORK	26
5.4 GENERATING “AFFECT” (EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT) AND BUILDING A CULTURE OF CARE	27
6. EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS	29
CONCLUSION	32
ANNEXES	33
ANNEX 1. AGROECOLOGY TRAINING WORKSHOP	33
ANNEX 2. REPORTS OF THE TRAININGS REALISED DURING AE4EU PROJECT	44



Background

This report links principles and process of training activities with a focus on agroecological transition and in the context of the work done by the European Coordination Via Campesina1 (ECVC). Due to representing small and medium scale farmers' organisations ECVC has a strong focus on peasant agroecology and plays an important role in disseminating knowledge concerning agroecological transition.

For the AE4EU project² ECVC member organisations developed and carried out three training programmes in agroecology in order to foster the agroecological transition in Europe during the AE4EU project timeline. The training programmes were designed to reflect ECVC's vision of peasant agroecology³ and the Nyéléni Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology's (2015)⁴ vision on learning agroecology.

The guidelines are based on the theoretical knowledge, practical experience and exchanges that should be included for efficient training on the transition to agroecology. Furthermore, the guidelines emphasise a strong focus on the grassroots level, Peasant to Peasant (P2P) methodology and the "*diálogo de saberes*" or "dialogue between ways of knowing" as an educational approach with different practical activities (meetings, seminars, individual reading, exchanges of experiences, field visits, etc.). The guidelines propose to use Peasant to Peasant (P2P) methodologies centring principles of horizontalism, peer-to-peer learning approach and participation.

These training guidelines follow the perspective of ECVC's vision on peasant agroecology as an open process, which allows peasants to put their knowledge into practice using the 'learning by doing' methodology, and to reinforce it through collective work and the relationship with the environment. The multiplication of knowledge is made possible by the creation of a network of promoters through trainings of trainers who will replicate the experiences in their own territories. This positive and proactive relationship with the environment enables them to adapt their production model to their environmental and climatic conditions, to increase production capacities and develop methods for resistance and to enhance their resilience while improving the ecological, socio-economic and cultural sustainability of their farming systems through agroecological peasant farming.

This echoes to the expanding application of all agroecological principles and to the first key objective of the AE4EU project (Increase connections between relevant actors).

1 <https://www.eurovia.org/>

2 <https://www.ae4eu.eu/>

3 <https://www.eaken.eurovia.org/peasant-agroecology-according-to-ecvc/>

4 https://www.foodsovereignty.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Declaration-Agroecology-Nyeleni-2015_EN.pdf



1. Introduction

ECVC defines peasant agroecology as a way of life, of working with nature and not against it towards sustainable agriculture and considers training and learning activities as an important process for agroecological transition. Agroecology offers solutions to the major environmental, social, economic and political challenges we are facing today. It is a living practice, as well as a science and a socio-political movement, built and fostered by people over thousands of years.

According to ECVC, training and learning is an infinite process of permanent production and dissemination of new knowledge that comes from sharing different opinions and ideas and from encounters between these ideas and reality.

Agroecology, due to its knowledge-intensive character, combines traditional, indigenous, peasant and experiential knowledges with elements of modern ecological, social and agronomic science, creating a dialogue of wisdoms from which principles for designing and managing biodiverse and resilient farms may be derived. In different countries, vocational trainings are widely used to promote agroecology^{5 6 7 8}.

Peasant farmers' movements and organisations have a deep knowledge of the ecosystem as they are immersed in it. Therefore, they are important actors in the trainings because their lived experiences and their adequate interpretation of reality give the political strategy a higher probability of success in terms of attaining both immediate and strategic goals⁹. Transformative agroecology learning, a collective strategy for food system transformation, is based on four key

⁵ Pimbert, M., Moeller, N. I., Singh, J., & Anderson, C. (2021). Agroecology. In Oxford Research Encyclopedias Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190854584.013.298>

⁶ FAO. (2019). Scaling up agroecology to achieve the sustainable development goals. In Proceedings of the 2nd FAO International Symposium on Agroecology. Rome: FAO.

⁷ Deguine, Jean & Gloanec, Caroline & Laurent, Philippe & Ratnadass, Alain & Aubertot, Jean-Noël. (2017). Agroecological Crop Protection. 10.1007/978-94-024-1185-0.

⁸ Migliorini, P., & Lieblein, G. (2016). Facilitating transformation and competence development in sustainable agriculture university education: an experiential and action oriented approach. *Sustainability*, 8(12), 1243.

⁹ <https://agroecologia-socla2015.net/>



characteristics or qualities: horizontalism; *diálogo de saberes*, combining practical and political knowledge; and building social movement networks (Anderson et al. 2019).

These Training Guidelines work towards systematising agroecological insights and experiences to provide improved, efficient, and transformative agroecological training programmes across Europe.

On the other hand, efficient and well-organised transformative agroecology learning provides significant benefits and improvements of the human capital, thereby contributing to fostering agroecology and to one the AE4EU goals.

2. The Basics: Objectives and Target Group

For ECVC, agroecology allows peasants to collectively develop knowledge and practical skills in areas of peasant farming in order to promote sustainable agricultural food production systems across Europe and beyond. At the same time, agroecology may foster a stronger network of peasants with a deeper understanding of their rights and help to amplify their voice towards achieving the positive change they want to see. Rather than a one-off event, we understand training as an ongoing process of learning and exchange.

2.1 Training Objectives:

To improve the general literacy around peasant agroecology for peasants across all levels as well as for other food system actors, the specific objectives of peasant agroecology trainings are to:

- Appreciate the socio-ecological, cultural and economic values of traditional peasant knowledge systems;
- Build a strong network of peasants who are knowledgeable of their practices and can speak with a united voice to advocate for a global transition to peasant agroecology;
- Demystify and foster an in-depth analysis of industrialised food systems while empowering peasants on their rights to food production and food sovereignty;
- Promote the agro-biodiversification of farms for the financial and farm autonomy;
- Instigate food systems initiatives through development of farm and community-based food systems plans to support the transition to peasant agroecology;
- Initiate training programmes focused on strengthening women's capacity and roles while providing solidarity initiatives to support them.

2.2 The Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the programme, the participants should be able to:

1. Understand what peasant agroecology is and what it is not and advocate accordingly;
2. Identify the principles of peasant agroecology;
3. Justify the urgent need for a transition towards peasant agroecology and food sovereignty;
4. Understand how to build a balanced, equitable and fair food system through agroecology;
5. Appreciate the socio-ecological and economic values of traditional peasant knowledge systems in agroecological settings;
6. Understand the importance of the agro-biodiversification of farms and its role in financial and farm autonomy;
7. Build and amplify social movements and alliances for sustainable food systems;
8. Define their own and other actors' roles in building a balanced, equitable and transparent food system;

9. Develop plans to practise peasant agroecology at farm and community level;
10. Properly use the training guidelines to develop training programmes based on their needs;
11. Be the resource people to transmission of information on existing policies and legislations on agroecology in order to advocate for a better agroecological transition.

2.3 The Target Group

The first target group for agroecology training programmes in La Via Campesina are peasant farmers, which includes peasant farmer leaders, new farmers/new entrants, youth, women or a mix.

Community leaders and organisers, leaders and facilitators of networks of food and agriculture, producers in processing, actors in short food supply chains, such as distributors, cooperatives, networks, activists and/or researchers, can also be part of the target group of agroecology trainings.

However, any training aimed at agroecological transformation should always centre farmers as the key actors.

In addition to farmers, one of the important target groups to consider are (urban and rural) activists. Activists may have a lot of information and are committed to make changes in the rural world, but their understanding and experience with the reality of rural life and production practices are limited. Engagements between activists and farmers in a training setting can contribute to filling these knowledge gaps while offering valuable political lessons to all participants.

Local or regional policy makers are not often included as target audiences. Nevertheless, including them in some ways might allow them to learn more about the realities and political challenges faced by the farmers. Local policy makers can for example be included on excursions to the farmers' fields or production areas, or to municipal events. Inviting representatives from local governments to create spaces for dialogue or discussions on key policies could generate lessons or pose opportunities for problem-solving. However, it is important to note that the main purpose may in such cases become political advocacy, distracting from the learning objectives.

Le MAP, Belgium: Dividing farmers by experience

Le MAP has its own training centre with the title 'L'Ecole Paysanne Indépendante' (the Independent Peasant School). In their training, they were faced with the challenge that participants came from very different backgrounds. As a solution, they started to divide the participants into different groups based on their experience and knowledge. The activities were developed according to participants' backgrounds. For example, one group was a farm school for the children of peasants with an agroecology background. One other, more

experienced group was taken on farm visits, followed by conversations on what they observed.

Toekomstboeren, Netherlands: Uniting farmers and activists

Agroecology training by Toekomstboeren is often organised in collaboration with the Dutch Agroecology Network. They aim at a combination of farmers, researchers and activists. Over one third of the participants are generally farmers. The activists and researchers come from different groups, with a strong emphasis on the climate and decolonial movements. The diversity of participants is pretty good, but there is also space for improvement (for example in the inclusion of people of colour, or those active in the LGBTQI community).

When selecting an audience, it is important to keep in mind:

- **Diversity:** Ensure spaces for youth, women, and other gender diversities;
- **Distance:** Consider for which participants virtual training is more accessible and for whom in-person training is an option. This can greatly differ per target group and per geographical region; create easy access to the training materials.
- **Farmers’ and landworkers’ time:** Timing should be programmed in advance in consultation with farmers in relation to farm work and the seasonal work-load
- **Level of knowledge and experience:** Taking into consideration the different levels of knowledge and experience of the participants

2.4 Building a training team and preparing the training

1. **The importance of building a training team:** The training team should be involved in all stages of the training, including preparation, implementation, and post-training activities. This ensures consistency and continuity throughout the process.
2. **Trainers as facilitators:** Depending on the duration of the training, it is recommended to have two facilitators who can alternate in leading and supporting the training. This helps maintain engagement and prevents fatigue and mistakes.
3. **Support staff:** Support staff play a crucial role in preparing training materials, handling logistics such as photocopying documents, and assisting the facilitators during the training.
4. **Documentation:** Assigning a person to document the training through note-taking and photography is important for capturing key information and preparing a training report.
5. **Reviewing the learning guide:** The trainer or training team should review the learning guide in collaboration with the organisation involved in the training. This ensures a common understanding of the methodology, materials and background for each session.
6. **Pre-training preparations:** The trainer or training team should define the roles and responsibilities for each session in advance. They should make a list of necessary preparations, required materials, responsibilities and timing.
7. **Rehearsal:** Allocating one day for a rehearsal before the training allows the trainer or training team to walk through and practise each session. This ensures smooth delivery and identifies any gaps in materials or processes.

8. **Technical background and facilitation:** The trainer or training team should allocate time to understand the technical background covered in the sessions and to enhance their facilitation skills.

Once the target audience has been decided and the path is clarified, the educational activities should be designed and planned. Preparation includes establishing the following elements of the training:

- Learning Objectives (a precise and clearly formulated objective determines all training activities)
- Decision on the content - depends on the stated objective and selected audience (relevance, quality and depth of the content)
- Pedagogical approach and methodologies
- A plan for documentation of learnings and outcomes (including capturing photos or videos)
- Establishing a team of trainers/facilitators
- Formulating a compelling invitation for participants

To ensure the training is relevant, the facilitators/trainers could enquire about participants' expectations and experiences while designing the training. By incorporating participants' expectations and experiences, the training can be tailored to their specific needs and foster a more engaging and effective learning environment.

The planning process should include a clear agenda which contains the methodology, objectives and outcomes, along with the resource documents for each session.

By following these recommendations, the training team can effectively prepare and deliver a training session, resulting in a more successful and impactful learning experience.

3. The Content of Agroecology Trainings

There are variations in operational areas and practices within peasant agroecology. Therefore, instead of providing an exhaustive list of practices for each section, the program outline serves as a guide. The facilitators/trainers delivering the program have the responsibility of identifying and extracting different practices from the participants and allowing for the practical sharing of experiences. They should focus on learning from the best practices within each section while staying within the framework of the main learning areas.

These training guidelines follow the perspective of ECVC on peasant agroecology as an open process, which allows peasants to put their knowledge into practice using the 'learning by doing' methodology, and to reinforce it through collective work and the relationship with the environment. The multiplication of knowledge is made possible by the creation of a network of promoters through trainings of trainers who will replicate the experiences in their own territories. This positive and proactive relationship with the environment enables them to adapt their production model to different environmental and climatic conditions, and increase their production capacities and methods to enhance resilience as well as the ecological, socio-economic and cultural sustainability of farming systems through agroecological peasant farming.

To ensure the training is practical, facilitators/trainers should consider the participants' expectations regarding learning peasant agroecology and their experiences within the group regarding specific concepts. This information can be used as a basis for selecting practical elements that align with the respective sections of the training program. By incorporating participants' expectations and experiences, the training can be tailored to their specific needs and foster a more engaging and effective learning environment.

One of the most important objectives of agroecology trainings therefore is to incorporate both the practices as well as the political aspects of agroecology, from the perspective of peasants. Understanding agroecological practices in their political context can help to connect peasants with others in the food system, notably citizens. One way to do so is by linking practices to public policies that exist (or lack) at different levels (see also section 3.2).

FADEAR, France: Peasant Farming Diagnosis Tool

FADEAR and its network were built around the Charter of Peasant Agriculture. They train members and activists of the Confédération Paysanne, supporting farmers who want to improve their practices, develop the autonomy of their farm, improve the quality of their products or diversify their activities. One way FADEAR supports farmers is with the Peasant Farming Diagnosis tool. This allows peasants to assess the state of their farm using specific indicators and to identify possibilities for improvement. In a one day short course, the Diagnostic Tool is introduced along with the history of peasant agriculture. After that,

participants are given a chance to apply the tool on different farms they visit. As such, this short course also offers participants an opportunity to share experiences with other farmers, to discover other practices and to gain new perspectives on the management of their own farm.

Landworkers' Alliance, UK: Agroecological principles in relation to farming practices

Through its training, the Landworkers' Alliance allows farmers to develop a firm understanding of agroecology, which can be used to analyse their own farming challenges and begin developing agroecological solutions to overcome them. The training links agroecological principles to farming practices and processes that reduce reliance on external inputs and support the transformation of farming and food systems. Agroecology is presented as a food system that combines food production, environmental public goods, financial viability, and climate resilience. Over the course of two days, participants explore various definitions and principles of agroecology, gain skills in systems thinking to analyse farming problems and imagine solutions, witness agroecological practices and systems in action, and learn the importance of the socio-political dimensions of agroecology.

4. Peasant Agroecology Training Programme Content

Agroecology trainings can zoom in on specific topics, for example the principles of agroecology, farmer seed systems, access to land, rural workers and migration, trade, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants, and so on. These training guidelines aim to align with the objective of strengthening the agroecological movement and supporting the transition to an agroecological food system. They will reflect the project findings and recommendations in their program proposals. It is evident from the outcomes of studies and research conducted in WP1. Mapping the development of agroecology in Europe; that the term and understanding of agroecology have been fragmented. It is used to encompass various elements of agroecology as a practice, a movement, and a science. The agroecology training guidelines as can be seen in the proposed topics focuses on the understanding of agroecology.

One of the WP4 tasks was focused on Living Labs, and contains methodology and knowledge on their creation and facilitation, thereby enhancing co-creation and horizontal sharing of knowledge, including local and scientific innovation, especially through farmer-to-farmer exchange, alongside transdisciplinary, participation and action research.

WP5 underscores the necessity of fully understanding agroecology from diverse perspectives to tailor policies more effectively. As highlighted in the policy briefs of the AE4EU project, agroecology is not merely a catalogue of best practices but a tangible roadmap to fulfil the objectives outlined in European Union agricultural legislation. Hence, to support the transition to agroecology and the development and implementation of agroecological principles and practices, these guidelines propose a holistic approach that facilitates interaction among various stakeholders beyond the farm scale. Crucially, this involves fostering direct relationships and co-creating knowledge and practices among different actors and a large focus on the policy level.

The aim of the training guidelines is to assemble a diverse group of stakeholders, as also suggested in the Living Labs of the AE4EU project, including farmers, researchers, citizen organizations, companies, food producers, policymakers, funders/financers, distributors, consumers, and NGOs related to food and agriculture.

The training guidelines consider and establish links through the outcomes of the inventory from WP1 mapping and recommendations from WP2, focusing on studying existing Living Labs. A table below contains an overview of potential topics to be included in an agroecology training program, drawing from the three training workshops held during the AE4EU project timeline and the outcomes and findings of aforementioned work packages.

TOPIC	ELEMENTS	RESOURCES/BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
<p>How do peasant movements/organisations organise?</p>	<p>Peasants' fight to defend their rights on a local, national and international level in order to feed the planet in a sustainable, dignified and healthy way through food sovereignty and peasant agroecology.</p> <p>Fairer and more sustainable agricultural systems can be summarised into three core concepts: food sovereignty, agroecology, and peasants' rights. These three concepts are complementary and together represent the essence of our political vision.</p>	<p>The Organisation and Strategy of social movements: https://viacampesina.org/en/who-are-we/what-is-la-via-campesina/</p> <p>https://www.eurovia.org/about-us/</p> <p>Introduction to European Policies: https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/european-policies/</p> <p>A call to European institutions - Manifesto: https://www.eurovia.org/publications/manifesto-for-agricultural-transition-to-address-systemic-climate-crises/</p> <p>Introduction to Global Governance: https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/global-governance/</p> <p>Introduction to Rural Workers and Migration: https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/rural-workers-and-migration/</p> <p>Introduction to Trade: https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/trade/</p> <p>Introduction to Agrarian reform and access to resources: https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/agrarian-reform-and-access-to-natural-resources/</p> <p>Introduction to Peasants' rights: https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/peasants-rights/</p> <p>Introduction to Youth, Women, Gender and Sexual diversities Articulations: https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/youth/ https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/women/ https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/gender-and-sexual-diversities/</p> <p>Political positions on diverse topics: https://www.eurovia.org/our-policy-positions/</p>

What is peasant agroecology?	<p>Peasant agroecology is not only a sustainable farming practice but considers the relationship between people, plants, animals and their environment; the ECVC approach to peasant agroecology, Nyeleni Agroecology Declaration and the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations) and HLPE (High Level Panel of Experts) principles of agroecology and the food sovereignty concept of La Via Campesina.</p>	<p>Peasant Agroecology Declaration of ECVC (2014): https://www.eurovia.org/publications/agroecology-transforming-society-through-food-production-and-the-peasant-struggle/</p>
	<p>Peasant agroecology asks for systemic change and is a political movement. The principles of Peasant Agroecology include: Environmental Dimensions of Agroecology + Political, Social and Cultural Dimensions of Agroecology + Economic Dimensions of Agroecology</p>	<p>Peasant Agroecology According to ECVC (2022): https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Agroecology_EN.pdf</p>
	<p>What is food sovereignty? The relation between food sovereignty and agroecology.</p>	<p>Nyéleni Declaration of the international forum for agroecology: https://www.foodsovereignty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Download-declaration-Agroecology-Nyeleni-2015.pdf</p>
	<p>The basic concepts, structures and glossary around agroecology, food sovereignty, climate justice, peasants' rights</p>	<p>FAO “The 10 elements of agroecology: guiding the transition to sustainable food and agricultural systems”: https://www.fao.org/3/i9037en/i9037en.pdf</p>
	<p>Agroecology as resistance and transformation</p>	<p>https://viacampesina.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/12/2016-12-14-Nyeleni_Newsletter_Num_28_EN.pdf</p>
	<p>In order to strengthen organisations, the work around agroecology should be done through collective horizontal processes, not individualised projects</p>	<p>HLPE - Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition: https://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf</p>
	<p>Building capacity to struggle and transform, not to conform, is key.</p>	<p>Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty, Nyéleni 2007: https://nyeleni.org/en/declaration-of-nyeleni/ Food Sovereignty: https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FOOD_EN.pdf</p>
	<p>Questioning and transforming structures instead of reproducing them is vital for the transformation of society</p>	<p>Food Sovereignty Now! An In-Depth Guide: https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/FINAL-EN-FoodSov-A5-rev6.pdf</p>

	The recognition and promotion of Agroecology by intergovernmental institutions, governments, universities and research centres is needed.	Declaration By Organizations Of Small-Scale Food Producers And Civil Society Organizations At The International Symposium On Agroecology Convened By FAO, 2018: https://viacampesina.org/en/declaration-at-the-ii-international-symposium-on-agroecology/
	The recommendations of the participants of the ‘International Symposium on agroecology for food security and nutrition’ of FAO	https://www.fao.org/3/i7604e/i7604e.pdf
	Analysing and understanding the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) as a collective dimension of the rights established which protects peasant and other rural communities as a group in the protection of the collective management of natural resources, decision-making processes and participation	https://www.eurovia.org/publications/lvcs-publication-undrop-book-of-illustrations/

Protecting and developing biodiversity on the farm - INTRODUCTION	Agro-biodiversity in its different forms is the basis of cohabitation and survival on earth	
	Crop, animal, seed, and soil diversity, biodiversity conservation technologies, GMOs, genomic techniques and their impacts on agriculture and life.	
	The challenges of preserving domestic biodiversity (food sovereignty, dependence on inputs, adaptation to the land and to climate change, etc.)	

Right and access to land; Soil health, building fertility and crop rotation	The long demanded realisation of the right to land as defined in Article 17 of the UNDROP is threatened today: concentration and land grabbing lead to the disappearance of farms, the increase of land prices, the devitalisation of rural areas and the industrialisation of farming practices. There needs to be a European framework for land governance.	https://www.eurovia.org/publications/proposal-for-an-eu-land-directive/
	Public policies supporting young people in agriculture, the establishment of young farmers and generational renewal, access to land, in the framework of food sovereignty.	
	To explore the many possible ways of ensuring access to land for agroecology, from concrete land struggles to local and	Roots of Resilience - Land Policy for an Agroecological Transition in Europe:

	national political transformation, in order to respond through action to the imperative of inventing new commons.	https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/rootsofresilience_online-light2.pdf
	The importance of soil organisms and soil structure to the health of the soil	PESTICIDES OUT! https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ECVC_Out-Pesticides-Brochure_EN_2018.pdf
	Identify different soil types based on the texture and structure and literacy of soil analysis on the agroecological farm. Define the role and importance of organic matter in soil (water holding capacity, aeration, nutrient bank, cation exchange capacity- CAC)	
	Soil, plant-water relations (the complex relationship of the three elements)	
	The role and impact of different types of cultivation. Different methods for improving soil fertility. Identifying crop families to plan and carry out successful rotations. The processes behind building and maintaining an effective composting system.	
	The products used for "plant protection" which result from synthetic chemistry, synthetic biology, and/or enter the field of nanotechnologies.	
	Soil and water conservation, water harvesting techniques and field water management, control of run-off, water pollution.	
	Nutrient recycling and improved efficiency of ecological processes as the bedrock for productive Agroecosystems.	
	The ecological management of pests, weeds and soil fertility for increased productivity with minimum to no external inputs.	
	Climate change mitigation through systematic management of carbon.	https://www.eurovia.org/publications/ecvc-publication-carbon-farming-a-new-business-model-for-who/

Distribution of Power	The power and control on the food system - corporate capture. How structures of patriarchy, class and racism can affect participation and decision-making mechanisms in communities, farms and organisations.	The PATH of peasant and popular feminism in la Via Campesina: https://viacampesina.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/11/VIA-CAMPESINA-feminismo-campesina-y-popular-DIGITAL-ENGLISH2.pdf
	Recognition of the role of women, youth and children in decision making and bringing about positive change	
	Gender and sexual diversity and political identities.	Embracing Rural Diversity: Genders and Sexualities in the Peasant Movement: https://www.eurovia.org/publications/embracing-rural-diversity-genders-and-sexualities-in-the-peasant-movement/
	Feminist values of care, balance and solidarity as the basis of agroecology	Collective farming in support of gender equality - Bizkaigane farm case: Peasant Agroecology According to ECVV (2022) : https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Agroecology_EN.pdf
Introduction to 'AE practices'	Ground-cover management, integrated crop-livestock management, sustainable viticulture, integrated pest management, agroforestry, biodynamic agriculture, plant-plant interaction, regenerative agriculture, permaculture, synergistic agriculture, reduced tillage, virtuous farming techniques such as, water and soil conservation, farmers' seed systems, crop mixing, rotation and diversification, the release of beneficial insects and the use of manual labour and animal traction	
FIELD WORK	Soil Sampling and Soil Nutritional composition Analysis – (application of lime or ash for pH correction, application rate of manure)	
	Basal Dressing techniques (Manure treatment, Compost, Vermicompost, Biofertiliser, Biochar, Green manure)	
	Top Dressing (Liquid manures, Fermented Biofertiliser	
	Soil organic matter and its role in soil physical and chemical properties.	
	Soil fertility management approaches for increasing soil organic matter: mulching, green manure and cover crops, etc.	

Peasant seed systems and cultivated biodiversity	<p>Peasant seeds, peasants' rights to seeds and seed autonomy. The societal stakes of the preservation of cultivated biodiversity and the right of farmers to sow part of their harvest</p>	<p>Key documents of ECVC: Seeds and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs): https://www.eurovia.org/working-groups/seeds-and-genetically-modified-organisms-gmos/</p>
	<p>UNDROP and ITPGRFA: Legal recognition of peasants' rights to seeds. Selection schemes, the impact of cultivated varieties on the production system, the interest in developing seed autonomy on one's farm in connection with other farmers in the area.</p>	<p>Seed Stories Fighting Against the Privatisation of Life: https://viacampesina.org/en/publication-seed-stories-fighting-against-the-privatisation-of-life/</p>
	<p>Seed Rights and Legislation at national, regional and international levels. The main obstacles to the use of farm-saved seeds and the rights of farmers in this matter.</p>	<p>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas: https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/UNDROP-Book-of-Illustrations-1-EN-1-Web.pdf</p>
	<p>The legal frameworks which exclude and criminalise peasant seed systems; the UPOV Convention: an international framework developed for and by the industrial seed system; the violation of the rights of peasants to exchange and sell their seeds by European legislation on seeds marketing.</p>	<p>ITRPGRFA: https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/en/</p>
	<p>The regulatory framework for seeds and GMOs: intellectual property laws, patent law. The economic environment of seeds: main seed companies and industries, strategy of industrialists to impose new GMOs etc. Present the issues at stake in the fight against old and new GMOs.</p>	<p>Incorporating Peasant Rights to seeds in European Law: https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Publication_Incorporating-Peasants-Rights-to-Seeds-in-European-Law_EN.pdf</p>
	<p>The main obstacles to farmers' use of their own seeds: use of the F1 hybridisation technique by the seed industry, European seed and intellectual property law (patents, plant variety certificates etc.). The different levels of precision in the technical, legal, economic and political knowledge of the fight against GMOs and the privatisation of life.</p>	
	<p>The different techniques of genome modification, both old (cell fusion, mutagenesis, transgenesis etc.) and new (in vitro cell multiplication, directed mutagenesis etc.) and proposals to develop seed autonomy on a farm scale.</p>	
	<p>Regulatory frameworks dealing with commercial seeds and with peasant seed systems and ECVC's demands and requests for a coherent European Regulatory Framework</p>	

	The challenges of preserving cultivated biodiversity (food sovereignty, dependence on inputs, genetic homogenisation and health, fragility, etc.)	
	The advantages of hardiness and adaptation of plants to the local soil, climate and agronomic environment	
	The societal challenges of preserving domestic biodiversity.	

Animal biodiversity on the farm	Selection based solely on the criterion of productivity per animal is detrimental to other selective advantages and constrains the production system and breeding practices. The genetic selection issues at farm level and identification of relevant selection criteria (performance, longevity, hardiness etc.)	ECVC publication: Livestock farming in the European Union: supporting an ambitious transition to peasant farming: https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ECVC-2023-ENG-Livestock.pdf
	The advantages of hardiness and the adaptation of animals to the specificities of the territory; the legal, technical and commercial constraints that hinder the development of farmers' breeding.	Booklet "La biodiversité animale à la ferme" - Confédération paysanne
	The distinction between individual genetic performance and adaptation to the system as a whole (environment, breeding practices etc.); farmers' practices that allow the development of the autonomy of the breeding system and the increase of genetic diversity (mass selection practices, decision-making autonomy, etc.)	Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – 2007
	The origin of pyramidal animal selection and its consequences on the decline of genetic diversity.	Wilderswil Declaration on Livestock Diversity – La Via Campesina: https://viacampesina.org/en/wilderswil-declaration-on-livestock-diversity/
	The genetic impoverishment of livestock and the protection of small breeds	
	The technical, commercial and administrative constraints of selection	
	How to direct people towards actors who are involved in preserving domestic biodiversity (breeder groups, exchange networks, associations, etc.).	

Technological Autonomy	Developing technological autonomy on farm scale; the evolution of farmers' relations with technology throughout history; how agro-equipment constrains production systems and technical itineraries.	Atelier paysan exhibition "Machines et bâtiments agricoles libres": https://www.latelierpaysan.org/Publications
	Strengthening advocacy capacity with a focus on agro-equipment constraints on production systems and technical itineraries.	Campagnes Solidaire n°361, Folder "L'autonomie technologique pour l'agriculture paysanne": https://www.confederationpaysanne.fr/sites/1/cs/documents/CS%20361%20leger.pdf
	Critical thinking and analysis on high technology and digitalisation in food and agriculture systems; the links between technological development and indebtedness, land restructuring, work rationalisation and energy dependence	The Atelier paysan plea for technological sovereignty: https://www.latelierpaysan.org/Plaidoyer-souverainete-technologique-des-paysans
	The imposition of technological and infrastructural regimes centred on extracting maximum production from the land by states and large corporations.	ECVC Peasant Agroecology in Eastern Europe and Central Asia - PACE Future technologies and food sovereignty publication: https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PACE-Future-technologies-and-FS.pdf
	The false 'feed the world' narrative of industrialised farming and digitalisation; a critical analysis of digital technologies on farms and in society.	
	DAMN classification of 4IR technologies: Digitalisation, Automation and sensing, Molecular manipulation and Natural systems modification; peasant technologies used in agroecology as innovation for food sovereignty	

5. Methodologies

Most of the agroecology training for peasants, small-scale farmers and other actors in the food system conducted by members of ECVC are rooted in participatory, experiential methodologies such as Peasant to Peasant learning (P2P), which allow farmers to find innovative solutions to the challenges they may face. This also creates a trusted space for horizontal communication and knowledge sharing among peasants. The methodology includes a combination of activities such as case studies, discussion/conversation circles, visual material and storytelling. They can take place in plenary, small groups or on an individual level, both in and out of the classroom, for example in farmers' fields.

It is important to note that the facilitators should create a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes effective cross-pollination and learning among participants, fostering the safe sharing of experiences and visions. Each session includes exercises and participatory techniques.

To support this, we propose a few pedagogical principles.

5.1 Peasant to Peasant (P2P) methodology and the Dialogue of Wisdoms

Peasant to Peasant (P2P) learning as a grassroots social methodology is the most effective way found to date, and rural social movements hold the key¹⁰. P2P methodology highlights the importance of horizontal communication and knowledge sharing among peasants. P2P emphasises the idea that peasants themselves are the primary agents of innovation and knowledge exchange. It recognizes that peasants have a deep understanding of their local environments, including the land, seeds and climate, as well as the socio-historical conditions which influences their agricultural practices and techniques. This methodology seeks to harness and promote this rich peasant knowledge, which is tightly connected to the specific territory and cultural heritage.

Rather than viewing learners as passive recipients of information, they are seen as active participants and agents of their own learning. The peasant-to-peasant methodology encourages learners to engage in a process of discovery, where they actively contribute their own knowledge, experiences, and perspectives while also being open to learning from others.

The concept of "diálogo de saberes" or "dialogue between ways of knowing" in the Peasant-to-Peasant methodology is an approach that recognizes and values the diverse ways in which

¹⁰ Peter Rosset, Valentín Val, Lia Pinheiro Barbosa & Nils McCune (2019): Agroecology and La Via Campesina II. Peasant agroecology schools and the formation of a sociohistorical and political subject, *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, DOI:10.1080/21683565.2019.1617222

individuals understand and interact with the world. It goes beyond the traditional notion of education as a one-way transmission of knowledge and emphasises the importance of dialogue and mutual learning. The emphasis on dialogue in this methodology is crucial. Instead of simply delivering knowledge in a hierarchical manner, the aim is to foster an inclusive and respectful conversation where different ways of knowing can be shared, questioned, and enriched. Through dialogue, participants can challenge preconceived notions, develop critical thinking skills, and collectively construct new knowledge and understandings. Overall, the P2P-methodology and the concept of "diálogo de saberes" promote a collaborative and transformative learning process that recognises the importance of diverse knowledges and actively involves learners in their own training.

The new collective understandings, meanings and knowledges may form the basis for collective actions of resistance and the construction of new processes¹¹.

The organisations that make up LVC have increasingly developed agroecological training processes aimed at accelerating historical transitions to food sovereignty.

The fact that agroecology is based on applying principles in ways that depend on local realities means that the local knowledge and ingenuity of farmers must necessarily take a front seat in this understanding.

EHNE BIZKAIA, BASQUE COUNTRY, SPAIN

The Escuela de Accion Campesina shows how the peasant-to-peasant exchange fosters not only learning but also action. This political training is organised by member organisations from La Via Campesina in Spain (COAG, Sindicato Labrego Galego, EHNE Bizkaia) as well as non-peasant organisations including Amigos de la Tierra, Justicia Alimentaria and Mundubat, and covers themes such as public policies, food sovereignty, peasant feminism and agroecology. The training is attended by young people active in regional peasant organisations and takes place over 4 to 6 weekends. Every weekend is organised by a different organisation and treats a different theme. This set-up ensures that there is exchange between young people and people with experience working for a particular organisation. Participants learn from each other as they exchange with people involved in different organisational processes, climates and policies. As put by Unai from EHNE Bizkaia, this goes beyond learning: "Exchanging on agrarian, political and transformative themes, also strengthens the work of the movement and its organisations. Participants create connections with new people and gain practical know-how and ideas for actions and activities that they can implement in their own organisation. At the end of the training, they receive an assignment. They have to make a summary of an encounter, a small video, which they distribute through the networks of their local organisations. This is also to prepare youth so that they can work in their organisations."

CNA, PORTUGAL

¹¹ María Elena Martínez-Torres & Peter M. Rosset (2014) Diálogo de saberes in La Vía Campesina: food sovereignty and agroecology, The Journal of Peasant Studies, 41:6, 979-997, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.872632>

Putting peasants at the heart of teaching and learning can also lead to the recovery and revival of traditional knowledge. This is exactly what CNA will be doing in an online course on agroecology that will start in 2024, and which will cover agroecology in forest, horticulture and animal production, as well as the commons and fair markets. Farmers are considered to be the basis of family farming. Therefore, a large part of the course will be given by farmers themselves, particularly those who have a lot of knowledge on traditional practices. As put by Laura from CNA: "The push for agro-industry has led to the disappearance of traditional practices. With the course we want to recall what happened 40 years ago, before the CAP. Some farmers have no choice but to change. With high input prices, they are looking for alternatives. In the North of Portugal, for example, some farmers close to the sea have started to use algae to fertilise the land again. The price of industrial fertilisers were so high that they remembered: "40 years ago we managed in another way so let's start it again". I think we can incentivise discussion with these webinars. But it is a slow process, because we are changing minds against a system that tells farmers that they have to produce in monocultures. We are saying the exact opposite, so it is very difficult."

5.2 Combining the political and technical aspects of agroecology

"Agroecology is a way of life and the language of Nature, that we learn as her children. It is not a mere set of technologies or production practices. It cannot be implemented the same way in all territories..... Agroecology is political; it requires us to challenge and transform structures of power in society. We need to put the control of seeds, biodiversity, land and territories, waters, knowledge, culture and the commons in the hands of the peoples who feed the world."

Nyeléni International Declaration on Agroecology, 2015

A central characteristic of all agroecology training programmes in La Via Campesina is that they address both the technical and political aspects of agroecology. There are different ways to do this. In many cases, more technically oriented sessions (such as on composting or water retention) are separated from political sessions (for example on food policy). A related methodological notion is the combination of practical and theoretical sessions. They are often, but not always, directly linked to technical and political aspects respectively. But there are also ways to connect these aspects naturally, for example when we talk about practices and start to understand how they make us more autonomous from large corporations or the state.

Ehne Bizkaia, Basque Country: Theory on Tuesday, practice on Thursday

Ehne Bizkaia organised a feminist agroecology school, for and by women. Young peasant women participated as learners, while women who were food producers shared their experiences in workshops. In that sense, young people and established producers were linked. For three months, participants had the following schedule: On Tuesdays they had a theoretical session (debate, round tables and presentations). On Thursdays they went on a field visit to a producer to learn about a practice (cheesemaking, milling, jam making, etc.). They would have a presentation, followed by a hands-on workshop, and a collective conversation afterwards. So, there was theory and practice, as well as political and technical aspects of agroecology.

An unexpected outcome was that the training also gave the established producers recognition. There were also a few lessons learned: The young women wanted more space to reflect among themselves and they also wanted to visit each other's places. International participants were brought in as resource people online, but doing it online did not work well. Women who were professionals and gave workshops were also made visible and lifted up. And finally, working on the topic of feminism and care in this way also influenced the organisation as a whole.

Sindicato Labrego Galego, Galicia: Online technical training and schools for political education

In Galicia in Spain, the Sindicato Labrego Galego offers specific training programmes on technical aspects related to for example cattle grazing or cultivation practices. Some of these take place via zoom, which gives access to producers who cannot travel. These training are sometimes spread over various days, for one or two hours per day. It was set up this way to address one of the challenges in Galicia: people are spread far apart, which makes training programmes that last several days much harder to attend for many farmers. Especially since the producers also have different work schedules in their day. SLG also offers political trainings, for example through its School for Peasant Action. These multiday in-person trainings are mostly for young people and have a strong political content around the peasant voice and vision. This school specifically looks to maintain a gender balance. Another initiative of SLG is its feminist peasant education, with workshops, field visits etc. This has existed for many years already. The focus is not defined as agroecology per se, but as 'peasant farming with an agroecological orientation'. The topics are varied and can include political aspects as well as technical aspects around the commons, seeds, mountain farming, and so on etc.

Toekomstboeren, Netherlands: The technical and political aspects of soil health

One of the sessions in an agroecology training by Toekomstboeren was a hands-on soil analysis. Participants brought soil from where they lived and together, they analysed the different soil types by feeling, smelling and looking. This workshop then turned into a political discussion on how the use of chemicals is promoted by government policy, skewed research and corporate lobbies, and how farmers can collaborate to increase soil health using ecological processes. The lack of government support for these practices came to the fore strongly without a need for the facilitators to point this out. This workshop beautifully combined technical and political aspects of agroecology.

5.3 Integrating field visits and field work

Agroecology is not (only) learnt in the classroom. Being together in a farmer's field to see or experience the reality is key to understanding agroecology.

This resonates with the theory of experiential and action learning, which proposes a shift from theory towards "the world" as the starting point for learning processes¹²

¹² Lieblein et al. 2010; Biesta, 2022

FADEAR, France: Working on 3 farms over a year

In FADEAR’s long-term courses for upstarting farmers, an action-learning approach was used to involve people in peasant agriculture. FADEAR matches the learners with member farms of Confederation Paysanne. The learners work on these farms over the course of an entire year. This field work is complemented by classroom lectures.

Landworkers’ Alliance, UK: Combining principles and practices during field visits

In the two-day agroecology training of LWA, day 1 starts with lectures and group work on the principles of agroecology, followed by an exchange to understand where participants see agroecology in their work. Participants are then taken on a farm walk to observe agroecological practices, followed by work in the field and group conversations with the farmer. On day 2 participants have more lectures and create a systems map of the farm they visited to address key issues raised by the farmer. Movement building and political agroecology are mostly addressed through lectures, and LWA is reflecting on how to use other forms, maybe in the field. Storytelling, music, and celebration are also important parts of the training, even though they formally are after-training moments.

5.4 Generating “affect” (emotional engagement) and building a culture of care

Training in agroecology is not only directed towards peoples’ thinking and cognition, but also focuses on “affect” - in other words, their emotional engagement. Affect refers to the passions, feelings, wishes and grievances which mobilise individuals and groups to engage in or change specific practices. Affect can engender deep forms of change that go beyond individual, economically motivated behaviours and break with unsustainable social, cultural and ecological patterns to establish more caring ones¹³.

Agroecological training can generate affect that motivates people to learn, connect and engage in political action. Affect can be generated through the use of methodologies that focus on participants' experiences, stories, wishes and grievances. This can create a space of trust and solidarity where farmers can have honest conversations to decolonise their practices (see the case of the Landworkers’ Alliance), come together to “heal their souls” (see box) or self-organise for land action (see the case of Toekomstboeren).

Affect can be generated not only through methodologies but also by creating a motivational environment. A training that is only given in the classroom will quickly exhaust participants. That is why agroecological training often occur on the farm. Being surrounded by trees, plants and animals, on-farm practices can contribute to participants' wellbeing and enable them to maintain energy throughout the training. In addition, exposure to the history, food and ceremonies on the farm can inspire participants to bring their learning into practice. The experience of the farm surroundings should not be underestimated as this can leave a bigger

¹³ Van den Berg, L., Teixeira, H. M., Behagel, J. H., Verschoor, G., Turnhout, E., Cardoso, I. M., & Botelho, M. I. V. (2022). From managing transitions towards building movements of affect: Advancing agroecological practices and transformation in Brazil. *Geoforum*, 131, 50–60.

imprint on participants than the content of the training. Ideally, the surroundings and the content reinforce one another.

Landworkers' Alliance: Decolonising teaching

In their training for teachers, the Landworkers' Alliance uses an affective methodology called "the community circle" to raise awareness of how colonialism can still be engrained in teaching. By creating an atmosphere of trust and focusing on teachers' personal experiences, people honestly reflect on their daily practices. As put by Hatty, this generates a type of reflection that is very different from an academic one: "What we do is give a little bit of information and then ask some very open questions about peoples experience and understanding of their own lives and the concept of decoloniality. What we find is that because the questions aren't overly academic, they are about people's personal thoughts and experiences, you get a very rich discussion about the topics. That helps people to learn from each other in a way that you would not get when you just continue to talk about the problem and ask overly academic questions."

Sindicato Labrego Galego, Galicia: Farmer encounters

SLG uses different strategies to foster affect. Every year, SLG organises a two day forum with talks, roundtables and workshops. This is a great place for farmers to meet people with similar experiences. For many farmers this is very healing for the soul. It is an opportunity for them to get away from their farm and their everyday difficulties, and to meet people with fresh perspectives. Farmers have stated that these encounters give them the strength to continue. SLG also regularly organises well-attended and appreciated farmer dinners as ways to foster relationships of trust. These have shown to be a fantastic basis for knowledge exchange.

Toekomstboeren, Netherlands: Farmers' Fire

The BoerenVuur (translated as Farmers' Fire) is a methodology used by Toekomstboeren. It mobilises farmers' grievances and wishes to foster learning and collective action. During a Boerevuur on land in 2020, participants expressed problems they had with accessing land. Many felt insecure as they only had 1-year tenure contracts. Some farmers shared how as a result of this, they often had to move from place to place. The sharing of these experiences created solidarity and trust among participants as well as motivation to do something. The land was too expensive to buy individually but collective purchases in collaboration with citizens offered new opportunities. Interested farmers formed a working group, which explored existing examples in the Netherlands and abroad, looking specifically at how to set up a crowdfunding scheme, organise a community around land and create a legal entity for the acquired land. They also began to elaborate plans for their own commons and wrote a project proposal to support their implementation. Currently, some farmers have succeeded in moving to the commons. This year the group has also published a handbook with lessons on how to become a commons farmer.

6. Evaluation of the Training Sessions

In order to receive more detailed feedback, both trainers and participants should evaluate the trainings.

It is suggested that to end the training, the trainer/facilitator should first make closing remarks for the session: take a few moments to summarise the key points covered during the session, highlight the main takeaways and emphasise their significance, and express your gratitude to the participants for their engagement and participation.

For conducting the final reflection, the purpose of the session should be explained and the objective of the training programme should be repeated. It is important to encourage openness in the group’s reflections. Encouraging the participants to explore how they can effectively incorporate these ideas into their own specific situations or contexts is also important at the end of the session and before the evaluation of the programme. This would facilitate a meaningful and interactive reflection process that allows participants to consolidate what they have learnt, gain further insights and develop strategies for applying their newfound knowledge and skills.

Evaluation by trainers

Table 1. An example of trainers’ evaluation of a training on agroecology

N	Questions	Evaluation
1	How would you evaluate the defined objectives of the training?	1-not clear, 2- somewhat clear, 3- moderately clear, 4-very clear
2	How would you evaluate the achieved goals (increased awareness of the agroecological transition) of the performed training?	1- not achieved, 2- somewhat achieved, 3- moderately achieved, 4- achieved
3	How would you evaluate the content introduced during the training (its usefulness, appropriate focus, specific interest)	not interesting/useful/appropriate (1) - interesting/useful/appropriate (4)
4	How would you evaluate the time allowed for this training?	1-not sufficient time, 2- somewhat sufficient time, 3- moderately sufficient time, 4- sufficient time
5	How would you evaluate the location of the training activity?	1-not comfortable, 2- somewhat comfortable, 3- sufficiently comfortable, 4- very comfortable
6	How would you evaluate the training performance (process) from a participation point of view?	1- not participative, 2- somewhat participative, 3- moderately participative, 4 – Very participative (*participation of the trainees in training activities)

7	How would you evaluate the methodology/training approach?	1-not appropriate, 2- somewhat appropriate, 3- moderately appropriate, 4-very appropriate
8	How would you evaluate the training outcomes obtained by the participants (received knowledge/practices/level of capacity building/encouragement)?	1- low, 2- moderate, 3- high, 4- very high
9	How would you evaluate the coherence of the training activities with your expectations and needs?	1-not coherent, 2- somewhat coherent, 3- moderately coherent, 4- very coherent
10	How would you evaluate the training programme and space for sharing experiences and ideas?	1-not appropriate, 2- somewhat appropriate, 3- moderately appropriate, 4-very appropriate

Open-ended questions:

- 1) What can be improved for future training programmes/workshops? Other comments/suggestions?
- 2) What do you think was missing during the training?
- 3) In terms of content, which components need further elaboration?

Evaluation by participants

In order to triangulate the evaluation of the training activities, participants are required to assess aspects such as objectives, time, performance and quality of the content.

The three pillars of agroecology (science, practice and social movement), are proposed as a basis for participants' evaluation of the training. In other words, people participating in trainings on agroecology are asked to evaluate their perceived learning outcomes from points of view of practice (questions 5 in Tab.2 and question a. below Tab. 2), science (questions 6, and question b. below Tab. 2) and social movement (questions 7, and question c. below Tab. 2), as demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2. An example of participants' evaluation of a training on agroecology

N	Questions	Evaluation
1	How would you evaluate the achieved goals (increased awareness of the agroecological transition) of the performed training?	not achieved (1) – achieved (4)
2	How would you evaluate the quality of the content introduced during the training (its usefulness, appropriate focus, specific interest)?	not interesting/ useful/appropriate (1) - interesting/useful/appropriate (4)
3	How would you evaluate the training performance (process) from a participatory point of view?	Not participative (1) – Very participative (4)

4	How would you evaluate the time of the training activities?	Definitely not sufficient (1) - Sufficient (4)
5	How do you evaluate the obtained practical skills related to agroecology and agroecological transition?	Definitely not useful (1) – Very useful (4)
6	How do you evaluate the obtained scientific/theoretical knowledge related to agroecology and the agroecological transition?	Definitely not useful (1) – Very useful (4)
7	How do you evaluate the obtained knowledge and skills on movement building related to agroecology and the agroecological transition?	Definitely not useful (1) – Very useful (4)

Open-ended questions:

- a) Could you specify at least 2-3 obtained practical skills that are most important/interesting to you?
- b) Could you specify at least 2-3 obtained scientific/theoretical knowledge that are most important/interesting to you?
- c) Could you specify at least 2-3 obtained skills on movement building that are most important/interesting to you?

Conclusion

Peasant farmers, agricultural workers and other rural peoples are recovering their land and territories and preserving their culture and way of life on a daily basis. Those who committed to defend the Earth and to feed people, who carry out or desire to carry out peasant agroecological farming are the key actors constructing food sovereignty.

Peasant farmers are considered as the main stakeholders who potentially will participate in future training programmes on agroecological transitions. We hope these guidelines on peasant agroecology trainings will encourage and make the path easier for peasant farmers organising agroecology training programmes focused on fostering the agroecological transition, and contribute to their advocacy efforts for furthering peasant agroecology and small-scale agroecological farms.

The main guidelines of the trainings are provided in a document titled “Peasant Agroecology Training Guidelines”, which is a brochure with succinct description of the objectives, target audience, content and evaluations of the training sessions. In order to reach the stakeholders in different countries, the brochure was translated into several languages.

The guidelines provided in the brochure will contribute to enhancing the capacity for knowledge and experience exchange between actors, through identifying needs in skills and competences for agroecological practices and principles in different geographical and professional contexts. That is aligned with targets of WP4 which supported the upscaling of agroecology in different dimensions. The guidelines described in the brochure are one of the main outcomes of WP4 (Task 4.3), they will be distributed through different communication channels used by AE4EU including the Hub.

Annexes

Annex 1. Agroecology training workshop

Brussels, 13 and 14 March 2023

Outcomes of the workshop (Annex 1) were used for development of the guidelines.

Aims of the workshop and participants:

The workshop was organised in order to collect information on the methodology and pedagogy used in three training programmes which were carried out in the Netherlands, in the United Kingdom and in France in order to provide exhaustive information for the project Deliverable 4.4 - Training package guidelines. Along with the organisers of the training programmes in the AE4EU project, three additional participants from Spain (SLG and Ehne Bizkaia) and Belgium (Le MAP) who were not part of the project but members of European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) have been invited in order to create a larger space for more exchanges on the agroecology training programmes by peasant organisations and its methodology

The main goal of the workshop was to collect, to reflect on the main elements of the successful educational experience such as audience, contents, and used educational approaches. This was discussed during the first day of the workshop. Besides, the workshop was targeted at collecting ideas for a future potential agroecological training in ECVC, that was performed during the second day of the workshop.

Nine people (Tab. 1) and six interpreters have participated in the workshop.

Table 1. Participants of the workshop

N	Name	Organisation	Type of the stakeholder
1	Leonardo van den Berg	Toekomstboeren ¹⁴	Peasant organisation
2	Catherine Tellier	Le MAP ¹⁵ , <u>L'EPI</u> ¹⁶	Peasant organisation
3	Michele Roux	Confédération Paysanne ¹⁷ , FADEAR ¹⁸	Peasant organisation
4	Unai Aranguren	Ehne Bizkaia ¹⁹	Peasant organisation
5	Xose Maria Garcia Villaverde	SLG Galicia ²⁰	Peasant organisation
6	Hattie Richards	LWA ²¹	Peasant organisation

¹⁴ <https://toekomstboeren.nl/>

¹⁵ <https://www.lemap.be/>

¹⁶ <https://www.lemap.be/L-EPI-ecole-paysanne-independante>

¹⁷ <https://www.confederationpaysanne.fr/>

¹⁸ <https://www.agriculturepaysanne.org/>

¹⁹ <https://www.ehnebizkaia.eus/>

²⁰ <http://sindicatolabrego.gal/>

²¹ <https://landworkersalliance.org.uk/>

7	Janneke Bruil (facilitator)	WUR, Cultivate Collective	Academia, Support organisation
8	Natalia Rastorgueva (facilitator)	University of Gastronomic Sciences (UNISG)	Academia
9	Olcay Bingol (facilitator)	ECVC	Peasant organisation

DAY 1 - 13.03.2023

1.1 Collective story harvest explanation

Collective Story Harvesting is an engaging and participatory process used to uncover a wealth of perspectives, insights, and dimensions that lie within the experiences of individuals, communities, teams, or organisations. This approach involves sharpening one's listening skills and focusing on specific predetermined details and topics during the storytelling process.

The aim of Collective Story Harvesting is to create a space where diverse voices are heard and valued, enabling a comprehensive exploration of a particular subject or theme. By actively listening and concentrating on specific aspects of the story, participants can unearth a rich tapestry of information, ideas, and emotions that may have been previously hidden or overlooked.

During this session at the workshop the process involved facilitators who guided the storytelling session in 3 break-out groups based on languages. They set the stage by establishing a safe and inclusive environment, ensuring that everyone feels comfortable sharing their stories. The facilitator also defined the focus areas to guide the participants' storytelling.

Once the storytelling began, participants were encouraged to share their experiences, narratives, and perspectives related to the training they have developed and practised. Each participant of the group took their turn to tell their story based on the questions asked by one of the members of the group. As they spoke, the facilitator and other participants actively listened, paid close attention to the specific details and took notes to be shared at the plenary.

The collected stories were then synthesised and analysed by the participants who are experts in their areas. Thus, six stories (successful educational experience) were shared by the participants from Toekomstboeren, Land Workers' Alliance, Ehne Bizkaia, SLG, FADEAR and Le MAP.

1.2 Audience selection and inclusion

This section provides bullet points that describe participants in each of six discussed educational experiences. In addition, lessons learnt are described at the end of this section.

1) Toekomstboeren story

- Training was aimed at farmers, researchers and activists
- Out of 37 participants, 14 were farmers
- Activists from different groups from all over country
- The diversity was fine and it was balanced. But there is a space for improvement (esp people of colour, LGBTQI)

2) Land Workers' Alliance story

- The training has been designed for those working with the land (farmers, growers, grazers, and new entrants), those who market, process or purchase food, and those who are engaged with farming and food research and policy making.
- 25 participants, working in different parts of the food system, mostly farmers

- Could do more to increase diversity (gender, people of colour) although it was quite well achieved
- Distance and timing is another challenge in relation to the growing season.

3) Ehne Bizkaia story

- First feminist agroecology school, only for and by women
- 16 young peasant women participated as learners. Bringing young women together gives a lot of joy.
- Women who are also producers shared their experiences in workshops which made them feel recognized and joyful.
- The participants perspectives and discussions influenced the organisation
- The participants stayed together and in solidarity after the training;
- Central approach: Young people and established (already) producers were linked.
- The main language spoken at the training was Basque, which was difficult for some people with a migration background. There is some work to do on intersectionality.

4) SLG story

- Different types of training programmes and forums:
 - Open farm days, visited mainly by young people who want to start a farm or learn about processing or selling.
 - Annual forum of two days (with talks and roundtables, most people come for 1 day). A great place to meet people from other similar experiences. Healing for the soul. It gives strength to continue to get out of your own place, your own everyday difficulties, and to meet people with fresh perspectives.
 - Specific training programmes on technical aspects related to, cattle grazing or cultivation. Some of these take place via zoom, which gives access to producers who cannot travel. They are sometimes spread over various days, for one or two hours per day.
 - School for peasant action, mostly for young people with a strong political content around the peasant voice and vision. This school specifically looks to maintain gender balance.
 - Training for feminist education, with workshops, visits etc. This has existed for many years already. The focus is not defined as agroecology per se but as ‘peasant farming with an agroecological orientation’. Topics can include the commons, seeds, mountain farming etc.
- Challenges in Galicia: people are spread apart, which makes training programmes that last several days much harder. And the producers also have different work schedules in their day.

5) FADEAR story

- FADEAR and its network were built around the Charter of Peasant Agriculture and around the training of peasants and militants of the Confédération Paysanne. They support farmers who want to improve their practices, develop the autonomy of their farm, the quality of their products or diversify their activity through advice but also short-format training, adapted to the work pace of farmers
- FADEAR in these training aimed to support participants who are farmers with the Peasant Farming Diagnosis tool. This allowed them to measure the situation of their

farm with respect to smallholder agriculture using specific indicators and to define their margins for improvement. It is also an opportunity to share with other farmers, to discover other practices and to gain perspective on the management of their farm. Farmers who are members of Confederation paysanne and their facilitators accompanied future farmers before their installation and provided them with support during the first years of their installation. The program was organised on 22 April with 20 farmers, peasant agriculture defenders, citizens and 2 May again 20 participants in the North of France. One day short course introduced the Diagnostic Tool and the history of peasant agriculture and also gave a chance to the participants to apply the tool in different farms as example during the visits of those farms during the course.

6) Le MAP L'EPI story

- L'Ecole Paysanne Indépendante is MAP's training centre, School for an agroecology school.
- The team of trainers is essentially made up of farmer-trainers and a few external trainers supporting the movement and the school.
- An essential tool for the analysis of agricultural practices is the Charter of Peasant Agriculture created in France by FADEAR.
- In addition to training, the EPI organises conferences, study sessions, visits, specialised course sessions, seminars, study trips and other knowledge exchange meetings as part of the agroecology school
- Challenge was that people come from different backgrounds and experiences.
- They divide the participants into different groups based on their experience and knowledge.
- One group was a farm school for the children of peasants with an agroecology background. One other group is doing farm visits with conversations about what is observed.

What was learnt in terms of the audience:

- We have to change the tools based on who we are aiming to reach. The content also needs to change based on the audience.
- Challenges:
 - Diversity, ensuring participation of different genders, cultures
 - Distance: sometimes it is too far to come together
 - Timing of the training: It is important in relation to farm work and seasons
 - Participants with different levels of knowledge and experience
- Most training programmes are for farmers, some on women, some on newcomers, on experienced farmers, or a mix. Sometimes also include producers in processing, marketing. armers, activists, researchers, but farmers in any combination should be in the centre.
- Establishing a political base is important, including with people from cities. Urban activists also contribute to make changes in the rural world but they have little understanding and do not know the reality and practices.
- Local or regional policy makers were not included in the educational activities . They are mostly included not as one of the trainees or experts but to do advocacy or to get information at the policy level.

- Organising excursions or events for municipalities, to bring them to dialogue spaces, e.g. on sanitary policies or including municipal policy officers who are responsible for regional food networks is important.

1.3 Content

This section describes the main topics of the training in the three educational experiences and summarises other experiences as lessons learnt.

1) Toekomstboeren story

- Main focus was agroecological transformation of food systems and the technical and political aspects were also included.
- Content: Decolonisation, sustainable, agroecological farming, land tenure, soil quality, no dig farming, movement building.
- Introduction on what is agroecology – political training for participants to understand why agriculture is political.
- For the decolonial part of the training they invited people who are active in the decolonial movement in the NL.
- Movement building: Focusing on Nyeleni Food Sovereignty movement in Europe. External people from the Nyeleni movement were invited and did farm visits and talked about strategies.

2) LWA story:

- Introducing agroecological approaches to developing farm and food systems that combine food production, environmental public goods, financial viability, and climate resilience.
- The training aimed to link agroecological principles with farming practices and processes that reduce reliance on external inputs and support the transformation of farming and food systems. The training also aimed to develop a firm understanding of agroecological principles and practices which can be used to analyse farming challenges and begin developing agroecological solutions to overcome them.
- Throughout the two days participants:
 - Explored various definitions and principles of agroecology
 - Considered how agroecological farming practices can help achieve objectives on farms
 - Gained skills in systems thinking to analyse farming problems and imagine solutions
 - Witnessed agroecological practices and systems in action at FarmED and Conygree Farm & Cotswold Market Garden
 - Learned the importance of the social, political and subtle dimensions of agroecology

3) EHNE Bizkaia story

- They adapted the language when concepts were unfamiliar, or too urban. They were not too purist. They could use ‘natural farming’ instead of agroecology.
- Three main topics:
 - 1) The rural woman as a political subject

- 2) Care for the earth and others
- 3) Public policy and law
- The practical part of agroecology was also included: how to make jam (processing agricultural products), processing dairy products, mill, flour and bakery , run a shop etc.

What was learnt in terms of content

- Most of the training programmes were related to production, processing, marketing, starting a farm, advanced techniques, and agroecological practices.
- Besides practical agroecological practices in all 3 training programmes and also the others always dedicated a part to Political-Ideological formation. One of the most important objectives of the agroecology training programmes is to bring in the practices and the political part based on our reality and connect us with others in the food systems and also with citizens. The practice should be contextualised by linking it to public policies at different levels. In order to build a political base to work on, it is important to make the connection from practical issues to the political aspects. All training programmes made it clear that practice is also political.
-
- Political-Ideological formation: Feminism, right and access to land, seed, water, seeds, water and other resources, regional and international processes, right of peasants
-
- Approach/ principles of agroecology should be included and based on Nyeleni agroecology declaration, FAO, HLPE 13 principles and lately ECVC's publication: Peasant Agroecology According to ECVC.

1.4 Pedagogies and educational approaches

This section describes learning process of the participants

1) Toekomstboeren story

- A methodology group coming from different working groups came together and designed the training. They also divided the tasks together. In order not to tire the participants they diversified the methods they used.
- Language: Dutch and English. When the international participants participated the training were done in English as all participants were fine with English.

Methods included:

- Rituals during the meeting and the dinner
- Classroom lectures
- Group work
- Circle discussions
- Videos
- Field trip
- Practical and theoretical training on soil and mechanisation for peasant farming
- Evening campfires with storytelling
- International speakers on movement building
- Political strategic discussions

- Background docs: Nothing was sent prior to the meeting but some resources were shared afterwards.
- The outcome of the training: Toekomstboeren is working to prepare a training curriculum to be used at the national level.

2) LWA story:

- Knowledge exchange and skill-share between farmers
- Co-creation of posters on: what is agroecology
- 'Pin the practice on the donkey' activity - participants take turns placing post-its describing their practices on the ESR framework.
- Each day starts with lecture, then group work, then field visit/ work, then group discussion with Q&A with 'expert'
- Day 1 started with lectures and group-work followed by exchange of information to understand where to see agroecology in their work. Agroecological practices were then observed during an on-farm walk, during field work and group discussions (farm talks with a specialist).
- Based on what was learnt on day 1, participants on day 2 created a systems map of the farm to address key issues the farmer raised during the walk.
- Storytelling, music making, and celebration are also part of the training even though they formally are the after-training times.
- Movement building and political agroecology was mostly addressed through lectures but may need some thinking on how to use other forms.
- Background documents: Some were sent before the training, some after.

3) Ehne Bizkaia story

- For three months, participants had the following schedule-
Tuesday: Theory (debate, round tables and presentations)
Thursday: Field visit to a producer to learn about a practice (cheesemaking, milling, jam making, etc.). They do a workshop and have a conversation afterwards. The producer first makes a presentation, then they work together. So there was theory and practice, as well as political and technical aspects.
- All teachers were also women, including the producers whom the participants visited . This allowed for a very good contact between established and new food entrepreneurs. An unexpected outcome was that the training also gave the established producers recognition.
- The group continued to be active after the training and recorded videos for March 8 International Women's Day on violence against women and on how women in the countryside are made invisible.
- Lesson 1: Women wanted more space to reflect among themselves., to reflect on what they learnt and saw together. And they wanted to visit each other's places also.
- Lesson 2: They brought international participants as resource people online, but doing it online did not work well.
- Lesson 3: Working on the topic of feminism and care also influenced the organisation as a whole.
- Lesson 4: Women who were professionals and had workshops were also made visible and lifted up.

- Lesson 5: The main language spoken at the training was Basque, which was difficult for some people with a migration background. There is some work to do on intersectionality.

4) FADEAR story

They match the learners with 3 farms (members of Confederation Paysanne) – to work in farms in a year.

An action-learning approach was used in involving people in peasant agriculture.

Classroom courses took place by the trainers

5) Le MAP story

It is important to use a clear and understandable language for all participants

Lessons learnt about educational approaches

- The methodologies and the content need to be adapted to the reality of the audience. Sometimes organising a dinner and bringing people to talk together is the best methodology. We have to organise methodologies that work for peasants.
- Finding the right mix is important because we want to get many different things out of a training programme. We want knowledge sharing, but also that farmers feel they are a collective. And that they are politicised, become political subjects. We want to connect to other movements. And we want them to feel energised to continue with the struggle.
- Learning the content is one of the outcomes of the training and the other is to make peasants feel connected to each other and to other movements.
- We want them to gain energy to continue their work and nourish their soul: Bringing people together to lift up people's spirits. That is why the fireplace, unstructured spaces, rituals and ceremonies are important.
- Some training programmes for and by a specific group eg women can be useful
- Terminology needs to be easy to understand, adapted to audience
- Online training works well for some sessions, esp when people cannot travel or have other duties
- There should always be a technical, political and movement building part
- Observation and analysis on-farm is very important

DAY 2 - 14.03.2023

After the intensive activities of the first day of the workshop, diverse information was collected and discussed. One of the main insights that came out during the 1st day was a future agroecology training programme potentially organised by ECVC (described in sections 2.1. and 2.2); another insight that came out during the workshop was a strong need in the training for trainers (described in section 2.3).

2.1 Reflections on a possible ECVC agroecology training programme

What should ECVC training programme guidelines look like? What are the principles, what is the content? It is agreed that there is no blueprint but a guideline, a manual for all ECVC to use can be developed collectively based on our values and approach to agroecology and training.

Reflections:

- Collection of the needs from the members is important.
- As ECVC, it is fundamental to develop training on training the trainers and organise those training programmes for them to disseminate and practise agroecology training on the field with members of their organisations.
- Translation of the tools in the main European languages are the key for a better reach-out and understanding..
- . The political content of the working groups should be used in the training and this allows the organisations to adapt the political content in their legislative and language realities. Those texts also would be very useful for integrating new members.
- EAKEN22 should be kept alive and should be regularly updated with members' resources and references on specific people on specific topics.
- We need to find a way and system (indexing and categorising) to collect all training documents and make them accessible.

2.3 Ideas on the Table of Contents for a Train the Trainer Document by ECVC

- Political context (information about policies; techniques, how to pursue struggles for rights for what they need). There should be a diagnosis on European political space along with international processes. European Union – structure - how it works - important legislation
- Content of the working groups: seeds, land, peasant agroecology, rural workers and migration, trade, etc
- Pedological-methodological aspect – how to facilitate in groups. Practices of Train the trainer- Facilitation skills; .
- Overview of key documents produced by ECVC and its members. An online library should be organised

²² <https://www.eaken.euovia.org/eaken/about-us/>

Annex 2. Reports of The Trainings Realised During AE4EU Project

To create guidelines for transformative agroecology learning, this report draws on three pilot training sessions with farmers, extension services, and/or other actors carried out in 2022 in three European countries: France (by FADEAR), the Netherlands (by Toekomstboeren) and the UK (by the Landworker’s Alliance).

These training sessions were organised in order to reach a larger number of stakeholders in Europe and to show opportunities for development in agroecology and cooperation across Europe.

The three organisations that organised the trainings are:

- **Toekomstboeren²³** – a small-scale farmers association in the Netherlands and its name stands for “FARMERS FOR THE FUTURE”. Toekomstboeren gives to these farmers for the future a voice and supports them in their struggle;
- **FADEAR²⁴** (Fédération Associative pour le Développement de l’Emploi Agricole et Rural) – Associative Federation for the Development of Agricultural and Rural Employment; FADEAR and its network were built around the Charter of Peasant Agriculture and around the training of peasants and militants of the Confédération paysanne²⁵
- **LandWorkers’ Alliance²⁶** - The Landworkers’ Alliance is a union of farmers, growers, foresters and land-based workers. Its mission is to improve the livelihoods of our members and create a better food and land-use system for everyone.

The objective of these three training programmes was raising awareness of agroecological transformations and linking agroecological principles with farming practices.

The training programmes had a multi-actor approach. It means that the stakeholders with different roles such as farmers, researchers, representatives of NGOs, citizens, local authorities participated in the training programmes as trainees and as trainers (researchers, farmers, food producers, farmers organisations, social movements).

An action learning approach that has made a shift from theory towards “world” as the starting point for the learning process (Lieblein at al. 2010; Biesta, 2022) was used as a basis for training activities which included following:

7. Practical information concerning agroecology
8. Dialogue between the stakeholders

²³ <https://toekomstboeren.nl/>

²⁴ <https://www.agriculturepaysanne.org/>

²⁵ <https://www.confederationpaysanne.fr/>

²⁶ <https://landworkersalliance.org.uk/>

9. Movement building

2.1.1 Toekomstboeren training (NL)

ECVC organised a training on agroecological transformation for young farmers, researchers and environmentalists with the support of Toekomstboeren on 14-16 May 2022 in the Netherlands in the framework of the AE4EU project.

On the 14th and 15th of May the training was given in De Merel (Woudenbergseweg 47, Austerlitz village, municipality of Zeist). On the 16th of May the training was held on the farm “Stadsboerderij Almere” (Kemphaanpad 14 in Almere). At the Merel participants were offered all meals and accommodation.

The training programme was attended by 37 people including 14 farmers, 9 researchers/students and 14 participants from environmentalist organisations or initiatives/collectives. Farmers came from different parts of the country both from farmers’ organisations as well as new entrant farmers. Researchers and students came mostly from Wageningen University although there were also researchers from applied knowledge institutes such as the Hanze Hogeschool. Environmentalists worked for organisations such as Greenpeace or were part of more activist groups such as Extinction Rebellion including participants of a professional artistic group.



Figure A. Training organised in the Netherlands

The main subject of the training was increased awareness of participants about agroecological transformation through four introduced topics: (i) decolonisation, (ii) land and commons, (iii) regenerative farming; (iv) movement building.

Each topic was discussed in a separate session during the training, that was taught and facilitated by an expert in the field. The first two training days focused on presenting basic knowledge of

each topic area. This was supported by guest speakers with specific experiences in practice, movement and/or policy.

The participants were first taken on a walk, led by forest and nature conservation professional Pablo van Neste (lecturer Wageningen University), who introduced the participants in the area and in the different species harboured by the forest surrounding the training location. This was followed by a collective dinner and a presentation of the programme of the training .

The first two training days were opened with a general introduction on agroecological transformation. Leonardo van den Berg (Toekomstboeren/Federation of Agroecological Farmers) outlined an overall framework on three areas of transformation: “practice, territory and the wider institutional environment”. Guest speaker Janneke Bruil focused on the governance aspect of agroecological transformation, looking at six governance domains: access to natural ecosystems, knowledge and culture, systems of exchange, networks, equity and discourse.

In addition Eduard Hernandez Nualart (Toekomstboeren/ECVC Youth) and Leonardo presented examples of transformative efforts by Nyeleni Food Sovereignty²⁷ movement, La Via Campesina²⁸ and Toekomstboeren.

After the session on “transformation” on the first day, Irma Brassinga (Toekomstboeren/Eet Meerbosch) led the session on Agroecology and Decolonization. With guest speakers Max de Ploeg (Aralez) a link was made between agroecology and decolonization and the necessity to reverse exploitative colonial relations between the global north and south as well as within agroecology itself.

This was followed by the session on “Land and Commons”. Margriet Goris (Agroecology Europe/Wageningen University) explained how the current situation, where many farmers do not have secure access to land, can be seen as result of the commoditization of land on the one hand and on imposed colonial relations between landlord and tenants on the other.

Eliane Bakker (Toekomstboeren/Lenteland) and Eduardo Cacades Salgado (Aralez) presented how “communing” initiatives are reversing these relations, by turning privately owned land into land that is owned and governed by the community.

The session ended with a closing ceremony called Trafkintu & Meli Witral Mapu, by Chatuileo Tranamil (Aralez) of the Mapuche Pewenche community. Until dinner participants had a chance to talk with speakers and discuss topics among themselves. After dinner Indigenous

²⁷ <https://nyeleni.org/en/homepage/>

²⁸ <https://viacampesina.org/en/>

leader Yuchen Li conducted a participatory performance called “Water as Memory, Bodies as Seed”.

On the second day of the training a session on “regenerative practices” was given. Frankie Turk (Re-peat) presented the problems of current industrial practices and how they are degrading soils, particularly peat lands.

Chris Chancellor (Tuinderij Het Lichtveen) gave an overview of agroecological farming practices and their capacity to regenerate the soil.

Gareth Hughes (FarmHack UK) presented Farm Hack, an initiative where farmers create their own, open source, equipment and machineries that are suited for agroecological farming. After lunch we conducted a hands-on, practical exercise on potting and making sustainable pot soil, led by Eduard Hernandez Nualart (Toekomstboeren) and Klarien Klingen (Toekomstboeren/De Wilde Peen).

The afternoon of the second day, started with “the movement building” session. Olcay Bingol international policy officer at the European Coordination of La Via Campesina (ECVC) and the technical secretariat of Nyeleni Europe and Central Asia Food Sovereignty Network) and Andrea Ferrante (Schola Campesina/Nyeleni ECA) presented Nyeleni Food Sovereignty movement as a movement capable of transformation at the global scale. Liz Knight (ASEED) presented local initiatives of the grassroots organisation ASeed.

2.1.2 FADEAR training (FR)

In France ECVC has organised the training program with the support of FADEAR in two days: on the 22th of April and on the 2nd of May in the North of France. Two different groups of 20 farmers have participated in training activities these days. The training was called: *"A better understanding of peasant agriculture: What is the place of agroecology in my project?"*

Training was open to farmers, citizens or defenders of peasant agriculture. The one-day event aimed to make the participants understand peasant thinking, its history, its link to agroecological approach and its direct application on farms.

During the training, a short course has introduced a Diagnostic Tool²⁹ and the history of peasant agriculture, detailed work specifically on 6 thematics of peasant agriculture based on

²⁹ *Diagnostic Tool: In the 90's the French farmers of the "Confederation paysanne" decided to work on a definition of an agriculture which could give an orientation to agricultural policies and to farmers to enable numerous farmers around the world to make a decent living from a sustainable agriculture that would keep the countryside alive. Together with academic researchers and based on their practices, they produced in 1998 a Charter with 10 principles and 6 main lines detailed in 84 indicators for a farm diagnosis*

the diagnostic tool and also gave a chance to the participants to apply the tool in different farms as example during the visits of those farms during the course.



Figure B. Training organised in France

The main objective of the training was to understand the peasant reflections, their link to an agroecological approach and its application on farms

Participating trainers:

- Willy Vindenvogel – Organic market gardener in peasant agriculture;
- Thomas Fayet – activist of peasant agriculture;
- Emilie Hequet - breeder in peasant agriculture;
- Marion Theriez – activist of peasant agriculture

The training was organised for following types of the invited stakeholders: farmers, project leaders, citizens and actors of peasant agriculture

Content:

- Creation and history of FADEAR;
- Peasant agriculture (definition, history, principles, themes);
- Agroecology (definition, link between agroecology and peasant agriculture, transition process);
- Case study (Willy Vindevogel) - Presentation of its farm diagnosis and the sustainability approach implemented on the farm;
- The Diagnostic tool.

2.1.3 Landworkers’ Alliance (LWA) training (UK)

In the UK, 25 participants attended the two-day short course which was organised by ECVC with the support of LWA on 30-31 May 2022, introducing agroecological approaches to developing farm and food systems that combine food production, environmental public goods, financial viability, and climate resilience. The training has been designed for those working with the land (farmers, growers, graziers, and new entrants), those who market, process or purchase food, and those who are engaged with farming and food research and policy making. Participated trainers: Jyoti Fernande, Gerald Miles, Jonathan Brunyee, Edd Colbert.

The training aimed to link agroecological principles with farming practices and processes that reduce reliance on external inputs and support the transformation of farming and food systems. The training also aimed to develop a firm understanding of agroecological principles and practices which can be used to analyse farming challenges and begin developing agroecological solutions to overcome them. Throughout the two days participants:

- Explored various definitions and principles of agroecology;
- Considered how agroecological farming practices can help achieve objectives on farms;
- Gained skills in systems thinking to analyse farming problems and imagine solutions;
- Witnessed agroecological practices and systems in action at FarmED and Conygree Farm & Cotswold Market Garden;
- Learned the importance of the social, political and subtle dimensions of agroecology.



Figure C. Training organised in the UK

As well as being inspired and gaining new knowledge from these two days the participants had a lot of opportunity to connect with other agroecologically minded participants in the classroom, over meals and around the campfire at Conygree Farm.

Throughout the two days of the training included a lot of group activities designed to support peer-learning and to encourage innovative thinking between folk from different walks of life. This required from the participants an open mind and a willingness to learn.

1.2. The Workshop in Brussels

The two-day in-person workshop was carried out in the office of ECVC (Brussels) in March 2023 (Fig. D). Three facilitators and six participants from different countries (Spain, France, Belgium, The UK, The Netherlands) and with different backgrounds discussed and shared training experiences. The workshop was carried out in three languages with simultaneous interpretation.



Figure D. Workshop in Brussels in March 2022

Collective story harvest (Møller et al. 2012) was used as a method for data collection. Collective story harvest includes strategic selection of listening themes, aimed at specific sense making. This method uses targeted listening to dig into the often-hidden learning in experience.

During the workshop six stories from the participants based on training experiences were shared and analysed (Annex 1). Besides, reflections for future training programmes by ECVC were collected:

- Linking training to the needs from the members is important;

- For ECVC, as a peasants' organisation, it is fundamental to develop training on “train the trainers”;
- All tools and documents need to be translated into the most spoken languages of Europe;
- The content of the different ECVC working groups should form the basis of the training programmes. Member organisations should be able to adapt the content to their needs and strategies (in education, policy, legislation, etc.). This content should also be useful to introduce new members to the issues ECVC works on;
- European Agroecology Exchange Network (EAKEN)³⁰ should function as a resource space for the development of national and European training programmes. EAKEN is a network aiming at linking initiatives in Europe which participate in the exchange of peasant agroecological knowledge based on the peasant to peasant methodology in ECVC needs to be more visible and also. For EAKEN, to function well, it should be updated regularly with members' resources and references on specific topics;
- A system (indexing and categorising) needs to be developed to collect all training documents and make them accessible for members. This system should be integrated in EAKEN
- Training programmes should have both political and practical content;
- Regular in-person training programmes for trainers should be prioritised.

In addition, proposals were collected for a future “Train the Trainers Document” that will be provided by ECVC and include following contents:

- Political context (information about what is agroecology in relation to food sovereignty and other topics, policies, etc.). Political context should be focused on the legal, administrative, political realities of Europe. The main question of the political content is: “How to change the society from the perspective of peasant values?”;
- The European Union, its structure and functions, important legislation for farmers;
- Content of the working groups of the ECVC: Peasant Agroecology, European Policies, Trade, Right to Land, Seed and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), Rural Workers and Migration, Peasants' Rights, Youth, Women, Gender and Sexual Diversities;
- Pedagogical-methodological aspect;
- Overview of key documents produced by ECVC and its members. List of reference people in ECVC on key themes.

³⁰ <https://www.eaken.euovia.org/eaken/>