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**Schola
Campesina**
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for food sovereignty

REGIONAL WEBINAR

Seeds and Knowledge: agroecology to strengthen the autonomy of rural women (experiences from Eastern Europe)

Concept note

17 June 2022, 14:00–16:00 (EEST)

Zoom [Link](#)



Agroecology is a holistic and integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agriculture and food systems. The transition to agroecology can support the concurrent achievement of multiple sustainability objectives – economic, environmental, social, nutritional, health and cultural – holistically and in an integrated manner at different levels and scales. Furthermore, agroecology can be adapted to differing environmental and cultural contexts.



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Women play a vital role in sustainable agrifood systems and in enhancing locally driven rural development. In this context, agroecology can support women to develop higher levels of autonomy by improving their knowledge, stimulating their economic engagement in local food chains and producer groups, and encouraging stronger involvement in community life. The empirical evidence from Europe¹ shows that agroecology not only allows for more sustainable production of healthier food but also considerably improves farmers' incomes. Equally, it carries the promise of re-enlarging productive agricultural (and related types of) employment and increasing the total income generated by the agricultural sector. Women's participation is essential for agroecological transition as they are often responsible for household members' food security, dietary diversity and health.

Women's involvement in agroecology is on the rise in Eastern Europe. For instance, 74 percent of producers taking part in the local distribution of peasant-bred seeds by Gradina Moldovei are women. They are also frequently the leaders of agroecology projects related to improving nutrition, community gardening, and better management of local resources, food cultures and traditions. More recently, during the war in Ukraine, rural women, mainly from family and smallholder farms, have been courageously supporting and feeding people who have been forcibly displaced within the country. Yet while in Eastern Europe rural women's contribution is sizeable, it remains largely informal and unpaid. The formal employment of men is also higher on conventional farms in the region despite the fact that women's workload in farming activities is substantial.

Women's contribution needs to be acknowledged and supported by policies that are underpinned by sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis. Thus, agroecology which is supported and based on equitable public policies represents an important step towards sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems and the progress of Agenda 2030. This webinar will review the available evidence and the advancement made in achieving SDG 5 on Gender Equality and discuss promising practices in addressing inequalities by creating opportunities for women.

Target audience: Agrifood producers' groups and associations, civil society organizations engaged in sustainable agriculture, agroecology, rural development and women's empowerment, farmers' associations from Eastern Europe, international partners, representatives from academia and other interested organizations and stakeholders.

About the initiative: FAO and Schola Campesina Aps are hosting four subregional webinars in 2022 to discuss promising gender-responsive practices for sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Turkey, and the Western Balkans. This webinar is the third one of the series.

¹ van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2019. The economic potential of agroecology: Empirical evidence from Europe. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 71: 46–61.



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AGENDA

Introduction		
14:00–14:10	Schola Campesina, Gradina Moldovei	Welcome note and introduction to the agenda
Review of evidence on data gaps and tracking progress towards achievement of SDG 5		
14:00–14:10	Anna Jenderedjian , Gender and Social Protection Specialist, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia	Why we need evidence on gender-based inequalities for sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems
14:20–14:35	Giorgi Kvinikadze , Statistician, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia	SDG indicators 5.a.1 and 5.a.2: tracking information on the situation with women's rights on land ownership and control
Promising practices from the region		
14:35–14:55	Liliana Botnaru , Executive Director, NGO Avânt, Republic of Moldova	Engaging community through agroecology
	Anatolii Albin , Business consultant, agroecology and seed-saving practitioner, member of NGO Gradina Moldovei, Republic of Moldova	Strengthening food sovereignty through the right to seeds
14:55–15:15	Anna Danyliak , Expert in sustainable agricultural development, Ecoaction, Ukraine	Why does agroecology matter when it's war outside?
	Anastasiya Volkova , Head of NGO Permaculture in Ukraine, a coordinator for the project 'Green Road of Ecovillages', Ukraine	Food and safety: family farms in times of war in Ukraine
15:15–15:30	Olga Shiglins , Director and Head of Experimental Direction and Implementation, NGO Agro-Eco-Cultura, Belarus	Agroecology and human rights: paving the way for food sovereignty
15:30–15:55	Discussion	Building a common complementary vision using existing tools
15:55–16:00	Gradina Moldovei	Summary and closing remarks