

SHARING KNOWLEDGE FOR STRONGER AGROECOLOGY
MOVEMENT IN ECA 2022/2023

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS TOOLKIT

FOR ORGANISATIONS AND FACILITATORS

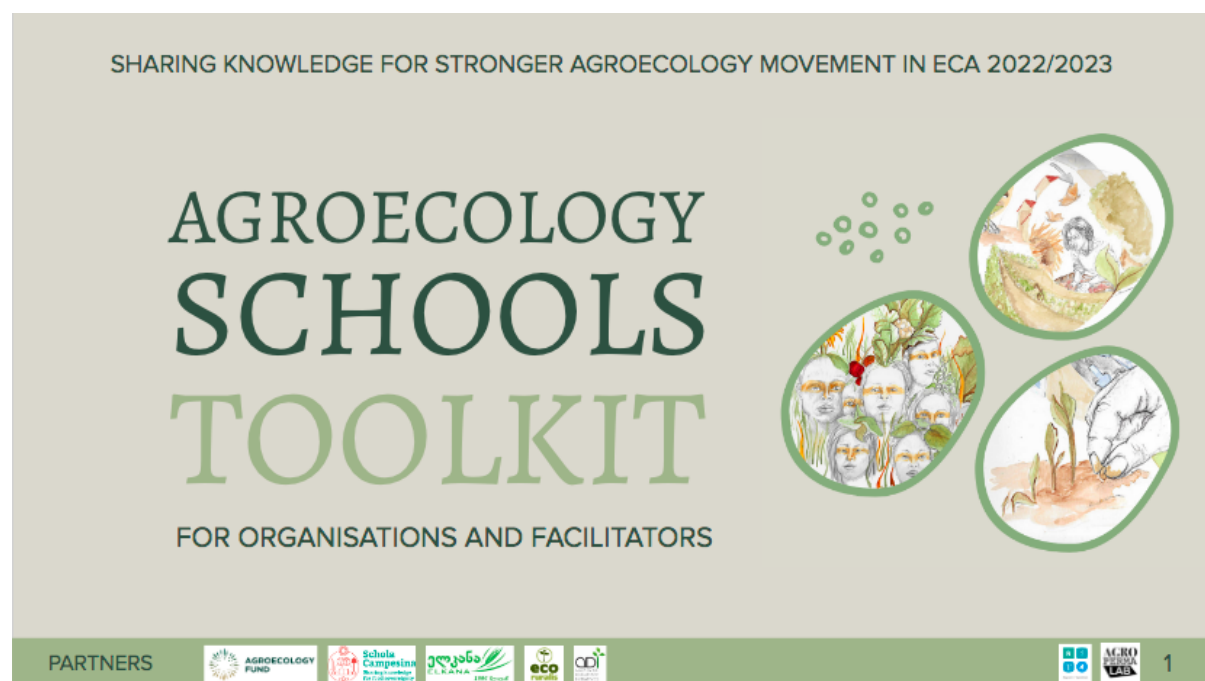


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BACKGROUND

Our ancestral production systems have been developed over millennia, and during the past 30 to 40 years this has come to be called agroecology. Our agroecology includes successful practices and production, involves farmer-to-farmer and territorial processes, training schools, and we have developed sophisticated theoretical, technical and political constructions - Nyeleni 2015 Declaration

**BILIM COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON AGROECOLOGY
IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA: www.bilim.network**

OUR

NETWORK'S

WORK

In the context of the abandonment of agricultural activities and rural exodus in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region, the project *Sharing knowledge for a stronger agroecology movement in ECA region 2022/2023* aims at strengthening local food producers' organizations and network through supporting grassroots organizations actions in rural areas and specifically their knowledge-related activities.

Building on nearly a decade of work of the network of grassroots organizations and social movements in agroecology, the ECA Agroecology Community of Practice activated by Schola Campesina supports coordinated advocacy work for agroecology and small-scale producers' rights, the implementation of UNDROP and the pursuit of food sovereignty in the region. Built on 11 Pillars of the Nyéléni Declaration on Agroecology, the network promotes strengthening of existing agroecology initiatives in the region, scaling up and scaling out of agroecology in the region and facilitates emergence of new Agroecology Schools.

METHODOLOGY

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS

Agroecology schools are already well implemented in Europe and Central Asia region. There are often not well connected to each other and not well supported. ECA Agroecology Community of Practice aims at supporting these initiatives and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences amongst them. This includes supporting food producers in their farming activity (economic viability, access to markets, food processing, local policies, organizational model, political advocacy, sharing of local knowledge) and in building alliances for improved and coordinated policy support for agroecology.

The Toolkit is part of a continued pedagogical work allowing agroecology schools facilitators to meet, exchange and be trained on content and methodology. It also aims at supporting young organisations in starting their own agroecology schools. Through horizontal knowledge-sharing organisations expand leadership, expertise and tools across community research, education and political work to promote agroecology at the international, national and regional levels

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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 [...] with each sector contributing their own colours of their local reality and culture, while always respecting Mother Earth and our common, shared values - Nyeleni 2015 Declaration

SHARING KNOWLEDGE FOR STRONGER AGROECOLOGY MOVEMENT IN ECA

Agroecology is certainly happening in European and Central Asian countries and there are many good cases of agroecology in different local contexts showing that Agroecology is - invisibly - making our local food systems resilient and strong. There is still, however, not enough institutional support, including the commitment from government ministries to encourage mainstreaming of agroecology and building of a groundswell movement across the region (FAO 2020).

In many cases, the environmental protection and agricultural policies are shaped without a political dialogue between them, or even perceived as opposite agendas and treated as separate domains. Far too often, where there is 'agroecology-in-action', it remains poorly visible due to national and local organisations' limited capacity to document the good work on the ground and engage in vigorous farmer-to-farmer or village-to-village work of testing for agroecology principles.

Documenting and disseminating successful practical experiences region-to-region is, however, critical to learn from

them, leverage their lessons and generate insights for policy change. The varied success rate in the adaptation and integration of Human Rights framework at national level in ECA region makes it an even stronger case for a continued dialogue, experience-sharing and regional partnerships in and through agroecology.

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS

In these schools, both younger and older educational subjects are trained not only in farming, but also in political-organizational aspects of the collective struggle for land reform, food sovereignty and agroecology. This makes for a rich learning environment, [...] a dialogue-based processes of action and reflection, using popular education as a guide for developing critical consciousness –La Via Campesina

PART I - AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Together, the diverse constituencies our organizations represent produce some 70% of the food consumed by humanity. They are the primary global investors in agriculture, as well as the primary providers of jobs and livelihoods in the world-
Nyéléni Declaration

WHY AGROECOLOGY?

The current model of our food system is in crisis. We no longer can deny its exploitative impact on both humans and nature and its failure to sustain and nourish the world. Agroecology is increasingly seen as a solution for societies to respond to the multiple crisis situations and reinstall stability of our collective livelihoods, ecosystem and human health (IAASTD, 2009; IPBES, 2019; IPCC, 2020; HLPE, 2019). The power and potential of Agroecology is rooted in the traditions of communities and continuously enriched with innovations in a Human Rights-based approach (Nyéléni, 2015).

READ ON: Agroecology Frameworks Section

The autonomy of agroecology displaces the control of global markets and generates self-governance by communities. [...] It implies a transparent relationship between producers and consumers, and is based on the solidarity of shared risks and benefits - Nyeleni Declaration 2015

WHY A FOOD SYSTEM APPROACH?

Food systems are nested in complex webs of interactions across sectors and actors in societies. All too often, farmers' livelihoods and environment are seen as competing with each other, when in fact, they are often both victims of the very same power structures. The challenges of agriculture today require us to integrate elements that usually are considered separate: rural development, youth employment, gender perspective, human health, climate

change, environment, etc. Agroecology gives us a holistic, integrative and action-oriented (political) perspective on food systems connecting food, health, nutrition, culture, land use and sustainability. Agroecology prioritizes protection of peasant knowledge at the heart of this transition.

READ ON: Nyeleni Declaration of Food Sovereignty 2007

Given that historically the family structure was often based on patriarchy and has oppressed women for centuries, we must find new ways of ensuring the transfer of knowledge in a world in which farming is not inherited from father to son, but rather, new entrants experience a cultural transition in order to become true peasant farmers or specialists in agroecology/gies - Schola Campesina

11 PILLARS OF AGROECOLOGY

The real solutions to the crises of the climate, malnutrition, etc., will not come from conforming to the industrial model. We must transform it and build our own local food systems that create new rural-urban links, based on truly agroecological food production by peasants, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, urban farmers, etc. - Nyeleni Declaration

2015

PILLAR 1 AGROECOLOGY IS A WAY OF LIFE

Agroecology is a way of life and the language of Nature, that we learn as her children.

PILLAR 2 ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTION

Agroecology entails agricultural production practices based on ecological principles.

PILLAR 3 TERRITORIAL APPROACH

Territories are a fundamental pillar of agroecology. Peoples have the right to maintain their own spiritual and material relationships to their lands.

PILLAR 4 RIGHTS AND COMMONS

People are rights holders. Collective rights and access to the commons are fundamental pillar of agroecology.

PILLAR 5 KNOWLEDGE & DIGITALISATION

The diverse knowledges and ways of knowing our peoples are fundamental to agroecology.

PILLAR 6 FEELINGS AND CARE

The core of our cosmovisions is the necessary equilibrium between nature, the cosmos and human beings.

PILLAR 7 COLLECTIVES AND ORGANISATIONS

Agroecology is based on collectives. Families, communities, organizations and movements are central to make agroecology alive.

PILLAR 8 SELF-GOVERNED MARKETS

The autonomy of agroecology displaces the control of global markets and generates self-governance by communities.

PILLAR 9 FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

The autonomy of agroecology displaces the control of global markets and generates self-governance by communities. / We need to put the control of seeds, biodiversity, land and territories, waters, knowledge, culture in the hands of the peoples who feed the world.

PILLAR 10 WOMEN ARE CENTRAL

Women and their knowledge, values, vision and leadership are critical for moving forward, play a central role in Agroecology.

PILLAR 11 YOUTH ARE CRITICAL

Agroecology can provide a radical space for young people to contribute to the social and ecological transformation that is underway in many of our societies.

WHY AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS?

*Our starting point is the local level, so that our position is deeply grounded and thereby enhanced,
in order to influence change on the global level - Schola Campesina*

WHY AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS?

Agroecology schools have become strategic spaces of social movements for scaling up agroecology, strengthening the work for food sovereignty and engaging people, especially youth, in agroecology. An Agroecology School is a self-organised safe space where farmers share knowledge and wisdom on a peer-to-peer principle. The School's methodology is rooted in years of experience of the work done by La via Campesina in the methodology campesino-a-campesino. Peasant knowledge is at the heart of our model of food production. Being autonomous of governments or formal adult education institutions, Agroecology Schools bridge the gap between practical and theoretical knowledge, as well as technical and political skills and provide a platform to unite learning and knowledge-sharing with action research and civic engagement. They are holistic and empowering, including two-way learning processes between policy makers, researchers and farmers to build strategic networks.

WHY AGROECOLOGY ORGANISATIONS?

Agroecology Schools are tools in the hands of organisations who use them to better understand the nature of their work, to better coordinate their action and carry out outcomes of learning into social, economic and political space. Strengthening farmers' organisations and building networks is fundamental in amplifying agroecology. Moreover, organised farmers help to build evidence that supports agroecology as a modern way of farming in the face of climate change and the current industrial food system's glaring injustices. Forms of organisations change through history. Historical popular forms of organisation, such as cooperatives, have been emptied out and devoid of their true meaning, self-regulation and agency. We need to address these very dynamics through strengthening farmers' and agroecological organisations.

READ ON: [Historical Background](#) - Schools of La Via Campesina section
READ ON: [Popular Education](#) section

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS - DEFINITION

Decisions are made collectively and learner-educators become accustomed to taking responsibility for their actions.
Human qualities such as humility, honesty, integrity and solidarity are considered as important to the learning process as
are composts, intercropping, and seed saving - La Via Campesina

WHAT DO WE TALK ABOUT?

Agroecology schools are the place where knowledge is shared within communities led by grassroots organizations on a diversity of topics determined by the local context. It can be either in the formal or informal educational system, in a solid structure or without walls. They tend to have the following elements:

- **For society transformation:** Agroecology schools facilitate knowledge sharing for a change toward a fairer society
- **Based on local needs and realities:** Agroecology schools are facilitating the exchanges to solve local problems faced in a specific context and reality.
- **Based on local knowledge:** The main source of knowledge is held in the farming community, enriched by other sources
- **Popular education:** Agroecology schools are using popular education methods, where participants are the main agent / knowledge holder.

- **Based on horizontal learning processes:** Agroecology schools are facilitating the exchange of knowledge, free of hierarchy. Learners and teachers are exchanging roles in a continuous dialogue. Experts are complementing the existing knowledge provided by all participants.
- **Dialogue of different kinds of knowledge:** (food producers, academia, activist, ...): Allied by a common vision (food sovereignty) in a space of trust, a diversity of knowledge, wisdom, ideas, feelings awareness is enriching participants. Food producers and communities, in relation with academia, experts, and activists can build promising dialogue in agroecology schools.
- **Participatory Action Research:** Research dimension in agroecology schools is always focused on people's needs and will be based on people agency in research processes (will not take food producers and their communities as object of academic research).

READ ON: Local Organizations at the Heart of Food Sovereignty [PDF](#)

WHY KNOWLEDGE? WHAT INNOVATION?

Given that historically the family structure was often based on patriarchy and has oppressed women for centuries, we must find new ways of ensuring the transfer of knowledge in a world in which farming is not inherited from father to son, but rather, new entrants experience a cultural transition in order to become true peasant farmers or specialists in agroecology/gies
- Schola Campesina

WHY KNOWLEDGE?

In an agroecological approach, which includes a wide range of actors, food producers are at the centre. It is therefore essential to recover, preserve and develop the knowledge that is useful for their activities and autonomy in order to secure the future of food producers. This is also crucial for new farmers and young people who want to farm in close connection with the ecosystem and their immediate environment. Without knowledge and skills appropriate to local needs (how to grow food on small plots, how to plan and build the appropriate equipment, how to prepare food for storage and marketing, etc.) farmers fall into dangerous dependency, e.g. on industrial seed producers. Agroecological education goes beyond vertical model of technical knowledge transfer and is horizontal; learning takes place in communities, it is often an empowering and a valued and sensitive space where people teach each other and contribute to change development paradigms and food system transformations.

WHAT IS INNOVATION FOR US?

Innovation inspired by agroecology and food sovereignty is aimed at the collective common good, and can be strengthened with the help of digitalisation. Innovation can't mean fewer farmers and less work in rural areas. Farmers provide the means for achieving a basic human right: the right to adequate food – without them this right is no longer granted. Farmers' knowledge has been extracted countless times in order to control of the production chain. The dematerialisation of agriculture is a work in progress and is clearly set on a collision course with the interests of family farming. The meaning of innovation hides a large part of the capitalist system that seeks to transform food production from a communal, social, democratic act that is respectful of the natural cycles into a commercial business for a few. Agroecology is the innovation based on peasant knowledge, which strengthens farmers' knowledge and farmers' autonomy.

READ ON Digitalization and Innovation in the frame of Agroecology [WWW](#)

READ ON: Everyday Experts: How people's knowledge can transform the food system [BOOK](#)

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS

#1 STARTING UP

Our starting point is the local level, so that our position is deeply grounded and thereby enhanced, in order to influence change on the global level - Schola Campesina

GET INSPIRED - LOOK IN, LOOK OUT

There are various agroecology trainings already run by various grassroots organisations: farmers' associations, self-organised consumer initiatives such as Community Supported Agriculture groups, land education collectives and mixed advocacy coalitions. The political roots of such programmes, in so far as they respond to concrete needs of social and peasant movements, are in that they tend to contribute to food system transformations in their territories. As such, trainings unlike more general adult education offerings go beyond individual learning outcomes. There are also courses and trainings offered by formal academic institutions. It is yet unclear to what extent these courses are actually contributing or not to paradigm change, or to what extent, the tools used aim at empowering participants to impact their political contexts. You can draw inspiration and invite expert practitioners from different fields and partner organisations.

DEVELOP VISION AND GOALS

Agroecology Schools are a tool for strengthening grassroots organisations and movements, training (young) farmers (and activists) of the food sovereignty movement and dynamising their engagement as political subjects. The objective of the school is to help carry out the vision of agroecological organisations, defined collectively and coming from their territories and communities. The form of the school follows function: Agroecology School can take a form of an annual training for organisation members, or be a core and integrated element of organisation structure. The primary step is to define within the organisation the needs and vision of the Organisation's work, and to build the School's goals and its training programmes from there on. While Agroecology Schools are diverse, their common characteristic features include horizontalism (popular education methods), *dialogo de saberes*, combining political and technical knowledge and building social movement networks or organisational capacity.

READ ON: Local Organizations at the Heart of Food Sovereignty PDF

Territories are a fundamental pillar of agroecology. Peoples and communities have the right to maintain their own spiritual and material relationships to their lands. [...] This implies the full recognition of their laws, traditions, customs, tenure systems, and institutions, and constitutes the recognition of the self-determination and autonomy of peoples - Nyeleni Declaration 2015

FORM A PEDAGOGICAL COMMITTEE

A pedagogical committee is a coordinating body made up of leading organisation members, allied pedagogues or experts who share basic principles of Agroecology. Their work is to identify priorities, diagnose needs, choose training themes and co-create a training proposal or educational strategy for the organisation. Since agroecological learning is transdisciplinary, combining several disciplines and areas, from academia to production practices and advocacy work, the committee can invite into collaboration other experts. The pedagogical committee may also set up criteria for participants and the enrollment process, choose the farmstead and work with farm host to prepare the learning space. It may also nominate facilitators and research for appropriate resources, including funding to deliver the programme. In Agroecology Schools the emphasis is on the reciprocal connection between learner-educators. As such, training participants may be involved in co-creating and adapting the training curriculum.

READ ON: Local Organizations at the Heart of Food Sovereignty PDF

SET OBJECTIVES FOR YOUR SCHOOLS

- To share knowledge in a farmer-to-farmer way to spread practices, especially based on local, ancestral wisdom, and respect for food producers;
- To demonstrate the power and successes of existing agroecological approaches, to showcase grassroots innovations and leverage the lessons to achieve a systemic change;
- To build leadership and educational capacity in the organisation and strengthen outreach;
- To raise awareness about advocacy work or political campaigns coordinated by the organisation, to build bottom-up policy work;
- To meet cyclically generations of practitioners and uncover arising needs, interests and issues from various perspectives;
- To create direct relationships between farmers, consumers and academia, and to rebuild the pact of trust and responsibility for our food systems;
- To apply pedagogical methods and contents learned from other organisations and train own facilitators

READ ON: Local Organizations at the Heart of Food Sovereignty [PDF](#)

BOX 1.1 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN STARTING UP:

FROM WHERE? Who is defining and promoting the agroecological school or training programme? For what purpose? Who may be involved in defining how the training will be developed? Will the School have a transformative agroecology focus? What needs of the organisation/movement will the training respond to?

FOR WHOM? Who the participants, teachers and facilitators will be? What is the intended pedagogical dynamics in learning? Will the group be more homogenous or more diverse; will previously unrelated stakeholders meet around the table? Will the participants be gaining skills or also sharing skills? **HOW?** Which forms of learning, actions and methodologies will you use? Will the courses include a strong critique to the current developmental and political policies and actions? Are the dynamics of oppression and power hierarchy to be actively uncovered and worked through? Is the function of educational process more about beginner's level or advanced and deepening reflection and co-creation exercise? About knowledge transfer and skill-honing, or about action-research and active enquiry?

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS

#2 TRAININGS

We call on our fellow peoples to join us in the collective task of collectively constructing agroecology as part of our popular struggles to build a better world, a world based on mutual respect, social justice, equity, solidarity and harmony with our

Mother Earth - Nyeleni Declaration 2015

TYPES OF TRAININGS

Agroecology Schools employ a variety of learning forms, keeping the peasant and farmers' wisdom at the heart. School can combine activities:

- Farm work and farm study visits provide encouraging testimonials of agroecological experience and transition;
- Capacity building political trainings based on multi-stakeholder and multi-perspective dialogue;
- Design workshops for field experiments and field visits on demonstration and research farms;
- Workshops, trainings and group consultations on specialist agroecological production techniques;

- Community action research and other forms of structured enquiry, such as TAPE;
- Theatre of the Oppressed engages learners with social issues and decision-making;
- Games, fairs and exhibitions around practices and products motivate for innovation;

METHODS AND TOOLS

In an Agroecology School, one of our objectives is to make learning an active peer process. We encourage learners to take action on their own behalf and to articulate their own perspective. For this, we engage in discussions and value all contributions equally. For learners, who feel empowered to co-create the context of learning, trainings are prototypical situations of negotiating and impacting their wider social and political context.

There is a great variety of facilitation schools and tools (see back of the toolkit for references).. When choosing tools you might want to think about:

Variety: Using a range of techniques and different activities helps to engage a wider spectrum of learners
Accessibility: Not every form of activity will be accessible to everyone; check prior the training needs in the group
Consent: not everyone will want to take part in scheduled activities; give people freedom to choose.

READ ON: POPULAR EDUCATION, for example training documents **RESOURCE & LINKS**

READ ON: TOOLKITS section if you're looking to hone your facilitation skills

The use of education, learning, and training as a strategy to build movements and fight oppression has a long history, especially in agrarian social movements [...] such approaches contrast with top-down approaches in that they seek to empower learners rather than simply fill them with information - EAKEN

TRAINING THEMES

Training and research themes are proposed by a pedagogical committee. The training seeks to bring together members of small-scale food producers organisations and/or other actors to share experiences and discuss issues relating to food and agriculture governance, peasant knowledge, peasant autonomy, agroecological practices, global peasant struggles, food policy, women empowerment, etc.

There are many ways to organise trainings, and each organisation will have specific needs and capacity, including economic means and other resources, that will influence the training programme. A general introductory training on agroecology will have a mix of theoretical and practical modalities. It may for example address one Agroecology principle a day. Alternatively, a school may run a specialised thematic training around specific production sector, pointing to political, social and economic dimensions of agroecology. Some organisations may choose to structure agroecological training around particular modalities of learning, based on the goal behind the training and the profiles of participants (dialogue, trips, expert presentations, fieldwork etc)

EXAMPLE OF TRAINING BY MODULE

Example of dividing the training programme into modules, reflecting five different types of knowing:

Module 1- On Agroecology appropriate to the region. Nyeleni Agroecoogy and FAO 10 elements of Agroecology

Module 2 - Learning Community. Get to know each other and presentation of the training process, framework and methodology. The module will be expressed through presentations and informal interactions.

Module 3- Socio-economic aspects of food systems. Focus on global governance and decision-making processes related to food and agriculture at the global level. How food policies are set up at regional and sub-regional scales. The module will seek to highlight the structure, logic and power relations that characterize the current corporate food system and be mainly explored through collective readings.

Module 4- Agriculture and livestock agroecological production and processing. Agroecological practices

including biodiversity, farm's relationship with surrounding ecosystems, life cycles, composting, multicropping and agroforestry, management of natural resources, seeds and old varieties, raw product processing.

Module 5- Territories and Communities. Peasant knowledge and recovering popular memory, collective peasant identity, rural sociology, rural extension and peasant autonomy. Ways of disseminating agroecology (scaling up as well as scaling out) - the Cuban territorial approach of disseminating agroecology through the 'Campesino a campesino' method and the Italian 'Biodistretto' system and the role of the territory. The importance of women empowerment in our organisations and in agricultural activities in general is also a key issue in spreading agroecology and this will be discussed as part of this module.

Module 6- Peasant empowerment. Sharing tools and learning tools to take back home. Highlight and discuss the networks and initiatives linked to trainings and courses, such as LVC's IALA Agroecology Schools, "Collective on Agroecology, Seeds, and Biodiversity", the European Peasant Agroecology Exchange Network, Nyéléni, etc. The module will set up media and IT tools for knowledge capitalization and sharing, will improve the skills related to building organisations and strengthen peasant autonomy.

SOURCE: 2017 Training on Agroecology & Global Governance of Food Systems, Schola Campesina.

Families, communities, collectives, organizations and movements are the fertile soil in which agroecology flourishes. Collective self-organization and action are what make it possible to scale-up agroecology, build local food systems, and challenge corporate control of our food system - Nyeleni 2015 Declaration

EXAMPLE DAY-BY-DAY PROGRAMME

Thursday 28th of September

Agroecology: Agroecology: what is our agroecology? Exchange of local realities that shape the local agroecology. Connection of smallholders realities to the 11 pillars on agroecology of Nyéléni and the 10 elements of FAO.

Speakers: Andrea Ferrante, Schola Campesina

Friday 29th of September

Rural extension How to share knowledge amongst food producers? The role of agroecology schools and other initiatives and networks. Basic principles of popular education. Speakers: Dario Mencagli, AUCS, Crocevia farm, Italy Nasseegh Yaffer, World Forum of Fisher Peoples

30-31st of October

Feelings and agroecology. Cultural weekend.

Saturday: Trekking on Via Amerina up to the town of "Ci ita castellana". Evening: Folk music "Taranta e pizzica"

Sunday: Lunch at Fattoria Lucciano, Civita castellana

Monday 2nd of October

14. Local policies and local food system. Role of the territory and the local management of food systems for food sovereignty. Introduction to the Bio-district. Local policies and sustainable management of natural resources.

Urban-rural linkages and farmers-consumers linkages. Speakers: Javier Sánchez, La Via Campesina

Tuesday 3rd of October

18. Farmer's organizations Farmer's organizations as social actors for change. How to get stronger and influence local policies? How to build a social control on natural resources?

Speakers: Michel Pimbert, Director of the Center for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University, UK; Andrea Ferrante, Schola Campesina

Wednesday 4th of October

Democratising knowledge for agroecology and food sovereignty. Knowledge and power relations, people's

access to knowledge and know-how as a political issue.

Speakers: Michel Pimbert, Director of the CAWR ,UK

Thursday 5th of October

Biodiversity & Seeds. Intellectual property rights, criminalization of farmers' seeds, international treaties and regulations, seeds, international actors and roles (CGIAR, FAO), institutional lock-ins, farmer's seeds networks, seeds selection and conservation methods.

Speakers: Guy Kastler, Réseau semences paysannes, France; Emile Frison, IPES-Food, ex- Biodiversity Intern.; Fabio Caporali, Tuscia University (Agrarian ecology)

SOURCE: International Training on Peasant Agroecology and Food and Agriculture Global Governance 25th of September – 7th of October 2017, Rome

READ ON: TRAINING RESOURCES section at the end

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS

#3 SCALING OUT

Horizontally, it is necessary for agroecology to reach out from the existing 'lighthouse farms' and engage many thousands and millions more small farmers [...]. This horizontal growth is called 'scaling-out' because it involves a process of taking agroecology to a greater geographic and productive scale based on the accumulation of farm-level transitions - LVC Toolkit

2017

There are various activities, that can strengthen the scaling out effect of Agroecology Schools to reach out farmers and other sectors. These can include:

MAPPING

AGROECOLOGICAL

TERRITORIES

Mapping can be based research, field visits and/or surveys, focusing on topic-specific technical areas or broad pooling of cross-sectoral networks data.

AUTONOMOUS MEDIA

Producing own informational and publicity materials helps to communicate field and regional experiences outward, to wider community, also internationally. Collaborations with storytellers or farm volunteers can yield fresh material for newsletters or website.

COLLECTIVE CELEBRATION

When organising events, such as training, exhibitions, regional cultural events with heritage foods, farm visits and conferences, create also reflective and celebratory space that brings joy and appreciation.

DIGITAL

LITERACY

&

NETWORKS

Utilise digital software, especially social media, to create vibrant post-training communication & knowledge sharing channels. Remember about simple technical instructions for those, who are less than fluent.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Organising trainings requires resources, many of which can be pooled together by participants themselves. Look for opportunities to encourage gift economy to increase financial sustainability of your School.

DEVELOP & CIRCULATE STRATEGIES

Using Agroecology School as a space to develop organisation's strategies & action plans, inform your networks and members by circulating & presenting working documents.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Create and share widely a library of resources.

READ ON: [ADVOCACY](#) section, Scaling Agroecology Up and Out Report [PDF](#)

BUILDING TRUST & ALLIANCES

Policy advocacy for agroecology generally works well when it is embedded in broad collaborations among farmers, researchers, and civil society organisations, and specifically includes women and indigenous peoples [...] - Amplifying Agroecology 2016

BOX 1.1. BUILDING TRUST, STARTING SMALL

The principles of the farmer-to-farmer method have been at the core of its success of La Via Campesina regional Agroecology Schools:

- 1. Start slowly and at a small scale.** This principle allows for evaluation, reflection, and the rectification of errors. It diminishes the magnitude of risks. It also allows farmers both great participation, as well as time to manage their work on the farm.
- 2. Limit the introduction of knowledge.** It is not necessary, in agroecology, to introduce many new themes all at one time. It is more efficient to gain command of new topics one by one, and stabilize and integrate them little by little.
- 3. Attain quick and recognizable success.** Enthusiasm is a generator of new ideas, and success is the most effective motivator. This principle seeks to be the moral engine during development, recognizing the advances made by daily tasks.
- 4. Experiment on a small scale.** Experimentation is nothing more than testing, sharing, adapting, and adopting new techniques or solutions, based on needs. By this principle, the farmer becomes an active and innovative experimenter and the farm, his or her rich and permanent laboratory, or in the organisation network.
- 5. Develop a multiplier effect.** Sharing information between peasants about results and lessons learned is the only way by which one can achieve extension and growth. Teaching is the best way to learn a subject in depth, and much of this teaching lies in creating a living example, and communicating from farmer to farmer. 'For the farmer, seeing is believing.'

SOURCE: LVC TOOLKIT (Bunch, 1982; Machín et al. 2010)

BOX 1.1 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND NGOS

It is important to distinguish between social movement organisations (SMOs) and non- governmental organisations (NGOs). Both are non-state actors and are, in general, recognised as part of civil society. The most crucial distinction between them pertains to the issue of membership. SMOs are constituted by their members, organised formally or informally, and engaged collectively from grassroots protest, resistance and change in a political project. The membership is central to the legitimacy of SMOs, their leadership and their ways of working. NGOs tend to be functionally specialised, with paid and professional staff, defining their work by their organisational goals rather than by their membership. This distinction is crucial in the context of food sovereignty, where there was an early rejection by the SMOs of the tendency of many NGOs to speak on behalf of social movements and grassroots organisations. In this context, social movement organisations have managed over time to assert their protagonism in relation to their NGO allies, giving them a supportive role. This support can be diverse in terms of political solidarity, expertise, funding, facilitation or media support. It is also essential for NGOs to respect the differentiation of roles and

responsibilities between them and the SMOs, and accept the need to adapt to the SMOs often slower and more complex decision-making and implementation processes.

SOURCE: Ch.4 The role of trust in building alliances in Everyday Experts

LEARNING COMMUNITY

Our learning processes are horizontal and peer-to-peer, based on popular education. They take place in our own training centers and territories (farmers teach farmers, fishers teach fishers, etc.), and are also inter-generational, with exchange of knowledge between youth and elders. Agroecology is developed through our own innovation, research, and crop and livestock selection and breeding - Nyeleni 2015

PART II - LEARNING COMMUNITY

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MOVEMENT-BASED LEARNING

Something that's really crucial to stimulate the process is to convince people what they know is relevant and that they hold the knowledge themselves. [...] Such confidence and capacity building, when embedded within a strategic program to scale up and scale out a learning program, can create a catalytic effect, where more learners become teachers and the process takes on a self-perpetuating momentum - Colin Anderson, 2019

BOX 1.1. MOVEMENT-BASED LEARNING - lessons from LVC

Movement schools are about creating social situations in which learners can transform their way of thinking and doing, so that together they can create the microcosm of the society they wish to live in. This means that each person is responsible for building the school community, rather than leaving everything to a group of administrators.

Decisions are made collectively and learner educators become accustomed to taking responsibility for their actions. Human qualities such as humility, honesty, integrity and solidarity are considered as important to the learning process as composts, intercropping, and seed saving.

One of the major characteristics of movement schools is their organicity, a term meaning that people are

connected to one another in bonds of reciprocity, communication, planning and follow-up of tasks that are defined collectively. Learner-educators work in permanent small groups that share productive, academic and managerial duties within the school setting. Additionally, working groups are established by topic to make sure that all the needed actions at the school are carried out.

This form of direct democracy is reflected and improved upon over time through the actions of the Political-Pedagogical Coordination, a body made up of leading cadres from the social movements. Coursework is transdisciplinary, combining several academic disciplines with long homestays in peasant communities near the schools, allowing learner-educators to learn from the 'chalkboard of reality' as they develop skills related to rural assessments and participatory community work.

READ ON: [La Via Campesina Peasant Agroecology Schools TOOLKIT](#)

MOVEMENT-BASED LEARNING

Peasant to Peasant methodology "sets knowledge free and awakens the enthusiasm to discover, recover and socialize the rich peasant knowledge, tightly linked to the territory, the memories and the socio-historic conditions of the place -

Rivierra-Ferre

FARMER-TO-FARMER *campesino-a-campesino*

While agroecology learning is relatively embryonic across Europe, its potential as a tool to build up social movement networks has been exemplified in the Cuban *Farmer-to-Farmer* movement, where, through social processes of learning, the program built up a base made up of 50% of all the peasant families in Cuba (Rosset et al. 2011).

Of course, there are many differences between the European context and the Cuban or other Latin American countries where much of the literature on agroecology learning has been developed. First, there is generally a larger peasant contingent in the Latin American context, with denser networks. Next, there is a much stronger tradition of popular education, whereas in Europe these traditions have been weakened through the neoliberal period. Finally, whereas in many Latin American contexts, peasant social movements have long advanced agroecology within an anti-capitalist and decolonizing framework, peasant movements in Europe have only recently begun to embrace a transformative agro-ecology for food sovereignty (Nyéléni 2017; Pimbert 2015).

SOURCE: Anderson, C. 2019

DIALOGUE OF WAYS OF KNOWING *diálogo de saberes*

Diálogo de saberes is one of the key elements of Agroecology Schools' pedagogical methods. It takes seriously learners' lived experiences as a point of departure. The method generates a space of transdisciplinary mutual learning. In practice this means that lecturers and students exchange knowledge in a non-hierarchical and respectful environment following the principles of horizontality. This requires honing of skills and confidence in one's ability to listen and think critically, take a stand and express a position as well as reflect individually and collectively, including the emotions and feelings that may emerge.

One way of using *diálogo de saberes* is to structure a series of interventions between actors from different constituencies (farmers, food workers, consumers, scientists, etc). Such multi-actor and inter-sectoral dialogues are essential to transform the food systems together based on food-sovereignty.

FORMAL VS NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

FORMAL EDUCATION (FE)

Formal education mainly occurs in schools, colleges and has pre-requisites and non-flexible, subject-determined curriculum. Increasingly agroecology is moving to this mode, as universities increase agroecological courses, which may restrict its ability to adapt to change and demonstrate learning diversity. However, it also has some mainstream advantages, such as reaching large numbers. FE tends to have a top-down teaching style, fixed curriculum and is often difficult to change.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE)

Non-formal education generally takes place in communities. People teach each other and may or may not get certificates etc. NFE in the community is often a more radical and a philosophical place for learning. It is non-discriminatory and it has a network pattern. This has strength. NFE is most often egalitarian and bi-directional. It favours equality of experience and authority and personal communication.

POPULAR EDUCATION

Education either functions as an instrument to...bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world
- Paulo Freire

PHILOSOPHICAL

ROOTS

The use of education, learning, and training as a strategy to build movements and fight oppression has a long history, especially in agrarian social movements. Sometimes referred to as 'popular education', such approaches contrast with top-down approaches in that they seek to empower learners rather than simply fill them with information.

Popular Education centres people's knowledge and understanding of their own world to generate and legitimise the expertise and strategies within their community. The purpose of popular education is the cyclical process of people joining with peers to critically reflect on the socio-economic and political conditions they exist in, and then imagine possibilities for something better to emerge.

In this way, popular education seeks to transform situations and institutions by "uncovering" the necessary knowledge for a (social) agroecological transition within economies and territories.

READ ON: Summary of Popular Education [PDF](#)

PEDAGOGY OF PAULO FREIRE

Paolo Freire, the author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Education for Critical Consciousness*, born in 1921 in Recife, Brasil, headed a literacy programme that trained more than 5 million people to read and write. Six principles of Freire's education are:

- The aim of education is radical transformation of our own lives, our communities, and our societies;
- Identify "generative themes" as the basis for the learning process; people learn best and work hardest for change when they have strong feelings about an issue and are emotionally engaged;
- Dialogue is essential. Learning must be participatory. The educator (or animator) creates the space for this authentic dialogue
- Use a problem-posing approach to analyze and understand the root causes of injustice. Find answers together and use them for action planning;
- Use a reflection/ action approach – what Freire referred to as praxis – in order to create change;

- No education is neutral – every approach supports certain values and worldviews.

Read: Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Paulo Freire) EN

POPULAR EDUCATION

There is a lot groups: the group of the men who sanctify peasant farming; the group of the young, who only want to engage in permaculture, the group of the women who just want to keep it practical, but don't really want to engage politically. So these are some of the bottlenecks

- Attila Szocs-Boruss

WHY HORIZONTALISM?

In Agroecology Schools participants are expected to share knowledge and experiences in a peer-to-peer perspective as well as to learn from other participants and guest speakers. The guest speakers are expected to learn from the participants and vice-versa, in a horizontal dialogue or “Diálogo de Saberes”.

“Horizontalism” is one of the key concepts within popular education and it involves a democratic, non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian communication that resembles more co-creation, than reaction. The approach recognises people’s ability to think critically and strategically, and to contribute knowledge, positioning learners as co-creators of their own learning process and activating in them a sense of discovery, confidence and agency. Horizontal learning environments also have the advantage of fostering confidence in participants, emphasising that everyone has experience and knowledge to contribute to any learning environment (i.e. as teachers)

WATCH: Farmer Trainings, Farm Consultations, Field Experiments in Georgia **VIDEO**

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUTH

WOMEN’S KNOWLEDGE & PERSPECTIVE

Women and their knowledge, values, vision and leadership are critical for moving forward. Migration and globalization mean that women’s work is increasing, yet women have far less access to resources than men. All too often, their work is neither recognized nor valued. For agroecology to achieve its full potential, there must be equal distribution of power, tasks, decision-making and remuneration - Nyeleni Declaration of Agroecology 2015

YOUTH’S KNOWLEDGE & PERSPECTIVE

Youth, together with women, provide one of the two principal social bases for the evolution of agroecology. Agroecology can provide a radical space for young people to contribute to the social and ecological transformation that is underway in many of our societies. Youth bear the responsibility to carry forward the collective knowledge learned from their parents, elders and ancestors into the future. They are the stewards of agroecology for future generations. Agroecology must create a territorial and social dynamic that creates opportunities for rural youth and values women’s leadership - Nyeleni Declaration of Agroecology 2015

LEARNING SPACES

Building trust among the participants was a key concern when designing the programme and methodology. Respect for the other, being open to listening and learning, creating a common language and understanding, and building mutual trust were unstated objectives of the Forum and they were put into practice throughout the event - Building Trust as a Social

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

Creating intentional educational spaces is extremely important in Agroecology Schools. This refers to not only the physical spaces, but also the processes of building and “educational environment”, creating conditions for an atmosphere of safety and trust.

Learning environment impacts on how people learn and can reflect the theme of the day. A farm is an unmatched setting for locating agroecology trainings, due to the very immersion in all the dimensions of agroecology at hand's reach. Building an educational environment combines activities with attitudes; each person is responsible for the group, and the group is responsible for each of the individuals, thus, bringing emotions into the learning process. Agroecology schools can use many spaces: training module on *Communities and Territories* may take the form of a nature field trip, whilst the day on *Collective rights to seeds*, a form of seed exchange or seed-saving on farm..

FARM AS A TRAINING SPACE

Lessons from Schola Campesina

The trainings are held in an agroecological farm of the Biodistrict of Via Amerina e della Forre where all Schola Campesina's members farms are located, allowing the participants to discover an Italian family farm environment and will also include a one day field visit in Rome. Close proximity to FAO enables training participants to directly participate in international meetings, such as the launch of the HLPE or CSM work. The agrotourism facilities on farm, combined with large hangar adopted for activities space, family-style kitchen and ongoing production activities around allow to connect and intersperse more theoretical discussions with nature and farmwork, whilst field trips to other collaborating farms help to understand territorial dimension.

PART III. ADVOCACY

Agroecology training must also include the political...I come from a country where peasant farming is a way of life and it's still very vivid in the rural area. So training on how to do agriculture is not a necessary thing. This is happening naturally in the rural communities. But what is missing, and this is what is happening in agroecology, is a more political training on how to articulate our political demands and how to act on achieving political aims

- Ramona Dumunicioiu

PART III - ADVOCACY

AGROECOLOGY FRAMEWORKS
POLICY MEASURES

p.

AGROECOLOGY FRAMEWORKS - MAIN DIFFERENCES: Nyéléni, FAO, HLPE

The efforts of defining agroecology and developing different sets of agroecological principles have been occurring in various contexts by different actors with different perspectives - HLPE, 2019

Three important initiatives to conceptually define agroecology are:

- The 11 pillars of the Nyéléni Declaration
- The 10 elements by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2018a)
- The 13 principles by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE, 2019)

The Nyeleni definition of agroecology was shaped by the different aspects that characterise territorial food systems operated by communities around the world. These aspects were reported by grassroots organisations.

It is a bottom-up process aimed at defending human rights in the face of unequal power relations..

According to the Declaration of Nyéléni (2015), agroecology advocates an agricultural model

- that respects farmers' rights and livelihoods,
- that aims to feed the surrounding population,
- that is based on local biodiversity
- that is managed at the local level.

The definitions from FAO and HLPE, based on extensive consultations, are institutional processes that aim to capture the key elements of food system sustainability.

It is a process, led by international institutions and experts with the general idea of overcoming the existing climate, environmental and social crisis.

The different nature of these processes naturally leads to differences in the content of the definitions. In general, the FAO and HLPE definitions refer more to the ecological character of the production system, while the Nyéléni Declaration focuses more on culture, social, rights and governance issues. In fact, 5 of the 10 FAO elements (1, 3, 4, 5, 6) concern the production side at farm level, while this is only the case for the second pillar “Ecological Principles” of the Nyeleni Declaration. The agency of the populations is fundamental in the Nyéléni definition of agroecology and is poorly represented in HLPE and FAO definitions, similarly to the central role of organisations and collectives..

READ ON: HLPE Agroecology PDF FAO 10 elements Agroecology PDF

POLICY MEASURES TO FACILITATE SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE FOR AGROECOLOGY

Strengthening farmers' organisations is fundamental in amplifying agroecology, because together farmers' organisations can create a grassroots movement that is capable of influencing mindsets and policy

- Amplifying Agroecology 2016

We have built agroecology through many initiatives and struggles. We have the legitimacy to lead it into the future. Policy makers cannot move forward on agroecology without us. They must respect and support our agroecological processes rather than continuing to support the forces that destroy us - Nyeleni Declaration 2015

A. Better recognition and support from the States of the existing agroecology initiatives of knowledge co-

creation and sharing -and of the actors behind these initiatives.

- Policies should acknowledge the existing informal initiatives -organized by non institutional actor demonstrating a valuable experience in educating farmers in agroecology-, as knowledge institution. The actors behind these initiatives -including the partner organizations of this project- should also be recognized and supported for the work accomplished so far in designing and providing adequate training for resilient and sustainable food system through agroecology, with an horizontal and peer-to-peer education and learning systems.
- Policies facilitate the access to ground-up, grassroots, community-based and diversified educational, training and capacity building initiatives specifically for youth; enhancing participatory and inclusive engagement and self-determination.

B. The inclusion of Agroecology -in all its dimensions- in the formal education system, in vocation trainings as well as in lifelong trainings.

- The existing courses in the formal system of education do not address agroecology in all its dimensions but are mainly dedicated to the ecological production of food. Adequate trainings for agroecology cover very different dimensions of food systems, starting from the Human Rights to the importance of the collective action, the territorial autonomy with self-governed markets, the relation with land and Nature, the transformation of the society for more equity; while recognizing the central role of women and youth in the food systems. A food system approach is required to address the increasing and concerning challenges.

C. Progress in pedagogy, from top-down to horizontal learning processes, where food producers' knowledge is recognized as central and where youth are given a chance to be agent of change.

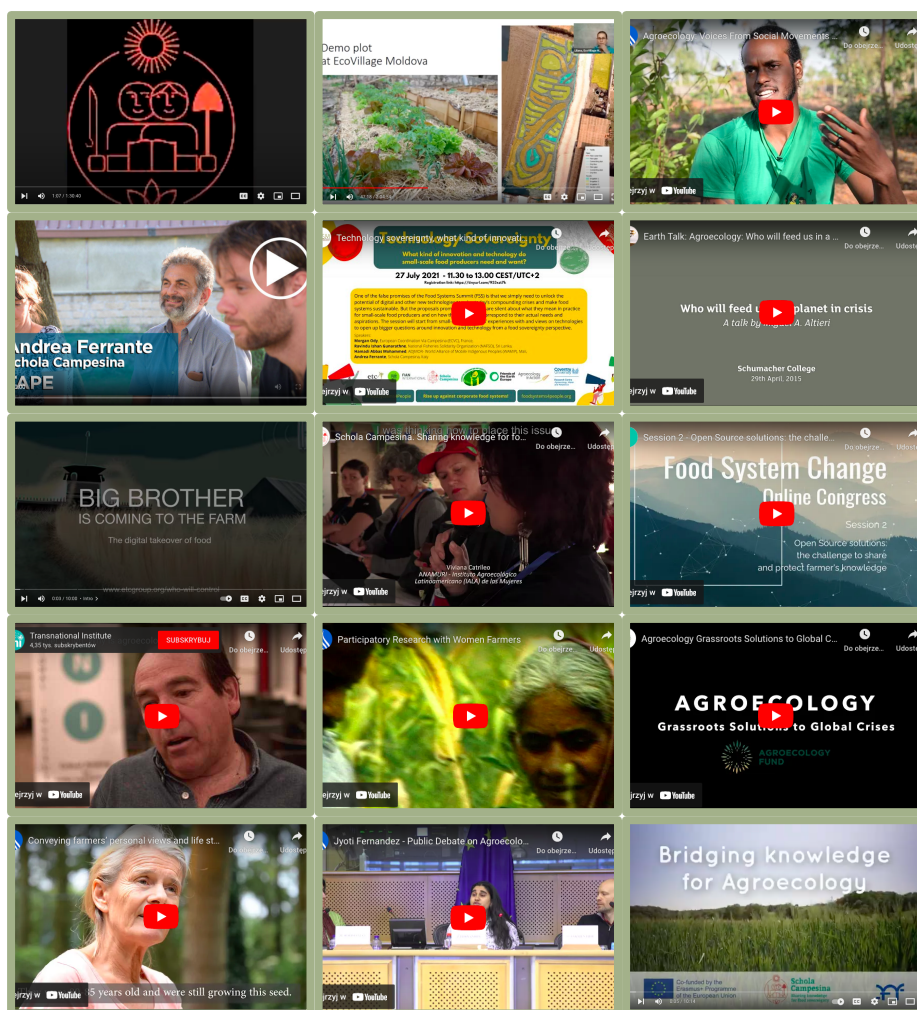
- Policies should acknowledge the central importance of small-scale food producers in the co-creation of knowledge and promote the horizontal dialogue with other kinds of knowledge such as academia's. Education for farmers should be based on concrete field examples and lessons learned from elder farmers and rural communities to share existing experiences of local economies.
- Policies should focus on the role and priorities of youth in education. Public research and training should be reoriented to build on the agency ("capacity to be agent") of youth and respond to their training needs to be skilled for transforming the food systems toward more sustainability.
- Public policies should promote participatory research given the key role that small-scale food producers play in research and development. The current unbalance in investment and research leading between the public and the private sector should be addressed by promoting participatory public led research, where farmers can set their priorities.

D. Promote, organize and fund collaboration between existing grassroots, community-based and diversified trainings that are so far poorly recognized and the formal education system

E. Create new spaces for knowledge sharing specifically between different generations

F. Allocate a specific fund for food producers' training, all life long.

SOURCE: Erasmus+ *Bridging Generations in Agroecology 2022*



GLOSSARY - KEY WORDS FOR AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS

ACTION RESEARCH

AMPLIFYING AGROECOLOGY

AUTONOMY

CO-CREATION OF

KNOWLEDGE

COOPERATION

DIVERSITY

EMANCIPATORY

EMPOWERING CRITICAL

REFLECTION

FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS

FEELINGS

HORIZONTAL LEARNING

INTERGENERATIONAL

INTERSECTORAL

NETWORKS & ALLIANCES

ORGANIZATIONS

PARTICIPATORY

PRINCIPLE-BASED

SCALING OUT/UP

SOLIDARITY

TECHNICAL & POLITICAL

TERRITORIAL DIMENSION

THEORETICAL & PRACTICAL

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

TRANSDISCIPLINARY

TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD

SYSTEMS

TRANSFORMATIVE

TRUST

ACTION RESEARCH Action research' is a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of significance concerning the flourishing of human persons, their communities, and the wider ecology in which we participate (Reason and Bradbury, 2008, Pimbert 2009)

AMPLIFYING AGROECOLOGY Amplification of agroecology the transformation of food systems, rather than just the spreading of a set of food production techniques. Amplification of agroecology (is) a long-term process leads by social movements, but encompasses all actors in the food system, including consumers.

AUTONOMY Building farm autonomy is a central issue for Agroecology Schools: valuing local knowledge, farmers, technologies for water and energy management, soil fertility and the multi-functionality of farming.

CO-CREATION OF KNOWLEDGE Innovations respond better to local challenges when co-created through participatory process. Participants should be engaged in the teaching process, not just mere recipients of vertical information transfer .

COOPERATION Agroecology Schools must be based on building cooperative situations among the actors involved in the agrifood system: producers, educators, consumers, social movements, (local) public institutions, along with initiatives and markets for a social-solidarity economy. This approach is based on enabling actors to work on the transformation of territories inspired by radical democratization of knowledge, teaching, institutions, economies and, in general, power.

DIVERSITY Agroecology School recognises the critical role of diversity in two aspects: ecological and social. Diversity is central in peasant farming, and it is through the observation and analysis of diversity that small producers improve and innovate their practices and approach. The process is based on continuous learning and embraces diverse modalities of knowledge that comprise peasant wisdom and art of food growing, land management, and environmental conservation.

EMANCIPATORY EDUCATION Emancipatory education dismantles the traditional vertical nature of teaching and learning and empowers learners to understand the wider context of learning and knowledge co-creation. It encourages learners to act on their understandings more effectively and enact change, both at first within the classroom, but ultimately to experience and reflect on their impact and affect other spaces.

EMPOWERING CRITICAL REFLECTION Developing critical consciousness among farmers through empowering their self-recognition, self-determination and visibility of experience is key to understanding the genuine role of agriculture.

FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS Grassroots organizations for small food producers include peasants and small family farmers, indigenous peoples, local communities, hunters and gatherers, small-scale livestock farmers and shepherds, and fishermen. These groups' work is essential combat poverty, food insecurity and hunger.

FEELINGS Peasant sentiment is based on awareness, love and respect for the land, the Earth, the commons, nature and all life forms. Agroecological education valorises feelings as part of the transformative learning process. Agroecology Schools recognise explicitly the emotional and organisational aspects of the shared common political identity in the group.

HORIZONTAL LEARNING A transformative learning approach and a central concept within popular education that involves democratic communication on the same level, non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian co-creation. A horizontal agroecology learning approach is a way to validate perspectives routinely sidelined in mainstream learning approaches.

INTERGENERATIONAL Agroecology School approaches the older generation with care, respect and a humble attitude, paying attention to how we can set up spaces for a more sensitive dialogue across differences in historical farming experiences.

INTERSECTORAL Agroecological education is intersectoral, showing us how various elements of the food system are linked. By bringing together into dialogue people from diverse sectors of economy and society, we learn that our concern for nature and care for the right to eat healthy, nutritious food connects us all deeply. From here we can build shared vision and act.

NETWORKS & ALLIANCES By building international networks through local, regional and national initiatives, new possibilities arise for exchange and the international mobility of pedagogical innovations from one location to another through the *dialogos de saberes*. Multi-scaled networks are critical for the sharing of agroecological knowledge and pedagogies and building capacity for further learning.

ORGANIZATIONS Decentralized and distributed local organizations play a key role in facilitating knowledge-sharing within transformative agroecological learning networks of producers and consumers.

PARTICIPATORY Agroecological education is based on *dialogo de saberes*, participatory methodologies and dynamics.

PEASANT TO PEASANT (*Campesino a Campesino*) Peasants have innovated and exchanged knowledge from ancient times, but the contemporary and systemized version of this exchange is known nowadays as the “Peasant to Peasant” (also known as farmer to farmer) methodology.

PRINCIPLE-BASED Agroecological education is based on the 11 Principles of Agroecology. These principles inform topics in the curriculum, the choice of training space, participant enrollment and the design of training programmes.

SCALING OUT/UP To amplify agroecology, it is helpful to imagine horizontal and vertical dimensions. Horizontally, it is necessary for agroecology to reach out from the existing ‘lighthouse farms’ and engage many thousands and millions more small farmers across the continents of the globe. This horizontal growth is called ‘scaling-out’.” On the other hand, agroecology cannot change global food systems without local **organisation-led processes**, projects promoting agroecology (supported by large funds), and social movements implementing agroecology with the scientific community in the context of ongoing agrarian reform and political structures (LVC Toolkit)

SOLIDARITY Sharing risks and benefits, and solidarity between rural and urban populations build strong, independent communities where agroecological knowledge can be horizontally learned.

TECHNICAL & POLITICAL Agroecology Schools connect learning about the practical aspects of agroecological production with the political project of food sovereignty. Whereas training on agriculture can happen naturally in communities, the political dimensions of training, including how to articulate political demands or impact institutions, is critical for empowering farming communities and organisations.

TERRITORIAL DIMENSION Agroecology Schools must enable transforming territories. The role of the territory as well as the local management of natural resources and food systems, with strong urban-rural links and farmer-consumer cooperation are critical for food sovereignty.

THEORETICAL & PRACTICAL A combination of theoretical (e.g. popular education, political agroecology), practical (ongoing study proposals for Food Sovereignty) and transformative (food networks and movements) approaches are typical of Agroecology Schools.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE Protecting and developing traditional knowledge is essential to maintaining the continuity of the farmer's vocation. Without traditional knowledge farmers could lose their autonomy and become vulnerable to external changes.

TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD SYSTEMS Agroecology links together science, practice and movements focused on social change and social justice. The agroecological transformation of the food system is a way to redesign it to achieve ecological, economic and social equality.

TRANSFORMATIVE Transformative agroecological learning changes the position of learners and makes them active discoverers. Agroecology schools help learners to reflect on their collective identity and struggles.

TRUST Trust between social movement leaders and non-governmental organisation workers is a result of long-term relationships built on shared values and goals, and the engagement of taking risks collectively, with a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities between the social movements and non-governmental organisations.

RESOURCES & LINKS

PART I - AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS

- 2022** Agroecology Guidebook: Bridging Generations in Agroecology [PDF](#)
- 2021** Agroecology in Europe and Central Asia - An overview by FAO [PDF](#)
- 2021** Food system and Digitalisation from a Food Sovereignty Approach [PDF](#)
- 2022** Agroecology, in, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Anthropology. (Pimbert, M.P.; Moeller, N.I.; Singh, J.; and Anderson, C.R., Oxford University Press [WWW](#)
- 2018** CIDSE (Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité). The principles of Agroecology [PDF](#)
- 2018** Pimbert, M.P. Democratizing knowledge and ways of knowing for food sovereignty, agroecology and biocultural diversity, in Pimbert, M.P. (ed.) Food Sovereignty, Agroecology And Biocultural Diversity. Constructing and Contesting Knowledge. London: Routledge, pp. 259-321. [WWW](#)
- 2017** Organizing for Food Systems Change (Anderson, C.R., Silivay. J. and K. Lobe) [PDF](#)
- 2015** The final report on the international forum for agroecology [PDF](#)
- 2015** Nyéléni International Forum for Agroecology. Nyéléni Center, Sélingué, Mali. 24–27 February 2015. [PDF](#)
- 2009** Agroecology, Small Farms, and Food Sovereignty, Altieri, M., in Monthly Review, 61 (3) [WWW](#)

TRAINING DOCUMENTS

- 2022** International Training on Agroecology - Sakarya Report [PDF](#)
- 2019** International Agroecology and Global governance youth training Programme & Methodology [PDF](#)
- 2019** Agro-Perma-Lab: Training Leaders in Agroecology, Programme [WWW](#)
- 2017** International Training on Peasant Agroecology and Global Governance Programme [PDF](#) / Methodology [PDF](#) / Description of modules & references [PDF](#)

PART II - LEARNING COMMUNITY

- 2023** Agroecology Stories from the Field: inspiring interviews with Agroecology Schools from BILIM Community [WWW](#)
- 2023** Farmer Trainings, Farm Consultations, Field Experiments and Agroecology Education in Georgia [VIDEO](#)
- 2023** Farmers' Seed Education and Network Building Strategies with Mariana Seremet – Gradina Molodovei, Fb Moldova and Ayida Jamangulova – Adi Dyikan Muras, Kyrgyzstan [VIDEO](#)
- 2016** Developing a European Agroecology Learning and Training Network. Research brief. [PDF](#)
- 2016** Strengthening people's knowledge, Farming Matters [WWW](#)
- 2014** Diálogo de saberes in La Vía Campesina: food sovereignty and agroecology (María Elena Martínez-Torres & Peter M. Rosset) [PDF](#)
- 2014** Everyday Experts: How people's knowledge can transform the food system [BOOK](#)
- 2014** La Vía Campesina and academia: a snapshot (Ch. 9 in Everyday Experts [BOOK](#)
- 2014** The role of trust in building alliances of social movements: organising the International Forum on Agroecology Ch 10 in Everyday Experts [BOOK](#)
- 2009** Book chapter: Pimbert, Michel, "Local Organizations at the Heart of Food Sovereignty," in Towards Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming Autonomous Food Systems [PDF](#)
- 2009** Book chapter: Pimbert, Michel, "Transforming Knowledge and Ways of Knowing" [PDF](#)
- 2006** Transforming Knowledge and Ways of Knowing for Food Sovereignty. Chapter 7 in Towards Food Sovereignty. Reclaiming autonomous food systems (Pimbert M.) [PDF](#)

PART III - ADVOCACY

- 2023** Rights to Knowledge & Undrop* – Political Education In Farmers' & Agroecological Organisations [VIDEO](#)

2023 Convention on Biological Diversity and Agroecology: Participation of Civil Society for Implementation [VIDEO](#)

2023 Podcast on Global Governance of Food and Agriculture, Schola Campesina (BAG Project) [AUDIO](#)

2023 Who's Tipping the Scales? The growing influence of corporations on the governance of food systems, and how to counter it (IPES-Food) [WWW](#)

2023 Food Systems for People report – Multistakeholderism and the corporate capture of global food governance. What is at risk in 2023? [WWW](#)

2022 Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in The Context of National Food Security [PDF](#)

2022 Agroecology for Europe (AE4EU) Policy Paper – “Improving Eco-schemes in the light of agroecology: Key recommendations for the 2023-2027 Common Agricultural Policy”. [WWW](#)

2022 Decision of the Cop15 / Cp-Mop10 / Np-Mop4 United Nations Biodiversity Conference, 7-19 December 2022 [PDF](#)

2021 A Long Food Movement: Transforming Food Systems by 2045 [PDF](#)

2021 What Will It Take To Reclaim Our Food System? A Long Food Movement! [VIDEO](#)

2021 CSM Vision on Food systems and Nutrition: An alternative to the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food systems and Nutrition (VGFSYN) [PDF](#)

2020 A Guide to Facilitation in the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM) for Relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) [PDF](#)

2019 E-Learning: Introduction to the Global Governance of Food and Agriculture from a Food Sovereignty Perspective [WWW](#)

2019 Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU (IPES-Food) [WWW](#)

2019 More farmers better food. Why and how to put small-scale sustainable producers at the core of the new CAP (Nyeleni Europe) [PDF](#)

2018 FAO Scaling Up Agroecology Initiative. Transforming Food and Agricultural Systems in Support of the SDGs [PDF](#)

2017 A Matter Of Scale A study of the productivity, financial viability and multifunctional benefits of small farms (20 ha and less) [PDF](#)

2017 Bringing home the results from Rome. Strengthening the use and application of CFS Policy Outcomes (CSM) [PDF](#)

2016 Agroecology Learning Exchange final report [PDF](#)

2016 How to amplify Agroecology [PDF](#)

2016 Civil Society and Indigenous People Mechanism. [PDF](#)

2017 International Planning Committee (IPC) Handbook (IPC) [PDF](#)

2016 Food Sovereignty Agenda of Transnational Rural Social Movements in the UN Global Governance (Mauro Conti) [PDF](#)

2015 Food sovereignty Turning the system upside down (GRAIN) [PDF](#)

2015 Towards food sovereignty: interrogating peasant voice in the United Nations Committee on World Food Security. Journal of Peasant Studies, volume 42 (1): 73-95 (Brem-Wilson, J) [PDF](#)

2014 Agroecological Formación in Rural Social Movements, McCune, N., Reardon, J., & Rosset, P. [PDF](#)

2013 “Using the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition to Promote and Defend the People's Right to Adequate Food” A Manual (CIDSE, IUF, LVC, FIAN) [PDF](#)

2013 Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security (CFS 40) [PDF](#)

2009 Towards Food Sovereignty. Reclaiming autonomous food systems. Pimbert, M., [PDF](#) [WWW](#)

2009 Book chapter 5. “Reclaiming Citizenship, Empowering Civil Society in Policy-making,” in Towards Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming Autonomous Food Systems [PDF](#)

APPENDICES #1: KEY TEXTS

2019 Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. HLPE Reports series # 14, Rome [PDF](#)

2018 FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) The 10 elements of agroecology [PDF](#)

2017 The struggle for the right to food and nutrition (FIAN) [PDF](#)

2017 Peoples' Monitoring on the Right to Food and Nutrition – Political Manifesto (FIAN) [PDF](#)

2015 The right to land and other natural resources (FIAN) [PDF](#)

2015 Water for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS 42 HLPE report9) [PDF](#)

2015 Nyéléni Declaration on Agroecology [PDF](#)

2016 Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (FAO, 2016) [PDF](#)

2005 Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of the national food security (FAO) [PDF](#)

2007 Food Sovereignty Declaration of Nyeleni 2007 [PDF](#)

1970 Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Paulo Freire) [PDF](#)

FAO AND AGROECOLOGY

United Nations Decade on Family Farming – Global action plan [WWW](#)

2019 Strengthening FAO's Commitment to Agroecology (CAWR) [PDF](#)

2019 Scaling up Agroecology to achieve the SDG Proceedings of the 2nd FAO International Symposium (FAO) [PDF](#)

2019 Putting family farmers at the centre to achieve the SDGs (FAO IFAD) [PDF](#)

2018 2nd FAO International Symposium on Agroecology: Summary [PDF](#)
2015 Final report for the Regional meeting on Agroecology in Latin America and the Caribbean Brasilia [PDF](#)
2015 Report on the Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Agroecology in Asia and the Pacific FAO, Bangkok [PDF](#)
2014 Final report for the FAO International Symposium on Agroecology for Food Security and Nutrition [PDF](#)

DIGITALISATION

2022 Food Barons: Crisis Profiteering, Digitalization and Shifting Power (ETC group) [PDF](#)
2022 Cashing in on the Climate Crisis through Agricultural Digitalisation Emerging Cases in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines (ETC group) [PDF](#)
2021 Food systems and digitalization from a food sovereignty approach – new working paper, Schola Campesina [PDF](#)
2021 A Long Food Movement: Transforming Food Systems by 2045. (IPES-Food & ETC Group) [PDF](#)
2021 The digital revolution in food and agriculture. Exciting promises, mixed results and risky bet. (Materne Maetz) [WWW](#)
2021 Is the future really digital. A deeper understanding of digital trade. (Mary Louise Malig) [PDF](#)
2021 Digital technologies cut off access to land (FIAN) [WWW](#)
2021 Big Brother is Coming to the Farm: the digital takeover of food (vidéo 10min, ETC Group) [VIDEO](#)
2021 Digital control: how Big Tech moves into food and farming (and what it means) (GRAIN) [PDF](#)
2020 Disruption or Déjà Vu? Digitalization, Land and Human Rights (FIAN) [PDF](#)
2020 What will digital farming mean for agriculture in Europe? (FoEE) [PDF](#)
2018 Blocking the Chain Industrial food chain concentration, Big Data platforms and food sovereignty solutions (ETC group) [PDF](#)
2018 Forcing the Farm How Gene Drive Organisms Could Entrench Industrial Agriculture and Threaten Food Sovereignty (ETC group) [PDF](#)
2018 In Global Food Policy report, Chp6: Knowledge and Data: Achieving Food and Nutrition Security through Open Access Data (Indira Yerramareddy and Suresh Chandra Babu) (IFPRI) [PDF](#)
2018 Food sovereignty and Agroecology are the adequate framework to develop innovations for family farming. (Schola Campesina; In the framework of the launch of the UNDF – United Nation Decade for Family Farming) [PDF](#)

WOMEN AND AGROECOLOGY

2023 Making invisible visible: gender-sensitive data to turn women's knowledge into capital for better food and agriculture. By Ana Benoliel Coutinho [ARTICLE](#)
2022 Women's initiatives linking producers and urban consumers [VIDEO](#)
2022 Seeds and Knowledge: Agroecology to strengthen autonomy of rural women (Eastern Europe) [VIDEO](#)
2022 Agroecology for Women's Economic Empowerment and Strengthening their Autonomy [VIDEO](#)
2020 Farming Matters – Agroecology and feminism (CIDSE, Cultivate!, AgriCultures Network) [PDF](#)
2019 Without feminism there is no Agroecology (CSM) [PDF](#)
2018 Feminist Practices for Economic Change Women's autonomy and agroecology in the Vale do Ribeira region (Sempreviva Feminist Organisation) [PDF](#)
2018 Without women there is no food sovereignty (Vivas Esther) [PDF](#)
2017 Understanding feminism in the peasant struggle – A “popular peasant feminism” (La Via Campesina) [PDF](#)
2017 Cultivating Gender Justice (Ahna Kruzic) [PDF](#)
2017 CFS Forum on women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition (CFS) [PDF](#)
2013 Gender Equality and Food Security – Women's Empowerment as a Tool Against Hunger (De Schutter for ADB, FAO) [PDF](#)
2012 Our secret weapon against hunger: gender equality and women's empowerment (Olivier De Schutter) [PDF](#)
2012 'Gender and the Right to Food', Report presented to the 22nd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (De Schutter for UN) [PDF](#)
2005 You Are Mostly Promised You Will Not Be Alone Women Farm Leaders Speak Out About Resistance and Agrarian Activism (Desmarais Annette Aurelie) [PDF](#)

APPENDIX #2: TOOLS

2023 Agroecology Schools Toolkit: Thursday Dialogues for and from BILIM Community [VIDEO](#)
2022 E-Course: Testing the Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE) [WWW](#)
2022 What is Agroecology School [PDF](#)
2020 Results of TAPE in Italy [PDF](#)
2019 TAPE – Process of development and guidelines for application [PDF](#)
2013 Imagining Research for Food Sovereignty – of St. Ulrich Workshop on Democratizing Agricultural Research for Food Sovereignty and Peasant Agrarian Cultures [VIDEO](#)

TOOLKITS

Peasant Agroecology Schools and The Peasant-To-Peasant Method Of Horizontal Learning (LVC) [PDF](#)
CSM Welcome Kit: Useful Tips on the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for Relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) [PDF](#)
Sustaining The Climate Justice Movement: A Psychosocial Resilience and Regenerative Activism Training Manual [PDF](#)
TESA tool box of popular education techniques [WWW](#)
Leadership, Organising and Public Narrative Tools [WWW](#)
InsightShare (trainings, indigenous media, toolkits) [WWW](#)
A running list of literature on adult education in food movements [WWW](#)
People's Knowledge and Participatory Action Research [PDF](#)
Seeds for Change Resources on different topics in facilitation [WWW](#)
The Aesthetics of the Oppressed (Theatre of the Oppressed), A. Boal [PDF](#)
Learning for Sustainability Facilitation Tools [WWW](#)
Farm Hack - Open Source tools for farms [WWW](#)
IT for change [WWW](#)

APPENDIX #3: CASE STUDIES

2023 BILIM Newsletter: Agroecology in Europe and Central Asia [WWW](#)
2023 Mapping Agroecological Territories: Building Collaboration Between Academia And Farmers with Lili Balogh, Hungarian Agroecology Network [VIDEO](#)
2023 Bridging Generations in Agroecology Webinars: 1) Knowledge Sharing for Farmers Autonomy and Collaboration [VIDEO](#); 2) Education for Agroecology Transformation [VIDEO](#); 3) Case Studies [VIDEOS](#)
2021 Beyond Supporting Access to Land in Socio-Technical Transitions. How Polish Grassroots Initiatives Help Farmers and New Entrants in Transitioning to Sustainable Models of Agriculture [ARTICLE](#)
2020 Mapping Agroecology In Hungary, Agroecology Europe [PDF](#) [WWW](#)
2020 Mapping Agroecology Initiatives in Eu [PDF](#)
2017 Taking agroecology to scale: the Zero Budget Natural Farming peasant movement in Karnataka, India • (Ashlesha Khadse, Peter Rosset, Helda Morales & Bruce G. Ferguson) [PDF](#)
2014 Participatory action research transforming local food systems in India, Iran and Peru Ch. 7, in Everyday Experts [BOOK](#)
2014 Researching our Campesino reality through critical reflection, participation, action and learning Ch. 4, in Everyday Experts [BOOK](#)
2011 The Campesino-to-Campesino agroecology movement of ANAP in Cuba: social process methodology in the construction of sustainable peasant agriculture and food sovereignty. Journal of Peasant Studies [PDF](#)

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Our vision is to rebuild, defend, energise, exchange and transfer peasant farming knowledge from generation to generation. This knowledge is the heritage of food producers, and also of their communities and like-minded academics – all on an equal footing - Schola Campesina

CO-CREATION

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PARTNER

This project is co-led by four organizations ADI (Kyrgyzstan), Ecoruralis (Romania), Elkana (Georgia) and Schola Campesina Aps (Italy) and will benefit a larger community of Agroecology Schools and small scale farmers' organisations from Europe and Central Asia (ECA), including Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Hungary, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

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