



Tree 2/3, Toni Demuro  
tonidemuro.blogspot.ie/

one does not sell  
the earth upon which  
the people walk

Tashunka Witko, 1840 –1877

subscribe  
online now!

[www.nyeleni.org](http://www.nyeleni.org)

*Help us to build the  
Food Sovereignty movement  
from the grassroots.*

**Every contribution counts:  
Support the Nyéleni newsletter.**

Bank: BANCA POPOLARE ETICA SCARL  
Account holder: Asociación Lurbide –  
El Camino de la Tierra  
IBAN: IT76 J050 1812 1010 0000 0134 009  
BIC/SWIFT code: CCRIT2T84A

## editorial: creating knowledge for food sovereignty

*There is movement in the many worlds that are creating knowledge for food sovereignty!*

The stories in this newsletter provide a glimpse into some of these worlds. They show that we are questioning the assumption of a single truth based on objective knowledge. Also that our understanding of the world is enriched by considering it from multiple perspectives, multiple cosmovisions. They indicate that for these multiple cosmovisions to enter into an equal dialogue, common languages must be found. They show the need to challenge academic knowledge, but also to be open to being challenged by it.

**We need to radically transform dominant knowledge and ways of knowing for food sovereignty.** To develop knowledge for food sovereignty we need to be humble and respectful of other voices and perspectives. We need to be bold in order to experiment with methods and ideas that may seem “unscientific”, while also working to demonstrate the quality in our inquiry processes. We need to be playful in order to move lightly through the many obstacles on this path while keeping our curiosity alive. With these challenges in mind, one research question emerges which we invite you to join us in reflecting on: How do we nurture the human qualities that we need in order to develop knowledge, together, for food sovereignty?

*Maryam Rahmanian and Michel Pimbert*

## who we are

In the last years hundreds of organisations and movements have been engaged in struggles, activities, and various kinds of work to defend and promote the right of people to Food Sovereignty around the world. Many of these organisations were present in the *International Nyéleni Forum 2007* and feel part of a broader **Food Sovereignty Movement**, that considers the Nyéleni 2007 declaration as its political platform. **The Nyéleni Newsletter wants to be the voice of this international movement.**

Organisations involved: Development Fund, ETC Group, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Food First, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, Grassroots International, IPC for food sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Oxfam Solidarity, Real World Radio, Roppa, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers, VSF-Justicia Alimentaria Global.

**now is time for food sovereignty!**

## Decolonizing Research and Relationships: Revitalizing Traditional Grease Trails

Indigenous scholars and holders of traditional knowledge in British Columbia, Canada, are developing a research protocol to guide their collaborative research. *The Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty (WGIFS)\** will bring together key Indigenous scholars and holders of traditional knowledge relevant to the *Grease Trails* (traditional trade routes) to solicit input and direction in the development of its research strategy and protocol. The Revitalizing *Grease Trails* research project arose in response to a series of strategic planning meetings and the large number of research proposals received from within numerous organizations and research institutions across Canada.

A workshop to discuss the research strategy and protocol will outline criteria that will enable the WGIFS to engage in research that strategically aligns with the vision, values and goals of communities. The protocol will outline an ethical process for working across cultures (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to decolonize methodologies for reviewing relevant literature and conducting community based interviews that will shed light on relevant issues, concerns, situations and strategies. Decolonizing methodologies strategies can range from day to day practices that promote more harvesting, cultivating and sharing Indigenous foods, to a more complex challenge of critical thinking and redesigning institutional frameworks and methodologies in research. In this context, the workshop will provide the time and space to concentrate energy and ideas that will lead to the development of a template of culturally relevant protocols for positioning Indigenous voice, vision, paradigms and priorities in institutional frameworks for research and community development. The research strategy will lead to the generation of a body of knowledge that will ultimately enable Indigenous communities to conduct research on their own terms and respond more effectively to their own needs for culturally adapted foods.

\* [www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/about](http://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/about)

# in the spotlight

1

It is not surprising that peasant, local and indigenous knowledge is important to food sovereignty. Food sovereignty was built by peasants themselves, based on their own experiences and collective analysis – first that of La Via Campesina, and since then an increasingly diverse group of actors who have been enriching this dynamic concept with their own perspectives.

Over the past few years, however, the rhythm of innovation, experimentation and dialogue related to knowledge for food sovereignty seems to be picking up pace. New visions, approaches and spaces for collective knowledge creation are emerging, some of which are captured in the brief stories in this newsletter.

These developments reflect the growing importance of the food sovereignty movement in national, regional and international debates, the strengthening of alliances for food sovereignty, the enhanced confidence of the movement, as well as the deepening crises that it is faced with. Social movements are also increasingly aware that realizing food sovereignty requires radically different knowledge from that on offer today in mainstream institutions (universities, policy think tanks, governments, corporations...).

## Dialogue between a diversity of actors

One of the most promising alliances in terms of developing knowledge is with indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples have been taking their place in the food sovereignty movement more assertively in recent years and their contributions are having profound effects on concepts of knowledge and ways of knowing for food sovereignty. They are reclaiming the validity of their own epistemologies<sup>1</sup> which question the mechanistic worldview of positivist science<sup>2</sup>. Indigenous peasants in the Andes, for example, assert that to develop food sovereignty, they rely on the knowledge that is embedded in their stories and rituals, and that is rooted in experiences in the visible world as well as the world of dreams (see *Voices from the field 2*). Collaboration between indigenous peoples and indigenous and “settler” scholars in Canada has led to challenges to the “colonising methodologies” of academia and to developing emancipatory methodologies (see *Box 1*).

Creating spaces for inter-regional and cross-cultural dialogue and mutual learning is crucial. A global movement like La Via Campesina or LVC (<http://www.viacampesina.org>) is taking advantage of its diversity to develop horizontal networks for knowledge creation. LVC has an important internal self-study research process underway. The goal of this process is to identify, document, analyze and “systematize” (i.e. not only to document but also to analyse with a view to drawing lessons) the best examples among the member organizations in America, Africa, Asia and Europe, with agroecology, peasant seeds and other aspects of food sovereignty, like local markets. The purpose is two-fold. One is to develop and contribute their own study materials, based on their own experiences, to the more than 40 peasant agroecology schools and numerous political training schools inside LVC. The other is to support campaigning directed at public opinion and policy-makers, with data that prove that the alternatives exist, that they work, and that they should be supported by better public policies (see *Voices from the field 1*).

Another example of a diverse space for mutual learning is the *Democratizing Food and Agricultural Research initiative* which aims to create safe spaces in which citizens (food providers and consumers) can engage in inclusive deliberations on how to build a research system for food and agriculture that is democratic and accountable to wider society ([www.excludedvoices.org](http://www.excludedvoices.org)). More specifically, the methodological approach seeks to facilitate the participatory design of alternative, farmer and citizen-led agricultural research (see *Box 4*). Since 2007, this global initiative has unfolded in the Andean Altiplano, South Asia, West Africa, and West Asia. In September 2013, the partners of *Democratizing Food and Agricultural Research initiative* organized an international workshop to share lessons and reflections from Africa, Asia and Latin America with a wider community of European farmers, policy makers, and representatives of the donor communities. Known as the *St. Ulrich Workshop on Democratizing Agricultural Research for Food Sovereignty and Peasant Agrarian Cultures*, this international workshop brought together 95 participants from a total of 17 countries.

1 - “Epistemology” refers to theories of what knowledge is, what can be known and how knowledge is to be acquired.

2 - Positivism is the philosophy of science which believes in objective truth. Positivism recognizes only that which can be scientifically verified or which is capable of logical or mathematical proof.

# in the spotlight

# 2

Most participants were farmers and half of them were women. The St Ulrich workshop focused on the need to both transform knowledge and ways of knowing for food sovereignty and peasant agrarian cultures<sup>3</sup>.

## Scholars and activists engage in critical dialogues...

At the conference “*Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue*”<sup>4</sup> held in the Hague in January 2014, Elizabeth Mopfu, General Coordinator of LVC, invited scholars to share constructive criticism of concept of food sovereignty. “We want to hear your doubts,” she said. The presence of hundreds of scholars, students, peasants and activists in such a forum reflects both the growing interest of researchers in food sovereignty, and the growing willingness of the movement to engage with them in critical dialogue and collaboration (see *Box 2*).

## ...and work together to challenge policy and governance

Opportunities for collaboration with researchers are sometimes linked with the policy spaces. As the movement invests in creating spaces for participation in the governance of food and agriculture, it finds that occupying these spaces requires collaboration with researchers. The *International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty* (IPC) ([www.foodsovereignty.org](http://www.foodsovereignty.org)), for example, played a key role in the reform of the UN’s *Committee for World Security* (CFS) which took place in 2009. Following the food crisis of 2007/8 there were calls for the reform of the system of governance of food and agriculture. The IPC argued for a multi-lateral governance with a system of one-country-one-vote and with the meaningful participation of the organisations of small-food providers and other CSOs. Proposals for less transparent governance mechanisms, including from the G8, were eventually defeated and the reformed CFS was declared the “foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform” for the governance of food and agriculture<sup>5</sup>. The CFS set up its own new expert wing – the *High Level of Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition* (HLPE) – to provide inputs into its decision-making by developing analysis and policy recommendations. The HLPE’s mandate recognises from the outset the importance of the knowledge of “social actors” and field experience. The involvement of experts with links to the food sovereignty movement in the HLPE, and also the wider work of the CFS, has led to increased networking and collaboration between scholars and activists.

## Drawing on multiple ways of knowing

As the number and range of collaborations with researchers grow, there is greater awareness of the need to develop new and appropriate research methodologies in cases where co-inquirers are rooted in different knowledge systems. Since academic knowledge has usually been seen as the superior validating standard for other knowledge systems it is especially important to develop methodologies that reach beyond rational knowledge and experiment with multiple ways of knowing such as humour, music, drama, etc. The “*Day of Dialogue on Knowledge for Food Sovereignty*”, which was held immediately following the Critical Dialogue in the Hague in January 2014, was one such attempt. The dialogue was open to about 70 activists and academics by invitation who had a history of collaboration. The organisers wanted to open up for a day a space where people could bring their creativity and curiosity to a collective dialogue. It was felt that space needed to be made for more playful conversations without the pressure of trying to be efficient to get things done<sup>6</sup>. This is a key step to developing power-equalizing research (see *Box 3*).

As the opportunities for research and collaboration between different constituencies grows it will become important to share experiences and draw the lessons from these. Face-to-face encounters across cultures, worldviews and knowledge systems must become more frequent.

3 - <http://www.excludedvoices.org/st-ulrich-workshop-democratising-agricultural-research-food-sovereignty-and-peasant-agrarian-culture>

4 - [http://www.iss.nl/research/research\\_programmes/political\\_economy\\_of\\_resources\\_environment\\_and\\_population\\_per/networks/critical\\_agrarian\\_studies\\_icas/food\\_sovereignty\\_a\\_critical\\_dialogue/](http://www.iss.nl/research/research_programmes/political_economy_of_resources_environment_and_population_per/networks/critical_agrarian_studies_icas/food_sovereignty_a_critical_dialogue/)

5 - For more information see <http://viacampesina.org/downloads/pdf/en/report-no.4-EN-2012-comp.pdf> and [http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/Pagine/16/reformed\\_cfs\\_jbw\\_en.pdf](http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/Pagine/16/reformed_cfs_jbw_en.pdf).

6 - See the report at <http://www.tni.org/briefing/day-dialogue-knowledge-food-sovereignty?context=69566>

## box 2 NGO-academic alliance for researching gender, nutrition and the right to food

*When so many call for the inclusion of women and a gender perspective in food security, why is the status of women and girls still not improving?*

This question led to the creation of an NGO-academic alliance to develop a focused approach on gender, nutrition and the human right to adequate food and nutrition. It brings the long term experience of CSOs (*FIAN International* and the *Geneva Infant Feeding Association*, member of the *International Baby Food Action Network* (IBFAN-GIFA)) in documenting cases of violations and abuses of the Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition in collaboration with affected communities and social movements, together with the theoretical and research expertise on the subject of the *Gender Nutrition Rights (GNR) Research Group*, which is made up of Syracuse University in cooperation with the University of Hohenheim. Their research found that the existing food security framework for the right to adequate food and nutrition is unable to identify the structural causes of hunger and malnutrition in all its forms, and therefore, is unable to propose the adequate public policies and programs needed to overcome them. Building upon the discussions of two public workshops, an expanded conceptual framework\* for the right to adequate food and nutrition has been proposed. This expanded framework for the right to adequate food and nutrition, which is based on the food sovereignty framework and integrates the dimensions of gender, women’s rights and nutrition is intended to support popular struggles against land grab and Big Food, among others. It also seeks to sharpen our human rights tools, adjusting them to the current challenges in order to provide adequate mechanisms for ensuring a life of dignity for each and every human being, and especially for the most disadvantaged and marginalized in our societies.

\* This expanded conceptual framework is proposed in Anne C. Bellows, Flavio L.S. Valente, and Stefanie Lemke. (Eds.) *Gender, Nutrition and the Human Right to Adequate Food: towards an inclusive framework*. New York: Taylor & Francis/Routledge. (Expected date of publication: 2014).

## box 3 Power equalizing research for food sovereignty

Research for food sovereignty aims to give the least powerful actors (marginalised farmers and food providers, women...) more significant roles than before in the production and validation of knowledge\*. *Power-equalising research* seeks to intervene throughout the research and development (R&D) cycle. A focus on the entire R&D cycle (including scientific and technological research, evaluations of results and impacts of research, the choice of upstream strategic priorities for research and development, and the framing of overarching policies) allows for a shift from narrow concepts of participatory research that confine non-researchers to 'end of the pipe' technology development (e.g. participatory plant breeding) to a more inclusive approach in which farmers and other citizens can define the upstream strategic priorities of research and governance regimes.

When combined, the following enabling factors are important in this regard:

- *Free Prior Informed Consent*, jointly developed rules of engagement and a mutually agreed code of ethics between food providers and researchers. Formation of safe spaces – non-threatening spaces in which wo/men farmers and other actors involved can gain confidence, discuss, analyse, mobilise and act on the basis of a shared vision.
- *Reversals from normal professional roles and practices*. For example, research is conducted by and with food providers themselves, - with outside professionals in a facilitating and support role. Marginalised wo/men farmers are central instead of richer farmers, research stations, scientists, abstract theories, and a pro-urban bias.
- *Cognitive justice* – acknowledging the right for different knowledge systems to exist. The idea of cognitive justice emphasises the right for different forms of knowledge – and their associated practices, livelihoods, ways of being, and ecologies – to coexist.
- *Extended peer review*. Both small scale farmers and scientists must be involved in the co-validation of the knowledge and outcomes of intercultural dialogues. We need to recognise here that there are many legitimate perspectives on every issue. Each actor, – be it a farmer or a scientist -, has partial and incomplete knowledge. 'Extended' peer review is necessary at a time when 'we do not know what we do not know' and when everyone everywhere is faced with the uncertainties of a fast-changing world (environmental and climate change, unstable markets...).
- *Communicating for change* should not be seen as the exclusive right of communication professionals working in scientific and policy research institutes as well as in agricultural extension departments. There is a need for a new communication practice and allocation of resources that emphasises the devolution and dispersal of power. Advances in new communication technologies (digital video camera, radio, the Internet) as well as popular theatre, mapping and visualisation techniques offer new opportunities to decentralise and democratise the production of knowledge and communication messages – allowing even remote village farming communities to share stories and messages that can influence research agendas, policy and practice at local, national and international levels.

\* These reflections are based on ongoing participatory action-research with indigenous and local communities in the Andean Altiplano (Bolivia and Peru), Asia (India, Indonesia, Nepal and Iran), Europe (France, Italy, UK) and West Africa (Mali) where research is done with, for and by people – rather than on people – to explore how locally controlled biodiversity-rich food systems can be sustained. See: Pimbert, 2012 <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03396.pdf>

## box 4 Agricultural research for food sovereignty in West Africa

As part of the *Democratising Food and Agricultural Research initiative* (see [www.excludedvoices.org](http://www.excludedvoices.org)), a series of citizens' juries have been held in Mali over the last seven years. Their aim was to allow ordinary farmers and other food producers, both men and women, to make policy recommendations after cross examining expert witnesses from different backgrounds. Three citizens' juries explored the following themes:

1. GMOs and the future of farming in Mali.
2. What kind of knowledge and agricultural research do small scale producers and food processors want?
3. How to democratise the governance of food and agricultural research?

The citizens' juries were guided by an oversight panel to ensure that the entire process was broadly credible, representative, trustworthy, fair and not captured by any interest group or perspective.

Altogether, the farmer jurors made over 100 recommendations on the priorities and governance of agricultural research for West Africa. Recommendations covered issues such as models of agricultural production, land tenure and property rights, and food and agriculture markets, as well as issues of research funding, organisation, practice and governance.

In the follow up to this unique deliberative process, West African farmers asked to have a *Policy Dialogue* with the *Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa* (AGRA) and its main donors. Farmers wanted a face-to-face discussion on research priorities with AGRA because it is a key player in setting the agenda for agricultural research for development in West Africa. This policy dialogue took place in Accra (Ghana) on 1st to 3rd February 2012. The three-day event was chaired by the *UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food*, Olivier de Schutter, and was also attended by representatives of farming communities in Asia, East Africa and Latin America. A video link with London allowed participation by UK donors and members of parliament. Both farmers and AGRA presented their vision for agricultural research in Africa. Overall, farmers analysis and policy recommendations significantly differed from those promoted by AGRA. For example, West African farmers were clearly against research that leads to the privatisation of seeds and proprietary seed technologies which allow companies to control the seed sector. They also felt that AGRA wrongly views farmers' local seeds as unimproved, - thereby denying the plant breeding and seed selection work done by wo/men farmers.

Most notably, AGRA and the African farmers framed their respective research agendas within radically different visions of food and farming. The wo/men farmers argued that a vision of farming that de-links and separates crop production from other sectors (livestock, fisheries, forestry) is not acceptable. By prioritising crop production alone, AGRA is inducing an imbalance which farmers want to avoid in West Africa. Farmers reject AGRA's development model and type of agriculture which, - they feel -, encourages bigger farms and the disappearance of small family farms, as well as the poisoning of the earth, water, and people. Instead, West African farmers called for a research agenda that supports family farming and food sovereignty.

Sources: Pimbert, M.P, B. Boukary, A. Berson and K. Tranh Thanh, 2011. *Democratising agricultural research for food sovereignty in West Africa*. IIED, London. <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/14603IIED.pdf>  
APPG on Agroecology, CNOP, Kene conseils, Centre Djoliba, IRPAD and IIED, 2012. *High level policy dialogue between the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and small scale farmers on the priorities and governance of agricultural research for development in West Africa*. A photo story available in English (<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03349.pdf>) and French (<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03389.pdf>).





## Documenting successful cases for horizontal learning

# 1

Peter Rosset, *La Via Campesina*

The “academy” is no longer the epicenter of knowledge production – if indeed it ever was. In today’s world, much of the important new knowledge, and even theory, on alternatives to conventional, exclusionary development, is being generated by social movements. I had the opportunity to participate in one of the self-study processes of *La Via Campesina* (LVC). In this case the object of analysis was the campesino-to-campesino (farmer-to-farmer) agroecology movement of the *National Association of Small Farmers of Cuba* (ANAP-Via Campesina), one of the most important cases of successfully bringing peasant agroecology to scale as part of food sovereignty.

By consciously using a social process methodology, ANAP was able, in a bit more than a decade, to build an ecological farming social movement inside a national farmer organization – a movement that has come to embrace 50% of all the peasant families in Cuba. They use few or no off-farm inputs, farm agroecologically, and have dramatically raised the total and relative contribution of the peasant sector to national food production, thus boosting food sovereignty. LVC and ANAP wanted the peasants to re-construct their own history, and do their own analysis of the keys to success. And they wanted the result of this process to be presented in a format that would both help ANAP with its internal process, and also help organizations in other countries learn useful lessons from it. A small team traveled the length of the island, facilitating workshops at peasant cooperatives, where the participants of the movement themselves, re-created their history and collectively drew their own lessons. The team was then responsible for organizing this information into a book for use in LVC’s training schools, and to support campaign work.

Other teams in LVC are now engaged in similar processes to analyze other cases. One of these is the experience of the *Zero Budget Natural Farming Movement* in southern India, in which more than million Indian peasants have stopped their use of purchased chemicals and raised production through autonomous, ecological practices.



## Food Sovereignty in the Ande

# 2

Maruja Salas\*

Here are the life stories of some of the community-based persons in the food sovereignty process who have been thinking with the power of nature and defending their individual and collective rights to eat healthy food. Their language is peaceful, yet allusive – even sometimes enigmatic. They personify their communal knowledge with varying degrees of coherence. Yet, when they speak about their lives of nurturing, farming, fishing and herding, they do so with a joy embodying a world-view which harmonises celebration and work. There is also a deep spiritual sense to their attentiveness to signs from nature, particularly towards the Altiplano’s sacred mountains and Mother Earth. These men and women are fully attuned to interpreting dream symbolism to guide seed selection, cooking, or food storage, constantly replenishing the traditional rules for familial well-being. More information about their work can be found at the website of the *Andean Program for Food Sovereignty* (<http://pasandes.net/>).

**Lucía Paucara**, Aymara woman

Lucia is from Vilurcuni, where she has spent much of her 54 years working in her fields and storing potatoes to feed her extended family. For her potatoes are like daughters and she celebrates all the phases of their growth. Since her fields are near the lake, she has many varieties that she uses for cooking special local dishes like patasca, chayro, and watia. She and her extended family who are living in Lima or Tacna will never go hungry because she produces enough potatoes for all of them.

**Presentación Velásquez**, Aymara woman

Presentación learned from her grandmother to cultivate Andean crops in the Aynoqas system (rotational sector agriculture) as well as chase away hail by mobilising the community. She has promised her granddaughters to continue to work in her fields until the end of her life, so that all the family will have plenty of Andean tubers and grains to eat without having to buy them in the market.

**Domitila Taquila**, Aymara woman

Domitila lives in Aychullo and she was not born with much ‘knowledge’, she says, but learned from working in the fields alongside her grandmother. Her mother taught her how to weave and cook. Her ability to read the natural indicators was revealed in dreams. Today, she demonstrates to her children the advantages of eating from the fields and avoiding contaminated food from the market.

\*From the book, *The voices and the flavours from the earth. Visualising Food Sovereignty in the Andes* by Maruja Salas, IIED 2013.

## To read, listen, watch and share

### Reports:

- International Commission on Sustainable Peasant Agriculture, *From Maputo to Jakarta — 5 Years of Agroecology in La Via Campesina*, <http://viacampesina.org/downloads/pdf/en/De-Maputo-a-Yakarta-EN-web.pdf>
- Pimbert, M.P. (2009) *Transforming Knowledge and Ways of Knowing*. In: *Towards Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming Autonomous Food Systems*. London and Munich: IIED and RCC. <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/mml/book-chapter-pimbert-michel-transforming-knowledge-and-ways-knowing>
- Pimbert, M.P. (2012) *FPIC and beyond: safeguards for power-equalising research that protects biodiversity, rights and culture*. Participatory Learning and Action 65,43-53 <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G03396.pdf>
- Pimbert, M.P. (2011) *Participatory research and on-farm management of agricultural biodiversity in Europe*. IIED

Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship Series. London. <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/14611IIED.pdf>

- Salas, M. and Wise Andean Peoples Network (2013). *Voices and Flavours from the Earth: Visualising Food Sovereignty in the Andes*. IIED Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship Series. London. <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/14624IIED.pdf> NFU (National Farmers Union) youth web page, Canada. <http://www.nfu.ca/about/youth>
- The Community Media Trust, Satheesh, P.V., and Pimbert, M.P. (2008) *Affirming Life and Diversity. Rural images and voices on food sovereignty in south India*. [film series]. IIED Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship Series. London. <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/14556IIED.pdf>

### Websites:

- Association BEDE – Biodiversity: Exchange and Diffusion of Experiences <http://www.bede-asso.org/lang/angl/home.php>
- Consortium for Agroecology and Food Sovereignty at Coventry University. <http://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/research-directory/environmental/agroecology-and-food-security/>

## Call for an international legally binding instrument on human rights, transnational corporations and other business enterprises

The call has been endorsed by a wide alliance of international networks, organizations and social movements. It represents the collective expression of a growing mobilization of global civil society calling for further enhancement of international legal standards to address corporate infringements of human rights. It welcomes the recent initiatives by States in the United Nations Human Rights Council, presented by Ecuador in the session of September 2013, to develop an international treaty on legally binding rules for TNCs on human rights issues. *Read and join the call* <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/actions-and-events-mainmenu-26/stop-transnational-corporations-mainmenu-76/1612-joint-statement-call-for-an-international-legally-binding-instrument-on-human-rights-transnational-corporations-and-other-business-enterprises>

## Who makes the laws

On May 24, millions of people from around the world participated in the March Against Monsanto, calling for the permanent boycott of genetically engineered foods and other harmful agro-chemicals. Marches occurred on six continents, in 52 countries, with events in more than 400 cities. During the same week in Brussels a new GM law was discussed. A law that could grant biotech companies - like Monsanto and Syngenta - unprecedented power over decisions on whether to ban genetically modified (GM) crops in Europe. The new law is being promoted as a way to give governments more sovereignty over decisions on whether to ban GM crops. However, the current proposals give biotech companies the legal right to decide whether a ban should be allowed. If companies refuse, governments are forced to fall back on vague, non-scientific legal grounds upon which to ban GM crops, opening the door to legal challenges. For more FOE Europe press release, [https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/press\\_releases/foee\\_optout\\_empty\\_offer\\_analysis\\_04141.pdf](https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/press_releases/foee_optout_empty_offer_analysis_04141.pdf) and GMWatch <http://www.gmwatch.org/index.php/news/archive/2014/15460-governments-make-laws-not-companies-take-action-europe>

## 20 years on, Marcos puts out his pipe

On May 2, the teacher Galeano was ambushed and killed by members of the paramilitary organization CIOAC-Histórica. Since that day, an international campaign has been organized in solidarity with the Zapatista communities, which culminated on May 24 in the caracol of La Realidad with a public event in which the Comandancia General of the EZLN also participated to honor the memory of Galeano and assure that justice will be done. Just after the tribute to teacher Galeano, Subcommandante Marcos, the tool developed by the Zapatistas of Chiapas in Mexico to address the neoliberal world, has ceased to exist. In the Zapatista caracole of La Realidad, Marcos made his last address and announced his future non-existence. According to their communication, following the “Escuelita” (small school) held by the Zapatistas in December and January of 2013/14; “We realized that there was a generation which could look us in the eye, listen to us and speak to us without awaiting guidance or leadership or demanding submission or monitoring. Marcos the “personality” was no longer necessary. The new stage in the Zapatista struggle was ready.”

## Indigenous ideas about “Living Well” can help heal the planet

At a recent series of events organized by Focus on the Global South, Lilak, and other allies in the Philippines, indigenous leaders and representatives of different social movements and sectors met to debate the idea of “vivir bien.” It is a Spanish phrase meaning “to live well” that is understood to many native communities in Latin America - where the terms are actually *sumac kawsay*, *suma qamaña*, and *ñandereko*. While the various similar indigenous concepts are centuries old, they are not relegated to the past. “Vivir bien” is a living philosophy, something that indigenous and non-indigenous scholars continue to develop, and something certain governments, like those of Ecuador and Bolivia, have begun to take seriously and put into their constitutions in reference to indigenous rights and pluri-cultural values. “Vivir bien” provides a powerful counter-argument to the capitalist model of development that has become so accepted that it can seem like the only path. Once we start to look closely at the meaning of “vivir bien,” it becomes quite clear that capitalism is by nature unsustainable. There is no real “green” way of going about capitalism

**many worlds are possible**

when the engine of development demands more grist for its mill each year. On the opposite “vivir bien” is about living in harmony with other people and the natural surroundings for shared survival and satisfaction. A key part of “vivir bien” has to do with redistributing resources to promote equality. These kinds of conversations between indigenous representatives and other sectors in Latin America and Asia are becoming more common, and they suggest that the time has come to seize on alternatives to capitalism.

Full article at <http://focusweb.org/content/indigenous-ideas-about-living-well-can-help-heal-planet>

## Ecuador’s tribes declare ‘national mobilization’ against oil and mining

Ecuador is facing an unprecedented confrontation between a ‘progressive’ left-leaning government and a national coalition of indigenous peoples determined to stop vast oil and mining projects taking place on their community land and villages. Ecuador’s umbrella organization representing the country’s Tribal Nations, CONAIE, has declared a National Mobilization to oppose a wave of oil and mining projects that threaten tribal territories across the country. The declaration comes in the wake of increasing hostility by Ecuador’s government against the indigenous people resisting large scale resource extraction on their ancestral lands. The government has announced a ‘national security alert’. At present more than 200 Tribal National leaders are under investigation for terrorism - relating to the growing popular resistance to polluted water and environmental destruction arising from extractive industries. The government of the ‘progressive’ and left-leaning President, Rafael Correa, is pushing hard for the development of oil and mineral resources as a means of bringing wealth to the country and raising much needed revenues for social spending. However its insistence on pursuing massive resource projects on lands owned by indigenous communities, and in some of the most biodiverse areas on Earth, is causing growing tension across the country.

Full article [http://www.theecologist.org/News/news\\_analysis/2408847/ecuadors\\_tribes\\_declare\\_national\\_mobilization\\_against\\_oil\\_and\\_mining.html](http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2408847/ecuadors_tribes_declare_national_mobilization_against_oil_and_mining.html)