Transforming Knowledge and Ways of Knowing for Food Sovereignty

Michel Pimbert

Reclaiming
DIVERSITY & CITIZENSHIP

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Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship

Series editor: Michel Pimbert

Published by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

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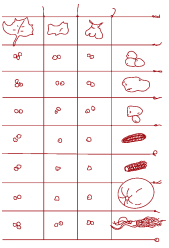
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-84369-655-1

Printed by: Russell Press, Nottingham, UK on Greencoat Velvet Recycled Paper

Designed by: Piers Aitman, www.piersaitman.co.uk



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Dr. Pimbert's work centres on the political ecology of natural resource and biodiversity management, sustainable agriculture, food sovereignty and citizenship as well as participatory action research and deliberative democratic processes. Over the last 25 years he has published extensively in these areas, linking theory with practice. His latest co-edited books include *'Social Change and Conservation'* (Earthscan), *'The Life Industry. Biodiversity, People and Profits'* (Intermediate Technology Publications), and *'Sharing Power. Learning by doing in the co-management of natural resources throughout the world'* (IUCN and IIED).

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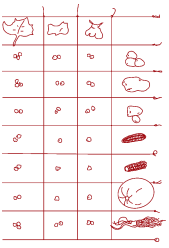

Executive Summary

People have special rights when it comes to food, and a new and growing movement of farmers, pastoralists, women, indigenous peoples and migrants worldwide is claiming and exercising these rights to 'food sovereignty'. The concept involves:

> "…the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets; and to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources…" The People's Food Sovereignty Network

These groups are getting organised, linking together with their counterparts in the North and gaining support from scholars, activists, consumers and progressive policy-makers. However, faced with the power of science, business and mainstream politics, the food sovereignty movement is confronted with many interrelated challenges. This paper focuses on only one of these: the need to fundamentally transform knowledge and ways of knowing in agricultural research, policy-making and the democratic process if food sovereignty is to be achieved.

Why must we transform knowledge?

Food sovereignty implies the endogenous development of locally controlled food systems based on bio-cultural diversity. This requires radically different knowledge from that on offer today in mainstream institutions (universities, policy think tanks, donor organisations, trade unions…). For example:

- Current knowledge and policies for growth in food and farming are leading to the economic genocide of unprecedented numbers of farmers and rural livelihoods throughout the world. We need to re-think mainstream economics on the basis of radically different principles (e.g. reciprocity, solidarity, affection, respect, equity, sustainability…).
- Reductionist science, as opposed to more holistic knowledge and ways of knowing, has largely failed to promote sustainable agro-ecosystem and natural resource management.

- Bureaucracies tend to blame rural people for environmental degradation and impose on them standard environmental management packages which neglect their knowledge, priorities, management systems, local institutions and social organisation—and overlook the value to them of local assets. Yet recent research has shown that several orthodox views on people-environment interactions are myths.

How can we transform our ways of knowing?

We need a radical shift away from the existing top-down and increasingly corporate-controlled research system to an approach which devolves more responsibility and decision-making power to farmers, indigenous peoples, food workers, consumers and citizens for the production of social and ecological knowledge. The whole process should lead to the democratisation of research, diverse forms of co-inquiry based on specialist and non-specialist knowledge, an expansion of horizontal networks for autonomous learning and action, and more transparent oversight. This implies:

i) Democratising science and technology research.

Despite its emphasis on local knowledge and management systems, the 'food sovereignty' movement also looks to the liberating potential of modern science, technology and institutional innovations. These can enhance local autonomy and ecologies, minimise pollution, and expand the realms of freedom and culture by eliminating needless toil. But local organisations and citizen federations should be the ones to decide which new policy and technical innovations are needed, when, where and under what conditions.

We therefore need spaces and processes that allow more direct citizen participation and pluralism in deciding on the allocation of funds for social and natural science research, setting strategic research & development (R&D) priorities, in validating knowledge and new technologies, ascertaining risks in the face of considerable open ended uncertainties and in framing policies for food and farming. These might include:

- Using citizen panels, consensus conferences, citizen juries, future scenario workshops and referendums to capture the full diversity of interests in deciding on strategic research and funding priorities, allocating resources and assessing technological risks.
- Opening-up decision-making bodies and governance structures of social and natural sciences organisations to a wider representation of different actors; and greater transparency, equity and accountability in budget allocation and decisions on R&D priorities.
- Reorganising conventional scientific and technological research to encourage participatory knowledge creation and innovations that combine the strengths of farmers and scientists in the search for locally adapted solutions and food systems.

- Ensuring that knowledge, genetic resources and innovations remain accessible to all as a basic condition for economic democracy and the exercise of human rights, including the right to food and participation.

ii) De-institutionalising research for autonomous learning and action

Endogenous knowledge creation by and for the people means 1) taking responsibility for one's own learning process; 2) having unrestricted access to learning tools; and 3) addressing issues that relate to people's aspirations and lives. Mechanisms are needed to strengthen citizen-led innovation and organise networks of knowledge users on the basis of a more horizontal and egalitarian logic. For example, there are both established and emerging networks within peasant and citizen movements that are capable of generating new and inclusive learning derived from farming practices, products, fields, landscapes, and the many 'living campuses' from where people derive their livelihoods. The knowledge and innovations produced by these socio-cultural networks are usually shared among farmers and other citizens through regular regional exchanges.

iii) Enabling contexts for social learning and action

Professionals (foresters, agronomists, social scientists, protected area managers, etc) all have specialist knowledge that can usefully feed into citizen deliberations and more inclusive forms of participation that strengthen civil society. But these professionals will often need to shift to new roles that facilitate local people's analysis, deliberations and production of knowledge. This will require the design of appropriate institutional mechanisms and rewards to encourage the spread of a participatory culture and praxis within research institutes and universities, as well as within civil society organisations and food sovereignty movements.

In participatory forms of inquiry final objective answers matter less than processes of emerging democratic engagement. The quality and validity of this way of knowing cannot be assessed from the narrow standpoint of positivist science alone. Criteria of validation and quality need to be much broader. One important criterion of quality is whether or not this social learning opens up new communicative spaces for democratic inquiry to take place. Another is whether it has contributed to the emergence of a wide community of inquiry among divergent actors.

Recommendations

Transforming knowledge and ways of knowing for food sovereignty and bio-cultural diversity are an integral part of a much deeper process of systemic change. In addition to the points noted above, this *systemic* change will depend on several interrelated and mutually reinforcing processes of transformation, including:

- **Nurturing Citizenship.** Food sovereignty implies greater citizen participation and more direct forms of democracy in the governance of food systems. It assumes that every citizen is competent and reasonable enough to participate in democratic politics. With training and experience citizens can learn to deliberate, make decisions, and implement their choices responsibly.
- **Confederalism.** Nurturing and strengthening citizen-centered food systems and autonomy calls for forms of political and social organisation that can institutionalise interdependence without resorting to the market or the central state. Confederalism involves a network of citizen groups or councils with members or delegates elected from popular face-to-face democratic assemblies, in villages, tribes, towns and even neighborhoods of large cities.
- **Dual power.** The larger and more numerous the linked federations and confederations become, the greater is their potential to constitute a significant counter-power to the state and transnational corporations that largely control the global food system. Confederations can eventually exert 'dual power', - for example by seeking power within local government through strategies of collaboration and political negotiation, while also maintaining strong community and municipal organising strategies at the grassroots.
- **Embracing equity and gender inclusion.** Gender equity and learning how to better include and respect the voices of the very poor and marginalised are urgent challenges for the food sovereignty movement and civil society at large.
- **Reclaiming property rights and territory.** Food sovereignty implies the implementation of radical processes of agrarian reform and equitable re-distribution of rights of access and use over resources, including land, water, forests, seeds and the means of production.
- **Deepening democracy in the age of globalisation.** Only with some material security and time can people be 'empowered' to live as they choose and also think about what type of policies they would like to see and how they can contribute to them. To create such space would require: i) a guaranteed and unconditional minimum income for all; ii) a tax on financial speculations; iii) a generalised reduction of time spent in wage-work and a more equitable sharing of jobs; iv) the re-localisation of pluralist economies that combine both subsistence and market-oriented activities; and v) the re-introduction of protective safeguards for domestic economies to guarantee stable prices covering the cost of agricultural production, including quotas and other controls against imports of food and fibre that can be produced locally.

These critical reflections and proposals for action are offered in a spirit of solidarity with the newly emerging food sovereignty movement and as a contribution to 'learning our way out' of the current impasse of industrial food and farming.

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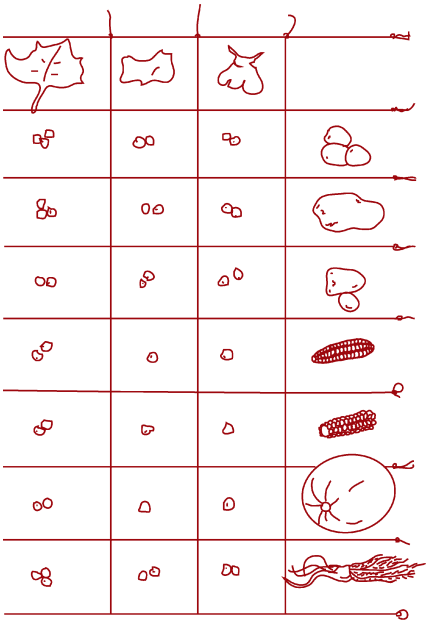

Introduction

The search for 'food sovereignty' is part of a wider affirmation of the right to self-determination and endogenous development. New social movements for food self-reliance in the context of endogenous development are arising worldwide. Throughout Latin America and in much of Africa as well as South and Southeast Asia, farmers, pastoralists, women, indigenous peoples and migrants are organising, linking together with their counterparts in the North. They are gaining support from scholars, activists, consumers and progressive policy-makers (Cohn et al., 2006). This emerging food sovereignty movement is typified by both rapid change and extensive global networks. The 'orderly battalions and colourful banners' of traditional opposition politics are being replaced by more diffuse, ambiguous, networked arrangements, all reminiscent of Manuel Castells' vision of a 'network society' (Castells, 1996:362).

Local organisations and federations increasingly seek to have a greater say in the governance of food systems. In so doing, they challenge liberal understandings in which citizenship is viewed as a set of rights and responsibilities granted by the state. Instead, citizenship in the context of locally determined food systems is claimed, and rights are realised, through the agency and actions of people themselves. Local organisations and federations are thus increasingly becoming expressions of an emergent citizenship in the governance of food systems (Pimbert, 2006). People have special rights when it comes to food, and claiming and exercising these rights to 'food sovereignty' have become a movement that is very much in tune with this concept of citizenship. La Via Campesina[1] and the People's Food Sovereignty Network defines this new paradigm for food and agriculture as follows:

> "Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets; and to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use

1 La Via Campesina is a broad, worldwide coalition of peasants and farmers lobbying for land tenure reform, agroecology, and food sovereignty. See: www.viacampesina.org

> of and the rights to aquatic resources. Food Sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to food and to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production." (www.viacampesina.org)

However, in the face of the organised power of science, business and mainstream politics, the more diffuse—but networked power—of the growing food sovereignty movement is confronted with many interrelated challenges. In this paper I focus on only one of these: the need to fundamentally transform knowledge and ways of knowing for 'food sovereignty'. After identifying some of the types of knowledge needed for transformation towards 'food sovereignty' I discuss possible ways of reclaiming knowledge for bio-cultural diversity and endogenous development.

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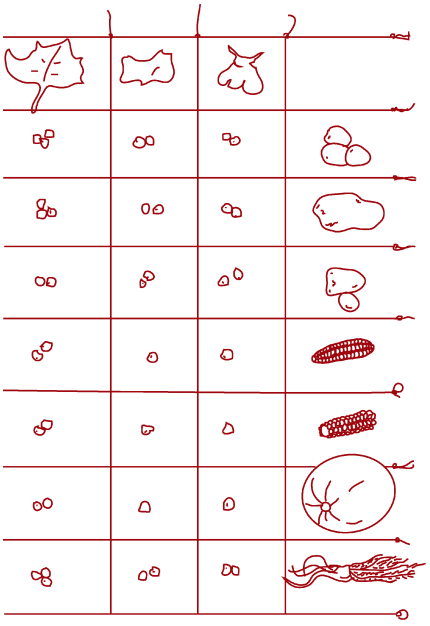

Transforming Knowledge

Knowledge plays a significant role in 'development' and 'environment'. It is important because it shapes society not only through technology, but also through instilling values and assumptions which motivate human beings and inform national policies. The endogenous development of food systems based on bio-cultural diversity requires radically different knowledge from that on offer today in mainstream institutions (universities, policy think tanks, donor organisations, trade unions…). There is a need to actively construct knowledge for diversity, decentralisation, dynamic adaptation and democracy.

Transformation of knowledge is needed in several areas, which I discuss below.

Going beyond ecologically blind science and the neglect of dynamic complexity

The science of parts (reductionism), *as opposed to knowledge and ways of knowing that integrate the parts*, has largely failed to guide agro-ecosystem and natural resource management. Narrow lens, universal and reductionist explanatory models have generated a crisis in natural resource management through their inability to come to terms with the dynamic complexity and variation within and among ecosystems (Gunderson et al., 1995). Reductionist knowledge has selectively favoured corporate profits as well as control over labour and nature in simplified and standardised production systems. Terminator seeds (GURTS) are the latest flagship in this corporate enclosure of farmers' and nature's autonomy. And for many indigenous and local communities, even existing models of ecology and landscape dynamics usually miss out the critical linkages between biodiversity, culture, spirituality and livelihoods.

Environmental as well as bio-cultural dynamics and effects are usually long-term and their emergent complexity calls for more holistic and transdisciplinary ways of knowing. For example, the concept of 'Indigenous Bio-Cultural Heritage Areas' (IBCHA) explicitely re-unites ecology, spirituality, territory and human well-being as a

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Box 1. The Potato Park as an Indigenous Bio-Cultural Heritage Area (IBCHA) in the Peruvian Andes

Indigenous Bio-Cultural Heritage Areas (IBCHAs) are a community-led and rights-based approach to conservation which ensures local livelihoods using the knowledge, traditions, and philosophies of indigenous peoples on the holistic and adaptive management of their landscapes, ecosystems and biological and cultural assets. IBCHA refers to a wide range of traditional resources – both tangible and intangible – including land, biogenetic resources, traditional knowledge, customary law, spiritual values and landscapes which are passed down from preceding generations and confer rights to current ones.

The Potato Park, near Cusco in Peru, focuses on protecting and preserving the critical role and interdependency of indigenous bio-cultural heritage for local rights, livelihoods, conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity. The park is in an area known as a microcenter of origin and diversity of potatoes, one of the world's major food crops, which has been protected for centuries by the deeply-rooted local food systems of the Quechua peoples. The Potato Park, as its name denotes, celebrates the tremendous diversity of native potato varieties and other native Andean crops characteristic of Andean food systems.

With the support of a local NGO (ANDES), indigenous Quechua communities in the region of Cusco have become organised into 'local platforms' for the adaptive management of mountain landscapes and livelihood assets. Most importantly, the Association of Communities of the Potato Park is responsible for running the park. The Association's members include the traditional head authority of each of the communities, along with representatives of local residents, non-government organisations, traditional authorities, local cooperatives and others. For the Quechua, the ecological, social, economic and cultural realms of human life are integrated through local organisations, institutions, laws and policies that transform assets (natural, physical, financial, human, social, cultural) into livelihoods. Examples of such indigenous transforming structures and processes include:

- **The development of community-to-community and farmer-to-farmer learning networks based on the principle of *ayni* (reciprocity).** Exchange is promoted through the sharing of information, practices and learning processes. Local platforms (organisations) of "barefoot technicians" elected by their own communities network with other communities and create opportunities to share and transfer traditional knowledge and innovations.
- **The consolidation of local grassroots enterprises.** These groups are anchored in Andean principles of reciprocity and a local definition of well-being. The organisations work using the principles of Andean economy to reinforce local food systems within a holistic approach to the adaptive management of bio-cultural landscapes.

1 **Box 1. contd.**

This local adaptive management of Andean landscapes thus helps sustain the Quechua's collective bio-cultural heritage.

The Potato Park is dedicated to safeguarding and enhancing these food systems and native agro-biodiversity using the adaptive and holistic approach described by the IBCHA model. The epistemological bridges prescribed by the IBCH approach link traditional and science-based understandings of the multiple functions of agricultural biodiversity—including the close interaction between wild and domestic plant and animal diversity—and how they sustain local livelihoods. The traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices of Quechua peoples are showcased in the park for their essentially modern significance and utility including for the purposes of pharmaceuticals, agro-ecotourism activities, and community-based conservation. In terms of the rights-based approach prescribed by the IBCH approach, the Potato Park is concerned with indigenous peoples' self determination and securing Quechua people's tenure and rights to agricultural biodiversity, local products, traditional knowledge, and related ecosystem good and services.

As an IBCHA, the Potato Park has been proposed as a *sui generis* system for the protection of Traditional Knowledge (TK) because it aims at protecting TK systems within its cultural, temporal and spatial dimensions using a combination of positive and defensive protection tools.

Source: Argumedo and Pimbert, 2005

basis for landscape management and the protection of indigenous peoples' rights in the Peruvian Andes (Box 1).

Similarly, a deeper understanding of the principles of organisation that ecosystems have evolved to sustain the web of life can provide a solid basis for the design of autonomous technologies and ecologically sustainable food systems. Agroecological knowledge, ecological literacy and ecodesign are cases in point here. Agroecology is key for rethinking agricultural production (Box 2). And more ecoliteracy and ecodesign are needed to reduce the ecological footprints of other parts of the food system (e.g. food processing, storage units, waste treatment etc). The challenge here is to develop sweepingly new knowledge in which *"The blending of architecture, solar, wind, biological and electronic technologies with housing, food production, and waste utilisation within an ecological and cultural context will be the basis of creating a new design science for the post petroleum era"* (New Alchemists, 1979).

2 Box 2. Agroecology as the basis for ecological agriculture

At the heart of agroecology is the idea that agroecosystems should mimic the biodiversity levels and functioning of natural ecosystems. Such agricultural mimics, like their natural models, can be productive, pest resistant and nutrient conserving. Indeed, in both low external input and high input agriculture, the goals of sustainability, productivity, and equity may best be met through agroecosystem designs that enhance functional diversity at the genetic, species and landscape levels.

Ecological agriculture based on the principles of agroecology has been shown to be productive, economical and sustainable for both low and high external input farmers. Scientists recently reported that a series of large scale experimental projects around the world that used and tested agroecological techniques (crop rotations, intercropping, use of mulches and compost, terracing, nutrient concentration, water harvesting, and management of micro-environments etc.) yielded spectacular results (Altieri and Uphoff, 1999; Pretty and Hine, 2000). Gains were particularly noteworthy in resource poor areas that had been labelled as incapable of producing food surpluses. For example, in southern Brazil, the use of cover crops to increase soil fertility and water retention allowed 400,000 farmers to increase maize and soybean yields by over 60%. Agroecological projects involving about 730,000 farm households across Africa resulted in yield increases of between 50 and 100%.

Unlike most conventional agricultural research, agroecological approaches consciously seek to combine the experiential knowledge of farmers and indigenous peoples with the latest insights from modern science. Local knowledge and indigenous management systems are usually effective responses to site specific challenges and risks. They are, after all, based on literally hundreds of years of collective observation, experimentation and adaptive management of dynamic complexity and diversity (from genetic complexes to whole landscapes). Good agroecologists value and build on such farmer-led experimentation as well as on the innovations and intellectual contributions of farmers, pastoralists and forest dwellers. Similarly, agroecology draws on the emergent science of dynamic complexity: ecology, population biology and ecological genetics, chaos theory, and whole systems theory. New insights gained here can also help provide the basis for the ecological design of resilient, productive and sustainable farming and land use.

New agroecological knowledge systems derived from such combinations of ‘indigenous’ and ‘modern’ always need to work with the complexity and diversity of ecosystems in a constructivist approach to science. This is to ensure that innovation and learning become embedded in management and that farmers are active co-creators of knowledge. Moreover, experience shows that when this happens ‘new methods rapidly spread among farmers’ … thus showing ‘the potential for farmer led dissemination of even complex technologies when users are actively engaged in understanding and adapting them instead of just being trained to use them’ (Altieri and Uphoff, 1999).

2 Box 2. contd.

A central challenge across the whole range of agroecosystems is to find alternatives to the input substitution approach and future dependence on costly and unreliable biotechnology packages. This can be achieved through an agroecological approach that seeks to break the monoculture structure and dependence on suppliers of off-farm inputs through the design of integrated agroecosystems. By assembling a functional biodiversity within and around agroecosystems, it is possible to encourage synergisms that subsidise agroecosystem processes by providing ecological services, recycling of nutrients, and enhancement of natural enemies of pests to produce diverse, quality foods and other farm products (Altieri, 1995; Pimbert, 1999 and references therein). By using biodiversity to enhance agro-ecosystem functions, this ecosystem-analog approach can thus enhance local and national autonomy by eliminating the need for external agro-chemical inputs and transgenic technologies. Moreover, an agroecologically informed transformation of farming systems can also significantly reduce the current cost-price squeeze and debt trap in which the world's farmers are increasingly being caught.

Overcoming myths on people and environment relations

Neo-Malthusian environmental policy narratives are still used by external bureaucracies to blame people for environmental degradation and justify imposing on them massive and widespread use of standard environmental management packages (see Leach and Mearns, 1996; Ross, 1998). These myths manifest themselves through the neglect of local people—their knowledge, priorities, management systems, local institutions and social organisation—and the value to them of local assets (natural, social, cultural…). Within this dynamic of 'denying and undermining the other', powerful actors seek to control the food system and natural resource management through discourse, law, coercion and violence. Misleading, simplified, and a-historical perspectives perpetuated by powerful bureaucracies and institutions are a persistent feature of environmental policy-making and interventions. Soil erosion, degradation of rangelands, desertification, loss of forests, the destruction of wildlife and fisheries…all of these problems appear to require intervention to prevent further deterioration, and local misuse of resources is consistently defined as the principal cause of destruction. All too often, *"by depicting resource users (the local ones) as wild, destructive (or illiterate, uneducated, backward or non-innovative), state resource management agencies think they can justify their use of militaristic environmental protection"* (Peluso, 1996).

These policy (or crisis) narratives are usually robust, hard to challenge, and slow to change. They play a key role in policy and project-level decision-making. They structure options, define relevant data, and exclude other views within bureaucracies and professional circles. And yet, recent research has debunked several orthodox views and

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Box 3. Debunking myths on people-environment interactions

Recent research has fundamentally questioned many of the environmental crisis narratives and received wisdoms on the supposed environmental destructiveness of rural people. A combination of historical analysis, social anthropology, participatory methods to understand local resource users' knowledge and perspectives, and insights from non-equilibrium ecology has challenged some of the environmental knowledge taken for granted by government bureaucracies and donors:

- Contrary to neo-Malthusian assumptions, population increase may not necessarily mean more environmental degradation and less biological diversity. More people can mean more care for the environment as shown by research in Sierra Leone and Kenya. And biodiversity may be enhanced or even be dependent on the activities of indigenous and local communities in conservation and protected areas.
- Historical research in West Africa has shown dominant deforestation estimates to be vastly exaggerated. Many of the vegetation forms that ecologists and policy-makers have used to indicate forest loss, such as forest patches in savannah, are, according to the knowledge of local resource users and historical evidence, the results of landscape enrichment by people.
- New perspectives in ecology have challenged conventional views of dry lands in Africa as stable ecosystems subject to decline and desertification once carrying capacity is exceeded. Rangelands are resilient and less prone to degradation and desertification than once thought. The new findings concord with the knowledge of many local herders and emphasise how rangelands are subject to high levels of spatial and temporal variability, and ecological dynamics are characterised by sudden transitions rather than slow and predictable change.

See *Kandeh and Richards, 1996; Fairhead and Leach, 1996; Pimbert and Pretty, 1995; Sullivan and Homewood, 2004; Tiffen et al., 1994.*

dominant myths on people-environment interactions (Box 3). A future challenge lies in bringing together such plural forms of knowledge within a more comprehensive, power equalising dynamic of participatory learning and action. This approach to transforming knowledge will need to be grounded in empowering pedagogical approaches and decentralised ways of knowing that enable more rural people and other citizens to directly access, produce, negotiate and use knowledge on complex dynamic systems to secure their rights, resources and ecosystems.

Decolonising economics

Decolonising social imagination from the scientism of neo-classical mathematical economics and neo-liberal economic dogma is essential for transformation towards food

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Box 4. The farm crisis, bigger farms, and the myths of 'competition' and 'efficiency'

The Canadian National Farmers Union (NFU) and its members took a critical look at the fundamental assumptions that underlie agricultural policy in Canada and in much of the world. The results offer a fresh and original analysis of concepts such as efficiency, competition, economies of scale, the effects of technology, and the allocation of profits within the agri-food system.

Family farms are generally painted as inefficient, and their loss is swept aside as an unfortunate but necessary effect of progress. However, overwhelming data show that the family farm sector may be among the most efficient in the entire Canadian economy. Statistics Canada data show that over the past 40 years, no other sector has matched the efficiency gains of farmers.

"When you liquidate a population, one of the things that you need to do is to tell lies in order to devalue and marginalize those people. The most pernicious lie told about our family farms during this crisis is that they are 'inefficient". NFU President Stewart Wells, President of the Canadian National Farmers Union.

"Inefficiency rhetoric is nothing more than a smokescreen: a propaganda tactic deployed against farm families, workers, and rural communities. Only by peeling away the myths and lies can we understand the rural crisis and begin to see ***who*** *is destroying our farms."* Prince Edward Island farmer Ronald MacFarlane.

New evidence shows that poor government policies, defective markets and powerful corporations undisciplined by competition are wiping out family farms. Such citizen-led participatory research can thus successfully deconstruct economic myths on 'competition' and 'efficiency' that often resonate with, and reinforce, Malthusian and social Darwinist views on survival of the fittest (Lewontin, 2001).

Source *"The Farm Crisis, Bigger Farms, and the Myths of 'Competition' and 'Efficiency'"*. Canadian National Farmers Union (2003) www.nfu.ca/briefs/Myths_PREP_PDF_TWO.bri.pdf

sovereignty. Simply put, current knowledge and policies for growth in food and farming are leading to the economic genocide of unprecedented numbers of farmers and rural livelihoods throughout the world (Perez-Vitoria, 2005). The need to re-humanise and re-enchant economics has been well stated by Castoriadis (1996): *"What is needed is a new creation of the imagination that is of unprecedented importance..., a creation which would put at the centre of human life other meanings than the mere expansion of production and consumption, one which would offer goals in life that are recognized by other human beings as being worthwhile [....] This is the immense difficulty we are faced with. We should want a society in which economic values have ceased to be central (or the only ones), where the economy is put back in its place as a means for human life and not as its ultimate goal, and in which we therefore give up the mad race to consume more and more. This is not only necessary to avoid the final destruction of the planet's environment, but it is also and especially needed to rescue fellow human*

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Box 5. Barter markets in the Peruvian Andes

The valley of Lares-Yanatile in Cusco (Peru) is rich in biodiversity, containing three different agro-ecological zones between the altitudes of 1,000 to 4,850 metres: *yunga*, *quechua*, and *puna*. Andean tubers and potatoes are grown in the highest zone; corn, legumes and vegetables in the middle area, and fruit trees, coffee, coca and yucca in the lower part. Every week a barter market is held in the middle area of the valley, where nearly 50 tonnes of goods are traded each market day; 10 times the volume of food distributed by the National Programme of Food Assistance. Anyone can participate, and can trade any amount of any crop.

Women are key players in this non-monetary market, which is vital in ensuring that their families have enough food to eat, and that they have a balanced diet. The rainforest supplies vitamin C, potassium and sodium through fruit like citrus and bananas that do not exist in the *quechua* and *puna* zones. The middle and high zones supply mainly potatoes and corn, which provide desperately needed carbohydrates to the rainforest zone. Principles of reciprocity and solidarity guide the economic exchange of a diversity of foods, ensuring that the needs of people and the land are met in culturally unique ways. Indeed, recent action research has generated new evidence on the importance of Andean barter markets for:

- access to food security and nutrition by some of the poorest social groups in the Andes
- conservation of agricultural biodiversity (genetic, species and ecosystem) through continued use and exchange of food crops at the markets
- maintenance of ecosystem services and landscape features in different agro-ecological belts along altitudinal gradients and at multiple scales
- local, autonomous control over production and consumption and, more specifically, control by women over key decisions that affect both local livelihoods and ecological processes.

A web of local organisations operating at different scales (from the household to the whole landscape) governs these forms of economic exchange and contributes to the adaptive management of environmental processes and natural resources. In addition to contributing to the food security of the poorest of the poor, this decentralised web of local organisations also enhances cultural, social and ecological resilience in the face of risk and uncertainty.

Sources: Marti, N (2005) and www.diversefoodsystems.org.

beings from psychological and moral misery"[2]. 'Learning our way out' partly depends on participatory learning and action that builds on local realities and different indicators of well-being, wealth and the 'good life'. For example, in Canada collaborative inquiry largely based on the experiential knowledge of farmers has helped debunk the economic myths that have informed agricultural development over the last 60 years (Box 4).

Similarly, new knowledge on the economic importance of barter markets in the Peruvian Andes has been generated through participatory research with indigenous peoples whose food security depends on these non-monetary forms of economic exchange (Box 5). New barter markets are being consolidated in the Andes because they directly contribute to the survival of peasant families and indigenous communities. They do not entail taking refuge in residual and archaic economic-social formulas. They are instead local choices for autonomy and socio-ecological resilience in the context of the increasingly unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of economic globalisation (Marti, 2005; Marti and Pimbert, 2006).

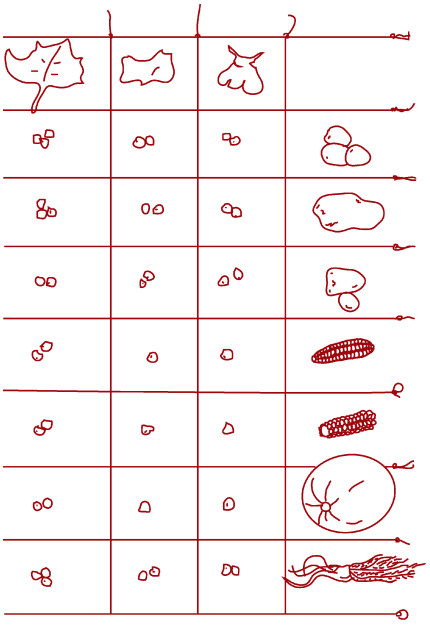
As substantive economic forms (cf Polanyi,1957), barter markets and other non-monetary exchanges can help in re-thinking mainstream economics on the basis of radically different principles (e.g. reciprocity, solidarity, affection, respect, equity, sustainability…) and a diversity of polycentric institutions (e.g. women's collectives, families, communal assemblies, citizen federations…) (see Latouche, 1998; 2003).

In this context, the more inclusive economic arrangements that are proposed by women are particularly important for at least two reasons. First, women are generally more harmed than men by the growing inequalities, insecure employment and social unrest that have marked the last two decades of neo-liberalism (1980-2000). Moreover, the degradation of living conditions in poorer households nearly everywhere has translated into an increase in levels of violence, particularly in domestic and sexual violence, of which women are the main victims. For example, as many as 40% of adult women are now subjected to domestic violence in Europe (58% in Turkey…). And it is estimated that in 2002 alone, over 4 million young girls and women were sold for use as slaves, wives or prostitutes throughout the world (Le Monde Diplomatique, 2003).

Secondly—as several feminist economists have shown—the gendered structure of the economy as well as male bias in national and international economic policies deeply constrain the institutionalisation of both gender and inclusive participation in development. More specifically, the neo-liberal approach to development and corporate-led globalisation affirm the superiority of 'economic efficiency' and the 'commodity economy' to the detriment of a) the 'care economy' where women have a predominant responsibility and b) the many subsistence economies that harbour diverse definitions of well-being and relationships between society and nature.

2 My translation.

3



Transforming ways of knowing

Attempts to re-constitute knowledge for endogenous development and bio-cultural diversity seek to better link local and global knowledge in respectul conversations and build mutual understanding, solidarity and peace, whilst addressing the pressing social and ecological challenges of the 21st century.

The food sovereignty movement is increasingly challenged to actively develop more autonomous and participatory ways of producing knowledge that is ecologically literate, socially just and relevant to context. This implies a radical shift from the existing top down and increasingly corporate-controlled research system to an approach which devolves more responsibility and decision-making power to farmers, indigenous peoples, food workers, consumers and citizens for the production of social and ecological knowledge. The whole process should lead to the democratisation of research, diverse forms of co-inquiry based on specialist and non-specialist knowledge, an expansion of horizontal networks for autonomous learning and action, and more transparent oversight. This implies 1) cultural values that emphasise more direct citizen participation in determining research agendas, regulations and policies; 2) new professional values, participatory methodologies and behaviour; 3) the adoption of a learning process approach in the production and validation of knowledge; and 4) enabling policies that offer citizens adequate material security and time for democratic deliberation in the context of more localised food systems and economies.

Consistent with a 'dual power approach' to transformation, the food sovereignty movement needs to actively engage in two distinct (but possibly complementary) 'ways of knowing':

i) Democratising science and technology research

Despite its emphasis on local knowledge and management systems, the 'food sovereignty' movement also looks to the liberating potential of modern science and technology. This is particularly true with the development of miniaturisation,

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Box 6. Democratising science and technological R&D: some institutional and methodological innovations

1. Use regular citizen panels, consensus conferences, citizen juries, future scenario workshops and referendums to capture the full diversity of interests and values in deciding on strategic research and funding priorities in the social and natural sciences, the allocation of resources and technological risk assessments. Citizens' commissions for science and technology futures should be set up to guide and connect research, training and policy institutions. These deliberative and inclusive democratic procedures will clearly need to be linked into the formal policy process through appropriate reforms that allow citizens to more directly frame policies and regulations. Recent experiences[3] also suggest that these forms of participatory democracy can help re-frame policies on the future of food and farming to reflect broader social interests and goals rather than narrow corporate interests and elite expertise.

2. Open up decision-making bodies and governance structures of Research & Development organisations to allow a wider representation of different actors and greater transparency, equity and accountability in budget allocation and decisions on R&D priorities. Throughout the world, there is a dire need for much wider and more gender balanced representation in these institutions by different citizens: small farmers, tribal people, forest dwellers, fisherfolk, healers but also farm workers, small food processors, retailers and consumers. These bodies set the agenda for the design of policies and technologies for food and farming. They are immensely powerful in that they broadly decide which policies and technologies will ultimately be developed, why, how and for whom. And yet the governance of science and technological R&D is presently largely dominated by men who are increasingly distant from rural realities and moving closer to corporations.

3. Reorganise conventional scientific and technological research to encourage participatory knowledge creation and technological developments that combine the strengths of farmers and scientists in the search for locally adapted solutions and food systems. Effective and interdisciplinary partnerships are needed to link natural and social sciences with indigenous knowledge to address needs and problems in specific local settings that are typically marked by complex and dynamic change. An important goal here is to ensure that knowledge, policies and technologies are tailored to the diversity of human needs and the situations in which they are to be used. This must be on the basis of an inclusive process in which the means and ends of R&D are primarily shaped by and for citizens through conscious deliberation and negotiation.

4. Ensure that knowledge, genetic resources and innovations remain accessible to all as a basic condition for economic democracy and the exercise of human rights, including the right to food and participation. Decisions to issue patents on knowledge embodied in products and processes (seeds, software etc) and national intellectual property rights legislation require more comprehensive public framing of laws and policies based on deliberative and inclusive models of direct democracy.

3. Pimbert and Wakeford, 2001; Pimbert and Wakeford, 2002; IIED, 2006.

multipurpose machines, multimedia and computer assisted technology, knowledge in agro-ecology, and efficient renewable energy systems. All of these can enhance local autonomy and ecologies, minimise pollution, and expand the realms of freedom and culture by eliminating needless toil. But local organisations and citizen federations should decide which new innovations are needed, when, where and under what conditions along the food chain and in every day life. Hence the need to re-embed citizens in the production of knowledge and fundamentally democratise social and natural sciences research organisations.

The overall aim here is to create spaces and processes that allow for more direct citizen participation and pluralism in deciding on the allocation of funds for research, setting strategic research & development (R&D) priorities, in validating knowledge and new technologies, ascertaining risks in the face of considerable open ended uncertainties and in framing policies for food and farming. This approach seeks to broaden democratic control over existing public research institutions and universities in order to transform theory and practice. In this context, a range of institutional and methodological innovations based on citizen deliberation and inclusion may help re-constitute knowledge and technologies for ecological sustainability, social justice and human liberation (see Box 6).

ii) De-institutionalising research for autonomous learning and action

This approach seeks to strengthen citizen-led innovation and organise networks of knowledge users on the basis of a more horizontal and egalitarian logic, working independently and outside the state and the market. According to Illich (1970; 1975), such endogenous knowledge creation by and for the people means 1) taking responsibility for one's own learning process; 2) having unrestricted access to learning tools; and 3) addressing issues that relate to people's aspirations and lives. *"Against the constant and pressing need for expert knowledge to catch up with the industrial development future, endogenous knowledge proposes to 'celebrate the awareness' of the social construction of knowledge and science, and to take the responsibility to 'create' alternative futures"* (Finger and Asun, 2001). De-institutionalising research for autonomous learning is thus seen as a way to move from 'communes of resistance' to sustainable communities which confederate into larger food sovereignty networks, and in which citizens participate in a direct and democratic way (Pimbert, 2006).

In the Peruvian Andes example (see Box 1) Quechua communities are linked through socio-cultural networks for horizontal learning and action. Platforms of local resource users from the Potato Park reach out to neighbouring indigenous communities, with 'barefoot technicians' building new confidence and capacities for the collective production of useful social and ecological knowledge. This endogenous socio-cultural network is thus engaged in learning-by-doing for the local adaptive management of

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Box 7. Autonomous research and learning networks in Bangladesh

Nayakrishi Andolan is a peasant movement in Bangladesh which includes more than 100,000 farmers supported by UBINIG[4]. UBINIG and Nayakrishi Andolan are committed to building a 'Peasant World University': an 'institution' capable of generating new and inclusive learning about agrarian livelihoods through horizontal networks that build on marginalised expressions of living knowledge. This living knowledge is the learning co-generated and distributed in multiple spaces: in farming practices, products, fields, landscapes, and in the village campuses that are made up of men and women, old and young, potters and farmers, artisans and healers, fishers and hunters, leaders and priests, story tellers and musicians.

The Nayakrishi Andolan and UBINIG have actively combined efforts to put into practice the art and science of learning-by-doing through a variety of interrelated knowledge producing activities. These include systematic rethinking of agriculture as the art of generating and managing both cultivated and uncultivated space. Innovative practices go beyond mere creation of new technology to include the active discovering of complex ecological interactions embedded in everyday language and rural livelihoods. The living knowledge of rural people cannot be harnessed by writing and conventional linear thinking alone. Nayakrishi Andolan thus uses the dynamics of oral culture as the medium of living knowledge. This approach has made it possible for the Nayakrishi Andolan to collect and preserve seeds of biodiversity, using oral culture to secure the collective memory on not only the properties of plants (edible wild plants, medicinals, crop varieties…), but also on the combinations of plants and other life forms that can contribute to ecological farming.

The institutional and organisational ramifications of learning innovations of this kind have been far reaching. They include the creation of Nayakrishi Seed Networks, regional Natural Resource Auditing committees, and also a network of Birth Attendants and Medicine Women. These strong networks and biodiversity-based farming practices are steadily expanding because of their productive capacity and ability to meet households' various needs. Household and village level seed huts develop and share the specialised knowledge of women farmers. The huts act as spaces for the exchange of seed and knowledge and as living monographs of particular farming strategies. Field experiments based on these seed collections are organised by UBINIG Centres located in all major ecological zones of Bangladesh, in cooperation with national scientists and plant breeders. These experiments allow farmers to directly test Green Revolution claims about the inherent inferiority of local seeds in comparison with the few varieties that make up the commercial seed system. They enhance the capacity of farmers to resist the monoculture imposed by techno-scientific and commercial paradigms of food production. The findings of these and other experiments are shared by farmers through regular regional exchanges. They are also celebrated nationally and locally in biodiversity festivals linking the act of seed saving to the spiritual practices of Bengal through poetry, song and the living knowledge of wandering musicians. Last, the knowledge co-generated by the farmers of Nayakrishi Andolan and UBINIG is contributing to a national discourse on ecological agriculture and is informing debates on global issues from the perspective of peasants.

More inclusive ways of knowing and new knowledge are thus being generated through a collective process of learning that unfolds in living experience.

Source: Mazhar et al, 2006; http://membres.lycos.fr/ubinig/about2.htm

mountain ecosystems and ecological networks. But it is also developing the 'soft side' of the land: customary institutions and forms of governance rooted in the concept of Indigenous Bio-Cultural Heritage Areas (IBCHA).

In Bangladesh, the experience of the Nayakrishi Andolan, or New Agriculture Movement, provides an important grounding and practical setting for the development of innovative farmer-centered approaches for learning and action (Box 7). As an autonomous network for learning and action, the Nayakrishi Andolan builds on rural peoples' systemic art and science of combining and integrating all aspects of life. Its holistic orientation seeks to re-unite those *"dimensions that civilisation has systematically broken into institutional and social silos, including livelihood (labour), wealth (capital), reciprocity (market), governance (government), spirituality (religious institutions), knowledge (science), aesthetics (arts), love (family) and pleasure (sex and entertainement)"* (Mazhar et al., 2006).

In the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, collectives of women dalit farmers are using modern digital video technology to document and share their knowledge on agroecology, local food systems, bio-cultural diversity and their lives. Autonomous film and radio also enable them to articulate their own visions for the future of food, farming and development. In so doing they are transforming knowledge and ways of knowing for themselves and others inspired by them (Box 8).

iii) Enabling contexts for social learning and action

Both of the above 'ways of knowing' for food sovereignty need to be attentive to the links between learning, power and organisational change. For example spaces – including citizen spaces – are infused with power relations, affecting who enters them, who speaks with what knowledge and voice, and who benefits. This is particularly apparent, for example, when both professional knowledge and peoples' experiential knowledge are brought together in the same space and discussed. Foresters, agronomists, protected area managers, water engineers, health professionals, architects, land use planners, and social scientists all have specialist knowledge that can usefully feed into citizen deliberations and more inclusive forms of participation that strengthen civil society. But the deliberative process, and the political negotiation over what constitutes valid knowledge in a particular context, deeply challenges professionals to assume different roles and responsibilities. In particular, citizens with professional knowledge will often need to shift to new roles that facilitate local people's analysis, deliberations and production of knowledge. Moreover, the adoption of a participatory culture within organisations, including civil society organisations, and changes in attitudes and

4. UBINIG is the abbreviation of its Bengali name *Unnayan Bikalper Nitinirdharoni Gobeshona*. In English it means Policy Research for Development Alternatives. UBINIG is a policy advocacy and research organisation which also implement the ideas that come out of research and its living interaction with local communities.

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Box 8. Autonomous film and radio: the Community Media Trust experience in South India

The Community Media Trust of the Deccan Development Society (DDS) was created in October 2001 in direct response to the demands of thousands of very poor, low caste women who wanted their unrecognised voices to be heard and acknowledged by the world outside. It works in about 80 villages with women's Sanghams (voluntary village associations of the poor) in the Medak District of Andhra Pradesh, where the official media were seen to be dominated by commercial and political actors whose interests conflict with those of rural communities and their environments.

The Trust is mandated to metaphorically hand over the microphones and cameras to marginalised rural women to produce their own images and authentic voices. Moreover, it strives to take images and voices of rural women to the wider world and create an alternative media that can be accessed and controlled by local communities, especially those that suffer continued exclusion. Twenty women, 17 of whom are working with video and three with radio, constitute the Community Media Trust. The video group operates digital video cameras, portable edit recorders, and computer-based editing facilities to make their films.

The women film makers have together made more than 100 short films on various issues of concern to them and their communities. They have brought fresh perspectives into film making. Whilst the primary engagement of the Trust lies in a horizontal communication with their own communities, their members have also produced dozens of films for other groups and agencies on environment and development issues. These include films about the future of food and farming; the bitter harvest of genetically engineered agriculture; water; lives and livelihoods; women's control over media; environment and agricultural biodiversity. Several of these films have been broadcast as news items on national television channels. They have also been shown in international farmer exchanges for mutual learning, and in film festivals.

Participatory video has also been used as an integral part of action research on the regeneration of diverse food systems and decentralised forms of governance. The Community Media Trust has documented this action research process through the eyes of marginalised women farmers and small farmers. In this way:

- Video transforms the lives of the people involved. But it also transforms the research process in which university trained professionals and non-literate, marginalised people are co-inquirers, producing new knowledge that challenges the dominance of western science and learning approaches
- Video empowers marginalised people—especially women—and facilitates social and ecological change
- Video travels across borders and boundaries to inspire a younger generation of scholars and practitioners to find better ways of doing research with, by and for people, not just on people.

Through their films and ways of working, the women of the Community Media Trust have engaged with their own communities and other actors in debates over food and seed sovereignty, control over natural resources, market and media. Through participatory communication processes, they have facilitated and recorded critical evaluations of state policies and programs. They have also established relationships of solidarity with local communities in South Asia and other regions of the world, helping them to develop their own, locally controlled, autonomous media.

Sources: www.ddsindia.com and www.diversefoodsystems.org

behaviour are unlikely to automatically follow when new methods for deliberation are adopted or suddenly become fashionable. In the 'democratisation of research' approach, the design of appropriate institutional mechanisms and rewards to encourage the spread of a participatory culture and praxis within research institutes and universities is obviously a key priority. But to a lesser extent, civil society organisations and food sovereignty movements that seek to create more safe spaces for 'autonomous learning and action' are also similarly challenged to transform themselves. Some ideas about the elements to tackle are offered in Box 9.

Last but not least, the participatory forms of inquiry mediated by citizens, their organisations and their federated networks ultimately represent a fundamentally different orientation to the nature of knowledge. This kind of participatory, experiential understanding takes involvement with our surroundings seriously, in all its ecological, social, economic, cultural and spiritual dimensions. The kind of knowledge that emerges from this process of social learning has been well described by James Scott in his book *Seeing like a State* (1998). He speaks of *"forms of knowledge embedded in local experience" (mêtis) and sharply contrasts them with "the more general, abstract knowledge displayed by the state and technical agencies". "Mêtis, says Scott, is "plastic, local and divergent…It is, in fact, the idiosyncrasies of mêtis, its contextualities, and its fragmentation that make it so permeable, so open to new ideas".*

In this context, final objective answers matter less than processes of emerging democratic engagement. The quality and validity of this way of knowing cannot be assessed from the narrow standpoint of positivist science alone. Criteria of validation and quality need to be much broader. One important criterion of quality is whether or not this social learning opens up new communicative spaces for democratic inquiry to take place. Another is whether it has contributed to the emergence of a wide community of inquiry among divergent actors. In many ways, social learning for food sovereignty could help to *"shift the dialogue about validity from a concern with idealist questions in search of truth to concern for engagement, dialogue, pragmatic outcomes and an emergent, reflexive sense of what is important"* (Bradbury and Reason, 2001). Coming to terms with this paradigm shift is a challenge that needs to be vigorously embraced by organisations of small scale producers, socially responsible researchers and other citizens seeking more autonomy through food sovereignty.

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Box 9. Organisational transformation for democracy in knowledge production

Key actions for those seeking democratic change and pluralism in organisations that produce social, environmental, economic and technical knowledge (research institutes, universities, government, civil society organisations and federations) include:

- ✓ diversify the governance and the membership of budget allocation committees of public sector planning and research institutes to include representatives of diverse citizen groups. Establish procedures to ensure transparency, equity and accountability in the allocation of funds and dissemination of new knowledge;
- ✓ encourage shifts from hierarchical and rigidly bureaucratic structures to 'flat', flexible and responsive organisations;
- ✓ build capacity of technical and scientific staff in the participatory skills, attitudes and behaviour needed to learn from citizens (mutual listening, respect, gender sensitivity as well as methods for participatory learning and action);
- ✓ provide capacity building and experiential learning for staff/people to develop their ecological literacy and skills in agroecology and ecological design;
- ✓ ensure that senior and middle management positions are occupied by competent facilitators of organisational change with the vision, commitment and ability to reverse gender and other discriminatory biases in the ideologies, disciplines and practices of the organisation;
- ✓ promote and reward management that is consultative and participatory rather than hierarchy and efficiency-led. Establish incentive and accountability systems that are equitable for women and men;
- ✓ provide incentives and high rewards for staff and members of organisations to experiment, take initiatives and acknowledge errors as a way of learning-by-doing and engaging with the diverse local realities of citizen's livelihoods in urban and rural contexts;
- ✓ redesign practical arrangements and the use of space and time within the workplace to meet the diverse needs of women, men and older staff and to help them fulfil their new professional obligations to work more closely with citizens and other actors (timetables, career paths, working hours, provision of paternity and maternity leave, childcare provisions, mini sabbaticals, promotion criteria…);
- ✓ encourage and reward the use of gender disaggregated and socially differentiated local indicators and criteria in monitoring and evaluation as well as in guiding subsequent technical support, policy changes and allocation of scarce resources.

(adapted from Bainbridge et al., 2000; Pimbert, 2007)

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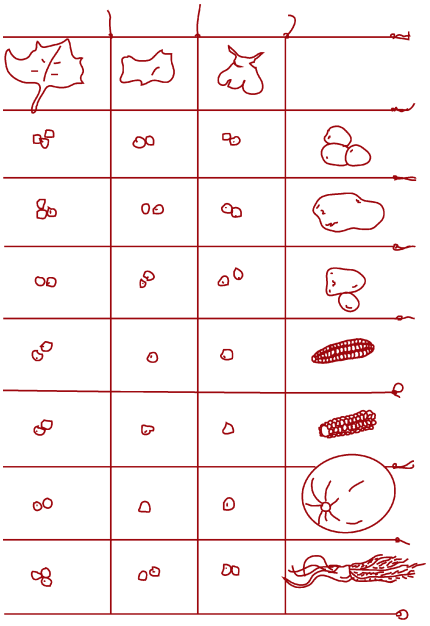


Concluding remarks

Reclaiming knowledge to make 'other worlds possible' must be envisioned in the context of wider social change for two basic reasons. First, knowledge broadly reflects and reinforces specific power relations and worldviews in any society. Deep social change is often needed for the emergence of new knowledge paradigms. Second, whilst clearly vitally important, new knowledge alone will not lead to endogenous development in food and farming.

Indeed, 'transforming knowledge and ways of knowing' for food sovereignty is an integral part of a much deeper process of *systemic* change. Local democratic control over diversified food systems needs to be backed by a new and alternative international framework for multilateral regulation on the sustainable production and trade of food, fish and other agricultural goods (see the *People's Food Sovereignty Statement - Annex 1*). I have suggested elsewhere (Pimbert, 2007) that this systemic change depends on several interrelated and mutually reinforcing processes of transformation, including:

- **Nurturing Citizenship.** Politics are too important to be left to professionals: they must become the domain of amateurs—of ordinary citizens. Food sovereignty implies greater citizen participation and more direct forms of democracy in the governance of food systems. It assumes that every citizen is competent and reasonable enough to participate in democratic politics. This calls for the developement of a different kind of character from that of passive taxpayers and voters. With training and experience citizens can learn to deliberate, make decisions, and implement their choices responsibly. However, like any form of civilised behaviour, these practices and virtues do not arise spontaneously; they have to be consciously nurtured and are the result of careful political education, which includes character formation. The Athenians called this education paideia: the sustained and intentional cultivation of the civic and ethical qualities necessary for citizenship.
- **Confederalism.** Nurturing and strengthening citizen-centered food systems and autonomy calls for forms of political and social organisation that can institutionalise

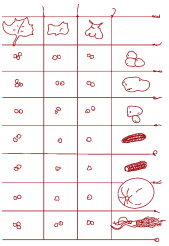
interdependence without resorting to the market or the central state. Combining localism with interdependence across large areas is a key challenge here. The principle of confederalism is a way of linking together several political entities into a larger whole. Confederalism involves a network of citizen-based as opposed to government bodies or councils with members or delegates elected from popular face-to-face democratic assemblies, in villages, tribes, towns and even neighborhoods of large cities. These confederal bodies or councils become the means of interlinking villages, towns, neighbourhoods and ecological units into a confederation based on shared responsibilities, full accountability, firmly mandated representatives and the right to recall them, if necessary.

- **Dual power.** The larger and more numerous the linked federations and confederations become, the greater is their potential to constitute a significant counter-power to the state and transnational corporations that largely control the global food system. Confederations can eventually exert 'dual power', using this to further citizen empowerment and democratic change. For example, they can seek power within local government through strategies of collaboration and political negotiation, while also maintaining strong community and municipal organising strategies at the grassroots. Multiple lanes for engagement can also be used to link community-based food systems, social movements and political parties with direct local governance strategies.
- **Embracing equity and gender inclusion.** Throughout the world, the challenge of widening social inclusion and representation is key for most civil society organisations and federations that seek food sovereignty. Although farming and natural resource management are becoming increasingly feminised, rural organisations still seem to reflect and reinforce the patriarchal relations that characterise many rural societies. Thus if raising the voice of poor people in food and agricultural policy is a general problem, then raising the voice of poor women in these policy discussions is particularly challenging. Gender equity and learning how to better include and respect the voices of the very poor and marginalised remain urgent challenges for the food sovereignty movement and civil society at large.
- **Transforming knowledge and ways of knowing.** We must actively develop more autonomous and participatory ways of knowing to produce knowledge that is ecologically literate, socially just and relevant to context. The whole process should lead to the democratisation of research, diverse forms of co-inquiry based on specialist and non-specialist knowledge, an expansion of horizontal networks for autonomous learning and action, and more transparent oversight.
- **Reclaiming property rights and territory.** Food sovereignty implies the implementation of radical processes of agrarian reform and equitable re-distribution of rights of access and use over resources, including land, water, forests, seeds and the means of production. Comprehensive agrarian reforms need to consider 'territory'

as a more inclusive and important concept than mere 'land' and, with this, the right to self determination of indigenous peoples in their territories. Broader concepts of territory, collective rights, autonomy and self determination must be at the heart of future agrarian reforms that seek to balance the needs, rights and demands of diverse actors. These actors include women, men and young people, indigenous peoples, farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers, migrants, colonists on the agricultural frontiers, rural workers, fisherfolk and others.

- **Deepening democracy in the age of globalisation.** There is a need for economic arrangements that offer enough material security and time for citizens (both men and women) to exercise their right to participate in shaping policies for the public good and to develop autonomous food systems. Only with some material security and time can people be 'empowered' to live as they choose and also think about what type of policies they would like to see and how they can contribute to them. Levelling the economic playing field for democratic participation and sustainable livelihoods calls for radical and mutually reinforcing structural reforms, including: i) a guaranteed and unconditional minimum income for all; ii) a tax on financial speculations; iii) a generalised reduction of time spent in wage-work and a more equitable sharing of jobs; iv) the re-introduction of protective safeguards for domestic economies to guarantee stable prices covering the cost of production, including quotas and other controls against imports of food and fibre that can be produced locally; and v) the re-localisation of pluralist economies that combine both subsistence and market oriented activities.

These critical reflections and proposals for action are offered in a spirit of solidarity with the newly emerging food sovereignty movement and as a contribution to 'learning our way out' of the current impasse of industrial food and farming.



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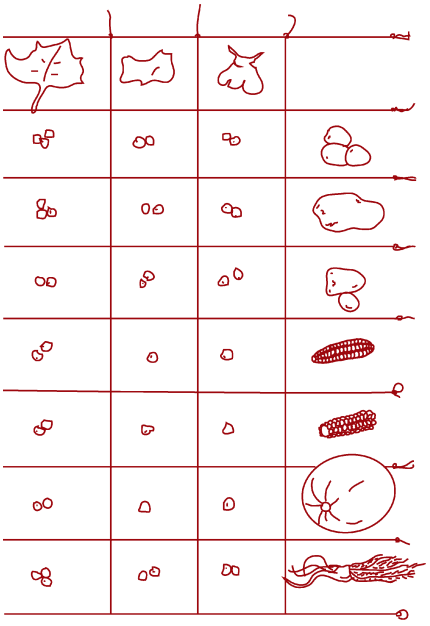

Annex 1: Peoples' Food Sovereignty Statement

Food and agriculture are fundamental to all peoples, in terms of both production and availability of sufficient quantities of safe and healthy food, and as foundations of healthy communities, cultures and environments. All of these are being undermined by the increasing emphasis on neo-liberal economic policies promoted by leading political and economic powers, such as the United States (US) and the European Union (EU), and realised through global institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). Instead of securing food for the peoples of the world, these institutions have presided over a system that has prioritised export-oriented production, increased global hunger and malnutrition, and alienated millions from productive assets and resources such as land, water, fish, seeds, technology and know-how. Fundamental change to this global regime is urgently required.

Peoples' Food Sovereignty is a Right

In order to guarantee the independence and food sovereignty of all of the world's peoples, it is essential that food is produced though diversified, community based production systems. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets, and; to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources. Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.

Governments must uphold the rights of all peoples to food sovereignty and security, and adopt and implement policies that promote sustainable, family-based production rather

than industry-led, high-input and export oriented production. This in turn demands that they put in place the following measures:

I. Market Policies

- Ensure adequate remunerative prices for all farmers and fishers;
- Exercise the rights to protect domestic markets from imports at low prices;
- Regulate production on the internal market in order to avoid the creation of surpluses;
- Abolish all direct and indirect export supports; and,
- Phase out domestic production subsidies that promote unsustainable agriculture, inequitable land tenure patterns and destructive fishing practices; and support integrated agrarian reform programmes, including sustainable farming and fishing practices.

II. Food Safety, Quality and the Environment

- Adequately control the spread of diseases and pests while at the same time ensuring food safety;
- Protect fish resources from both land-based and sea-based threats, such as pollution from dumping, coastal and off-shore mining, degradation of river mouths and estuaries and harmful industrial aquaculture practices that use antibiotics and hormones;
- Ban the use of dangerous technologies, such as food irradiation, which lower the nutritional value of food and create toxins in food;
- Establish food quality criteria appropriate to the preferences and needs of the people;
- Establish national mechanisms for quality control of all food products so that they comply with high environmental, social and health quality standards; and,
- Ensure that all food inspection functions are performed by appropriate and independent government bodies, and not by private corporations or contractors;

III. Access to Productive Resources

- Recognise and enforce communities' legal and customary rights to make decisions concerning their local, traditional resources, even where no legal rights have previously been allocated;
- Ensure equitable access to land, seeds, water, credit and other productive resources;
- Grant the communities that depend on aquatic resources common property rights, and reject systems that attempt to privatise these public resources;

- Prohibit all forms of patenting of life or any of its components, and the appropriation of knowledge associated with food and agriculture through intellectual property rights regimes and
- Protect farmers', indigenous peoples' and local community rights over plant genetic resources and associated knowledge – including farmers' rights to exchange and reproduce seeds.

IV. Production-Consumption

- Develop local food economies based on local production and processing, and the development of local food outlets.

V. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

- Ban the production of, and trade in genetically modified (GM) seeds, foods, animal feeds and related products;
- Ban genetically modified foods to be used as food aid;
- Expose and actively oppose the various methods (direct and indirect) by which agribusiness corporations such as Monsanto, Syngenta, Aventis/Bayer and DuPont are bringing GM crop varieties into agricultural systems and environments; and,
- Encourage and promote alternative agriculture and organic farming, based on indigenous knowledge and sustainable agriculture practices.

VI. Transparency of Information and Corporate Accountability

- Provide clear and accurate labelling of food and feed-stuff products based on consumers' and farmers' rights to access to information about content and origins;
- Establish binding regulations on all companies to ensure transparency, accountability and respect for human rights and environmental standards;
- Establish anti-trust laws to prevent the development of industrial monopolies in the food, fisheries and agricultural sectors; and,
- Hold corporate entities and their directors legally liable for corporate breaches of environmental and social laws, and of national and international laws and agreements.

VII. Specific Protection Of Coastal Communities Dependent On Marine And Inland Fish

- Prevent the expansion of shrimp aquaculture and the destruction of mangroves;
- Ensure local fishing communities have the rights to the aquatic resources;

- Negotiate a legally binding international convention to prevent illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing;
- Effectively implement international marine agreements and conventions, such as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement; and,
- Eradicate poverty and ensure food security for coastal communities through equitable and sustainable community based natural resource use and management, founded on indigenous and local knowledge, culture and experience.

Trade Rules Must Guarantee Food Sovereignty

Global trade must not be afforded primacy over local and national developmental, social, environmental and cultural goals. Priority should be given to affordable, safe, healthy and good quality food, and to culturally appropriate subsistence production for domestic, sub-regional and regional markets. Current modes of trade liberalisation, which allows market forces and powerful transnational corporations (TNCs) to determine what and how food is produced, and how food is traded and marketed, cannot fulfil these crucial goals.

'No' to Neo-liberal Policies in Food and Agriculture

The undersigned denounce the liberalisation' of farm product exchanges as promoted through bilateral and regional free trade agreements, and multilateral institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. We condemn the dumping of food products in all markets, and especially in Third World countries where it has severely undermined domestic production. We condemn the attempts by the WTO and other multilateral institutions to sell all rights of aquatic resources to transnational consortiums. Neo-liberal policies coerce countries into specialising in agricultural production in which they have a so-called 'comparative advantage' and then trading along the same lines. However, export orientated production is being pushed at the expense of domestic food production, and production means and resources are increasingly controlled by large transnational corporations. The same is occurring in the fishing sector. Fishing communities are losing their rights of access to fisheries, because access has been transferred to industrial corporations, such as PESCANOVA. Those TNCs have consolidated a great part of the production and of the global fishing commerce.

Rich governments continue to heavily subsidise export oriented agricultural and fisheries production in their countries, with the bulk of support going to large producers. The majority of taxpayers' funds are handed out to big business – large producers, traders and retailers – who engage in unsustainable agricultural, fisheries and trading practices, and not to small-scale family producers who produce much of the food for the internal market, often in more sustainable ways.

These export-oriented policies have resulted in market prices for commodities that are far lower than their real costs of production. This has encouraged and perpetuated dumping, and provided TNCs with opportunities to buy cheap products, which are then sold at significantly higher prices to consumers in both the North and the South. The larger parts of important agricultural and fisheries subsidies in rich countries are in fact subsidies for corporate agri-industry, traders, retailers and a minority of the largest producers.

The adverse effects of these policies and practices are becoming clearer every day. They lead to the disappearance of small-scale, family farms and fishing communities in both the North and South; poverty has increased, especially in the rural areas; soils and water have been polluted and degraded; biological diversity has been lost, and; natural habitats destroyed.

Dumping

Dumping occurs when goods are sold at less than their cost of production. This can be the result of subsidies and structural distortions, such as monopoly control over markets and distribution. The inability of current economic policy to factor in externalities, such as the depletion of water and soil nutrients and pollution resulting from industrial agricultural methods, also contribute to dumping. Dumping under the current neo-liberal policies is conducted in North-South, South-North, South-South and North-North trade. Whatever the form, dumping ruins small-scale local producers in both the countries of origin and sale.

For example:

- Imports by India of dairy surpluses subsidised by the European Union had negative impacts on local, family based dairy production.
- Exports of industrial pork from the USA to the Caribbean proved ruinous to Caribbean producers;
- Imports by Ivory Coast of European pork at subsidised prices are three times lower than the production costs in Ivory Coast;
- Chinese exports of silk threads to India at prices far lower than the costs of production in India has been seriously damaging for hundreds of thousands of farmer families in Southern India; and,
- On one hand the import of cheap maize from the US to Mexico- the centre of the origin of maize - ruins Mexican producers; on the other hand the export of vegetables at low prices from Mexico to Canada ruins producers in Canada.

Dumping practises must to be stopped. Countries must be able to protect their home markets against dumping and other trade practices that prove damaging to local

producers. Exporting countries must not be allowed to dump surpluses on the international market, and should respond to real demands for agricultural goods and products in ways that do not undermine domestic production, but rather support and strengthen local economies.

There is no 'World Market' of Agricultural Products

The so called 'market' of agricultural products does not exist. What exists is, above all, an international trade of surpluses of milk, cereals and meat dumped primarily by the EU, the US and other members of the CAIRNS group. Behind the faces of national trade negotiators are powerful TNCs, such as Monsanto and Cargill. They are the real beneficiaries of domestic subsidies and supports, international trade negotiations and the global manipulations of trade regimes. At present, international trade in agricultural products involves only ten percent of total worldwide agricultural production and is mainly an exchange between TNCs from the US, EU and a few other industrialised countries. The so called 'world market price' is extremely unstable and has no relation to the costs of production. It is far too low because of dumping, and therefore, it is not an appropriate or desirable reference for agricultural production.

The Older Siblings of the WTO: The World Bank and The IMF

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are the older siblings of the WTO and serve as domestic arms of the WTO regime in developing countries. They have played significant roles in weakening agricultural autonomy, dismantling domestic self-sufficiency, creating famines and undermining food sovereignty. Their structural adjustment programmes – now called poverty reduction programmes – have created and entrenched policy induced poverty across the developing world. Hardest hit by these policies are those who rely on agriculture and the natural environment for their livelihood and survival.

Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, the Bank and Fund are unchanged in their belief that global integration' of domestic agriculture systems and 'market access' are the best avenues to reduce poverty. Developing countries are exhorted to undertake reforms in their respective agriculture sectors, which include dismantling of agriculture subsidies, deregulation of pricing and distribution, privatisation of agriculture support and extension services, provision of greater market access to foreign producers and removing all barriers to international agriculture trade. However, the Bank and Fund are unable to force the rich countries of the OECD to the same. As a result, Bank-Fund policies entrench inequalities among the developed and developing world and reproduce colonial structures of production and distribution.

Privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation are the hallmarks of the World Bank-IMF approach to development and are necessary conditions in all Bank-Fund lending programmes. Despite fierce criticism from numerous farmers' organisations, academics and independent researchers, the Bank continues to support 'market-assisted land

reform' and the creation of 'functioning land markets' as a key rural development strategy. Bank-Fund policies mandate the transformation of subsistence based, community oriented and self-sufficient agriculture systems to commercial and market dependent production and distribution systems. Food crops are replaced by cash crops for export, and communities and societies are compelled to rely on external markets that they have no control over for food security. Furthermore, the emphasis on export crops has led to increased dependence on harmful and costly chemical inputs that threaten soil, water and air quality, biodiversity, and human and animal health, while providing greater profits for large agribusiness and chemical corporations.

The commercialisation of agriculture has resulted in the consolidation of agriculture land and assets in the hands of agribusiness and other large commercial entities, displacing small-scale and family farmers off their lands to seek employment in off-farm activities, or as seasonal labour in the commercial agriculture sector. Most farmers in developing countries are steeped in debt as a result of increasing input costs and falling farm-gate prices for their products. Many have mortgaged their land and assets to repay old debts, and in several cases have lost their lands altogether. An equally large number have moved to contract farming for large agribusiness in order to hold on to whatever assets they have left. This has resulted in widespread migration of farming families, the creation of new pockets of poverty and inequality in rural and urban areas, and the fragmentation of entire rural communities.

The World Bank and the IMF threaten the wealth, diversity and potential of our agriculture. Agriculture is not simply an economic sector, it is a complex of ecosystems and processes that include forests, rivers, plains, coastal areas, biodiversity, human and animal habitats, production, distribution, consumption, conservation, etc. Bank-Fund policies are creeping into every one of these areas. In order to protect our agriculture, the World Bank and the IMF must be removed from food and agriculture altogether.

The World Trade Organisation Dismisses Calls for Reform

The WTO is undemocratic and unaccountable, has increased global inequality and insecurity, promotes unsustainable production and consumption patterns, erodes diversity and undermines social and environmental priorities. It has proven impervious to criticisms regarding its work and has dismissed all calls for reform. Despite promises to improve the system made at the Seattle Ministerial Meeting in 1999, governance in the WTO has actually become worse. Rather than addressing existing inequities and power imbalances between rich and poor countries, the lobby of the rich and powerful in the WTO is attempting to expand the WTO's mandate to new areas such as environment, labour, investment, competition and government procurement.

The WTO is an entirely inappropriate institution to address issues of food and agriculture. The undersigned do not believe that the WTO will engage in profound reform in order to make itself responsive to the rights and needs of ordinary people. The WTO is attempting

to establish rules to protect foreign investments of fleets that operate in national waters, and is pressuring the governments to yield exclusive fishing rights to the international consortiums. Therefore, the undersigned are calling for all food and agricultural concerns to be taken out of WTO jurisdiction through the dismantling of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and removing or amending the relevant clauses on other WTO agreements so as to ensure the full exclusion of food and agriculture from the WTO regime. These include: the Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS), Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Quantitative Restrictions (QRs), Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

A Role for Trade Rules in Agricultural and Food Policies?

Trade in food can play a positive role, for example, in times of regional food insecurity, or in the case of products that can only be grown in certain parts of the world, or for the exchange of quality products. However, trade rules must respect the precautionary principle to policies at all levels, recognise democratic and participatory decision making, and place peoples' food sovereignty before the imperatives of international trade.

An Alternative Framework

To compliment the role of local and national governments, there is clear need for a new and alternative international framework for multilateral regulation on the sustainable production and trade of food, fish and other agricultural goods. Within this framework, the following principles must be respected:

- Peoples' food sovereignty;
- The rights of all countries to protect their domestic markets by regulating all imports that undermine their food sovereignty;
- Trade rules that support and guarantee food sovereignty;
- Upholding gender equity and equality in all policies and practices concerning food production;
- The precautionary principle;
- The right to information about the origin and content of food items;
- Genuine international democratic participation mechanisms;
- Priority to domestic food production, sustainable farming and fishing practices and equitable access to all resources;

- Support for small farmers and producers to own, and have sufficient control over means of food production;
- Support for open access of traditional fishing communities to aquatic resources;
- Effective bans on all forms of dumping, in order to protect domestic food production. This would include supply management by exporting countries to avoid surpluses and the rights of importing countries to protect internal markets against imports at low prices;
- Prohibition of biopiracy and patents on living matter - animals, plants, the human body and other life forms - and any of its components, including the development of sterile varieties through genetic engineering; and,
- Respect for all human rights conventions and related multilateral agreements under independent international jurisdiction.The undersigned affirm the demands made in other civil society statements, such as Our World is Not for Sale: WTO-Shrink or Sink, and Stop the GATS Attack Now. We urge governments to immediately take the following steps: Cease negotiations to initiate a new round of trade liberalisation and halt discussions to bring 'new issues' into the WTO. This includes further discussions on such issues as investment, competition, government procurement, biotechnology, services, labour and environment.
- Cancel further trade liberalisation negotiations on the WTO's AoA through the WTO's built-in agenda.
- Cancel the obligation of accepting the minimum importation of 5% of internal consumption; all compulsory market access clauses must similarly be cancelled immediately.
- Undertake a thorough review of both the implementation, and the environmental and social impacts of existing trade rules and agreements (and the WTO's role in this system) in relation to food, fisheries and agriculture.
- Initiate measures to remove food and agriculture from under the control of the WTO through the dismantling of the AoA and through the removal or amendment of relevant clauses in the TRIPS, GATS, SPS, TBT and SCM agreements. Replace these with a new Convention on Food Sovereignty and Trade in Food, Agriculture and Fisheries.
- Revise intellectual property policies to prohibit the patenting of living matter and any of their components and limit patent protections in order to protect public health and public safety;
- Halt all negotiations on GATS, and dismantle the principle of 'progressive liberalisation' in order to protect social services and the public interest;
- Implement genuine agrarian reform and ensure the rights of peasants to crucial assets such as land, seed, water and other resources;

- Promote the primary role of fish harvesters' and fish workers' organisations in managing the use of aquatic resources and oceans, nationally and internationally.
- Initiate discussions on an alternative international framework on the sustainable production and trade of food, agricultural goods and fisheries products.

This framework should include:

- A reformed and strengthened United Nations (UN), active and committed to protecting the fundamental rights of all peoples, as being the appropriate forum to develop and negotiate rules for sustainable production and fair trade;
- An independent dispute settlement mechanism integrated within an international Court of Justice, especially to prevent dumping and GM food aid;
- A World Commission on Sustainable Agriculture and Food Sovereignty established to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of trade liberalisation on food sovereignty and security, and develop proposals for change. This would include agreements and rules within the WTO and other regional and international trade regimes, and the economic policies promoted by International Financial Institutions and Multilateral Development Banks. Such a commission could be constituted of and directed by representatives from various social and cultural groups, peoples' movements, professional fields, democratically elected representatives and appropriate multilateral institutions;
- An international, legally binding Treaty that defines the rights of peasants and small producers to the assets, resources and legal protections they need to be able to exercise their right to produce. Such a treaty could be framed within the UN Human Rights framework, and linked to already existing relevant UN conventions;
- An International Convention that replaces the current Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and relevant clauses from other WTO agreements and implements within the international policy framework the concept of food sovereignty and the basic human rights of all peoples to safe and healthy food, decent and full rural employment, labour rights and protection, and a healthy, rich and diverse natural environment and incorporate trading rules on food and agriculture commodities.

Creating Crisis

The governments of both developed and developing countries face the choice of sacrificing the rights of the majority of their populations to food sovereignty and decent employment in return for increased corporate access to international markets. As agriculture negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) continue, government negotiators are being pressured to cede the ability of local and national governments to

democratically establish their own policies to feed their people and support their farmers in return for increased access to international markets for their main exporters.

The WTO must get out of agriculture to ensure people's food sovereignty throughout the world, as the WTO is the antithesis of the idea of sovereign peoples making their own decisions about food.

Despite skirmishes among the major trading countries and various developing country groupings on specific targets and numbers, WTO members seem unwilling to accept the fact that the fundamental problem lies in the very structure of the World Trade Organisation and the framework of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). Through disciplines for its three "pillars" (market access, domestic supports and export subsidies), the AoA furthers and entrenches monopoly production in the hands of the world's largest agriculture producers and exporters, while the rest of the world suffers. And as negotiations over the past ten years have shown time and again, the WTO is not a space for cooperation, but rather for competition.

Since the collapse of the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Cancun, the United States (US) and European Union (EU) have attempted to revive stalled trade talks by invoking the so-called Doha Development Agenda. However, they have not come up with any new proposals that seriously address the concerns raised by developing countries in Cancun regarding agriculture trade, such as the EU-US formula for tariff reduction, their unwillingness to actually cut export subsidies (rather than simply say they will) and their repeated attempts to hide subsidies by moving them between the Green and Blue boxes. Nor have the trade majors made any attempt to address the concerns of the thousands of farmers who gathered in Cancun to demand their rights to food sovereignty and livelihoods, thus showing complete indifference to the reasons that led Mr. Lee[1], a Korean farmer, to sacrifice his life in protest.

What the Cancun Ministerial collapse revealed was the need and right of developing countries to protect their farmers, their agriculture and food sovereignty. Yet this is precisely what is being ignored by all WTO members in the follow-up since Cancun.

The WTO has no business in either food or agriculture. WTO rules militate against the very concept of food sovereignty. In order to protect and ensure the rights of millions of rural and urban poor in the world to food, employment and livelihoods, the WTO must be removed from food and agriculture.

Note: Downloaded from http://www.peoplesfoodsovereignty.org, on 23 November 2006.

1 Editor's Note. Mr. Lee Kyung Hae was a peasant farm leader from South Korea and a member of the Via Campesina delegation in Cancun, Mexico. On 10 September 2003, Lee Kyung Hae climbed up on the barricades and took his own life with a knife plunged into his heart, during the farmer and peasant protests against the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Cancun. He was aged 56 years old when he courageously gave his life in the struggle against the neo-liberal logic in food and farming, and in favour of that better world which is possible.

In the face of the organised power of science, business and mainstream politics, the more diffuse but networked power of the growing food sovereignty movement is confronted with many challenges. In this book, the author focuses on only one of these: the need to transform knowledge and ways of knowing to regenerate locally controlled food systems. The production of ecologically literate and socially just knowledge implies a radical shift from the existing top down and increasingly corporate-controlled research system to an approach which devolves more decision-making power to farmers, indigenous peoples, food workers, consumers and citizens for the production of social and ecological knowledge.

The whole process should lead to the democratisation of research, diverse forms of co-inquiry based on specialist and non-specialist knowledge, an expansion of horizontal networks for autonomous learning and action, and more transparent oversight. This implies: 1) nurturing political values that emphasise more direct citizen participation in determining research agendas, regulations and policies; 2) the adoption of a learning process approach and extended peer review in the production and validation of knowledge; and 3) enabling policies that offer citizens adequate material security and time for democratic deliberation in the context of more localised food systems and economies.

How – and under what conditions – can diverse, localised food systems be sustained in the twenty-first century? Who gains and who loses when local food systems are strengthened? These are some of the questions examined by the *Sustaining Local Food Systems, Agricultural Biodiversity and Livelihoods* project.

This project combines a political ecology perspective on food systems and livelihoods with action research grounded in local practice. Research is done with, for and by people – rather than on people – to bring together many different ways of knowing and types of knowledge for learning and change. As such this action research seeks to bridge the gap between the academic orientation of political ecology and the largely activist focus of food sovereignty, human rights and environmental justice movements.

The *Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship* Series publishes lessons from case studies in India, Indonesia, Iran and Peru along with findings from other studies linked with this action research project. Contributors are encouraged to reflect deeply on the ways of working and outcomes of their research, highlighting implications for policy, knowledge, organisations and practice. The *Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship* Series also seeks to encourage debate outside mainstream policy and conceptual frameworks on the future of food, farming and land use. The opportunities and constraints to regenerating local food systems based on social and ecological diversity, human rights and more inclusive forms of citizenship are actively explored by contributors.

The research project and this publication series are co-ordinated by Michel Pimbert in the 'Sustainable Agriculture, Biodiversity and Livelihoods' Programme at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). It receives financial support from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS).

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The publication of this paper has been made possible through the generous support of the following donor:

Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken
Ontwikkelingssamenwerking