21st Conversation on Agroecology

Social Values and Diets: From Fields to Tables – June 24th, 2026

Throughout 2026, each Conversation explores one of the thirteen principles of agroecology. The 21st Conversation on Agroecology focused on the principle "Social Values and Diets". The event highlighted that agroecological transitions are not only driven by ecological and economical innovations but are also deeply connected to social justice, cultural values, food systems, and participation.

The first presentation was given by Esther Milberg Muñiz (Wageningen University & Brazilian Agroecology Network), who examined the role of gender and racial justice in agroecology. She emphasized that agroecology is rooted in Indigenous, peasant, and ancestral knowledge systems and should be understood as more than a set of farming practices. Agroecology also addresses issues such as power relations, land access, knowledge production, self-determination, and social equity. Drawing on research conducted with rural women in Bahia, Brazil, Esther presented the Agroecological Logbooks (Cadernetas Agroecológicas), a participatory methodology developed by feminist agroecological networks. The logbooks help document products that are consumed, exchanged, donated, or sold by women, making their, often invisible, contributions to agriculture and biodiversity management visible. The results have shown significant benefits for participating women, including greater visibility, increased self-confidence, stronger collective organization, and enhanced political engagement. However, challenges such as unequal land rights, limited representation in decision-making spaces, and persistent patriarchal structures continue to affect rural communities. A key message of the presentation was that social justice should not be treated as an additional element of agroecology but rather as a cross-cutting dimension that influences all agroecological principles.

The second presentation was delivered by Giulia Gouet from Slow Food, who explored pathways towards food systems that are "good, clean and fair." She highlighted the strong connections between agroecology, food cultures, diets, and food environments, emphasizing that food should be viewed not only as a commodity but also as a social, cultural, ecological, and political good. Giulia introduced Slow Food's framework of "Good, Clean and Fair Food for All," placing particular emphasis on the concept of "good food" as food that is healthy, nutritious, culturally appropriate, enjoyable, and accessible. The presentation demonstrated how food choices are shaped not only by individual preferences but also by broader food environments, including markets, education systems, public policies, and cultural norms. Giulia also discussed major barriers to food system transformation, including the dominance of globalized food supply chains, retail concentration, unhealthy food environments, declining food knowledge, and fragmented policymaking. She argued that agricultural, health, social, and cultural policies are often developed separately, limiting the implementation of

integrated food system approaches. More holistic governance frameworks are therefore necessary to support agroecological transitions.

The discussion following the presentations focused on the relationship between agroecology and social transformation. Participants reflected on how experiences from Brazil could inspire agroecological initiatives in Europe, particularly regarding gender equality, inclusion, and participatory approaches. Both speakers concluded that agroecology must remain closely connected to social movements and continue addressing issues of power, justice, and democratic participation in order to achieve sustainable and equitable food systems.

Networking requests and information shared by the community through the chat

Speakers E-Mail Addresses:
- esther.milberg@wur.nl
- g.gouet@slowfood.it

Community of Practice: https://communities.agroecologytpp.org/

Literature and links provided by the speakers:

Esther:

- **Alonso-Fradejas, A., Forero, L. F., Ortega-Espès, D., Drago, M., & Chandrasekaran, K. (2020).** *'Junk Agroecology': The corporate capture of agroecology for a partial ecological transition without social justice*. Friends of the Earth International, Transnational Institute, and Crocevia.
- **Altieri, M. A., & Holt-Giménez, E. (2016).** *Can agroecology survive without being coopted in the Global North?* Sociedad Científica Latinoamericana de Agroecología (SOCLA).
- **Chakma, T. (n.d.).** *Agroecology and gender: A literature landscape summary*. Gender and Environment Data Alliance (GEDA).
- **Franklin, A. (Ed.). (2022).** *Co-creativity and engaged scholarship: Transformative methods in social sustainability research*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-84248-2.
- **Kesselman, B., & Zukulu, S. (2025).** Traditional foodways of the Amadiba: A struggle for indigenous food sovereignty in Mpondoland, South Africa. *Grassroots – Journal of Political Ecology, 32*, 1–25.
- **Petersen, P., Mussoi, E. M., & Dal Soglio, F. (2013).** Institutionalization of the agroecological approach in Brazil: Advances and challenges. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, 37*(1), 103–114. https://doi.org/10.1080/10440046.2012.735632.
- **Toledo, V. M. (2022).** Agroecology and spirituality: Reflections about an unrecognized link. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, 46*(7), 1069–1088. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2022.2104421.
- **van den Berg, L., Goris, M. B., Behagel, J. H., Verschoor, G., Turnhout, E., Botelho, M. I. V., & Silva Lopes, I. (2019).** Agroecological peasant territories: Resistance and existence in the

struggle for emancipation in Brazil. *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 47*(7), 1435–1460. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2019.1683001.

- **Walthall, B., Vicente-Vicente, J. L., Friedrich, J., Piorr, A., & López-García, D. (2024).** Complementing or co-opting? Applying an integrative framework to assess the transformative capacity of approaches that make use of the term agroecology. *Environmental Science and Policy, 156*, 103748. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2024.103748.
- **Zaremba, H., Elias, M., Rietveld, A., & Bergamini, N. (2021).** Toward a feminist agroecology. *Sustainability, 13*(20), 11244. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011244.
- **Zuluaga Sánchez, G. P., Catacora-Vargas, G., & Siliprandi, E. (Eds.). (2018).** *Agroecología en femenino: Reflexiones a partir de nuestras experiencias*. Sociedad Científica Latinoamericana de Agroecología (SOCLA) & CLACSO