

AGROECOLOGY AND INNOVATIONS

MARCH-APRIL 2025

Disrupting Industrial Discourse by Organising Grassroots Innovation



Photo Credit: Boer Bricoleur



University of Vermont
**INSTITUTE FOR
AGROECOLOGY**



**Schola
Campesina**



Why take this course:

Extractive technology actors threaten to increase their control over food systems and further an antisocial narrative on innovation. This course seeks to raise awareness of these issues within civil society organizations and provide a space for sharing innovation experiences at the grassroots level. The course will explore the diverse dimensions of the *agroecology-innovation nexus*.

This includes:

- Collectively explore the bottom-up knowledge system needed for the development of innovations for agroecology.
- Understanding the context we are working and evolving in (including which actors are at play, the interests of the data, technology, and food industries, and the political and economic context of the concept of *innovation*).
- Exploring and defining what innovation means for Agroecology
- Learning and sharing about grassroots learning processes
- Exploring the enabling environment and legal and social *infrastructures* that makes innovation for agroecology possible and scalable

Through collective reflection, working group and peer-learning, participants will learn from a diversity of organized grassroots innovation processes focused on supporting farming communities and centering their technology autonomy.

The course is taught by Scola Campesina Aps, in collaboration with the Grassroots Innovations Assembly for Agroecology (GIA). It is offered by the University of Vermont's Institute for Agroecology in partnership with Stats4SD, with support from the McKnight Foundation.



Photo Credit: Maya Cohen (left), Boer Bricoleur (right)

Who is this course for:

Agroecology organisations active - or wishing to be active - in the field of technology and innovations, with a passion for sharing their knowledge and learning from others. The course is free. It is aimed at food producers' organisations, civil society organisations, researchers, students, NGOs .

Course Details

11 MARCH - 16 APRIL

7 sessions

13 hours

25 participants

Course Approach:

The course will navigate between theoretical sessions and field examples brought by a diversity of actors. Throughout the course, participants will work on the development of a strategy (or work plan) to strengthen their agroecology organisation (or institution)'s work on innovations, using this opportunity to get peer feedback. Theory, concrete existing practice and participants' strategies will be the core elements of the course, nourishing one another.



Photo Credit: Maya Cohen (left), Boer Bricoleur (left center), Nicolas Garnier (right center), Boer Bricoleur (right)

Course Format:

The course is taught in English. It includes 7 video conference sessions. These run from March 11th until April 16th, including an introductory session of one hour (11th March) followed by 6 sessions of 2 hours each Wednesday from 5:30-7:30pm CET. Outside of the classroom, participants are expected to complete another 2 hours per week (12 hours) on directed reading, viewing or listening; and 2 hours per week on reflections and final project work (12 hours).

11 MARCH Introduction

- Presenting learning outcomes, methodology and flow of the course.
- Presentation of participants and facilitators

2 APRIL Fostering Innovation for Agroecology, Part 2

- Case studies illustrating the development of local solutions.
- Groups discussion on assignments

12 MARCH Grassroots Learning

- Knowledge systems in agroecology for grassroots innovation.
- Hearing practitioners' and participants perspectives

9 APRIL Enabling environment for agroecology innovations

- How to protect and scale 'commons' innovations: presentation of mechanisms and tools to support and protect grassroots technologies and knowledge
- Assignment discussion

19 MARCH Innovation narrative of the industrial model

- Risks and threats of digitalization & high-tech narratives
- Group discussions

16 APRIL Presentation and peer feedback on the participant projects

- How to address innovation in my organization?
- Identifying tasks that strengthen your organising/organisation

26 MARCH Fostering Innovation for Agroecology, Part 1

- Practitioners's presentation of the social processes of identifying local needs, co-building technical solution at grassroots level, documenting and sharing local innovations
- Collective and group discussions

Course Instructors



Andrea Ferrante

I am an Italian agroecologist, coordinator of Schola Campesina and active in the Bio-district where I live and where I run an organic farm. My commitment to support small-scale food producers organizations globally including in policy processes is at the core of my work



Caroline Ledant

I have a background in social work and peoples' Rights activism. With Schola Campesina, I work for strengthening agroecology organisations, through networking, advocacy and knowledge co-creation activities.

Technical Requirements

Sessions will be hosted on Zoom, so you must have an internet connection. Access to course resources, communications between participants and instructors, interactions in the group, and the submission of final project work will be through Moodle supported by Stats4SD. All associated resources will be available on this platform for download outside of seminar sessions. By participating on zoom, participants accept that the sessions are recorded, to be available for participants on the moodle platform. The recordings may later be open for public access.

Certificate

On completing the course, participants will receive a certificate from the Institute for Agroecology and Schola Campesina, have access to online resources, and be invited to join the alumni. Conditions include active participation during sessions, preparation and group work, and have submitted their final project.



Photo Credit: Maya Cohen

Apply

Due to a shortage of spaces, this course is offered to a determined number of allied organisations. If this course is of high interest for you, you can still apply and explain your motivation. All participants are invited to first register interest and provide some information by **21st February 2025**. If selected, you will be sent information about how to register by the **28th February**. You will then be asked to register on the Stats4SD website - we will share this information with you by email once your attendance has been confirmed. Online registration will be open until the **7th March**. If you do not yet have an account on the platform, you will first be invited to create one. If you have participated in previous training, you can use the same login information that you created before.

For any questions, please contact info@scholacampesina.org



University of Vermont
**INSTITUTE FOR
AGROECOLOGY**