

DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY

MARCH-APRIL 2026

Guiding the agroecology movement away from corporate digitalization



University of Vermont
**INSTITUTE FOR
AGROECOLOGY**



11th Hour Project

The Schmidt Family Foundation



**Schola
Campesina**

Why take this course?

In response to the rapid expansion of Ag-tech and its consolidation of power through data and infrastructure control, this course draws on the principles of food sovereignty which, when applied to technologies, asserts the right of people to define and build -with allied technologists - their own digital tools based on farmers and workers needs and living experiences. It will provide an overview and in-depth exploration of the **alternative digital ecosystem** containing locally managed open-source and farmer-centered digital resources that, instead of empowering big data corporations, create connections and collaborations for locally-governed food systems.

Over our 6 weeks together we will:

- **Collectively explore** existing digital tools supporting farming communities autonomy and sovereignty
- **Critically evaluate** the technologies applied to farm management, accessing market, social coordination and knowledge and data records and analysis.
- **Model a collective process** to foster the critical awareness and agency needed, individually and collectively, to achieve digital sovereignty and technological autonomy.
- **Deepen understanding** of food producers' needs and grounded realities in relation with the use of digitalization.



Credit for all photos: Agroecology in Latin America, Building Paths Project: <https://construyendocaminos.cepagro.org.br/>

The course is facilitated by Schola Campesina in collaboration with the Grassroots Innovations Assembly for Agroecology (GIAA) and AfriTAP; and is offered by the University of Vermont Institute for Agroecology with support from the McKnight Foundation and from the Funding Lab for Agroecological Technologies (Float), an initiative of the 11th Hour Project.

The course is being developed by members of GIAA, the University of British Columbia, AfriTAP, Purdue University, IDEMS, GOAT, Tekopora, the Kenyan Peasant League and the Open Food Network.

At A Glance

MARCH - APRIL 2026

6 sessions

12 hours

30 participants

Who is this course for?

This course, offered at no cost, is for organisations and individuals acting at the cross roads of technology and agroecology. It targets primarily those in farmers groups who are interested in supporting small-scale food producers in the use of appropriate and non corporate digital tools as well as technologists wishing to make agroecology food producers' life easier through digital means. The course offers the opportunity to connect with those who value sharing knowledge and learning from others, it will enable participants to build longstanding connections and relationships that will be valuable for advancing a people-led ag tech movement.

Course Approach

The course will blend theory and practice, operationalising internal processes with a focus on how to assess digital technologies and how to use existing promising tools moving beyond theoretical discussions. It will create the space for connections and mutual learning and enrichment amongst technologists and agroecologists; developing the capacities of food sovereignty actors to understand and navigate the existing decentralized digital tools, and identify what best suits their needs. Learning is structured around four key themes, covering the digital tools necessary to support localized food systems and address the challenges of data and power concentration. The course is part of the 'Digital Sovereignty Curriculum' project, and will enrich a collective discussion that results in an e-learning course for the agroecology movement and beyond.

Format

The course is taught in English, with interpretation available according to applicants' needs. It includes 6 interactive sessions on Zoom of 2 hours each. These run every Wednesday between 5-7pm UTC from the 18th March until 22nd April. An introductory session will be held on March 17th. Outside of the classroom, participants are expected to complete 2 hours per week of reading, viewing, reflections; and final work (10 hours, 5x 2 h).



Sessions

Introduction (one hour), March 17

- Methodology and flow of the course.
- Presentation of participants and facilitators
- Learning outcomes

1 Context and Terms

- Context of digitalization in agriculture
- Why is it important to create an alternative digital ecosystem?
- What is digital technology and architecture ?
- What is digital sovereignty ?

2 Social Coordination Tools

- Safe social networking and communication
- Presentation of tools from developers and users
- Group work: assessment of alternatives

3 Sovereignty Over Data

- Challenges of data and knowledge collection, record and analysis in farming
- Local data infrastructures & data trust
- Community-led databases and repositories.
- Group work: adaptation of alternative solutions to local contexts

4 Access and Predict Markets

- Digital tools and infrastructures for market prediction
- Direct-selling
- Group work: assessment of existing solutions

5 Farm Management

- Digital tools for farm management
- Mapping the needs and solutions
- Assessment of the solutions

6 Future Developments

- Strengthening collaboration for future development of tools and infrastructures
- Sharing on final work
- Farewells

Facilitators



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 am from Belgium and live in rural France. My deep commitment for social justice led me to support the Rights of those feeding the world. With Schola Campesina, we facilitate processes of knowledge sharing and networking for strengthening agroecology organisations.

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 an online learning platform. All associated resources will be available on this platform for download outside of sessions. By participating on zoom, participants accept that the sessions are recorded, to be available for participants on the platform. The recordings may later be integrated into the e-learning course.

Certification

On completing the course, participants will receive a 'certificate of completion' 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.



Apply

All those who would like to participate in the course are invited to first register their interest and provide some information via an 'expression of interest' form by the **18th February 2026**. Selection criteria for this course prioritises people who are already active in the areas covered by the course, including landworkers. If you are not part of one of these groups, you can still apply. If selected, you will be sent information about how to register by the **4th March**.



For any questions, please email: caroline.ledant@scholacampesina.org