

3C - Agroecology from movement to policy: lessons from Brazil

Theme: Agroecology
Speakers: Irene Cardoso (Brazilian association for agroecology), Han Wiskerke (Wageningen UR)
Moderator: Jessica Milgroom (ILEIA)

Verslag

This workshop consisted of three parts, a brief discussion of the importance of a policy on agroecology, a presentation about the process of developing a policy on agroecology in Brazil, and a session using the Paulo Freire's 'culture circle' method to generate the steps that need to be taken.

The first part of our workshop consisted in asking people to discuss two questions in pairs. The first question was, what is the importance of having a policy on agroecology? Three pairs gave the following answers: 1) the conventional agricultural system is not sustainable and we need alternatives, 2) alternative movements need support, and 3) policy can restrict people's experimentation. The second question was, what are the constraints or difficulties that you see in establishing a policy on agroecology in your country? The following answers were given: 1) we need a policy that is flexible so that it actually works to stimulate the experience, 2) there are big constituencies that are working against the effort to promote agroecology, and 3) there is lack of public awareness.

The second part of the workshop was a presentation by Irene Cardoso about the Brazilian experience. See the presentation here.

The third part of the workshop started in group work. Each group was asked to answer the following questions on cards, one idea per card: What are the steps that need to be taken to develop a policy on agroecology? And, who needs to be involved? Each group was asked to contribute one idea, the most important idea according to the group, to the entire group. By weaving together the main ideas from each group, a narrative was generated that outlined the steps that need to be taken, who needs to be involved and how to shift from movement to policy.

The common group narrative that emerged from this workshop as steps to creating a policy on agroecology was:

- Build a network.
- Create a platform with a common goal that includes social movements and has a common narrative.
- Make initiatives visible and to use media to reconnect people with food.
- Increase awareness and knowledge, including education for farmers, students, scientists.

The 'culture circle' method is powerful because it becomes evident that no one needs to have all of the knowledge or ideas. When each person or group brings one idea, the collective result is powerful.

Outcomes

1. The first step is that we need to take to shift from a movement to a policy on agroecology is to strengthen our network and common platform as well as our narrative. This can be done by identifying and visiting agroecology experiences collectively.
2. It's necessary to create and raise awareness among farmers, civil society, politicians etc.
3. Education in agroecology for all.