

3J - New peasants in Europe

Theme: Access to land and land rights
Moderators: Leonardo van den Berg (Toekomstboeren) Camiel Donicie (FIAN NL)
Speakers: Klarien Klingen (Toekomstboeren), Elena Shatberashvili (Biological Farmers Association Georgia), Jyoti Fernandes (ECVC, Land Workers' Alliance UK)

Report

During this workshop, representatives from peasant organizations shared their practical experiences (as farmers) as well as their efforts and ideas to change policies (as movement builders) and strengthen the peasant way of farming in Europe. Jyoti (from the UK) gained land through a mortgage with an ethical bank. She had to go through a court case to be able to build a house on the land. Not only did she win the case, the case also got a lot of public interest. In Georgia (Elena) there is less land regulation. It is easier to get land, but harder to buy it. Klarien (the Netherlands) started to work on farms. One of the farms offered a small piece of land for her to establish a farm. She considers herself lucky because there is a lot of trust with the landowner. In many cases in the Netherlands this is not the case, and new peasants end up being kicked off the land.

There are many struggles in obtaining land and establishing a farm. This includes access to investments to build fences and buy farm equipment. Better training is also necessary. Start-up programs for farms would be helpful. Also support for farmers or for farmer-citizen initiatives to purchase land is needed.

However, there is a lack of policy and political will at all levels. This is why it is important to influence policies and continue the struggle at levels ranging from the grassroots to the EU/global level. To come to a society where food and farming are shaped by farmers and citizens' movements such as La Via Campesina and the Nyeleni Forum are crucial. To strengthen the movement and ensure alignment between the global and the local we need to talk in the same language; the language of Food Sovereignty.

Outcomes

1. Build and strengthen our own alternative food systems through, for example, community supported agriculture and agroecology.
2. Make visible the value of peasant agriculture, the food they produce and the benefits they provide for nature and society.
3. Start using the term "Food Sovereignty" in the Netherlands. So that we can start talking in the same 'language' to build a movement that respects diversity.

More information

- Website Transnational Institute, www.tni.org
- Website Toekomstboeren, www.toekomstboeren.nl
- Website FIAN International, www.fian.org
- Website OtherWise Foundation, www.st-otherwise.org