Workshop 19: Young agroecologists: trajectories and professionalisation

Organizer: International Agroecology Action Network (IAEAN)

Impulse talks:

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In this workshop the experiences of young graduates from agroecology study degrees were presented. Some of them decided to become researchers and joined universities and institutes to focus on different projects. One young graduate was working on a Scandinavian project dealing with the issue of sustainable reutilization of organic waste from industries. Another was conducting a PhD study on agroforestry systems in France. Many other graduates however, decided to work closer to farmers and are now involved in consultancy agencies or projects which provide space and farmland to support agricultural entrepreneurs with developing their businesses.

All graduates were quite satisfied with the set of skills and holistic mindset developed thanks to their previous studies on agroecology. Nevertheless, it was questioned whether the agroecology curriculum provide all the useful skills to establish themselves as young entrepreneurs. Many abilities related to logistic, budgeting and accounting were not part of the study curriculum and this lead to insecurities and difficulties when entering the job market and setting up their businesses.

Another difficulty mentioned by one PhD student working in Brazil was the issue of access to land for implementing agroecological projects, which was said to be a common struggle in both the European and Latin American context.

The workshop concluded with the proposition of creating an online platform to map agroecology projects around the world that also serves as a network for sharing experiences which could support young agroecologists finding new cooperation and jobs opportunities.