

Gender perspective

Female peasant farmers have a long history in carrying out agroecological practices. In the 1960s, when farmers were under pressure from the industrialisation of agriculture, the diversity of produces was reduced, and monocultures were on the rise. However, especially female farmers often continued to grow different types of vegetables, maintained fruit trees and gardens with flowers, livestock for non-commercial use and (medicinal) herbs to ensure on-farm biodiversity, nutritious food for their families and a healthy living environment. Women farmers are often regarded as the guardians of seeds, and hold knowledge about selecting, storing and planting seeds. These women did not want pesticides on the food they grew for their families and were often the leaders of agroecological practices on their farms and in their communities. This is still the case today.

For this reason, their work should be highlighted and they should be recognised for this work and for their important role. Around the world, female farmers have been, and are still in many cases, excluded from heritage, land, financial autonomy, and agricultural extension. They should be offered an equal voice in all levels of public decision making as a result of the patriarchal system in which they live.

If we want to ensure a next generation of agroecological female and male farmers, gender equity, women and LGBT rights have to be an integral part of efforts to advance agroecology. Agroecology is also about social biodiversity. It is about creating a more horizontal relationship between humans and nature, but also between humans, between the different generations, genders and populations. Agroecology Europe acknowledges that there are different feminisms related to different oppressions and that practical actions can be co-constructed based on the local experiences of female peasant and small-scale farmers and their organisations.

Agroecology Europe therefore commits to integrating women rights into its work to support the amplification of agroecology.