THE KEY ROLE OF PEASANTS’ SEEDS IN THE AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION
SEEDS ARE AT THE HEART OF AGRICULTURE AND ARE PART OF THE AGRONOMIC, SOCIO-CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION.

PEASANTS’ SEEDS

These are local (or locally adapted) seeds produced, maintained and renewed by and for farmers. This is known as dynamic field management, or in situ management, which allows for continuous adaptation to local crop conditions and the terroir.

They are accompanied by a peasant history and specific know-how. A common heritage that belongs to none of us but for which we are all responsible.

They are hardy, low-input, free from proprietary rights and naturally selected on farms and gardens run by peasant, agroeological, organic or biodynamic agriculture.

These are ‘peasant’, ‘country’ or ‘population’ varieties, not ‘ancient’ varieties, because they are cultivated today in the fields and are constantly evolving. This work of co-evolution between cultivated plants and humans has existed for 10,000 years and is open to everyone. Everyone is legitimate to continue to do so, no need to be a specialist.

CULTIVATED AGROBIODIVERSITY

CULTIVATED BIODIVERSITY (OR AGROBIODIVERSITY) CORRESPONDS TO THE DIVERSITY OF PLANTS USED IN AGRICULTURE IN A GIVEN TERRITORY: NUMBER OF SPECIES (INTER-SPECIFIC DIVERSITY) AND GENETIC DIVERSITY WITHIN SPECIES (INTRASPECIFIC DIVERSITY).

They are often populations of different lines with a certain genetic and phenotypic variability that makes them adaptable to the land, farming practices and climatic disturbances.

CULTIVATED BIODIVERSITY IS A CULTIVATED HERITAGE (VEGETABLES, FRUITS, CEREALS, OTHER FIELD CROPS, FLOWERS SOWN IN THE FIELDS) WITHIN AGROSYSTEMS.
Peasants' seeds, by their very characteristics, are intrinsically part of the 13 principles of Agroecology (HLPE, 2019). In particular, with the principles of biodiversity, economic diversification, equity, governance of land and natural resources, co-creation of knowledge, social values and diet.

Diseases/pathogenic micro-organisms are an issue that must be dealt with, not by drastic elimination, but by varietal diversity, and by working with living soils, in diversified fields, with well-designed crop rotations, to continue to live with these diseases that will always be present.

Industrial seeds are not always more productive than peasants' seeds. There are examples of species where peasants' seeds, produced and used locally and with the know-how that goes with it, is as productive or more productive than cultivars multiplied by industrial seed companies.

The use of peasants' seeds contributes to the reappropriation of peasants' knowledge and know-how, which reduces the level of dependence on industrial sectors whose objectives do not correspond to the current needs of agroecological production. They lead to greater peasant autonomy and greater resilience of agroecosystems.

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