

**Call for papers - Workshop on**

**“Sustainable Agroecology: Governance, practices, potentials, and tensions in a comparative perspective”**

**17. + 18. July 2023**

**University of Kassel, Witzenhausen/ Kassel, Germany**

Agroecology holds that agricultures that are part of sustainable food systems are closely interwoven with local contexts and communities. These agricultures are embedded into farmers' local and practice knowledge which is articulated in constructive ways with scientific knowledge. They combine producers' concerns with concerns of consumers and environmental protection and operate in recognition of and with respect for local social-ecological system boundaries. They strive towards reliance on ecological techniques for managing pests, improving soils and meeting demands of food security. Networks of farmers, civil society, consumers and public actors and local communities are the primary agents in such agricultures. Ideally, they work together to provide for equitable livelihoods and nutritious and sustainable diets. By its very definition and given the diversity of social-ecological contexts and political economies, there exist different forms, types, practices and understandings of sustainable agroecology, and pathways towards these are equally manifold.

Together, these idealized features highlight that sustainable forms of agroecology and food systems more broadly represent a radical departure from the modern orthodoxy of industrial and globalisation-oriented food systems they seek to undo and replace. It is no surprise then, that sustainable agroecology is being contested by vested interests, practices and networks of producers, processors, retailers and export countries as well as parts of research and input manufacturers of the dominant food systems. They question agroecological systems' feasibility, particularly regarding their potential to sustainably deliver food security on a global scale and they dispute agroecology as long-term orientation of policies shaping the food system and its regulatory frame.

The workshop series “Sustainable Agroecology: Governance, practices, potentials, and tensions in a comparative perspective” aims to gather evidence on conditioning factors of sustainable agroecologies, related practices and transformative pathways, as well as the tensions and conflicts of the multi-scalar politics of agroecological transitions. For that purpose, it aims to mobilize cases and insights from a diversity of regions worldwide.

The workshop series is an initiative of the “Agriculture, Ecology and Societies program” and the DAAD-funded Global Partnership Network of University of Kassel, as well as the DAAD-funded AURORA (Sustainable Agriculture and social-ecological systems approaches in higher education in the MENA region) project, which aims to map sustainable agroecology in diverse social-ecological, historical and geo-political contexts.

Workshops will be organized by partners in three main locations: Merida (Mexico), Beirut (Lebanon) (t.b.c.) and Kassel (Germany). Scholars and empirical work from the regions of Latin America, Middle East and Northern Africa, India and Europe are invited. The state of agroecology both in practice and in public debate varies greatly across these regions. Therefore, workshops will provide rich empirical insights into agroecology and its relations to particular social-ecological, political-economic and community contexts. As ultimate outcome, the organizers aim at a peer-reviewed Special Issue, the details of which will be delineated during the workshops.

Particularly, organizers invite contributions on or inspired by the following questions:

1. What makes agriculture sustainable? What local, political and social factors contribute to the emergence and maintenance of sustainable agricultures?
2. What is considered agroecology by whom in particular social-ecological contexts and what are modes of agroecological practice and types of agroecological systems and their role in food systems?
3. What are the political, social, institutional, economic, knowledge sharing and social-ecological factors facilitating emergence and farmers' use of agroecological practices and what are tensions and conflicts accompanying them?
4. What are context-specific evolutionary pathways of agroecological transformations and their politics – and what can we learn from these pathways for transformation and its potential mainstreaming across a wider region?
5. What are the ways that international and national political-economic contexts affect agroecology, and how do recent inter- and transnational initiatives at sustainable farming relate to agroecological practices in different contexts?

#### **Workshop location and hosting organization:**

1. Workshop: 17 (9:00 – 18:00 + conference dinner) and 18 July 9:00 – 13:00 + conference lunch) 2023, University of Kassel, Germany, arrival 16 July/ departure 18 July
2. Workshop: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY), October/ November 2023, t.b.c.
3. Workshop with separate call: Spring 2024 (t.b.c.) at American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon

#### **Submissions (currently only for the Kassel Workshop, 17 & 18 July 2023) & funding:**

500 words abstracts + indication of contributors and affiliation are invited for submission by 28 April to [lthiemann@uni-kassel.de](mailto:lthiemann@uni-kassel.de)

Confirmation of participation will be given within 14 days. Confirmed participants will be paid two nights hotel close to workshop venue in Kassel or Witzenhausen and all catering for two full days. Only in exceptional cases contributions to travel expenses (up to 300€, depending on overall requests) will be granted; otherwise, participants are asked to cover their travel expenses themselves. Please in case you require support for travel, get in touch and provide some indicative reasons along with your abstract submission. Any further inquiries are welcome and should be directed to [lthiemann@uni-kassel.de](mailto:lthiemann@uni-kassel.de).

#### **Convenors:**

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