

EVENT REPORT
PARTICIPATORY
WORKSHOP



Feminist and Intersectional Approaches in Agroecology: Challenges, Realities and Collective Pathways in Resource management

DATE: October 2nd, 2025

**LOCATION: AGROECOLOGY EUROPE FORUM 2025 – MALMÖ,
SWEDEN**

Introduction

On October 2nd, 2025 around 30 individuals participated in a participatory workshop during the 5th Forum of Agroecology Europe guided by Chiara Flora Bassignana and Jesse Donham.

The workshop consisted of two parts:

1. It began with a short introduction to the gender and intersectionality working group of AEEU and the work it has done since its founding four years ago, as well as definitions of feminism and intersectional approaches. It then went into why gender & intersectionality matter in natural resource management.
2. The bulk of the workshop was in the second part, where individuals were divided into 3 thematic groups: a) water b) soil and c) seeds to discuss questions such as:
 - a. What challenges and barriers are related to the management of your specific resource (e.g. seeds)?
 - b. What examples have you seen that intelligently manage this resource?
 - c. What collective pathways can be found to manage this resource in the future?

Aim of the participatory workshop

The aim of the workshop was threefold, to bring awareness to the reality of the AEEU working group, to discuss the gendered and intersectional experience in agriculture and to discuss collective pathways for resource management.

The AEEU working group is made up of AEEU staff, board and members. Monthly meetings are guided by horizontal knowledge exchange which includes both internal discussions and guided experiences with guest lecturers (i.e. experts in the field such as economists, policy makers, and academics) to discuss steps to make AEEU and the agroecological movement more socially equitable, current events, discriminations in agriculture, solutions, modes of transition, activism and actions. Together we create guides, position papers, workshops and sessions for conferences. The questions that guide the working group are the following:

1. What is the reality of identity-based discrimination and privilege in the workplace?
2. Is agroecology intrinsically feminist and therefore blind to gender? Is agroecology blind to class? Is agroecology blind to ethnicity?
3. What would a feminist and intersectional agroecological food system look like?
4. How do we address individuals that believe that equality has already been achieved?
5. As individuals deeply embedded within a patriarchal society (and privileged people from

Western contexts/women in a traditionally male-dominated field) how do we challenge and deconstruct our own biases and assumptions?



Discussion on these topics is vital for an agroecological organisation since what makes agroecology different from other agricultural systems is its focus on social dimensions. In Europe, gender equity has not yet been achieved and it is shown by statistics such as:

1. Women make up 30% of the total workforce in Agriculture, forestry and fisheries in Europe (EC)
2. 1/3 of farms across the EU are managed by women (EC)
3. Globally, less than 15% of all landholders are women (FAO)
4. Women in agriculture are less likely to have access to resources such as credit, loans, extension services, and markets, which affects their productivity (World Bank)

This means that while women produce a significant proportion of the world's food and are often the guardians of biodiversity, seeds, traditional knowledge and nutrition, they regularly lack access to land, institutional knowledge, credit, inheritance, financial autonomy and all levels of decision-making spaces. Further, LGBTQIA+ farmers and marginalized communities frequently face compounded discriminations, further limiting their participation and representation in food systems.

These definitions are what guide the working group:

A. *Feminism*

- o Feminism is a range of socio-political movements and ideologies that aim to define

and establish political, economic, personal, and social equality

- o Feminist economic models highlight the need to shift to economies where care work, ecological sustainability, and social justice are central.
- o Advocate for safe work environments, legal protections, and support systems.

B. *Intersectionality*

- o How different aspects of a person's identity, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, physical ability and culture can combine to create unique experiences of privilege and oppression.
- o It looks at how these overlapping factors influence and often reinforce inequalities.

Agroecology, as a transformative approach, holds the potential to challenge these power imbalances; however, without explicitly addressing gender and intersectionality, agroecology risks perpetuating the same exclusions it aims to dismantle.

Gender and intersectionality matter in natural resource management because sustainability cannot only be ecological, it must include social justice, as gender, race, class, and indigeneity shape access to land, water, and seeds, and create unequal access to such resources. Women have lost access to such resources through a variety of historical landmarks, through enclosures in Europe and colonial landgrabs, corporate patents and loss of seed sovereignty, and through the lack of active participation in the governance of water.



Outcome

The workshop participants were divided into 3 major natural resources: a) water b) soil and c) seeds and were given seeds, water and clay to look at and touch during the conversations. The participants were given the opportunity to discuss the challenges and come up with solutions together as the focus of the discussion revolved around gender and intersectional dynamics in natural resources. These are the collective pathways they came up with:

Seeds

- Curtailing the ability for companies to own seed patents or create rules where seeds cannot be reproduced.
- Investing in seed saving libraries and making them more widespread (i.e. one in each community).
- Improving networks among farmers, citizens and researchers so the exchange of seeds becomes easier and more commonplace.
- Creating EU policies that protect seed exchange of local varieties.
- Bringing seeds into the art world to increase their importance and familiarity in the collective consciousness.

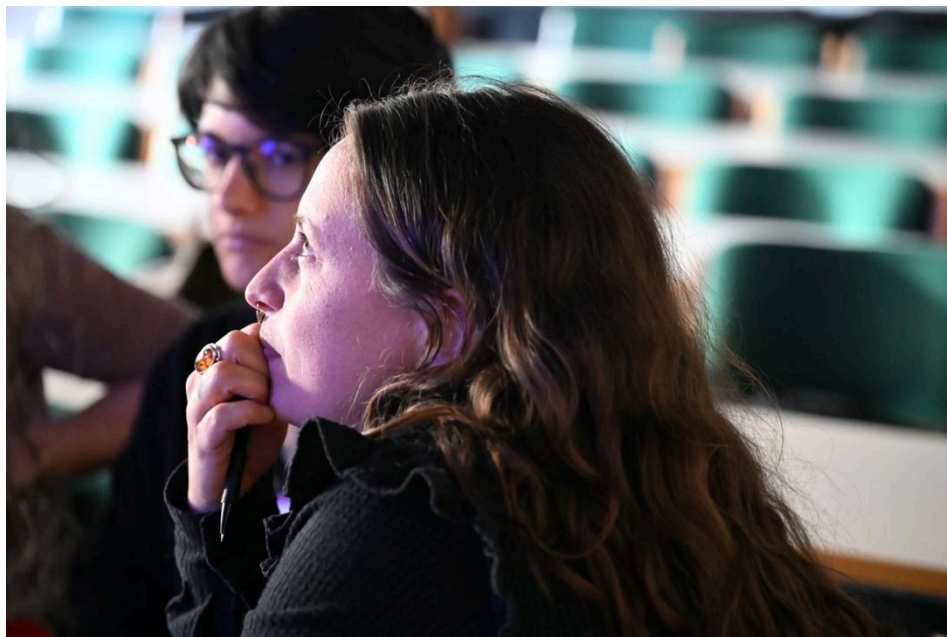
Land

- Stakeholder engagement needs to be considered before policies are created.
- There should always be a community right to buy before large or important land acquisitions.
- All land should be given its own sovereign rights that curtails the harm that can be done to the land.
- More schemes of collective ownership for land should be created.
- There should be programs and organisations that connect young or new entrant farmers and farmers which are retiring.
- Community supported agriculture schemes should become more widespread.
- More investment should go into land banks that give long-term stability to land.
- Some land should return under the concept of 'the commons'.

Water

- Creating advisory services specifically focused on water management which also considers traditional and local knowledge.
- Engaging in more collective action and investment for cleaning up bodies of water.

- Creating water literacy from a young age within school programs.



Policy Recommendations

1. Policies should be created that protect and facilitate seed exchange of local varieties (which are often more adapted to climate change) and curtail the corporate monopoly on seed ownership and reproduction.
2. Stakeholder engagement should be included at the beginning of the creation of every policy.
3. Creating policies that ensure the community's right to buy before large or important land acquisitions.
4. More investment should go into land banks that give long-term stability to land.
5. Public land, at least in part, should return under the concept of 'the commons' and legal frameworks should be created that allow for the commoning of natural resource governance.
6. Creating advisory services specifically focused on water management which also considers traditional and local knowledge.
7. Engaging in more collective action and investment for cleaning up bodies of water.
8. Creating water literacy from a young age within school programs.
9. Accessing all programs, policies and legislations for which implications any planned action could have, in all areas and at all levels, for women, men and non-binary persons. Based on the understanding that there are no 'gender neutral' measures.
10. Ensuring that all workplaces, events and conferences create 'safe spaces' within them.
11. All organisations should carry out an equality analysis.
12. Training sessions to foster awareness on unconscious bias should be held regularly which provide tools and strategies to recognize and mitigate such biases in decision-making processes, hiring practices, and everyday interactions.

13. Organisations should promote a healthy work-life balance, including appropriate remuneration.

About Agroecology Europe

Agroecology Europe, is a non-profit European association intending to place agroecology high on the European agenda of sustainable development of farming and food systems. The association fosters interactions between actors in sciences, practices and social movements, by facilitating knowledge sharing action. It aims at the creation of an inclusive European community of professionals, practitioners, and more generally societal stakeholders in agroecology.



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