

XV ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL AGROECOLOGY SHORTCOURSE

Agroecology and Social Transformation: transdisciplinarity, health, and human development

**July 6-18, 2014
Estelí, Nicaragua**

Organized by

Community Agroecology Network (CAN) – Social Development Association of Nicaragua (ASDENIC) in collaboration with the National Committee comprised of: UNAN-Managua, SIMAS, PRODECOOP, UNA, MAONIC, FAREM-Esteli, FAREM-Matagalpa, SWISSAID

Description

The Community Agroecology Network (CAN) and the Social Development Association of Nicaragua (ASDENIC) announce the XV International Agroecology Shortcourse which will be held in the Parque de las Ciencias Estelimar, located near the city of Estelí in the north of Nicaragua from July 6-18, 2014. The main topic of the course is *Agroecology and Social Transformation: transdisciplinarity, health, and human development*. Nicaragua is a nation that faces difficult challenges in terms of creating and promoting a food system that does not compromise health, human development, and the environment. Among rural producers and consumers nationwide, there are challenges and opportunities within the context of dependence on export production (especially coffee), cultural changes, climate change, and social and political structures. Nicaragua is also a place where agroecology exists as a viable strategy for addressing these problems and is supported by different social movements that include the agricultural sector, unions, academics, politicians, and nongovernment organizations. The objective of this shortcourse is for participants to develop conceptual and methodological skills to be able to incorporate the basic principles of agroecology into a process of social transformation that is focused on health and human capacity to achieve sustainable, healthy, and just development. To achieve this objective, the shortcourse first will provide a solid foundation in the basic concepts of agroecology and later will explore ideas and models of action within the following key areas:

- Basic principles of agroecology
- Concepts and methodologies of community participatory action research (PAR)
- Agroecology and interculturality: tools for social transformation
- Local Models and Examples: links between agroecology, health, and human development in food systems
- Agroecological social transformation to confront climate change
- La Roya, agroecology, and the “thin months”: Searching for sustainable models
- Food sovereignty and social justice: experiences and models in food systems



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Course Dynamics and Activities

The course program builds a base of knowledge using basic concepts of agroecology, diversity, complexity, and change in food systems, later fostering dialogue between formal and local knowledge about the relationship between agroecology, social transformation, health, and human development. The course will place emphasis on the value of interculturality and participation through its methodology, using presentations, papers, testimonies, meetings and fieldwork, and forums for discussion. The principle component will be participatory action research in the field: participants will develop a research methodology the first week and, in the second week, small groups will spend three days in the field studying one of the case studies of experiences of social transformation in food systems. All of this has the aim of establishing sustainable innovation for social change and the development of sustainable agrifood systems. The course will be conducted entirely and exclusively in Spanish.

Participant Profile

Instead of limiting the participation in the shortcourse to a specific group, the shortcourse is open to those who have interest in the subject and those who can demonstrate that they fulfill the following criteria:

- Commitment to social transformation of agrifood systems, mainly commitment to the field
- Demonstrated leadership in social transformation and agrifood systems
- Demonstrated analytical skills and local innovation in agrifood systems
- Demonstrated critical thinking
- Research experience and experimentation in agrifood systems
- Functional fluency in Spanish

Accommodation and Meals

The shortcourse will be held at the conference center and agroecological farm, Estelimar, which is located 1km outside the city of Estelí. The participants will stay in shared rooms or cabins in Estelimar. Apart from those being served in the field, meals will be prepared with local ingredients in the best Nicaraguan style. If you have diet restrictions, please note this in the application letter.

Admission Requirements and Application

Interested individuals need to send a brief letter of intent explaining their experience in agroecology, their current employment, and responses to the following questions:

- What does social transformation mean to you? How have you worked to achieve it and what are some challenges that you have experienced with respect to these efforts?
- What kind of experience do you have with innovation, experimentation, and research on agrifood systems?

Those accepted to participate in the shortcourse will be notified of their acceptance within two weeks of having submitted their application. Once being accepted as a candidate, a form will be sent requesting information about food preferences, health information, certain personal details, and bank information for payment of the course fee. It is up to the potential participants to complete the form and pay the fee (see details below) within one week of having received the notification of acceptance. The applications will be accepted until the course is filled (maximum of 40 people).

Please fill out the application found at <http://agroecologia2014.asdenic.org/> and email it to:

Agroecologia2014@asdenic.org



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At the end of the course, participants will receive a certification of participation.

Participation Fees

The fee for participating in the shortcourse is based on the application date:

- US\$1100 for applications received before April 15, 2014 and paid before May 1st.
- US\$1200 for applications received after April 15, 2014 and paid before July 1st.

The price includes shared accommodation from July 6th (arrival date) through the morning of July 18th (departure date), meals from dinner the night of July 6th through breakfast on July 18th (except lunch on July 13th, which is a day off without programming), transportation related to the shortcourse, materials, classes, and professors. The fee does not include airfare or bus fare for arriving to the site of the course, visas, medical insurance, or any other additional expense that participants may have. Nicaraguan and other regional participants need to deposit their fee in a national bank account (at the time of being accepted, we will send the enrollment information with the bank information to make the deposit); international students will need to make a bank transfer to a US bank.

Scholarships

The organizational committee is working on making funds available to offer scholarships to students who need financial support in order to participate in the shortcourse. However, the availability of scholarship funds is not guaranteed. If you need assistance to participate in the shortcourse, please note this on your application letter and, if there are funds, an evaluation process will be made to select recipients.

Poster Presentation

Participants are invited to share their experience in food system transformation. Posters will be exhibited at the shortcourse site and in a public forum that will be held as part of the course, which aims to foster dialogue between and among participants in the shortcourse and local residents. All candidates are invited to participate and will receive instructions concerning the poster presentations by email.

For more information: <http://agroecologia2014.asdenic.org/>

Questions? agroecologia2014@asdenic.org