

ನೋಡಿ!

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ಅರೋಗ್ಯಕರವಾಗಿ ಮಾಡಲು  
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ಬೇಗ ಮೇಲೆ ಬನ್ನಿ.

Chille and Yemee for Amrita Bhoomi agroecology school in India

editorial

## communicating for food sovereignty: people's culture and popular education

Food sovereignty, among the multitude of ideas that it encompasses, is also about defending the billion diversities that exist on this planet, and is a celebration of our many unique practices, tastes, cultures and customs. An important pillar in this struggle for food sovereignty is the role played by popular rural cultures, of peasants, fisherfolk, family farmers and Indigenous Peoples. These communities are inheritors of a rich and diverse tradition of oral and visual forms of communication, whether in the form of folklore, legends, tales, proverbs, songs, murals and more. These varied forms of communication are also the recorded histories of human struggles and survival.

However, this diversity is, today, under threat. Just as the agro-industrial complex pushes for a homogenous, singular view of a global agrifood system, the international-corporate-media complex has also resulted in a singular, centralised form of mainstream communication. A handful of corporations today control much of what we read or watch and how people access information.

Despite the challenges, organised peoples and communities around the world are countering this marginalisation of peoples' culture. The current edition of the Nyéléni newsletter focuses on the wide variety of popular, community-driven communication approaches, drawing inspiration from local symbols, context and culture. It explores how these approaches are integral to pedagogy among peasants, family farmers, Indigenous Peoples and fisherfolk, crucial for political formation and popular education, and an essential element of our struggle for food sovereignty.

*Friends of The Earth International, Real World Radio and La Via Campesina*

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Food Sovereignty movement  
from the grassroots.

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## who we are

In the last years hundreds of organisations and movements have been engaged in struggles, activities, and various kinds of work to defend and promote the right of people to Food Sovereignty around the world. Many of these organisations were present in the *International Nyéléni Forum 2007* and feel part of a broader **Food Sovereignty Movement**, that considers the Nyéléni 2007 declaration as its political platform. **The Nyéléni Newsletter is the voice of this international movement.**

Organisations involved: AFSA, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Food First, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, Grassroots International, IPC for Food Sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Real World Radio, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers, VSF Justicia Alimentaria Global, WhyHunger, World Forum of Fisher People.

now is time for  
food sovereignty !

## **Brasil de Fato<sup>1</sup>: a popular communication alternative against the hegemony of the mass media**

*Brasil de Fato* was officially launched on 25 January 2003 during the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre with the aim of breaking new ground in the hegemonic dispute in the field of communication. Since its creation, it has covered economic and political events; it promotes the activities and struggles of social movements in Brazil and Latin America from a left-wing point of view, presenting analyses of the current situation and national and international events.

As an alternative media it contributes to the analysis and contextualisation of another Brazil. It presents a Brazil in constant mobilisation and identifies the scenarios of political disputes in order to create a communication agenda by putting on the table issues that the mainstream media intentionally hide or minimise. The alternative media affirms the vision of another world proposed by leftist theorists, creating space for the approach of criticism and cultural valorisation from the popular classes, workers who defend their political interests and promote the debating of ideas. *Brasil de Fato* is also a space of denunciation deeply committed to transformation, with a vision of international solidarity, pluralist in its ideas, and a source of information and reflection for activists in support of the social struggle.

With media such as *Brasil de Fato*, a communication strategy is created in the face of the communication hegemony of the dominant groups and is able to transform the national and international political agenda by adding the voices of the movements that fight for the construction of another possible world.

1 - *Brasil de Fato* is a Brazilian online newspaper and a radio agency, [www.brasildefato.com.br](http://www.brasildefato.com.br)

# in the spotlight

## **The role of rural popular communications in the struggles of the peoples**

Communication is a fundamental tool for all struggles, but it becomes absolutely essential for those that are territorially dispersed. The peasant struggle may have physical distances of thousands of miles between people, but it is a unified struggle. Popular communication in rural areas has several roles - to transmit knowledge, to resist corporate media, to recognize other communities, to reach where hegemonic media does not reach, to work from a position of solidarity, to contribute to popular education and to support the struggle.

We talked about popular and rural communication with a number of people - Viviana Catrileo, leader of The National Rural and Indigenous Women's Association (ANAMURI) in Chile, which is part of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations (CLOC-La Via Campesina); Elizabeth Mpfu, general coordinator of La Via Campesina, from Zimbabwe; Anuka De Silva, from the Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (MONLAR) in Sri Lanka, member of the International Coordinating Committee of La Via Campesina (ICC), and from the peasant-based media Visura Radio.



“Rural popular communications exist in many different forms and are based on our traditions as peasants and Indigenous People. These include peasant songs, mystica, paintings, art and dance, among other things,” explains Elizabeth Mpfu about the role of communication within communities. These communications are key to intergenerational exchange with diverse objectives - “not only to affirm our identity and belonging, but also to perpetuate our harmony with mother earth, our source of life, our gratitude for our food sources, and to preserve dignity and respect for humanity”.

Telling stories of struggle and resistance, passing on teachings and lessons learned about forms of organization and societies is essential. Especially, explains Viviana Catrileo, in times when “modernity and capitalist conceptions of development have been pulverizing the value of multidimensional life in our lands and their cultural and spiritual diversities, which is linked to the philosophy of ‘kvme mogen’ or living well in its maximum expression”.

For Anuka De Silva, popular media are necessary because communities do not have spaces in the mass media and often do not have access to them either. “We really need to build a solidarity group of strong media for the people’s struggle,” she says.

Popular communication connects people, unites struggles, promotes solidarity, and crosses borders. From the experience of La Via Campesina, Mpfu recounts that the slogan of this immense worldwide movement, “Globalize the struggle, globalize hope,” has been realised thanks to citizen and community based media that in her words “have created a network of global solidarity and built alliances.” “Through the awareness created by alternative media, we have been able to grow and connect the dots of our struggles to build the movement for food sovereignty,” adds Mpfu. From Sri Lanka, Visura Radio

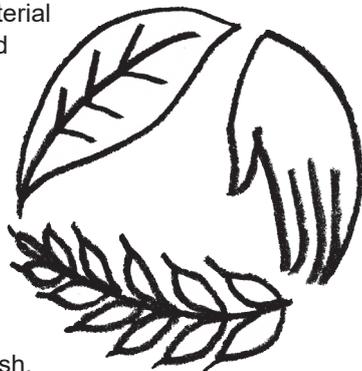


# in the spotlight

→ shares knowledge from farmers, problematises issues such as health and environmental impact, and tells stories that show the possibility and benefits of building a more liveable reality. This is their contribution to strengthening and building food sovereignty.

No initiative that challenges power is free of difficulties and risks. De Silva tells us: “we have a military government here, they are trying to control us, we have suffered some security threats”. Catrileo also remarks: “To dream and communicate from the anti-hegemonic path is increasingly dangerous and more difficult when it is the impoverished and plundered peoples who intend to make our communication an alternative to the neoliberal model”. “The criminalization of social protest also falls on the media and its popular communicators because at the same time it constitutes a threat to the established order”, she adds.

In the same way, it is a great challenge to sustain economic independence and the lack of material resources. Time management and the insufficient number of people to take on tasks (often there are no resources for paid workers) are also issues that the popular media must overcome in order to continue their work.



Communication is part of a whole. In Mpfu's words, it is one more ingredient in what will be the final dish.

“La Via Campesina is like a pot that cooks a n d combines and mixes the different ingredients to become a good, tasty and healthy meal, where the diner can identify the individual ingredients while enjoying the meal as a whole. This is how La Via Campesina gives importance to popular rural communications: it embraces diversity to build a collective voice.”

In this diversity we find the intersection of struggles, the need for popular, rural communication with a feminist perspective. “This feminism that seeks to vindicate women in the historical struggle of the peoples and their revolutions is an invitation to add the voices that have been anonymous and marginalized for centuries by patriarchal societies,” says Catrileo. She also emphasises the cross over with the territorial. “The peasant and popular struggles in which we women are framed have clear expressions in the land, in the care and respect for mother earth and the defence of the biodiversity that sustains the balance of nature”.

Rural popular communications are key in the struggle of the peoples. They accompany, build, disseminate and unite the struggles, at the same time that they teach how to live in other ways. Says Mpfu: “Every time we get together as La Via Campesina, we sing, dance, do *mistica* and exchange information in a way that does not promote competition among members, but rather complements them”.

## box 2

### The Nyéléni newsletter facilitates a pedagogy of peoples in the struggle for food sovereignty

In 2007 the Nyéléni Forum brought together representatives from organisations and movements of small-scale food providers, consumers and civil society organisations engaged in the struggle for food sovereignty. These participants shared knowledge, visions, strategies and practices for transforming their communities, societies and economies through the principles of food sovereignty. These discussions revealed the wealth of knowledge continuously created by food sovereignty practitioners even as they faced social, economic, environmental and political challenges. They also highlighted the centrality of food sovereignty as an alliance-building platform to resist neoliberalism, global capitalism, authoritarianism, and all forms of injustice, inequality and violence. Participants pledged to build solidarity within and across movements, genders, cultures and regions by strengthening communication, political education, awareness and peer-to-peer learning.

The Nyéléni newsletter was created to respond to all these commitments: to give voice to the priorities, concerns, experiences and knowledge of the food sovereignty movement, and to foster dialogue across sectors and actors.

The newsletter was conceived as an educational tool to contextualize and explain complex issues to movement actors—especially those at the grassroots and on the frontlines—as well as a vehicle to bring the first hand experiences of those actors to the fore. While allied researchers are invited to contribute articles, the newsletter mainly contains the movements' analysis and views. These analyses are complemented by direct testimonies from grassroots actors, information about struggles and initiatives, and outreach materials from movements across the world. The movement members decide the topics of each edition. The articles are written in an accessible style that is easy to understand and translate into other languages. The newsletter can be downloaded/read online for free (in English, Spanish and French) at [www.nyeleni.org](http://www.nyeleni.org) and all content is copy-free.

# voices from the field

## 1 *Voz Campesina*, the role of community radios in promoting food sovereignty

*Azul Cordo, Real World Radio*

Ten years ago, Real World Radio and The Latin American Coordinator of Rural Organizations (CLOC-Vía Campesina) created “Voz Campesina”. It is a radio programme that covers the main issues of the peasant movement, its struggles, challenges and achievements, and guarantees coverage of events organised by CLOC and its allies.

Voz Campesina has its own agenda and, at the same time, brings a peasant and popular, anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-colonial and feminist perspective on other issues that affect everyone. For example, in the last year, it provided analysis on the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding that it is the consequence of the neoliberal systemic crisis that we have been going through for years, with an emphasis on the solutions that the peasantry already has in place, such as agroecology and food sovereignty.

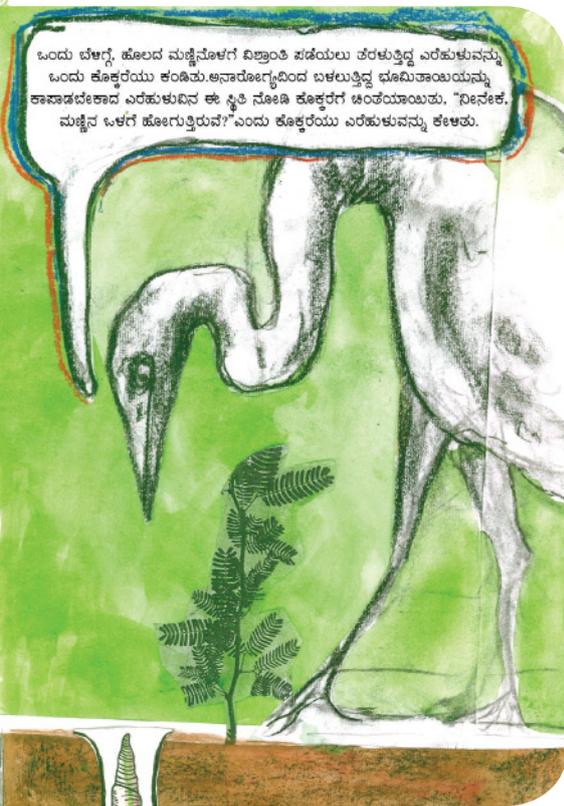
Each programme seeks to guarantee the representation of men, women, young people and adults from CLOC and from the South and Central American and Caribbean regions. In its content, peasant experiences for access to land are relevant, along with analysis and denunciations from the regions. Broadening the dissemination is a challenge. The programme is available on the RMR and CLOC websites and can also be played on podcast platforms.

## 2 Peasant newspapers, an example from South Korea

*Jeungsik Shim, editor in chief of KPL News, South Korea*

The KPL News is a newspaper that is run and distributed by the Korean Peasant League. Since its foundation in 1990, KPL realized the need of its own media. KPL continued to struggle for peasant issues, but the existing media was not paying attention, or they distorted the struggles. Finally in 2006, KPL took over a weekly newspaper specializing in agriculture and issued the first edition on September 25th as reorganized KPL News (Han-kuk-nong-jung in Korean).

It is a weekly newspaper specializing in agriculture, covering news on farmers and rural areas. Newspapers are published every Monday and are published four times a month and 48 times a year, and are delivered to over 30,000 peasants across the country. It also has a web version <http://www.ikpnews.net/> which is updated frequently so that readers who do not receive paper newspapers can read them anywhere in the country.



The Amrita Bhoomi book of illustration on Natural farming

## 3 *Arpillería*, an art form for telling and not forgetting

*Blanca Nubia Anaya Díaz, member of the Movimiento Social en defensa de Ríos Sogamoso y Chucurí, Colombia*

The Movimiento Social en defensa de Ríos Sogamoso y Chucurí is a movement that was born to oppose the Hidrosogamoso dam, and is also part of the Ríos Vivos Colombia movement. Arpillería is an art form that allows us to tell what we have lived through in a different language. In our eagerness to make the problem visible and bring the message to others, we took threads, needles, scraps of cloth and began to stitch everyday scenes onto jute.

We make these memories so that those who see them will not allow megaprojects to cause this damage in their lands. We capture what we have lived through, which is why in the scenes there are dead fish and few people. We use rustic materials and support the work with collage. We want to show people what we have lost.

The idea is to continue with arpillería because it is a very beautiful technique. Between threads and needles, we chat, talk, tell stories. When we started making these environmental memoirs, we discovered that our dead were not free, that our displaced people were not the bad ones, that all this had a background that little by little we discovered and we captured in the jutes.

We are going to continue working because we want to create a memory so that this is not repeated - a memory of peace. We fight for peace and our weapons are a needle and thread.

# voices from the field

## 4 Illustrations and comics to promote food sovereignty and peasants' rights

"The Amrita Bhoomi book of illustration on Natural farming explores the experiences of rural farmers in their ecological practices of soil restoration whilst also highlighting the horror of industrial farming. Working with peasants and children at Amrita Bhoomi we collated stories and inputs, using the local white bird and the ever-giving earth worm to weave these stories." say Chilli and Yeme who worked on this book (<https://viacampesina.org/en/comic-book-on-zbnf-compressed/>, only in Kannada language). "Using local symbols and folklore, we created a story to teach children the importance of agroecology and natural farming as an alternative. School children in our area now uses this book and develop short projects around it." adds Chukki Nanjudaswamy from Amrita Bhoomi.

Meanwhile, Confédération Paysanne in France has developed an illustrated novel on corporate capture of the seed system. Damien Houdebine, National Secretary in charge of plant and vegetable production, talks about The History of seeds: Resistances to the privatization of living things (<https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BD-anglais-format-web-3.pdf>): "The debates on seeds and GMOs are highly publicized but there is an abundance of incorrect information in circulation! We wanted to create accessible educational materials aimed, in particular, at young people. We think we've met that challenge with this comic! Its publication has been a real success. It is on the table at every peasant festival and accompanies us on all our actions for food sovereignty!"

Carlos Julio, an artist and activist with the MNCI Somos Tierra (Movimiento Nacional Campesino Indígena) in Argentina who illustrated the sketches of Peasant and Rural Women with Rights (<https://viacampesina.org/en/08-march-2020-la-via-campesina-releases-illustrations-amplifying-the-voices-and-demands-of-rural-women/>) explains: "The best praise I usually receive as a cartoonist is when comrades from the Peasant Movement tell me "I felt reflected in that drawing", "it expresses our struggles", "it expresses our life"...". Another praise that moves me is when they tell me "it made me laugh a lot". I also know that when we make materials for reflection and debate, the drawings help to question reality, and to get a message across, beyond words. I really liked doing the drawings for Peasant and Rural Women with Rights. Showing peasant life, making people smile, making them think and discuss. That's no mean feat".

## box 3

### CLOC- Via Campesina school of communication

The Latin American Coordinator of Rural Organizations (CLOC-Via Campesina) held the fifth Continental School of Communication in 2020 as part of its process of technical, political and ideological training for organisational purposes. After several events held in different countries, always for communicators from the organisations that make up CLOC and its historical allies, the 2020 School was virtual.

CLOC is a continental organisation that brings together peasant, Indigenous, Afro-descendant and women's organisations from 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This fifth School made it possible to study the current context of the dispute in communication; on the one hand, as an instrument of manipulation used by imperialism against progressive countries and social movements, and on the other hand, as a popular tool for the construction and strengthening of the peasant movement. They were also able to deepen their understanding of internationalism and its implications for popular struggles.

During the process, the communicators got to know and evaluate the current communication work of the CLOC at the continental level, as a strategy against hegemony in the class struggle, and in favour of food sovereignty, agrarian reform and agroecology.

This fifth School also organised practical workshops with expert facilitators and activists from CLOC and allied organisations, such as ALBA Movimientos, the Continental Day for Democracy and against Neoliberalism, Real World Radio, Código Sur, and communicators from former progressive governments, such as that of Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Through these workshops, the communicators strengthened their skills in areas such as photography, video, audio, graphic design, social networks, newsletters and internal communication.

"It was an important space for exchanging knowledge and updating knowledge, given the great activity that we develop as activists and communicators of the organisations. In general terms, our expectations were fulfilled, although it is never enough when it comes to improving in order to contribute to the great battle for ideas in the communications arena".

- Participant of the 5th CLOC School of Communication.

The very rich process of training in popular communication in this fifth school provided many lessons, challenges and, above all, a collective that is growing in transformative dreams and hopes, strengthened in the revolutionary and internationalist spirit.

Communicating to build and to transform.  
From Our Lands, Unity, Struggle and Resistance, for Socialism and the Sovereignty of Our Peoples!

## Peasant songs, the carriers of wisdom, memories and resistance

To understand the rich and diverse history and evolution of peasant and indigenous practices, one only needs to listen to the countless number of folklore and songs that exist among the people around the world. In this section we look at two peasant songs from Uganda and Turkey that communicate local struggles of the peasants and Indigenous Peoples.

### ***Icamo Irudu Laki, Uganda (Luo/Lango language)***

Composed during a period of food scarcity due to the community's shift from growing local food crops whose seeds they had control of, to new crops introduced by the government. The harvest from the new crops was sold to middlemen cheaply, leaving farmers unable to buy food for them and their families. The new crops made farmers dependent on the seed traders and government for seeds since they could not save, multiply and freely share them, hence lost seed sovereignty. The song encourages small-scale farmers to go back to local food plants that promote a farmer-managed seed system and address malnutrition and hunger. The song also shows that when you eat local food plants, it's as if you're brushing your teeth because they are healthy and free from chemicals. When it's being sung, there are some additional words that are said by women as they share their achievement stories about overcoming food scarcity in their households using traditional local food plants.

#### **Original version in Luo/Lango**

ICAMO IRUDU LAKI  
Icamo irudu laki X3  
Can dek rac  
Gin omio lango camo ajonga doo  
Can dek rac

Nen ibot Joci gi doo  
Can dek rac  
Gin omio lango camo ajonga doo  
Can dek rac

#### **Translation**

EAT AND BRUSH YOUR TEETH  
Eat local food plants and brush your teeth X3  
Food scarcity is bad  
The reason why Langis\* eat local foods plants without pasting or frying  
Food scarcity is bad

Look at it from those of Joci\*\*  
Food scarcity is bad  
The reason why Langis eat local food plants without pasting or frying  
Food scarcity is bad

\*Langis are people from the Lango sub-region in the northern region of Uganda, most of who grow crops and keep livestock.

\*\* Joci is the name of a person/neighbor whose household is struggling with food scarcity. It can be replaced with any name of anyone in the community struggling with food scarcity.

### ***İşkencedere'den (Eşkincidere) elime kalan bir çakıl taşı, Turkey***

This song was composed during the resistance of the İkizdere people against a private company with strong ties to the government and a bad history of environmental/land destruction. The company, through a presidential decree, is now destroying the İşkencedere valley for the quarry needed for port construction in İkizdere, Rize. İkizdere villagers, led by peasant women took action to stop this destruction of their valley by keeping watch over it while seeking legal recourse and an interdict. Women are in the front line defending their land and the rights of the nature. People are keeping watch on the trees, using the mountain, forest roads as their roads are blocked by the military.

#### **Original version in Turkish**

İşkencedere'den (Eşkincidere) elime kalan bir çakıl taşı

Bir gün Boğacak seni anaların gözyaşı  
Hep bulanık akıyor İşkencedereleri

İki tabur askerle beklersin dozerleri  
Ben köyümde büyüdüm  
Bilmiyorum şehri  
Vermedin insanlara, dozer kadar değeri

#### **Translation**

A pebble left in my hands from Eşkincidere

One day, the tears of mothers will suffocate you  
The Eşkincidere is running muddy now

You put two battalions of soldiers to wait for the bulldozers  
I was born in a village, I do not know the city  
You didn't give value to the people as you have given to the bulldozers!

