



*1 April, 2016 - Polytechnic University of Valencia*

## WORKSHOP 6: PRODUCTION, JOB CREATION, ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUNG FARMERS, WEALTH DISTRIBUTION

Translated from French by Lauren Broom, Translators Without Borders (TWB)

### EVALUATION

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Processes of land grabbing and accumulation have greatly threatened small-scale family-based agriculture and societies overall. The destruction of small-scale agriculture can be attributed to national and international policies which actively support the development of a capitalist agriculture with employees<sup>1</sup>.

The States largely encourage the industrial agricultural model by supporting the large farms financially, in the form of subsidies and tax exemptions. The mechanisms for the control of land markets, which aim to preserve lands to the benefit of family farming, are failing. Those with the most means have full scope to take control of immense fertile areas, through rental or sales contracts, often in a completely opaque manner<sup>2</sup>.

The unequal competition of capitalist farms with employees, with better lands and means of production, and the difficulties in accessing markets, put existing family farms in jeopardy. Rural people are progressively left with no other choice than exile or, for a minority, employment in large commercial farms<sup>3</sup>. Generational renewal is compromised.

The obligation to possess more and more capital in order to have access to land prevents many people from taking up farming. Access to land by young people and women is even more affected because, in many societies, habits and customs limit inheritance to men or even only the first-born male. Furthermore, small-scale agriculture and family and community use of natural resources are, in general, devalued more and more in the eyes of young people, who often prefer to envisage their future outside of the rural sphere. As a result of these factors, countless family farms are disappearing. In France, where unlike most other countries the transfer of land rights (use and property) is subject to regulations, more than 10,000 farms disappear on average per year. In Africa and Asia, where the majority of the world's farmers live, in Latin America and Eastern Europe, tens of millions of farmers are forced to stop farming each year (workshop 4).

The destruction of family farms poses major problems for the people directly affected. It is also very serious for society as a whole. These farms produce 70 to 80% of the world's food, and often under conditions which are not harmful to the environment (workshop 7) nor human health. This agricultural model is able to ensure food security, while responding to demand for diversified, quality food products. Their demise is a threat to security and food sovereignty. It also aggravates the economic and social crisis overall.

In small-scale family farming, the wealth generated is returned mainly to the workers. Conversely, capitalist farms with employees pay most of the wealth back to shareholders. As an example, in the large farms in South Africa, 80% of the wealth created is used to pay capital, compared with 9% used to pay workers. Thus these farms considerably reduce the amount of production revenues shared.

Depending on the country and the type of agriculture developed, family farm systems may provide more than 20 times more jobs per hectare than capitalist farms. In Andalusia (Spain), where land concentration is particularly high - 2% of land owners possess 50% of the arable land - youth unemployment is between 40-60%. Like many others, this region shows the devitalisation which comes with the concentration of land by capitalist farms with employees. How can these areas stay dynamic without maintaining small-scale agriculture? The disappearance of small farms spurs massive waves of migration and the impoverishment of towns (workshop 4). Unable to deny the damaging impacts of the capitalist model of agriculture, some States have adopted policies for their mitigation. But it is clear that they are ineffective, some are even dangerous for small-scale family farming. Measures to create opportunities for access to land often leave those young people with the least capital and

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<sup>1</sup> South African participants reminded us that these processes are not new and that in that country, as in many others, they began during the colonial period.

<sup>2</sup> In Nicaragua, for example, companies which have licenses for the construction and commercial use of the transoceanic canal, were given *carte blanche* by the government to operate over a 100-year period and to expand into different types of commercial activity.

<sup>3</sup> As an example, many South African women farmers, in order to reimburse their loans, are forced to go into exile to work in the large farms in neighbouring countries, where they are paid the equivalent of just 4 Euros for 13 hours of work.

without access to credit, in the position of being unable to settle in farms. Credit access programs (particularly for women) require recipients to accept conditions (purchase of GMO seeds, pesticides...) which reduce their decision-making autonomy, prevent them from implementing ecological agriculture systems and increase their vulnerability to climate hazards. Sometimes, aid allocated on an individual basis enables family farms to survive, but does not enable the development of their means of production, to cultivate and produce sustainably. The overall insecurity of rural people also takes in agricultural workers, whose working conditions are very often extremely difficult.

The disappearance of small-scale agriculture and other family/community uses of natural resources is a threat to humanity. The spread of the capitalist model of farming with employees reduces the number of people working in agriculture and the amount of revenues shared. Rural family farming offers the best advantages for the production of quality food in sufficient quantities and to generate employment and economic activity which would guarantee a dignified and happy life for most rural people. It is a matter of urgency that public policies which privilege family use of natural resources, and in particular rural agriculture, be adopted and implemented. These policies must lead to the revaluing of these activities and ways of life, and ensure that they are passed on to young people, from generation to generation.

## **PROPOSITIONS**

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### **Political Measures**

#### Facilitate access to land

- Strengthen existing programs and/or initiatives to support young people and women to get started in farming, in both northern countries and southern countries (like in Portugal, this may take the form of land banks; in this country, young people can also receive priority access to subsidies and are exempt from paying taxes in their first 3 years of farming),
- Regulation of land to prevent land grabbing/concentration and to encourage generational renewal, in particular access to land for young people (the initial purpose of the Société d'Aménagement du Foncier et de l'Établissement Rural, SAFER, in France was raised) and women.

#### Make farm start-ups viable

- Guarantee gainful prices through trade regulation policies (see workshop 8),
- Improve access to local and regional markets,
- Devote priority grants in support of small-scale farmers and other family and community users of natural resources, through the implementation of practices that respect the environment,
- Develop and spread ecological farming practices through the farmer exchange networks/ and other training programs,
- To help stem the rural exodus, policies should facilitate the access of rural (and in particular farming) populations to health care, education, infrastructure or social security.

#### Strengthen city - country relationships (consumers - producers)

- Involve women and youth in decision-making processes related to access to land and natural resources, food production and urban citizens' access to this food,
- Design and implement, in a democratic way, integrated food and agricultural policies, to re-localise cities' food supplies and promote the establishment of farms in peri-urban areas,
- Develop links between rural and urban areas, and the anchoring of eating habits to local territories and knowledge/know-how, through innovations allowing for the circuits of processing and consumption to be re-localised.

### **Citizen actions**

The revitalisation of city - country relations and policies which focus on small-scale agriculture and other family/community uses of natural resources will only be achieved by concrete citizen actions and strong movements. Participants discussed different forms of actions for achieving political change, such as the strikes conducted in South Africa, marches recently carried out in India, West Africa and Brazil, or even the occupation of land as in Andalusia. Experiences of concrete reorganisation, by citizens themselves, of collective food supplies (schools, administrations...) has demonstrated that change also turns into direct action. The spread of sustainable agricultural and food systems based on family and community uses of natural resources nonetheless calls for much stronger alliances among all the initiatives.

## INTERVENTIONS

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*The following list is not exhaustive. We apologise to the speakers at the workshop and participants whose names do not appear, and invite you to contact us, at the following address, to enable us to update this summary with the full list: [secretariat@landaccessforum.org](mailto:secretariat@landaccessforum.org)*

### Introductory interventions:

BORQUEZ, Rita, PROCASUR, Chile  
COCHET, Hubert, Professor, AgroParisTech, France  
DAO, The Anh, Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Vietnam  
DARROUY, Guillaume, Young Farmers, France  
FORTUIN, Bettie, Women on Farms Project, South Africa  
GONZALEZ, Pablo, Andalusian Workers Union (SAT), Spain  
JAHIEL, Camille, Association to Improve the Governance of Land, Water and Natural Resources (AGTER), France  
OBREGON, Saul, Fundacion del Rio, Nicaragua  
ROBLES, Hector, Rural Subsidies Observatory, Mexico  
VIDAL Y GONZALEZ, Mireia, Coordination of Agricultural Organisations - Autonomous Community of Valencia (COAG-CV), Spain

### Interventions from participants:

ANDREWS, Nancy, Research Fellow, France - United States  
CISSE, El Hadji Thierno, National Council for Rural Concertation and Cooperation (CNCR), Senegal  
FAYE, Iba Mar, Head of Mission 'Family farming and land', GRET, Senegal  
GBANFREIN, Paul, Urban Land Rights Security Project, Research and Action Center for Peace (CERAP), Ivory Coast  
LERAS, Gérard, former dairy farmer, former elected regional representative and Land Policy Special Councillor at Region Rhône Alpes, France  
MARTINEZ JIMENEZ Florita, Bribri and Cabecar Indigenous Network (RIBCA) and Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB), Costa Rica  
NEVES, Vitor Carlos, Centre for Cooperatives and Social Enterprises, Brazil  
PALEBELE, Kolyang, President of the National Council for the Concertation of Rural Producers of Chad, CNCPRP, Vice-President of the Sub-Regional Platform of Peasant Organizations of Central Africa, PROPAC, Chad  
RUSSO, Nuno, Coordinator of the National Land Bank, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Portugal

### Moderator:

EL OUAAMARI, Samir, Association to Improve the Governance of Land, Water and Natural Resources (AGTER), France

### Rapporteur:

SARMENTO, Francisco, Center for Social Research, Portugal