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# Building a Feminist and Intersectional Approach to Agroecology

Agroecology Europe's Position Paper on Gender and Intersectionality in Agroecology

Globally, women, LGBTQIA+ folks, and all other marginalised communities and genders face systemic barriers in agriculture and food systems. Women produce a significant proportion of the world's food and are often the guardians of biodiversity, seeds, traditional knowledge and nutrition, but regularly lack access to land, institutional knowledge, credit, inheritance, financial autonomy and all levels of decision-making spaces<sup>1/2</sup>. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ farmers and marginalised communities frequently face compounded discriminations, further limiting their participation and representation in food systems<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>4/5</sup>. Feminism and gender studies provide critical thinking and new alternatives to comprehend the world, therefore, a feminist and intersectional lens in agroecology not only promotes equity but also enhances biodiversity, community resilience, and the sustainability of food systems.

Agroecology sees nature and people of all identities as sources of life and creation, not as objects to be exploited for profit or power. It emphasises a relationship of care and mutual support between humans and non-human beings, as well as social diversity, between different generations, genders, and populations in contrast to the dominant paradigms of domination and control.

Agroecology Europe (AEEU) strongly believes that agroecology and feminism are interlinked and together, will lead to a transformation of food systems based on equality, human rights, and a new relationship with nature. We acknowledge that there are different feminisms related to different oppressions and that practical actions can be co-constructed based on the local experiences of female peasants and small-scale farmers, and their organisations.

AEEU is committed to advancing agroecology as a science, a set of practices, and a socio-political movement. Central to this commitment is the recognition that achieving sustainable and just food systems necessitates addressing gender and

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<sup>1</sup> Bruil, J., Delvaux, F., Diouf, A., Hogan, R., Milgroom, J., Petersen, P., Prado, B., & Serneels, S. (2020). Experiences in family farming and agroecology. *Farming Matters*, 01(March), 56.

<sup>2</sup> Helda Morales (2021) Agroecological feminism, *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 45:7, 955-956, DOI: 10.1080/21683565.2021.1927544

<sup>3</sup> Trevilla Espinal, D. L., Soto Pinto, M. L., Morales, H., & Estrada-Lugo, E. I. J. (2021). Feminist agroecology: analyzing power relationships in food systems. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 45(7), 1029–1049. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2021.1888842>

<sup>4</sup> Zaremba, H., Elias, M., Rietveld, A., & Bergamini, N. (2021). Toward a feminist agroecology. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(20). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011244>

<sup>5</sup> Trevilla Espinal, D. L., Soto Pinto, M. L., Morales, H., & Estrada-Lugo, E. I. J. (2021). Feminist agroecology: analyzing power relationships in food systems. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 45(7), 1029–1049. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2021.1888842>

intersectional inequalities and injustices. AEEU adopts the following definitions and principles to guide its gender-inclusive agroecological agenda:

- **Gender Equity:** Ensuring fairness in opportunities and resource allocation, recognising the specific needs of different genders.
- **Intersectionality:** Understanding how overlapping identities—such as gender, race, culture, class, sexuality, and physical ability—shape experiences of oppression and privilege.
- **Feminism in Agroecology:** Advocating for power redistribution within food systems, valuing care work, centering the voices of historically marginalised groups and aiming to establish political, economic, personal and social equality.

These principles are rooted in the recognition that social justice is inseparable from ecological balance and sustainability. Feminist agroecology calls for dismantling patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism as interlocking systems of oppression<sup>6</sup>.

AEEU commits to embedding gender equity and intersectionality across its organisational and external activities. Key actions include:

1. **Research and Knowledge Creation:**

- Integrate feminist and intersectional perspectives in research, highlighting the contributions of women, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalised groups to agroecology<sup>7</sup>.
- Foster co-creation of knowledge, ensuring diverse voices are heard and valued.

2. **Partnerships and Advocacy:**

- Partner with organisations that promote gender justice in agriculture and food systems.
- Advocate for policies that secure land rights, equitable resource distribution, and recognition of care work.

3. **Events and Representation:**

- Ensure gender-balanced panels and diverse representation in AEEU conferences and events.
- Promote safe, inclusive spaces for dialogue and collaboration.

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<sup>6</sup> Trevilla Espinal, D. L., Soto Pinto, M. L., Morales, H., & Estrada-Lugo, E. I. J. (2021). Feminist agroecology: analyzing power relationships in food systems. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 45(7), 1029–1049. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2021.1888842>

<sup>7</sup> Zaremba, H., Elias, M., Rietveld, A., & Bergamini, N. (2021). Toward a feminist agroecology. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(20). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011244>

#### 4. **Internal Practices:**

- Ensure that protocols and conduct for the working groups, staff, and members include intersectionality and feminism.

Agroecology's transformative potential lies in its ability to reimagine food systems as equitable, sustainable, and inclusive. By adopting a feminist approach, AEEU commits to leading this change, ensuring that gender justice is not an afterthought but a foundational principle of agroecology.



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