

Learning AgriCultures

Learning AgriCultures is an educational series currently being developed by ileia. It will provide a source of information and inspiration for teaching and learning about small-scale sustainable farming. Two modules were completed in 2009, which were tested in Ethiopia and have now been uploaded onto ileia's website. The first module provides an introduction on sustainable small-scale farming and the second focuses on soil and water systems. The modules contain a main text that describes the theme, which is supplemented with a section that provides inspirational educational resources, photos, case studies and further references and suggestions for assignments, classroom discussions, exercises and games. In 2010 five more modules (on cropping systems, livestock, labour and energy, marketing and finance, and knowledge) will be developed.

An initial internet survey revealed that people who have started using the series (15 respondents) include agricultural extensionists, educators and development workers. They find the modules very useful for teaching about sustainable agriculture. Suggestions for farmer visits, field exercises, the theoretical learning blocks, the case studies, photo series and videos have been mentioned as elements of the modules that are particularly useful.



From learning to practice

The Learning Agriculture series is not a practical guide on sustainable agriculture. It is intended to inspire learning and discussion in schools and universities. But ileia is keen to see how people get inspired by publications like this. We were really pleased to receive a letter from one of our readers, Raphael Chama from Zambia, who sent us his ideas on a

workshop on sustainable agriculture. He proposes a practical curriculum with 6 key activities: building a compost pile, preparing a contour bed, double digging, mulching, making compost tea and pens for livestock. Chama stresses the importance of getting students involved in the work, 'for the more they are participating in doing, the more they will retain and start practicing on their own farms' he says.



ILEIA INFORMATIVE

New house style For ileia as an organisation, 2009 was a year of change. After 25 years, in which the organisation had made many small adaptations, ileia was ready for a complete and rigorous make-over. Ileia asked Frivista, a communication consultancy with experience in branding development organisations and charities, to guide this process. They came up with a new logo for ileia and the AgriCultures Network and designed the new layout of the global magazine *Farming Matters*. Designer Folkert Rinkema explains the choice of the logo: 'Typical agricultural logos are often grain or rice-like, this one is much more sprouting, evolving and in motion. And, if you look closely, you see the forms are complementary. Just like ileia and the network'.



The Sustainable AgriCulture Alliance 2009 was a turbulent year, in which the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation presented a new subsidy framework MFSII for Dutch civil society organisations and the co-financing system MFSI came to an end. The new arrangements for MFSII funding required development

organisations with common interests to form alliances. ileia formed an alliance with ETC, Heifer, RUAFA, Both Ends and the Louis Bolk Institute to submit a joint funding proposal. Building this alliance took a lot of effort, as did writing the joint summary proposal, which was submitted in December 2009. Disappointingly the submission was not accepted for funding, a major setback for all parties involved. For ileia it means that we will need to work very hard in the year 2010 to build an alternative fundraising strategy. The ministry for Development Cooperation has been ileia's major donor for years and filling this gap is a real challenge. But ileia believes in resilience.

Going through the process did provide ileia with a good learning experience. Ileia now knows better what it stands for and really wants to achieve and that the information it provides is useful and appreciated. In addition, working with the members of the alliance has created some valuable contacts and helped broaden ileia's view on possible future partnerships and joint programmes.

Campaign for Family Farming Since 2009 family farming has become ileia's main focus. This replaces the more technical, and somewhat limiting, concept of Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA). Small-scale family farming refers to a broad category of farmers who employ multifunctional farming strategies and depend primarily on local resources.

Ileia has embraced the initiative of the World Rural Forum to get the United Nations to declare an international year of family farming. More than 300 organisations from all over the world already support the campaign, as well as ministries in Belize, El Salvador, Pakistan, Peru and Switzerland. The focal point of having a family farming year will be to highlight the contribution that family farmers make to the world's food security and climate stability. José Antonio Osaba, coordinator of the campaign, joined ileia's jubilee conference in December and addressed all those attending with a call to them to get their organisations to join the campaign. For further reading on the campaign, see www.familyfarmingcampaign.net.



Jose Osaba

The board In 2009, the board remained a constant and stable factor for ileia, which otherwise faced a constantly changing environment. The board consists of professionals from science and development cooperation. The members have a wide range of professional experiences and networks and that diversity is useful. Drs. Teresa Fogelberg is Deputy Chief Executive of the Global Reporting Initiative and has worked for several Dutch ministries, development organisations and international committees. She is one of the hundred most influential sustainability leaders in the Netherlands. Dr. Moussa Badji is Senior Specialist on the Environment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgium. Dr. Paul Engel is Director of the European Centre for Development Policy Management. Dr. Janice Jiggins is Visiting Fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development and contributed to the IAASTD report 'Agriculture at a Crossroads'. Dr. Guido Gryseels is General Director of the Africa Museum in Tervuren Belgium and is connected to the ICARDA and CGIAR research institutes. Dr. Melanie Peters is Director of 'Studium Generale' at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. Together, they support ileia in policymaking and strategic thinking.