Summer School on Research Practice for Food System Transformation

[Escuela de verano sobre prácticas de investigación para la transformación del sistema alimentario]

Course Information

24 June – 1 July 2018, Cal Cases, Catalonia.

A. Overview

How can we undertake research and learning in ways that contribute to greater social, ecological and knowledge justice?

While other learning opportunities might focus on other aspects of food system transformation: like alternative food networks, the right to food and policies for food sovereignty, our summer school is about approaches, methodologies and pedagogies of action research. Thus, our learning goals are to:

1. Better understand the wider politics of knowledge and our own positioning as researchers.
2. Critically reflect on our own practices and theories of change.
3. Learn about approaches, methodologies and pedagogies that can contribute to greater justice.
4. Build a “community of practice” that can become a network for mutual support and learning after the course.
B. Pedagogical Approach

Our approach will draw on the principles of critical pedagogy, participation and popular education methodologies. We will convene spaces for sharing ideas and research, unpacking problems in research and to explore together the collective experiences, uncertainties, hopes and dreams of the group.

In contrast to expert-lecture style learning (what Paulo Freire called “banking” education), our pedagogical approach will put much of the responsibility for the learning environment in the hands of the collective of participants. We expect this to be rewarding but also demanding and challenging. This approach will involve putting into practice the politics and methods that we are examining through the course. Much of the course is based on a process of dialogue with each other, while using provocations from the coordinators, collective reading, films and guests to stimulate our learning spaces.

The principles we intend to follow in the learning space are, as much as possible to:
1. Organise non-hierarchically and emphasise good process
2. Create spaces in which we can address problems, including in regards to power imbalances, openly and with care for one another
3. Rotate the role of ‘facilitator’ (also called ‘convenor’ or ‘animator’), including with participants in the session so no one dominates and everyone increases their experience and skills.

C. Indicative Learning Sessions and Topics

A full programme of learning sessions will be circulated shortly before the course starts.

It will be likely to include these approaches/ideas, amongst others.

- **Sharing:** River of Life: Who you are and how you’ve personally come to be involved/interested in Agroecology/Food Sovereignty Pedagogy and Learning.
- **Sharing:** Presentation and discussion of key projects you are working on.
- **Let’s get practical:** Sharing, discussion and problem solving session on your own projects, dilemmas.
- **Let’s get practical:** Mapping, analysing and discussing different approaches being used amongst the group.
- **Fundamentals:** Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Education as the practice of freedom and emancipation.
- **Fundamentals:** Decolonising our minds – including works from people like Linda Tuhiwai Smith, bell hooks, Orlando Fals Borda and Shiv Visvanathan.
- **Fundamentals:** Feminist ways of knowing and learning
- **Fundamentals:** Non-violent communication
- **Fundamentals:** Popular education and participatory action research as a political commitment.
- **Practice:** The popular educator and bricolage.
- **Practice:** Feminist methodologies
- **Practice:** Participatory action research
- **Practice:** Arts-based and visual collective inquiry
- **Practice:** Theatre of the oppressed and other forms of dialogic performance
D. Evaluation:

The coordinators will not be evaluating students and there is no grading or marks given for this course. Each and participant (including the coordinators) is responsible for making the most of their own learning experience within and beyond learning community we will co-construct over the duration of the summer school. Your peers are invaluable resources and sounding boards for your own specific issues and learning needs and there will be informal time (meals, breaks, evenings, mornings, collective cooking, etc.) to discuss ideas, challenges and dilemmas. Course coordinators will also be available during informal times and it is the responsibility of course participants to negotiate support from them as they need it.

We will engage in a collective evaluation of the summer school on the final day, reflecting on our own learning (all of us, including the coordinators) in an open, honest and constructively critical way.

E. Learning Journal:

We ask each participant to keep a learning journal, making one entry per day, reflecting on their key learnings, feelings and thoughts through self-writing and other creative means (art, poetry, video, drama). We will schedule time each day for you to work on this. We will create an online space that will give the option for you to share these with the coordinating team and with your fellow students. Please bring a notebook and pens for drawing.

F. Preparation:

Poster - each participant should come with images for a poster about your research. Please don’t come with a pre-made poster - we will make the poster during school. Please bring printed pictures or art that you can use to make your own poster in a session on the first day. The poster should focus on how your work relates to participatory research, action research, inter-cultural dialogue for the purpose of giving everyone a good sense of what you are working on and what approaches you use. The pictures you bring, and/or draw, on your poster will be especially helpful in this session.

Web/phone pre-team meeting - we will organise a meeting using skype or an online webinar system to discuss the course and other details. There will be a Spanish and an English version of this meeting.
G. Readings

Participants are expected to do some reading prior to coming to the course.

Suggested key readings are:


H. Logistics:

The summer school will be residential, hosted by an intentional community with basic and shared accommodations and spaces for collective eating, cooking and learning, with opportunities to engage with local Agroecology and food sovereignty initiatives.

The community, Cal Cases, is a rural community in the center of Catalonia. The project started 11 years ago and it counts with 30 members (20 adults and 10 children).

The community principles are based on feminist and social and solidarity economy from a perspective of care ethics and politics and community self-managing, agroecology, energy sovereignty and eco-construction, among others.

Food will be vegetarian (with vegan option), local and agroecological, and it will be cooked by the members of the community. Internet access is limited in the community.

Everyone will have responsibilities for looking after our learning space including cleaning, helping with cooking, setting up rooms, etc.

Travel:

The community is located between the cities of Manresa and Vic (it takes approximately one hour by train or bus from Barcelona). There is no public transport to reach the community, so we will arrange transport from and to the city of Vic. Transport to field visits will be also arranged by us.
What to bring:
Please consider bringing appropriate shoes for hiking, sun-cream, bathing suit and a towel.

There are not near-by shops, so it is important that you bring all you can need for the days staying in the community (e.g. medicines).

I. Staying connected:

Whatsapp group: We will set up a whatsapp group for everyone to stay connected.

Website and Facebook: We hope that participants in the school will stay connected in the “community of praxis” via the peoplesknowledge platform: www.peoplesknowledge.org, https://www.facebook.com/groups/peoplesknowledge/

J. Other Readings


**K: The coordinating team**

From Spain:

Rosa Binimelis Adell

Soy un científico ambiental especializado en conflictos ambientales y economía ecológica. Tengo un gran interés en examinar las implicaciones sociales, culturales, políticas, ecológicas y económicas de las formas en que se perciben, producen y consumen los alimentos. Durante muchos años he estado investigando temas relacionados con los sistemas agroalimentarios, como los impactos socioeconómicos de los organismos genéticamente modificados, la soberanía alimentaria, los sistemas alimentarios alternativos o las cuestiones de género relacionadas con el mundo rural. También participo en movimientos sociales relacionados con la agroecología, la soberanía alimentaria y la justicia socioambiental. Además, estoy interesado en las intersecciones entre el activismo y la academia.

I am an Environmental Scientist specialised in environmental conflicts and Ecological Economics. I have a long interest in examining the social, cultural, political, ecological and economic implications of the ways food is perceived, produced and consumed. For many years I have been conducting research in topics related to agri-food systems such as the socio-economic impacts of Genetically Modified Organisms, food sovereignty, alternative food systems or gender issues related to the rural world. I also participate in social movements related to agroecology, food
sovereignty and socio-environmental justice. Furthermore, I am interested in the intersections between activism and academia.

Marta Rivera-Ferre

El enfoque fundamental de mi carrera investigadora es el análisis de la sostenibilidad de los sistemas alimentarios, desde la producción al consumo. Al inicio de mi carrera la unidad de análisis era el sistema "animal", intentando mejorar la eficiencia de la alimentación del cerdo ibérico. Durante este período recibí dos premios de investigación para jóvenes investigadores (Patronato Enrique Corís Gruart y Federación Española para el Desarrollo de la Nutrición Animal) y una mención especial de la British Society of Animal Science. En mi primera etapa postdoctoral amplié el marco de análisis al sistema “finca”, analizando las interacciones sociales, económicas y ecológicas que se daban en sistemas ecológicos de producción porcina y aviar. En la actualidad mi unidad de análisis es todo el sistema alimentario, utilizando como marco analítico el de sistemas socioecológicos complejos (SES) desarrollado por la premio nobel Elinor Ostrom.

The fundamental focus of my research career is the analysis of the sustainability of food systems, from production to consumption. At the beginning of my career the unit of analysis was the "animal" system, trying to improve the efficiency of the Iberian pig’s diet. During this period I received two research awards for young researchers (Patronato Enrique Corís Gruart and the Spanish Federation for the Development of Animal Nutrition) and a special mention of the British Society of Animal Science. In my first postdoctoral stage I extended the analysis framework to the "farm" system, analyzing the social, economic and ecological interactions that occurred in ecological systems of swine and avian production. At present, my unit of analysis is the entire food system, using the complex socio-ecological systems (SES) developed by Nobel Prize winner Elinor Ostrom as an analytical framework.
From Canada:  

Colin Anderson

I’m a researcher working as a part of People’s Knowledge at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience. Most of my work has been located in Canada, the UK and Europe. All of my research is collaborative and uses participatory action research in the area of food and the environment. I work closely with community groups, social movement organizations, grassroots networks and NGOs. For example, I am currently involved in the UK People’s Food Policy process, the European Agroecology Knowledge Exchange Network and a collective focusing on food justice and decolonizing food in the UK. I have co-convened of a range of different learning environments both inside and outside the university that are based on critical pedagogy, place-based learning and popular education. I have spent lots of time thinking about and discussing the contradiction of doing participatory action research in the constraints of the neoliberal and elitist academic institution. I’m looking forward to exchanging around these issues and hearing how these relate to the experiences of other participants in the summer school. This will be an amazing opportunity think and learn together about how we can best position ourselves in movements for social justice and ecological regeneration.

Soy un investigador que trabaja como parte de People’s Knowledge en el Centro de Agroecología, Agua y Resiliencia. La mayor parte de mi trabajo ha estado en Canadá, el Reino Unido y Europa. Toda mi investigación es colaborativa y utiliza investigación-acción participativa en el área de alimentos y medio ambiente. Trabajo estrechamente con grupos comunitarios, organizaciones de movimientos sociales, redes de base y ONG. Por ejemplo, actualmente estoy involucrado en el proceso de la Política Alimentaria del Pueblo del Reino Unido, la Red Europea de Intercambio de Conocimientos sobre Agroecología y un colectivo centrado en la justicia alimentaria y la descolonización de alimentos en el Reino Unido. He convocado conjuntamente una variedad de entornos de aprendizaje diferentes, tanto dentro como fuera de la universidad, que se basan en la pedagogía crítica, el aprendizaje basado en el lugar y la educación popular. He dedicado mucho tiempo a pensar y debatir la contradicción de hacer investigación-acción participativa en las limitaciones de la institución académica neoliberal y elitista. Tengo muchas ganas de intercambiar sobre estos temas y escuchar cómo se relacionan con las experiencias de otros participantes en la escuela de verano. Esta será una oportunidad increíble de pensar y aprender juntos sobre cómo podemos posicionarnos mejor en los movimientos por la justicia social y la regeneración ecológica.
From France:  

**Michel Pimbert**

Michel Pimbert is Professor of Agroecology and Food Politics at Coventry University and the Director of the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience in the UK. An agricultural ecologist by training, he previously worked at the UK-based International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in India, the University François Rabelais de Tours in France, and the World Wide Fund for Nature in Switzerland.

Michel has been a Board member of several international organisations working on food sovereignty, sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and human rights. His research interests include agroecology and food sovereignty; the political ecology of biodiversity and natural resource management; participatory action research methodologies; and deliberative democratic processes.

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Michel Pimbert es profesor de Agroecología y Política de Alimentos en la Universidad de Coventry y director del Centro de Agroecología, Agua y Resiliencia en el Reino Unido. Un ecólogo agrícola por formación, trabajó anteriormente en el Instituto Internacional para el Medio Ambiente y el Desarrollo (IIED), el Instituto Internacional de Investigación de Cultivos para los Trópicos Semiáridos (ICRISAT) en la India, la Universidad François Rabelais de Tours en Francia, y el Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza en Suiza.

Michel ha sido miembro de la Junta de varias organizaciones internacionales que trabajan en soberanía alimentaria, agricultura sostenible, conservación ambiental y derechos humanos. Sus intereses de investigación incluyen agroecología y soberanía alimentaria; la ecología política de la biodiversidad y la gestión de los recursos naturales; metodologías participativas de investigación de acción; y procesos democráticos deliberativos.
From UK:

Chris Maughan

Chris Maughan is a Research Fellow at CAWR with a research interest in, (and personal commitment to), learning as a social movement strategy. He has a background in community food growing and has worked on numerous projects within Coventry (and elsewhere) aimed at building capacity towards civic participation in food system governance.

Chris Maughan es Investigador en CAWR con un interés de investigación en (y compromiso personal con) aprender como una estrategia de movimiento social. Tiene experiencia en el cultivo de alimentos en la comunidad y ha trabajado en numerosos proyectos dentro de Coventry (y en otros lugares) con el objetivo de desarrollar capacidades para la participación cívica en la gobernanza del sistema alimentario.

Tom Wakeford

Tom Wakeford is Lead Practitioner (People’s Knowledge) and Reader (Public Science) at Coventry University’s Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR). He combines knowledge of the biosciences with 20 years’ practice and analysis of participatory and inclusive approaches to action research.

He has led, evaluated or been a research collaborator in numerous participatory action research processes within three broad themes:

1. Food justice, health, climate change and sustainability
2. Democratisation of new technologies, including genetic modification, nanotechnology and synthetic biology
3. Diversities of knowledge, particularly expertise gained through experience and inclusivity in relation to ethno-cultural diversity, indigenous peoples, gender, age, disabled people and sexuality.
Tom is a Fellow of the Linnean Society and an adviser to the European Commission on public dialogue. He is Editorial Advisory Board member of the journals Action Research (Sage Publications) and Citizen Science: Theory and Practice (Ubiquity Press).

Tom Wakeford es Lead Practitioner (Conocimiento del Pueblo) y Reader (Public Science) en el Centro para Agroecología, Agua y Resiliencia de la Universidad de Coventry (CAWR). Combina el conocimiento de las biociencias con 20 años de práctica y análisis de enfoques participativos e inclusivos para la investigación-acción.

Ha dirigido, evaluado o colaborado como investigador en numerosos procesos de investigación participativa en tres grandes temas:
1. Justicia alimentaria, salud, cambio climático y sostenibilidad
2. Democratización de las nuevas tecnologías, incluida la modificación genética, la nanotecnología y la biología sintética
3. Diversidades de conocimiento, en particular la experiencia adquirida a través de la experiencia y la inclusión en relación con la diversidad etnocultural, los pueblos indígenas, el género, la edad, las personas con discapacidad y la sexualidad.

Tom es miembro de la Sociedad Linnean y asesor de la Comisión Europea sobre diálogo público. Es miembro de la Junta Asesora Editorial de las revistas Action Research (Sage Publications) y Citizen Science: Theory and Practice (Ubiquity Press).

The summer school is hosted by:
- UVic Agroecology Agroecology and Food Systems Chair, Director
- People’s Knowledge at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (Coventry University, UK). [www.peoplesknowledge.org](http://www.peoplesknowledge.org).