Agroecological knowledge - assessing and transmitting traditional knowledge of rural areas

Janko RODE

VIRIN, Trsteniška ulica 4, 3272 Rimske Toplice, Slovenia

Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia, Gospodinjska ulica 6, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia



Introduction

During centuries of coexistence with nature farmers accumulated many skills and knowledge. They learned to observe nature and adapt to it. They managed their production respecting the characteristics of the local soil, climate, water and coexistence with neighbors and nature. This way they got sufficient amount of quality food, feed, seeds and other farm products for their living and trade. At the same time they didn't overexploit the nature. In most cases the farming could be considered sustainable way of shaping cultural landscape. The knowledge and skills were passed to younger generations predominantly in the family or local community circles.

Industrialization of farming has pushed this knowledge aside. Changes in communities and families made transfer of knowledge diffcult.

Agroecology

In seeking to resolve dilemmas of modern intensive agriculture and cope with challenges of climate changes, different approaches have been developed as organic farming and biodynamics. But there are knowledge and traditional approaches of farming which ensure sustainability of agriculture on local levels. Collecting and learning those skills, especially in South America, enabled local communities to revive farming by traditional systems. This approach is called AGROECOLOGY.

"As an applied science, agroecology uses ecological concepts and principles for the design and management of sustainable agroecosystems where external inputs are replaced by natural processes such as natural soil fertility and biological control. "(Altieri 1998 cited in Altieri and Nicholls 2012).

It introduces an old traditional knowledge into management of agricultural space and rural communities. Previously evaluated by experts and updated agroecological knowledge is a set of different skills adapted for use in local environments for the most sustainably-oriented farming. Approach does not exclude sustainable innovation or the transfer of knowledge from one to another environment.

Holders of this knowledge and users are primarily small farmers.

As agroecological knowledge traditional and innovative approaches are applicable



Traditional pasturing on community pasures of Julian Alps in Slovenia



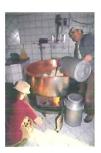
Hay stack: Kozolec – characteristic Slovenian farm outbuilding





Dry stone walls of Kras region

Some more traditional practices identified in Slovenia









Knowledge of Camelina sativa growing in Koroška region 700 years old tradition of common village dairy in Čadrg Račka č'bula traditional onion variety Shinkle making

Innovative pratcices usefull in agroecology





Agrohomeopati

Project SAGITER

SAGITER - Savoirs agroécologiques et Ingéniosité des Terroirs Agro ecological Knowledge and ingenuity of the local soils

Objectives of the project:

- Getting to know the concept of Agroecology and exchange of views on the importance of agro-ecological knowledge
- Looking for ways of implementation of Agroecology in the development of sustainable agriculture
- Development of learning strategy based on observation, census of good practices, interviews with farmers and experimentation
- Explore ways of acquiring and imparting agroecologycal knowledge.
- Design of training module in agro-ecological knowledge for teachers and agricultural consultants
- The development of teaching aids and tools tailored for the transfer of informal knowledge
- Creation of awareness and understanding importance of traditional knowledge in sustainable agriculture through training



Project partners

- Supagro, Institute for Higher Education in Environment-Florac, France
- Fumeterre, Géobiologie et écologie, Villefontaine, France
- Savoir-Faire et découvertes, learning of agro ecological knowledge, Gisors, France
- Merle training center school of shepherds, Salon de Provence, France
- Geyser, Saint Michelle, France
- Department of Geography, University of Marburg, Marburg, Germany
- Federation of family agrarian schools in Galicia, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- Vlaamse Landmaatschappij (B) agency of land development and rural development of the Flemish government, Brussels, Belgium
- Chamber of agriculture and of forestry of Slovenia, Liubliana, Slovenia
- Szent Istvan Univerity , Budapest, Hungary
- USAMV Cluj Napoca , Romania



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission trough Léonardo Da Vinci, Life Long Learning programme with grant 538785-LLP-1-2013-1-FR-LEONARDO-LMP