



Figure 1. Susana and Celedonio harvest their potatoes in Apurimac (Perú). Autor: MVD

Latin-American School for Food Systems Resilience

Transformative
socio-environmental
learning: fostering food
systems innovation
grounded in local
knowledge.

Why is the Latin American School for Food Systems Resilience important?

WRITTEN BY: ALLSA PERÚ CO-ORGANIZERS

Due to human activity, our ecosystems are changing more rapidly than at any other time in the history of humankind (EEM 2005). Some of the changes have been in climate, in the degradation of forests and grasslands, the diversion and storage of fresh water in dams, and the loss of biocultural diversity, including agricultural diversity.

Because of these changes, we have crossed the limits of global sustainability, affecting the present production and supply of food and compromising our future (Steffen et al., 2015). Yet innovative alternatives are available. We have 30,000 edible plants throughout the world, but only 150 are cultivated. So far, 90% of food energy and protein come from just 15 crops (rice, maize, wheat, etc.) and eight animal species (Füleky 2016, FAO 1999).

The global challenge ahead of us is to promote sustainable food systems to nourish the growing population in a way that promotes both human wellbeing and the health of our ecosystems.

The challenge is aggravated by effects of climate change such as increases in the severity and frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, frosts and fires. These events increase the likelihood of abrupt and irreversible changes that put vital food systems at risk.

A food system includes all the activities and infrastructures necessary to feed us: from production to the distribution of food and waste management (CFS 2017). However, a local food system is a collaborative network that integrates this chain, but improving the environmental, economic and social health of a particular geographical area. Sustaining more resilient local food systems, means having the capacity to adapt or recover from climatic and / or economic threats or "shocks" (FAO 2014). That is why communities need to promote resilient food systems to not only feed, but also to nourish the population in the near future in a way that respects local cultures and landscapes.

Latin America has the resources to face this challenge, since it is one of the world centers of origin of many cultivated species (Vavilov and Dorofeev 1992), with a high level of agrobiodiversity and associated cultural diversity. Additionally, the agroecosystems of the region integrate a high level of local knowledge and connectivity. For this reason, the continent has more resilient rural areas than many other parts of the world.

The School for Food Systems Resilience creates a space and a network for Latin Americans to promote innovative processes for the sustainability and resilience of local food systems, based on participatory and peer-to-peer learning approaches for socio-ecological systems. Intercultural dialogue and integrative understanding of food systems will be favored, involving researchers from Latin America, Indigenous farmers from Peru's Potato Park and representatives from the private sector.

This 10-day meeting will take place in October 2018 in Cusco, Peru, in

conjunction with the communities of the Parque de la Papa

The school will be oriented around four transdisciplinary axes: The first studies the problems of transport, storage, distribution and food marketing in sustainable food chains. The second will examine socioecological tools to assess and evaluate the vulnerability of food access and availability. The third axis will examine participatory leadership and commitment to action, to foster creative approaches to problem-solving through innovation and dialogue among actors. The fourth, biocultural axis will reconnect with traditional knowledge and consider integrating diverse local perspectives to increase the resilience of food systems.

We look forward to meeting young Latin Americans between 20 and 35 years of age, from Indigenous communities, universities, and the private and public sector, who are transformative voices and actors committed to the sustainability of the food systems and the biocultural diversity associated with them. In addition, we seek qualities of leadership and diversity in terms of disciplines and action plans. The young people selected will have the common characteristic of being agents of change, community leaders and innovators.

We will invite outstanding academic and Indigenous mentors and local farmers to interact with community leaders, practitioners and professionals at the beginning of their careers. Together, we will analyze intersectoral strategies for food systems resilience.

Three full scholarships will be awarded to young people from the communities of the Parque de la Papa (Cusco, Peru).

HOW

To understand food systems and promote innovation, we will pursue the following goals:

Encourage participatory leadership:

Leadership does indeed matter: leaders have the power and means to engage others in coordinated efforts for change. In its format and content, ALLSA will model participatory leadership, and teach skills to creatively foster collaborative action. We will also focus on building leadership across sectors, by integrating participants who engage the market and formulate and influence government policy, as well as Indigenous and campesino farmers and their representatives, and those involved in research and development agencies. We believe diverse social actors, working together, are best positioned to influence the direction that innovation processes take.

Facilitate peer-to-peer learning, sharing of experiences and methodologies for socio-ecological approaches: ALLSA will open a space to understand our interrelations with nature and how this is understood differently in each culture, space and time. These tools will serve to guide students in participatory exercises in the field, and to develop certain skills, such as empathy and holistic observation of the ecosystem

Figure 3. Engaging people's knowledge to cope with climate change.

Advance recognition of local knowledge and traditional practices as a basis for innovation: Through open and sincere engagement and dialogue

across epistemologies, we will learn from farmers and other traditional knowledge-holders, including the spiritual dimension and empiricism that grounds their practice and guides their innovation.

Collaborate for action: The School will foster innovative collaborations among participants across disciplines and sectors, to bring about positive socio-environmental change. Each of us brings our own dynamic approach to change. Diversity of identity, knowledge, and culture will produce crucial for action-oriented approaches for future sustainability.

Key Partners

The School engages with key partners at

Regional level: Asociación ANDES, Potato Park, Centro de Investigación y Estudios Prospectivos, Agraria La Molina University (PROPAR), SINBA (Por un mundo sin basura).

International level: Global Diversity Foundation (GDF) and FAO.

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