

COOKING UP POLITICAL AGENDAS



A FEMINIST GUIDE ON
THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION
FOR WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

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FOREWORD

The 'common cooking pot' has historical and political significance. At different moments in time, women in Latin America living under authoritarian regimes would create spaces to discuss politics and articulate actions of resistance. This strategy was also used to respond to severe economic and food crises. Although the practice is not common throughout the world, the political meaning and material use of the 'common cooking pot' can be translated across borders. From selecting the best seeds when harvesting, to giving the finishing touch to dishes full of flavor, women have passed on knowledge about food from one generation to the next. This intergenerational sharing of knowledge around food encompasses a rich set of spiritual and material relationships.

Rather than reinforcing gender roles that confine women to duties of social and reproductive labor (bearing the sole responsibility of 'cooking', 'caring' and 'feeding'), this Guide evokes the emancipatory potential of collective organizing and knowledge construction between women. The 'common cooking pot' enhances collective building and transmission of different ways of knowing between women. It recalls women's political subjectivities and their struggles against oppression. Throughout the guide, we choose to speak of 'cooks' instead of 'participants', and 'recipes' instead of 'experiences'. In this way, the metaphor of the cooking pot is able to break through the fictional borders that divide different aspects of women's lives (referred to as the private and public spheres). We hope this Guide will provide a grounded space for women in rural areas to 'cook up' political transformative agendas on the human right to adequate food and nutrition.

*"For me, the common pot is an instrument,
a moment, a space where we are complicit,
a place where women negotiate and exchange
knowledge, build dreams and realities".*

~ Sayda Tabora, feminist activist, Honduras



I. INTRODUCTION

WHY A FEMINIST PRACTICAL GUIDE ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION?

Women from different parts of the world are organizing. Across regions, women in rural areas are collectively building a diversity of alternative models based on **peasant economies** (Check Glossary), interconnected systems of production, distribution and consumption, gender-justice, and diversified agroecological systems. Women are contesting capitalist and patriarchal food production models.

Women remain at the core of the struggle towards just food systems based on food sovereignty. As consistent actors in this struggle, they have made their claims heard at the global level. Throughout the years, women have emphasized their significant role as food producers, both in the fields and at home. They have indicated that recognizing this contribution and making it visible entails, among other things, ensuring access to, control, management, and tenure of productive resources, as well as a decent income.

Simultaneously, women have continued to stress the ways in which domination and violence play out, materially, on their bodies.¹ The latter is expressed through severe restrictions over women's sexual and reproductive health, and through the multiple forms of gender-based violence exerted from within and outside their communities. Over all, women in rural areas have fearlessly voiced their rejection over the undue interference of for-profit or commercially-motivated non-state actors in their human right to adequate food and nutrition (hereinafter, right to food and nutrition).

Recent developments in international human rights law support some of the aforementioned claims and take a turn towards a progressive interpretation of the rights of women working and/or living in rural areas (hereinafter, women in rural areas). In 2016, the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted its General Recommendation No. 34 (CEDAW GR34) on the Rights of Rural Women. CEDAW GR34, the Committee's authoritative interpretation of Article 14 of the CEDAW Convention, provides guidance to State parties on the measures to be adopted to ensure full compliance with their obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of women in rural areas. Significantly, it is the first international instrument that specifically addresses the rights of women in rural areas. It is also the first that explicitly recognizes the human right to adequate food and nutrition of women in rural areas within the framework of food sovereignty.

More recently, in December 2018, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP). Article 4 outlines the rights of peasant women and other women living and/or working in rural areas, as well as States' obligations to ensure their fulfillment. UNDROP recognizes individual and collective human rights to land, seeds, biodiversity and food sovereignty, among others. It reinforces the human rights obligations of States previously established by CEDAW and addresses the negative customs and traditional practices that affect the full enjoyment of rights by women in rural areas.

International legal instruments cannot replace the diversity of ongoing struggles that seek to advance the food sovereignty project and attain a well-regulated right to food and nutrition. However, the human rights standards underpinned by CEDAW GR34 and UNDROP provide a timely opportunity. They can help us expand the normative framework of the right to food and nutrition and guide States on the implementation of recognized rights. Both instruments have the potential to ensure coherence between national public policies related to **food systems** (Check Glossary) and the needs of women in rural areas worldwide. Importantly, UNDROP was an initiative from the peasant movement itself and CEDAW's GR34, a development enriched by inputs from civil society organizations and social movements.

To move towards utilizing these instruments, an international meeting comprised of international, regional and national human rights organizations, peasants, indigenous peoples, fisheries movements, and feminist organizations took place in Mexico City in 2019. Together, we critically assessed the relevance of the content adopted in CEDAW GR34 and UNDROP to our struggles. After three days of fruitful discussions, we agreed to co-construct an easily adaptable guiding methodology for women who want to build a right to food and nutrition agenda in rural areas. The Guide is the result of this collective process.

1 Andrews, Donna et.al. "Enraged: Women and Nature". *The Right to Food and Nutrition* (2019): 6-15.

FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

The Guide has been developed by human rights practitioners, activists and women from rural areas. It provides women in rural areas, whether or not they belong to local or national organizations, with practical methodological guidance for the co-construction of a right to food and nutrition agenda based on recent international human rights law standards. When referring to women in rural areas, we mean indigenous women, landless, seasonal and migrant workers, women engaged in artisanal or small-scale agriculture, crop planting, livestock raising, pastoralism, fishing, forestry, hunting or gathering, and handicrafts related to agriculture or a related occupation in a rural area. We also refer to women as dependent members of peasant families.

The methodologies proposed throughout different sections of the Guide take participants' (hereinafter the 'cooks') lived experiences and knowledges as a starting point. Therefore, it is designed to be adapted by different groups to address their needs and priorities in response to their own realities. After using it, the Guide extends an invitation to women to share their experiences across borders. This will enrich a collective discussion and reflection on the different resources put to use to give life to feminist political agendas on the right to food and nutrition in rural areas.

WHY ARE WE CALLING IT A FEMINIST GUIDE?

There are numerous feminisms, with different viewpoints and aims. When applying the term feminism to the Guide, the authors refer to a range of social movements and ideologies that share a common goal: to expose and redress **socio-political power hierarchies** and **privileges** (Check Glossary) revealed in/through gender relations. Power relations extend to and are influenced by class, (neo)colonial structures, racism, caste and religion, among others. Along these lines, the Guide particularly builds on the interlinkages between food sovereignty, **agroecology** (Check Glossary) and feminism. All sections underscore the different, and intersectional identities of women in rural areas, women's political and economic subjectivities, and women's active participation in collective action that challenges paradigms of oppression and exploitation.

DOING IT THE FEMINIST WAY!

Feminist methodologies promote ethical and political commitments between the different people involved in pedagogical or learning experiences, whether in their roles as facilitators, participants and/or others. Local ways of knowing are the point of departure. This means taking into account collective, critical and reflexive knowledges. It also entails recognizing different ways of knowing, places and lived experiences. Feminist **methodologies** (Check Glossary) are under permanent construction, producing information without relying on numbers; always focusing on how people live their lives.

Feminist methodologies should expand what we know by giving us richer information on the complex power relations that feminisms seek to transform. The goal is to move towards a fairer society with and for women and girls.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE?

The authors have divided the Guide into five main sections. Even though sections are cross-referenced, there is no need to complete all five sections in order to use the Guide. The methodologies in the Guide were tested with a group of about twenty women. However, there is no constraint on group size. Each section contains a combination of didactic exercises, definitions, as well as excerpts from CEDAW GR34 and other relevant international human rights instruments. A list of legal sources for the right to food and nutrition of women in rural areas, as well as other complementary guides and pedagogical resources, is provided on page 27. Finally, a Glossary is provided with key concepts used throughout the Guide. Definitions and international legal instruments are highlighted in different colors.





GETTING STARTED!

TIME

The timeframe for completing each section is up to the cooks using the Guide to define, as it is highly dependent on their own specific needs and time constraints. Authors suggest breaking the meeting into at least two days in order to go through all exercises in the Guide.

FACILITATION

The authors suggest you set up a facilitation group composed of a small number of cooks. The facilitation group is helpful for: ensuring minute-taking, guiding group discussion throughout the exercises in each section, recording audio or visual experiences, assessing and constantly reviewing that goals agreed upon by the group are being met.

BEFORE STARTING

Make sure you go through all the steps and methodologies with the facilitation group beforehand.

TOOLS

Markers, colors, stationary.

EXTRAS

When possible, consider bringing printed versions of CEDAW GR34 and other relevant international legal instruments such as UNDROP. Take a look at OTHER INGREDIENTS OR UTENSILS and check if there is anything useful for the group's aim you would like to bring to the meeting.

DON'T FORGET!

- » To collectively fine-tune the ground rules for the meeting.
- » To open with a brief introduction of the overall meeting and objectives for each section.

"Our food sovereignty is provided by Chaco's monte (grasslands) and rivers. What I cook starts with the territory and ends on my plate. Food is life. It is the starting point."

– Marité Álvarez, traditional pastoralist, member of WAMIP, Northern Argentina.



1 BRINGING INGREDIENTS TOGETHER

OBJECTIVE

Identify the main issues faced by women in rural areas in their struggle for the right to food and nutrition.

METHODOLOGY: BUILDING A MIND MAP

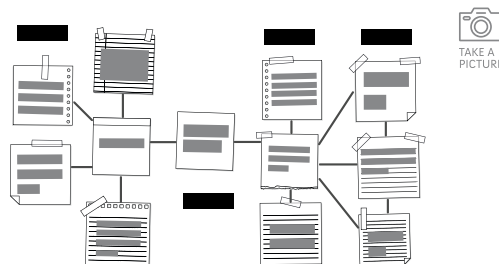
In order to achieve the objective above, the group co-constructs a Mind Map. A Mind Map is a creative way of expressing and organizing ideas and reflections. The Mind Map can be built on a wall or a board.

STEP 0: Cooks introduce themselves, including their names and anything they would like to share about themselves. To get started, cooks can also say which of their favorite ingredients/foods, they would like to bring to the imaginary pot.

STEP 1: Based on each of their different lived experiences and perspectives, cooks write down or draw each of their concerns and actions affecting their right to food and nutrition, as well as any actions undertaken by their movements, organizations and communities to counter such situations.

STEP 2: The cards are affixed on the wall without following any specific order.

STEP 3: After the cards have been affixed, the following step is to group the cards on the wall into themes. Using the information on page 9, facilitators can explain the elements on the right to food and nutrition. These elements can serve as guidance to the facilitators' group on how to classify the issues and actions according to themes, for instance: access to land, seeds and natural resources.



TIP

When grouping into themes, the group might also find it useful to think of the different aspects of life linked to their right to food and nutrition. For example: land, water, seeds, working conditions, political participation, **care work** (Check Glossary) and violence. See more on the next page!



"The Epicureans who lovingly choose the freshest and most sensual ingredients, prepare them artistically and offer them as a gift to the senses and the soul."

~ Isabel Allende, writer, Chilean

HOW CAN WE START A DISCUSSION ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION?

When encouraging each other to write down the issues that concern you (women you work with, your organization and community), the facilitation group might find it useful to start by naming out loud some of the elements on the right to food and nutrition mentioned below. All of these elements are based on international human rights standards and law. The main legal sources for these elements can be found on OTHER INGREDIENTS OR UTENSILS.

FOOD IS MORE THAN JUST CALORIES!

What we eat is part of our cultures and identities as human beings. For many of us, food is something to share and show that we care. It is central to most social activities and events. How we produce food, who produces it and what we eat is intrinsically linked to human rights – and in particular, to the right food and nutrition. For our right to food and nutrition to be realized, we must have access to food that is nutritious, culturally adequate and sustainable. For groups such as peasants, traditional livestock keepers, pastoralists or fisherfolk, having access to land, seeds, oceans and the resources needed to produce food is key to realizing their own right to food and nutrition: their livelihoods depend on it.

WHAT IS THE HUMAN RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD AND NUTRITION?

The human right to adequate food has been defined by United Nations (UN) human rights bodies by its indivisible link to the inherent dignity of a human being. "The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement".² According to the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the right to food and nutrition is related to but distinct from the fundamental right to be free from hunger, which requires immediate action from States.³

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR FOOD TO BE ACCESSIBLE, ADEQUATE, AVAILABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE?

According to the CESCR Committee, to have access to food means everyone has physical and economic access to food at all times. Food is economically accessible when the costs associated with the acquisition of adequate food are at a level where no other basic needs are compromised. Physical accessibility means adequate food must be available to everyone, including vulnerable populations like the disabled, infants and the elderly, and rural peoples, among others.⁴ Adequacy refers to different aspects of food that must be acceptable, like its dietary, safety, and cultural adequacy.⁵ For food to be available, one must be able to feed oneself either directly from land and natural resources, or from a dependable and efficient distribution, processing, and market system.⁶ The CESCR Committee states these conditions must be met in a sustainable manner, meaning food will be accessible, adequate and available for present and future generations.⁷

WHAT SHOULD STATES DO?

States have **international human rights obligations** (Check Glossary). States that ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights have the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to food and nutrition. The obligation to respect means to refrain from taking any actions that prevent sustainable access to and availability of adequate food; the obligation to protect means to ensure no other party can take actions that will deprive access or decrease the availability of adequate food; and the obligation to fulfill through facilitation means States must take active steps to progressively improve the accessibility and availability of resources that will ensure individuals' livelihoods and the right to adequate food. To fulfill also means to provide the right directly.⁸

NON-REGRESSION, NON-DISCRIMINATION AND PROGRESSIVE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION

The concept of progressive realization of the right to food and nutrition, as defined by the UN, requires States to act quickly and efficiently, using their maximum available resources, to achieve the goal of full realization of the right, while at the same time recognizing that not all governments are able to mobilize resources to immediately comply with all their human rights obligations to mitigate and alleviate hunger. However, the Committee declares that regardless of the resources available, States must ensure at least minimum levels of rights and programs that target disadvantaged and

2 UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). General Comment No. 12: *The Right to Adequate Food* (Art. 11 of the Covenant), May 12, 1999: Para.6.

3 *Ibid.* Para. 1.

4 *Ibid.* Para. 13.

5 *Ibid.* Para. 7.

6 *Ibid.* Para. 12.

7 *Ibid.* Para. 7.

8 *Ibid.* Para. 15.

marginalized⁹ populations. This contrasts with the right to be free from hunger because the fundamental right to be free from hunger imposes immediate and unconditional obligations for States.¹⁰ This flexibility is a necessary device given the reality that it is difficult for any country to ensure the full realization of economic, social, and cultural rights.¹¹

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE POLICY COHERENCE AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION?

In broad terms, a policy is any government decision that provides guidance for addressing a specific public concern.¹² To fulfill the right to food and nutrition, during implementation of the right there must be policy coherence and meaningful participation of those most affected by hunger and malnutrition. Policy is coherent when it connects across different aspects that impact the right to food and nutrition. This can include women's rights, healthcare, education, and many other areas. Meaningful participation entails people's participation in the decision-making process, accountability for governments, non-discrimination (Check Glossary), transparency in decisions and outcomes, dignified treatment in which no right is sacrificed for another, the empowerment of people to make decisions regarding their right to food and nutrition, and the notion that everyone, including decision makers, must comply with the law.

WHAT IS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY?

Since 2018, food sovereignty has been recognized as a right under international human rights law (UNDROP). The content of this right is largely based on the understanding set out by social movements in the Nyéléni Declaration. Food sovereignty is defined here as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems" (Nyéléni Declaration). Food sovereignty primarily deals with the unequal distribution of power between the parties that impact the accessibility, adequacy, availability, and sustainability of food and aims to put those who distribute, consume, and produce food in power over their food systems. The concept of food sovereignty calls on States to address these inequalities as well as structural inequalities, including gender and power relations, within food systems.¹³

ARTICULATING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND FEMINISM

Some of the contributions made by feminism to the food sovereignty project are reflected in:

- » The creation of spaces by and for women in agricultural organizations. These spaces have been crucial for women to develop their own agendas within the food sovereignty movement.
- » The incorporation of claims focusing on the redistribution and recognition of care work and women's productive work.
- » The increasingly central role given to guaranteeing women's equal access to land, territories, water, seeds, information and direct access to markets, among others.
- » The numerous reflections and demands building on the links between radical food politics, gender justice and agroecology.
- » The recognition of women's crucial role in food sovereignty, including the development of peasant, local, and indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing.
- » The integration of food sovereignty struggles and LGBT rights. Thus, strengthening a "united struggle that challenges gender norms, seeks bodily autonomy, and brings down patriarchal (and related racist and colonial) structures".¹⁴

Community-driven feminisms where multiple cosmologies and claims converge. Many of them consist of working class and field laborers, peasant, indigenous and afro-descendant women.

9 *Ibid.* Para. 14.

10 *Ibid.* Para. 1.

11 *Ibid.* Para. 9.

12 Torjman, Sherri. *What is Policy?* Canada: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2005.

13 Gordillo, Gustavo and Jerónimo Obed Méndez. *Food Security and Sovereignty (Base Document for Discussion)*. Rome: FAO, 2013, p. 3.

14 Gioia, Paula. "Coming Out! Gender Diversity in the Food System". *The Right to Food and Nutrition Watch* (2019): 6-15.



2 CHOOSING OUR UTENSILS

OBJECTIVE

Connect the identified community's struggles with international standards in CEDAW GR34.

METHODOLOGY: ANALYSING AND DISCUSSING CEDAW GR34

First, cooks are divided into groups according to the themes identified on BRINGING INGREDIENTS TOGETHER. Second, cooks reflect collectively on ways in which CEDAW GR34 contributes to their ongoing struggles on the right to food and nutrition, and evaluate missing links.

STEP 0: Cooks do an energizer. For example, cooks form a circle. One starts by saying, "I am going to the fields to find herbs." The next cook says "I am going to the fields to find herbs and wild fruits". Each cook repeats the list, and then adds an item. The aim is to be able to remember all of the items that people before you have added to the list.

STEP 1: Someone from the group provides a short summary of the outcomes achieved in the previous section.

STEP 2: Cooks are divided into groups according to the themes identified in BRINGING INGREDIENTS TOGETHER.

STEP 3: Each group discusses the following questions:

- A. What are the main elements in CEDAW GR34 linked to the everyday realities/problems that have been identified in the Mind Map?
- B. Which of the main elements in CEDAW GR34 are useful, or not, in your own work and struggle for the right to food and nutrition?

C. In what ways is CEDAW GR34 useful where you are and how can we achieve its appropriation in our collectives, organizations and communities?

STEP 4: Answers and reflections to these questions are written down in each group.

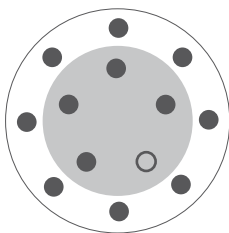


STEP 5: All cooks present the outcomes of their discussions during a plenary using the fishbowl method.

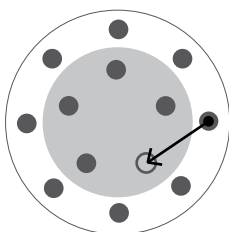
SETTING UP THE FISHBOWL

The Fishbowl is a useful way of organizing groups to foster a spontaneous, conversational approach to discussing issues. It has been named 'fishbowl' due to the specific arrangement of the chairs in the room, which allows speakers at the center to be surrounded and observed by a larger circle.¹⁵

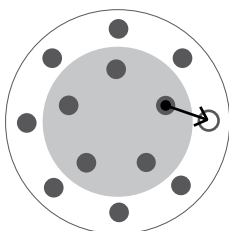
1. In the center of a broader circle of chairs, place one chair per group and one extra empty chair.



2. Each cook sitting in the inner circle of chairs gets ten minutes to present the outcomes of the discussions held in her working group.
3. After every cook has intervened, the floor is opened up to anyone sitting in the outer circle that wishes to contribute.
4. In case a cook wants to participate, she will occupy the empty chair.



5. When the empty chair is occupied, someone already sitting in the inner circle should leave their chair and sit in the outer circle.



6. It is important to always keep an empty chair available in the inner circle so that other cooks may join the conversation.

WHAT IS GENERAL RECOMMENDATION 34?

CEDAW GR34 is an international human rights instrument from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. It is the authoritative interpretation of the Committee of Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and focuses on the identification of State obligations and corresponding rights of women in rural areas. This instrument was created with the input of activist groups and **social movements** (Check Glossary) that are made up of the women which this document aims to protect.

WHO HOLDS THESE RIGHTS?

CEDAW GR34 applies specifically to women in rural areas. This includes indigenous, fisherfolk, peasants and pastoralists, agricultural workers among others. Additionally, one of the foremost human rights principles is that human rights are inherent, universal, and nondiscriminatory. Rights are inherent because all human beings are equally entitled to them without discrimination. Human rights are available equally to all, regardless of nationality, sex, class, ethnicity, religion, language or any other status.

WHAT DOES CEDAW GR34 SAY?

CEDAW GR34 recognizes the often unseen and undervalued contributions of women in rural areas. This serves as the basis for the discussion and identification of specific ways to improve the current condition of women in rural areas. Strategies to create this change include new policy initiatives, **gender-responsive approaches** (Check Glossary) to current systems, full accessibility of rights and access to justice for the violations of any of those rights.

CEDAW GR34 recognizes the gaps in data available regarding the situation of women in rural areas and calls for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of such data to inform the actions that will be taken to protect their rights. Furthermore, it acknowledges that women in rural areas across the world share a common plight of exclusion, poverty, discrimination - be it in the Global North or Global South. They are all entitled to the respect, protection, and promotion of their rights.

CEDAW GR34 also emphasizes the need for women in rural areas to be involved in decision-making roles in their communities. These roles may not be accessible to them because of long-standing discrimination. Discrimination is a cross-cutting con-

15 UNICEF. *UNICEF KE Toolbox*. New York: UNICEF, 2015, p. 1-6.

cern throughout CEDAW GR34 and addressing it is often the prerequisite for ensuring a specific right. Discrimination can be **intersectional** (Check Glossary) - e.g. a peasant woman might be discriminated against due to both her gender and status - and deeply rooted in existing legal and societal systems. This is no different when it comes to the right to food and nutrition.

CEDAW GR34 states the following:

A. RURAL WOMEN'S RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT FROM RURAL DEVELOPMENT¹⁶

Women in rural areas drive sustainable development and agriculture through their work. Institutions, policies and laws must recognize and enable their contributions in agricultural and water policies, including forestry, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture. These institutions, policies and laws should be gender-responsive and protect the rights of women in rural areas by providing adequate economic, institutional and accountability mechanisms. These actions must be undertaken in line with the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security](#); and the [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small- Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication](#). These are other relevant international instruments that urge States to ensure that women are recognized as key actors and decision makers of agricultural and rural development policies, strategies and plans.

B. HEALTH CARE SERVICES¹⁷

Women in rural areas have diminished accessibility to healthcare services. The right to health care services requires a holistic approach. It encompasses all types of health care, including, but not limited to, sexual and reproductive health. Pregnant women, including those experiencing early pregnancy due to child marriage, must have adequate pre- and post-natal care. This includes information on breastfeeding, healthy lifestyles and nutrition. Health care services must be economically and physically accessible and its facilities adequate, which includes water and sanitation services. Information regarding health care should be widely disseminated in all local languages and dialects. Health care services should also be physically and culturally acceptable for women in rural areas. Laws and regulations that restrict access to health care for women in rural areas should be repealed.

C. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE¹⁸

Most women in rural areas cannot adequately pursue economic and social prosperity. They must be guaranteed direct benefit from social security regardless of their marital status. This must be achieved considering the unpaid and unregulated forms of work women in rural areas often engage in, such as work in rural and urban family enterprises, as a result of the limited opportunities available to them. Women in rural areas should also have income security and access to health care and childcare facilities. States should also adopt gender-responsive **social protection floors** (Check Glossary), per [ILO Recommendation number 202](#), to ensure women in rural areas have access to health care, childcare and income security.

D. EDUCATION¹⁹

Women in rural areas often have less access to education and training. This is especially true for girls who are victims of child and forced marriage, and pregnant girls. Education must be accessible, affordable and culturally appropriate in suitable languages for all women. It should possess proper infrastructure and training for personnel. Curricula should be structured to combat discriminatory stereotypes about the roles of women, gender-based and ethnic discrimination, as well as to change negative attitudes towards girls' education. Pregnant girls should remain in school during pregnancy and be allowed to return after childbirth. Women in rural areas should have access to education in various fields, including non-traditional careers and agriculture. States must protect the right to education of women in rural areas and improve the systems of delivery of this education.

E. EMPLOYMENT²⁰

Women in rural areas have limited labor opportunities. Diverse employment opportunities should be made available to them. Work should be decent, safe, and be properly compensated – including paid maternity leave and social security. Employment should be free from sexual harassment, exploitation, and other forms of abuse. It should also protect from exposure to harmful chemicals and pesticides through legislation and public awareness programs. Laws and policies that prevent women in rural areas from obtaining certain jobs should be eliminated. States must also facilitate women's ability to obtain adequate employment by ensuring their right to **collective bargaining** (Check Glossary), social security, and childcare, among other things.

16 CEDAW GR34. Para. 35-36.

17 CEDAW GR34. Para. 37-39.

18 CEDAW GR34. Para 40-41.

19 CEDAW GR34. Para. 42-47.

20 CEDAW GR34. Para. 48-52.

"It's not about supplication, it's about power. It's not about asking, it's about demanding. It's not about convincing those who are currently in power, it's about changing the very face of power itself."

~ Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'intersectionality' theorist,
United States of America

F. POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE²¹

Women in rural areas have often been excluded from decision-making in their communities – even though they have the right to participate in decision-making at all levels, including in land, forestry, fisheries and water governance bodies, as well as natural resource management. Women in rural areas must also be adequately represented. States must actively ensure the meaningful participation of women in rural areas by establishing quotas for representation, ensuring they can influence policy, addressing power discrepancies between men and women, and ensuring the participation of women in rural areas in the elaboration and implementation of rural development projects.

G. LAND AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES²²

With respect to land and natural resources, the exercise of the rights of women in rural areas are limited. Much of the land in rural areas around the world is controlled by men. States should ensure equal and non-discriminatory access to lands and other natural resources like water, seeds, forests and others. Specifically, seeds, tools, information and knowledge should be protected by States. State parties should address discriminatory stereotypes and practices that inhibit access to land and natural resources by taking all necessary measures to achieve equality. Women in rural areas must occupy positions of power to fully ensure their own access to rights like the rights to land and other natural resources. Agricultural policies should support rural women farmers. They should also promote sustainable practices that respect and protect the traditional and eco-friendly agricultural knowledge of women in rural areas. Women in rural areas are often among the most at-risk groups for **food insecurity** (Check Glossary), malnutrition and hunger. To combat this reality, States should ensure the right to food and nutrition through food sovereignty, so women in rural areas can control and manage their own natural resources.

H. ADEQUATE LIVING CONDITIONS²³

Adequate housing, water, sanitation, energy, and transportation have been of particular concern for women in rural areas. The infrastructure needed for the adequacy of these services are often absent in rural areas. Access to these services is key to the exercise of many other rights, such as health, food, and education, among others. Transportation has specific challenges because without transportation there can only be very limited access to many rights. This is further complicated by the risks of gender-based harassment and costs. As such, State parties should ensure affordable and safe access to transportation.

21 CEDAW GR34. Para.53-54.

22 CEDAW GR34. Para. 55-78.

23 CEDAW GR34. Para 79-87.

HOW DO THESE RIGHTS INTERACT?

Another preeminent human rights principle is that human rights are interdependent and indivisible. Regardless of any status, rights are interrelated because “[t]he improvement of one right facilitates advancement of the others. Likewise, the deprivation of one right adversely affects the others”.²⁴ As a significantly vulnerable group, the balance in the interdependence of rural women’s human rights is a delicate one. Thus, the violation of human rights of women in rural areas has a deep impact on their right to adequate food and nutrition. This is further elaborated below.

HOW DOES THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IMPACT THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION?

The lack of education for women in rural areas can increase disparities between rural and urban areas, the perpetuation of gender roles, and the deprivation of economic opportunity, as well as decrease access to employment opportunities. This all impacts the ability of women living in rural areas to access food, physically and economically.

HOW DOES THE RIGHT TO POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE IMPACT THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD?

When women in rural areas are excluded from the decision-making process, they are unable to opine on laws and policies that directly impact them, including those relating to land use, natural resources, development, the economy, and agriculture, among others, which are intimately related to the ability of women in rural areas to feed themselves and their families.

HOW DOES ACCESS TO LAND AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES IMPACT THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD?

Women in rural areas who do not have equitable access to land and other natural resources are incapable of being food sovereign. Their food system is under the control of those who do have access to land and natural resources, limiting the available food. Without access to land and other natural resources, many women in rural areas would be unable to adequately feed themselves and their families.

HOW DOES THE RIGHT TO DECENT WORKING CONDITIONS IMPACT THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD?

Without safe working conditions and proper compensation, the accessibility of food for women in rural areas who rely on paid employment for their livelihood becomes much more difficult. Women in rural areas are often exploited when carrying out paid and unpaid labor. While at work, women are generally exposed to various forms of abuse, such as **harassment** (Check Glossary) and dangerous working conditions, which prevent them from having physical and economic access to adequate food. Even though CEDAW GR34 is innovative and progressive, there are gaps within CEDAW GR34 that can be filled by the utilization of additional human rights instruments. A significant contribution in this regard is the recognition of individual and collective rights brought by UN-DROP, including the right to work (Article 13), to work in safe and healthy working conditions (Article 14), and the rights of women in rural areas (Article 4).



24 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. *What are Human Rights?* Geneva: OHCHR, 1996-2020. Available at: www.ohchr.org/en/issues/pages/whatarehumanrights.aspx.



3 SHARING OUR RECIPES

OBJECTIVE

Learn from women’s different lived experiences in the struggle for their right to food and nutrition in rural areas.

METHODOLOGY: SHARING LIVED EXPERIENCES

Before doing the exercises in this section, and if possible before the meeting, the facilitation group requests one or several cooks to prepare to share a lived experience in organizing a collective action on the right to food and nutrition.

STEP 0: Cooks do an energizer. For example, cooks stand in a circle and join hands. Keeping hands joined, cooks move in any way that they wish, twisting and turning and creating a knot. The knot must be unraveled without letting go of one another’s hand.

Sharing our stories, an act of resistance: the facilitation group is encouraged to begin this section by reflecting about the power of “sharing with and learning from each other, finding commonality and creating networks of solidarity”. It is important that the sharing of experiences is lived as a conversation, not a lecture, and as part of a collaborative process of co-creation in which “dreams are dreamt and strategies for change are conceived” (Feminist Realities Toolkit-AWID).

STEP 1: A cook provides a short summary of the outcomes achieved in CHOOSING OUR UTENSILS.

STEP 2: Everyone sits together in a circle around the speakers.

STEP 3: Each cook shares her lived experiences.

STEP 4: The floor is opened up for questions and comments from all cooks.

STEP 5: Facilitators review with the group the lived experiences that have been shared.

The following questions can help guide the discussion:

- » What were women able to achieve through the actions employed?
- » Which strategies did women use to reach the desired outcome?
- » Which were the difficulties and lessons learned?

	OUTCOME 1	OUTCOME 2	OUTCOME ...
DIFFICULTIES			
ACHIEVEMENTS			
MEANS			
STRATEGIES			
...			



TIP

PRESENTATIONS: A good way of structuring presentations is to suggest to cooks to prepare their stories by answering: who, what, when, where, why and how. The following advice might also be useful to consider: “The stories we share are lived shared experiences; they are not abstractions! Like any good story, however, we can understand more about them by looking at what is happening AND who the characters/actors are, the setting – political, emotional, physical – or situation around their story, the principles/values or motivations behind their actions, the problems they face or obstacles, the conditions that help them grow” (Feminist Realities Toolkit-AWID).

"Sharing our recipes implies sharing everything we are."

~ Norma Don Juan, leader of the indigenous movement, CONAMI-ECMIA, Mexico

EXPERIENCES FROM THE GROUND

WOMEN MOBILIZING IN RURAL AREAS IN COLOMBIA

In 2017, several civil society organizations launched a collective process aimed at strengthening mobilization against situations of injustice and discrimination experienced by women in rural areas in Colombia. Together we developed the first alternative report of rural and peasant women, which was presented in 2019 to the 57th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The report became a political agenda for women in rural areas, as well as a valuable tool that allowed us to influence the Concluding Observations issued by the CEDAW Committee to the Colombian State.

Several actions were fundamental to the collective construction of the process. Some of them are listed below:

1. Bringing together a diversity of voices. We call on women from all regions of the country with different organizational and advocacy experiences to join the process. We have managed to involve over seventy organizations, and to establish a working group, which used various communication tools such as virtual meetings, visits, meetings, interviews and mailings to facilitate the discussions and ensure an inclusive process.
2. Holding meetings. The meetings in different territories were fundamental for people to feel mutual recognition and proximity, as well as to consolidate the network. Two national meetings were held. The first one was in Montes de María, a region known for its peasant women's struggles. The second meeting was held in Bogotá, where women from different organizations from all regions of the country got together. During the meetings, some of the following activities were carried out:
 - » Collective understanding of CEDAW and CEDAW GR34;
 - » Analysis of the realities that women in rural areas experience in their territories (including: at home, in their community, and within their organizations);
 - » Discussion of the most felt and relevant issues to be presented in the report. These were: the implementation of the Peace Agreement between the government of Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC-EP guerrilla; violence against women; land and other natural resources; food sovereignty and economic, social and cultural rights;
 - » Collective analysis of periodic reports presented by the

Colombian State to the CEDAW Committee, as well as General Comments made to the Colombian State in previous years. For example, in 2013 the CEDAW Committee urged the Colombian State to:

*Develop sustainable solutions for women to whom their land has been returned which, inter alia, incorporate women's right to have access to productive resources, such as seeds, water and credit, and foster their capacity to earn a living and produce their own food; ensure that the protection of these rights prevails over the profit interests of third parties involved in agricultural and mining mega-projects by, inter alia, promoting public-private partnerships; and ensure that adequate compensation is provided when land is requisitioned.*²⁵

3. Identifying common problems and situations giving rise to systematic violations of women's human rights in rural areas. Women initially wanted to cover very broad issues related to various forms of discrimination. To make discussions more concrete, they referred to the structure of CEDAW GR34. This format turned out to be a useful guide for territorial and national meetings, and for drafting the report.
4. Raising the profile of emblematic cases. The situation in rural areas in a peace-building context is complex. Related cases were included in a special section of the report. These were compiled with the support of social and community-based organizations. Through interviews, focus groups, meetings, calls, and dialogue, among other methods, women themselves carried out the tasks of doing research, reviewing information, verifying data, and identifying the context and actors.
5. Identifying the main issues of the collective agenda. The organizations agreed on key issues highlighting the different situations of women in rural areas. A decision was also made to categorize the specific situations that most organizations shared, leading to a type of thematic convergence.
6. Building a collective advocacy roadmap at local, national and international levels. This consisted in: i. Identifying experiences of organizations that had submitted reports to the CEDAW Committee; ii. Mapping key actors, such as parliamentarians, CEDAW experts, women's organizations, government and UN representatives in the country; iii. Identifying strategic moments, such as local and national elections, policy drafting, and of course the presentation of the Colombian State Report in Geneva to the CEDAW Committee.

²⁵ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Concluding observations on the combined 7th and 8th periodic reports of Colombia (CEDAW/C/COL/CO/7-8), October 29, 2013.



7. Ensuring representation. It was agreed that a broad range of women in rural areas and of women human rights defenders would participate. The delegation of Colombian civil society organizations to Geneva was large and diverse.

8. Building a communications and outreach strategy. We built a strategy to disseminate the report and the Concluding Observations, together with the different participating organizations. We participated in radio programs and articles in national and international alternative media magazines.

Among the Concluding Observations that the CEDAW Committee made to the Colombian State, the following achievements can be highlighted:

- » Issues of women from rural areas were included throughout all Concluding Observations;
- » The State was urged to:
 - Incorporate UNDROP into legal and policy instruments relating to women in rural areas, even if the Colombian State has not signed this Declaration;
 - Adopt measures to increase women's access to land, including access to financial and technological support for productive projects; and
 - Strengthen the implementation of public policy regarding women in rural areas with adequate funding and follow-up.

CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations have served as guidelines for the preparation of bills in the Colombian Parliament. Some examples are: the draft bill on women in rural areas emphasizing the right to food, and another bill for the implementation of the System for the Progressive Fulfillment of the Right to Food in the framework of the Peace Agreement. The latter considers rural and peasant women as a core

element. On the other hand, communication materials were developed to allow women to disseminate the Concluding Observations in their territories, and influence local policies (e.g. in the drafting of city and department Development Plans and of public policy guidelines). These materials also helped women from rural areas to take a position in other groups of women.

The fact that we all came from such different backgrounds has led to a collective endeavor that builds on mutual recognition and respect. In such difficult contexts, it is paramount to strengthen networks in rural communities, and to construct solidarity among women in rural areas who are leading the struggle in their territories. Widening the scope of action and being part of the solution to the ecological crisis must be part of a common commitment, and therefore of an international political agenda that promotes progress in guaranteeing the right to food and nutrition as well as peoples' food sovereignty.





4 TASTING THE FLAVORS

OBJECTIVE

Identify missing and complementary ‘tools’ and ‘actions’ to advance the struggle for the right to food and nutrition. (Check Next Page for a Meaning of Tools and Actions!)

METHODOLOGY: DISCUSSING TOOLS AND ACTIONS

Cooks agree on a set of tools and actions that can contribute to their struggle for the right to food and nutrition.

Using the World Café methodology, all cooks divide into an agreed number of groups (called ‘tables’) and write down missing tools and actions needed to advance their struggles.

The aim of the world café methodology is to allow for ‘meaningful conversations’ to develop in ‘large group’ settings. Each group has a table host. All tables discuss for a specific amount of time. When the time is up, cooks go to the next table. You can calculate the total amount of time you need by dividing the time you have allocated to this section into the number of tables. This way, you will ensure that everyone participates at each table. For example, if you have two hours and four tables for this section, each table will discuss for 30 minutes.

STEP 0: Cooks do an energizer. For example, cooks gather in a circle and answer the question: If struggles tasted like something, what do you think they would taste like?

STEP 1: A member of the facilitation group provides a short summary of the outcomes obtained in the first three sections, BRINGING INGREDIENTS TOGETHER, CHOOSING OUR UTENSILS and SHARING OUR RECIPES.

STEP 2: Cooks divide themselves into the same groups and themes as they had done in CHOOSING OUR UTENSILS.

STEP 3: Each group gathers around a large sheet of paper and writes the group theme on top together with the following question: “What are we missing in order to advance?”

STEP 4: The person who volunteered to be the table host facilitates and takes note of the group discussions and writes them down in the large sheet of paper.

STEP 5: When time is up, cooks rotate to the next table. The host stays behind to introduce the question to the new group and to summarize the preceding discussion. The new cooks at that table then add their insights to the question, refining or modifying the contributions of the previous group. When time is up, the group moves on to the next table. This step is repeated until all cooks have joined all tables.

TIP:

When writing down the answers, consider dividing them into two columns:

- A. Local, national and/or regional actions.
- B. Types of tools missing to bring such actions to life (e.g. capacity-building, media resources, funds).

	LOCAL	NATIONAL	REGIONAL
ACTIONS 1			
ACTIONS 2			
ACTIONS 3			
...			



If while tasting the flavors you feel the need for some extra inspiration, take a look at the next column. There, you will find a series of questions that can guide you through the group discussion. You can also check out the section on ‘Experiences from different parts of the world’, where women share how they have come together to bring to life an action for the right to food and nutrition.

“Every moment is an opportunity to organize, every person a potential activist, every minute a chance to change the world.”

~ Dolores Huerta, labor leader, United States of America

WHAT ARE ‘TOOLS’ IN THIS CONTEXT?

A tool is a device that helps us to carry out an action. It is something that helps the group achieve a collective goal. There are different actions and different tools; no single tool or action provides solutions to all the situations we wish to transform. For example, policy or legal reform might be useful tools to advance our community’s struggle to defend access to land while in other contexts this may not work. Similarly, in some places, media outlets might be a useful tool to exert pressure against government authorities refusing to acknowledge women’s roles in food production. Under authoritarian regimes though, using the media could increase your exposure and put you at risk. Claiming the right to food and nutrition in a rural area in one country may require a different assessment of strategies to that of a rural community in another area, even if within that same country.

The following are some guiding questions that can help cooks identify the best tools and actions in their struggle for the right to food and nutrition.

WHAT:

- » Do we want to raise awareness about a particular issue affecting us?
- » Is there a policy or law that we want to ensure is adequately implemented, that we want to change or put forward for consideration to local and/or national authorities? (e.g. the right of women to inherit land)
- » Is there a particular behavior in our government that we would like to monitor?

WHO:

- » Which relevant actors need to be considered and/or addressed? (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture, local authorities, etc.)

WITH WHOM:

- » Which other groups and/or allies do we want to involve?

HOW DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE AN ACTION?

Some examples include: using media tools (e.g. community or national radios, social media, podcasts, local newspapers and TV channels); carrying out an investigation and subsequent analysis; documenting State behavior (e.g. human rights violations against women land defenders); strengthening our local and/or national networks and alliances (e.g. by holding a strategic meeting); capacity-building; explore strategic litigation (i.e. bringing a case to court with the goal of not only advancing with that particular case, but also pushing for broader societal change); mobilizing.

Actions are not mutually exclusive. For example, women in Indonesia have resorted to advocacy actions as well as other types of mobilization activities, such as social protest to counter government projects that are limiting their access to forests with the excuse of implementing projects for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD).



EXPERIENCES FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD

WOMEN ENGAGE IN ACTION RESEARCH IN UGANDA

For women in fishing communities, other than farming, land is used for drying fish and fishing-related activities. However, with the growing demand and competition for land bordering the lake, local fishing communities are increasingly being displaced. In 2017, amidst escalating land-grabbing that benefited individual investors at the expense of rural livelihoods, Katosi Women Development Trust (KWDT) (in partnership with FIAN International and the Transnational Institute) engaged local women and men in fishing communities in an action research project to promote accountability from local leaders. KWDT established and trained grassroots pressure committees, where 50% of members were women. These were imparted with skills and knowledge on how to identify lawful and unlawful land evictions and the possible actions to take in the face of eviction.

Since then, committees have been very proactive in solving and preventing several land evictions including communities in Buleebi, where investors had bought land for sand mining, and at the Kiziru, Kasali and Kamwanyi landing sites, which had all been given to private investors. In 2019, the committees further supported residents of the Mbale fishing community, where local residents were evicted after government officials sold the forest reserve to an investor to plant commercial trees. After 14 consecutive days of meetings and demonstrations, a compromise was reached and a total of 10 acres was spared for fisher people to reside and work.

AUTHOR: Margaret Nakato (KWDT, Uganda)

THE STATUTE OF THE *BASERRITARRAN*²⁶ WOMAN IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY

In 2015, the Basque Country approved the Statute of the Baserritarran Woman (Basque peasant women). Borne from women's struggles (members of local peasant organizations), the statute was a collective achievement. Of course, there is still a lot of ground to cover, lest it be no more than a declaration of good intentions, but nevertheless the statute includes positive provisions on small-scale production.

One particular challenge was how to define the Baserritarran woman. In its first iteration, the definition used for men – which states that 50% of income must come from agricultural activities – was automatically applied to women. This was problematic because, in the Basque Country, processing and commercializing agricultural produce were not 'legally' considered agricultural activities. Processing was considered an industrial activity, while short-term commercialization was not even taken into account. In many cases, due to the sexual division of labor in family-based productive enterprises, many women were excluded from the statute under the existing definition, precisely because they were the ones in charge of such tasks. In light of this problem of meaning, women fought and finally agricultural labor was redefined so as to include processing and commercialization. This was a positive step forward not only for peasant women, but for small-scale food production overall.

AUTHOR: Isa Alvarez (URGENCI, Spain)

²⁶ *Baserritarra* is the name given to peasants in the Basque Country. The term is usually not translated because it has a very special meaning; it includes productive work but also the home environment.



PARTICIPATORY FIELD-BASED RESEARCH IN SURAT THANI IN THAILAND

In Thailand, women actively participate in fisheries. For instance they distribute and market fish, and prepare meals. Yet their roles and activities remain invisible in policies and laws relevant to small-scale fisheries. To address this gap, in 2019 the Sustainable Development Foundation launched a process titled ‘Strengthening Evidence-Based Advocacy for Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Justice in Small Scale Fisheries’ in close coordination with the Association of the Federation of Fisher Folk of Thailand, Forest and Sea for Life Foundation and the Rak Ow Ban Don Fisherfolk Association. The initiative focused on assessing the impacts of the government’s promotion of aquaculture (in the context of the blue economy) on the livelihoods of local, mostly small-scale, fishers.

First, the groundwork was laid for a collective agenda and research plan with the local fishers’ movement. The first case study was Phum Riang (Sub-District of Chaiya District) in Surat Thani Province, an area that is home to a traditional coastal fishing community, which has been negatively affected by mariculture. The second case study was Kadae Sub-District, a traditional fishing community in the coastal area of Kanchanadit District involved in mariculture since 1979. Second, researchers headed to the field and actively engaged with over 50% of community members. This interaction was key, as it allowed them to raise visibility on the issues affecting small-scale fisheries, and it led to discussions among participants on common demands. One of the most important outcomes from applying the Participatory Research Tool was the overall change in consciousness.

During the initial part of the process, participants shared their perceptions on the negative impacts that aquaculture projects were having on their lives and fishing activities. Women, for example, discussed how their access to food was obstructed by the installation of aquaculture cages in over 65% of the coast, in areas where small-scale fishers used to fish.

After collecting the data, the researchers came together to share and discuss the findings with the participants. One alarming issue that came up was access of small-scale fishers to the coast. The group decided to tackle this issue by taking several steps: First, to share with media outlets some of the problems the group had confronted; and second, to file a claim with the Provincial Security Committee and the Fishery Committee Members. This action, they hoped, would lead to coastal territories being restored to those communities who have been fishing since they first settled there almost a century ago. In early 2020, the Provincial Committee finally issued an order to have the aquaculture cages removed. However, due to lack of compliance from project investors, small-scale fishers are still following up on the case.

AUTHORS: Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk and Treeyada Treemanka (Sustainable Development Foundation, Thailand)

PRESERVING AND REVITALIZING NATIVE SEEDS AND INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY IN MEXICO

In the diverse cosmovisions of Mexico's indigenous peoples, maize is considered the spirit that provides the foundation for material and spiritual nourishment, without which peoples' biocultural reproduction would not be possible. Indigenous people link adversities in food production – such as low agricultural productivity and/or loss of crops – to a disturbed maize spirit, as well as to biological and climate change issues. Revitalization ceremonies and ritual activities that can bring back the spirits in maize, earth, water, air, and fire are therefore just as important as conducting soil analysis.

In 2010, in the region known as Huasteca Potosina in the municipalities of Xilitla (Nahua peoples) and Tancahuitz (Teenek peoples), different communities came together to reflect on genetically modified maize. Within these spaces, people discussed the risks posed by the introduction of genetically modified (GMO) varieties to the conservation and reproduction of native seeds (maize, beans, squash and chilies), which together make up the local crop-growing system known as 'milpa'. Women adopted a leading role in the process of consciousness-building on the importance of defending and preserving native seeds, as well as the knowledges necessary for their conservation. Women realized that public policies facilitating the introduction of genetically modified seeds put their food sovereignty at risk, both in their communities and among the Huasteca Potosina indigenous peoples.

Since 2010, and to this day, maize festivals are celebrated during the first days of November. During these festivities, indigenous peoples express their gratitude for the harvest to the maize spirit through dances, rituals, and food offerings (maize-based foodstuffs). These festivities are also devoted to the revitalization of different ways of knowing through the exchange of native seeds between peasants, and by sharing offerings and self-consumption of handicrafts, fruits, and traditional medicines. These festivities are spaces for political awareness-raising, as people share information on GMO seeds and public policies that intend to make peasant-indigenous production in the region 'profitable'.

This strategy has borne fruit: the communities of Xilitla and Tancahuitz have rejected GMO seeds and now demand public programs to respect the cultural and productive rights of women, men, and 'men of maize'.

AUTHOR: Norma Don Juan Pérez (*Coordinadora Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas de México, CONAMI-Mexico*)





5 SAVORING THE COMMON COOKING POT

OBJECTIVE

Agree on short-term and/or long-term collective activities on the right to food and nutrition.

METHODOLOGY: BUILDING AN ACTION PLAN

After cooks have shared their lived experiences (SHARING OUR RECIPES) and discussed the tools and actions they wish to carry out (TASTING THE FLAVOURS), cooks design an effective political action plan on the right to food and nutrition.

STEP 0: Cooks do an energizer. For example, a cook begins with a mechanical noise and motion, repeated in machine-like fashion. Other cooks connect themselves when they see a place in the machine where they would like to fit in.

STEP 1: Someone from the group provides a short summary of the previous outcomes.

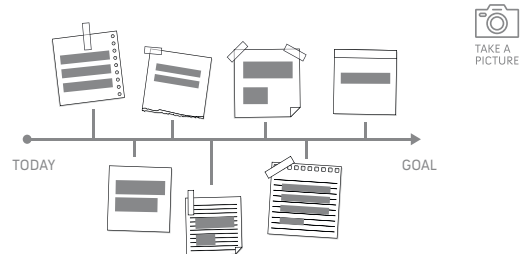
STEP 2: A timeline is drawn in front of all cooks.

STEP 3: The facilitation group presents the actions and tools identified by cooks in each of the tables in TASTING THE FLAVOURS.

STEP 4: The discussion is opened up for all cooks to decide which of those actions are to be included in the timeline. Facilitators can guide the discussion on each action and the overall action plan by raising a series of guiding questions. Take a look at the next page for some examples!

STEP 5: Whenever an action is agreed by the group, a card is placed in the timeline highlighting:

- » the expected date to carry out the action; and
- » the main responsible person or organization coordinating the action.



STEP 6: After the timeline is completed and the action plan ratified by all cooks, the entire group evaluates the achieved outcomes of the overall meeting.

STEP 7: Don't forget to wrap up with a closing up activity!

*"No fly dares approach a boiling pot".
~ Spanish saying*

The power of collective action is behind the strength of the many struggles that people are waging across the planet to oppose the dominant food production system and build alternatives to it. If we are going to embark on this journey together, how can we organize our tools and actions (identified in TASTING THE FLAVOURS) in order to ensure that we are successful? Which strengths and weaknesses do we have as a group? How do we insert our plan into a long-term struggle for the right to food and nutrition?

“Only the pot knows the temperature of the boiling water”

The following are only some suggestions to get discussions going. Cooks and facilitators can bring up better questions based on their specific contexts and lived experiences.

CHOOSING OUR BATTLEFIELD:

At which level are we targeting each organized action? National, subnational or international? After we choose the level we want to target, we can take some time to discuss just how the different actors we want to address interact. For example, if you want to target the Ministry of Women, a relevant question is: How does the Ministry of Women work together with other institutions that are involved, to foster oppression, discrimination and violations of our right to food and nutrition?

ORGANIZING:

Once we have an idea of how our targets described above work, we can ask ourselves: how do we organize to be able to challenge oppression, discrimination and human rights violations? Try discussing the following when addressing this question:

OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- » How can we fund the activities we want to carry out?
- » How are we able to keep our message alive in the public?
- » How are we able to maintain political presence?
- » How well can we reach those we want to target?

RISK ASSESSMENT

Our actions might increase individual and collective risk of harm. The following questions can guide us through a preliminary assessment:

- » Which are the main interests and strategies of the relevant actors we are targeting?
- » What can be the impact of our action on those interests and strategies?
- » Can we expect threats or an increase of risk against our group?
- » Which are our vulnerabilities and capacities to react to such threats?

INSERT OUR ACTION PLAN INTO A LONG-TERM PROCESS

As you develop your action plan:
what is your road map towards the future?

"When we were in Big Mountain supporting the Diné elders in their struggle against the forced relocation, the grandmothers told: for us, providing food is the most important, providing food is the most powerful thing we can do. We own the sheep and for us, cooking and sharing means 'closing that circle'. There is no place more powerful than this in a community."

~ Andrea Carmen (Native American), Executive Director of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC)

FOLLOWING STEPS:

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE USING THIS GUIDE

Ways of sharing your experience and joining the debates:

1. Use the hashtag **#CookUpPolitics** on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and follow the discussion;
2. Share a video telling us about your experience using the hashtag;
3. Or share a photo and write a few lines about your story.

If accessing social media is not possible, don't worry! You can always send us your video or story at:
womensrights@righttofoodandnutrition.org

We will post it on your behalf!

PROTECTION AND SECURITY

Safety comes first, sharing your story should meet the purpose of supporting your struggle. We will make sure to refrain from sharing any information you feel would be putting yourself and/or your community at risk.



II. OTHER INGREDIENTS OR UTENSILS

LEGAL SOURCES FOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS:

- » [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(1966\)](#), Articles 11.1 and 11.2. (ICESCR)
- » [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(1979\)](#), Article 11. (CEDAW)
- » [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(2007\)](#). (UNDRIP)
- » [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas \(2018\)](#). (UNDROP)
- » [Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(1988\)](#). (Protocol of San Salvador)
- » [General Comment No.3 \(1990\) on the nature of States parties' obligations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#). (CESCR GC3)
- » [General Recommendation No. 16 \(1991\) on unpaid women workers in rural and urban family enterprises of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#). (CEDAW GR16)
- » [General Comment No. 12 \(1999\) on the right to adequate food of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#). (CESCR GC12)
- » [General Recommendation No. 34 \(2016\) on the rights of rural women of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#). (CEDAW GR34)
- » [General Recommendation No.35 \(2017\) on gender-based violence against women of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#). (CEDAW GR35)
- » [FAO Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security](#). (2004)
- » ILO [Income Security Recommendation No.67](#). (1944)

COMPLEMENTARY GUIDES AND OTHER RELEVANT RESOURCES:

- » International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty. "People's Manual on the Guidelines on Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests" (2016). Available at: www.foodsovereignty.org/peoplesmanual/
- » ARROW "InterSEXionality: A Facilitator's Guide" (2019). Available at: arrow.org.my/publication/intersexionality-a-facilitators-guide/
- » Civil society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism (CSM) "Without Feminism there is no Agroecology" (2019) Available at: www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CSM-Agroecology-and-Feminism-September-2019_compressed.pdf
- » Front Line "Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders" (2005). Available at: www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/protection_manual_-_english.pdf
- » AWID "Feminist Realities our Power in Action: An Exploratory Toolkit" (2019). Available at: www.awid.org/resources/feminist-realities-our-power-action-exploratory-toolkit

'Cooking Up Political Agendas' - A Feminist Guide on the Right to Food and Nutrition for Women in Rural Areas

You can download this Guide at: www.fian.org/en/publication/article/cooking-up-political-agendas and <https://www.righttofoodandnutrition.org/cooking-political-agendas>

III. GLOSSARY

AGROECOLOGY is a way of producing food, a way of life, a science, and a movement for change. “The production practices of agroecology are based on ecological principles like building life in the soil, recycling nutrients, the dynamic management of biodiversity and energy conservation at all scales.”²⁷

CARE WORK consists of time and energy consuming activities performed to satisfy the physical and/or emotional needs of others. This type of labor is generally unpaid and performed by women and girls. It includes activities such as cooking, childcare, farm work, fetching water and firewood.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING are negotiations which aim at determining working conditions, terms of employment; regulating relations between employers and workers; and regulating relations between employers and workers’ organizations.²⁸

DECLARATION is a document under international law in which States declare certain aspirations without the intention of creating binding obligations. However, many of these aspirations are based on binding international legal principles and/or norms.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN is any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.²⁹

FOOD INSECURITY exists when people do not have adequate physical, social or economic access to food.³⁰

FOOD SYSTEMS “gather all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes”.³¹

27 Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology. Available at: www.foodsovereignty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Download-declaration-Agroecology-Nyeleni-2015.pdf.

28 International Labor Organization. *Collective Bargaining Convention*, 1981 (No. 154). Article 2.

29 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979). Article 1.

30 FAO. *Trade Reforms and Food Security: Conceptualizing the Linkages*. Rome: FAO, 2003. Chapter 2. Available at: www.fao.org/3/y4671e/y4671e06.htm.

31 HLPE. *Nutrition and Food Systems. A report by The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition*. Rome: FAO, 2017. Available at: www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-12_EN.pdf.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE is an approach or perspective that actively seeks to address and change rigid norms and imbalances of power that impair gender equality (e.g. by facilitating and supporting alternative agricultural programs that support women-led farms and women as farmers, and promote women’s traditional farming practices³²).

HARASSMENT is any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.³³

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS are dispositions that oblige States to respect, protect and fulfill human rights. These norms are enshrined in international customary law and in international treaties to which States themselves (also called ‘States parties’) have consented.

INTERSECTIONALITY is a framework that identifies how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalized in society. Discrimination can affect all aspects of social and political identities (gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, age, etc.) and these aspects overlap (or ‘intersect’). Applying an intersectional approach means assessing how multiple forms of oppression come together.

MALNUTRITION is any deficiency, excess, or imbalance in a person’s intake of energy and/or nutrients. Forms of malnutrition include: undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight), inadequate vitamins or minerals, overweight, obesity, and resulting diet-related noncommunicable diseases.³⁴

METHODOLOGY refers to the concepts and tools that we apply, in a systematic way, to produce knowledge about the world we live in or about an object of interest (e.g. holding weekly discussions with neighbors to talk about planting techniques that have been working well under changing weather patterns).

NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK is a complete body of relevant legal or non-legal norms, and indigenous peoples’ customary law.

32 CEDAW GR34. Para.91.

33 United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Harassment Policy including sexual harassment*. Available at: www.un.org/womenwatch/osag/new/fpsexualharassment.htm.

34 World Health Organization. *Malnutrition*. Geneva: WHO, 2020. Available at: www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/malnutrition.

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PEASANT ECONOMIES refers to small-scale food producers' institutions (including fisheries, livestock, and pastoralism), their ways of distributing labor and using natural resources, as well as spaces of production. A typical element of peasant economy is the peasant household or family farm.³⁵

PRIVILEGE is a special advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group.³⁶

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS are composed of a representative number of people that self-identify with particular causes and joint struggles that encapsulate interlocked interests, because of this the expressive registers of social movements tend to be heterogeneous.

SOCIO-POLITICAL POWER HIERARCHIES are unequal, usually rigid social arrangements wherein individuals with greater control over resources (economic, social, political) decide over the lives of individuals with less access to resources.

SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS are national sets of basic social security guarantees that secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.³⁷

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36 Oxford Dictionary

37 International Labor Organization. *Social Protection Floors Recommendation* (No. 202). Geneva: ILO, 2012.

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GLOBAL NETWORK FOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION



African Centre for Biodiversity
(Centro Africano para la Biodiversidad, ACB)
Sudáfrica



Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)
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Association paysanne pour le développement
(Peasant Association for Development, A.PA.DE)
Togo



Association pour la protection de la nature au Sahel
(Association for the Protection of Nature, APN Sahel)
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Biowatch South Africa
South Africa



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(Malian Convergence against Land Grabbing, CMAT)
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Brazil



Habitat International Coalition-Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN)
Egypt



HEKS/EPER (Swiss Church Aid)
Switzerland



Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN)
United Kingdom



Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO Cooperation)
The Netherlands



International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)
Switzerland



International Indian Treaty Council (IITC)
USA



International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (IUF)
Switzerland



Justicia Alimentaria (Food Justice)
Spain



KATARUNGAN - Movement for Agrarian Reform and Social Justice
Philippines



KHANI
Bangladesh

Maleya

Maleya Foundation
Bangladesh



Observatori DESC
(*Observatory of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*)
Spain



People's Health Movement (PHM)
South Africa



Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (Inter-American Platform for Human Rights, Democracy and Development, PIDHDD)
Ecuador

POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti
(*Anti-POSCO People's Movement, PPSS*)
India

**REDSAN
CPLP**

Rede da Sociedade Civil para a Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional na Comunidade de Países da Língua Portuguesa (Regional Civil Society Network for Food and Nutrition Security in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, REDSAN-CPLP)
Portugal



Réseau africain pour le droit à l'alimentation (African Network on the Right to Food, RAPDA)
Benin



Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (West African Network of Peasant Organizations and Agricultural Producers, ROPPA)
Burkina Faso



Right to Food Campaign
India



Right to Food Network – Malawi
Malawi



Society for International Development (SID)
Italy



Solidaritas Perempuan (SP)
Indonesia



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Malaysia



World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP)
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