

Initial module of the training on food sovereignty

Purpose: to facilitate the understanding of the **complexity of food systems** and the concept of **food sovereignty**.

Estimated duration: 25–30 minutes

1. Introduction to the training session

The training session will start with a **brief round of introductions**. Each participant will introduce themselves with their name, area of study or work, and a **personal habit or preference linked to food**.

The trainer will then present the **objectives of the session**:

- to **deconstruct preconceived notions** about food systems
 - to understand how everyday products are connected to **global networks and power dynamics**.
Participants will be informed that the session will include **interactive discussions** and **collective reflection exercises**.
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2. Practical exercise – the journey of a coffee cup

The trainer will **show a moka pot (coffee maker)** in front of the participants, emphasizing the **simplicity of the act** and inviting the group to observe every element involved.

This **sensory experience** will allow participants to smell, see, and hear the process of making coffee.

The trainer will guide participants in identifying all the elements involved:

- **coffee beans,**
- **water,**
- **cup,**
- **spoon,**
- **moka pot,**
- **energy used,**
- and **any additives** like sugar or milk.

Each element will be analyzed by asking:

- **Where does it come from?**
- **Who produced it?**

- **How was it transported?**
- **Who earns from it?**
- **Who decides its price and availability?**

Participants will reflect on the **multitude of people, territories, and processes** hidden behind a **single cup of coffee**.

3. Complementary examples – the case of cheese and macarons

After the coffee analysis, the trainer will guide participants through **two additional examples: cheese and macarons**.

These products, often perceived as **local and emblematic of French culture**, are in fact embedded in **globalized supply chains**.

- For **cheese**, the discussion will explore:
 - **imported feed** for dairy cows
 - **industrial inputs**
 - **refrigeration and logistics**
- For **macarons**, the focus will be on:
 - **almond flour from California**
 - **tropical sugar**
 - **industrial egg production**
 - **synthetic colorings**
 - **high energy consumption**

These examples show how “**local identity foods**” are shaped by **international flows, policy choices**, and **unequal access to resources**.

4. Transition to the notion of food sovereignty

Following the collective reflection on the coffee cup, cheese, and macarons, the trainer will introduce the concept of **food sovereignty**, defined as:

*the **right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture systems,**
prioritize **local and sustainable production,**
and have access to **healthy and culturally appropriate food** produced through **ecologically sound methods.***

The discussion will highlight how current food systems are shaped by:

- **international markets**
 - **corporate interests**
 - **policy decisions**
which often disempower **local producers and consumers**.
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5. Conclusions and key takeaways

The session will conclude with a synthesis of the key messages:

- **food systems are complex and interconnected**
- **food sovereignty aims to re-balance power** in favor of producers and consumers
- **understanding these dynamics is a first step** toward more just and sustainable systems.

Participants will be invited to share:

- **what surprised them most**
- how they perceive the **relevance of food sovereignty** in their personal or professional lives.

Module 1 bis – sovereignty vs sovereignism: reclaiming a progressive concept

Purpose: to clarify the difference between the emancipatory idea of food sovereignty and the reactionary distortion promoted by right-wing nationalist parties in Europe.

Estimated duration: 45 minutes

1. conceptual clarification: food sovereignty ≠ sovereignism (10 min)

The trainer starts by writing two words on the board:

- **Food sovereignty**
- **Sovereignism / nationalist discourse**

Participants are invited to associate words or images to each. The trainer then clarifies:

- **Food sovereignty** originates from **peasant and indigenous movements**, aiming at **redistribution of power, democratisation of food systems, recognition of peasants' rights**, and **ecological resilience**.
 - **Sovereignism**, as used by right-wing nationalist parties, invokes **protectionism, national borders, identity-based exclusion**, and a **rejection of international cooperation**, often **without questioning corporate power or inequality**.
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2. political appropriation in Europe: a dangerous shift (15 min)

Focus on two concrete cases:

- **Italy:** In 2022, the new right-wing government renamed the Ministry of Agriculture as the **Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty**. This rebranding was not accompanied by any **redistributive, ecological or peasant-oriented policy**. Instead, it served to reinforce nationalist rhetoric and protect industrial agri-food interests, while continuing to support extractive models.
- **France:** Similarly, “souveraineté alimentaire” has become a slogan in presidential debates, used by right-wing parties like **Rassemblement National**, often to promote **anti-import, anti-migrant, and anti-globalist discourses**, without real support for local farmers or agroecological transitions.

The trainer highlights the **paradox**: movements that created the concept of food sovereignty are now marginalised, while their vocabulary is exploited by forces that oppose their values.

3. a progressive concept abandoned by the left (10 min)

Reflection on how **left-wing parties and progressive governments**, particularly in Europe:

- have **failed to defend and articulate food sovereignty**,
- have often **reduced food policy to health or climate concerns**, avoiding its **structural political dimension**,
- and have **left the discursive space open to the far right**.

This strategic **withdrawal or silence** has led to a distorted public understanding, damaging both **agroecological movements** and **democratic food reforms**.

4. discussion and critical reflection (10 min)

Questions for group discussion:

- Why has the left been reluctant to embrace food sovereignty as a political banner?
- What are the risks of leaving transformative concepts to nationalist appropriation?
- How can we **reclaim food sovereignty as a tool for justice**, inclusion and ecological transition?

Students are invited to identify **political, academic or activist spaces** where the original meaning of food sovereignty is still defended, and to propose **ways of re-legitimising** the concept.

Key message

Food sovereignty is anti-neoliberal, not nationalist. It belongs to **grassroots movements**, not to **governments that defend industrial agribusiness under nationalist flags**. Its distortion by the far right reveals a **strategic failure of the global left**, which must be recognised and reversed if we are to reclaim the future of food systems.

Module 1 ter – movements for food sovereignty: from formal alliances to diffuse ecosystems

Purpose: to present the structured and informal actors that constitute the food sovereignty movement in Europe and globally, and to understand how they interact, resist, and build alternatives in the face of dominant food systems.

Estimated duration: 1 hour

1. structured actors: ECVC and La Via Campesina (15 min)

The trainer introduces the organisational structure of the movement:

- **La Via Campesina (LVC)**, founded in 1993, is the global reference for food sovereignty. It gathers more than 180 peasant organisations in over 80 countries and was the first to use the term *food sovereignty* as a political claim.
- **European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)** is the European pillar of LVC. It gathers 27 member organisations in 18 countries, including peasant unions, landless workers, dairy producers, and agroecology practitioners.

Key messages:

- These organisations **produce collective positions** (e.g., on CAP, WTO, GMOs, land rights)
 - They practice **horizontal governance, territorial anchoring, and international solidarity**
 - They link everyday struggles (land access, market justice, seed rights) with **global frameworks** (UNDROP, FAO, UN climate talks)
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2. the broader ecosystem: beyond formal membership (15 min)

The trainer expands the focus beyond ECVC members to highlight the **broader ecosystem** of actors supporting food sovereignty in Europe.

These include:

- **Vulnerable or marginalised farmers** who are **not organised** in unions but preserve biodiversity through seed saving, rotational practices, and local markets.
- **Independent seed producers and informal seed networks**, resisting industrial regulation and patent systems.
- **Post-1968 anarchist and rural autonomist movements**, defending anti-capitalist, communitarian food practices.

- **Youth-led environmental movements** (e.g., Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, Last Generation) that connect food sovereignty with climate justice.
- **National green parties and some MEPs**, occasionally aligned with food sovereignty demands in the EU Parliament.
- **Activists and micro-lobbies** who have little formal influence but create **critical mass**, educational content, social media mobilisation, or informal political pressure.

This constellation forms a **fluid, hybrid landscape** where formal and informal actors intersect.

3. coexistence, contradictions and tensions (10 min)

The trainer facilitates a discussion on the **complexities** of this ecosystem:

- While some actors aim to **influence policy**, others work in **disobedience or rupture**
- Some operate through **institutional channels** (e.g., lobbying, expert reports), others through **direct action** or **prefigurative models**
- Tensions may emerge between **professionalised NGOs, grassroots activists**, and **radical collectives**, but they often **coexist and reinforce** each other indirectly

The idea of **converging struggles** becomes central: food sovereignty acts as a **common ground** between very diverse actors.

4. group work: mapping the ecosystem (15 min)

Participants are divided into small groups. Each group is tasked with drawing a **map of actors** in the food sovereignty movement at European or national level, distinguishing:

- formal organisations
- informal or emerging groups
- institutions, allies, and adversaries
- individuals or communities often invisible but essential (seed keepers, migrant workers, micro-farmers)

They present their maps briefly, with emphasis on **who works from within** and **who pushes from outside**.

Key message

Food sovereignty is not owned by a single structure. It is a **living political ecosystem**, composed of unions, collectives, seed savers, youth movements, agroecologists, feminists, anarchists and precarious farmers.

It survives because of the **interdependence between formal advocacy and invisible resistance**, between international declarations and local, often fragile, practices.

Region / Country	Organization / Movement	Type / Focus	How 3A Students Can Contribute
Europe – EU-wide	European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	Formal coordination (27 orgs)	Study CAP reforms, seed rights, land justice. Internships or policy simulations.
Europe – Spain	Xarxa de Consum Solidari (BCN)	Consumer-producer solidarity network	Field visits; co-design local food initiatives; survey consumer patterns.
Europe – Germany	Food Policy Councils (e.g. Berlin)	City-level governance tables	Case studies; comparative civic participation analysis.
Europe – Italy	Slow Food & Terra Madre	Biodiversity & food communities network	Organize local Presidia events; document small food systems.
Europe – Romania	Eco Ruralis	Grassroots agroecology network	Case studies on land rights; contribute to seed fairs.
Africa – West Africa	ROPPA	Regional farmers' platform	Analyze advocacy; support local policy briefs.
Africa – Sub-Saharan	AFSA (Africa Food Sovereignty Alliance)	Policy & advocacy on agroecology	Support continental mapping; policy analysis.
Africa – Ghana	CEAL partners via Groundswell Intl	Eco-farming & livelihood support	Fieldwork; help document climate-smart practices.
Africa – Kenya	Vision Bearerz	Urban agroecology & youth activism	Create digital storytelling projects; support youth engagement.
Africa – Zimbabwe	Muonde Trust	Indigenous seed systems & land care	Seed-saving research; local-narrative documentation.
Americas – Brazil	MST (Landless Workers' Movement)	Land reform & agroecological settlements	Research agrarian transition; media and academic support.
Americas – USA	US Food Sovereignty Alliance	Food justice/network activism	Community-based projects; analytical reports.

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Americas – USA	Indigenous Food Sovereignty Alliance	Indigenous-led food justice	Co-develop cultural curricula; policy research support.
Asia – India	Navdanya (Vandana Shiva)	Seed sovereignty & organic farming	Participate in seedbank training; document biopiracy cases (Agroecology Fund , viacampesina.org , Wikipedia , Wikipedia , Wikipedia , Groundswell International , Wikipedia , WhyHunger , Groundswell International , Food Tank)
Asia – India	Deccan Development Society	Women's agroecology & grain banks	Field studies on millet systems; gender-agriculture analysis (Wikipedia)
Asia – India	Swaraj Abhiyan – Jai Kisan Andolan	Farmers' rights & policy mobilization	Analyze public interest litigation; interview movement leaders (Wikipedia)
Asia – Kerala, India	Heal Ponnurunni (NGO)	Urban agroforestry & waste-to-compost	Student-led case study on urban sustainability (The Times of India)
Global	IPC / Nyéléni process	International food sovereignty platform	Support event coordination; comparative network analysis (foodsovereignty.org)
Global / Informal	Seed-saver networks / feminist, anarchist, youth climate collectives	Ecosystemic actors in food sovereignty	Field documentation; co-create activist workshops and media.
Oceania – Australia	Aboriginal Carbon Foundation	Indigenous carbon farming	Study indigenous-led land restoration; field observation programs (Food Tank)

Region / Country	Organization / Movement	Type / Focus	How 3A Students Can Contribute
North America – Canada	Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty	Indigenous seed & food systems policy	Document policy proposals; participate in Indigenous food forums (Agroecology Fund)

Name / Institution	Type / Location	Focus & Contributions	How 3A Students Can Engage
Dr. Vandana Shiva	Founder, Navdanya (India); professor & activist	Pioneer of seed & food sovereignty, ecofeminism, legal challenges to GMOs (Wikipedia , navdanya.org)	Study her writings; participate in Navdanya's seed banks; collaborate on agroecology case studies
Navdanya / Bija Vidyapeeth	NGO & agroecology school (India)	Training centre on seed saving, IP rights, organic farming (navdanyainternational.org)	Apply for internships; co-design multilingual learning modules; visit biodiversity farms
University of Calabria (DISPeS)	Italy – Dept. Political & Social Science	Comparative qualitative research on peasants, food sovereignty in Ecuador/Italy (iss.nl)	Conduct internships; assist in data collection and fieldwork in Calabria Ecuador
Leibniz Institute IAMO	Germany – Halle	Agricultural economics, rural transition, policy analysis (Wikipedia)	Propose joint research on small-scale farming, CAP impacts, actor interviews
AfricaRice & CIAT	CGIAR Centres (Africa, Latin America)	Biodiversity, food systems, climate resilience (Wikipedia , Wikipedia)	Support agroecology programmes; design local cereals projects; field research
IPLI/UNDROP & FAO/PLAAS researchers	Global and South Africa	Legal frameworks on peasants' rights and food sovereignty (Thesis Unipd , ResearchGate)	Support policy analysis; participate in legal clinics; comparative case studies

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Philip McMichael (Cornell)	Cornell University, USA	Food regime theory and food sovereignty as counter-hegemonic project (practicalactionpublishing.com)	Engage in conceptual research; support literature reviews; co-author seminar papers
Frank & Giunta (University of Calabria)	Italy-Ecuador comparative research	Food sovereignty, peasant organisations in Latin America and Europe (iss.nl)	Assist comparative research; write academic entries or reports
Dr. Chris Bacon & ICBA researchers	Santa Clara University; Dubai	Agroecology, climate-smart agriculture with equity focus (scu.edu , Wikipedia)	Collaborate on community-based case studies; contribute to field data collection
Global Land Governance networks	Talloires Network / OSUN	Community-university partnerships in agroecology (talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu)	Join as student researchers; develop field-based participatory projects
International PLuralist bodies – FAO, WFP, IFAD	Intergovernmental agencies	Integration of food sovereignty elements in global food policies (Thesis Unipd)	Draft policy briefs; conduct desk reviews; act as mini consultants in field missions

Category	Actor / Institution	Region	Role in Food Sovereignty	Opportunities for 3A Students
Activist & Thinkers	Vandana Shiva /	India / Global South	Activism, seed sovereignty	Study Navdan ya's

Name / Institution	Type / Location	Focus & Contributions	How 3A Students Can Engage	
Academic Institutions	Navdanya		y, ecofeminism	work, collaborate on seed diversity projects
	University of Calabria (DISPeS)	Italy	Peasant movements, comparative research, diagnostics	Participate in diagnostics, case study co-research
	Cornell University (Philip McMichael)	USA	Food regime theory, agro-political economy	Conceptual analysis, write academic papers
Research Institutes	Leibniz IAMO	Germany	Agricultural transition, rural economy, policy	Quantitative tools, indicators, field visits
International Research Centers	Africa Rice / CIAT (CGIAR)	Africa / LatAm	Agroecology, biodiversity, sustainability	Intern in agroecology, contribute to

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			e intensification	biodiversity studies
Legal Research & Advocacy	IPLI / UNDR OP / PLAAS (South Africa)	Global South / Africa	Legal empowerment, peasants' rights, UNDROP advocacy	Legal research, assist rights-based field actions
Universities & Scholars	Santa Clara University (Chris Bacon)	USA	Agroecology, climate resilience, equity focus	Join climate-food nexus projects, support workshops
Universities & Scholars	University of Calabria (Frank & Giunta)	Italy / Ecuador	Comparative fieldwork and grassroots peasant analysis	Conduct interviews, co-write with researchers
Research & Climate-Agriculture	ICBA – International Center for Biosaline	MENA / Global	Climate-adapted agriculture, biosaline practices	Work on climate and water innovation projects

Name / Institution	Type / Location	Focus & Contributions	How 3A Students Can Engage
Networks & Alliances	Agriculture		
	ECVC / Via Campesina / OSUN / Talloires Network	Global	Networking, capacity-building, student engagement Develop networks, join events, co-organize activities
Intergovernmental Agencies			Food policy, program support, integration of sovereignty into global frameworks Participate in desk reviews, short consultancies, internships
	FAO / IFAD / WFP	Global	