

ILEIA, the Centre for Learning on Sustainable Agriculture



Introduction:

ILEIA is an active participant in the global movement for sustainable and socially just agriculture. For the past 28 years, ILEIA has built and shared knowledge on sustainable agriculture with small-scale farmers (men and women) and their organisations, with agricultural professionals (fieldworkers as well as teachers, trainers and researchers) and decision makers at local, national and global levels. Together with the AgriCultures Network, of which ILEIA runs the secretariat, we strive towards a greater recognition at local and global levels of the role that small-scale family farmers play in tackling major global challenges: climate change and hunger.

ILEIA was among the first to recognize the importance of blending “local” and “scientific” knowledge as a route to viable innovation in family farming. It gradually evolved as a bridge-building organisation, making connections between many different stakeholders in sustainable family farming. Together with local groups, researchers and extension workers, ILEIA succeeded in delving up and documenting thousands of inspiring experiences. ILEIA’s online database of validated experiences forms a unique treasure house of agro-ecological knowledge.

ILEIA’s key activities include the production of the *Farming Matters* magazine; capacity building for documentation and systematisation of sustainable agriculture approaches and practices; strengthening agricultural education; and policy dialogue and advocacy. Working together with our partners, ILEIA has made a significant contribution to the documentation, dissemination and upscaling of sustainable agriculture approaches around the world. It demonstrates that small-scale farming, based on ecological principles, forms part of a sustainable development pathway. The AgriCultures Network’s role in the documentation and upscaling of sustainable agricultural practices has been recognised by, among others, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter in his report on Agro-ecology and the Right to Food.

While ILEIA produces the global reaching magazine, the AgriCultures Network members produce a regional edition: (1) Asociacion ETC Andes in Peru (*LEISA Revista de Agroecologia*), (2) AME Foundation in India (*LEISA India*), (3) IED Afrique in Senegal (*Agridape*), (4) AS-PTA in Brazil (*Agriculturas*), (5) CBIK in China (*LEISA China*), and (6) ALIN in Kenya (*Baobab*). These regional editions appear in Spanish, Portuguese, French, English and Mandarin. In India there are also sub-regional local language editions in Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Oriya and Bengali. All editions together reach a readership of over 500,000. Over the years, the magazines have become a respected forum for knowledge sharing among all those searching for sustainable solutions in agriculture, in a non-dogmatic and inclusive manner, bridging between “scientific” and “local”, “alternative” and “mainstream” approaches.

Many of our readers expressed a need for teaching and training tools and materials on small-scale family farming and agro-ecology. During the past few years, ILEIA developed the teaching resource *Learning AgriCultures*, an educational series consisting of seven teaching modules on family farming, based on agro-ecological principles. It uses a pedagogical systems-thinking approach, with linked examples from practical experiences in the field. The target groups are educators who seek inspiration or support in conveying concepts of sustainability to agricultural students, researchers and field workers attending higher institutions such as universities and colleges.

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ILEA and SCAN:

What is the value of ILEIA and what would ILEIA bring to SCAN (added value)?

ILEIA has made a systematization of their long standing experience resulting in the teaching resource *Learning AgriCultures*, an educational series consisting of seven teaching modules on family farming, based on agro-ecological principles (on English). These modules will be available for the SCAN platforms to review, use and validate regarding specific reality.

ILEA is very interested supporting the resource documentation center, and are more than willing to support thinking about the subject of a "Field-level" resource center.

ILEA has a longstanding expertise on systematizing experiences, has experience with "good writing and analyzing" and could make a real added-value on the Review committee.

SCAN results and experiences can be published and divulged through the ILEA network of magazines. *Farming Matters* and *LEISA* could be used to exchange experiences on agro-ecology, on developed training materials, SCAN experiences and lessons learned (case studies) on certain subjects.

ILEA has a worldwide network of readers and a lot of people can be reached with the published articles. But the other way round, ILEA will also get more promotion and publicity of their magazines through the SCAN network.

ILEIA also provides training on writing, editing and the concept of information transfer, this could be interesting to support the training materials development processes.