

# A SEED Policy plan 2024-2027

## Introduction

Industrial agriculture continues to wreak havoc on soil, air, and communities around the world. This ever-growing industry already contributes to one third of global greenhouse gas emissions. It funnels the power to control the production and distribution of food into a few corporate hands, especially disadvantaging vulnerable populations in the Global South. The importance of food and agriculture has been reinforced in the last years as COVID, climate crises, and various wars have shown our dependency and weakness towards an unsustainable, destructive current food system. Through A SEED's Fossil Free Agriculture campaign, we have identified fossil fertilisers as a crucial point of attack to shift away from the current fossil-fuel intensive food system. Fossil fertilisers are largely unknown to the public and are entirely based on fossil gas for production.

Fossil fertilisers are a key component of the industrial agricultural model that contributes to 20% of emissions in this sector, are entirely dependent on fossil gas for production, deplete the soil, hinder carbon sequestration, harm local biodiversity, and trap farmers into dependence on continuous chemical input. As farmers protest and nitrogen crisis around Europe become increasingly important topics, it highlights the need for bringing awareness and change to our food production. Change is also needed to shape better systems, where consumer and producers are no longer alienated.

Fortunately, the solutions already exist: Food sovereignty, agroecology and peasant agriculture systems prioritise biodiversity and soil health, use less water, sequester carbon, and support small scale farmers. These systems are already responsible for producing most food we consume globally, while using fewer resources than industrial agriculture. Unfortunately, residents in Amsterdam and the Netherlands lack access to and knowledge of alternative food systems that either already exist in their vicinity or they could initiate together in their communities.

A newer focus in the campaign has been to show the linkage of agribusinesses with fossil fuels, gas and land-grabbing. Thus, we have managed to connect to the anti-gas and climate justice movement by bringing in the topic of food and agriculture. We believe that a well-connected, resilient movement with strong narratives that places farmers' concrete solutions at the forefront can lead to powerful social change. A SEED has been doing unique work in the last years to connect food justice movements, farmers, the wider climate movement, and energy justice movements around the topic of fossil fertilisers. Despite lack of resources and precarious employment, we have played a central role in bringing the fossil fertilisers issue to social movements in Europe and taking action to challenge the industry's social license. In the next four years, we are planning on strengthening these newly formed connections and together challenge socially and environmentally destructive agribusinesses under the frame of the Fossil Free Agriculture campaign.

## **Fight agribusinesses**

We believe that we need to put as much pressure as possible on the agrochemical corporations that produce the fossil fertilisers to bring public attention to their inherent dangers and injustices. Our campaign is, therefore, focused on bringing awareness to farmers, general public, activists and politicians to the toxic business of fossil fertiliser producers and their connection to climate change and farmers' dependency. With revealing the green-washing strategies and ties and influence with destructive businesses, A SEED attempts to continue in the next four years this work by following up with more information on the fossil fertiliser business and identify the malfunction of the current food system. By connecting to the energy justice, anti-gas and agroecology network, we make the topic of fossil fertilisers an interdisciplinary topic of concern with multiple layers that need to be fought collectively in the upcoming years.

## **Strengthening the movement - Food Autonomy Festival**

The main A SEED event of the year, the Food Autonomy Festival (FAF), embodies the dual focus of our campaign. The 8th edition of the festival took place in 2024, and over time it has transformed into a dedicated grassroots gathering, where we share, connect, and celebrate alternatives and resistances to the corporate-controlled industrial food system. Being a site of resistance, solidarity, and autonomy, we use this gathering to bridge the gap between the agroecology, climate justice and anti-gas movements. Through open discussions, workshops, hands-on farming activities and cultural events, we aim to find common ground where movements converge. The FAF began in Amsterdam, but has also been organised de-centrally in multiple cities in past years.

In comparison to previous years, the FAF#8 was more focused on the main topics of the FFA campaign, building strong connections between agroecological farmers and the anti-gas movement. The FAF served as a weekend-long event to strategise, share knowledge, and build trust among different actors in both fields, as well as the general public. Participants engaged actively with the topics of resisting a fossil-fueled and oppressive food system, finding strategies to build and connect movements, and exploring regenerative activism and agroecology in practice.

The main themes of the FAF #8 were Fighting Agrochemicals and Corporate Control, Social Justice in food Systems, and food Autonomy in Practice.

By organizing workshops, reading groups, collaboration talks/panels with other organisations through out the year, the FAF is a connecting point for our work. We are planning to continuously use the festival as a point of reflection and growth in coming years. Additionally, we wish to scale up the FAF by collaborating with other groups in the organising process. This can increase our capacity and reach, while allowing us to "bubble hop" and break out of our usual activist circles.

## **Fundraising**

The sources of income of the organisation in the next three year will be donations from sympathisers, contributions from network partners, project grants from the the European Union (European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+ programmes), grants from foundations and other charitable entities (such as Charities Aid Foundation America/Patagonia, Lush Charity Pot and Alert Fonds), and funds raised during the activities of the organisation (contribution from participants). A SEED will apply for European Solidarity Corps funding each year. Together with a partner organisation from Spain, we will apply for Erasmus+ funding in the field of KA122-ADU Short-term projects for mobility of learners and staff in adult education, to finance a trainings project. We will consider submitting one more Erasmus+ application provided that our partners have capacity for it. In addition to that, we have identified several foundations and ethical companies to which we plan to apply for funding (such as Stichting Women Engage for a Common Future). Finally, we aim to reach out to former A SEED members in order to find more regular donors.

In 2024 and 2025 A SEED will employ a fundraising coordinator (0.2 FTE).

## **Financial management**

A SEED Europe has limited equity to pay for big projects. This money is in a current account and a savings account. The organization has no large reserves that have been set aside or invested.

A SEED employs a financial administrator. A SEED uses an external agency for the payroll administration. The project coordinator is responsible for monitoring project expenditure, supported by the financial officer. Annual budgets are assessed during the staff-board meetings.

## **Expenditure of financial resources**

All funds raised and savings will be fully used to keep the organization running and to pay for important projects and activities that are in line with the organisation's mission. This mainly concerns wage costs, office and administration costs, expense reimbursements, printing costs for publications and flyers and the other material costs of the projects. As mentioned above, A SEED Europe does not have large equity capital.

More specifically, the project subsidies from the European Union that we receive are spent on the activities and objectives as agreed in the partnership agreements. Other subsidies from fundraising are mostly spent on the relevant projects for which the subsidies were allocated or the FFA campaign, including personnel costs and partly organisational costs. The organisational costs are financed from donations from sympathisers, contributions from network partners and the proceeds from the foundation's activities. A SEED Europe has a small capital that is kept in a savings account with ASN Bank.

## **Online visibility**

A SEED is constantly working on disseminating information about various developments, problems and solutions in agriculture and climate justice. We do this by means of brochures, press releases, articles, on our website, social media, email lists and a digital newsletter. A SEED is also very active on social media and has been able to reach more followers and interested parties. Our target group consists of journalists, politicians, activists and other ordinary people. In addition to that, we are in the process of revamping the A SEED website in a bid to make it more modern and reach a wider audience.

## **The organization's internal structures**

A SEED needs a core team of 6-7 people to continue to challenge industrial agriculture. One example of how we continuously work to improve our internal processes and workflow is through our partnership with ULEX. We are applying for an accreditation to send A SEED members to week-long trainings to strengthen collaborative and campaigning skills such as conflict management, facilitation, anti-oppression, and regeneration. This makes training young change-makers that are already loosely connected to the movement a major part of our work. We support them in obtaining skills and confidence to become more experienced campaigners within the topic of sustainable food systems.

Every year, four people between the ages of 18 and 30 join the team for one year through the European Solidarity Corps program. Additionally, we welcome around six interns every year, and many more volunteers. We believe that we must build strong connections within the team and distribute as much knowledge as possible for its members to thrive and build confidence. That way, we contribute to increasing the number of skilled campaigners within the climate justice network, circulating knowledge we have gained and refined in the last years.