



Annual report 2015

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ASEED Europe in 2015

Legal and general information

Registered name : A SEED Europe (Action for Solidarity, Equality, Environment and Diversity Europe). Often the organisation is simply called ASEED.

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History and background

ASEED Europe (Action for Solidarity, Equality, Environment, and Diversity Europe) is an international campaigning organisation, giving importance to involving youth in direct democracy activities. ASEED Europe targets the structural causes of environmental destruction and social injustice.

We do this by campaigning on multinational corporations and their national and international influence spheres and control tools. At the same time we promote sustainable alternatives. Currently ASEED Europe focuses on issues related to the global food chain: the decline of biodiversity in agriculture and the availability of seeds, genetic engineering and power concentration by global agro/biotech giants. Our general agriculture campaign goal is to promote food sovereignty. In the recent past we have been campaigning on the massive production and imports of soy, climate change and international financial and trade institutions.

ASEED was established by young engaged people in 1991 in response to the UNCED Earth Summit proceedings in Rio de Janeiro and aimed to forge alliances among young people committed to social and environmental justice. Since 1992, the ASEED decentralised network grew and regional “hubs” were created in Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, Latin America and Japan. Each hub had its own level of activity, linking youth groups and individuals in their region. By now each hub has developed in its own way, working independently from each other.

ASEED Europe works with about 6 people in the interactive office in Amsterdam, and together with many contacts in the rest of Europe and abroad on the following objectives:

- Initiating and coordinating actions and campaigns on environmental, development and social justice issues;
- Promoting discussion and disseminating information about critical emerging issues;
- Empowering local youth groups and grassroots organisations via trainings, joint projects, and knowledge sharing;
- Establishing partnerships between various organisations and groups worldwide and facilitating international cooperation and networking;
- Preparing projects from the ASEED Europe office and working with local grassroots organisations.

Mission statement

ASEED Europe believes that people have the potential to change their lives and communities for the better and we aim to support and empower both groups and individuals who are striving to do so. We believe that the roots of the ecological destruction and poverty which is ravaging our planet today can be traced back to the colonial and imperialist past when the populations and natural resources of entire continents were ruthlessly exploited.

We see today's profit-obsessed 'free' market globalisation which is fuelled by the increasing mobility of capital as a continuation of this phenomenon. Our campaigns are based on the need to act in solidarity with the millions of people in the Global South whose already precarious livelihoods are being ruined by unfair competition and disastrous privatisation programmes imposed by bodies like the International Financial Institutions and trade agreements in the name of 'free' trade and globalisation.

So far, globalisation has led to more inequality and the concentration of resources into fewer hands. ASEED Europe believes that everybody counts and that decisions that can make or break lives should be taken locally, not on the stockmarkets of New York and London or behind the closed doors of international financial institutions.

We support the rights of individuals and communities to determine their own lives and so we work with groups which promote local democracy and social justice as well as taking these principles as a starting point in our own campaigns.

Our commitment to equality is reflected in our non-hierarchical working practises, whereby decisions are made by consensus.

One of ASEED Europe's most fundamental standpoints is that humans are a part of nature, not apart from it. Modern economic systems, regardless of their political hue, continue to regard nature as a resource to be exploited and recent treaties aimed at slowing down ongoing environmental degradation, climate change and the alarming loss of bio-diversity are doomed to failure because short term economic growth is always given precedence over the long term future of the planet.

It is imperative that we develop new, sustainable alternatives to our current consumption

patterns. ASEED Europe's campaigns focus on exploring alternatives and networking with groups working to promote viable alternatives and sustainable development. ASEED Europe strives for the preservation of both cultural and biological diversity. We reject and work towards ending discrimination based on age, class, disability, gender, race, religious beliefs and sexual preference.

Vital tools that we use to realise our aims are: the promotion of grass root organisation, education, mobilisation and non-violent direct action so that people can act to achieve social justice and environmental integrity on both the local and global level.

Team and office

The office team consists in a core group of 5 people.

Flip Vonk: campaigner

Sonia Conchon: campaigner

Alex Reuter: financial administrator

Egle Draugelyte (Lithuania), Alejandra Pajares (Spain): European volunteers who are part of ASEED through the European Voluntary Service programme, under the "Youth in Action" 7-year plan.

The board members are the following.

Anne Jessica Assehn – Chairperson – in the board since 04/07/2007

Johanna, Katharina Jager – Treasurer – in the board since 31/10/2006

Tjerk Dalhuisen – Secretary – in the board since 27/10/2014

In addition, other people regularly contribute to ASEED's activities in the fields of research, event organisation, fundraising and actions. In the summer 2015, ASEED has welcomed a new intern from the UK, Bonnie Welsh supported ASEED with research and writing on different topics regarding the preparations for the COP21 in Paris.

An internal document, **the ASEED Guide**, has been updated in order to make the office run more smoothly. It compiles all useful information for newcomers, volunteers and regular team members, from protocols and practical tips to lists of resources for every campaign topic.

Campaigns

In 2015, ASEED has engaged in two main campaigns under the umbrella topic of food sovereignty and climate: seeds and the impact of the current food system on climate change. Besides activities connected to these campaigns, ASEED has kept on organising other smaller activities and participating in various networking events.

Seeds

Background: why this campaign?

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported in 2010 that 75% of the world's crop diversity had already been lost. Meanwhile, commercial 'high yielding' varieties are proving less effective with climate change, resulting in greater farmer vulnerability. In fact, the advent of industrial farming with its push for commercial seeds has been responsible for a great loss in agricultural biodiversity. Additionally this dynamic has brought both farmers and consumer to be dependent from large corporations and the agro-industry which aim is to make profit and not to feed people in a sustainable way.

On the other hand, for thousands of years, generations of farmers across the globe have been observing, selecting, nurturing, breeding and saving seed. Farmers have creatively cultivated ever more crop varieties to deal with many different challenges of soils, climates, nutrition, flavour, storage, pests and diseases. Women, in particular, play a critical role in their communities as the custodians of seeds.

Urgent action is needed to ensure that farmers can grow resilient crops and nutritious food for us all, in the face of climate change and other challenges. Farmers' complex farming knowledge and their right to save, adapt, exchange and sell seed must be recognised by re regulations and protected in pro-active policy and practice. Otherwise who will feed us in the future?

Source: <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/susagri/2014/sa325.htm>

What are our goals?

- To inform consumers, farmer community and policy makers about seed issues.
- To denounce the strategies of transnational corporations to take over global seed production and distribution their influence on NL and EU policy making.
- To promote alternatives to save the biodiversity of vegetables, fruits and grains.

What are the activities organised within this campaign?

Reclaim the Seeds, Driebergen 28 February – 1 March

This was the fourth edition, following on from previous events in Amsterdam, Den Bosch and Haren (Groningen). The seed fair offers a wide range of interested parties the opportunity to exchange seeds and knowledge about seeds, sustainable agriculture and the current threats to seed diversity.

This year we have focused on two main topics:

- Special focus on climate, since in December 2015 the UN Climate Summit will take place in Paris. There were discussions about the relation of agriculture and greenhousegasses, as well as about the necessity of sturdy seeds considering the ongoing climate change.
- Another main topic were soils, since 2015 was declared International Year of Soils. Sustainable agriculture is dependent on good soil and there are always possibilities to improve soil and for the future of special seeds the quality of the soil is very important.

In 2015, again Reclaim the Seeds was very successful and showed the still growing interest for seeds, agricultural biodiversity and alternatives to industrial agriculture in the Netherlands and Europe.

With more than 1500 visitors, 2015 was maybe the most succesful weekend until now. The workshops were well attended, and some didn't have enough space for all the interested people. The highlights this year were the workshop 'Help Humus' by Jan Diek van Mansvelt about the history of soilerosion in agriculture and the workshop by Elly Jansen about the latest developments and news about patents on seeds.

The seeds-swapping tables had been even more busy then the years before, showing that more and more private people and small farmers are exchanging seeds, information and experiences. Which was one of the main goals when initiating the Reclaim the Seeds weekends in 2012.



Other related activities:

Tuinbordjes: Gentechvrij, Patentvrij en Gifvrij

ASEED produced beautiful screenprinted wooden signs to hang up at environmentally friendly gardens. With such a sign environmentally aware gardeners can tell the world around them that they want to stay clear of genetically modified crops, patented seeds, or pesticides, and make a statement against the largescale agricultural companies that promote this way of farming. Both hobby gardeners and professional growers can place the sign.

On 12 September 2015 the new sign was presented at the community garden *Voedseltuin Ijplein* in Amsterdam Noord, where volunteers grow vegetables for the *Food Bank*. There were speakers invited to give some background information about the 3 subjects of the garden sign: pesticides, patents and genetic engineering.



Food Otherwise networking day, Wageningen 13 June 2015

13 June 2015 Milieudefensie, as part of the Food Otherwise network organised a day to bring people and organisations together to strengthen the movement that is working for a change to a more sustainable agriculture- and food system.

ASEED was present and facilitated an 'openspace' in the programme about agriculture and activism. Buying organic and local food from small and independent shops or growing your own veggies on the balcony won't stop industrial agriculture. So what can we do more to reduce the impact of agriculture on the climate and society?

Food & Climate

Background: why this campaign?

ASEED, as part of the climate justice movement, finds it absolutely necessary to include agriculture in the climate discussion. To start with, the current food system is responsible for a large part of total greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, healthy food is a vital necessity, and universal right, for everybody. We cannot allow the discussion on the future of food production to be dominated by large corporations that only aim to maximise profits. It is time to stand up for just and sustainable alternatives. By taking action together we can make this a reality.

What are our goals?

- to inform the public on the key role of industrial agriculture in causing climate change,
- to inform the public on the key role of agroecology as a solution to climate change,
- to promote alternatives
- to build more connections between the actors, movements and organisations involved in the fields of agriculture and climate justice.

What are the activities organised within this campaign?

Ground Control, Agriculture and Climate Action camp, Amsterdam 1 – 8 July

For a whole week, a total of over 250 participants from all over Europe and beyond have gathered in the Amsterdam Western harbour to share their experiences and knowledge. They did so in a horizontal way by either following one of the activities scheduled in the programme or they spontaneously proposed new activities. The following topics were tackled: sustainable alternatives to industrial agriculture, self-organisation, farming, energies and synergies...



On Saturday Aug. 4th, many participants took part in the Climate Games, an innovative action game where teams could prepare actions together against the big polluters present in the harbour. Ground Control has hosted the Climate Games awards ceremony on the same evening. Several groups took on some of the many tasks that such an horizontal structure requires, such as building eco-toilets, preparing vegan organic meals, facilitating the meetings, creating shade structures, discussing with the authorities, or communicating with the media.



After 5 days spent on an occupied field, the camp moved to the [cultural free-haven ADM](#). There the programme continued smoothly until the end of the event.

During the 6 months prior to the camp, many info-nights and public meetings were held in order to inform and mobilise potential participants and to build a solid network of volunteers. Non-exhaustive list of movements and networks involved in making the camp alive: GroenFront!, Wij stoppen Steinkool, Cityplot, De Kas Kantine, Alternatiba, Toekomst Boeren, ILIEA, Down to Earth, Hambach Forest defenders, Ketelbroek Food Forest, Monsanto Tribunal, Degrowth movement, Fossilvrij Nederlands...



Klimaatparade, Amsterdam 30 November 2015

On Sunday 30th November 2015, 7000 people gathered on Museumplein in Amsterdam for the Dutch Climate March, the Klimaatparade. While the Paris march has been forbidden, many demonstrations were organised in big cities all around the world. ASEED was part of the **Climate Justice bloc** together with other movements and organisations, including GroenFront! We are proud to say that this bloc was probably one of the biggest of the entire protest! ASEED came with a big “vintage” banner, which stated: “Agrofuel are no cure for our oil addiction”. Unfortunately, our message was and still is more than ever accurate.

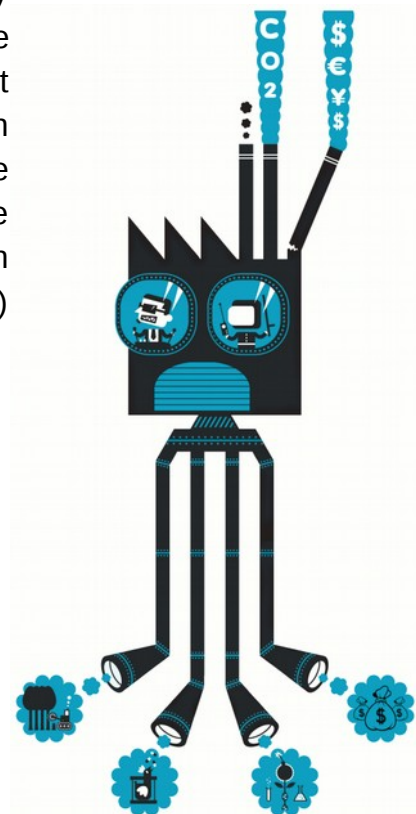


UN Climate Summit – COP21, Paris 30 November – 12 December 2015

Together with the *Groen Front!* ASEED organised a bus full of Climate activists from the Netherlands to go to the UN Climate Summit in Paris.

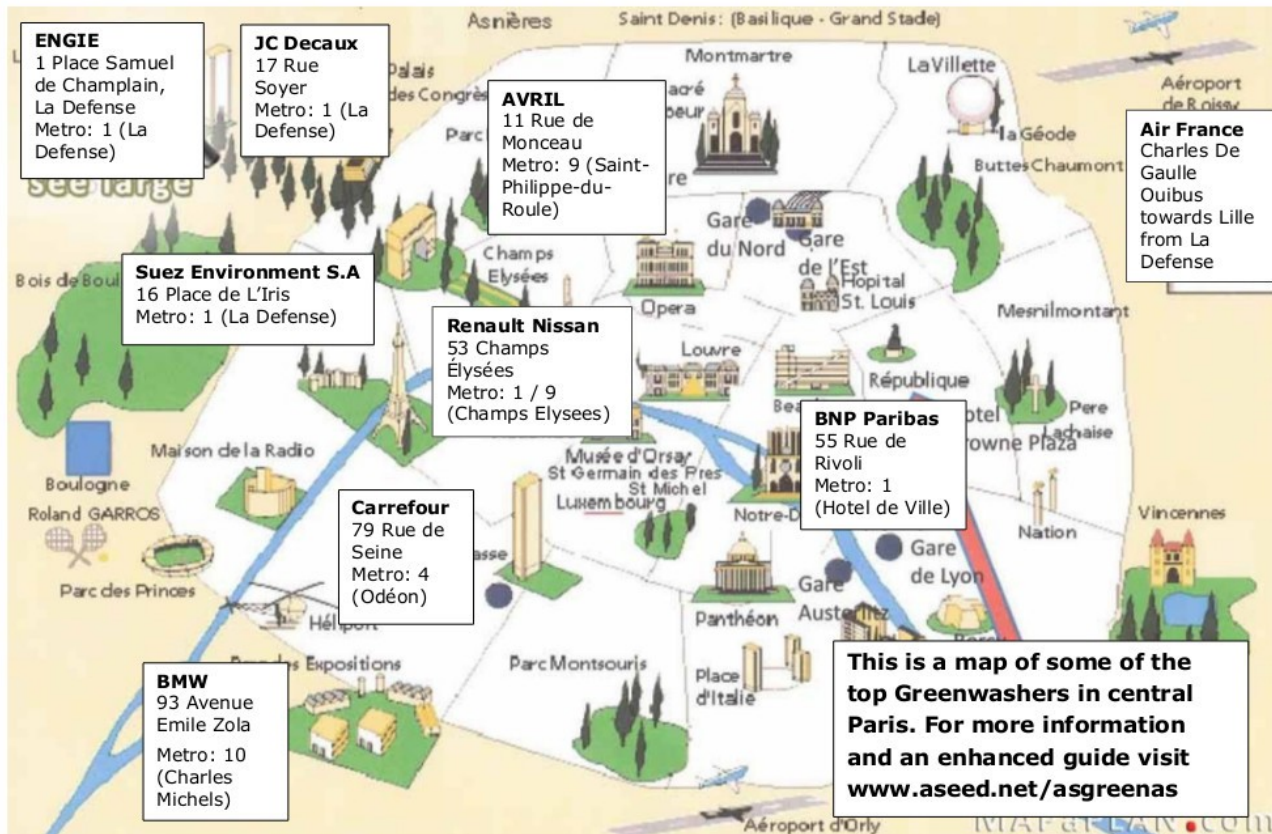
ASEED produced a flyer in English and French to explain the impact of the industrial food system on Climate Change and a variety of other materials that draw attention to the greenwashing attempts of large corporations and their lobby organisations. As a part of a “Guerilla against Climate Greenwashing”, stickers, posters and flyers were spread at business fairs, inside the conference and at other spots in Paris where corporations were presenting themselves more climate friendly than they are in reality. In particular, the corporate greenwashing event ‘Solutions COP21’ (which took place in the Grand Palais from December 4th to 10th) was asking for some counter-information.

The flyer can be downloaded [here](#)



Guide for Greenwash Guerilla COP21

ASEED prepared a guide for the Guerilla against Greenwashing with a selection of companies present at COP21, at official side-events or elsewhere in Paris. About each company there is a small description, information on their greenwashing and some practical information about where to find our material.



GREENWASHING = companies that wreck the climate, pollute the earth and destroy livelihoods paint themselves as environmentally friendly and socially progressive;

DISTRACTING from the negative impacts of their core activities (e.g. burning fossil fuels), helping them to pretend to be part of the climate solution (rather than problem);

MISLEADING policy-makers into believing polluters deserve a seat at the table.

As green as ...

The Guerilla Against Greenwashing campaign will expose the worst greenwashers present at COP21. The message "This Company is as green as this sticker / poster / banner..." is a simple one that can be repeated time and again. The repetition of this action should enable a strong dissemination of the message.

How to get Materials

There are stickers and posters available for people who want to join the Guerilla Against Greenwashing. On www.aseed.net/asgreenas you can find out where. On this page you can also find the latest updates about this campaign and you can download the poster to print some copies yourself.

Of course you can be creative and make your own flyer, poster, banner or other attribute to use for your own action against the greenwashers.

How to Publish your Action

If you have a short report or some pictures of an action against greenwashing (from yourself or something you saw in Paris), please let us know about it:

Email pictures and reports to climate@aseed.net

Post your pictures and report on **Indymedia**

Tweet your pictures with the #asgreenas

Post your pictures and report on ASEEDs **Facebook** page

TOP GREENWASHERS

- 1) **Engie** (formerly known as GDF Suez) - a French multinational electric utility company, which operates in the fields of electricity generation and distribution, natural gas and renewable energy.
- 2) **Renault Nissan** - is a Franco-Japanese strategic partnership between automobile manufacturers Renault, based in Paris, France, and Nissan, based in Yokohama, Japan, which together sell more than 1 in 10 cars worldwide.
- 3) **BNP Paribas** - BNP Paribas is a French multinational bank and financial services company with global headquarters in Paris. BNP Paribas is one of the largest banks in the world.
- 4) **Avril** - Avril is a French agribusiness. Its name may not be well-known, but it is a huge company with a €7.3bn turnover. It is mainly present throughout the oils and proteins sectors. It

has joined the "Solutions COP21" platform, advertising its new biodiesel and the introduction of large-scale soy production in France as 'climate solutions'.

Some others: JC Decaux, IKEA, AirFrance, Coca Cola, Carrefour, Suez Environment, BMW.

Corporate Greenwashing Events:

COP21 Sustainability Innovation Forum - 7-8 Dec (Stade de France (gate E))

Solutions COP21 - 2 Dec: (Trophies awarded at World Efficiency's 'Solutions Gallery', Le Bourget). 4 Dec: (Winners honoured at Solutions COP21 Winners Conference, Grand Palais).

World Climate Summit - 6 December (Hotel Potocki (Paris Chamber of Commerce), 27 Avenue de Friedland)

Council meeting WBCSD - 7-10 December (same as above)

Energy for Tomorrow - 8-9 December (same as above).

Peasant Agriculture and Food Sovereignty Day

On December 9 an action took place at the headquarters of Danone (a large French agribusiness, well known for its dairy products and bottled waters like Evian) in Paris. A red line was painted in front of the building on the pavement. Simultaneously, a long line of red banners depicting the problems caused by industrial agriculture were held in front of the building. Many people from the international network of peasant farmers La Via Campesina took part alongside ASEED and friends – calling for food sovereignty and “food system change not climate change”. The action took place as planned, during which time there were short speeches were pronounced and flyers were handed out to the public passing by. Red stickers and posters with the slogan “This company is as green as this sticker/poster” were stuck to the building – in line with the anti-greenwashing message.



Other related activities:

Sla Alarm tegen TTIP, Amsterdam 10 October 2015

On Saturday October 10th, various actions took place against TTIP (*Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership*) in many European cities. In Amsterdam about 7000 people joined a demonstration through the city centre. ASEED joined with the message **“TTIP is a capitalist wet dream – to stay dry we need climate action now!”**



TTIP, een onverteerbaar Monsterverdrag

In spring 2015 ASEED published a brochure written by Susanne Maenen as part of her internship at ASEED. This brochure is looking at the impact of such an agreement as TTIP on the food for consumers in Europe.

You can download the brochure [here](#)



**TTIP, EEN ONVERTEERBAAR
MONSTERVERDRAG**

Donor campaign - Donor Party 11 April 2015

To give a special thank you to all donors – and to recruit more donors – we organised a benefit party in cooperation with the organic, vegetarian kitchen De Peper. We started with a meet and greet with former and current ASEED'ers and supporters, followed by a 3 course dinner. There was an ongoing projection of pictures from ASEED's diverse activities and actions over the past years and a small info table with information about our current work. .

It was a very successful evening where we could refresh and build new contacts, and gain about 15 new monthly donors.



16.00 drinks (also fun for kids)

19.00 vegan organic dinner - no reservation, come in time!

21.00 - 1.00 party with Grassmoower (klezmer-balkan-punkrock) and DJ Frank van S.

free entrance • donation welcome • De Peper • 01301 • Overtoom 301 • Amsterdam

More info • www.aseed.net