

# Annual report 2007



[www.aseed.net](http://www.aseed.net)



# About A SEED Europe

A SEED Europe (Action for Solidarity, Equality, Environment, and Diversity Europe) is an international campaigning organisation, giving importance to involving youth in direct democracy activities. A SEED 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.

A SEED 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 A SEED decentralized 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.

A SEED Europe works from the interactive office in Amsterdam 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 organizations via trainings, joint projects, and knowledge sharing;
- Establishing partnerships between various organizations and groups worldwide and facilitating international cooperation and networking;
- Preparing projects from the A SEED Europe office and working with local grassroots organizations.

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In 2007, A SEED's projects and campaigns, activities and actions, publications and office space have been made possible thanks to the financial support of the following funds and programs:

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ASN Foundation, The Netherlands

NCDO, The Netherlands

OxfamNovib, The Netherlands

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WG-fund, The Netherlands

XminY Solidarity fund, The Netherlands

Municipality of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Friends of the Earth International, The Netherlands

WISE, The Netherlands

Patagonia Europe, France

Foundation Terre Humaine, Switzerland

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# Contents

Introduction - 6

A SEED Campaigns - 7

WORLD BANK DISINVESTMENT CAMPAIGNACTIVITIES 2007 - 7

Events, activities and projects - 7

World Bank Campaign Publications - 11

SOY CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES 2007 - 12

Events, activities and projects - 12

Ongoing projects - 15

Soy campaign publications - 15

GMO CAMPAIGN 2007 - 17

Events, activities and projects - 17

GMO Campaign Publications - 19

A SEED Office Activities - 21

Projects - 21

Active Balkans - 21

Climate information for Young people - 23

European Volunteers host and job training - 23

Open Source Software - 23

Local networking - 24

Broeinst infocafe - 24

Providing Office and Meeting space - 24

Participating in Plantage Doklaan - 24

A SEED office publications - 25

Website ([www.aseed.net](http://www.aseed.net)) - 25

Digital Newsletter SEEDMAIL - 25

General A SEED promotion flyer - 25

Endorsements - 26

Financial Overview - 27

# Introduction

Welcome to the A SEED Europe Annual Report 2007.

In the fifteenth year of the European organisation of A SEED - Action for Sustainability, Environment, Equality and Diversity - our commitment remains strong and focused on promoting grassroots action in defence of environmental and social rights and in defence of a diverse stable ecosystem that we can depend on, now and in the future.

A SEED aims to take the international agenda home, to “Think Global, Act Local” through campaigning on both local and international level, while networking with local organisations home and abroad.

In 2007 our campaign work concentrated around three main issues: World Bank policies, Soy production and its environmental and social consequences, and GM crops in Dutch agriculture. Apart from our in house campaign work, A SEED has supported the initiation of a number of environmental activities and groups in the Balkan in 2007.

On the following pages you will find a brief summary of public events, projects and activities from each of our campaigns as well as a report on the A SEED organisation in 2007.

# A SEED Campaigns

## WORLD BANK DISINVESTMENT CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES 2007



*In reaction to the controversy of recent years the World Bank has cosmetically slimmed down the number of conditions it uses when lending to developing countries. But in 2007 the Bank still continues to make heavy use of economic policy conditionality, especially in sensitive areas such as privatisation and liberalisation. The A SEED World Bank Campaign continued to compile information from all over the world, exposing and taking it to the public and the institutions. Back in the nineties A SEED Europe was one of the first environmental groups warning for climate change. Now, fifteen years on, due to the lack of effective measures against carbon emissions the World Bank Campaign is again focusing on climate change, drawing attention to the billions the World Bank is investing in fossil fuels and other climate-disturbing projects.*

### **Events, activities and projects**

#### **January – April**

Outreach: the campaign team worked hard on getting new groups involved in World Bank disinvestment. Friends of the Earth International signed onto the campaign and every local FOE group started targeting investors in their home countries.

#### **May 22**

Counter Forum on Water privatization in Den Haag, organized by Corporate Europe Observatory and A SEED. People from the global South (Paraguay, Mali) presented testimony about privatization to representatives of Dutch civic society.

#### **May 23**

Street protest action at the PPIAF donor conference on water privatization in Den Haag. A SEED Europe, Corporate Europe Observatory, FIVAS, Friends of the Earth International, TNI and World Development Movement organized a demo at the annual donor meeting of the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility. PPIAFF is a World Bank-supported agency, funding consultants' advice on tailoring the privatization of key sectors such as water, energy and telecommunications in poor countries. The agency is funded by 15 donors including the UK government, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Dutch government.

of the Berezovka Initiative Group, Kazakhstan to testify the Karachaganak oil & gas field case.

The experts' panel consisted of Charles Abugre (Development Economist, Ghana), Maartje van Putten (AfDB inspection panel member, Netherlands), Marcos Arruda (Policy Alternatives for the Southern Cone, Trans National Institute), Francesco Martone (Senator, Italy) and Medha Patkar (National Alliance of People's Movements, India). All witnesses answered questions by the panel members and the audience. In the evening, the panel members convened to draft a conclusive declaration to be presented at a press conference the following morning. There was a live video streaming of the entire event. The final declaration of the members of the panel reads that donor governments must set more precise and strict guidelines for spending taxpayers' money in the field of development aid, accordance to which performance should be audited. One of the most important achievements of the Hearing was the new evidence and documentation provided. The information presented at the Hearing is an excellent source for a debate on the future of the World Bank, its current development model and potential alternatives.

For more information about the event: [[www.worldbankcampaigneurope.org](http://www.worldbankcampaigneurope.org)]

## **October 16**

A SEED Europe, Friends of the Earth International and CRBM (Italy) organized a follow-up event in Crea Theatre (Amsterdam), where the Nigeria, Kazakhstan and Nicaraguan cases were discussed and the final declaration by the Panel of the Hearing were presented. The public event had a less formal character and the audience had more opportunities to interact with the speakers. The Amsterdam event was attended by one member of the Dutch Parliament. Press work for both events was organized by A SEED Europe, Friends of the Earth International and EURODAD.

## **October**

A SEED Europe took part in an NGO consultation organized by the Ministry of Finance on the occasion of the autumn annual meeting of the World Bank. This resulted in a letter A SEED sent to Dutch Minister Koenders and the WB coordinator of the Dutch Foreign Ministry proceeding the IDA 15 replenishment meeting in Dublin, November 9th.

## **December 13**

A SEED Europe distributed a press release among the Dutch media, in the context of the final IDA replenishment meeting in Berlin. At the meeting the Dutch government, together with the rest of the European donor countries, decided to increase their commitments to the World Bank, despite the doubts of the Norwegian government and the policies that several countries had adopted against conditional policy lending.



# SOY CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES 2007



*Soy - As the awareness of climate change and the subsequent interest in alternatives energy sources increased, the ASEED Soy campaign worked hard to draw attention to the risks of mass producing agro-fuels (or biofuels). Just like the expansion of soy, new policies on agrofuels and the rising price of oil will have a huge negative impact on land use and food security. One of our soy*

*campaigners returned from Paraguay where she did academic inquiry in communities affected by soy expansion, collecting lots of new photo and video footage, while reinforcing our contacts with people in the South who are directly affected by policies and life styles in the North. As their struggle for land continues we express direct solidarity through practical support as well as getting their message across.*

## Events, activities and projects

### March

G8-infotour in Germany - The network Globale Landwirtschaft made a tour through Austria and Germany to explain and discuss the link between agriculture and the G8. The tour focussed on the social problems caused by large scale agriculture and the trade of commodities on a liberalised global market. In daytime the group used street theatre to get in contact with the local citizens. In 6 towns A SEED contributed with a presentation about the effects of soy production in Latin America and the relation to the meat industry and meat consumption in Europe. A SEED also contributed to a newsletter and a reader that both have been used during the infotour and during the rest of the G8 related activities in 2007. Pictures of the tour:

[[www.umbruch-bildarchiv.de/bildarchiv/ereignis/030307infotour.html](http://www.umbruch-bildarchiv.de/bildarchiv/ereignis/030307infotour.html)]

### April 16

In cooperation with "Landwirtschaft" A SEED organized a screening on a local Amsterdam TV channel Salto around the theme of International Peasant Struggles day, highlighting the struggle of Paraguayan peasant movements. On the same evening we held a debate in the Broeïnest Cafe Amsterdam, attended by some 40 participants from Dutch NGOs and other local organizations.

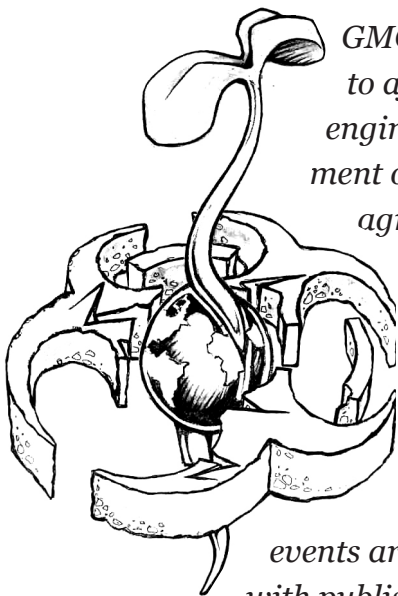
More info on: [[www.broeïnest.info/drupal/?q=node/73](http://www.broeïnest.info/drupal/?q=node/73)]

### May 3

Information evening at youth cultural centre De Poema in Ghent, Belgium with photo presentation, 30 participants, some of whom initiated follow up action on November 23rd in Belgium. Paraguayan media coverage:

[<http://paraguay.indybay.org/editorial/2007/12/12/solidaridad-internacional-con-paraguay-desde-belgica-contra-los-cultivos-de-soja>].

## GMO CAMPAIGN 2007



*GMO - New commercial and legislative developments continued to affect Dutch agriculture in 2007. Field tests with genetically engineered corn and potatoes were approved by the Dutch government on several locations in the country. An so called coexistence agreement was drawn up by Dutch farmers' associations on the cultivation of conventional and GMO crops next to each other on Dutch farmland. The A SEED GMO campaign is breaking the silence surrounding the introduction of GMO's into our environment, directly addressing producers, local rural communities, and youth and consumer organizations.*

*In 2007 A SEEDs GMO campaign organized numerous info-events around The Netherlands and contributed to the public debate with published news articles, presentations and playful outdoor activities. Various information materials were published and distributed in print and online. Through it's activities the campaign team extended its contact network in the agricultural sector, media, and political environments, improving distribution channels and newsletter lists. The campaign contributed to a Spanish film on GMO's 'TranXgenia' that was screened on many Dutch information events. To further stimulate the debate on this subject the A SEED GMO campaign initiated and co-produced a documentary film about the potential consequences of the commercial introduction of GMO crops for Dutch farming called 'Farmer and the Gene'. It will be screened all over the Netherlands in an extensive info/debate tour early 2008.*

### **Events, activities and projects**

#### **February – April**

Brainstorm meetings with groups of young people to prepare the programs of informative events, the concepts for the educational theatre plays and the film script for 'Farmer and the Gene'.

#### **March 12**

Debate 'Sleutelen met genen' organized by the local Socialist Party in the agricultural community of Horst aan de Maas.

A SEED represented the critical stand in the panel.

#### **April 19&20**

European Conference on GMO-free Regions, Biodiversity and Rural Development in Brussels was attended by several A SEEDs GMO campaigners.

# A SEED Office Activities

ASEED is a foundation with a council and a board, with annual office-council statutory meetings. In 2007 this meeting took place over two days in Wageningen, discussing strategy, direction, analyzing and evaluating our work .

The A SEED office consisted in 2007 of fifteen paid staff, volunteers, interns and trainees, working on campaigns, projects and core functioning.

## Projects

### Active Balkans

In brief, the Active Balkans project is an initiative for establishing nine autonomous youth collectives in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania which are active in the field of environmental protection and civil participation. From March 2007 onwards monthly creative educational workshops and public events on a wide range of themes have been taking place in the three Balkan countries, prepared by the national coordinators. The workshops are open for participation for all interested.

Throughout 2007 A SEED did the overall administrative and financial management and coordination of the project, including:

- an overview of expenditures and additional incomes
- biweekly coordination conference calls with all youth workers
- keeping track of plans and reports of the activities, taking place in each country and sending updates about the project activities in all countries to all participants, asking for their comments and contribution.

During the period the A SEED international coordinators also performed the following general activities:

- regularly sent packages to the youth collectives with magazines, documentaries, visuals and books on the topics of energy, climate change, genetically modified organisms and strategies for local-level organizing;
- maintained and updated the project website [[www.aseed.net/balkan](http://www.aseed.net/balkan)];
- gathered a team of 12 youth workers, affiliated with A SEED, who were interested in the project and volunteered to conduct trainings or find useful non-formal training strategies for the local groups whenever necessary. The team consisted of twelve people, who had sufficient experience on youth organizing, non-formal education and

## Local networking

### Broeïnest infocafe

A SEED participated regularly in the weekly public info evening in the Plantage Doklaan gallery space called Broeïnest. A wide range of subjects were covered in 2007, such as the G8 protests, flexwork society, Zapatista's, as well as A SEED campaign issues. In October the Broeïnest Collective decided to scale down the frequency of their events.

More info on [[www.broeïnest.info](http://www.broeïnest.info)]

### Providing Office and Meeting space

A SEED facilitates meetings of local affiliated groups and campaigns like activist theatergroup Rebelact and the organisation Vrije Ruimte, offering skills, meeting space and equipment. We share our office with several other organizations and collectives. These are A SEED provides office space to the Broeïnest Collective, All Included - an organization that campaigns on migration issues and offers support to refugees, and Uitvalbasis, an organization that provides technical assistance to non-profit public events. A SEED provides office space to the Broeïnest Collective. The A SEED downstairs office serves as an information point providing magazines and books on various issues, while our upstairs office provides space for the work on our campaigns.

### Participating in Plantage Doklaan



A SEED is part of the PlantageDok-project in Amsterdam. PlantageDok is a former school building which was transformed into a creative and cultural center involving 40 artists, actors, designers and media projects and several public spaces. The building is a collective project with several functions. The activities of A SEED differ from the other more art-oriented collectives but the A SEED office is well integrated in the project. We participate in the house meetings, and the necessary organizational and maintenance jobs that are part of running this big project. The building is also the location for the weekly Broeïnest info evenings, weekly DokGallery Art Exhibition evenings, and a community organic food coop.

## Endorsements

Among countless others A SEED supported the following initiatives and calls:

- Petition by Safe the Rainforest against natural gas extraction project Camisea II in Colombia causing environmental damages and violations of human rights of indigenous peoples. [[www.regenwald.org/protestaktion.php?id=124](http://www.regenwald.org/protestaktion.php?id=124)]
- Open letter by Safe the Rainforest and Biofuelwatch to the EU, on intended biofuel regulations
- Petition against about possible EU financial assistance for the construction of the Belene nuclear power plant (NPP) in Northern Bulgaria.
- Protest letter against legitimating Low-Level Presence of Unauthorized GM Material in Asia [[www.panap.net/wora2007/index.php?takeaction=nonasian](http://www.panap.net/wora2007/index.php?takeaction=nonasian)]
- Petition to urge the USDA to deny the application by Ventria Bioscience to grow up to 3,200 acres of genetically engineered, pharmaceutical rice in Kansas.
- Letter to the Russian Embassy and Ministry asking support for Russian researcher and biologist Andry Zakota, in court in Turkmenistan for environmental activities.
- Petition signed along with representatives of Russian, Japanese, and international public environmental organizations to the Japan Bank for International Cooperation on the Sakhalin-2 project, one of the biggest oil and gas developments in the world.
- Endorsement of the GLOBAL APPEAL against patents on life forms [[www.no-patents-on-seeds.org](http://www.no-patents-on-seeds.org)]
- Letter against the sale of highly poisonous pesticides by Bayer for Bayer's shareholders meeting 27th of April.