



Annual report 2018

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1. ASEED Europe in 2018

1.1 Legal and general information

Registered name:

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

Inschrijvingsnummer Kamer van Koophandel: 41212969

RSIN (Legal Entities & Partnerships Identification Number) / Tax number: 803284342

Contact details:

Plantage Doklaan 12a, 1018 CM Amsterdam,

The Netherlands

Tel: +31-20-668-2236

Fax: +31-20-468 2275

email: info@aseed.net

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/aseedeurope

1.2 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 8 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.

1.3 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 stock markets 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 biodiversity 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.

1.4 Team and functioning

The office team consists of a core group of 8 people, made of "permanent" members and of 'EVSers' who have joined ASEED through the European Voluntary Service, as part of the Erasmus+ 7-year program.

Sonia Conchon: communication

Alex Reuter: financial administrator

Philip: campaigner & fundraiser

EVSers	
September 2017 - September 2018	September 2018- September 2019
Sarah Chabane (France)	Dea Retzou (Greece)
Louis Génot (France)	Mandy Rutkowski (Germany)
Eduard Hernandez (Spain)	Annie Storey (England)

January 2018 ASEED welcomes a new team member, Philip, as a new Campaign Coordinator and Fundraiser. Philip coordinated the launch of the new ASEED Campaign “Fossil Free Agriculture” and has been involved in all the ASEED coordination roles from the office work, to campaign, fundraising or direct action coordination.

In addition, other people regularly contribute to ASEED's activities in the fields of research, event organisation, fundraising and actions.

In September 2017, Mathilde Jimenez joined ASEED to volunteer for 7 months related to her studies in the University of Toulouse on political Science (France). Anna started her internship in January 2018 also coming from the same studies in the Toulouse University.

Mathilde helped a lot with communication tasks and also, she got very involved with the Monsanto Tribunal. Anna developed amazing tasks of coordination during the Food Autonomy Festival and she also coordinated the weekly gardening days at the ASEED Community Garden.

In September 2018, Mattias joined the team for 4 month of internship part of his studies on Environmental Studies. Julia joined ASEED in December 2018 and stayed with us as part of her studies for 8 months.

Mattias did a lot of work coordinating the Ende Gelände Dutch delegation and also designed new logos and stickers for the organization. Julia got deeply involved with the international Campaign Free the Soil and coordinate several groups during the 3rd edition of the Food Autonomy Festival-.

Our internal document, the ASEED Guide, is regularly 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.

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

2. ASEED's new 2018 Campaign: Fossil Free Agriculture (FFA)

2.1 Background: why this campaign?

The industrial food system heavily relies on fossil fuels: from chemical fertilizers for large-scale monocultures to farm machinery, food processing and long-distance transport. All of this contributes to a speculative global commodity market dominated by a small group of very powerful corporations.

The devastating consequences cannot be ignored any longer: runaway climate change, ecological collapse, impoverishment of farmers and the destruction of rural communities. While it claims the opposite, it is clear that fossil fuel based industrial agriculture cannot feed the world, because it relies on a variety of finite resources and is destroying the very foundations of life itself: healthy soils, biodiversity, agricultural diversity, and a stable climate.

The fossil fuel industry and corporate agribusiness are not there to provide people with healthy and sustainable food or to protect our climate, but to make profit and to increase their domination over the food chain. We need to unite and organise against these structures that lie at the root of our problems! Our actions should educate the public and trigger more and more people to confront those organisations that promote and profit from a food system that serves neither the people nor the planet. We are targeting big business and the politicians that support them, not the farmers that are victims of a corrupted system. Our goal is to help build a powerful emancipatory movement from below for a sustainable and just food system.

2.1.1 Why the focus on Fossil Free Agriculture?

By focusing on the use of fossil fuels in the corporate controlled industrial food system, we aim to expand the concept of climate justice to include agricultural justice. We do this by connecting the fossil fuel focused climate movement and the food sovereignty movements, while opening a conversation about the structural links between the agro-industry and the fossil fuel industry, and the major role it plays in the escalating climate, ecological and social crises.

What role does the Netherlands play in this? The Netherlands functions as Europe's most important distribution centre for both fossil fuels and industrial agriculture. The largest factory of the biggest nitrogen fertilizer company in the world (Yara) is located in Sluiskil, Zeeland. To make things worse, this country is hosting a huge and ruthless industrial livestock industry and performs as a European hub for the distribution of genetically modified soy imports. On the political level, the Dutch government is enthusiastically promoting the intensification of industrial food production, harmful and undemocratic trade agreements and risky new GMO techniques. Taking action here, in our own back yards, is clearly both urgently necessary and of strategic importance.

Fortunately, the real solutions are already all around us: food sovereignty, agro-ecology and peasant agriculture, which feed the planet and cool the earth. Agro-ecological farms that produce local and seasonal food can promote biodiversity and soil health, use fewer water resources, are resilient for the shocks of a changing climate, offer the possibility to capture carbon in the living soil and can provide dignified compensation to farmers. We urgently need to dismantle the fossil fuel powered industrial food system.

We should also nurture people's connection with the food they consume, for example through food cooperatives and community-supported agriculture projects. People that want to stay on the land or go back to the countryside should be encouraged and supported. Working alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real-needs-oriented and small-scale production initiatives already exist and have to be expanded further. Industrial scale meat and dairy production have to be eliminated.

2.2 Mission of the campaign

Our goal is to help build a powerful emancipatory movement from below for a sustainable and just food system. By focusing on the use of fossil fuels in the corporate controlled industrial food system, we aim to expand the concept of climate justice to include agricultural justice, connecting the fossil fuel focused climate movement and the food sovereignty movements, while opening a conversation about the structural links between the agro-industry and the fossil fuel industry, and the major role it plays in the escalating climate, ecological and social crises.

The industrial food system heavily relies on fossil fuels: from chemical fertilizers for large-scale monocultures to farm machinery, food processing and long-distance transport for a speculative global commodity market dominated by a small group of very powerful corporations. The devastating consequences cannot be ignored any longer: runaway climate change, ecological collapse, impoverishment of farmers and the destruction of rural communities. While it claims the opposite, it is clear that fossil fuel based industrial agriculture cannot feed the world, because it relies on a variety of finite resources and is destroying the very foundations of life itself: healthy soils, biodiversity, agricultural diversity, and a stable climate.

The impact of what we do here can be felt in many places, since the Netherlands functions as Europe's most important distribution center for both fossil fuels and industrial agriculture. The largest factory of the biggest nitrogen fertilizer company in the world (Yara) is located in Sluiskil, Zeeland. It is one of the largest users of gas in the country, consuming about 2 billion cubic meters of gas annually, of which a quarter is coming from the Groningen gas field. On top of Yara more synthetic fertilizer companies are active in the Netherlands. The greenhouse horticulture sector is also a major user of Groningen gas, consuming approximately 3 billion m³ per year to grow and export tropical flowers and tasteless tomatoes in winter. To make things worse, this country is hosting a huge and ruthless industrial livestock industry and performs as a European hub for the distribution of genetically modified soy imports. On the political level, the Dutch government is enthusiastically promoting the intensification of industrial food production, harmful and undemocratic trade agreements and risky new GMO-techniques. Taking action here, in our own back yards, is clearly both urgently necessary and of strategic importance.

Fortunately, the real solutions are already all around us: food sovereignty, agro-ecology and peasant agriculture, which feed the planet and cool the earth. While large-scale agricultural production uses 70 percent of the global agricultural resources to produce only 30 percent of the total food supply, peasant-based food systems provide 70 percent of our food while using only 30 percent of agricultural resources. Agro-ecological farms that produce local and seasonal food can promote biodiversity and soil health, use fewer water resources, are resilient for the shocks of a changing climate, offer the possibility to capture carbon in the living soil and can provide dignified compensation to farmers.

We urgently need to dismantle the fossil fuel powered industrial food system. Instead, we should nurture people's connection with the food they consume, such as through food cooperatives and community-supported-agriculture projects. People that want to stay on the land or go back to the countryside should be encouraged and supported. Working alternatives to capitalism through cooperative, collective, autonomous, real-needs-oriented and small-scale production initiatives already exist and have to be expanded further. Industrial scale meat and dairy production have to be eliminated.

While individual consumer choices and reducing food waste are important, alone they will not be capable of addressing the problems of industrial agriculture because the causes are systemic. The fossil fuel industry and corporate agribusiness are not there to provide people with healthy and sustainable food or to protect our climate, but to make profit and to increase their domination over the food chain.

As in other areas, agriculture is clearly showing a recurring pattern: people and nature are exploited for profit and power is concentrated in the hands of a few. We need to unite and organise against these structures that lie at the root of our problems!

2.3 What are the main FFA campaign goals?

We invite you to join us in developing a campaign strategy with a clear plan for movement building based on different levels of engagement. In this campaign, ASEED wants to be a facilitator of the grassroots, not the 'leader'. We aim to link local practical action with global political struggles by engaging in spectacular, inspiring and effective direct actions that build increasing power from below that can counter the lobby of the fertiliser industry, the rest of the agri-corporations, the eco-modernists and free market fetishists. Our actions should educate the public and trigger more and more people to confront those organisations that promote and profit from a food system that serves neither the people nor the planet. We are targeting big business and the politicians that support them, not the farmers that are victims of a corrupted system.

Organising principles

In our efforts to collaborate for change we approach our work with respect for all people and all life on Earth. We strive in both our perspectives and practices, to challenge racism, sexism, homophobia, and oppression in all its forms. We empower each other to take up new responsibilities by rotating tasks and sharing skills. We firmly oppose any attempts to use our opposition to the corporate industrial food system for reactionary or nationalist aims.

2.4 Activities under the FFA campaign

An agreement has been made in the beginning of the campaign thinking on a short term/long term strategy goal. The ASEED team decided to get a clear structure on how the campaign and all the other ASEED ongoing projects can benefit each other and we decide to organize all the ASEED projects under the FFA campaign trying to create direct links between the topic of fossil fuels and synthetic fertilizers and the ongoing project. This means that FFA became the main ASEED campaign and all the other events/projects such as Reclaim the Seeds, the Food Autonomy Festival, Free the Soil and others fell under the campaign umbrella.

2.4.1 Reclaim the Seeds in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Leuven (Belgium)

During 2018, three decentralized Reclaim the Seeds took part in different cities; Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Leuven (Belgium). ASEED took a major coordination role for the one in Amsterdam and Rotterdam and helped with the Leuven coordination

The Saturday February 24th, Reclaim the Seeds took place in Rotterdam, in the Bluecity building. This was the former Tropicana building in which various initiatives are now engaged in a circular and sustainable society. ASEED organized this Reclaim the Seeds Rotterdam together with people from ERGroeit, an annual festival about urban agriculture. ASEED was coordinating the seeds exchange table and the welcoming info table as well as helping with the overall organization.

The regional seed fair took place in the farm located in the west of Amsterdam, Fruittuin van West during the 3rd and 4th of March. Besides the seeds market, this RtS edition also held several talks about seeds, industrial agriculture and alternative food system projects. Several tours around the fruit trees biodynamic farm were organized as well. Besides coordinating volunteers, the info-table and the seeds exchange, some of the ASEED team members gave a workshop on big-seeds corporation techniques and seeds patents.

On Sunday a bike-protest leaving from the Fruittuin van West took part finishing at the local organic farm De Boterbloem, threatened by eviction for a distribution park construction (see more information below). On the way we had a great tour explaining all the history behind the Lutkemeer polder, the last agricultural land within the Amsterdam borders.



On the Saturday March the 10th, the organization Velt organized the first Belgium Reclaim the Seeds in Belgium. Same as Amsterdam, besides the seeds exchange and food market, the event had lots of political and farming talks all around the topic of seeds.

Celebrating 3 decentralized Reclaim the Seeds at the same year showed to everyone the necessity of creating more spaces for exchanging seeds, political agricultural talks and in general people's necessity of protesting against the ridiculous laws on seeds patents, GMO's and fee trades agreements. These events helped to continue facilitating more seeds saving networks in the Netherlands and neighbouring countries.



2.4.2 Free the Soil International Campaign preparation

Free the Soil (FtS) is a campaign aiming to expose the devastating practices and impacts of industrial agriculture and the major role this industry plays in the escalating climate crisis. FtS provided information, calls to action and organized a mass-action and camp to denounce industrial agriculture and the synthetic fertilizers industry. A Danish collective called KlimaKollektivet started promoting in 2017 a mass civil disobedience action planned for 2019. After talking with them during all the first part of 2018 and sharing experience during the Code Rood Groningen Action Camp, the Free the Soil Coalition (Danish, German and Dutch

organizations) started their international plenaries where ASEED took an important coordination role.



Starting the 2018 summer, all the grassroots and collective involved with the Free the Soil coordination had meetings every two months in different German locations. Part of the ASEED team was involved in all the preparation plenaries working towards the mass-action of civil disobedience against the fertilizer company Yara.

We arrived to the end of 2018 with a great sense and well structure community, with a great intersectional approach and overall really empowered for keep celebrating plenaries during 2019 having a great motivation to organize the Civil Disobedience Action Camp against Yara, in the North of Germany.



2.4.3 Food Autonomy Festival #2

On May 26th, the second Food Autonomy Festival (FAF) took place again in Bajesdorp, Amsterdam. The Food Autonomy Festival (FAF) is about presenting and celebrating alternatives and resistance to the state and corporate-controlled industrial food system and ASEED, after a great first edition, decided to celebrate a second edition this time extending the event to a two days festival.



The theme for this second edition was “Grassroots alternatives for a fossil free food system”.

ASEED wants to give special mention for all the participants: speakers, collectives, workshop facilitators, cooks, veg choppers, bar folk, seed-swappers, musicians, funds (especially Alert!) and everyone else who participated in this edition of the FAF! And of course, big thanks to all the people living in Bajesdorp for hosting us and making this event possible, and all volunteers for making the FAF#2 great!

We started the day with the first plenary about “Food Sovereignty & Agroecology” welcoming friends from Italy (CISV), Spain (Food Sovereignty Magazine) and a local CSA (De Stadsgroenteboer). A second plenary discussion took place under the theme of “Supporting autonomous spaces” with comrades from La ZAD (France) and

farmers’ friends from the Amsterdam organic farm De Boterbloem.

A third plenary took place in the afternoon with some ASEED comrades talking about the new ASEED campaign together with our Danish comrades presenting “Free the Soil”.

Besides these 3 plenaries, we had amazing talks, farming activities, cooking workshops and other events, both in the permaculture garden and in the main Bajesdorp corridor. Some of them were the Growing Mushrooms workshop lead by our friend Darren Organiclea (Worker’s cooperative growing food on the edge of London, UK), a workshop of Kaskantine relocalized in front of the Muijerij where Menno built wooden



rocket stoves, cooking activities with Taste Before You Waste and many other little events happening simultaneously.

Throughout the day, different collectives and individuals hold stands along the main path of Bajesdorp, providing information, seeds, food, drinks... This gave a very lively atmosphere to the whole festival. Contributors were Paper Jam, de Vrije Bond, Kokke-Rellen, Sexy Seitan, Code Rood, City Plot, ASEED, Food Cycle, ADM, Healthy and Affordable, Persvrijheid, in addition to a collective seed and seedlings swap table. The vegan dinner prepared by Guerilla Kitchen, which was a delicious asparagus risotto served with salad, avocado and tempeh gave some energy to the participants in order to get ready for the night program.



The music performances then started in the garden of the Muieterij. The Finnish band Slack Bird went first on stage and matched perfectly the feeling of this sunny day ending with their acoustic folk. Captain Frank & the Cheap Ho's played after them, warmed up the audience and finished their set in complete darkness. After some light was fixed, the Bucket Boyz entered the stage for the last performance. They started their show by 'borrowing' the previous band's amazing drummer, soon joined by the official one. They closed beautifully this awesome 2nd edition of the Food Autonomy Festival, which celebrated all the previously

mentioned initiatives as part of an important step in collectively reclaiming our autonomy. We must put food forward in social, economic, political, and climate justice discussions!

2.4.4 Save De Boterbloem and the Lutkemeer Polder



On the western edge of Amsterdam is one more arable farm: De Boterbloem. For generations, the Hoogendam family has grown food on fertile clay soil. In recent decades, this has also happened biologically. Now, however, the farm is under serious threat from a project developer, in the hands of local authorities, who wants to turn it into a business park. Still strange at a time when local food is trendy and the municipality of Amsterdam is talking about sustainability and urban agriculture.

In July, owner Trijntje Hoogendam received a message from the Schiphol Area Development Company (SADC) that the soil had to be delivered clean as of 1 November in order to begin construction of phase 2 of the Lutkemeer III business park. And this happened before the first phase of this site was completed. And in 2009, the Osdorp district had announced that it did not want to start the construction of phase 2 before phase 1 was fully completed. A problem is that most of the arable land has been owned by the municipality of Amsterdam since 1953 and that a few years ago in the Lutkemeer zoning plan, the use of the arable fields was changed into an industrial estate.

SADC says it is still sitting around the table with De Boterbloem. They still see a future for De Boterbloem: the yard can be preserved and given an urban agriculture function. But then agriculture without land. However, Trijntje does not like to be allowed to mow the grass of the business park.

Urban agriculture and locally produced food are in the spotlight. The municipality of Amsterdam also says it is sympathetic to this. And sometimes this offers opportunities. At the Tuinen van West, just north of De Boterbloem, anything is possible; organic orchards and garden houses are being created and the municipality is very proud of this. Then it is great that a beautiful project that has been producing local food for 100 years and is very popular in the neighbourhood is swept aside by the same municipality.



On its website, the SADC tries to give it a nice twist by explaining that if businesses are located on the site of those fields, there will be more room for housing elsewhere. And which Amsterdammer does not want more housing? However, this is a false argument. It's just about attracting more activity around Schiphol. More companies and industry provide more aviation and more aviation is good for that activity. But wasn't there something about climate change? Isn't the Netherlands also trying to reduce CO2 emissions? Then you should counteract these kinds of developments, right? Or store 'circular circling' planes? It is better to close some runways and use the space that has become available for sustainable food production, and ahead, some housing construction. Then De Boterbloem can also remain.

ASEED decided to support the local struggle and get involved from the beginning since the whole concept of access to land, land grabbing and farmland destruction fall under the FFA campaign goals and are directly link with the Boterbloem struggle As long as the fields are still there, the battle is not lost and ASEED will fight the coming years for saving the Boterbloem and the Lutkemeer Polders

2.4 Other activities related to FFA campaign

Translation and distribution La Via Campesina new GMOs brochure for Dutch audience

A new brochure was released by La Via Campesina about the new GMO's techniques developed by the big agro-industry seeds companies. ASEED translated and distributed the brochure to other's Dutch collective and organization such as the Toekomst Boeren, Code Rood, Boerengroep and also in events like Reclaim the Seeds, the Food Autonomy Festival and others.

Nieuwland info-night series

Starting in September 2018, the ASEED team launched a series of info-night events at the social-political center Nieuwland. Those events had a great welcome from the Amsterdam community interested in seeds, food sovereignty and agroecology.

The events always started with a Solidarity meal cooked by the ASEED team and volunteers and followed up with a talk, workshop or movie screening with topics related to ASEED and the Seeds campaign.

Participation in the CJA (Climate Justice Action) meeting in Amsterdam

In February 2018 the international CJA meeting took place in Amsterdam, same building where the ASEED's office is located, in the Plantage Dok. ASEED helped coordinating the space during the whole weekend and participated in all the talks and workshops that took place.

It was a great opportunity to start talking about our new FFA campaign, the future Free the Soil plans and keep growing coalitions with other grassroots groups focusing on environmental and social justice.

3. Towards 2019

The vision for 2019 is to continue making coalitions with other organizations working on the topic of Fossil Free and more specifically with groups like ASEED make the link between the Fossil Fuel industry and the Agriculture sector.

After a first great year of the FFA where lots of volunteers, grassroots collectives and NGO's got interested on the new ASEED campaign, the main focus for 2019 will be celebrating the **Free the Soil Action Camp in Germany**, keep supporting the **Boterbloem and Lutkemeer Polder Struggle** and organize the **3rd Food Autonomy Festival** putting emphasis on the issues of land grabbing, direct action and intersectionality in the food system.

Finally, ASEED will continue to maintain or develop fruitful relationships with various collectives and organisations from the Netherlands and Europe who value solidarity, grassroots empowerment and true sustainability.