



Figure 1. Susana and Celedonio harvest their potatoes in Apurimac (Perú). Autor: MVD

Latin-American School for Food Systems Resilience

ALLSA: Transformative socio-environmental learning: fostering food systems innovation grounded in local knowledge.

Why is the Latin American School (ALLSA) for Food Systems Resilience important?

WRITTEN BY THE CO-ORGANIZERS OF ALLSA PERÚ

Due to human activity, our ecosystems are changing more rapidly than at any other time in the history of humankind (EEM 2005). Some of the changes have been in climate, in the degradation of forests and grasslands, the diversion and storage of fresh water in dams, and the loss of biocultural diversity, including agricultural diversity.

Moreover the effects of climate change, such as increments in the severity and frequency of extreme weather events, droughts, floods, frosts and fires increase the likelihood of abrupt and irreversible changes that put our vital food systems at risk. Because of these changes, we have crossed the limits of global sustainability, affecting the present production and supply of food and compromising our future (Steffen et al., 2015). Of 30,000 edible plant species around the world, only 150 are now widely cultivated. Currently, 90% of food energy and protein come from just 15 crops (rice, maize, wheat, etc.) and eight animal species (Füleky 2016, FAO 1999). Yet Indigenous Peoples and smallholder farmers maintain diverse and resilient food systems, which

offer alternatives to the current global food system.

The global challenge ahead of us is to integrate multiple knowledges and sources of innovation to seek solutions to global problems and to promote sustainable food systems that nourish our growing population in ways that promote both human wellbeing and the health of our ecosystems.

A food system includes all the activities and infrastructures necessary to feed us: from production to the distribution of food and waste management (CFS 2017). At the local scale, a local food system is a collaborative network that integrates this chain of processes, and maintains and improves the environmental, economic and social health of a particular geographical area. Sustaining more resilient local food systems means having the capacity to adapt or recover from climatic and / or economic threats or 'shocks' (FAO 2014). This is why communities need to actively promote resilient food systems to not only feed, but also nourish the population in ways that respect local cultures and landscapes.

Latin America has the resources to face this challenge, since it is one of the world centers of origin of many cultivated species (Vavilov and Dorofeev 1992), and possesses a high level of agrobiodiversity and associated cultural diversity. Additionally, the agroecosystems of the region integrate a high level of local knowledge and connectivity. For this reason, the continent has many highly resilient rural areas.

Our Proposal: ALLSA

The Latin American Academy for the Resilience of Food Systems, (ALLSA), creates a space and a network for Latin Americans to address and face these challenges. Based on participatory and horizontal learning approaches for socio-ecological systems, the aim is to promote innovative processes for sustainability and the recovery capacity of local food systems. ANDES will guide us to provide transformative learning opportunities, employing decolonization methods and tools, which prioritize knowledge and traditional practices.

We will facilitate dialogue between different knowledge systems and provide spaces for the development of Indigenous capacities and the development of leadership skills. Intercultural dialogue and a holistic approach to understanding food systems will involve local experts and researchers from the Potato Park in Peru, academic and research institutions, representatives of the private sector and individuals with political influence.

In ALLSA Peru 2019 we are committed to protecting the governance spaces of indigenous peoples as well as respect and autonomy among sectors.

When and how will we address these issues?

This 10-day meeting will be held from September 14 to 25, 2019 in Cusco, Peru, along with Asocaión ANDES and the communities of the Potato Park. The school will be oriented around four transdisciplinary axes: the first, the biocultural axis, will (re)connect with traditional knowledge and integrate different local perspectives, serving as a model of how to create bridges between different knowledges and knowledge-holders. Knowledge increases the resilience of food systems. The second will examine contextual socio-ecological tools to study and assess food security and food sovereignty. The third axis will consider the problems of storage, distribution, transport and marketing of food in sustainable food chains. The fourth will examine participatory leadership and commitment to action, to foster creative approaches to problem-solving through innovation and dialogue among actors.

We hope to meet young Latin Americans between 20 and 35 years old, from Indigenous communities, universities and the public and private sectors, who will be transformative voices and actors committed to the sustainability of food systems and the biocultural diversity associated with them. We seek qualities of leadership and diversity in areas of work and action plans. The selected participants should be agents of change, community leaders and innovators.

We will invite leading academic and Indigenous mentors, including local farmers, to interact with leaders, professionals and practitioners at the beginning of their careers. Together, we will analyze intersectoral strategies for the resilience of food systems.

What is our approach and epistemological perspective?

To support the search for creative solutions to global problems, both ANDES and Global Diversity Foundation work at local and global scales. As ANDES points out, attempts to educate through culture, language and place to unite knowledge systems and pedagogies present particular challenges, but also the opportunity to create processes that support sustainable lives and balanced perspectives. Indigenous science and knowledge systems can inform environmental learning and help change values and practices.

Our approach is aligned with ANDES *Yachay Kuychi* Pluriversity for Biocultural Landscapes and Resilient Food Systems. The Andean learning concepts are integrated: Ruway (learning by doing), Yachay (thinking and knowing) and Munay (learning from the heart and making connections). These reflect different types of knowledge and forms of learning.

We affirm with ANDES that transformative learning opportunities are essential and must be available in different environments and at different levels of education, formal and informal, in order to produce meaningful changes. ALLSA seeks to offer alternatives that incorporate traditional knowledge and ecological perspectives, critical and feminist pedagogies and the dynamic connections between local and global scales.

The technical training will cover theoretical frameworks and methodologies of Indigenous, social and natural sciences for the analysis of socio-ecological systems.

Techniques include cooperative learning via diverse knowledge traditions, participatory mapping, interviews, Indigenous methods and tools such as storytelling, conceptual graphics, and *yupana*, farmer field schools. Each day will take each learning axis into account as a cycle, which will be integrated with the topics addressed.

- To develop the axis of collective leadership, we will use expository and participatory work dynamics, learn to listen to ourselves, and elevate the values that can be learned through mutual recognition.
- For the axis of socio-ecological tools, we propose to follow a sequence of group work throughout the academy. At the beginning of the event, each participant will make a presentation of 5 to 8 minutes of a problem that affects them from their own socio-environmental context.

By consensus, we will choose four environmental themes that arise from individual presentations, seeking a diversity of countries and themes. The groups will be formed based on shared themes, and will meet each morning. At the end of the academy, each team will present their reflections and learnings, and the next steps they commit to follow. Participants are expected to define a socio-ecological system, its actors, problems and, together with their colleagues, address it in a space based on the experience of the case presenter.

- For the axis of reconnection with traditional practices and nature, the intensive days of the workshop will be complemented by field visits and experiential learning with indigenous farmers and *campesinos* of the local Quechua community. The dynamics of the afternoon spent in reconnection with nature will complement the thematic discussions facilitated by mentors. We will also have ethnobotanical breaks, followed by reflection and review.

A round table will gather diverse voices to talk about resilient food systems for the future.

- For the action-oriented axis, we will use the "U Theory" tool, which seeks innovation from within. It will be developed throughout the learning process to help participants develop proposals.

We will focus on the construction of leadership in all sectors, by integrating Indigenous and campesino farmers and their representatives, as well as other participants involved in the market sector and in formulating and influencing government policies, and those involved in government agencies. investigation and development.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

An online call will be directed to Latin American participants. The form will request a summary of skills and experience in the field in which they are developed (researcher, farmer, communicator, etc.), along with a 500-word summary explaining motivation.

The final group will be selected taking into account a balance of gender, country of focus, and professional diversity.

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