

Training Strategy for the biodynamic movement

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The aim of the strategy is to work on our mission for Human Development worldwide and develop goals for the next 7 years in order for the Section and DI to work and invest jointly, together with others to reach these commonly agreed goals.

The strategy and its goals departs from two points; the current situation and the vision and mission for the future.

Current situation and needs

There are many training initiatives, schools, courses and workshops in the world, both long term established and brand new. The inserted picture is from June 2018 and the map has received updates with more trainings in February 2019.

There is also a history of engagement, coordination and actions that have provided a level of support and services to date from international organisations:

- A meeting every 2 years for educators in biodynamic agriculture organised by the Section.
- Contribution or impulses to courses worldwide by the Section
- Project support for some training courses in various countries (amongst others India, Kenia, Peru) by Demeter International
- Supporting the establishment of some biodynamic initiatives by giving back part of licensee income by Demeter International.
- To hold the overview of initiatives in the IBDC



Problems and needs in terms of training and capacity building (based on list of contributions in Annex 1).

In general, the interest in biodynamic agriculture is strongly growing in countries outside Europe. This further pressures the already existing need for more training and education opportunities and their quality, however, generally in the absence of resourceful biodynamic organisations.

- 1) Current starting initiatives and trainers; how to develop biodynamic schools in terms of curriculum, didactics, funding, training skills.
- 2) In countries in Asia, South America and Africa smallholder farmers need to learn biodynamic farming to secure their survival as a farmer, without being able to finance it themselves. This also relates to opportunities for rural youth.
- 3) In relation to the above; in many countries in Asia, South America and Africa there is not yet a biodynamic organisation that can provide services and network. Organisation capacity, leadership skills, funding to get organised, democratic structures are often missing.
- 4) In some countries in Asia, South America and Africa new training initiatives seek an independent accreditation institute which increases their funding opportunities.
- 5) Current (experienced) educators and trainers: How to teach in ways that do justice the vision? (new and sensitive methods, accessibility of anthroposophy, addressing the whole person, starting from the creativity of the person, teach or guide?).
- 6) The European market searches for biodynamic products worldwide, high demands for conversion needs more trained local advisors (and certifiers as well) – and their international acknowledgement.
- 7) In countries with developed markets, there is a need to train processors, traders and supermarkets.

- 8) Is there a full overview yet, and are courses comparable in different continents and languages? – how to establish an international overview which can be used in quality assessment?
- 9) How to facilitate continuous learning and development (entrepreneurial, adoption of new biodynamic techniques, personal and social questions) of already established biodynamic farmers.
- 10) How to raise awareness to consumers

Vision and mission

From the common vision adopted in 2016, that we want an agriculture that impels and enables people to unfold their individual potential and develop their full consciousness, our mission regarding training is:

To enable farmers, processors and traders to practice and to support agriculture for the future and to educate the own staff and consumers to raise awareness of their responsibility.

How we work is, that we foster mutually enriching and open-ended dialogues based on mutual respect to strengthen self-responsibility (Vision, Mission, Values, Principles 2016).

The essence or quality of 'how' for all future training has been further worked out by the Working Group Training Strategy (WGTS) in the following pictures:

- Farm Individuality; a course needs to have holistic picture and open space methods for sparking inspiration and self-responsibility. The trainer as the opener of a space where possibilities arise and where people are brought into their own creativity.
- Farm Organism – to be conscious to organise local for local (not fly in experts all the time). Out of holding space globally to carefully build local organisms which can stand themselves.
- The three foldedness qualities – Freedom, Brotherhood, Equality - to guide the way we relate as “teachers” and “students”. And to not forget the whole chain (producer to consumer)
- Observation of the inner and the outer and access through head heart (beauty, arts) and hand learning
- Co-active, so jointly created with space for individual reflection (own potentials and possibilities) and for meta reflection (transfer and generalisation)

Long term common goals and short term goals

Long term common goals for the next 7 years:

- 1) *Have high quality BD trainers and training initiatives all over the world to serve the real needs of farmers and of the whole value chain and community.*
- 2) *Enabling farmers to be confident to run their BD farm and develop themselves*
- 3) *Enabling local biodynamic organisations to serve their communities*

What has so far been collected on the sub goals:

Have high quality BD trainers and training initiatives all over the world to serve the real needs of farmers and of the whole value chain and community.

1a. Curriculum alignment across countries:

- For 1 week/5 day courses
- Existing courses around the world; translate into English
- Working group collect, synthesize, create
- Manual in a Wiki format so to keep improving and widening availability
- Integrate the formulated essences
- Consciousness about how to work with student interests
- Consciousness about adaptation to local conditions

1b. Accreditation of course programs

- Comparability of courses
- Quality assessment and criteria,
- Accreditation of trainers

1c. Train the trainer programs at locations in the world

- Face to face 'trainer talks' analogues to farm talks
- Focus on (intro) course level rather than on schools
- Searching methods appropriate for local situations,
- Train observation & reflection skills, inner and outer!
- Social skills, be open for questions. Give enthusiasm, hands, heart and head learning
- Trainer as opening spaces to make possible. Freedom & responsibility
- Bring people to their own creativity, BD techniques, self-responsibility, potentiality
- Explore, research, collect and share new models for training beyond traditional "schools":
- Ideas that can be adapted for deeper learning beyond introduction
- Trainers for courses to processors and traders

1d. Exchange meetings and peer-to-peer learning for educators

- Innovation in the program to offer not only exchange of those present but also make innovative approaches/content available in online tools and live streaming
- Renewing processes in existing schools reps. Groups
- Groups of trainers, who like to offer something to each other
- Conference needs to have a differentiated approach, since questions of educators are very different depending on their context

Enabling farmers to be confident to run their BD farm and develop themselves

2a. BD college on every continent and every country where BD farms are.

- IPMT programs
- Start BD farming schools to prepare youngsters to carry on this vision into the future
- Accompany new initiatives from a group of (organic) farmers (in using BD preps)
- Bursaries for smallholder farmers

2b. Translate agricultural course and/or DI standards in as many local languages as possible

2c. Continuous learning for farmers and trainers in peer-to-peer networks such as Farm Talks.

Enabling local biodynamic organisations to serve their communities

3a. Leadership skills, how to organise groups of people – analogue to IFOAM?

3b. mentoring program to learn and be inspired to organise local groups on farms or workplaces

Translation of short term goals into first actions

How do we work with this strategy?

It is not the aim to fix a precise plan for 7 years upfront. It is neither the aim to organise from the centre to the periphery, on the contrary, we aim to facilitate in order to strengthen all those in local places.

In Annex 2 you see a rough overview of goals and actions to which we aim and in which we want to localise actions so that they can run by themselves within an international network. From this strategy, work plans will be made for 1 or 2 years ahead and this strategy will be reviewed by DI and the Section every year. Both DI and the Section will invest their resources in terms of funding and in terms of time investment to acquire external funding.

Actions in 2019 and 2020

1. Teacher and trainer conference 7 -9 of November 2019
2. Digital platform for exchange of material, curricula, methods
3. Use of webinar technology to have more courses available for advisors
4. Program for capacity building of BD associations
5. Investigate accreditation of courses – what is needed for a quality assurance system

Annex 1; list of contributions.

This strategy builds on contribution from everyone who participated in:

1. Vision, Mission, Values, Principles document (2016)
2. Long term coordination project on the Training topic at the Section
3. Minutes and documents of collecting the needs of trainers in meetings/conferences in 2014, 2015 and 2016
4. Working group on Research and Training at the Members Assembly in Italy, June 2017
5. Evaluating the mission at the DI board meeting October 2017
6. A questionnaire to the list of trainers of the Section, May 2018.
7. A Working Group on the Training Strategy (WGTS) at the Members Assembly in Swiss, June 2018.
8. A Professional Group at the Agricultural Conference in Dornach February 2019

Annex 2 Timeline of sub goals

