Facilitators tools: The Agroecology card game

TAPE Line

Transitioning to Agroecology

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Table of Contents

The agroecology card game 3
1.1 Purpose and Learning Outcomes 3
1.2 How It Works 3

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THE AGROECOLOGY CARD GAME

Agroecology is a rich but often abstract concept. This activity uses a simple card-based game to make its elements and principles tangible and discussable without requiring prior knowledge from participants. It works equally well in person and online and can be used at the start of MAPs engagement or at any point in the TAPELINE training where the facilitator wants to build a shared understanding of agroecological thinking.

1.1 Purpose and Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will have:

- Encountered the key elements and principles of agroecology through their own interpretations
- Connected the FAO 10 Elements with the HLPE 13 Principles at a basic level
- Built a shared vocabulary for discussing agroecological transition in their territory
- Experienced a participatory format they can replicate in MAP sessions

1.2 How It Works

Each card carries the name of one element or principle of agroecology with a short explanation of the concept.

Steps

1. Distribute one card per participant (in person: physical printed cards; online: cards are sent to each participant via email). Each participant has the the cards of FAO and HLPE expressing the same concept.
2. Ask the first participant to place their card on the table (or move it to the shared board) and explain what the word means to them in their own words, from their own experience. No agroecology knowledge is required. All interpretations are valid as a starting point.
3. After the participant shares, the facilitator briefly explains what the element or principle represents in agroecological terms using plain language, a concrete local example if possible, and connecting it to what the participant just said.
4. Continue with the next participant and their card.

1. FAO and HLPE Cards

Here the cards that can be used at your convenience during the activity with the MAPs.

FAO:

Recycling

More recycling means agricultural production with lower economic and environmental costs.



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Circular and solidarity economy

Circular and solidarity economies that reconnect producers and consumers provide innovative solutions for living within our planetary boundaries while ensuring the social foundation for inclusive and sustainable development.



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Resilience

Enhanced resilience of people, communities and ecosystems is key to sustainable food and agricultural systems.



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Human and social values

Protecting and improving rural livelihoods, equity and social well-being is essential for sustainable food and agricultural systems.



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Culture and food traditions

By supporting healthy, diversified and culturally appropriate diets, agroecology contributes to food security and nutrition while maintaining the health of ecosystems.



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Responsible governance

Sustainable food and agriculture requires responsible and effective governance mechanisms at different scales – from local to national to global.



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Diversity

Diversification is key to agroecological transitions to ensure food security and nutrition while conserving, protecting and enhancing natural resources.



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Efficiency

Innovative agroecological practices produce more using less external resources.



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Synergies

Building synergies enhances key functions across food systems, supporting production and multiple ecosystem services.



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Co-creation and sharing of knowledge

Agricultural innovations respond better to local challenges when they are co-created through participatory processes.



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HLPE:

BIODIVERSITY



Maintain and enhance diversity of species, functional diversity and genetic resources and maintain biodiversity in the agroecosystem over time and space at field, farm and landscape scales.

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LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE



Recognize and support the needs and interests of family farmers, smallholders and peasant food producers as sustainable managers and guardians of natural and genetic resources.

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PARTICIPATION



Encourage social organization and greater participation in decision-making by food producers and consumers to support decentralized governance and local adaptive management of agricultural and food systems.

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RECYCLING



Preferentially use local renewable resources and close as far as possible resource cycles of nutrients and biomass.

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INPUT REDUCTION



Reduce or eliminate dependency on purchased inputs.

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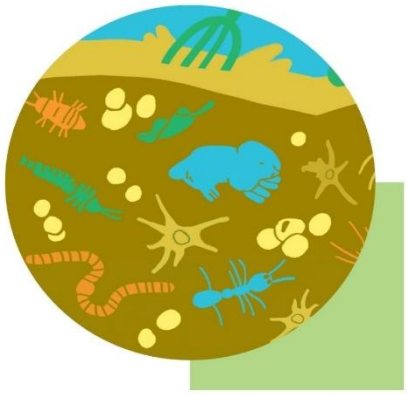
ANIMAL HEALTH



Ensure animal health and welfare.

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SOIL HEALTH



Secure and enhance soil health and functioning for improved plant growth, particularly by managing organic matter and by enhancing soil biological activity.

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BIODIVERSITY



Maintain and enhance diversity of species, functional diversity and genetic resources and maintain biodiversity in the agroecosystem over time and space at field, farm and landscape scales.

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ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION



Diversify on-farm incomes by ensuring small-scale farmers have greater financial independence and value addition opportunities while enabling them to respond to demand from consumers.

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SYNERGY



Enhance positive ecological interaction, synergy, integration, and complementarity amongst the elements of agroecosystems (plants, animals, trees, soil, water)

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CONNECTIVITY



Ensure proximity and confidence between producers and consumers through promotion of fair and short distribution networks and by re-embedding food systems into local economies.

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CO-CREATION OF KNOWLEDGE



Enhance co-creation and horizontal sharing of knowledge including local and scientific innovation, especially through farmer- to-farmer exchange.

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FAIRNESS



Support dignified and robust livelihoods for all actors engaged in food systems, especially small-scale food producers, based on fair trade, fair employment and fair treatment of intellectual property rights.

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