SIX

Movimento Campesino a Campesino

From Cultural Resistance to Social Change

I think we should not fall in the trap of seeing the development of agroecology by just looking at the physical aspects of the farm or just at the economics. The greatest impact of our work in promoting sustainable agriculture is precisely the "human farm." We as NGOs have a problem with our social position in which we are serving as a dike and often an obstacle to processes of agency within the people and greater local organization. I think we have to look for processes because any aid that arrives, whether it is food for work or whatever, will work if the community is strong and organized. . . . Agroecology is not just a collection of practices. Agroecology is a way of life—contrary to the way we are always doing things. We can't have an agroecological change without a campesino movement. We NGOs can accompany them, but we can't do it. We promote projects, and projects have a short life. They are unsustainable. The problems go farther than whether or not the aid arrived or if the people implemented different techniques.

—Nelda Martínez, Nicaragua

Why Aren't All Farmers Sustainable?

A few years ago, while attending a university seminar, I listened as a group of graduate students in agroecology presented scientific evidence on the sustainability of different farming practices to a skeptical group of conservation biologists. Using probabilistic models to compare conventional farming with agroecological practices, they showed time and again that smaller, diversified, low-external input farms were much more sustainable than larger, monocropped, industrial farms. The question-and-answer period was lively and full of debate over the assumptions built into the mod-

els, their validity, and the applicability of the results. Finally, one biologist just shook his head, "Why aren't all farmers sustainable?" he asked.

The question stopped the agroecologists cold. Why indeed? At the end of the day, unless farmers actually implement sustainable practices, it does little good to talk about their socioeconomic and environmental benefits. The answer is not found in probabilistic models or even in the practices themselves, but in the political economy of agriculture—in the institutions and relations of power among farmers, consumers, agribusiness, and governments.

Campesino a Campesino holds many lessons for those of us concerned with sustainability, food security, the eradication of rural poverty, and the protection of the environment. The promoters of MCAC have shown that, given the chance to generate and share agroecological knowledge freely among themselves, smallholders are perfectly capable of developing sustainable agriculture, even under highly adverse conditions. The capacity to develop agriculture locally is not only the agroecological key to sustainable agricultural development—for campesinos it is a matter of survival. This explains in a very fundamental way why the movement has spread as widely as it has: it works.

However, the Campesino a Campesino experience still leaves us with the question: If sustainable agriculture is so great, why aren't *all* campesinos doing it? What keeps it from scaling up? Why is it still the exception rather than the rule?

The development of sustainable agriculture in Latin America ultimately depends on a combination of efforts between farmers and the countryside's social institutions: the markets, banks, government ministries, agricultural research institutions, farmers' organizations, churches, and NGOs. Each of these institutions—including the market—has its own strengths and weaknesses; and each responds to the political agendas of the actors who are able to use it. Sustainable agricultural development is part of the larger Development arena, where the power of these institutions is accessed, contested, or undermined for different, frequently incompatible ends—such as corporate profit versus the conservation of biodiversity, or exports versus food sovereignty. Scaling up the successes of any experience in sustainable agriculture, including MCAC, is therefore not simply a technical or administrative exercise but a *political project* that will necessarily engage the power of these institutions in one way or another.

Smallholders have relatively little control over the institutions shaping agriculture. If MCAC has provided them any influence at all, it is because the movement's successes expose the glaring failures of Development. Though they may still be just "islands of sustainability," MCAC's farmers have tremendous social and political potential, simply because conventional

agriculture has failed to produce anything better—for campesinos, for the environment, or for the food security of the millions of poor rural and urban dwellers in Latin America. However, without structurally enabling conditions, a few hundred thousand agroecological smallholders will not tip the balance from conventional to sustainable agriculture in Mesoamerica. Advancing farmer-led sustainable agricultural development requires overcoming the structural obstacles to sustainability through the institutions that promote the idea of sustainability, but in practice often hold it back.

This book has attempted to share stories that provide a campesino perspective on the utility of these institutions. This final chapter will briefly sum up the political opportunities and constraints to MCAC in order to then address both the question "Why aren't all farmers sustainable?" and, just as important, "What can we do about it?"

Going to Scale: NGOs, Government Programs, Agricultural Research Institutions, and Farmers' Organizations

As we have seen, many things influence MCAC: personalities, traditions, war, the global economy, even droughts and hurricanes. In order to think about MCAC's potential as a successful alternative, we need to briefly assess the institutional factors facing campesinos in the Development arena. The key institutions in this regard have been NGOs, government ministries, agricultural research institutions, and farmers' organizations. All are in some way a part of Campesino a Campesino and as such represent the potential for "going to scale" or "tipping the balance" in favor of sustainable agriculture.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS

Nongovernmental organizations have been pioneers in sustainable agriculture and rural development. Thanks to the diverse array of NGOs, farmers in MCAC have been able to put on workshops and travel between villages and countries. They have developed and refined their methodologies for experimentation and knowledge sharing. NGOs have brought in technical experts and have taken MCAC promoters to development forums. They have encouraged campesina women to be promoters and have often opened up local dialogues on equity, pluralism, and integrated development. The somewhat eclectic, rural experiences of NGOs have resulted in creative, village-based alternatives to conventional agriculture. NGOs have "scaled out" sustainable agriculture by increasing the number and size of their programs over more and larger areas.

For their part, *mainstream development institutions* that implement bilat-

eral and multilateral aid programs have attempted to go to scale in sustainable agriculture by availing themselves of farmer-to-farmer techniques to increase local participation in national development projects. Indeed, the Campesino a Campesino methodology is one of many participatory approaches often used to make smallholders feel like "stakeholders" in conservation, reforestation, and other rural development projects.

The International Agricultural Research Centers have applied formal scientific research approaches to sustainable agricultural development similarly to the way science was applied to the generation and transfer of Green Revolution technologies. Some have piloted successful farmer-led approaches, like CIAT's Local Agricultural Research Centers (CIALs), and the Farmer Field Schools of Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE), both of which work extensively with MCAC promoters.

Farmers' organizations like the National Farmers and Ranchers Union of Nicaragua played a key leadership role in spreading MCAC through their Campesino a Campesino Program, PCAC. Because of the union's national scope, they reach farmers across the entire country, rather than in just a few villages or municipalities. Other farmers' organizations have followed suit, either in response to demand from members or to funder-driven opportunities for sustainable agriculture projects.

A combination of all these strategies would be ideal. After all, the Green Revolution transformed the Mesoamerican countryside in a couple of decades precisely because it brought governments, research institutions, banks, development agencies, and producer associations together in a concerted effort to modernize agriculture.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case with sustainable agriculture. With some exceptions, on the whole, the sectors working in sustainable agricultural development operate in separate institutional worlds. True, sometimes they overlap geographically or thematically, and occasionally farmers' organizations, NGOs, and research institutions find themselves working alongside each other in the field. Once in a while, everyone meets at a conference on sustainable agricultural development. In general, however, there is little sustained coordination among institutions, a fact painfully obvious to farmers on the ground.

The Campesino a Campesino movement *does* work with NGOs, government development projects, research institutions, and farmers' unions. It also works with local churches and religious groups, parent-teacher associations, and local government. While MCAC has clearly provided these institutions with an alternative approach, an innovative methodology, and a very active and committed constituency of "stakeholders and beneficiaries," it has not played a coordinating function per se between institutions,

and for all the talk about farmer-led development certainly does not "lead" the development institutions, the governments, the farmers' organizations, or the NGOs. This is understandable: MCAC has no centralized hierarchy and its leaders are farmers who basically lead other farmers by their own example.

Could MCAC play a catalyzing role between these institutions? Should it? What might it look like? Before answering, it is helpful to review the shortcomings of each institutional actor to try to understand the key factors limiting the integration and coordination of these efforts in the first place.

INSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS

The IARCs (International Agricultural Research Centers) continue to play a decisive role in conventional agriculture, but are neither prominent nor central in the development of sustainable agriculture. In part, this is because they have not really abandoned the Green Revolution and treat sustainable agricultural development as an "add-on" research area. Their sustainable research programs are dwarfed by the conventional agricultural research budget, and their support for the development of genetically modified crops does not contribute to their effectiveness in the development of agroecology. In fact, the preference of these institutions to prioritize capital-intensive, industrial-scale "fixes" to the problems of agricultural productivity undermines the scope of the relatively few agroecological projects they *do* have. A further serious structural problem with the international agricultural research institutions is that they tend to centralize research. Agroecology, the science of sustainable agriculture, is based on the understanding of ecosystem functions in agriculture. Because agroecosystems are highly diverse, their study tends to be ecosystem specific. Applied agroecological research flourishes in a *decentralized* research system. Centralized research systems tend to use agronomy and genetics to produce agricultural technologies that substitute for ecosystem functions—like genetically modified seeds and the Green Revolution's technological packages. Decentralized research systems (like those found in Cuba) are able to use the science of agroecology to understand local agroecosystems and raise production by *enhancing* ecosystem functions. This has the added benefit that researchers are in direct contact with farmers and technicians over broad areas, helping to overcome the difficult problem of technology transfer.

Until their basic agroecological research is effectively decentralized (and unless they somehow wean themselves from the power of the transnational corporations pushing GMOs), it is unlikely that the IARCs will ever play the same prominent role in sustainable agricultural as they do in conventional agriculture development.

While UNAG's Campesino a Campesino project literally put the Cam-

pesino a Campesino movement on the map, most *farmers' unions,* including UNAG, have yet to politically address sustainable agricultural development. Though not true for all of these organizations, many are run by large-scale farmers who tend to farm conventionally. Though as board members they may make room for sustainable agricultural *projects* for their campesino constituents, they do not pressure for sustainable agricultural *policies* as an organization. The farmers who dominate the boards of directors tend to lobby for cheaper agricultural inputs and subsidies for conventional agricultural production. This actually increases farmers' dependence on the agribusiness-agrifoods complex, making them more vulnerable to the whims of a market dominated by global finance capital and transnational corporations. In these farmer organizations, putting sustainable agriculture on the policy agenda is limited by a "democratic deficit" between smallholders in the rank and file and large farmers in leadership positions. Larger farmers have more time and money to devote to board meetings, lobbying, and political influencing. Smallholders, even though more numerous, thus have less say in what these organizations do. There is more of a chance of sustainable agriculture actually becoming a part of the political agenda in those farmer organization where leadership positions more closely reflect the campesino majority and where power is more equitably distributed between large farmers and smallholders.

Because they primarily concentrate on implementing sustainable agriculture projects, *NGOs* have not paid much attention to policies, and rarely address structural issues like land security or guaranteed prices for sustainably produced agricultural products. Having been so effective at promoting sustainability on the ground, what keeps them from addressing the larger structural issues? For one thing, most NGOs are small and cannot afford to have both professional agroecologists and professional policy advocates on staff. The truly effective development NGOs work deep in the countryside, far from the capital cities were policies are set. These NGOs tend to be funded by Northern foundations, which rightly point out that foreign international organizations have no business influencing national policy. Others either believe in the political and economic assumptions behind the laissez faire, free market approaches, or simply take these structural conditions as given. Developing the methods and techniques for sustainable agriculture in the field has been difficult enough. For most of these organizations, addressing the macroeconomic conditions for sustainability as well is simply too daunting to consider.

Campesino a Campesino methodologies have been easily co-opted by most of the *mainstream development institutions* within their "participatory" development frameworks. Of course, these frameworks do not allow for participation regarding substantive program, budget, or political decisions.

Rather, they are designed to give farmers the sense of belonging, of being "stakeholders" in the project being offered. Having a "stake" in a project, however, is an insufficient condition for the development of sustainable agriculture or for the survival and well-being of the region's peasant farmers. Having a stake means little if it can be given and taken away depending on the whims of a development institution or a fickle international market. A stake in an agricultural development project is clearly not the same as exercising a *controlling share* in agriculture itself.

MCAC and the Globalization of Mesoamerica

Campesino a Campesino has enhanced smallholders' "share" in sustainable agricultural development by helping them to improve agriculture while eliminating their dependence on external inputs. Smallholders have stopped erosion, reclaimed soil, forested hillsides, diversified crops, and raised productivity. This has stabilized the family food system and resulted in a marketable surplus, thus providing most farmers in the Movement with some autonomy from the vicissitudes of the hollowed state and the skewed global market. In many cases it has led to higher levels of local organization for village or municipal development.

Nonetheless, MCAC does not exist in a vacuum. The sad fact is that agrarian and economic policies work against smallholders in Mesoamerica. Because these countries have not protected their agriculture from the heavily subsidized imported grains from the First World, few family farmers are doing well. Southern governments have favored agribusiness and conventional agriculture by letting land concentrate in fewer and fewer hands.

Multilateral development institutions often tout their rural development projects, market-driven land reform programs, and nontraditional export projects designed to integrate farmers into the global market. Unfortunately, the precarious benefits from these programs pale against the juggernaut of structural adjustment, privatization, and trade liberalization that destroys domestic markets, shuts down agricultural services, and privatizes everything from rural credit to drinking water.[1] Currently, the real weight of development assistance in Mesoamerica is for maquiladoras, natural resource extraction, tourism, and large infrastructure projects like hydroelectric dams,waterways, and highways. This development model sees no role for smallholders, does not seriously consider regional food security, and on the heroic assumption that free trade and massive infrastructure will automatically bring about development, views sustainability primarily as a question of sustaining growth in GNP. Although there is no solid evidence that any of these activities will lead to improved rural livelihoods instead of more crushing external debt, the region's development institutions, led by

the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, continue to insist on NAFTA, CAFTA, the Initiative for Infratructure Integration of South America (IIRSA), and the Plan Puebla-Panamá. The net effect is to push campesinos off the land, leaving the food system in the hands of the transnational agribusiness-agrifoods complex. The add-on rural development projects directed toward the impoverished rural sector are designed to mitigate this structural damage, not to advance socially, economically, or environmentally sustainable agricultural development.

The differences and inconsistencies between actors and institutions in sustainable agriculture reflect the realities of the global political economy, which is centered on maximum resource extraction and profit, not sustainability and equity. Does this mean that sustainable agriculture is doomed to fail? Couldn't these actors and institutions work together to overcome these shortcomings? What if formal research institutions teamed up with NGOs to decentralize research and reach farmers directly? What if farmers' unions prioritized smallholders' agroecological demands to government policy makers and mainstream development institutions abandoned free market reforms to provide aid for credit, guaranteed prices, agricultural extension, and marketing within a campesino-driven sustainable agriculture policy agenda? What if instead of being viewed as a problem, the peasantry was viewed as a solution? Given the impressive thirty-year track record of Campesino a Campesino, what keeps all this from happening?

If we believe that the global economy itself must be transformed before we can have local conditions for sustainability, then sustainable agriculture will require nothing short of a global revolution. This is unlikely in the short or medium term. But sustainable agriculture in MCAC has always been a strategy of *resistance*, not revolution. And it is not simply another recipe for development. If, despite an adversarial political-economic context, the Movement has still gained a foothold "from below" in Mesoamerica, then instead of waiting for a revolution, perhaps it is better to ask what aspects of the current context are changeable. How can these be changed in a way that strengthens the social and political base of autonomous, farmer-led alternatives? Instead of waiting for social change, how can sustainable agriculture itself become a force for social change?

From Cultural Resistance to Social Change

Campesino a Campesino's extensive knowledge networks have been highly successful in generating and spreading sustainable agricultural practices on the ground. In effect, MCAC has decentralized the practice of agricultural development. This is both a measure of and an explanation for its successes. If agriculture is to be sustainable it must not only be based on the ecology

of the specific agroecosystem where it is being practiced, it must evolve from the social structures and cultures in which the system itself is embedded. Campesino a Campesino has built local agroecological capacities. Based on these capacities, smallholders develop their own agriculture, arguably, as sustainably as can be expected. While they are clearly constrained by lopsided global markets, hostile agrarian polices, and the absence of any effective support from the state, they have nonetheless figured out how to farm without damaging the environment or going broke. In short, they have survived.

If sustainable agriculture is to become the norm rather than the exception, then these embedded, agroecological experiences must scale out, geographically; up, into the institutions that shape agriculture's social, economic, and political terrain; and in, into the culture of agriculture itself. To go to scale, Campesino a Campesino must not only be effective on the ground, it needs cultural, social, and political power to affect the structures and policies that *hold back* the development of sustainable agriculture.

As evidenced by the appearance of sustainable projects across Latin America, sustainability, equity, social justice, and the conservation of ecological and cultural diversity have become regular discursive currency for development institutions. However, they are far from replacing the "bottom line" of national, multilateral, or regional development programs. In this context, sustainable development, whether through state intervention, multilateral projects, or the "invisible hand" of the global market, is still fundamentally focused on sustaining permanent economic growth to pay off the permanent foreign debt. By this logic, redistributive strategies that address food security, sustainable livelihoods, social and economic justice, and the conservation of ecological and cultural diversity are at best secondary, mitigating considerations in the face of the massive extraction of wealth from the countryside. Changing the superstructure of economic development to favor sustainable agriculture implies the political, economic, and social transformation of the societies that produce that superstructure. The transition to sustainable agriculture requires social change.

What kind of social change? If history has anything to teach us, it is that fundamental changes come about when an existing order enters into crisis and when social movements create political will through broad-based social pressure. Behind the façade of economic progress, industrial models for agricultural development are clearly in social and environmental crisis. Widespread, and increasingly organized, local and regional resistance to structural adjustment, transnational privatization, genetically modified crops, and debt-heavy infrastructure projects are a reflection of this and are an indication of the potential for social change in Latin America.

While many advocacy groups lobby for sustainable agriculture in

national and international forums, campesinos—the men and women actually developing sustainable agriculture on the ground—are relatively silent. Smallholders are disperse and politically weak and have little time and few resources to engage in political activity. The MCAC has spread, not through high-profile, charismatic leaders or by force of lobby or protest, but through hardworking promoters and farmer-to-farmer "capillary action" linking experiences of thousands of smallholders from hundreds of communities.

Though the MCAC-NGO partnership has been highly effective in supporting local projects and developing sustainable practices on the ground, it has had little impact on the policy context for sustainable agriculture. Despite a far-flung network of hundreds of NGOs, these supporting institutions have generally not lobbied, pressured, or otherwise organized around policy issues in a significant way. Lobbying in itself is only effective to the extent that it represents and articulates significant political and social force. In the Mesoamerican countryside, "lobbying" often means mobilizing hundreds or thousands of campesinos in marches, protests, invasions, or occupations. Presently, neither the NGOs nor the advocacy groups promoting sustainable agriculture have the capacity to do this. Some farmer organizations do mobilize around agrarian issues, particularly on access to land. However, once peasants receive land, support for the sustainable use of that land is rarely, if ever, the subject for protest or mobilization.

Ironically, MCAC's strength as a network—i.e., its capacity to generate farmer's agroecological knowledge in a horizontal and decentralized fashion—is also its political weakness as a social movement. On one hand, there is no coordinating body capable of mobilizing MCAC's network for social pressure, advocacy, or political action. On the other hand, MCAC's effectiveness at developing sustainable agriculture at the local level has kept its promoters focused on the agroecological *practices* rather than the socioeconomic *conditions* for sustainable agriculture. A focus on the socioeconomic policies limiting sustainable agriculture, and the ability to create social pressure, are necessary conditions for MCAC to become an effective movement for social change.

For the Movement to overcome these limitations, the campesinos in MCAC will need to become as knowledgeable regarding the structural conditions for sustainable agriculture as they are in the practices of sustainable agriculture itself.

As the testimonies in this book demonstrate, MCAC's promoters are very aware of globalization. Their information, however, is patchy, and their understanding of where and how they might resist is unclear and limited to sustainable farming and migration. There is no reason to assume, however, that promotores in the Movement could not become *structurally literate.* There is every reason to believe that they could and would also incorporate

political-economic information about industry, policy, markets, and finance into their existing networks for sharing agroecological knowledge. With thematic and methodological support from NGOs, promoters could incorporate a dialogical suite of farmer-to-farmer methods for sharing structural information into MCAC's body of agroecological knowledge. Structural issues like food sovereignty, agroecological agriculture versus genetically modified crops, intellectual property rights versus farmers' rights, and other themes could be included in MCAC workshops, cross visits, and regional gatherings.

The missing link between practical and structural knowledge could be bridged by linking advocacy groups and farmers unions and federations to sustainable agricultural development NGOs. Advocacy groups could provide training and information regarding structural issues, NGOs could help promoters develop appropriate methodologies, and MCAC's farmer-to-farmer networks could take care of spreading structural knowledge. As was the case with agroecological knowledge, it would probably only be a matter of time before these networks began to *generate* information as well. Experiences in preserving agrobiodiversity in the face of transgenic contamination, resistance to colonization by the soy-beef industry, or the creation of local and regional markets for food sovereignty could all be easily shared alongside the agroecological innovations that constantly emerge and spread within MCAC.

Just as the expansion of farmers' agroecological knowledge created a demand for services in sustainable agriculture, the expansion of structural knowledge among campesinos will create a demand for agroecological advocacy.

How this demand is met will depend largely on smallholders and the possibilities for complementary capacities with farmers' organizations, NGOs, and advocacy groups and will likely vary widely from place to place. For example, promoters might pressure farmer organizations for agroecological policy advocacy or for greater representation on the boards of directors in order to ensure that their agroecological demands form an integral part of the organization's political agenda. Or they might seek more direct linkages with advocacy groups for direct action. Then again, they might demand more political accountability from the funding institutions and NGOs that bring them agricultural projects, pressuring them to take proactive positions on structural reforms for sustainable agriculture. Perhaps peasants might pressure agricultural research institutions for greater accountability and transparency as well (after all, it is smallholders' agrobiodiversity that provides the basic genetic material to these institutions to begin with). Then again, smallholders might decide to organize locally, within their own municipalities, opposing multinational seed companies

and research institutions to keep their counties GMO-free. They might demand that government set up programs to channel and match remittances to finance and market sustainably farmed products.

There are many ways that campesinos in MCAC, when armed with structural knowledge, could influence the institutions presently operating within the sphere of sustainable agricultural development. However, MCAC's most important, singular opportunity in this regard is cultural: promoters can create *social awareness* among the smallholder sector in the Mesoamerican countryside. This is the first step in building a strong, broad-based movement for social change.

Integrated Transnational Advocacy Networks

Most campesinos don't fight for water rights, land rights, or for abstract notions of sustainability, justice, or "participation" in development . . . they fight for food, for water, for land, for forests, and for a fair price for their products. They struggle for good healthcare, for decent dwellings, and for education for their children. In short, they fight for their livelihoods, not for causes.

As individuals, campesinos hold on fiercely to their dignity, and they reaffirm their rural and indigenous cultures, not because of the principle of dignity or the ideal of culture, but because cultural integrity ensures their existence—to ignore or deny it is to sabotage the networks of mutual aid and reciprocity recognized as essential to survival in a risky, unpredictable, and often hostile world.

Agroecology and sustainable practices help reduce campesino families' risk of livelihood failure over time by reducing their level of vulnerability to external economic, environmental, or political shocks. In this concrete, straightforward sense, the struggle for sustainability is a struggle for autonomy, for protection of and control over production factors essential to survival.

This is not new. Campesinos have survived this way for centuries. What *is* new is that the Campesino a Campesino movement has used agroecology and horizontal learning networks to link campesino communities across village, municipal, and national boundaries. Also new is that these networks occur in a larger, structural context of national and transnational movements for social justice and environmental sustainability. The MCAC's networks have practice and demographic weight but no political influence. The advocacy networks can exert significant political influence but lack a social base for lasting change. The divide between sustainability as advocated by activists and sustainable agriculture as actually practiced on the ground by MCAC reflects the social and political atomization of both

campesinos and activists. Overcoming the divide between alternative politics and the struggles of everyday life in the countryside depends on linking the two. Successful social movements are formed by integrating activism with livelihoods. These integrated movements create the deep, sustained, social pressure that produces political will—the key to changing the financial, governmental, and market structures that presently work against sustainability. Sustainability requires social change, which is in turn dependent on the force of social movements.

If Campesino a Campesino is to become an effective social movement that affects both agricultural practice *and* the structures holding back sustainability, it will need to link its agroecological practice to structural literacy and to the *transnational advocacy networks* that lobby and pressure for structural change worldwide. By the same token, if activists for sustainable agriculture expect to have a social impact on political and economic structures, they will have to integrate their advocacy to ground-level campesino struggles for sustainable livelihoods.

The integration of Campesino a Campesino networks with transnational advocacy networks is the major challenge facing the Movement and facing sustainable agriculture in Latin America.

Establishing integrated transnational advocacy networks for sustainable agriculture will depend less on the farmers of MCAC than on the NGOs and activists supporting and advocating sustainable agricultural development. It is not up to campesinos to bridge the divide between development and advocacy—it is up to NGOs and activists to begin linking activism with practice. The Campesino a Campesino movement offers many opportunities for building a deep and politically effective social movement for agricultural sustainability. Localized, "small-scale experiments" in this kind of integration are already underway. If activists and NGOs can learn to work with MCAC's hands of production and protection and walk with the Movement's legs of innovation and solidarity, these networks may well have a significant impact on the struggle for sustainability in Latin America.

WE CAME TOGETHER to write a book. This is a way of writing a continuing chapter, a chapter that makes us stronger, a chapter that brings us together. In the future I hope that we can all carry out actions together for the good of our land and our self-sufficiency. As farmers we defend what we produce and consume. We have to promote unity among our organizations. The unity between campesinos is the way to defend the Campesino a Campesino movement and we are going to make it stronger each day. Remember, our chapter is open. We have so much to write, so much to continue doing, so much to work for, and above all, so much to contribute. —*Alicia Sarmientos, Tlaxcala, (Mexico 2004)*

SOCIAL SCIENCE / THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT / RURAL

Campesino a Campesino is the first book to tell the story of the Farmer to Farmer movement which developed in southern Mexico and war-torn Central America over the last three decades. Holt-Giménez describes the social, political, economic, and environmental circumstances that shape the movement. It vividly brings to life the hopeful stories of peasant farmers helping one another to farm sustainably, protecting their land, their environment, and their families' future.

"*Campesino a Campesino* tackles some of the most complicated political, ecological and economic conundrums of the day and, in the campesinos' compelling stories, we come to understand that viable alternatives exist in even the most impoverished zones of rural Latin America." —Marc Edelman, Professor of Anthropology, Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, author of *Peasants Against Globalization*

"This book will prove to be a benchmark for farmer-based partnerships in sustainable development. Holt-Giménez shows us how the best agroecologists are often the farmers themselves; we have much to learn from them. *Campesino a Campesino* will stand for a long time as the example of meaningful participatory action research." —Stephen R. Gliessman, Alfred Heller Professor of Agroecology, University of California–Santa Cruz

"Grassroots development at its best! While many cross-border networks get called transnational social movements, this one's the real thing. Holt-Giménez creatively chronicles the history and impact of twenty-five years of campesino innovation in sustainable agriculture in Mesoamerica." —Jonathan A. Fox, Professor of Latin American and Latino Studies, Merrill College, University of California–Santa Cruz

"*Campesino a Campesino* is perhaps the world's foremost sustainable agriculture movement, and everyone concerned about the future of farming should study it. This book is *the* essential guide to the history and lessons of this crucial movement." —Peter Rosset, Land Research Action Network

Eric Holt-Gimenez, Ph.D., spent over twenty five years in Mexico and Central America as an agroecologist and rural organizer.

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CAMPESINO A CAMPESINO

Voices from Latin America's FARMER TO FARMER MOVEMENT for Sustainable Agriculture

Eric Holt-Giménez