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Nextfood - Educating the next generation of professionals in the agrifood system

Practice Abstract #14: Three months certificate course in Agroecology at University of Calcutta

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The 3 months certificate course in agroecology is an opportunity for the farmer trainers, agri-business entrepreneurs, development workers from any agri/food related background to develop and design solutions to an actual challenge in the agri-food system. The pedagogical approach of the course focused to bring a shift in paradigm from a linear to a cyclical approach to learning based on an active action reflection. The main task, was to engage with farms to find out challenges and offer solution. The learning started in an ideal farm and ends with sharing the experience with larger audience through exhibition.

Students who joined this course learned

- i) system dynamics
- ii) action-oriented learning to train stakeholder
- iii) solving real life problems in agri-food sectors.

The major skills achieved were Observation, Reflection, Visioning, Dialogue, Participation, Communication.

The main practical recommendations:

Short term impacts:

- Improved understanding of pedagogical requirements in Agroecological teaching and learning
- Students qualified through the course enthusiastic about initiating agro-ecological actions and some are already pursuing the same.

Long term impacts:

- Adaptation of developed and adapted pedagogical methods in other university curricula where possible.

Improved human resource with Agroecological system skills and orientation to initiate restorative actions in agriculture and food system.