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**CALL:** RURAL RENAISSANCE –  
FOSTERING INNOVATION AND  
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

**TOPIC:** RUR-13-2017 BUILDING A  
FUTURE SCIENCE AND EDUCATION  
SYSTEM FIT TO DELIVER TO  
PRACTICE

**GRANT AGREEMENT:** NO 771738

**DURATION:** MAY 2018 TO APRIL  
2022

**COORDINATOR:**

Dr Martin Melin, Swedish University  
of Agricultural Sciences, Alnarp,  
Sweden

**WEBSITE:**

<https://www.nextfood-project.eu/>



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

### Practice Abstract #22: Farmers as teachers of Agroecology

Authors: Ritam Bhattacharya, Anshuman Das, Parthiba Basu,  
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During the 3-month certificate course in Agroecology at the University of Calcutta, target students act as farmer trainers and extension workers. The backbone of the course is for students to understand the social, economic, and ecological challenges faced by smallholder farmers and looking for options to address those challenges.

The students engage in multiple forms of interaction with the farmers. At the beginning, students are staying at farms which are well-established zero external input integrated farms to learn from farmers about planning, techniques, practices, interaction with the market etc.

Interaction is free flowing but also structured in the sense that farmers are already oriented to making the students work on the farm, explain about farm planning, resource flow etc.

A few weeks into the course, students are again staying with the farmers to assess the challenges through various Participatory Resource Appraisal (PRA) tools.

And at the end, students are again sent to the same farmers to test some solutions together. Farmers give their feedback about students' performance as to their eagerness to learn, inhibitions in staying and working on the farms, and as regards engagement.

Acting as farmer trainers and extension workers, students learn that:

- farmers communicate and express themselves differently than the way in which they may be used to;
- observation is key to ask questions to farmers.
- it is good to plan the day together with the farmers.
- it is important to stay and have food with the farmer's family.
- keeping a student's diary about the farm work is helpful.

it is important for each of the students to summarize the everyday learning and present it to the larger group of students.



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

### Practice Abstract #22: Agricultores como profesores de agroecología

Autores: Ritam Bhattacharya, Anshuman Das, Parthiba Basu, University of Calcutta, Welthungerhilfe, India.

Durante el curso certificado de 3 meses en Agroecología en la Universidad de Calcuta, los estudiantes seleccionados actúan como capacitadores agrícolas y trabajadores de extensión. La columna vertebral del curso es que los estudiantes comprendan los desafíos sociales, económicos y ecológicos que enfrentan los pequeños agricultores y busquen opciones para abordar esos desafíos.

Los estudiantes participan en múltiples formas de interacción con los agricultores. Al principio, los estudiantes se quedan en parcelas que son integradas sin insumos externos bien establecidos, para aprender de los agricultores sobre planificación, técnicas, prácticas, interacción con el mercado, etc. La interacción fluye libremente pero también está estructurada en el sentido de que los agricultores ya están orientados a hacer que los estudiantes trabajen en la parcela, explicar la planificación del sistema, el flujo de recursos, etc.

Unas semanas después del curso, los estudiantes se quedan nuevamente con los agricultores para evaluar los desafíos a través de varias herramientas de Evaluación participativa de recursos (PRA).

Y al final, los estudiantes son enviados nuevamente a los mismos agricultores para probar algunas soluciones en conjunto. Los agricultores dan su opinión sobre el desempeño de los estudiantes en cuanto a su entusiasmo por aprender, sus inhibiciones para permanecer y trabajar en las granjas y su compromiso.

Actuando como capacitadores de agricultores y trabajadores de extensión, los estudiantes aprenden que:

- los agricultores se comunican y se expresan de manera diferente a la forma en que pueden estar acostumbrados;
- la observación es clave para hacer preguntas a los agricultores.
- Es bueno planificar el día junto con los agricultores.
- Es importante quedarse y compartir comidas con la familia del agricultor.
- Es útil llevar un diario del estudiante sobre el trabajo agrícola.

Es importante que cada uno de los estudiantes resuma el aprendizaje diario y lo presente al grupo más grande de estudiantes.

