

Experience by Fundación Segundo Montes

In EL SALVADOR

At the end of 2013, the Environmental and Climate Change Commission of the Salvadoran Congress, with 45 votes in favour, approved the modification of the Law on the control of pesticides, fertilisers and products for agricultural use, which allows the prohibition of 53 agrochemicals.

The **problem** was that large coffee growers, sugar cane growers and representatives of agrochemical marketing companies started a radio and television campaign against this proposal of the Environment and Climate

Change Committee, which reflects the feelings and thoughts of many farmers' organisations about the negative effects on human health of the use of agrochemicals.

Main characteristics

- Design of organic agriculture courses
- Promotion of organic products in the mass media
- Awareness campaigns resulted in a decrease in the use of pesticides

Experience description

The partner organisations and members of the Organic Agriculture Movement of El Salvador (MAOES) accompanied the proposal for a ban on pesticides with the Environmental and Climate Change Commission of the Congress. We succeeded in making the problem a matter of public discourse. However, the economic power was put in front of this proposal, which made the political power give in. Therefore it was discussed in the MAOES to carry out grassroots work to promote the knowledge of organic agriculture. In this way, it is the peasants who will start to change this reality from below by stopping the use of these products. Consequently, it could be said that this was a good practice of learning from a failure.



Other characteristics



REASONS FOR FAILURE

- Entities with great power and economic interests prevented the approval of the modification of the law.
- Lack of financial resources to confront transnationals and agrototoxin monopolies



LESSONS LEARNED

- Organic farming starts from the grassroots - the farmers.
- Partnerships are needed with farming families, not with public officials.
- Community partners must be involved in finding solutions.



CORRECTIVE MEASURES

- Continuation of close cooperation with farming families
- Promoting organic farming also among young people
- Follow-up discussion between institutions and community organisations