

Kristin Vala Ragnarsdóttir

What I would like to see emphasised in the NDP is focus on learning from ecosystems and nature to feed the world - which of course draws on the knowledge of indigenous people because they have been living sustainably on their land for centuries.

To exemplify that many people have come to understand this wisdom:

1. There is the emerging interest in Agroecology - taken up by the UN as the way to feed people on the planet in the future. It was born in the late 1970s Mexico, where researchers from Mexico and the US learned from local farmers, one of them over 100 years old then and delivered crop yield that was up to 10x higher than those in the area that conducted "industrial" agriculture.
2. Another systems/ecological based way of thinking for food growing - but also taking into account many societal, local economic and well-being aspects of society is Permaculture (Perma(nent) (Agri)culture) - born in Australia in the 1970s and has now spread around the world. Permaculture is about setting up food systems that fit the local ecological, climate and geographical surroundings. Permaculture is at the heart of many ecovillages that are sprouting up across the world.
3. A third example is the Grandmother's University that Vandana Shiva has set up in her Nardanya Institute - where elder women teach younger women about seed saving and local organic agriculture.
4. There has been an increasing interest in organic agriculture across the world in the past 30 years or so.

Both Agroecology and Permaculture have a lot of synergy with traditional agriculture in Bhutan. These are four examples that underpin Bhutanese aims of 100% organic growing by 2020 (or was it 2015?) - and are in my mind because I am writing the agricultural part of the Ecological Sustainability substantive chapter.