



FAME Workshop: Internationalisation of water battles; empowering local stakeholders

Thursday 15 March 10h00 – 12h30 , Docks des Suds room Cabaret Rouge 4

The Justicia Hídrica alliance: research and action on water accumulation, conflict and civil society strategies (Rutgerd Boelens, Wageningen University Netherlands /Catholic University Peru)

Globalization and a neoliberal policy climate allowed some actors to concentrate water and decision-making power at the expense of less powerful ones, threatening their water and food security while also causing environmental degradation. Resulting water conflicts happen over access to resources, contents of rights and rules, the legitimate authority to make those rules, and the discourses used to articulate realities. The Justicia Hídrica/Water Justice alliance sets out to support water policies that contribute to an equitable distribution of water and democratic allocation procedures. Through a broad alliance of researchers, policy-makers, professionals and grass-root organizations, chiefly in Latin America, but also in countries in Africa, Asia, North America and Europe, the project combines: interdisciplinary research on the dynamics and mechanisms of water accumulation and conflicts; training for and conscientization of a critical mass of water professionals, grassroots leaders and policy-makers; and support for civil society strategies that engage with the questions, needs and opportunities of those groups with less rights and voice in terms of water control.

Land grabbing and the control over water (Henk Hobbelink and GRAIN, UK)

The past few years have witnessed a massive wave of landgrabbing in which foreign corporations take over land in poor countries to grow food or biofuels for export. They are also true watergrabs, as these deals require enormous amounts of water for irrigation. In many cases local communities see the access to their traditional water sources blocked and their water supply polluted with agrochemicals. Besides direct land and water grabs there are numerous indirect ways in which local communities are denied access to land and water. The UN now actively promotes private sector involvement on a global scale in the name of Public Private Partnerships and Corporate Social Responsibility under the Global Compact. Increasingly it is adopting the model of Multi-Donor Trust Funds involving private foundations, corporations in financing development projects in the name of poverty alleviation and environmental protection. The new developments call for new strategies against land and water grabbing.

Farmers' fight for control over local water resources in an international perspective (Asli Ocan, ÇİFTÇİ-SEN, Turkey)

Farmers' Union Çiftçi-sen from Turkey, a member of la Vía Campesina faces a big issue in Turkey both on rivers crossing national borders and local struggles against hydro-electric plants in many villages. Çiftçi-sen will give a presentation on water problems (pollution, privatization), their transnational

impacts and local struggles based on the Turkish case. We would like to share farmers' experience in Turkey with other stakeholders in local and international struggles over control over water and water sources from other parts of the globe.

Water Stewardship (Jeroen Vos, Wageningen University Netherlands)

Increased global trade of agricultural commodities has augmented the use of fresh water. In arid regions this export of 'virtual' water, embedded in products sold abroad, has increasingly affected local communities and ecosystems around the globe. Recently, initiatives for certification of agricultural production are showing a rapidly growing interest in considering 'water issues' in schemes of product certification. Agribusiness use product certification as part of their "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR) strategy. However, in practice producer certification schemes discriminate against smallholders and bear the danger of "greenwashing". Can local water user communities, labour unions and environmental movements use water stewardship claims to defend local water rights?

European Water policy, corporate interests and the right to water (Jerry van den Berge, European Federation of Public Services Unions)

Water and water resources are becoming more and more terrain of conflicting interest since water is being considered as a 'scarce' good. European neoliberal policies promote market structures and dynamics as the most efficient way too allocate water resources. This policy continues even when knowing that market dynamics and corporate interests seek to make profits in the short term and neglect long term effects, and without analysing at what and at who's expense these profits are made. The European public service trade unions have promoted and keep promoting quality public services as core to achieve fair and equitable distribution of water services and to maintain public control over water resources to safeguard them for future generations. EPSU will reveal its plan for a European Citizens' Initiative to empower people in defence of their human right to water.

Moderator Shiney Varghese, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Organised by:

EPSU: European Federation of Public Service Unions

IATP: Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

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