

AGROECOLOGY

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MASTER'S OF SCIENCE (UMB)

WHAT IS AGROECOLOGY

The academic field that bridges agriculture, nature and society.

Agroecology links practice and science in describing, analyzing, and managing complex agroecosystems. We focus on integrating ecology, agriculture, socio-economics, and culture with an ultimate goal of sustaining production, food security, community and environmental health.

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STUDENT PROFILE : GLORIA C. ROTOLO



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"The methodology applied to learning and ground-breaking topics such as visionary thinking were challenging and extremely enriching and pushed me to new places of knowledge..."

BECOMING AN AGROECOLOGIST

By G. Lieblein, E. Østergaard and C. Francis

Agroecology provides the framework to organise learning opportunities for students interested in solving challenges in today's world. Our programmes in agroecology concentrate on discovery and learning. Rather than agroecological theory having primary value,

we immerse students in practical phenomena at the farming and food system level, and let these phenomena determine what theory is necessary and relevant. Teachers are converted from lecturers to leaders and catalysts in the learning process. In a learning landscape on campus, on

farms, and in communities, we find direction by focusing on how students can become agroecologists. Students will have knowledge of farming and food systems, and the skills necessary to handle complexity and change, to link theory to real life situations, to communicate and facilitate in an effective way, and to be

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FACILITATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN AN ORGANIC DAIRY CORPORATIVE IN DENMARK

By Dorte Christensen

In recent years the organic milk production in Denmark has exceeded consumer demand. This put economic pressure on dairies and farmers and increased competition between the dairies. One of the smaller dairies that had great difficulties surviving in this competitive environment was the organic dairy corporative, which in this thesis is named ORDA. The two objectives of the present thesis were: 1) to facilitate a process of organisational change in ORDA, built on systems theory and practice, 2) reflectively evaluate the process and the outcomes, towards improving the theory and practice.



The crucial task of the systems analyst/researcher is therefore one of acting as a facilitator of a change process, within which people can share their multi-perspectives on reality and engage in a debate about them, in a way that will lead to change, which they find desirable. This means that systems research becomes action research, which has the dual aim of pursuing both action (change) and research (understanding/learning) by taking action together with people to address issues of pressing concern to them.

The reflective evaluation of the facilitated organisational change process and its outcomes lead us to conclude that the major strength of the methodology of sequential experiential learning cycles was openness to new ideas action, at the same time allowing a certain level of rigidity to be maintained. Further, the discipline of creating a shared vision could be easily incorporated into this experiential methodology, where it acted as the major catalyst for the organisational learning and change achieved. These organisational change processes all required collective efforts, guided by a facilitator. This opens up for a new professional role: the facilitator of change as an intervener in agricultural contexts.

Abstract of MSc Thesis, KVL, Denmark, 2004

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“The agroecology program binds together learning for knowing and learning for becoming a professional. This is very different from learning as a specific activity directed towards acquisition of abstract and general knowledge from books.”