

Sow your Resistance 2019



Final Summary Report Peasant Seeds International Meeting 4 - 9 November 2019 Occitanie, France

Organizing associations :



In collaboration with :



Sommaire

1- Reminder of the framework of the action	3
Context.....	3
Consortium project leader :.....	3
Three main partners for Local, European and international anchoring.....	4
Thematic	4
Flow of the event	5
Objectives, Audiences and Expected Results	5
General Objectives.....	5
Publics.....	5
Expected results.....	5
2- First Assessment of the Action	6
1. Look Back on the Meeting	6
2. Key datas.....	7
3- Teachings and Way Forward	12



1- Reminder of the framework of the action

Context

Since its creation in 2003, the French Peasant Seed Network (RSP) has been organizing international meetings bringing together practitioners, farmers, gardeners and seed artisans from all over the world. These international meetings have been an important lever to regain the knowledge and know-how associated with seeds, too often lost in industrialized countries. This regular gathering have made it possible to build links, alliances and projects between practitioners of cultivated biodiversity in the diverse regions of the world, committed to peasant-ecological and solidarity-based agriculture.

Today, RSP includes around ninety organizations in France, including twenty in Occitanie, a new administrative region in South of France. Supported by the RSP, and coordinated by the international solidarity organisation BEDE which has its headquarters in Montpellier, four collectives from various territories of Occitanie - Chemin Cueillant (Minervois) and les Semeurs du Lodévois Larzac, Pétanielle (Tarn), Rénova (Ariège), managing Peasant Seed House have proposed to co-organize an international Peasant Seeds meetings in 2019 in the region.

Consortium project leader :

- **BEDE** (Biodiversité : Échanges et Diffusion d'Expériences) is an international solidarity association based in Montpellier, France. Member of the Peasants' Seeds Network since its foundation, BEDE pursues the objective of linking the agricultural project to the society project, by collaborating in solidarity with the dynamics initiated by practitioners of ecological and peasant agriculture that feed their territories. BEDE supports and networks communities and territories in différentes regions of Europe, North and West Africa. www.bede-asso.org
- **Chemin Cueillant** is an international solidarity association based in Montpellier, France. Member of the Peasants' Seeds Network since its foundation, BEDE pursues the objective of linking the agricultural project to the society project, by collaborating in solidarity with the dynamics initiated by practitioners of ecological and peasant agriculture that feed their territories. BEDE supports and networks communities and territories in several regions of Europe, North and West Africa. www.bede-asso.org
- **Collectif Semeurs du Lodévois-Larzac** is an association of gardeners and vegetable producers whose aim is to collect and conserve native varieties and to bring together farmers and citizens committed to the fight for biodiversity. <http://semeurslodevoislarzac.org/>
- **Pétanielle** is an association that brings together farmers and gardeners for the conservation and development of cultivated biodiversity. Its activities focus mainly on bread making cereals. The common objective, beyond safeguarding the varieties, is to make them available and promote them as an alternative to commercial seeds for the agro-industry to enable farmers to regain autonomy and everyone to have access to quality products while alleviating the constraints on our environment. www.petanielle.org.
- **Renova** is an association that works to safeguard and enhance the value of the fruit-growing heritage between the valleys of Ariège and Garonne rivers, in particular by means of

valorization (processing workshop). www.renova.arize.fr/-La-Federation-Renova-.html

- **Peasants' Seeds Network (RSP)** leads a movement of peasant collectives rooted in the territories that renew, disseminate and defend farmers' seeds, as well as the associated know-how and knowledge. These collectives are inventing new seed systems, a source of cultivated biodiversity and autonomy, in the face of the industry's monopoly on seeds and its patented GMOs. www.semencespaysannes.org. RSP has a particular role of national coordination, giving information, calling on collectives and farmers throughout France and leading workshops and other activities.

Three main partners for Local, European and international anchoring

- **CPIE Bassin de Thau** is an associative network in the territory of Thau Lagoon. Its aim is the valorization, the concerted development and the promotion of initiatives in the field of environment and sustainable development, approached in a global way. The CPIE provided a link with the territory, in particular with the city of Mèze, where the meetings and public events were located. It played a decisive role in terms of communication and was particularly involved in the final large public day.
- **European Coordination for Liberating Diversity (EC-LLD)** is since 2012 an international, non-profit association, based in Brussels, whose objectives are to coordinate the positions and actions of the national farmers' seed networks to encourage, develop and promote the management of biodiversity cultivated on farms and in gardens in Europe. The French Peasants Seed Network (RSP) is one of the founding members. EC-LLD ensured the European dimension of the event by bringing participants from about ten European countries, by organizing a workshop-forum, allowing the exchange and the diffusion of Sow your Resistance at a European level.
- **LCCFD-Terre Solidaire (Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development)** was created in 1961. It has a double mission: to support the poorest populations, on all continents, through development actions implemented by local organizations, partners on four main axes, including food sovereignty and agroecology. The CCFD has been one of the main support towards the international scene, by taking charge of the coming of a dozen international participants from Asia, and Africa and by mobilizing its volunteers throughout the territory of Occitanie.

Thematic

The previous international meetings in 2012 in Périgueux and in 2015 in Lescar-Pau in the village of Emmaus were held respectively on the themes of "Farmers' Seed Houses" and "Farmers' Seeds Feed the World". For these meetings in Occitanie, the organizers took up Pau's slogan "Sow your Resistance" and decided to work on the climate change on agriculture and food. The observation is general among farmers networks all over the world, peasant communities have observed in recent years sudden and unpredictable rainfall patterns or temperatures modifications. New pests and diseases are emerging and many commercial seeds are no longer adapted. The agro-biodiversity maintained in the fields by ecological and peasant-farming methods confers resilience to agrarian systems. It is what we want to share.

The aim was for the participants to discuss also the consequences of the privatization through patents and the concentration of the seed sector monopolized by giant agrochemical companies. With globalization, public policies and regulatory frameworks in all countries support industry standards that increasingly limit the use that farmers, gardeners and diversity keepers can make of their seeds and seedlings. These standards undermine the fundamental rights of both peasants (right to seeds) and citizens (right to food) by allowing an industrial monopoly on the first link in the food chain. These international meetings provided an opportunity to exchange on how to defend the fundamental rights necessary for food sovereignty. They were organized in early November to coincide with the meeting of the Governing Body of the International

Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources ITPGRFA (11-16 November 2019) in Rome, which dealt with farmers' rights over their seeds.

Flow of the event

The international meetings "Sow Your Resistance 2019" were organized in three stages during one week (November 4 to 9) in the following format :

- The first stage: three days (4-6 November) decentralized around visits to farms and collective facilities allowing exchanges of practices between peers in the field with an evening opening to the public. These exchanges involved some fifty international participants, and reached several hundred citizens living in rural areas.
- A second phase (7, 8 November), called "Les Rencontres de Mèze", at Taurus Centre Mèze (Hérault), hosted thematic and practical exchanges for nearly 300 international and national participants.
- The closing of the event through a "day for large public", on Saturday 9th November, aiming to spread around a large associative forum and 3 main themes "Sowing", "Resist" and "Eat" (practical animations/workshops, conferences, seed exchange, film debate, Round Table on Land/Sea issues...) in partnership with the CPIE of the Thau Basin.

Objectives, Audiences and Expected Results

General Objectives

Since its inception, this project has had two goals: to encourage sharing among peers and to open these exchanges to the large public. Therefore our objectives were presented as follows :

- To cross experiences and peasant practices around the management of cultivated biodiversity, to strengthen the links between local and international networks working on seeds, peasant agroecology and food sovereignty, especially in the context of climate change ;
- To raise awareness among the citizens and the agricultural world of Occitanie on the issues related to agricultural and food biodiversity maintained by farmers in their region, and throughout the world.

Publics

The main audiences that have benefited from these exchanges are :

- Farmers, project leaders, resource persons from academic institutions: at local, national and international level: between 200 and 300 people.
- Citizens of the Occitanie region and of the Thau Basin: 1000 people for the whole week in partnership with the CPIE of the Thau Basin.

Expected results

For the international guests, farmers and project leaders participating in the meetings, the expected results targeted were :

- the acquisition of know-how and socio-ecological knowledge about farmers' varieties and cultivating diversity through the exchange of practices ;
- the acquisition of a better knowledge of international contexts and issues related to seeds and agroecology.

For the citizens participating in the opening moments during the week, we wished :

- to raise awareness of the international issues of cultivated biodiversity and the solutions provided by farmers , and more largely on biodiversity in food and health.



2- First Assessment of the Action

1. Look Back on the Meeting

The general objectives have been fully achieved through farm visits and meetings in Mèze allowing complete exchange in the field, as well as exchanges of knowledge both through thematic and practical workshops and informal moments.

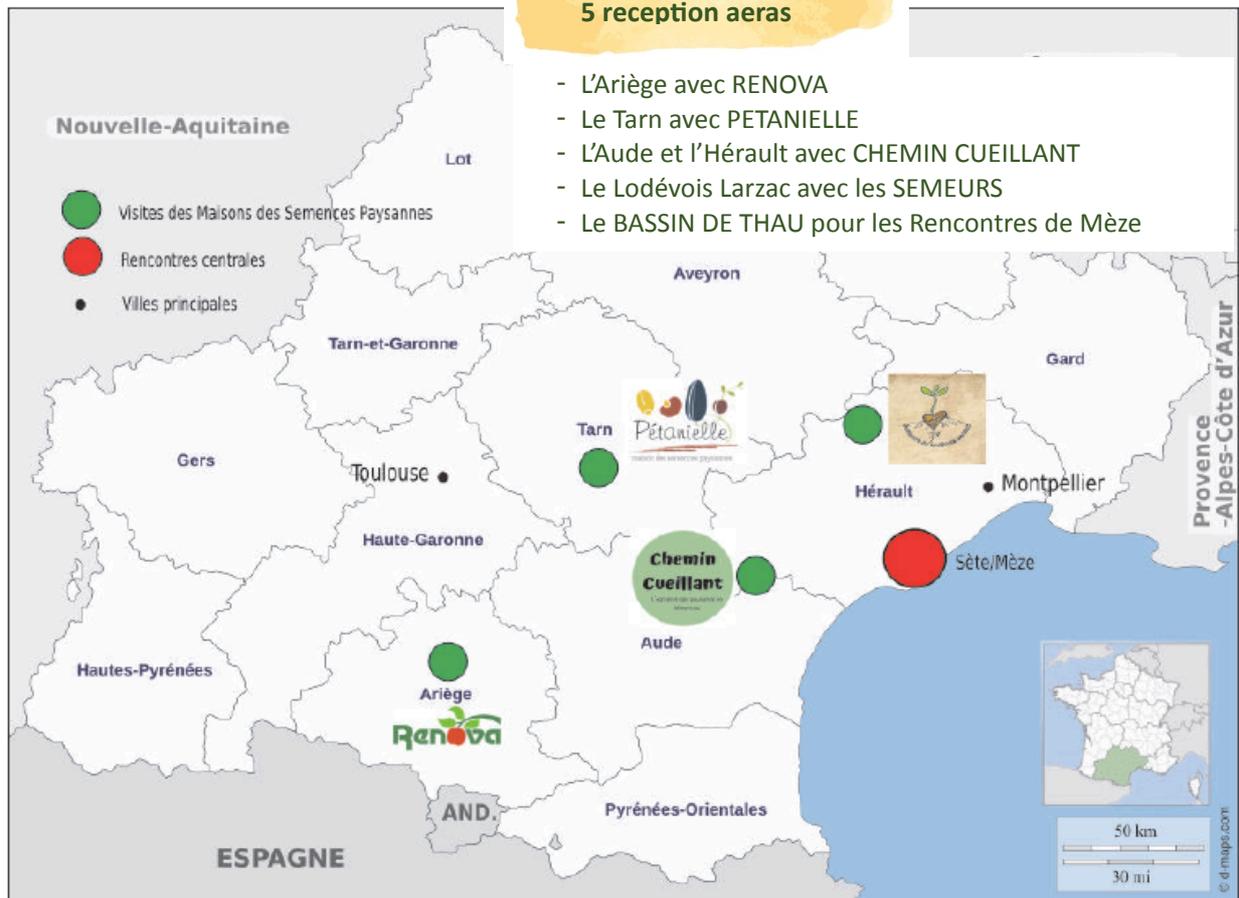
250 farmers, NGO activists and researchers were represented. Although we assume that seven full days can be an obstacle for farmers to come, attention was paid to support them in order that a majority of the international participants were actually peasant-farmers.

The days open to the public, during the field visits, as well as the day for the large public, were real successes, exceeding our expectations with more than 800 visitors during the final open day. Thus, reproducing on the scale of one day what we tried to set up all week long: exchanges around awareness raising workshops, practical workshops (apple press, breadmaking, ...), round tables on specific themes, such as on hidden GMOs, for example, that made accessible to the less informed public. In this way, local associations and inhabitants were able to take up the issues.

The expected results has been assessed through an evaluation of the organizing committee that highlighted the weaknesses and strengths of these meetings while making recommendations for the next event. Bilateral evaluations with partner organisations are underway and have already revealed a great general satisfaction of all the international participants and potential points for improvement in terms of upstream coordination.

As for the local institutional and associative partners, they gave us very positive feedback on the days and evenings for the general public, both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view: the diversity of the programme met the challenges of raising awareness while allowing a varied and mostly unaware public to attend.

2. Key datas



6 Organizers

BEDE

Chemin Cueillant

Pétanielle

Rénova

Le RSP

Les Semeurs du Lodévois Larzac

3 Main Partners

CPIE Bassin de Thau

CCFD

Let's Liberate Diversity

23 farm visits

14 thematic workshops

11 types of animation
during a large public
day

8 practical workshops

3 plenary sessions

3 round tables

1 tale created around
the seeds

1 film-debate

1 concert

+ **+300**
PARTICIPANT.E.S
+ **41% women**

More than 800 people
came to participate in
the General Public Day!

100 organisations

29 COUNTRIES

Aegilops
Agro'phile /paysan boulanger
Agrobio Perigord
Allkorn
Arche Noah
ARDEAR
ARI
ASPSP
Association 1001 Semences
Limousines
Association Semences de Pays
Association tunisienne de
Permaculture
Ateliers Paysans
Banque de gènes Tunis
BEDE
BEDE AFO
Benkadibugu
BIAUGERME
BP REA Monteils
BPREA brens
GAEC Radis
Buzuruna Juzuruna
Caravan'olla
CCFD-Terre Solidaire
CENDI
CENESTA
CETAB
CFPA Montmorot
CFSI
Chemin Cueillant
CIRAD
CISP
Civam 44
CNRA, Côte d'Ivoire
COASP-Mali
COATI
Coopérative Canasta Campesina
(ACPACAC)
CPIE Bassin de thau
Danish Seed Savers
Earthlore
ECLLD
Ecole d'ingénieur de Purpan
(enseignante chercheuse)
ENAMI/RED DEFENSA DEL MAIZ
RED DE SEMILLAS
Faucheurs Herault
FCMN-Niya
Rénova
FONDATION DE France
Grain'avenir
graine des montagnes maison des
semences paysannes
Graine des Pais
Inf'OGM
INRA
IPR de Katibougou
ITAB
Jardin de semences - association La
Mainlè'v'
Jardin'enVie
Joliegraine / SEAT Ecopôle du Val
d'Allier
KVANN
L'Arbre Joie, Terre de dignité
la Cuisine de Laurence
La Touselle
Le potager d'un curieux
Les jardins de l'espoir
let's libertate diversity
Maatiainen NGO
MADA
Maghaz
Marchés paysans
MOORIBEN
MSP de la loire
Nature et Progrès
Odysée engrain
ORAD
paysarbres
Pépinière La Belle Verte
Petanielle
PGP
PSR
RBIA
RIAM
RMRM
RSP
Rural Women' Assembly
Secours Populaire
SEED
Semeurs du Lodévois Larzac
SUPAGRO Montpellier
SWISSAID Niger
SWISSAID SUISSE Siège
T&H Maroc
Terre en Vie 65
Terre et Humanisme
TORBA
Towards Organic Asia
TRIPTOLEME
Uniterre
Varietas autoctones
ZMAG

South Africa

Algeria

Austria

Belgium

Benin

Burkina Faso

Ivory Coast

Croatia

Denmark

Spain

France

Britain

Greece

Hungary

Iran

Italy

Lebanon

Luxemburg

Mali

Morocco

Mexico

Niger

Norway

Salvador

Senegal

Swiss

Sweden

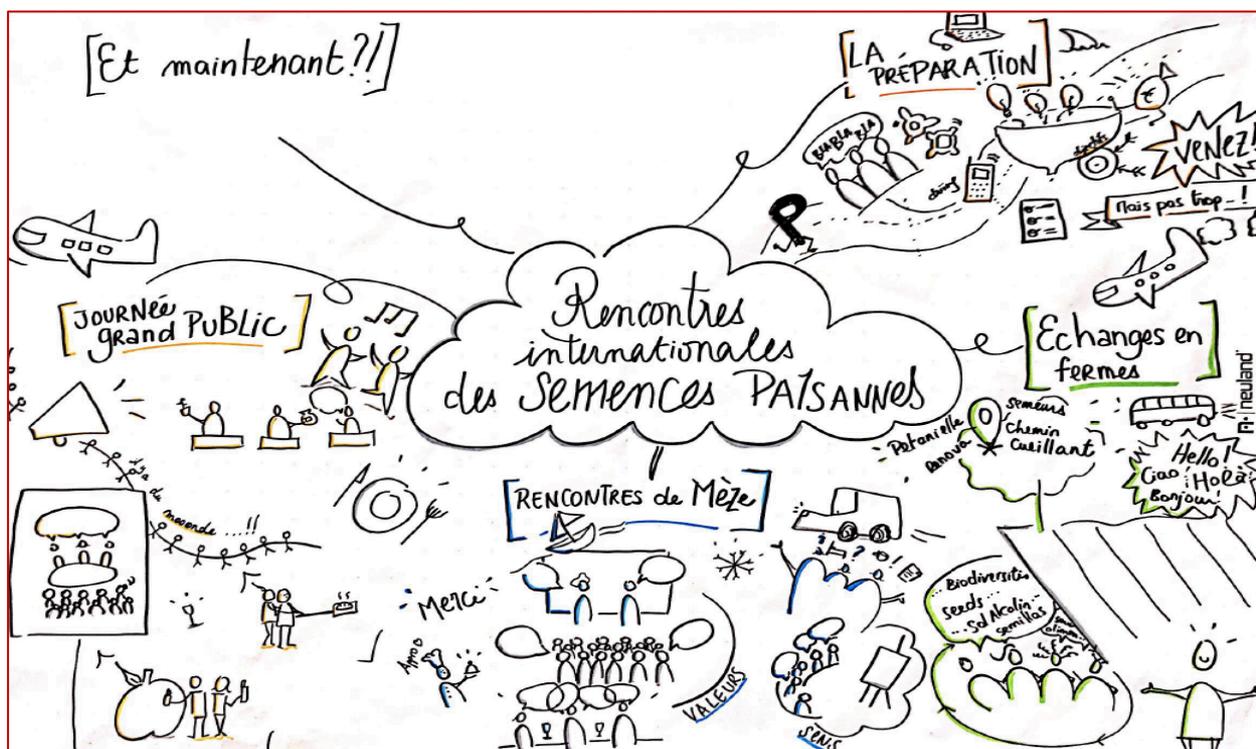
Tunisia

Vietnam





3- Teachings and Way Forward



« What is alive can only be transmitted through encounters. »

« The farmers have built up knowledge and know-how, the fruit of their experiences and encounters, which are specific to each of them. This knowledge and know-how is a richness that can only be acquired through meetings, life sharing, and periods of person-to-person exchanges on the farm ». Pétanielle, a collective of farmers and bakers from the Farmers' Seed Network.

Once again Sow your Resistance, which is the fourth episode in 15 years, has opened up the borders to farmers so that they can exchange and consolidate their visions and analyses across geographical distances, financial constraints and administrative obstacles. We share the same Earth, and political and climatic chaos affects us all. The International Peasants' Seed Meetings have offered a wide variety of spaces and tools so that everyone can build in turn empirical knowledge and know-how adapted to their needs. Therefore they forge the instruments to defend their rights in the face of the aggressive privatization of the commons - seeds, land and water- that sustain us.

The very strong solidarity that these meetings were able to mobilize during this year 2019, is declined since the construction of the organizing committee associating within the French Farmers' Seed Network (RSP) several farmers' collectives of Occitanie, a platform of local environmental associations of the CPIE of the Thau Basin, International solidarity associations such as BEDE and CCFD-Terre solidaire with numerous partnerships in the South, an European coordination "Lets Liberate Diversity", formed by networks and organisations for the conservation and management of biodiversity cultivated on farms and in gardens in about ten European countries.

This solidarity has been reinforced by the support of a wide range of donors, first and foremost the local authorities - Occitanie Region, General Councils of Hérault and Aude départements , as well as Sète Metropole. The city of Mèze has also involved the municipal restaurant in a truly innovative experience during the time of the meetings, that of feeding children in school canteens with products from a diversity of Peasants's seeds. Sow your Resistance has obtained the support of many committed foundations such

as the Fondation de France, FPH, UMPT and the Human

Rights Foundations (women FFM, and workers FDHT), or in the organic sector (Léa Nature, Biocoop). Several NGOs involved in food sovereignty have supported through their own programmes the coming of participants from faraway countries: Terre et Humanisme, Swissaid, Secours Populaire, but also some research institutes such as CIRAD.

The six-day Meetings were held in three stages: practical exchanges in small groups on farms for three days, then internal exchanges with practitioners in workshops and plenary sessions for two days, and finally as a festive public day mixing the citizens of the territory was a success. Each person will retain a lesson according to his or her background, the field experiences with the collective he or she has visited, the workshop debates he or she has chosen, the round tables or stands where he or she has exchanged. The assessment is in progress: though it will never be exhaustive.

The Press review carefully updated by the CPIE of the Thau Basin indicates a coverage of the events both in the departments of Occitanie where the farm exchanges took place and on the Mèze site. Newspapers, social networks, rural radios, regional (FR3) or private (TV noise) TV channels reported on the events. Several videos are being edited. The event will be a landmark for all the participants because it succeeded in echoing the burning issues at stake in today's ecological and peasant agriculture by developing practical and political proposals.

The enthusiasm for attending the meeting has surpassed our forecasts. Very quickly, as the capacity of the spaces had been reached, we had to negotiate hard to keep the number of participants within the limits of the capacity and security of the premises: for farm exchanges, for example, it is very difficult to exceed 15 participants, and for the many workshops, the optimum of 30 was often exceeded. We can see that, despite the importance of challenges for small farmers' organizations to dare to take the initiative of such an event, the organization of new international farmers' seed meetings has good prospects, and deserves to be rooted in a tradition.



Avec le soutien de :

