

GRAIN

in 2021

Highlights of our activities



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Front and back cover: Colectivo Huerquen

About GRAIN

GRAIN is a small international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems. The objectives of GRAIN are to deepen public understanding of the forces shaping the global and local food systems and their impact on farming and food systems, and to support social movements and civil society organisations in advancing towards food sovereignty.

Since 1990, GRAIN has been active in the global movement challenging corporate power over people's food and livelihoods. Initially, GRAIN focused on raising awareness and action about the loss of biodiversity on farmers' fields around the world. Over time, GRAIN expanded its work to include the impact of the wider corporate takeover of our food systems, the increasingly problematic issue of access to land by small-scale producers, and the dramatic contribution of the industrial food system to the climate crisis.

This report highlights our information work and movement building support from 2021 across interrelated thematic and operational programme areas:

- ✓ Corporations, power and the global food system
- ✓ Land grabbing and the struggle for land
- ✓ People's control over seeds
- ✓ Food sovereignty to fight the climate crisis
- ✓ Communications, outreach and organisational development

This report shares some of the year's highlights and challenges ahead. For more information, please visit our website, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, subscribe to our mailing lists or contact us directly. Please also consider donating to GRAIN to help sustain our work.

Year in review: In memory of Carlos Vicente

At the time of writing – March 2022 – GRAIN received a terrible blow in the form of the sudden death of one of our colleagues: Carlos Vicente. Based in Argentina, Carlos was the anchor of our work in Latin America for more than 20 years. We are profoundly sad but determined to carry on all we learned from Carlos throughout the years.

4 Within GRAIN, Carlos was cherished for his strong political sense and great ability to cut through the noise and get us to the clear essence of issues or decision-making, especially on actions we needed to take – including working on anti-patriarchy and strategies of communication and building links among organisations. In that sense, he was a valued and trusted voice inside our collective. His deep and wise presence amplified the lights of those around him. He made us better versions of ourselves and was a role model to younger staff.

We are dedicating this report to Carlos, since he played a vital role in the work and campaigns that GRAIN carried out in 2021. For example, Carlos was centrally involved in a major campaign that GRAIN and partners launched last year: a global week of action against UPOV, the main international body pushing the privatisation of seeds worldwide. He was an activist in the campaign against GM wheat in Argentina, a trusted teacher at LVC's agroecology schools and in two annual online courses he developed on seeds and climate, a skilled network builder in the Alianza Biodiversidad and a frequent guest on radio and television interviews explaining the dangers of the industrial food system and lifting up solutions based in agroecology and food sovereignty.

Carlos left us too soon and will be deeply missed, but we are forever grateful for his presence, fine work and strong camaraderie. Always a pleasure to work with, always positive in spirit, Carlos shaped GRAIN and left his indelible mark on us and so many along his path.

We share our condolences with Carlos's family and friends, and may we all take comfort in knowing that Carlos transcends and becomes seeds, because there are countless peoples, struggles, organisations, territories, communities, fields and rivers where he has been a seed of life, of effort, of initiative, of support and of welcome.

Abrazos fuertes y hasta siempre, Carlos.

The GRAIN team

Please read our full tribute to Carlos here: <https://grain.org/e/6821>

Our last in-person meeting as a team with Carlos, in Senegal in 2019.



Tributes

In April and May, GRAIN lost three great comrades and friends. Here we share a bit of our tributes to each one.



René Ségbènou was in all the fights for more than thirty years – farmers’ seeds, GMOs, biosecurity, agroecology, UPOV, patenting of life, land grabbing – in Benin and Africa. With his wife Jeanne Zoundjihékpou, a member of GRAIN’s staff from 2001 to 2016, René was one of the co-founders of the Coalition for the Protection of Africa’s Genetic Heritage (COPAGEN). A tireless

advocate for the peasant cause, he is one of those who, very early on, understood that the crisis in rural areas and agriculture needs strong voices that will be heard. Surrounded by his family and loved ones, René was taken away in the last battle he fought for about 15 years. Go fighter, colleague, brother and friend, we will never forget you!

6 *Read full tribute to René here: <https://grain.org/e/6648>*



Meriem with GRAIN board, Argentina, 2008 (Meriem lower right, on white).

Meriem Louanchi was an Algerian agricultural scientist committed to the struggle for farmers’ rights and food sovereignty. We first met Meriem in 1999 in Mbalmayo, Cameroon, at a workshop for African rural movement leaders on gene technologies and emerging intellectual property laws. She served on GRAIN’s Board from 2007 to 2013, and worked with us on various research and writing projects. She pushed

us to bridge the gap between North Africa and the rest of Africa, and accompanied numerous coalitions we worked with across the continent. Meriem, thank you for your courage, your heart, your friendship, your great intellect and your unwillingness to be pushed around.

Read the full tribute to Meriem here: <https://grain.org/e/6655>



Aziz Choudry (left) with Carlos Vicente and Paul Pantastico, Bangkok, 2006.

Aziz Choudry was an activist in the anti-globalisation movement, who later became a scholar of social movements struggles. GRAIN staff bonded with him over a common understanding of the perniciousness of bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) in the late 1990s. Over a cup of coffee in Manila in 2004, we mused together about building a single platform on the internet where groups fighting FTAs and bilateral investment treaties on their own could see what was going on in different countries – and bilaterals.org was born. A central and committed part of bilaterals.org ever since, and a close friend to many of us, Aziz’s insightful guidance, wonderful camaraderie, biting humour and intellectual heft will be sorely missed.

Read the full tribute to Aziz here: <https://grain.org/e/6681>

Corporations, power and the global food system



- ✓ Confronting today's growing corporate control over the global food system.
- ✓ Exploring how corporate power impacts small-scale food producers.
- ✓ Linking corporate power to the food crisis, control over resources, and global trade relations.

Big Tech, big money, big food

Digital technology which is encroaching food production, distribution and trade is an important new topic for GRAIN and many allies. It is also moving fast. Digital control: how Big Tech moves into food and farming (and what it means) and our joint webinar with ETC Group on Food sovereignty and digitalisation of food systems looked into crop

data collection systems, digital banking, chatbot advice and, of course, retail platforms. The implications for small farms and farmers are threats of increasing monopoly and vertical integration of the food system by corporate actors. Those who hold the data hold the power in this digital age. No one represents this better than Bill Gates, the largest farmland owner in the United States and a huge funder of industrial agriculture through the Gates Foundation.



A Growing Culture developed a meme series based on GRAIN's report, cross-posted on our Instagram account. Traffic to GRAIN's website skyrocketed the day we published the report, it was picked up in multiple media outlets and was one of the most downloaded and most viewed articles on our website for 2021.

Tech, money and business are also converging on Africa's food systems in the form of multinational corporations dumping cheap, low-quality agricultural commodities and highly-processed food. Jointly produced with the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) Big Food in Africa: Endangering people's health report and infographic maps out food safety scandals across Africa in recent years.

One year into the Covid-19 pandemic in Asia

GRAIN, BioThai, India Hawkers Federation and Sekolah Pasar Indonesia held a virtual discussion called People's markets in lockdown, retail corporations in business, streamed live on 20 May 2021. The online forum brought together fresh market traders, street vendors and organisers from India, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines to discuss the situation for small-scale vendors and to see how to move forward in the context of the ongoing global pandemic. One of the traders involved in the event commented, *"We are really happy to be able to share our experience and lessons learned with people from other countries. We are often underestimated by local authorities but here people listened to our opinion and ideas."*

Agro is fire

The Brazilian Agro é fogo ("agriculture is fire") platform officially launched in May 2021. The coalition behind the platform is made up of social movements and organisations that have worked for decades to defend the Amazon, Cerrado, and Pantanal regions of Brazil. The platform and materials have been important in politicising the debate around the fires in the Amazon, visibilising the role of agroindustry behind the flames.



Design by Mabel M. Valenzuela

Animals under corporate control

From bicycle chickens to dairy cows, fish poaching to swine fever, the story is the same around the world: corporations taking control of the food system. But food sovereignty offers an alternative: celebrating and supporting local, diverse smallholder dairies, livestock and poultry producers and fisherfolk.

- ✓ The [government used a pig pandemic to expand corporate power and crush small farms](#) with the African Swine Fever outbreak in the Dominican Republic.
- ✓ [GRAIN and COPAGEN raised several questions](#) about Burkina Faso's plan to create a national label for "bicycle chickens" – indigenous breeds native to all of West Africa.
- ✓ The [corporate attack on Pakistan's small dairies](#) fits right into the [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor](#) scheme to push trade of industrial food products as part of the Belt and Road Initiative.
- ✓ [Corporate control of the dairy sector in Africa](#) means billions of dollars exit Africa every year to pay for dairy imports, when dairy can and should be produced locally.
- ✓ [Of lobsters and mobsters: Who are the companies poaching the oceans?](#) exposed the highly secretive, lucrative and concentrated seafood industry.

Women and trade in Africa

Working in partnership with groups across Africa, GRAIN's July 2020 report, [What do FTAs mean for African women? A critical look into the African Continental Free Trade Area](#), was translated into languages used across Africa (English, French, Portuguese plus Amaharic, Arabic, Ndebele, Shona, Swahili and Wolof). Then, local groups coordinated community launches of the material in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Finally, in October, we co-organised the continental report launch and global release of these translations, with a two-part conversation series. [Trade in Africa: Tracing colonial legacies of trade](#) had around 50 participants live in Zoom, 250 live streaming, and many additional viewers to date and [Trading Africa: The gentrifying costs of diaspora investments](#) had around 35 participants in Zoom and 150 online streaming.

This project seeded a continental-diaspora dialogue on the historic and contemporary roles of women in trade, investment and development. The work has also opened the doors to engage in new areas, regions and with different groups for next year, around areas of trade activism, food sovereignty and gender justice in Africa.

Blackout protest

GRAIN shut down its website and social media platforms on 23 September 2021 in protest of the United Nations Food Systems Summit. The Summit was supposed to help solve the global food crisis, but it was hijacked early on by corporate interests. Together with La Via Campesina, GRAIN penned an [editorial for The Guardian](#) asking: "Small farmers have the answer to feeding the world. Why isn't the UN listening?", and arguing that we can't have the future of the food system dictated by the same corporations that are the very source of the problem.

On the eve of an annual gathering of public development banks in Rome in October 2021, 280 groups from 70 countries [signed a letter](#) slamming them for bankrolling the expansion of industrial agriculture, environmental destruction and corporate control of the food system. GRAIN and allies who drafted the statement affirm only fully public and accountable funding mechanisms based on people's actual needs can achieve real solutions to the global food crisis – and that development finance needs to end altogether.

WE REFUSE THE CORPORATE TAKEOVER OF THE WORLD FOOD SYSTEM THAT THE UNITED NATIONS IS HOSTING TODAY

**#UNFSSCAPTURE #FOODSYSTEMS4PEOPLE
#OURFOODSYSTEMS**

GRAIN's website shut down and displayed this message in protest of the UN Food Systems Summit on 23 September 2021.

Land grabbing and the struggle for land



- ✓ Exposing today's massive assault on fertile farmland by investors, speculators and agribusiness.
- ✓ Keeping land grabbing high on the global agenda.
- ✓ Building alliances and strategy to stop land grabbing.

Big Tech takes over land

Digital fences: technology being used for land grabbing, is a visual reference of the elaborate labyrinths through which corporations (with the support of international institutions such as the World Bank) grab land using new technologies. Demystifying the use of global positioning systems (GPS), digital land registry and financial assets, the infographic series shows how these actors privatise land, thereby grabbing them away from public or collective use. As always, the problem does not reside in technology: we need a political solution. We have since taken this information, and our call for a comprehensive agrarian reform, to various partner groups and media platforms to spread the word.



Pipelines and protests in the Sierra of Puebla-Hidalgo, Mexico

A multi-year research process, in deep relationship with the regional council for indigenous peoples in defence of the Puebla-Hidalgo territory and the Centre of Studies on Changes in Rural Mexico (CECCAM), collectively documented the impact of Mexico's Tuxpan-Tula pipeline. This was gathered into an electronic book in Spanish titled Territories of water. Just as pipelines cross territories and borders, so does the planned resistance: the affected communities across Mexico have started to connect with communities organising against pipelines of the same company in Canada.



Workshop in Chila, Mexico, reconstructing the spatial history of their region.
Photo: Itzam Pineda

Resisting land grabs on the ground and in the courts

Cross-border, international, grassroots resistance to land grabs from industrial plantation expansion across Africa took on many forms this year:

- ✓ Hybrid online and local women's meetings and general meeting of the Alliance against industrial plantations in West and Central Africa
- ✓ Alliance member women's tour in Sierra Leone
- ✓ Connections of Alliance members with communities in Uganda
- ✓ Community mobilisation against the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, and this historic declaration from villagers and traditional chiefs in Ivory Coast
- ✓ Press conference to denounce the "sustainable" certification of a Socfin oil palm plantation
- ✓ Statements hosted on farmlandgrab.org of violence by a Socfin subsidiary against local villages in Nigeria
- ✓ Alliance village tours in Liberia to visit affected communities
- ✓ GRAIN article on Feronia's rice operations in the DR Congo
- ✓ Collective report and infographic assessing the involvement of Development Finance Institutions in Feronia

- ✓ Investment and legal documents released of Feronia/PHC to village leaders in the DRC, who used the information to speak out and refuse to sign new social contracts
- ✓ Communiqués on violence and retaliations against community members in Lokutu, DRC, posted on farmlandgrab.org ([here](#) and [here](#))
- ✓ Preparation of legal documents for litigation against the Bolloré group in France, which [won the first step in French courts](#), and is now in appeals
- ✓ Mobilisations, actions and [new media release](#) around the Socfin and Bolloré annual shareholder meetings in May 2021
- ✓ [Bold letter](#) calling on the United Nations to sever relations with Bolloré, coordinated by The Oakland Institute
- ✓ [This report](#) on Socfin and tax avoidance by Bread for All and Solidar

This relentless and sometimes harrowing work is absolutely critical in putting a stop to the expansion of industrial oil palm plantations throughout Africa, and an international movement is key to the strategy.



Women from oil palm alliance member organisation Maloa meet in Pujehun, Sierra Leone

Defending Brazil' s Cerrado region

After several [groundbreaking publications](#) with Rede Social and other Brazilian groups and years of campaigning by the US Land Grab Coalition and student groups, efforts to denounce the intensifying farmland grabs in Brazil by US-based pension funds and universities are gaining momentum:

- ✓ Faculty at the University of Iowa [passed a resolution](#) calling for their pension fund manager TIAA to provide transparency on farmland investments and include an opt-out for pension holders.
- ✓ United University Professions, the US's largest higher education union, decided to [call for an end to TIAA's investments](#) in farmland associated with deforestation and human rights violations.

Also this year, the Permanent peoples' tribunal [formally accepted](#) the petition brought by the Campaign in defence of the Cerrado. Over 50 organisations came together for over three years to prepare the documentation, testimonies, legal arguments and demands that made up the 15 cases of the petition. The first hearing on water took place in December. Additional hearings and final sentencing will take place in 2022.



Muyissi Environnement Gabon gathers during the general meeting of the oil palm alliance in N'dolou at Mandji with a banner reading, Stop the expansion of tree monocultures in Africa.

People's control over seeds



- ✓ Challenging corporate seed and intellectual property laws.
- ✓ Revealing unprecedented levels of corporate control over seeds and the push for GMOs.
- ✓ Cultivating emerging seed saving and exchange movements.

#StopUPOV

GRAIN and others joined together for a global week of action against UPOV - the Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) and the main international body pushing the privatisation of seeds worldwide. In conjunction with UPOV's 60th anniversary in December this year, 10 groups convened a [call for action](#), with over 230 signatories across 47 countries. GRAIN and partners produced and translated several multimedia materials to inform the actions: a [booklet](#), an [animated video](#), a [data set](#) on trade agreements used to privatise seeds, livestock and micro-organisms and an interactive [map version](#).

The success of this week of action was both in the amount and diversity of actions held, as well as the seeds planted for more interest, awareness



Seed saver Sudam Sahu in his seed bank with farmers and a petition to the Indian government not to sign UPOV.



and engagement. A specially created [#StopUPOV](#) Facebook group to support the campaign, now with over 1,000 members, gives examples of the diverse actions across the world, including public discussions and webinars, regional and local workshops and trainings on seed saving and seed laws, radio and television interviews and issuing press statements and petitions.

Soy from Brazil to Barcelona

In collaboration with the Spanish magazine *Soberanía Alimentaria*, we co-published a report about soybean imports from Brazil to the port of Barcelona, designated in 2021 as the "World capital of sustainable food". The report and associated press conference with the Barcelona municipality, where GRAIN staff from both Brazil and Barcelona participated, were important to visibilise the very unsustainable "soy route" between continents and the impact of production in the main vulnerable areas of Brazil's Cerrado region.

Stop Golden Rice!

The Stop Golden Rice! Network (SGRN) is a regional coalition across Asia against Golden Rice. Events this year included coordination



Farmers group and NGOs protested in front of UPOV headquarters in Geneva against the privatisation of seeds and symbolically liberated their crops from the chains of UPOV.



Members of the Network in defence of maize, including GRAIN, hosted a panel event in Mexico City as part of the #StopUPOV campaign activities in December.

meetings with members, information sharing on gene editing and a webinar on digital agriculture and the future of seeds, attended by over 160 people including farmers, civil society leaders, students, farmers, concerned consumers, scientists and academicians from 41 countries. SGRN held six days of action calling to #ShutDownIRRINow in March-April and participated in the #StopUPOV campaign.

The fight against golden rice faced some disappointments this year, as it was approved in the Philippines. GRAIN along with SGRN allies convened to put together a nationwide campaign with consumers about the impact and contribute to a legal appeal of the decision. The work – and the network – continue to go strong.

Hands off our bread! GM wheat campaign

The first-ever genetically modified wheat was approved by Argentina in late 2020. GRAIN jumped into the collective of social movements and scientists to prepare a position paper and statement against the GM wheat that was signed by 15,000 people and over 400 organisations.



GRAIN was active in the media and social media, speaking at interviews and in webinars, raising awareness, calling for a rejection of the GM wheat and participating in actions and protests.

Unfortunately in November, Brazil approved the import of GM wheat. But opposition remains strong, and we continue to mobilise with civil society groups, legal advocacy, producer groups and the wheat industry in Argentina and Brazil to try to stop this decision.

The “panazo” – bread protest against GM wheat – was coordinated with farmer groups, social organisations and academics in a public plaza in Buenos Aires.

Food sovereignty to fight the climate crisis



- ✓ Drawing attention to the industrial food system as a main driver of the climate crisis.
- ✓ Zooming in on industrial meat and dairy as key culprits.
- ✓ Proposing food sovereignty and agroecology as an important part of the solution.

Corporate greenwashing = deadly fraud

Unmasking false solutions to the very real climate crisis, we put out a series of materials on “greenwashing” schemes – those corporate initiatives that claim to reduce climate emissions but really protect profits, with dire consequences.

- ✓ Corporate greenwashing: “net zero” and “nature-based solutions” are a deadly fraud: revealing corporate scams to avoid climate regulations and skew legislation in their own benefit, to continue operating as business as usual.
- ✓ The global farmland grab goes green: how farmland funds are drawing in money from pension funds and billionaire family offices (e.g. Gates) looking for a green and socially responsible image.
- ✓ Agribusiness and big finance’s dirty alliance is anything but “green”: financial instruments being used by oil palm plantation companies, fish farming behemoths, pulp and paper manufacturers, meat and dairy giants, pesticide producers and commodity traders to attract funding under the guise of sustainable investment.
- ✓ No to Nature-Based Solutions Dispossessions!: sign on statement to help spread the word and pull together a unified front against these scams now with hundreds of signatories from around the world.
- ✓ ‘Nature-Based Solutions’: A smokescreen for dispossession &



threat to food sovereignty: webinar with interpretation in English, French and Spanish and a live audience of around 70 people.

Farmer solutions to the climate crisis

With all this talk of false solutions, the question becomes: what are the *real* solutions to the climate crisis? [Agroecology vs. climate chaos: farmers leading the battle in Asia](#) shows evidence from the ground on peasant solutions to the climate crisis. Circulated to farmers' groups around the region, popular on social media and picked up in two international outlets, [Common Dreams](#) and [GreenStories](#).

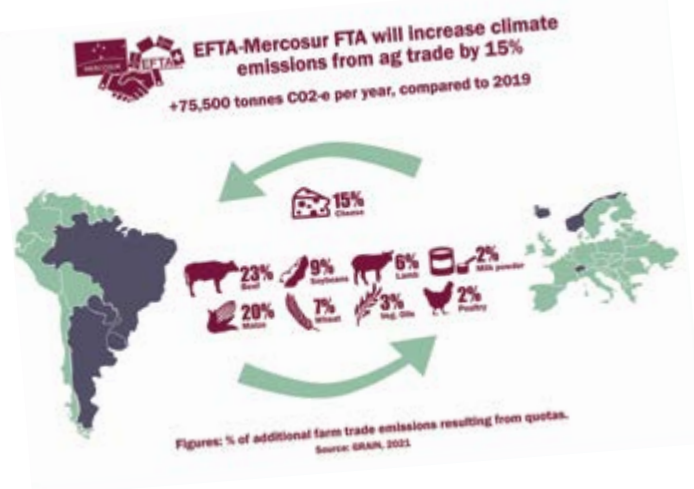
Carbon emissions from trade and fertiliser

Zooming in on the impact of trade of food commodities to the climate, GRAIN released a report and infographics looking at the increase in carbon emissions (15%!) from the agricultural quotas in the [European Free Trade Association \(EFTA\) – Mercosur trade agreement](#). This was done in cooperation with groups in the EFTA region who did their own media releases, statements and educational material using the data.

Building off a similar report from 2019 looking at the European Union (EU)-Mercosur trade agreement, GRAIN joined with the coalition against this still-pending FTA to launch a dedicated website with 450 groups behind it, circulate a petition to get over two million signatories and organise a joint week of action in May. Then, a first joint EU/EFTA-Mercosur trade activist meeting brought together about 20 groups to exchange information and coordinate actions.

Looking at the fertiliser industry's impact on climate, a [collaborative report](#) with Greenpeace International and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) found that synthetic nitrogen (N) fertiliser is a top climate-polluting industrial chemical. Published on the eve of

the UN's climate change conference (COP26), the message from this study was clear: phase out, not phase down, synthetic N fertilisers and urgently transition to farming without fossil fuels and chemicals.



In the name of climate: climate actions around the world

- ✓ [Africa Climate Justice Group](#), where GRAIN is a founding member, organised a workshop in May in Abidjan. The alliance also organised several activities for the [counter-COP in Senegal](#), attended by GRAIN and implemented by alliance members and farmer organisations.
- ✓ Young Volunteers for the Environment (JVE for its acronym in French) and GRAIN once again put together an agroecology bootcamp in August in Côte d'Ivoire - a space for around 40 participants, including youth and local rural women, to learn more about agroecology on the ground and policy issues shaping the food system.
- ✓ GRAIN formed part of the organising committee for the [Mekong-ASEAN Environmental Week 2021](#). GRAIN co-organised three of the 20+ panels for the weeklong event with a total of 114 speakers, livestreamed in four languages and attended by over 1,200 people online and 30,000 through Thai public television.
- ✓ GRAIN participated in Brazil's Belem letter working group on agriculture and food systems, calling out greenwashing initiatives and so-called sustainable agrifood chains based on digitalisation in the country in a webinar series, [Inconvenient Dialogues](#).
- ✓ Led by GRAIN staff in Argentina, the annual online course in Spanish: "Do we need to heat the planet to produce food?" ran from September to November with weekly modules and 70 participants from grassroots organisations from Paraguay, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala and Colombia.
- ✓ GRAIN participated in a workday on agroecology at the central market in Buenos Aires on World Environment Day in June and presented at virtual events, trainings and seminars on agroecology including with La Via Campesina's agroecology schools. Supporting



young farmers-in-training to learn agroecological practices and politics is key to strengthening this alternative across the region.

GRAIN and members of the organization Namané of Tchebloguhé meet in Daloa, Côte d'Ivoire, for an in-person session on agroecology.

Communications and outreach



- ✓ Deepening public understanding of the forces shaping the food system
- ✓ Getting the word out on emerging issues
- ✓ Amplifying global struggles for food sovereignty

GRAIN publications are written to inform and support social movement activists and to increase public understanding of the power dynamics behind the global food system. Many are written in collaboration with partners. Each piece is edited and translated into English, French and Spanish, and increasingly in other languages as well like Hindi and Portuguese. We also coordinated with partners to translate materials into local languages. Last year, we worked to diversify the formats of our outputs, publishing infographics, memes, videos and short blog posts along with our standard reports.

Outreach is key to getting our message across to a broad public. With in-person meetings and events still limited, we find that maintaining an active online presence on our website and social media platforms is crucial. Besides posting our own materials, we continued to make an effort to curate content for our social media and blog that is not found on mainstream channels, amplifying partner struggles and making connections to wider food system issues and activists around the world.

References and links to our articles made their way to mailing lists, newsletters, blogs and in presentations of partner organisations. Publications and staff interviews were also cited in media outlets such as Al Jazeera, The Guardian and Telesur plus national and local outlets, academic publications, scientific journals, civil society reports, podcasts and radio programs.



GRAIN's team in 2021



Cultivating GRAIN



- ✓ Ensuring a stable, healthy working environment
- ✓ Aligning internal practices and policies with our politics
- ✓ Developing our collective skills and management

GRAIN has continued growing and evolving this year. We held a series of internal skill-building workshops on writing. We added a new global staffer to our team and a new board member. We worked with several consultants on specific jobs such as website management, translations and financial management. And – we moved! Our coordination and administration hub changed offices after more than 25 years. We found a nice new space still in the heart of Barcelona.

We also continued with a series of conversations on patriarchy and power dynamics and took action to improve our policies and practices, focusing on communication, salary and benefits and updating our staff charter to better reflect our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Another important collective conversation we began this year was on the transition of several long-time staff into retirement. Having open conversations with all staff and Board members and coming to a consensus about next steps, we are approaching this as an opportunity to prepare new collective leadership in GRAIN.

In the midst of this transition, experimentation and learning we continue to produce new research and support movements fighting for food sovereignty as ever. We are fully aware that none of this would be possible without our colleagues, partners, allies, funders and friends across the world. Thank you for being there and for your continued support!



GRAIN's Board and staff meetings were, again, held on-line this year. Our team members based in Barcelona and Paris were able to get together in-person for the staff meetings. We very much miss the chance to see and strategise altogether in person, and hope to be able to meet up soon.

Annex: GRAIN publications, media and webinars, 2021

GRAIN publications in 2021

Corporations, power and the global food system

[How the funding of a colonial-era oil palm plantation by European development banks dramatically failed: new report](#)

[Digital control: how Big Tech moves into food and farming \(and what it means\)](#)

[EFTA-Mercosur: another low blow to climate, peoples' rights and food sovereignty](#)

[Unmasking the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor](#)

[How the Gates Foundation is driving the food system, in the wrong direction](#)

[A label for bicycle chicken? Time to ask some questions!](#)

[Big Food in Africa: Endangering people's health](#)

[The corporate attack on Pakistan's small dairies](#)

[Governments use a pig pandemic to expand corporate power and crush small farms](#)

[Corporations make a killing milking Africa](#)

Land grabbing and the struggle for land

[Infographic | Digital fences: technology and its use in land grabbing](#)

People's control over seeds

[UPOV animation: The great seed robbery](#)

[Booklet | UPOV: the great seeds robbery](#)

[Trade deals pushing UPOV: an interactive map](#)

Food sovereignty to fight the climate crisis

[2020 Report on Climate Change in Argentina. Who dares to call out agribusiness?](#)

[Agroecology vs. climate chaos: Farmers leading the battle in Asia](#)

[Corporate greenwashing: "net zero" and "nature-based solutions" are a deadly fraud](#)

[Agribusiness and big finance's dirty alliance is anything but "green"](#)

[New research shows 50 year binge on chemical fertilisers must end to address the climate crisis](#)

Communications, outreach and organisational development

[GRAIN's 2020 activity report](#)

Blog posts

[The Big Tech takeover of agriculture is dangerous](#)

[Swallowing up forests](#)

[GM waxy maize: The gene edited Trojan Horse is moving through the gates](#)

[The global farmland grab goes green](#)

[The untold story of Feronia Inc's failed rice operations in the DR Congo](#)

[The global food system: a waste of energy](#)

[Confronting neoliberalism with feminist climate justice](#)

[Of lobsters and mobsters: Who are the companies poaching the oceans?](#)

[Trade agreements privatising biodiversity](#)

[Golden rice in the Philippines: hurried approval raises questions](#)

[GRAIN rejects the UN Food Systems Summit - and shuts down in protest](#)

[Golden Rice & GM wheat: the corporate lobby's last-ditch attempts to impose GMOs](#)

[The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal accepts accusation over Brazilian Cerrado ecocide](#)

[Livestock and climate: the problem is the industrial system](#)

[The state of the global farmland grab, according to the Land Matrix](#)

[FAO says food responsible for 31% of all greenhouse gas emissions, but that's not the whole story](#)

[Lessons from Sri Lanka's agrochemical ban fiasco](#)

[Territorios del agua: la defensa de los ámbitos de comunidad y la historia compartida de sus pueblos](#)

[No moriremos de sed a la vera de los ríos del Cerrado](#)

Supermarket Watch Asia

[What kind of "markets" are we fighting for?](#)

[One year into the Covid-19 pandemic: the continuous fight & resilience of People's markets](#)

[Organising informal traders and local markets](#)

[Ending violence against women street vendors and market traders](#)

Revista Biodiversidad, sustento y cultura

Biodiversidad 107 / 2021-1
Biodiversidad 108 / 2021-2
Biodiversidad 109 / 2021-3
Biodiversidad 110 / 2021-4

Revista Soberanía Alimentaria, Biodiversidad y culturas

40. Un análisis de la ayuda alimentaria
41. Ruralismo frente a capitalismo energético
42. Identidad rural

Selected webinars where GRAIN staff presented, 2021

Title	Host	Date
People in Lockdown, Extractives in Business	WoMin African Alliance, GRAIN, Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC), Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM) and Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOME-F)	4 February
Big Brother is Coming to the Farm: the digital takeover of food	ETC Group	14 April
#TheFoodWeWant: A Round Table Discussion on the Corporate Control of Food Systems and its Impacts	People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty and Pesticide Action Network- Asia Pacific	22 April
The Future of Seeds in the UN World Food Systems Summit	MASIPAG	6 May
Nothing to Lose but Our Supply Chains: Activism on Trade and Food Sovereignty in Asia and Europe	Asia-Europe People's Forum workshop	18 May
People's markets in lockdown, retail corporations in business : COVID-19 in Asia	GRAIN, BioThai, Hawkers Joint Action Committee and Sekolah Pasar	2 June
Factory farming and its consequences	Agrar Info	17 June
Inconvenient Dialogues on food and environmental issues	Grupo Carta de Belém	1 July

Title	Host	Date
Digitalization of Agriculture: opportunities and challenges for small farmers	CECOEDECOE, PAIRVI and MASUM	6 August
Mandatory Fortification of Food: Boon or Bane?	Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)	28 August
Derechos o agronegocio	Acción Ecológica	17 September
Neocolonialism and the Failed Rice Revolution	SGRN and A Growing Culture	20 September
La agroecología en disputa	REDES-Amigos de la Tierra Uruguay, junto Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Rurales e Indígenas (ANAMURI) desde Chile, de Sempreviva Organización Feminista (SOF) de Brasil, la Sociedad Científica Latinoamericana de Agroecología (SOCLA) y la Fundación Heinrich Boell Cono Sur	24 September
Food Sovereignty and Digitalization of Food Systems	GRAIN, ETC and LVC	12 October
Cuaderno sobre derechos de propiedad intelectual	Acción por la Biodiversidad	14 October
Food systems, climate and biodiversity	FASE Proposta Magazine	18 October
Sustainable agriculture/ agroecology to tackle climate crisis	Mekong-ASEAN environmental week	25 October
Seminario sobre agronegocio y soberanía alimentaria	BASE-IS y CLOC- VC	1 Nov
Seed is Power - UPOV meeting	A Growing Culture	6 November
Decarbonizing with Net Zero? The architecture of forest privatization	Grupo Carta de Belém	24 November
Disparity to parity to solidarity: Justice in international trade & ag policy	IATP	30 November

Selected media mentions of GRAIN materials and interviews, 2021

Source	Date	Title
Brasil de Fato	8 Jan 2021	Foreigners control at least 17,000 hectares of protected land in Brazil
Equal Times	11 Jan 2021	Big data: a friend or foe for small farmers?
Countercurrents	31 Jan 2021	Viral inequality and the farmers struggle in India
DW	2 Feb 2021	Dossier Feronia : la Banque allemande de développement à nouveau pointée du doigt
Mongabay	3 Feb 2021	Trader Cargill, pension fund TIAA linked to land grabs in Brazil's Cerrado
A l'encontre	4 Feb 2021	Inégalités mondialisées, l'avancée des big tech dans l'agriculture, l'exemple de l'Inde
Al Jazeera	5 Feb 2021	The Big Tech takeover of agriculture is dangerous
Rebelión	5 Feb 2021	La desigualdad ante el virus y la lucha campesina en India
Daily Maverick	7 Feb 2021	Restoring the balance of nature and reversing food insecurity starts with land reform
WOZ Die Wochenzeitung	11 Feb 2021	Der grosse Ausverkauf
Zeit online	27 Feb 2021	Ein öliger Versuch
Inside Climate News	7 Mar 2021	Big Banks Make a Dangerous Bet on the World's Growing Demand for Food
Ambiente Bio	9 Mar 2021	La crescente domanda mondiale di cibo e la pericolosa scommessa delle banche
Betahita	10 Mar 2021	Masyarakat Sipil Tetap Kritisi Ratifikasi Terbaru dari IE-CEPA
Common Dreams	12 Mar 2021	Sustainable Agriculture in the Face of the Climate Crisis: Farmers Leading the Battle in Asia
Público	17 Mar 2021	Las repercusiones ambientales del tratado de libre comercio entre la UE y Mercosur atascan su ratificación
ALAI	18 Mar 2021	El "maquillaje verde" de las corporaciones
Mongabay	22 Mar 2021	Pension and endowment funds linked to conflict-plagued oil palm in DRC
Climatic Change Journal	25 Mar 2021	The climate responsibilities of industrial meat and dairy producers
Financial Times	29 Mar 2021	Bill Gates' farmland buying spree highlights investment appeal
Bulatata	30 Mar 2021	Why is the Food Systems Summit silent on corporate land grabs?
Directa	6 Apr 2021	La soja desplaça població i desforestava selves del Brasil
Berita Moneter	14 Apr 2021	Ratifikasi IE-CEPA Bentuk Arogansi Pemerintah Yang Abai Hak-Hak Dasar Publik
KPFK Pacifica Los Angeles	15 Apr 2021	Earth Watch: Corporate Greenwashing
Blick	17 Apr 2021	Filippo Lombardi und die kasachischen Schweine
Tecnopolítica	20 Apr 2021	Tecnopolítica #84: Plataformas digitais e o controle da produção e distribuição de alimentos
Ara	14 May 2021	Per cultivar tota la soja que s'importa a Catalunya caldria el 75% de la superfície agrícola del país
Welt-Sichten	23 Jun 2021	Datenkraken in der Landwirtschaft
Swissinfo	28 Jun 2021	¿El acuerdo EFTA-Mercosur generará asimetrías y neocolonialismo?

Source	Date	Title
Le Courrier	29 Jun 2021	Bill Gates promet une agriculture high-tech en Afrique
Congo Virtuel	2 Jul 2021	Scandale Feronia Inc. RDC : De Kikaya Bin Karubi à Luc Gérard Nyafé : L'histoire méconnue d'une production rizicole ratée (GRAIN)
Scientific American	6 Jul 2021	Bill Gates: Stop Telling Africans What Kind of Agriculture Africans Need
Lifegate	9 Jul 2021	La lotta del popolo indigeno Bunong contro il land grabbing in Cambogia
Modern Ghana	12 Jul 2021	Are we hungry for change for genuinely transforming food systems?
Desmog	18 Jul 2021	Investigation: How the Meat Industry is Climate-Washing its Polluting Business Model
Desinformemonos	21 Jul 2021	Caos climático y acaparamiento de tierras
Rebelión	26 Jul 2021	Sin semillas no puede haber reforma agraria
Charlie Hebdo	26 Jul 2021	Bill Gates, noble guerrier philanthropique
La Vaca	17 Aug 2021	Panes, facturas y tortas fritas en Plaza de Mayo, para rechazar al trigo transgénico
Telesur	17 Aug 2021	Argentina: Organizaciones se movilizan para alertar sobre alteración de los genes del trigo
Ozy Podcasts	1 Sep 2021	The Future of Farming: Why You Should Care About 'Big Ag' Getting Bigger
Civil Eats	19 Sep 2021	The Greenhouse Gas No One's Talking About: Nitrous Oxide on Farms, Explained
The Guardian	23 Sep 2021	Small farmers have the answer to feeding the world. Why isn't the UN listening?
Mediapart	23 Sep 2021	En Afrique, des paysans en lutte contre « l'agro-colonialisme »
Hind Kisan	23 Sep 2021	UN food Systems Summit - Food Business और Politics का खेल!
Boston Globe	5 Oct 2021	'Diet for a Small Planet' came out 50 years ago. Its lessons are as relevant as ever
The Nation	6 Oct 2021	The Gates Foundation Avoids a Reckoning on Race and Power
Mongabay	6 Oct 2021	Are nature-based solutions the silver bullet for social & environmental crises?
The Guardian	17 Oct 2021	The US has a silent pig pandemic on its doorstep once again
DW	29 Oct 2021	La UE y la agricultura verde: ¿tendrá el mismo color en América Latina?
Canada's National Observer	31 Oct 2021	Why fertilizers are worse than flights when it comes to climate
La Vanguardia	17 Nov 2021	Bill Gates, reseteando el sistema alimentario sin consenso
El País	3 Dec 2021	La red colonial de las plantaciones de aceite de palma
La Jornada	4 Dec 2021	El gran robo de las semillas
InfoCongo	9 Dec 2021	DRC: An Abusive Palm Oil Business is Shaming the European Development Banks
The Gecko Project	14 Dec 2021	Soldiers, Cronies and Deforestation: The story behind Indonesia's food estate programme
Servindi	15 Dec 2021	Semillas para los pueblos, campaña contra el modelo privatizador UPOV
IT for change	16 Dec 2021	21 takes on Big Tech in 2021
Russell Brand	17 Dec 2021	"WOAH!!!" The Media Don't Want You To Know THESE PROTESTORS WON!!!"



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