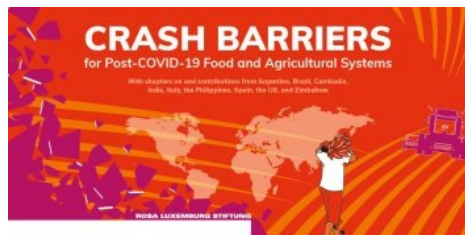


## Crash Barriers

for Post-COVID-19 Food and Agricultural Systems

Sep 9th, 2021 / Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung



***With chapters on and contributions from Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, India, Italy, the Philippines, Spain, the US, and Zimbabwe***

### Preface

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the chasms in the food and agricultural systems became plain for all to see. But even before COVID-19, the food and agricultural systems were in crisis: millions of people were hungry, there was a loss of biodiversity, climate change

impacts were devastating, and labour conditions appalling. So, how do we do things differently to guarantee a different outcome in a world beset by seemingly insurmountable challenges and faced with a lack of strong political leadership, as well as collusion, corruption, authoritarianism, and theft, especially in times of crisis?

The authors of this publication present alternatives for post-COVID-19 food and agricultural systems from a politically-leftist perspective and discuss the impacts of the pandemic with a focus on small-scale food producers who feed the majority of the world's population, and the invisibility of farmworkers that grow, pick, and pack the food sold in supermarkets and other food retail outlets. By documenting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our food systems in different regions across the world, the publication aims to provide an account of the nature of the prevailing food systems globally and their outcomes, and reflect upon the experiences and perspectives of the hardest-hit communities within rural and urban settings.

The publication is a result of the collaborative efforts of the Agrarian Politics Working Group of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS). The content for this joint publication was facilitated by a number of RLS regional offices and authors from several countries including Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, the Philippines, South Africa, the US, and Zimbabwe.

The scope and focus are two-fold. COVID-19 exposed to an even greater extent the highly concentrated and inequitable distribution and commercialization of food. Therefore, the articles featured in this publication firstly analyse the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to food, and secondly, examine how the pandemic laid bare the deep contradictions in agro-food chains from multiple perspectives. The articles observe the socio-economic impacts, the assault on farmworkers, violations of the right to food, the aggressive hijacking of food production and commercialization by large corporations, levels of concentration in food systems, unfair food pricing, incoherent food policies, the role of social organizations that produce and distribute food, and the role of the state. Interestingly, the experiences of social movements and peasant organizations during the pandemic show that different food systems are necessary and possible. A beacon of hope amidst the doom and gloom surrounding COVID-19 is the realization that a sense of community, care, and reciprocity is critical to sustaining life. The articles provide glimpses of what post-COVID-19 food and agricultural systems might look like by exploring the steps and strategies that would be required to bring about this change. In addition, the authors uncover the risks and dangers of corporate domination over our food systems.

As the RLS Agrarian Politics Working Group, we trust that the experiences and responses documented in this publication are useful to activists, civil society organizations, and social movements in the continuing struggle for food sovereignty. No doubt the responses from below will stimulate critical debate among policy makers to challenge the hegemonic food system and prompt the mindful contemplation and swift implementation of alternative food systems. On the occasion of the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) 2021, we hope our contribution strengthens counter-narratives to food systems that have been increasingly captured by global capital.

We also pay tribute to all small-scale food producers, farmworkers, communities, activists, and social movements in rural and urban areas across the globe who fight the corporate-dominated food systems, sometimes risking life and limb to do so. They are proof that real transformation of food and agricultural systems is possible. The UNFSS-proposed technical fixes to a broken system that mainly serve the interests of the rich and powerful are untenable and will never alleviate poverty or allow nations to attain food sovereignty.

*In solidarity, Jan Urhahn (RLS Southern Africa), Nadja Dorschner (RLS Germany), Patricia Lizarraga (RLS Southern Cone), Refiloe Joala (RLS Southern Africa), Verena Glass (RLS Brazil and Paraguay), and Vinod Koshti (RLS South Asia). On behalf of the Agrarian Politics Working Group*

