The Brazilian Landless Rural Workers Movement – MST – is a Brazilian social movement fighting for land, agrarian reform and social change. It is the result of a long history of land concentration and social inequality and is inspired by various forms of resistance and popular struggles for social justice and the sovereignty of peoples.

For 30 years the MST has organized landless peasants throughout Brazil to fight for their land and produce healthy food, building a better life for their families with education, health, and culture, based on cooperation and respect for each other and for nature.

Our agrarian program seeks structural changes in how we use our natural resources, which belong to all of society, and in the organization of production and social relations in the countryside. We want to contribute permanently to building a just, equal, and fraternal society.

MST has organized more than 1.5 million people in about 1,200 cities located in 23 states and the Federal District.

Occupations are the main ways to apply pressure so that lands that do not fulfill their social function are destined for land reform.

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People’s Agrarian Reform

International solidarity and struggle and the countryside

International relations, in all its dimensions, but mostly with the working class of the whole world, has always been present in MST.

The current situation reaffirms the need to combat the large estates and the agribusiness model and at the same time requires that we continue building our proposed people’s agrarian reform that goes beyond the settlement of families, looking to implement a new model of production based on agroecological experiences that produce healthy food for all people and guarantee decent living conditions for families who live and work in the countryside.

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CONCENTRATION OF LAND AND INEQUALITY IN BRAZIL

Brazil is the country with the second-highest concentration of land in the world. Furthermore, much of the land produces very little or nothing. This situation persists in Brazil since the Portuguese invasion in 1500 and is the foundation of great social inequality that characterizes the country today.

About 3% of landowners hold around 40% of all lands. Of the approximately 400 million private acres, only 60 million are used for crops. The rest of the land is idle, undercultivated, or intended for livestock.

Today in Brazil there are about 4 million landless peasants (farmers who have no land, or do not have enough land to survive).
The production of agricultural commodities is an integral part of the economy, and it is essential for providing food and raw materials to the population. However, the production of these commodities is often associated with negative environmental and social impacts, such as soil degradation, water pollution, and human rights violations.

In recent years, there has been a growing demand for sustainable and equitable agricultural production systems. The concept of agroecology, which integrates ecological principles with social justice, has emerged as a promising approach for transforming agriculture. Agroecology aims to create more resilient and regenerative agricultural systems that are responsive to local conditions and capable of providing food security and economic opportunities for marginalized communities.

To achieve this vision, it is necessary to create spaces for learning and reflection where participants can discuss their experiences and exchange knowledge. These learning spaces can be organized on different levels, such as local communities, regional networks, or national organizations. They can be facilitated by educators, trainers, or researchers who have expertise in agroecology.

Moreover, it is essential to promote the participation of women and other marginalized groups in the decision-making processes related to agricultural production. Women often play a key role in the management of natural resources and the production of food, and their voices and perspectives are crucial for the success of agroecological initiatives.

Additionally, it is necessary to promote the development of a new model of agriculture that is based on agroecological principles. This includes the use of agroecological techniques, such as crop rotation, intercropping, and agroforestry, which can improve soil health and biodiversity. It also involves the use of sustainable practices, such as reduced tillage and conservation agriculture, which can reduce soil erosion and increase water availability.

Finally, it is essential to build a strong network of support for agroecological initiatives, both at the local and national levels. This network can provide resources, technical assistance, and advocacy for agroecological projects and can help create a favorable political and social environment for their development.

In conclusion, agroecology is a promising approach for transforming agriculture, and it requires a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach. By promoting learning, participation, and networking, we can create a more sustainable and equitable food system that meets the needs of all people, protects the environment, and respects human rights.