

What can Biointensivists do facing climate change?

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When we become aware of the negative effects that the climate change will bring in the future, we very often feel anxious and disappointed. This is logical; the rise in temperature will bring several consequences for our countries in general and specially for the rural sector. Some of those consequences are: a rise in evapoexudation, an increase in the intensity of the extreme meteorological phenomena, the modification of the seasons of the year and sowing and harvest calendars, a change in the distribution of crops and a decrease in their production, a decrease in the availability of water, a rise in deforestation and soil loss, a decrease in the profitability of agricultural and livestock activities, a decrease in food production, and an increase in the levels of marginalization, poverty and migration.

In the light of some scientific reports of the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC)—although there is uncertainty and we cannot predict with precision what is going to happen due to all the factors around this global problem—the advances in the attention we are paying to the problem are really small and the possible future scenarios are really worrisome. The truth is that we urgently need to make some regional and local precise diagnoses of the situation and to establish tendencies, risk and vulnerability levels, mitigation measures in the generation of greenhouse effect gases and adaptation to climate change.

Global warming is a problem we know about since the eighties but it took us a long time to understand and take care of it. Ten years ago, the different governments in the world established the Kyoto Protocol which allowed us to start facing the problem though in an insufficient manner. Today we know the problem better but we need to build solutions and hope.

The commitments established in Kyoto are far from being fulfilled and the worst part is that there isn't a new world agreement that will allow us to move forward; besides the participation of the civil society is very limited.

From the beginning the Mexican government signed the Kyoto protocol and in the last years it has worked more diligently on the topic. Felipe Calderón—current President of Mexico—established in 2007 through the “Commission for the Climate Change” coordinated by the SEMARNAT the “National Strategy for the Climate Change.” Said strategy made possible to decree in the year 2009 the Climate Change Special Program 2009-2012.

Some of the measures related to the rural regions included in those documents are to recover the natural conditions of the soil, to implement techniques to conserve the soil and water, to modify the practices of soil use, to establish mixed production systems, to eliminate as much as possible the use of agricultural machinery and agrichemicals, to develop production proposals based on new technologies that incorporate sustainability principles and criteria, to use manure, to produce and make good use of compost and to operate bio digesters among others.

Most of these recommendations are in keeping with or represent principles shared by the Biointensive Method that has brought us together today and that's why in our Department we have decided to support the visionary efforts made by Biointensivists for the development of an agriculture that is really sustainable.

The contribution made by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is still very modest with regard to what has to be done. Even when we are not in charge of promoting the production in the Mexican fields, the SEMARNAT—through the Education and Training Center for a Sustainable Development—is giving a boost to the Biointensive Method as an alternative to adapt to the climate change and supporting their projects to give rural training in compliance with the guidelines and compromises derived from the United Nations Decade for the Education on Sustainable Development 2005-2014 coordinated by the UNESCO.

The abovementioned has allowed us to produce for example: 5000 copies of the book “El cambio climático en las comunidades rurales” (“Climate Change in Rural Communities”), 13000 copies of the book “El huerto familiar Biointensivo” (The Family Biointensive Garden”) and in coordination with the Department of Public Education 1 million one thousand copies of the book for teachers “Cambio Climático, Ciencia, evidencias y acciones” (“Climate Change, Science, Evidence and Actions”); we present said educational material for your consideration. In the rural field the books have helped us to carry out a training strategy for multipliers that will provide with productive alternatives based on the saving and efficient use of water, the recovery of damaged soil and production of healthy food that will allow us to improve the quality of life of the less fortunate population and that are more vulnerable to the climate change.

With the specific material we have for the rural sector, we have taught 24 workshops about the Biointensive Method and as a result we have educated 583 rural promoters. This year we will teach 38 more workshops in 11 states of the Mexican Republic and with this we hope to have more than 1,000 trained basic-level promoters that would add to the ones that have been trained by Ecology Action (a civil association) and other organizations and associations based on the method of our friend John Jeavons and his collaborators.

In the CECADESU we are convinced of the fact that it is urgent to redouble efforts and speed up the pace in the search for viable options to boost the productive and social transformation of the field in our countries. We are also convinced that by carrying out the following fundamental actions: saving and using water efficiently, recovering the damaged soil, raising productivity and the production of healthy food as well as conserving the native germoplasm, the agricultural biodiversity and the knowledge of our ancient cultures we will be ready to confront the global crisis that has many faces and that human beings are encountering and to build a new world. That is the extent and the importance of the crops you can get from your Biointensive beds.

This is why we are pleased to collaborate with the organizers of this Conference and we would like to specially thank Ecology Action, Ecología y Población A.C. and Xochitla Foundation for having allowed us to participate. We are sure that the work that will be done during this week

will bear good fruit because we see representatives of 19 countries that are willing to generously share their knowledge and by doing so to strengthen everyone's teaching capabilities to transmit it and apply it in the communities where they work and to help people to cope with the economical, social and ecological problems of the era we got to live in.

The institutional and personal effort made so that all of you are here today is really big and that is why we have to celebrate and take advantage of this space that will allow us to revise and go into the characteristics of the Method, to share successful experiences of the people that are participating as well as the pedagogic methods and the educational materials and to evaluate the possibility to make up a network of Biointensivists and the feasibility of establishing centers that would certify the correct use of the Method in their hometowns.

We in Mexico and through our Department support this process and hope to have very soon training centers that can certify promoters of the Biointensive Method backed by Ecology Action. We also wish to take care of regions ecologically representative of our country that we currently support as much as we can so that these centers consolidate in Aguascalientes, Michoacán, Veracruz and Estado de México.

Let me share with you the conviction that the year 2010 is a very important year in history because the Kyoto protocol is coming to an end and it is essential to establish a new global agreement. For example, at this moment the "Petersberg Talks" are being held in Germany, the Ministerial Conference about Climate Change: "Building in Copenhagen for Mexico's Success" whose purpose is to reactivate the building of new agreements in the "Sixteenth Conference of the Parties about Climate Change" which will be celebrated in Cancun, Quintana Roo in November and December of this year.

Finally, I would like to invite you on behalf of our Secretary—engineer Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada—because the COP 16 will make it possible to have in our country thousands of decision makers from all over the world and the celebration of this world summit is very important to reach binding agreements so that every country, from their different responsibilities face the problem, and to be able to make those who historically are responsible for the devastation of the planet participate

more in restoring the damage, support the conservation of natural resources and the development of our towns.

Our governments and we as citizens have an unavoidable responsibility to give a new direction to the production and consumption levels that have caused this world crisis; this is why we invite you to reflect on and present proposals for the COP-16. We invite you to think about the Biointensive Method not only from a technical perspective, but also in keeping with the commitment we have with all human beings and nature, to reflect from a perspective that will allow us to build a new humanism and from a political perspective that will allow us to build a new order in our nations and in the whole world.

This is an invitation for you to take advantage of the fact that we have all gathered here to reflect and to get the voices of Biointensivists through to the COP-16 so that they—starting from what they establish—invite people in their countries to give thought to what we have to say because we are convinced of the fact that the work all of you do is very important to build—now that there's still time—the environmental, economical and social sustainability we all need to live in a better world for all human beings.

CONGRATULATIONS FOR THE EXECUTION OF THIS CONFERENCE AND
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.