

NextFood & the UNISG Master in Agroecology and Food Sovereignty (MAFS)

Our current food system faces numerous interconnected and complex challenges. In order to address these issues effectively, it is crucial to engage students in a transformative learning process that values their diverse perspectives and encourages collaborative problem-solving. Peer-to-peer learning provides a platform for students to collaborate, learn from each other's experiences, and collectively develop sustainable solutions to fix our food system.

Objectives

The MAFS programme was created within the NextFood framework with the objective of educating the next generation of agroecologists with the necessary competences (knowledge and skills), needed to become active facilitators of change in agrifood systems and to support food sovereignty.



Multiple learning environments

An action-based approach requires a shift from a single lecture hall to a diversity of learning arenas, including classrooms, online platforms, the UNISG garden as well as a plethora of nearby farms and farming communities.

Methodology & Approach

With a systemic case- and action-based approach and classes integrating natural and social sciences, the MAFS students will develop an understanding of the ecological, technical, social, economic, cultural and policy dimensions of agricultural and food systems; and a trans-disciplinary profile and competences based on holistic knowledge and necessary skills to cross the gap between knowing and doing and to become a facilitator of change.

Collaborative learning

The MAFS programme emphasises participatory and peer-to-peer learning methods, active student involvement, collaboration, and fostering a deeper understanding of the complex issues within our globalized food system.

Appreciation of diversity

By creating an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives, experiences, and cultural backgrounds, peer-to-peer learning enables university students to collaborate and gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted issues surrounding our food system.

Interdisciplinary approach

The inclusive nature of peer-to-peer learning encourages students from diverse academic disciplines to contribute their unique perspectives to complex food system issues. This approach fosters holistic thinking and allows for comprehensive solutions.



Data collection

Initial questions and final questions were shared, according to the NextFood template. Students also carried out a self-assessment on the first and last day of the course, evaluating themselves on the five core competences.



Initial questions

- What knowledge and skills do we need to support sustainable development in agri-food and forestry systems?
- What experiences and competences do I bring to this course to make it a success?
- What are the questions would I like this course to help me find an answer to?
- What are the competences I'd like to train and improve significantly on during this course?

Final questions

- What experiences and competences did I bring to this course to make it a success?
- What questions did this course to help me to find an answer to?
- Which competences did I train/improve significantly during this course?
- At the end of the course, what are the questions I am now asking myself?

Self-assessment

The five core competences were Observation, Participation, Visioning, Reflection and Dialogue.

For each competence, different specific sub-competences were listed and the definition of the different level of development was given.

