

Vandana Shiva's battles *for* Food sovereignty

by
Val-Bleu



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AQOCI dedicates this graphic novel to everyone involved in the struggle for positive and respectful food sovereignty.

We would especially like to thank Vandana Shiva, Indian feminist activist, ecofeminist and writer, alternative Nobel Prize winner (1993), and founder of the *Navdanya* biodiversity conservation association for her inspiration.

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Les combats de Vandana Shiva pour la souveraineté alimentaire by :
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With authenticity and sensitivity, Val Bleu introduces us to the origin of Vandana Shiva's struggles against the agrifood giants, addressing the issues of responsibility and solidarity, which bring us together around the world.

Vandana Shiva's battles *for* Food sovereignty



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#FOODSOVEREIGNTY



What is food sovereignty?

Food sovereignty is peoples' right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced using sustainable methods, and their right to define their own agricultural and food systems. It promotes a sustainable, small-scale production model that benefits communities and their environment. Food sovereignty gives priority to the production and consumption of food at the local level. It recognizes the right of countries to protect their local producers from cheap imports and to control their production.

Through the following pages, we invite you to discover the history and work of Vandana Shiva, Indian feminist activist, ecofeminist and writer, alternative Nobel Prize winner (1993), founder of the Navdanya association, which fights for the promotion of traditional peasant agriculture against multinational food companies.

Food sovereignty means rethinking our consumption patterns. We can be and become enlightened consumers, aware of the impact of our choices on the environment and on others.

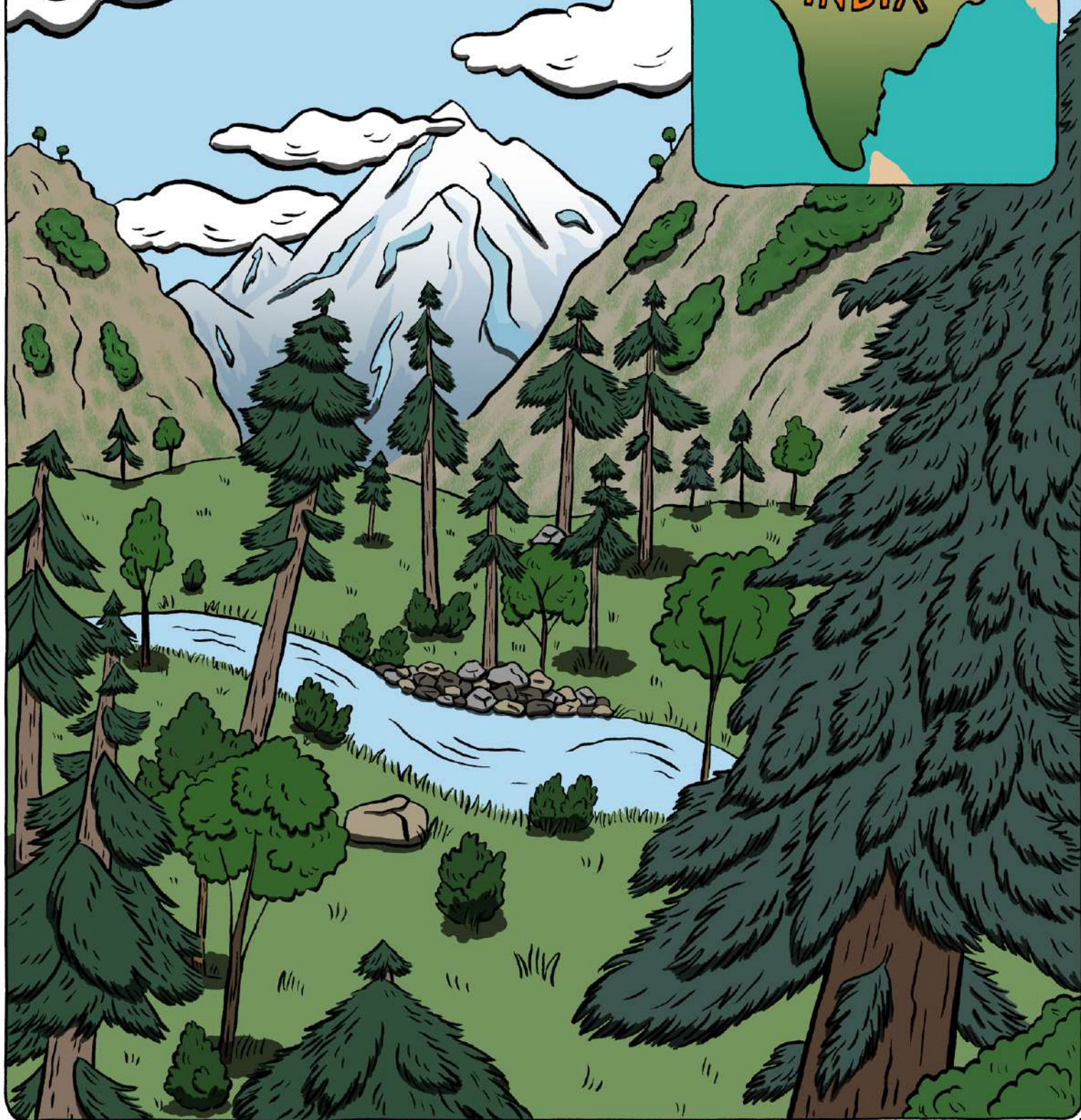
"We all belong to the living and this creates duties for us: to follow the laws of nature and to react when they are violated. The world needs protection and we need justice."

- **Vandana Shiva**
at the Ecoposs Biennial
Conference, February 2023.



#SDI2024 #souverainetéalimentaire

Vandana Shiva was born in 1952 in the Doon Valley. Her father, a forest conservationist in the Himalayas, took her on treks from a very young age.



This is a neem tree. We use it to prevent plaque, but it is also very efficient for keeping the mosquitoes away!



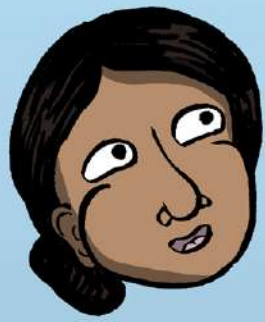
During those walks, he shares his knowledge and his love of nature with his daughter.

Growing up, Vandana Shiva takes interest in sciences, especially in physics.



...a subject that will bring her to Canada to complete a master's degree and doctorate in philosophy of physics.





Before leaving, I wanted to do one last trek in my childhood forests.

But a horrible vision awaited her.



The forest had been completely razed, the biodiversity eliminated, ready to be replaced by monocultures that would serve international trade instead of local needs.

This is when she heard about the Chipko movement for the first time.

Chipko is a movement of peasants who hug trees to prevent them from being cut down, because our culture and our local economy are one with the forest.



We are a vast majority of women because the deforestation affects us much more...

By destroying nature and its ecosystem, we are being forced to walk further to get drinking water and firewood.



Here, women are responsible for feeding the family—to achieve this, the forests must be protected.



Working with these women taught me a lot. They were illiterate but they understood the forest much better than the educated people who wanted to destroy it. They knew that everything was connected!



We cannot cut down all the trees without affecting waterways, biodiversity, the richness of the soil...





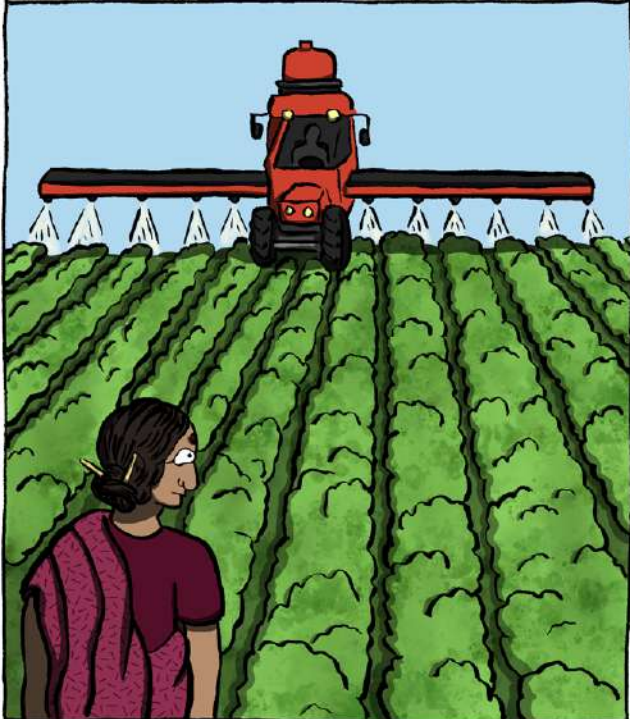
These meetings lead to the writing of her first book, which links ecological battles with women's struggles.



She writes a second book, this time about the violence of the Green Revolution in India, where the transformation of agriculture by multinationals had harmful consequences, notably in Punjab and Bhopal.



She becomes more and more interested in the agri-food industry.



She creates the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology.

With this foundation, she can carry out independent research on a small budget.



They give a voice to local communities, who bear witness to the ecological changes that affect them.

Her criticism of the agri-food industry leads her to attend several conferences on the subject; one was especially notable.

Laws of Life



Geneva, 1987

Thanks to GMO*s, we will create "new" seeds, which will allow us to patent them.

This will make it illegal for farmers to preserve their seeds. They will have no choice but to buy them from us, year after year!

But if someone asks, GMOs aim to generate better harvest to end world hunger, OK?



* genetically modified organism

Back in India, she goes to small villages.

Vandana Shiva is horrified.

We need to preserve our seeds before it is too late!



She uses farmers' help to create a seed bank.



A rich variety of seeds are stored there, ready to use, thus opposing the monocultures imposed by the multinationals.

In 1991, she creates Navdanya, a farm that also serves as a research and training space on biodiversity and the importance of preserving indigenous seeds.



Navdanya values traditional knowledge from farmers,



the contribution of women in a diversified agriculture that protects and respects nature,



a food production that meets local needs,



and the vision of a unified world, where the human does not dominate nature, but rather is part of the Great Earth Family through reciprocal relationships.

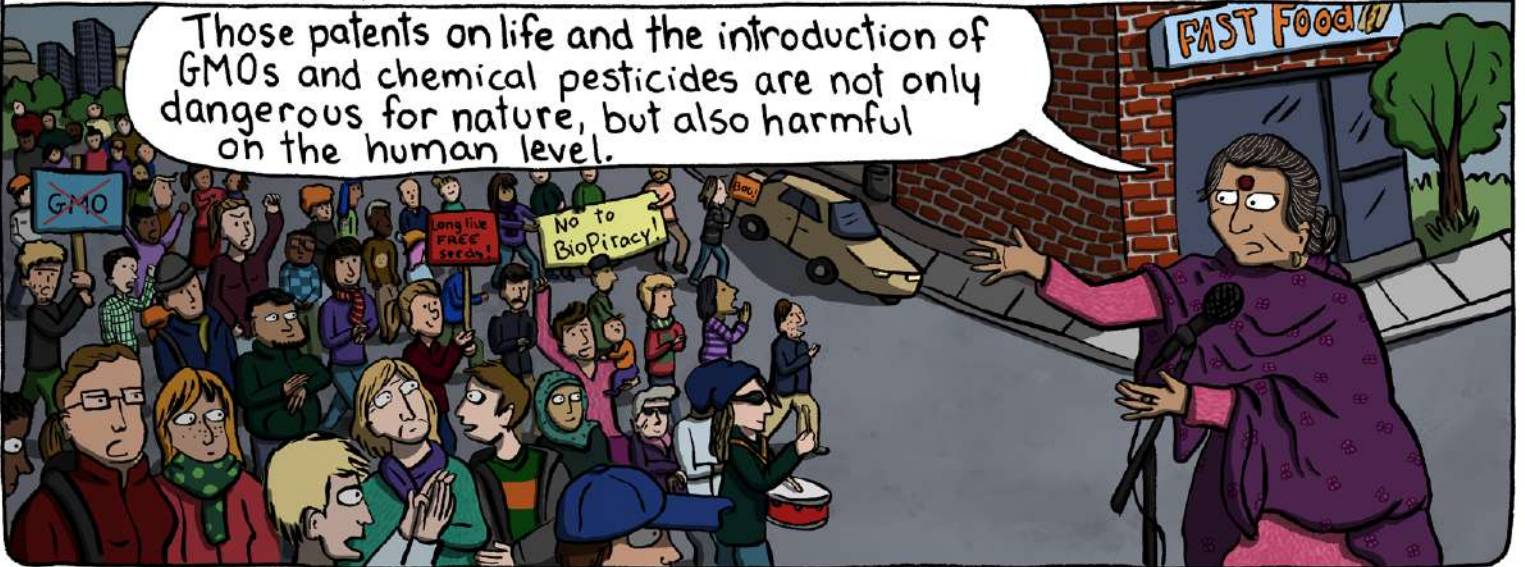


Vandana Shiva is involved in several peasant causes in India and internationally. She always makes sure that the treaties and laws that multinationals want to impose are translated into the local languages.



Very eloquent, she participates in numerous protests and events around the world.

Those patents on life and the introduction of GMOs and chemical pesticides are not only dangerous for nature, but also harmful on the human level.



She writes around twenty activist books and more than 500 articles,



in addition to working with many organizations that defend food sovereignty.



I dream of a world where farmers' rights are protected, where Mother Earth is respected and seeds belong to everyone. Fortunately, many of us are working in this direction.



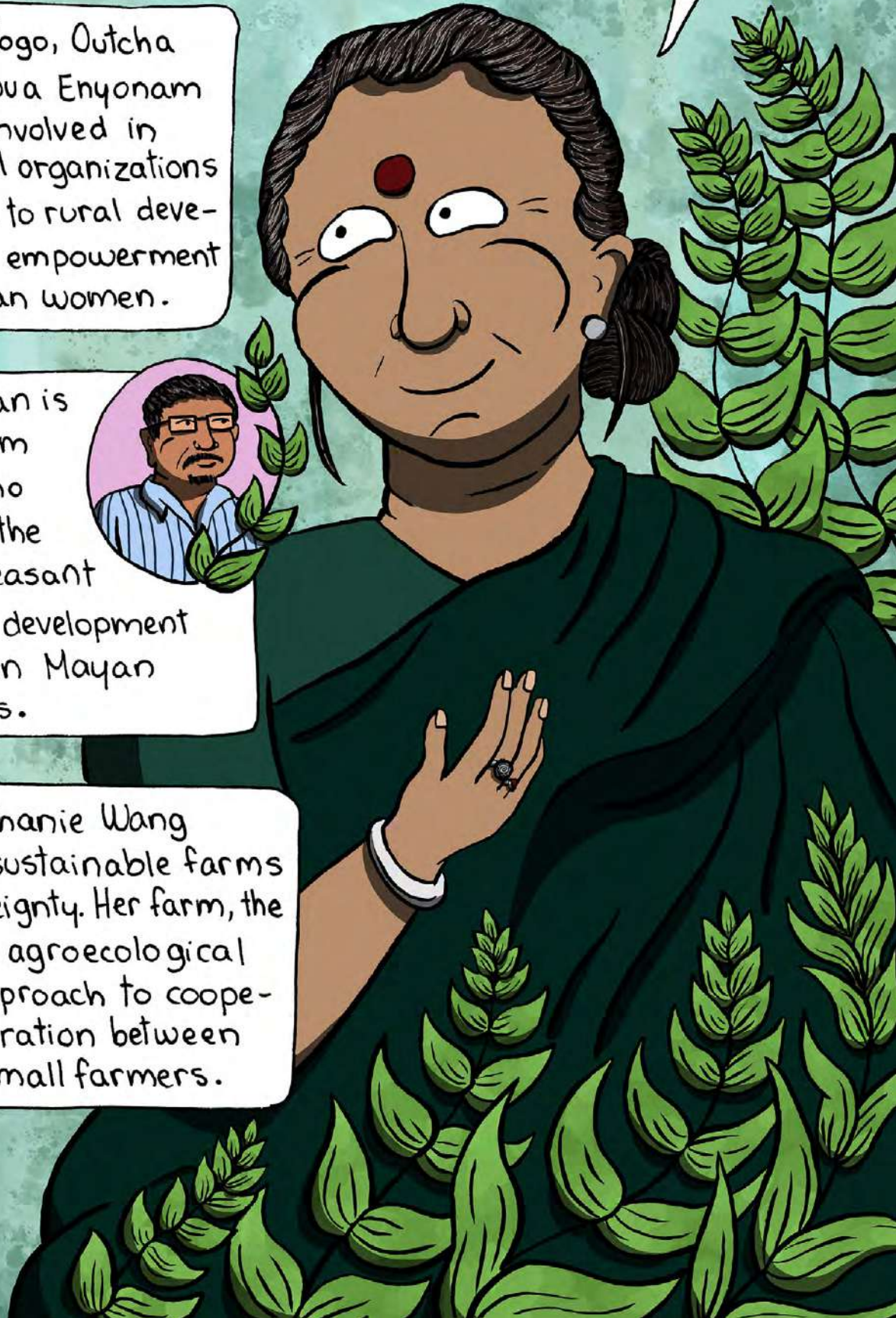
In Togo, Outcha Akoua Enyonam is involved in several organizations that contribute to rural development and the empowerment of West African women.



Leocadio Juracan is an activist from Guatemala who works towards the recovery of peasant lands and the development of livelihoods in Mayan communities.



In Quebec, Stéphanie Wang campaigns for sustainable farms and food sovereignty. Her farm, the Rizen, takes an agroecological approach to cooperation between small farmers.



The right to food is sacred. Together, we can build a food system that protects biodiversity and local productions, so we can all have access to healthy food in sufficient quantity!



Val-Bleu

TRUE OR FALSE?



Small-scale family farming feeds 80% of the world's population.

1



TRUE

FALSE

500 million people worldwide suffered from hunger in 2022.

2



TRUE

FALSE

The largest number of hungry people are in Asia.

3



TRUE

FALSE

Globally, food insecurity affects women and people living in rural areas the most.

4



TRUE

FALSE

Around the world, nearly 10% of food is thrown into the trash.

5



TRUE

FALSE

The dominant agrifood industry is doing its fair share to address climate change.

6



TRUE

FALSE

Food sovereignty can help reduce poverty and protect the environment.

7



TRUE

FALSE

Food sovereignty is the same as food self-sufficiency.

8



TRUE

FALSE

1 : TRUE. Small-scale family farming is left without financial and technical support from governments. Yet this type of agriculture feeds 80% of the world's population while using less water and polluting much less. It faces political and economic barriers to the benefit of the agrifood industry.

Source: Development and Peace (2014). [Sow Much Love. Small family farmers feed the world.](#)

2 : FALSE. The number is even greater: about 735 million people, or 9.2% of the world's population, suffered from hunger in 2022! Since the COVID-19 pandemic, world hunger has increased dramatically.

The food systems that feed people are highly vulnerable to crises and disruptions related to conflict, climate change and economic contractions. These systems must be transformed to address the problem of hunger in the world.

Source: FAO. (2023). [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023.](#) Urbanization, transformation of agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum.

3 : TRUE. Among the major regions of the world, Asia has the largest number of hungry people. The two subregions with the largest number of hungry people are South Asia (313,6 million) and Sub-Saharan Africa (262 million).

However, it is in Africa that the *percentage* of people suffering from hunger is the highest: 22.5% in sub-Saharan Africa.

Source: FAO. (2023). [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023.](#) Urbanization, transformation of agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum.

4 : TRUE. In 2022, moderate to severe food insecurity affected 33.3% of adults in rural areas, compared to 26.0% in urban areas. Moreover, food insecurity affects women more than men globally.

Source: FAO. (2023). [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023.](#) Urbanization, transformation of agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum.

5 : FALSE. Nearly 20% of the food available to people around the world is wasted every year around the world, the equivalent of nearly a billion tons of food!

The fact that substantial amounts of food are produced but not consumed by humans has significant negative environmental, social and economic impacts. Estimates suggest that 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food that is not consumed.

Source: UN (2021). [UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2021.](#)

6 : FALSE. Today, the dominant food system is largely controlled by multinationals and promotes monocultures, long-distance food supply chains, the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This system is damaging to the environment and needs to be radically transformed to address climate change.

Protecting the environment requires sustainable farming practices that conserve natural resources and producing more food locally, thereby reducing carbon emissions from transporting imported food.

Source: AQOCI. (2023). [Les solutions proposées par la souveraineté alimentaire.](#)

7 : TRUE. Food sovereignty is peoples' right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced using sustainable methods, and their right to define their own agricultural and food systems.

It can help reduce poverty and inequality by strengthening communities' capacity to produce their own food in a sustainable manner and by promoting equitable access to land and resources. In addition, it helps to combat environmental degradation by promoting sustainable agricultural practices that conserve natural resources and by producing more food at the local level.

Source: AQOCI. (2023). [Les solutions proposées par la souveraineté alimentaire.](#)



8: FALSE. Food sovereignty is sometimes confused with food self-sufficiency. However, these are two different concepts.

Self-sufficiency in food refers to an economic model that implies total economic independence from the rest of the world.

Food sovereignty, on the other hand, does not exclude trade or international trade. It is based on the right to food, which means that priority is given to production aimed at feeding the population. Adopting this approach therefore means aiming to produce and consume locally what we can. But this does not prevent importing what cannot be produced locally and exporting surpluses if needed.

Source: AQOCI. (2023). [Les solutions proposées par la souveraineté alimentaire.](#)



Food is the motto of life, the connection between us and the earth, between us and other species. Food is the connection between different species that weave the frame of cooperation and reciprocity of life. The industrial food system is at the heart of a human and global crisis. It also drove the peasants from their land, and often led them to suicide. And instead of feeding humans, it promotes starvation, malnutrition and chronic diseases. [Translated by AQOCI].

- *La Relève et La Peste*, Vandana Shiva, 2019

Visit



SOW

HARVEST

EAT





Val-Bleu is a graphic novel artist who has traveled extensively in India. She worked in the mountains of Nainital district, where Vandana Shiva grew up. Indian culture and the quiet beauty of forests and mountains have greatly influenced her graphic novels; it is in these settings that she explores social, relational and feminist themes. She has published *La Zone de l'Amitié* and *Mina la brave* at the Éditions du remue-ménage, as well as *Couennes Dur*, at the Mécanique générale publishing house. In collaboration with Dwin Mitel, *Papillonie* (Mécanique générale) will be published in March 2024.



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