

# Biodiversidad



**S**eedling's sister publication, *Biodiversidad*, written in Spanish and distributed in Latin America, is growing rapidly. As Carlos Vicente, who runs GRAIN's information work in Latin America, explains, it is responding to the demands of a highly politicised continent, where social movements are finally managing to get some of the more progressive governments to take up their demands.

“*Biodiversidad* magazine has evolved. When it was created in 1994, as the result of a joint initiative between GRAIN and REDES-AT (an ecological group in Uruguay linked to Friends of the Earth), the aim was to produce a publication that would publicise the struggles and the issues around biodiversity in Latin America. Our intention was to combine articles from *Seedling* with our own articles on the local and regional reality of Latin America. Right from the beginning we created an advisory board, drawn from people from different regions and sectors of Latin America, to help define the issues to be covered and to establish the broad editorial guidelines.

In July 2007 we decided to widen our editorial group and to decentralise our printing. We brought in Acción Ecológica from Ecuador, Grupo Semillas from Colombia, Grupo ETC from Mexico, Campaña de la Semilla from Via Campesina in Chile, Acción por la Biodiversidad in Argentina and Red de Coordinación en Biodiversidad from Costa Rica. As well as this, we produced one edition of the magazine in Portuguese in association with Centro IPE in Brazil and we plan to go on doing this in the future. We brought in a new editor – Ramón Vera Herrera – who is based in Mexico. He comes up with an editorial proposal for each edition and oversees the coordination of all the material. Once the edition is finalised, it is distributed electronically and printed in each of the contributing countries.

It is this process which has led to a step change in our circulation. In 2007 our print run was 2,500–3,000 copies and we distributed it by mail to subscribers from all over the continent. As a result of the changes mentioned above, our print run has increased to 8,000 copies. We still mail it to our subscribers but, as well as that, our editorial partners distribute the magazine by hand at the various meetings, events and demonstrations that they are involved in. In this way we get our magazine to the social movements and their struggles.

We see our role as supporting the different struggles of the social organisations in Latin America, giving them useful information and analysis that help them gain a better understanding of the processes that affect them. At the same time, we are helping to publicise their problems, resistances and strategies that they are developing. Our magazine turns up all over the region, and is clearly used by social organisations. As a result, we are confident that we are achieving our objectives.

*Biodiversidad* is developing its own identity, which is somewhat different from *Seedling*'s, because we are so fully involved in Latin America's social struggles. At the same time, *Seedling* continues to be our sister publication and an essential reference point for us. We still routinely translate and publish articles from *Seedling* that deal with global problems so that we can encourage discussion about these issues in the Spanish-speaking world. At the same, the fact that articles from *Biodiversidad* are beginning to be used in *Seedling* has generated an enriching process that we hope to sustain and deepen.

We try to strike a balance between regional and international information in *Biodiversidad*, but sometimes it is quite difficult. Capitalist globalisation means that the problems that Latin America faces have many points in common with those faced in other countries, and we want to make the connections. Sometimes we are able, through GRAIN's network, to look at problems from a global perspective, as was the case with our special issue on agrofuels. In this instance we were very pleased to be able to print the magazine in Spain, thanks to contacts with EHNE (Euskal Herriko Nekazarien Elkartasuna/Solidarity of Agricultural Workers of the Basque Country) and Veterinarios sin Fronteras (also including in this edition some articles looking at the problem from a Spanish point of view).

As to the future, we want to strengthen our network, getting ever closer to social movements, peasant organisations and indigenous peoples, so that we can reflect their demands, proposals and visions. We will discuss this in our next editorial meeting, to be held later in 2008, when we will be talking about increasing yet further our presence in Latin America, bringing in other organisations. We are hopeful about the future because Latin America is a highly politicised continent, and governments are beginning to listen to social movements and to take on some of their demands. Yet we must also remember that most people live in a situation of oppression, in which the neoliberal model is still dominant.”

