Countless staff who now work for the ATC throughout Nicaragua received their training at what is known today as the Rodolfo Sánchez Bustos Northern Agroecological Institute, nestled in the hills beside the village of Santa Emilia in the department of Matagalpa. The school was constructed in 1986-1987 with the support of DANES, a Danish NGO, as well as the sweat and muscles of many ATC supporters such as Don Félix Zapata, who today is the school’s director.

While the school has existed for years to train youth in agronomy, it has more recently begun to focus specifically on agroecology. The theme of agroecology has been integrated with more established trainings in coffee production, cooperatives, unions, political theory, gender, and youth. Combined with farms, cooperatives, and unions in the surrounding countryside, the school grounds and activities there form a regional agroecological training ground and make up part of the ATC’s Agroecological Corridor.

The school has also made a concerted effort to increase women’s participation in recent years. Enrollment in training programs by women was quite low in the ‘90s and ‘00s, but has risen to approximately 25% today. The staff continue to integrate a gender component into each course taught at the school.