IALA Profile:
Francisco Morazán International Peasant School

The Francisco Morazán International Peasant School, located on the outskirts of Managua, is the central hub of activity for La Via Campesina (LVC) in Central America. It hosts many activities, including meetings of other organizations or allies of the LVC movement. Since 2010, the school has hosted regular trainings and conferences for leaders and representatives of peasant and worker organizations across the region, such as leadership training for social movements. Trainings are based on popular education methodologies inspired by Paulo Freire to respect and engage with different knowledges. The aim is to build critical consciousness and solidarity to inform social action and social justice struggles. The school has 45 course modules, which include cooperative organization, agrarian reform, agroecology, indigenous cosmovisions, gender and youth equity, campesino and popular feminism, and popular communication and education. Classes must be comprised of at least 60% women, and emphasis is placed on encouraging the leadership of young people. Out of these courses grow countless political leaders and promoters of LVC.

In addition to facilitating international social movement building, the school coordinates initiatives focused on employment. Through the school, rural workers can receive certifications in coffee, tobacco, rice, and banana production, which substantially increases their negotiating power with local employers. The employment program also trains rural youth in creating value-added products using raw materials from their farms. In a time when many workers (especially youth) are forced to migrate to the city to find work, such programs are crucial in maintaining the resiliency of rural communities.

The Francisco Morazán school also promotes and practices agroecology through its on-site agroecological demonstration garden and medicinal plant garden. Outside of school grounds, the school staff support a network of local farmers interested in agroecological production methods.