IALA Profile:  
Ixm Ulew for Mesoamerica & the Caribbean

The Latin American Institute of Agroecology (IALA) Ixm Ulew for Mesoamerica and the Caribbean in Nicaragua offers a two-year degree to youth leaders from throughout Latin America that provides technical, political, and ideological education in agroecology as a fundamental pillar to the construction of food sovereignty and transformation of society as proposed by the ATC and the international peasant movement, La Via Campesina.

The students’ education is based upon principles of popular education and peasant-to-peasant methodology, valuing and reclaiming traditional knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation. IALA Ixm Ulew prepares youth leaders to create alternative approaches to development, to be resilient against the challenges of climate change, to have productive rural livelihoods, to build gender equity, and to be able to grow culturally appropriate food for local consumption. The students furthermore learn about the geopolitical contexts of their countries with a focus on political economy to better understand imperial structures and anti-imperial struggles. This training is essential for the survival of peasant peoples and for the survival of the planet.

In 2014, La Via Campesina acquired land in Santo Tomás in the department of Chontales in order for IALA Ixm Ulew to become a physical reality. The property includes plentiful acreage for cultivation of vegetables and grains, pasture for grazing animals, a forest with tropical wildlife, and a creek for bathing and irrigation. The land is used as an agroecological production and demonstration space and is a central component of the ATC’s Agroecological Corridor, helping to spread agroecological growing practices and ways of thinking throughout the region through peer-to-peer education.