

CASAS: Values and Guiding Principles

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Mission

To create a politically engaged, solidarity-based network of agrarian studies for Global South scholars

Values

- **Social, agrarian, environmental, gender, racial, and climate justice.**
- **Equality:** We stand for the complete abolition of all forms of privilege. This encompasses every privilege rooted in the exploitation of labor, land, income, and the double or triple workload endured by women, tied to social reproduction. It also includes the extraordinary surplus value extracted from all marginalized social groups—whether ethnic, racial, caste-based, or gendered—, dynamics that are crucial mechanisms for sustaining imperialism and the subjugation of entire humanity.
- **Plural and revolutionary forms of anti-capitalism.**
- **Solidarity.**
- **Mutual care.**

Principles of scholar-activism and political principles of research:

- Commitment to rigorous academic work that engages in dialogue and collaboration with social movements aligned with and/or close to our values, supporting their efforts in social struggles to change the world.
- Support the political processes and transformative social practices led by peasants and their allies as they develop alternative approaches to organizing social and ecological reproduction. This includes fostering agroecology, social and solidarity economies, territorial self-governance, practices of commoning, and *buen vivir* to cultivate more caring, just, and ecologically aligned ways of living. Additionally, support the efforts of local, national, and transnational agrarian and environmental justice movements that mobilize to expand these alternative frameworks and practices.
- Support our political allies who advocate for radical transformation towards just, diverse, sustainable food systems and social and environmental justice.
- Serve as a conduit for members of local groups to engage with scholars of broader agrarian studies groups.

Internal principles of CASAS as a network:

- To foster a diverse solidarity network among scholars from the Global South
- To promote collaboration and knowledge co-production among critical scholars, scholar-activists and activists engaged with agrarian social movements in their struggles for social, agrarian, and environmental justice, through co-authorship and reviewing.

- To develop an expanded solidarity network of researchers, writers, readers, and reviewer
- To broaden the scope of dissemination of work by Global South scholars in international academic spaces.
- To create a non-sectarian Global South network.
- To foster reflexivity, sensitivity and mutual care in the process of cross-border solidarity and collaborations within the network.
- To support scholar-activists working in conflict and settler colonial contexts.
- To support the collective and democratic construction of CASAS through a sovereign General Assembly and the operation of the Reference Group as outlined in the [Reference Group Terms of Reference](#).
- To operate within the principles set by the anti-sexual harassment and discriminatory policy as described in CASAS' [Anti-Sexual Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy](#).
- Against classism, racism, casteism, regionalism, sexism, and all forms of discrimination

Principles of social justice in academic spaces:

- To understand, interpret, expose and challenge global injustices within academia and other spaces of knowledge production and dissemination.
- To counter racial, gender, caste and all forms of discrimination in academia and other spaces of knowledge production.
- To understand, interpret and challenge financial inequalities in academia, particularly concerning scholarships, conference funding, and travel support.
- To understand, interpret and challenge exploitative practices, such as predatory academic journals.
- To understand, interpret and challenge structural inequalities that affect research outputs and recognition of researchers from the Global South.
- To understand, interpret and challenge everyday struggles of scholars from the Global South, including the precariousness of academic work, especially for junior scholars, M.A. students and PhD researchers.
- To understand, interpret, and challenge constraints on academic freedom, particularly for scholars dedicated to social transformation.

Principles of anti-colonial knowledge

- To contribute to democratic access, production, distribution and dissemination of knowledge.
- Collective and reflexive production of knowledge to promote radical social change.
- To reflect on agrarian issues and it's political economy from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, Asia, and any other colonized societies –and subjectivities– that have been marginalized, which includes: scholars from the working class, migrants and their children, racialized groups, women, and Indigenous Peoples, agrarian communities, imbricated in identities of class, caste, ethnicity, race, gender, generation, religion, workers' struggle, women's movement, food sovereignty, environmental and

anti-nuclear movements and all of those who are in the margins of capitalist globalization.

- Ethical commitments to dismantle the hierarchies in the processes of knowledge production/creation, co-produce/create knowledge in dialogue and collaboration with agrarian struggles, and to be accountable to them.
- Commitment to knowledge production and scholarship in critical agrarian studies that actively opposes colonialism and critically reflects on the appropriation of the 'decolonizing project' by social elites.
- Conceptualize the Global South beyond a geographical and binary notion, understanding it as an insurgent political category rather than a geographical term/concept/notion.
- To engage in critical reflection on our own positionalities within the Global South, recognizing and understanding the diverse experiences and perspectives among scholars from the South, rather than assuming a homogeneous identity and being able to critically reflect on the universality that encompasses our particularities.
- Identify, critique and correct inequalities embedded within scholarship.
- Problematize 'mainstream' interpretations and solutions produced in the Global North'
- As a non-sectarian Global South network, scholars and activists geographically located in the global north can join forces with us, given entrenched inequalities that pose risks and barriers for them to advance sustained campaigns for agrarian and environmental justice.
- Question the dominance of 'academic elites' in the Global South that reproduce mainstream theories.
- Address power inequalities within Global South knowledge production.
- Call for new ideas and critical analysis within academia that have remained marginalized.

Principles of language justice

- Recognize language as a tool of domination and the need to challenge it in both academia and activism.
- Address hierarchies in knowledge production and dissemination as a result of linguistic colonization.
- Contribute to disseminating academic knowledge in forums, journals and publications in diverse languages to increase accessibility of knowledge to scholars and activists in the Global South.
- Recognize capitalist structures, colonial legacies and legacies of imperial domination in the way language can reproduce inequalities in knowledge, particularly the dominance of English language.
- Promote knowledge diversity by countering hierarchies and dominant narratives that perpetuate inequalities and social injustice in science and policy-making.
- Pursue and look for ways to have other indigenous languages and knowledge systems integrated in scholar-activist spaces and initiatives.

Principles of a social, agrarian, environmental and food justice research agenda:

- Develop syntheses and analytical tools to reflect on evolving perspectives of the agrarian question shaping current global debates.
- Investigate ways in which rural people are affected by land grabs, green and blue grabs, the socio-economic and political impacts and responses.
- Understand the evolving landscape of social justice struggles, alliances, and challenges within agrarian struggles for control over land, resources, and conditions of production and reproduction. This includes struggles for food and seed sovereignty, environmental and climate justice, territorial defense, alternative ways of living, Indigenous rights and autonomy, and gender and urban justice.
- Understand the complexities of rural realities and be part of a collective effort to transform food systems that improve peasant and rural livelihoods.
- Critically analyze evolving struggles without essentializing rural communities, using multidisciplinary approaches to understand diverse forms of exploitation, dispossession, and marginalization, as well as their impacts on diverse forms of living. Recognize the complexity and agency of different livelihoods, emphasizing their right to land and self-determined ways of living.
- Problematize North-South binaries and recognize social and economic inequalities within both the Global North and South, while recognizing the enduring legacy of colonization.
- Question the assumption of internal homogeneity of the nation-state or state-nation.
- Recognize that the 'Global South' describes spaces of various forms of exploitation and oppression that undermine specific social groups.
- Broaden the field and practices of critical agrarian studies within universities and beyond, reimagining its theoretical frameworks and practical applications.

Acknowledgement:

This document was written based on the accumulated political/theoretical discussions within CASAS over recent years, aiming to produce a concise document capable of conveying CASAS's political principles and protocols through the [CASAS Manifesto](#), the [CASAS collective article](#), and the [minutes of the latest General Assemblies](#), as well as the minutes of preparatory meetings for the in-person General Assembly held in China, October 2023.