



A Manifesto by the women farmers of ÖBV-Via Campesina Austria

In our daily lives, we pay caring attention to food production, to our fellow humans and to nature. We find the current negative developments in agriculture and food policy shocking and say: Enough is enough! We want to encourage and invite you:

Let us work for a good life for all – for “Buen vivir”!

Our current economic system is based on the logic of growth. The consequences are, on the one hand, profit and the concentration of power for the few, and on the other hand, hunger and the exploitation and oppression of people and nature.

We want an economic system which has, as its core aim, a good life for all!

A good life, to us, means eating, drinking and sleeping well, carrying out satisfying and worthwhile work, living out our spirituality, loving and being loved, dancing, listening and being heard, when we express ourselves.*–To us it means having time to dream and time to turn those dreams into reality – with others, but also for ourselves. Living well means being able to both rest and be active. A good life for us includes exchanging ideas, connecting with others, being curious and open-minded, living with passion and humor. It also means leading a self-determined life. “Buen vivir” is not a standardized model - it encompasses the diversity of humans and their basic needs and creates a free space that can be socially, culturally, emotionally and sensually molded.

We are women who orient our work on our farms towards a good life for all. We integrate natural cycles into our daily work. We produce food for our region and take care of the life in our soil, of clean water, of healthy air and of beautiful landscapes. We learn from our ancestors as well as through education and training, and use our knowledge and skills to improve our own well-being and the well-being of our fellow humans and fellow creatures. An economy for a good life for all is a concrete alternative to - and resistance against - the dominating logic of growth and profit maximization.

We are women farmers who publically express our opinion for a system change in agriculture. We expose practices that harm humans and nature, offer resistance against these practices and advocate alternatives. We demand agricultural policies that concentrate on food sovereignty. We need more farmers and access to land for those who want to work for a good life for all.

Our experience in agriculture leads us to demand an economic and political system which is oriented towards a good life for all and which preserves Mother Nature, the source of our livelihood. We are not rulers, but part of nature and highly dependent on biodiversity. Such an economic system places responsibility for humans, animals and plants at its center. Our important and valuable work needs to be appreciated, fairly distributed and appropriately paid.

For such societal change we need many, many people focusing on the good life for all in their own living environments. Let us unite!

***Women’s working group of ÖBV-Via Campesina Austria
(Austrian Association of Mountain farmers and Smallholders), October, 2016***

* These definitions of a good life for all are taken from the concept of “Buen Vivir”, of “Sumak kawsay” by the indigenous people of Bolivia.