



THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Stela Zămoiu is a proud peasant woman who has been part of the Romanian Peasants' Association Eco Ruralis since 2014. She is part of the Seed Saving and Agroecology Working Group of the NGO, as well as a member of the Eco Ruralis Coordinating Committee. Supported by her family, Stela became an ambassador for peasant seeds and peasants' right to seeds, often hosting the national meeting of the working group in her home village of Dâmbroca. Being engaged in various national seed exchange networks, she promotes peasant seeds and peasants' right to seeds at seed exchange markets throughout the country, and at national and international events. Stela also innovates by promoting gift and exchange economy practices, oftentimes offering, or exchanging her seeds.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Stela brings all her varied experiences to fuel her activism within Eco Ruralis and her advocacy for peasants' rights. The tradition of peasant seed saving is an inherently sustainable practice which preserves the treasure of biodiversity, culturally and environmentally adequate (and resilient) varieties of vegetables. She thus contributes to displacing the idea that food production should be done for profit. Her innovative practice is a model of applied food sovereignty, one which she is eager to showcase in media and share with or advise others on.

However, her activism goes beyond this in that Stela, as part of Eco Ruralis, positions herself politically as a peasant and advocate for peasants' rights. The

peasant way of life grounded on environmentally sustainable practices like localized food production, natural construction, community living and in general a simple sustainable lifestyle in harmony with nature is rapidly disappearing in Romania and the EU, the peasants and small food producers being overburdened by bureaucracy and considered to lack in terms of modernization and development.



Stela and Eco Ruralis counteract this perspective through their public discourse; by forming alliances and networks of peasants and small farmers (both at national and international level); and organizing collective political action to secure their rights as peasants. The impact of these actions consists in (re)presenting peasants as political actors with a continued, historical, and fundamental contribution to environmental sustainability who continue to claim their rights.

USEFUL LINKS

[Eco Ruralis](#) – Romanian Peasants' Association
[The Seed Keeper](#) (documentary about Stela)
[Stela Zămoiu on FB](#)