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“Can agroecological farming feed the world?  
Farmers’ and academia’s views”

## Agroecology boosts agency for reproduction goals among smallholder farmers in southeast Nigeria: implications for food security and nutrition

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### Abstract

Studies in Africa have demonstrated that investing in agroecological farming practices improves the food and nutrition security of farmers. However, apart from the regenerative agronomic practices associated with agro-ecology, there are also non-market aspects such as social networking activities. The study claims that the agroecology practices are promoted and established as a result of the social networks formed by the agroecology farmers, just as the network itself is perpetuated as a result of the agroecology practices adopted by these farmers. However, literature is still silent on the important roles of the non-market activities fostered through the adoption of agroecological practices. We aim to reveal the social and household reproduction dimensions accompanying the adoption of agroecological practices in self-made farmer groups and to understand their role in ensuring food and nutrition security. In-depth interviews were conducted with 29 farmers belonging to an agroecology group founded a few years ago in Southeast Nigeria. The interviews were analysed using qualitative content analysis. Our preliminary key findings suggest that participatory agroecological farming creates social reciprocity among the agroecology farmers and the agency for pursuing household non-market activities which had a strong potential of meeting the food security and nutrition needs of farmers; at least in the eyes of the participants of schemes. Indeed our results point to the role of agroecology group membership on food security and nutrition through social and household reproduction, beyond the agronomic sustainable production practices adopted on the farms. This idea of analysing agroecology not only as an ecological but also as a social system provides an entry point for addressing food security challenges of farming households that do not entirely depend on the market economy. Such farming households reflect the reality of rural agrarian communities.

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