



# Agroecology boosts agency for reproduction goals among smallholder farmers in southeast Nigeria

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## Introduction

Agroecology is increasingly recognized as a key alternative food system that could make significant contributions toward achieving global food security in an environmentally friendly manner

Chukwuma *et al* (2020) suggested three pathways through which agroecology might influence food security which include:

- i. through physical reproduction and maintenance of the soil
- ii. Through social reproduction and networking
- iii. Through household reproduction and family care

While the physical reproduction pathway is well investigated in literature, the social and household reproduction pathways that emerged as a result of the adoption of agroecology practices are sparsely explored

### Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to empirically investigate the social and household pathways through which agroecology affects food security and nutrition

## Methodology



We interviewed 19 female agroecology farmers from Southeast Nigeria

The agroecology farmers were part of an agroecology group started by a team of researchers from the center of Agroecology, UK

We concentrated on female farmers as they are mainly involved in ensuring food availability in the households.

We selected the respondents to reflect the demographic dynamics of the members of the agroecology group

We employed the concept of agency and reproduction in conducting a thematic analysis of the link between agroecology and food security

## Result

### Social reproduction and networking



#### Local food market system

"...I can exchange the food that I could not sell with my fellow members and they will give me the ones that I need."

#### Peer-to-peer knowledge exchange

"Even if you have any problem or even if what you plant does not grow well. If you come and share it in the group, they will give you advice on how you can do it and will be growing well again".



#### Self provisioning

"I don't have to join them, I have all the food I need so I don't need to depend on the government of the 'FADAMA' people before I can eat, I plant different food as we were taught in the group".



#### Nutrition and dietetics

"We learn how to cook balance diet ... it has changed the way I cook in my house"



### Household reproduction and family care

Reduced Food Insecurity Experience  
and  
Improved Dietary Diversity

### Agroecology Practices



## Discussion and conclusion

By adopting agroecology practices agroecology farmers appear to have agency in respect to:

### Autonomy from the dominant Agri-industrial food system

- Production – by using own seeds, by using alternative fertilisation, hence are able to make decision on crop choice
- Marketing – by producing organically the define their own marketing channel and structure
- Consumption – Sustainable production = Sustainable Consumption

### Capacity or Ability to persist and follow through their decisions

- Knowledge – adoption of the practices bring together persons of like mind for knowledge exchange
- Increased income – more premium for organic production, reduction in cost of production

## References

Chukwuma, Stephanie and Ernst-August (2022) Linking Agency to Food and Nutrition Security (FNS): The Role of Agroecology. Tropentag.de. Available at:Tropentag 2020, virtual conference

September 9-11, 2020 <https://www.tropentag.de/2020/abstracts/full/289.pdf> (Accessed: 7 September 2022).