



Tropentag, September 20-22, 2023, hybrid conference
“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:
Trade-offs and synergies”

Agroecology as a choice of farming practice for women household members and restoration potentials: A case of Lake Chamo catchment, southern Ethiopia

SHIBIRE BEKELE ESHETU¹, MARCOS LANA², STEFAN SIEBER¹, KATHARINA LÖHR¹

¹Leibniz Centre for Agric. Landscape Res. (ZALF), Sustainable Land Use in Developing Countries, Germany

²Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Crop Production Ecology, Sweden

Abstract

Agroecology is one of the promising solutions and is currently promoted to deal with current challenges like biodiversity loss and climate change. Particularly on smallholder farmers' land where securing households' food consumption is a priority. The objective of this study is to explore how agroecology-based homestead agroforestry system is contributing to forest landscape restoration (FLR) and providing financial equity for women. The study used qualitative data through focus group discussion (FGD) with a total of 32 participants (8 per FGD) discussed with men and women separately. Participants were asked to mention the reason they are practicing the agroforestry system in their homestead as well as subsequent questions on agroforestry practices. The practice of agroecology with various components on their homestead is the most preferred land use practice by women than men. Most participants indicated securing household food consumption from the *Ensete ventricosum* (enset), vegetables, and other perennial crops they integrate into the agroecology practice is their primary objective for the practice. Furthermore, practicing agroecology in their homestead is an inherited societal practice. Interestingly, the cash earned from land use products is shared based on gender. Men are privileged to handle crop products, plantation and livestock whereby most products sold from the homestead are left for women. This is due to their full engagement in the management, and direct cash earning is possible from components like a coffee leaf, *Moringa oleifera* powder, products from enset and vegetables. Even though the women spend the money they have earned from their homestead for the whole household members' need, it gives them financial freedom and security. It has been indicated that indigenous tree species like *Cordia africana*, *Terminalia brownii* and *Junipuros procera* are the most preferred tree species by both men and women. This will provide a chance to integrate these tree species into the agroecology practice. The integration has great potential in implementing FLR through tree-based restoration practice in the land use system. The study concludes that agroecology practice can potentially solve income inequality between women and men farmers while solving the trade-off between FLR using monocrop plantations and securing household food security.

Keywords: Agroecology, FLR, food security, homestead agroforestry, tree based restoration, women