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## Does training in dynamic agroforestry change doing, organising, meaning, and knowing in smallholder systems in Bolivia?

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### Abstract

Bolivia is among the countries with the highest deforestation rates in Latin America due to the expansion of commercial agriculture, timber production, and mining activities. At the same time, smallholder farmers face challenges such as the impacts of climate change, soil degradation, and unstable market prices. Local and international actors have promoted dynamic agroforestry (DAF) as an approach to improve living conditions, restore natural habitats and increase adaptive capacity for over two decades. Currently, stakeholders involved in promoting DAF in the Alto Beni region of Bolivia seek to understand better how the approach has integrated with and potentially changed local socio-ecological realities. Accordingly, our goal was to explore whether DAF training and the possible implementation of DAF have contributed to new ways of doing, knowing, meaning, and organising in smallholder agroecosystems in the study area. We draw on relational concepts, including nonhuman agency and the emphasis on dynamics and processes, to frame our research interest. We used participant observation, interviews, narrative walks, and a mapping exercise to address the research question with twenty farmers and other stakeholders in the region. Preliminary results indicate that participating in the DAF training has indeed created space for exchange, reconsideration, and re-strengthening of social-ecological relations. By engaging more deeply with the roles and needs of flora, fauna and soil, feelings of kinship were rekindled, according to participants. We suggest that this perception shift towards reciprocity and care will play a major role in initiating long-term changes in farming practices. The participants also attempted to raise awareness and encourage their family and community members to cease practicing shifting cultivation and to diversify their production systems. Ongoing follow-up activities and consistent communication with promoting organisations will be essential for maintaining the relationships established through the training and for ensuring the continuation of the newly implemented agroforestry systems.

**Keywords:** Agroforestry, Bolivia, change processes, relationality