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“Reconcile land system changes  
with planetary health”

## Experiences in the process of integrating agroecology (AE) into curricula and research in Africa

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### Abstract

This study investigates the experiences gathered in the process of integrating agroecology (AE) into academic curricula in African countries. Although AE has been part of agricultural discussions for more than one decade, its interpretation remains inconsistent. Some consider AE a flexible set of practices adaptable to local contexts, others see it as partially incorporated into existing systems, while some view it as a distinct agricultural paradigm comparable to Organic Agriculture, Regenerative Agriculture, Conservation Agriculture, Agroforestry, Climate Smart Agriculture, or Evergreen Agriculture. At the same time, conventional agriculture continues to be promoted by many stakeholders as the most effective approach.

Members of the AGROECOFARM ERASMUS project from six West African and three European Universities face these tensions as they work to embed AE into university teaching and research. Over time, they have gained valuable knowledge on the subject-related and institutional challenges of establishing AE in higher education. This study aims to capture and analyse these insights through qualitative interviews with more than 40 project members across various African Universities. The interviews will focus on how AE differs from other approaches, the transformation of curricula content, stakeholder acceptance, the participants' assessment about the potential of AE to address environmental degradation, improve soil fertility, and strengthen food security and finally the general acceptance of various stakeholders to move forward from conventional towards more agro-ecological oriented practices.

The interviews, conducted via Zoom, last about 60 minutes each. Data will be analysed through an initial coding round based on predefined themes, followed by a grounded theory approach. The findings will be interpreted within transformation theory frameworks. Findings contribute to the discourses on how more sustainable agricultural practices, i.e., cultivation methods can be implemented into the curricula of African Universities master studies curricula.

**Keywords:** Agroecology integration, curriculum transformation, higher education curricula, institutional challenges, qualitative interviews