Land Use and Livelihood Strategies for Women: The Case for Agroecology

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Research Overview

- **Purpose:** Explore how organizations stimulate the use of agroecological practices to positively impact household levels of poverty and food security

- **Key Finding:** Three key mechanisms of knowledge transfer
  - Farmer to farmer methodology (peer learning)
  - Use of field technicians
  - Use of field schools
Agroecology

- Agroecological practices are methods of farming that apply ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of the sustainable agricultural ecosystem
  - Require fewer external inputs, less energy, and produces more than monoculture systems
Maya Women in the Highlands
Natural Capital

• All three approaches emphasize appropriate natural resource use, water and soil health, and climate change adaptation and mitigation
Financial and Physical Capital

- Organizations emphasize increased production and reduced costs
  - Fewer chemical inputs, seed saving, using/making organic fertilizer = fewer expenses
Human and Social Capital

- Knowledge transfer eases human capital; participation in project/group increases social capital
- Empowerment: might be one of most important results of agroecology projects for women
  - Participants encouraged to share knowledge to empower other community members, neighbors, and family members
Conclusions and Future Research

- Once farmers have necessary human capital, must be able to utilize it to increase other capitals (social, physical, financial, natural)
  - The cycle organizations attempting to start; targeting both men and women
  - Useful for men and women, but especially for women who have more limited opportunities to secure income

- Further research suggestions
  - Better understanding of project participants
  - Explore how households using increased production