

Agroecology contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals



Agroecology contributes positively to ten of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

A meta-analysis of 50 case studies from 22 African countries shows the contribution of agroecology to the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Measuring the benefit of industrial agriculture is simple; you just count the crop yield per unit area. This is the basic indicator of conventional farming technology. However, the real world is much more complicated. While industrial farming claims to have raised yields, it has done so at great cost, with extensive soil damage, huge biodiversity loss and negative impacts on nutrition, food sovereignty and natural resources. By contrast, agroecology offers sustainable improvements, not only to yield but also to many other aspects of life.

Simply measuring yield is not enough – we need to establish new ways of measuring the impact of our agricultural systems. Many are grappling with the task of developing more holistic tools, notably FAO and IPES Food. Meanwhile, there is a recently established benchmark against which we can gauge our progress: the SDGs.

Starting in 2013, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) and partners collected 50 case studies of agroecology from 22 African countries. The 50 case studies document the experience of a diverse range of agroecological approaches, collectively involving several million farmers.

To further strengthen the case for agroecology, TOAM (as a member of AFSA) developed a simple tool to establish how these case studies contribute to the SDGs.

Using the tool to record positive and negative impacts against the SDG goals and targets, TOAM officers analysed the 50 case studies, concluding that agroecology contributes positively in various ways to ten of the 17 SDGs. Notably, every case study showed a positive impact towards the goal, ‘End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.’

Highlighting the contribution of agroecology to an important policy framework such as the SDGs makes a clear case for cross-cutting policy that supports agroecology. It is now up to policy makers and the agricultural research community to recognise this potential to meet the world’s needs and challenges.

**Adapted from article in [Farming Matters 32.3](#)*

Internal Control System in Place in Lushoto, Tanga

Last week, TOAM paid a visit to the Nkombo, Kishangazi and Mnazi (NKM) ginger growers’ group in Lushoto, Tanga. During the visit, the 350-member strong group drafted an Internal Control System (ICS) manual and TOAM provided orientation on filing and documentation.

The result of the visit is that NKM now has an ICS system in place. If all goes to plan the group hope to gain organic certification during 2017. They will then be looking to export organic ginger to Europe, where a Danish company has already expressed interest in organic produce from Tanzania.



A group reviewing the first draft of the ICS manual