IDRC · CRDI

Canada

RIMISP
Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural

LATIN AMERICAN LESSONS ON AGROECOLOGY AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT TO TRANSITION TOWARDS INCLUSIVE AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS

November 2024

LATIN AMERICAN LESSONS ON AGROECOLOGY AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT TO TRANSITION TOWARDS INCLUSIVE AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS

Authors
Rafael Lindemann
Rodrigo Yáñez
Valentina Cortínez
Patricio Carrasco
Camila Migueletto

Expert Committee
José Graziano da Silva
Ileana Gómez
María Quispe

Case study editors
Tatiana Aguirre Sanhueza
Karla Bayres Mejía
Eder Camacho
Moises Quispe Quispe
Kevin Horacion Carmen Encarnación

Communications
Diego Reinoso Carter
Rafael Díaz Canales

.....

This document is product of the Latin American Lessons on Agroecology and Territorial Development to Transition Towards Inclusive and Climate-Resilient Food Systems project. It has been developed by Rimisp – Latin America Center for Rural Development and was financed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) from Canada.

We would like to thank all the organizations and institutions that have collaborated in the documentation and analysis of agroecological transition experiences and their remarkable work in promoting fairer, more sustainable, and inclusive food systems: Agronomists and Veterinarians Without Borders (**AVSF**); Family Agriculture and Agroecology (**AS-PTA**); National Association of Ecological Producers of Peru (**ANPE**); Departmental Association of Ecological Producers of Huánuco (**ADPEH**); Regional Association of Ecological Producers of the Amazon (**ARPEAM**); Pro Wellbeing in Action Sahaq Ach'ool Nimla K'aleb'aal Association (**APROBA-SANK**); Agricultural Cooperative Association Canasta Campesina (**ACPACAC**); Community Forestry Association of Guatemala (**Utz Ché**); San Nicolás Peasant Coordinating Committee (**CCCSN**); Department of Rural Development (**DDR**) of the Municipal Government of San Nicolás; **Chiyangua Foundation**; Regional Program for Development and Environment Research Foundation (**PRISMA**); Autonomous Group for Environmental Research (**GAIA**); Zero Hunger Institute (**IFZ**); **Polo da Borborema**; Promotion of Sustainability and Shared Knowledge (**PROSUCO**); **Polinizar Network**; Community System for the Protection and Management of Biodiversity (**SICOBI**); and the State University of Northern Paraná (**UENP**).

CONTENT

Preface iii
Summary 1
Chapter 1. Introduction 4
1.1. Agroecology Transitions 5
1.2. Objectives and Structure of the Study 5
Chapter 2. The added value of the Territorial Approach to understanding and promoting Agroecological Transitions 7
2.1. Territorial Analysis for a better understanding of Agroecological Transitions 7
2.2. The role of social territorial coalitions in leading the transformation of Food Systems 8
2.3. Lack of comparative studies on territorial agroecology transitions 8
Chapter 3. Methodology 11
Chapter 4. Ten noteworthy experiences of agroecological transition in Latin America 12
4.1. Territorial context of the analyzed experiences 12
4.2. Unfolding of experiences over time 13
4.2.1. Territorial Challenges 13
4.2.2. The relevance of social mobilization and core alliances 14
4.2.3. Emergence of territorial social coalitions 15
4.3. Connection of Experiences with Agroecological Principles 16
4.3.1. Entry Points to Agroecological Transitions 16
4.3.2. Strategies for promoting multiple principles in agroecology transition pathways 18
4.4. Multidimensional impacts of the experiences. 22
4.4.1. Women empowerment 22
4.4.2. Nutrition and health 23
4.4.3. Resilience to Climate Change and Management of Natural Resources 24
4.4.4. Influence on Public Policies and Organizational strengthening 24
Chapter 5. Lessons Learned 26
5.1. Alignment of the Territorial Approach with Agroecological Principles 26
5.2. Political Advocacy and promotion of Agroecology processes 27
5.3. Connection with diverse markets 28
5.4. Promotion of Social Inclusion 29
5.5. Sustainability of processes over time 30
Chapter 6. Proposals for an action Research Agenda 32
6.1 Learning Network among actors promoting Agroecological Transitions 32
6.2 Digital Platform to learn from Territorial Experiences 32
6.3 Publication of a series of articles for knowledge dissemination 33
References 35
Annexes 38

PREFACE

In Latin America, rural territories and their communities have historically faced complex challenges ranging from poverty and social exclusion to environmental degradation and limited access to markets. Within this context, agroecology has emerged as an inspiring pathway to transform existing food systems into more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient models. However, this journey is not accomplished with a mere wave of a magic wand; on the contrary, it is a long and arduous path! This transition not only aims to promote agricultural practices that are more in harmony with the environment but also serves as a catalyst for strengthening social cohesion, valuing cultural diversity, and responding to the aspirations of those who inhabit and work the land. Nonetheless, the success of these processes depends on multiple factors, one of the most decisive being the territorial approach, which allows for an analysis of how local and national contexts interact in the quest for effective and lasting solutions.

It is within this framework that the Rimisp study "Lessons from Latin America on agroecology and territorial development to transition towards inclusive and resilient food systems" explores ten experiences implemented across eight Latin American countries. The work examines how communities in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru have implemented agroecological transitions, not only on their plots but also throughout their territories. The selection of cases was rigorous: consolidated initiatives spanning at least a decade were chosen, capable of linking local processes with national developments while representing territorial diversity. By analyzing and comparing these experiences, the study not only identifies lessons learned but also offers applicable recommendations for other contexts, both regionally and globally.

The territorial approach, which is the central axis of the analysis, allows for an understanding of agroecological transitions as dynamic and contextual processes. More than just a physical space, territory is viewed here as a social construct that reflects the identity, culture, and aspirations of local actors. This perspective enables the observation of how historical, social, economic, and geographical factors interact in shaping these processes of change and how communities articulate their own solutions in harmony with the national context.

The experiences collected in this publication illustrate how rural territories in Latin America, often characterized by high levels of poverty and exclusion, have faced significant challenges on their path towards agroecology. Difficulties in land access and tenure, environmental degradation, lack of infrastructure and appropriate technology, and limited market access are common obstacles. In response, social mobilization has emerged as a key factor: unions, cooperatives, and non-governmental organizations have formed support networks that not only address these issues but also advance collective and sustainable proposals. Without this social impetus and the emergence of new local leadership, agroecological transitions would not have achieved the success they have garnered after many years of efforts.

Among the highlighted strategies to promote these processes, the study emphasizes two particularly effective ones: the creation of alternative markets for non-agricultural products and jobs, linking farmers with urban centers to encourage local and healthy consumption, as well as levering public resources that have been crucial for consolidating these processes in vulnerable local contexts.

Finally, the study proposes a practical research agenda that strengthens agroecological transitions in Latin America and fosters mutual learning among regions of the Global South. Establishing a knowledge exchange network among the stakeholders involved in these processes is a highly valuable proposal as it can amplify the impact of individual experiences and promote broader collaboration.

The comparative analysis of these experiences in Latin America underscores the fundamental role of the territorial approach and social mobilization in transforming food systems. The lessons learned from these cases offer a valuable framework for replicating these initiatives in other contexts and scaling the impact of agroecology in the pursuit of a more just, inclusive, and sustainable global food system.

José Graziano da Silva,

Director of the Zero Hunger Institute (www.ifz.org.br)

SUMMARY

Agroecology has emerged as an approach that demands a profound rethinking of food systems. It is a dynamic concept grounded in a set of principles that promote food systems that are more just, sustainable, resilient, and healthy. Miguel Altieri posited that agroecology involves applying ecological principles to agriculture (Altieri, 1983). Today, the trend is to incorporate principles that extend beyond the management of agroecosystems and natural resources, integrating socioeconomic, cultural, and political dimensions as well (Wezel et al., 2020).

Agroecological transitions refer to ongoing, long-term processes in which social, technological, and institutional innovations are implemented to promote agroecological principles. There are no one-size-fits-all formulas for advancing these transformation processes; rather, they are pathways for change that adapt to local realities and respond to specific social, productive, and institutional idiosyncrasies. Effective transitions require the collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including grassroots organizations, non-governmental entities, consumers, public institutions, and others.

This study, titled "**Latin American lessons on Agroecology and Territorial Development to Transition towards Inclusive and Climate-Resilient Food Systems**", has been commissioned by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and coordinated by the Latin American Center for Rural Development (Rimisp). Its primary goal is to inspire food system transformative processes in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), while simultaneously facilitating south-south learning to inform similar initiatives in Africa and Asia.

The study adopts a territorial development approach that contextualizes agroecological transitions within historical, sociocultural, political, and geographical frameworks. Additionally, it analyzes the evolution of agroecological experiences over time, providing a nuanced understanding of the various factors that drive these processes of change. While there is a substantial body of case studies in the agroecological literature, there are relatively few publications that compare agroecological transitions. By employing a **multiple case studies comparative analysis methodology**, this research identifies key leverage points for promoting agroecological transitions, while taking into account the unique characteristics of each specific experience. The **ten case studies** analyzed span eight countries in Latin America (LAC): Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and Chile.

The cases analyzed in this scoping study have evolved over a period of one to three decades and are situated in territories that exhibit high indicators of rurality and poverty. In these regions, farming families confront **multiple challenges**, including land tenure issues, access to natural resources, environmental degradation, the climate crisis, lack of productive infrastructure, and difficulties accessing markets. These problems do not occur in isolation; rather, their interplay illustrates the context in which these transformative processes have emerged.

Despite the fact that the agroecological transitions examined have unfolded in different territorial contexts, all have involved collaboration among a diverse set of actors. A key finding from these ten studies is the significance of collaboration among a broad range of stakeholders—referred to as **territorial social coalitions**—that coordinate efforts to promote agroecological transitions. These coalitions comprise grassroots organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

consumers, public institutions, and other relevant actors. The collaboration among coalition members transcends the confines of a specific project or public policy; instead, efforts are driven by shared objectives, interests, and values, all guided by a common vision for the future of food systems. The consolidation of these coalitions is a gradual process in which increasing collaboration around shared strategies nurtures relationships built on trust.

In some sites, territorial coalitions have been formed around the establishment of alternative markets that connect farming families with consumers. In others, the central focus has been the development and implementation of participatory planning and certification instruments that guide the processes of change. More broadly, various case studies showcase how different stakeholders have forged a shared territorial narrative that address critical issues that must be tackled to unleash agroecological transitions. By defining a vision for the future of food systems, territorial coalitions have gradually mobilized diverse strategic actors to boost transformative processes within these systems.

Through this expanded network of allies, territorial coalitions have successfully activated various pathways for change that promote multiple agroecological principles. Drawing from the ten agroecological transition experiences in LAC, the study offers a series of **insights and recommendations** on how to engage in public policy advocacy, establish fairer markets, promote social inclusion, and sustain agroecological transitions over time. The ten case studies shed light on how territorial coalitions have **influenced public institutions** operating at different levels. These advocacy processes encompass the consolidation of new markets, the stewardship of natural resources, land governance systems, and the promotion of agroecological practices.

Some cases have led to significant regulatory changes, achieving the recognition of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) by public entities, as well as the introduction of laws requiring public procurement markets to be sourced from farming families. Other examples illustrate how new institutional arrangements facilitate the participation of actors from territorial coalitions in the design, adjustment, and execution of large-scale public programs that have been crucial in advancing agroecological transitions. Moreover, some territorial coalitions have successfully channeled resources from centralized public entities to co-finance territorial-scale projects and adapt technical assistance services. Specific experiences also include the implementation of social mobilization strategies that encourage local governments to allocate resources and support initiatives promoting agroecology.

The **establishment of alternative markets** that connect farming families with consumers is another recurring strategy identified in the ten case studies analyzed. Diverse ecological markets have been promoted, including fairs, farmer's markets, and festivals, as well as agritourism and gastronomy services, and virtual markets. These alternative markets transcend the simple buy-and-sell mechanisms; they serve as spaces for interaction and socialization among various actors, where information, knowledge, and experiences related to food and agroecological production are exchanged.

A key factor in the success of these alternative markets is the recognition by consumers of agroecological products as a healthier and more just food choice. In some cases, initiatives have been developed to raise consumer awareness, including educational activities on agroecological practices, healthy diets, and the significance of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). Within

agritourism and gastronomy services, both consumers and farming families engage in experiential activities that foster the sharing of values, knowledge, and cultural traditions. In addition to facilitating physical encounters between consumers and producers, social media has played a fundamental role in establishing these alternative markets. Beyond aiding logistics, marketing, and information dissemination, social media has enabled the creation of a contextualized identity for alternative markets.

In most of the analyzed cases, **women have played a leading role** in the agroecological transitions being promoted, demonstrating significant participation in the activities undertaken. Women have been pivotal in driving non-agricultural economic activities associated with agroecological transitions, such as agritourism, gastronomy, and ventures that transform agri-food products. These initiatives often emerge from efforts to promote economic activities in the backyard areas of households, where small gardens are established, products are processed, small livestock is raised and services are offered to consumers. By boosting productivity in these spaces, women have improved their economic independence and positively transformed attitudes and behaviors within their households and communities. Moreover, diversifying agricultural activities in backyards has had a favorable impact on family nutrition, fostering greater dietary diversification and reducing the consumption of processed foods.

In some instances, territorial coalitions have promoted the inclusion of **youth** in non-agricultural activities related to agroecological transitions. However, several experiences indicate a lack of young leaders within grassroots organizations and a pressing need for generational renewal. Regarding **older adults**, the study recommends that transformation processes take their needs and aspirations into account, as they are often excluded from projects and initiatives.

Analyzing the case studies, territorial coalitions have had a pivotal role in **sustaining agroecological transitions over time** by establishing strategic alliances with various actors instead of relying on a single source of funding. This involves creating a broad support network from which territorial coalitions leverage resources from international cooperation organizations, channel investments and resources from public entities, and harness the economic activity generated by dynamic markets. In some instances, territorial coalitions have generated their own income through inclusive tourism and gastronomy services. In other cases, they have established rotating funds and inclusive credit systems to ensure that their transformation processes are not entirely dependent on external resources.

The final chapter of this study proposes an **action research agenda** aimed at establishing a learning network that engages actors and territorial social coalitions that promote agroecological principles. This study demonstrates that each agroecological transition follows its unique pathway; however, methodologies, strategies, and innovations can be adapted to be effective in specific territorial, sociocultural, and institutional contexts. The goal of establishing a learning network is to enable actors from different territories to draw inspiration from transformative processes so they adapt social, technological and institutional innovations that could be integrated into their specific territorial and institutional contexts. Finally, the study presents a series of questions designed to guide a research agenda that continues to deepen the reflection on how to promote more inclusive and resilient food systems in Latin America and beyond.

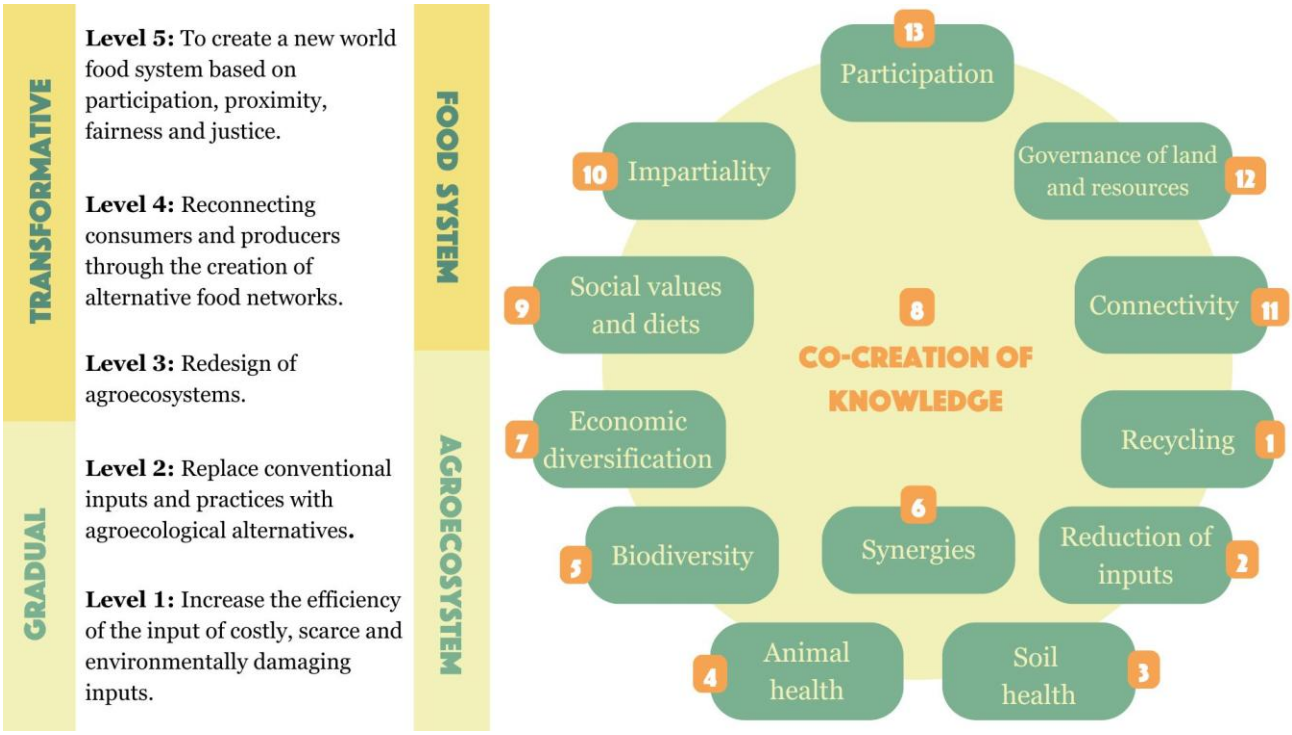
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Agroecology has established itself as an approach that demands a profound rethinking of food systems. It is a dynamic approach grounded in a set of principles that promote fairer, more sustainable, resilient, and healthy food systems.

Over the decades, numerous declarations and publications on the principles of agroecology have emerged which have been summarized by Wezel et al. (2020). Framing agroecology as a collection of principles or elements is strategic, as these provide foundational concepts that can be adapted to various contexts (Coe and Coe, 2023) and local visions (Darmaun et al., 2023).

Miguel Altieri, regarded as one of the leading proponents of agroecology, posited that it consists of applying ecological principles to agriculture (Altieri, 1983). Today, the trend is to incorporate agroecological principles that transcend the management of agrobiodiversity and natural resources to integrate socioeconomic, cultural, and political principles (Wezel et al., 2020). This is evident in the 13 principles of agroecology defined by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE, 2019) and the 10 Elements of Agroecology established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2018)[1].

Figure 1. Framing 13 Agroecology Principles of HLPE within Gliessman's 5 level food systems transformation framework



[1] Annex 1 presents a summary of the 13 HLPE Principles and their relationship with the 10 Elements of Agroecology from the FAO.

Linking the 13 HLPE principles with Gliessman's framework helps contextualize agroecological principles within a food system theory of change. Principles 1 to 7 are related to the agroecosystem level, while principles 8 to 13 encompass the entire food system (Wezel et al., 2020). However, the HLPE report (2019) clarifies that different principles can be implemented at or impact different scales, from local to global, from the field to the whole food system.

1.1. Agroecology Transitions

The study defines agroecological transitions as **continuous and long-term processes that promote the progressive adoption of sustainable and resilient practices, alongside social and institutional changes that foster fairer food systems**. These transitions do not adhere to a predefined formula; rather, they are shaped by local realities and the unique sociocultural, productive, and institutional dynamics present in each context. Moreover, the study emphasizes that transitions require the collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including grassroots organizations, non-governmental entities, consumers, public institutions, and others.

A key element in advancing agroecological transitions is gathering evidence that showcase the comparative advantages of agroecology practices. This facilitates the mobilization of grassroots organizations and social movements to advocate for its practices and principles. It also strengthens their ability to influence public policy and shift consumer preferences.

The scientific debate surrounding agroecology has accumulated experiences and case studies over decades, demonstrating that the scaling of agroecology integrates vertical processes that involve institutional changes with horizontal processes that encourage geographical and social expansion (Altieri, 2022). This discussion is significant as it is at the territorial level where top-down provisions of public programs and investments intersect with the democratic expression of citizens' needs, aspirations, and demands (Anderson, 2019).

1.2. Objectives and Structure of the Study

This study, titled “Latin American lessons on agroecology and territorial development to transition towards inclusive and climate resilient agri-food systems,” has been commissioned by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and coordinated by the Latin American Centre for Rural Development (Rimisp).

The general objective is to nourish and **inspire food system transformation processes across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) through the documentation of a range of agroecology transition experiences and lessons learned**. As a secondary objective, the study aims to facilitate South-South learning to inform similar processes in Africa and Asia.

The research is grounded in the documentation and comparative analysis of ten agroecological transition pathways that have unfolded in vulnerable and impoverished territories within LAC. These ten case studies examine transitions driven by grassroots organizations operating at the territorial level. These organizations include cooperatives, unions, producer organizations, NGOs, social movements, and universities, which collaborate with various public, private, and civil society stakeholders that operate within territories.

Chapter two of the study explores the added value that a territorial approach can offer for better understanding and promoting agroecological transitions. Chapter three outlines the multiple case

study comparative analysis methodology and methods employed throughout the study. Chapter four provides a comparative analysis of the ten agroecological transitions documented, incorporating an examination of the different actors who have led these transformation processes along with the strategies implemented to promote agroecological principles.

Chapter five presents a series of lessons learned and recommendations for the implementation, scaling, and sustainability of agroecological transitions. Finally, chapter six proposes an action-research agenda aimed at strengthening food system transformation pathways in LAC and encouraging South-South learning.

The territorial approach employed for analyzing the ten case studies highlights the importance of collaboration among a diverse range of agents to mobilize rural societies, consumers, public agents, and NGOs in the transformation of food systems. The comparative advantage of multi-stakeholder territorial coalitions lies in their nuanced understanding of the realities faced by local family farmers and stakeholders, as well as the idiosyncrasies of public agents and the preferences of urban consumers. This insight enables them to design initiatives and strategies that effectively promote agroecological principles within their specific local contexts.

CHAPTER 2. THE ADDED VALUE OF THE TERRITORIAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING AND PROMOTING AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITIONS

Analyzing agroecological transitions from a territorial perspective provides valuable insights into how local and national processes intertwine and collectively influence food systems. This approach contextualizes agroecological transitions within historical, sociocultural, political, and geographical frameworks, thereby facilitating a nuanced understanding of the various factors that drive these change processes.

For over two decades, the territorial approach has examined change processes in rural areas of the region, generating a set of strategic recommendations that are valuable for guiding the design and implementation of agroecological transitions. Additionally, this approach has developed research methodologies that enable comparative analysis of different transformation processes, contributing to the generation of generalizable insights and recommendations.

2.1. Territorial Analysis for a better understanding of Agroecological Transitions

The Latin American Centre for Rural Development (Rimisp) posits that a territory is not merely an "objectively existing physical space," but rather a complex physical and social construct that shapes cultural identity and fosters a shared sense of purpose among multiple stakeholders (Schejtman and Berdegué, 2004). This socially constructed identity is influenced by various factors, including historical contexts, economic structures, the natural environment, infrastructure, and the effects of political-administrative boundaries (Berdegué and Bebbington 2015).

The territorial approach outlined in this study examines agroecology transitions by analyzing the interplay of various contexts. This comprehensive analysis considers factors such as the evolution of agrarian structures and control over natural resources, transformative public investments (or their absence), the social structures that shape power relationships, as well as sociocultural idiosyncrasies and the specific geographic and environmental characteristics that define each territory.

From a territorial perspective, the experiences of agroecological transition are not merely anchored to individual plots of land; rather, they are situated within broader ecosystems and are influenced by links to intermediate cities and large urban conglomerates (urban-rural linkages).

Additionally, the analysis considers multiple economic activities, migratory flows, and the impact of remittances, among other key aspects that are essential for understanding the livelihood strategies of farming and indigenous families. This investigative approach allows for a broader comprehension of agroecological transitions, taking into account also the non-agricultural economic activities that, according to recent estimates, account for 47% of the income of rural households in Latin America and the Caribbean (Berdegué et. al, 2023).

2.2. The role of social territorial coalitions in leading the transformation of Food Systems

Through the comparison of development processes in various rural territories of Latin America, research led by Rimisp concluded that the success of these processes is closely tied to the creation of **transformative territorial social coalitions**, where diverse actors with common objectives reach consensus and coordinate strategic actions over time (Fernández et. al., 2014).

Agroecological transitions are complex, long-term processes that require collective action and collaboration among stakeholders operating at different levels (HLPE, 2019). Consequently, establishing networks of actors united by common goals and narratives that envision the ideal state of food systems is essential for guiding and maintaining agroecological transitions over time. This study places particular emphasis in understanding how various stakeholders operating in vulnerable territories of the region have managed to forge shared visions and action plans from a diachronic perspective.

Social coalitions encapsulate a dynamic concept that integrates a crucial element in change processes: power. This entails recognizing the tensions and conflicts that exist among the actors operating within a territory, as their future visions are not always aligned (Ranaboldo, 2006; Yáñez, 2024). However, this recognition does not hinder collaboration of a group of like-minded stakeholders; in some cases, it even motivates some actors to unite around shared goals, visions and values, working together towards the sustainable and inclusive transformation of food systems.

Territorial social coalitions can play a key role in the process of adapting public policies to territorial and local contexts. This entails that public institutions recognize the importance of territorial actors in decision-making processes related to development strategies and initiatives. Furthermore, public programs should also channel funds and incentives to implement collaboratively identified projects. It has been emphasized that public policies for rural development must, above all, create the space, time, and opportunities necessary for local actors to carry out their work (Berdegué and Escobal, 2015).

2.3. Lack of comparative studies on territorial agroecology transitions

In the last two decades, academic literature on agroecology has grown rapidly, with the number of scientific publications significantly surpassing those related to similar approaches, such as regenerative agriculture and nature-based solutions (IPES-Food, 2022). A study by Jones et, al. (2022) reveals that in 2005 there were fewer than 50 scientific publications containing the term "agroecology" in the title, abstract, or keywords. In contrast, by 2022, more than 800 publications had been recorded, which collectively support agroecology as a viable solution for agricultural producers, the environment, society, and consumers.

Case studies on agroecology represent a significant percentage of the literature in this field. According to an analysis of 347 global case studies conducted by Sachet et al. (2021), 64% of these studies do not provide any information on the interaction between agriculture and the broader socioeconomic context. Specifically, in Latin America, 45% of the analyzed case studies approach agroecology as a movement, focusing more prominently on social, political, and economic issues compared to case studies published in Africa and Asia.

Despite the abundance of case studies in the academic literature, there are relatively few publications that conduct comparative analyses among case studies. This knowledge gap is significant, as the methodology for analyzing multiple case studies offers added value by enabling the understanding of complex phenomena without losing sight of the particularities of specific experiences. Furthermore, comparative analysis increases the validity of findings and enhances the capacity to extract generalizable lessons.

In the academic literature, several notable publications have conducted comparative analyses of case studies on various topics related to agroecology, including keys for scaling up agroecology (Nicholls and Altieri, 2018), participatory action research (Richardson et al., 2021), public procurement purchases (FAO, 2021), access to markets (Laconto, 2018), management of heirloom seeds (Yoshiaki and Pimbert, 2022), and the efficiency of agroecological production systems (Altieri, 2012).

Additionally, international research centers, multilateral organizations, and NGOs have published reports that include comparative analyses of case studies derived from projects and programs promoting agroecology. In the Global South, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) released a report on the Agroecology Living Landscapes program (CGIAR, 2023), which evaluates agroecological transitions at the landscape scale. As part of the FAO's Initiative for Scaling Up Agroecology, a report was published presenting 16 agroecological experiences from around the world that have successfully scaled (FAO, 2018). The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (2021) also published a report that highlights various experiences regarding responsible consumption in the Global North and South.

In Latin America, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation financed a report detailing the experiences of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) in eight countries of the region (Avensur, 2019). Additionally, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) has also documented PGS experiences in four Latin American countries (IFOAM, 2013).Under the collaborative research program on crops funded by the McKnight Foundation, experiences promoting agroecology have been published by organizations that are members of the Andean Community of Practice (CLACSO, 2021). Additionally, with support from the IDRC, a book analyzing agroecology scaling experiences in four countries of Latin America and the Caribbean was published (Ranaboldo and Venegas, 2007).

Another source of comparative studies on agroecological experiences in LAC are specialized agroecology journals, notably the LEISA journal. For over 25 years, this journal has facilitated the dissemination of innovative agroecological experiences in the region that seek to contribute to the transformation of the agri-food model. LEISA and its sister publication, *Agricultoras de Brasil*, boast an extensive collection of case studies on agroecology. Across over 100 issues published by LEISA, a wide range of topics are covered, including participatory research (LEISA, 2021), the connection between women, biodiversity, and food (LEISA, 2020), and conservation for agrobiodiversity (LEISA, 2023), as well as urban agriculture (LEISA, 2019) and many others. Special editions of LEISA analyze case studies assessing their multidimensional impact (LEISA, 2003) and their contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (LEISA, 2016).

Certainly, LEISA represents a crucial source of knowledge, disseminating experiences and case studies that inspire various organizations promoting and applying the agroecological approach.

Additionally, it provides evidence supporting the comparative advantages and impacts of agroecology. However, these publications fall short of offering an exhaustive comparative analysis that would grant generalizable conclusions and recommendations.

The literature review conducted highlights several publications that perform comparative analyses between case studies. However, there is a notable scarcity of longitudinal comparative studies that analyze agroecological transitions in detail. While there is a growing body of literature documenting case studies on agroecological transitions, many tend to focus primarily on assessing changes in agricultural practices, often neglecting other dimensions of change (Gliessman, 2018). Therefore, there is a significant knowledge gap regarding publications that offer comparative analyses of agroecological transitions, identifying key factors and recommendations for their implementation, consolidation, scaling, and sustainability.

To address this knowledge gap, several noteworthy publications have been identified. For instance, Sarah Jones and colleagues (2022) published a scientific article that analyzes and compares strategies for promoting agroecological transitions in low-and-middle-income countries. Additionally, in a publication by IPES-Food (Gliessman, 2018), seven agroecological transitions from both the Global North and South are presented, evaluating changes across four key dimensions essential for applying agroecological principles: changes in production practices, shifts in social and economic relationships, changes in institutional frameworks, and changes in knowledge generation and transmission.

This study tackles a research area that has not been sufficiently developed: the progression of agroecology transitions over time. This aspect is crucial to consider, as the analysis of how pathways consolidate and converge, creates an opportunity to extract valuable lessons on how to foster collaboration around processes that are adaptive and resilient to a highly dynamic and interconnected world.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This study documents ten agroecological transition experiences in Latin America, located across eight countries: Bolivia (1), Brazil (2), Chile (1), Colombia (1), El Salvador (1), Guatemala (2), Mexico (1), and Peru (1). The selection of experiences was guided by the following criteria: (i) initiatives sustained over a period of ten years or more; (ii) cases led by grassroots actors who effectively articulate local, territorial, and national processes; and (iii) cases that are part of a sub-regional sample to ensure diversity in territorial experiences.

To analyze these cases, significant milestones, innovations, and lessons learned were identified in the agroecological transition processes. A qualitative methodology was employed, complemented by the processing of quantitative data, allowing for a comprehensive research approach that integrates multiple cases. The diversity of cases lies at the heart of the study, and the comparison among them is a desired objective.

As part of the methodological strategy, various information collection techniques were employed, prioritizing direct engagement with the phenomenon in its context (Chaves & Weiler, 2016; Escudero et al., 2008; Stake, 2008; Yin, 2003). Notably, this included gathering, processing, and analyzing primary information (interviews with individuals involved in each experience) and secondary data (documentation related to the history and trajectories of the initiatives).

The documentation and analysis of each case was carried out through fact sheets that addressed the following dimensions: (i) contextualization (temporality, geographical coverage, and key agroecological principles promoted); (ii) political context and regulatory framework (institutional and public policy environment); (iii) agroecology transition analysis (characterization of the leading organization and its collaboration with other stakeholder or initiatives, methodologies and strategies implemented, alongside evaluation of multidimensional results and impacts); (iv) lessons learned (in public policy, market access, social inclusion, and sustainability); and (v) contributions from and for the territorial approach.

For the aggregated analysis of the agroecological experiences, an analytical tool was developed that assessed seven dimensions of change—aligned with the structure of the fact sheets—to gain a comprehensive understanding of the key factors and processes that enabled organizations to advance toward agroecological transitions.

The results and products of this study are available on Rimisp's website, where an interactive map provides access to the ten case studies alongside other Annexes that support the scoping study.

The research team maintained ongoing interaction with an International Advisory Committee of Experts, composed of three prominent researchers with extensive experience in initiatives and projects related to territorial development, agriculture, and agroecology in various Latin American contexts: (i) José Graziano da Silva (Instituto Fome Zero, Brazil); (ii) María Quispe (PROSUCO, Bolivia); and (iii) Ileana Gómez (Fundación PRISMA, El Salvador). This committee provided guidance on the development of data collection instruments, the definition of criteria for identifying and prioritizing cases, and reflections on key aspects of the case studies in their agroecological transition processes, as well as the lessons learned from these experiences and how they could inform future research-action agendas for the region.

CHAPTER 4. TEN NOTEWORTHY EXPERIENCES OF AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION IN LATIN AMERICA

4.1. Territorial context of the analyzed experiences

The ten documented experiences promote agroecological transitions that have been ongoing for several years (see summary of the ten experiences in Annex 2). The most recent initiatives have emerged around 10 years ago, while several consolidated experiences boast over 25 years of deployment.

Table 1. Summary of documented experiences

Territory	Country	Lead organization	Initiative name	Years
Alta Verapaz	Guatemala	APROBA SANK Welfare in Action Association	Safeguarding the Q'eqchi' territory in Alta Verapaz through the promotion of diversified farming systems	22
Coast, Highlands and Amazon	Perú	National Association of Peruvian Ecological Producers (ANPE)	National and regional ecological farming organizations influence public policies, open markets and certify ecological farmers	26
La Paz department	Bolivia	Polinizar Network	Rural Agritourism connects a network of farming families with consumers to promote *climate responsible consumption*	10
Department of Cauca	Colombia	Chiyangua Foundation: Women, Culture and Territory	Network of grassroot organizations fight for *black women's dignity*, upholding their rights, traditions and ventures	29
District of Comasagua, Department of La Libertad Sur	El Salvador	The Canasta Campesina Agricultural Production Cooperative Association (ACPACAC)	The Farmers' Basket: healthy and fair food markets	10
State of Paraíba	Brazil	Polo de la Borborema	Network of farming organizations *learn to live with the semiarid* through social, technological and institutional innovations	31
State of Paraná	Brazil	Center for Agroecology and Territorial Studies (NEAT) of the State University of Northern Paraná	The role of State Universities in promoting agroecology transitions	15
Municipality of Totonicapán	Guatemala	Utz Che network of family farmers in Totonicapán	Network of indigenous women collectively manage natural resources and alternative markets	10
San Nicolás, Ñuble Region	Chile	The San Nicolás Peasant Coordination Committee	Municipality and Farmers' Committees develop the San Nicolás agroecology model	19
Sierra Sur and Coast of Oaxaca	México	Community System for Biodiversity (SICOBI)	Community based restoration of degraded ecosystems to transition towards fair and sustainable livelihoods	15

The agroecological experiences presented above are situated in territories characterized by high rurality and unfavorable socioeconomic conditions compared to the rest of the country (see table in Annex 3). In nearly all cases, rurality rates exceed 50%, reaching percentages as high as 76% in the Comasagua District experience in El Salvador. Some of these territories are home to a significant indigenous population. In Guatemala, over 90% of the population in Alta Verapaz and Totonicapán identifies as Maya. Similarly, the territories in Mexico, Bolivia, and Colombia also have a high representation of indigenous and Afro-descendant populations.

According to national data, poverty rates in all the territories where these experiences take place are also notably high, ranging from 10.4% in San Nicolás (which is still above the national average in Chile, 6.5%) to 69% in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, and 90.3% in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.

The experiences mobilize a diverse array of actors, with the number of participants ranging from 75 to 11,000 individuals. In some instances, the territories encompass a single municipality, while in others they span multiple municipalities, as seen in the case of the Norte Pioneiro territory in Brazil, which includes 29 municipalities.

4.2. Unfolding of experiences over time

4.2.1. Territorial Challenges

The cases studied reveal four types of territorial challenges that prompted the initiatives: (i) conflicts related to the access, use, or ownership of land; (ii) environmental degradation exacerbated by climate change; (iii) lack of infrastructure, technology, and inputs for small-scale agriculture; and (iv) difficulties accessing markets and positioning ecological products. None of these challenges occur in isolation, some are more prominent than others. The interplay of challenges helps to illustrate the context in which these initiatives emerged.

A significant number of cases indicate that the onset of agroecological transitions is linked to **conflicts over land access, use, or ownership**. In several instances, the initial context is marked by a high concentration of land in large estates (such as sugarcane and cattle ranching in Borborema, or coffee production in the Norte Pioneiro of Brazil), the development of agroindustry (oil palm in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala), and logging activities (in San Nicolás, Chile). These cases highlight the intense tensions faced by smallholder and indigenous farmers due to limited access to land, which led to diminishing productivity and increasing migration. As these farmers carry out their productive activities on smallholdings, land fragmentation has increasingly hindered their ability to sustain small-scale agricultural systems, prompting a territorial response.

Conflicts over land have also severely affected indigenous and Afro-descendant communities that have been expropriated of their territories, whether by the state for the development of large tourism establishments (as seen in the Sierra Sur and Costa de Oaxaca, Mexico), through promoting the sale of land for monoculture development (as in the case in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala), or due to armed conflict and drug trafficking (as documented by the Fundación Chiyangua in Colombia). Entire communities have been displaced from their territories or forced into much smaller landholdings, directly impacting their agricultural economies and ways of life.

Associated with conflicts arising from land fragmentation and expropriation are ongoing issues of **environmental degradation**. These conflicts are linked to recurrent phenomena such as droughts, wildfires, deforestation, and extreme weather events associated with climate change, leading to a general decline in soil quality. This deterioration is also tied to state-promoted use of

synthetic inputs to increase family agriculture productivity. Together, these elements contribute to low land productivity and a chronic state of vulnerability for smallholders.

Another significant territorial challenge is the **lack of access to technology, infrastructure, and inputs** necessary for the development of family agriculture. This situation stems from the absence of supportive policies for small-scale agriculture—particularly in relation to ecological, organic, or traditional farming—contrasting sharply with the institutional architecture that subsidizes industrial agriculture. The lack of irrigation systems, water resource storage infrastructures, and appropriate tools for agricultural and domestic tasks are some of the limitations faced by farming families, both campesino and indigenous, across Latin America.

Finally, family agriculture in the studied territories encounters significant barriers to **access markets.** This challenge encompasses a range of difficulties related to the conditions under which products are sold, including the scarcity of farmers' markets in intermediate cities or metropolitan areas, the exploitation by intermediaries, poor conditions in sales spaces, low prices, a lack of strategies to differentiate ecological products and insufficient recognition of pesticide-free production. In response to these challenges, several initiatives have emerged leading to the implementation of Participatory Guarantee Systems (ANPE, Peru), certification processes (Norte Pioneiro, Brazil), and initiatives aimed at bridging the gap between consumers and producers (such as the Red Polinizar in Bolivia, Canasta Campesina in El Salvador, and Fundación Chiyangua in Colombia).

4.2.2. The relevance of social mobilization and core alliances

In several of the cases studied, territorial challenges spurred forms of collective action, which serve as the social foundation upon which the studied transitions are largely organized and promoted. In some instances, these territorial challenges have reached a critical point, leading to social mobilizations that have encouraged the collaboration of actors around the construction of a future project for the territory.

In the case of the Sierra Sur and Coast of Oaxaca (Mexico), the expropriation of indigenous territories for the construction of a tourist complex in the Bahías de Huatulco, along with the forced displacement of 2,500 people, sparked social mobilizations and protests against the megaprojects promoted by the Mexican state. In response to this conflictual context, a group of civil society organizations promoted territorial planning as a key tool for the protection of the common land of the communities. This milestone led to the creation of the Community System for Biodiversity (SICOBI), which represents an institutional framework aimed at coordinating agrarian and community organizations in the management of natural resources and governance of their territories.

In the case of Alta Verapaz (Guatemala), the gradual loss of control over indigenous territory due to the sale of land for the palm oil industry and other industries mobilized local youth to form the APROBA SANK Association. Their initial goal is to retain q'ecqchi' indigenous people in the territory, beginning with support to formalize land tenure. In the municipality of San Nicolás (Chile), environmental degradation caused by the timber industry has led to the formation of Peasant Committees, which, in coordination with the municipal government, have initiated participatory processes aimed at reversing environmental degradation. In the state of Paraíba (Brazil), the droughts of 1992 and 1993 prompted social movements to occupy the

Superintendence of Development of the Northeast, demanding permanent actions to address the impacts of drought.

Other experiences have sparked social mobilizations around unfavorable market dynamics for farming families. In the city of La Paz (Bolivia), street markets are firmly controlled by unions of intermediaries that reject initiatives promoting farmers' markets in the city. In response to this situation, a group of urban and rural activists came together to promote short supply chain markets and a network of rural agritourism destinations.

On the other hand, in Peru, the various challenges faced by families and farming organizations in accessing organic certification have led these groups to demand the inclusion of a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) in the legislation. This process has united producers and NGOs in building the foundations of a national movement for ecological farmers. Consequently, in 1998, the National Association of Ecological Producers of Peru (ANPE) was established, gradually expanding its reach to 22 regions.

The analyzed social mobilizations have emerged in various ways; however, in most cases, they have been driven by a **core group** composed of civil society leaders, NGOs, and grassroots organizations. In some instances, charismatic leadership has played a crucial role in the processes of social mobilization and the establishment of grassroots organizations.

In other cases, NGOs have taken a leading role in driving social mobilizations in partnership with social leaders and grassroots organizations. These NGOs have been key actors in forming the core group and initiating the transition processes. In Peru, the core group, composed of ANPE and various NGOs, has operated at the national level. In contrast, in the Sierra Sur and Coast of Oaxaca (Mexico), the members of the core group began their collaboration based on the land-use planning of the community of Santa María Huatulco.

4.2.3. Emergence of territorial social coalitions

Once groups of core stakeholders have been established, these experiences expand their social base prompted by the success of initial initiatives or projects while gaining interest from other like-minded organizations. The initial composition of the group becomes increasingly complex, integrating a broader range of actors that result in territorial social coalitions. Gradually, these coalitions develop their own narrative horizon, articulating a shared vision for the territory, along with methodologies, action strategies, institutional and governance structures that democratize rural participation in territorial development.

In the case of the Borborema territory in the state of Paraíba (Brazil), the positive outcomes of projects related to the collective management of water resources and seed storage generated interest from other rural workers' unions seeking to join the initiatives. Similarly, the Chiyangua Foundation in the Pacific Coast of Cauca (Colombia) implemented rooftop crop recovery projects that served as a unifying activity for the economic and identity aspects of Afro-descendant women in the municipality of Guapi. This effort attracted women's organizations from other municipalities in the Cauca department, as well as local and international NGOs and other stakeholders.

In Alta Verapaz, the APROBA SANK Association developed a pilot farmers' school that attracted the attention of indigenous authorities, farming families, NGOs, and other grassroots organizations. Building on this initial version of the farmers' school, these organizations have

collaborated in the design and implementation of a methodological circuit comprising various initiatives that promote transformation processes in six municipalities within the territory. Pilot initiatives to validate the feasibility of alternative markets such as rural agritourism in the Department of La Paz (Bolivia) and the Farmers' Basket in the Comasagua District (El Salvador), have been crucial in generating interest and support from farming families, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

Drawing upon the case studies, the coalitions have managed to sustain themselves over time by forging a shared vision for the transformation of food systems. This entails fostering a collective vision regarding the future of these systems and gradually developing transformation pathways which are pushed forward in coordination with a wider network of diverse territorial, national, and international players.

At the local level, participants include: (i) associations, unions, and cooperatives of small-scale family agriculture; (ii) community associations and committees; and (iii) informal networks of farming families. At the territorial level, participants consist of: (i) networks that integrate local grassroots organizations; (ii) NGOs that support the aforementioned networks; (iii) local and regional governments; (iv) networks of consumers, restaurants, and urban businesses linked to these territories; and (v) public universities that promote action research and provide technical assistance. At the national level, the actors include: public programs from various ministries, national associations of producer organizations, platforms for marketing ecological products, among others.

In five of the ten analyzed cases, national and international NGOs have played a critical role in providing strategic guidance, consolidating, and expanding the territorial coalitions by establishing strategic alliances with extraterritorial entities, including public programs, markets, and regional and national networks. From their inception to the present, these NGOs have systematically supported transformation pathways in these five territories.

4.3. Connection of Experiences with Agroecological Principles

4.3.1. Entry Points to Agroecological Transitions

In the experiences from the State of Paraíba (Brazil), Alta Verapaz (Guatemala), and the Pacific Coast of Cauca (Colombia), stakeholders come together around co-constructed territorial narratives. These narratives emerge from critical aspects of the territory that must be addressed to unleash agroecological transitions. Their dual function is to provide identity and a shared sense of purpose among the actors within the territorial coalition, while also communicating their vision of transformation to other stakeholders and local communities.

In the State of Paraíba, "*learning to coexist with the semi-arid*" is the narrative shared by the Polo Union of Family Farming Organizations of Borborema, the NGO ASPTA, and the Articulation of the Semi-Arid Region of Brazil (ASA). This narrative was developed in response to the recurrent cycles of drought that have left farming families in extreme vulnerability, resulting in crop and seed losses. In this context, the Polo de Borborema and ASPTA identified systems for rainwater harvesting and storage, along with heirloom seed banks that adapt successfully to the region's semi-arid landscape. Consequently, these institutions promote visits and exchanges of experiences methodologies to disseminate local innovations that have proven resilient to the challenging conditions of Borborema's environment, creating revolving funds to encourage the

adoption of these technologies. Here, the entry point to the agroecological transition was the principle of co-creation of knowledge related to innovations suited to the local semi-arid context.

In Alta Verapaz, the narrative is illustrated through two contrasting drawings created by a local artist, which are frequently used by the APROBA SANK Association, the international NGO Agronomists and Veterinarians without boarders (AVSF), and the Aj Awinel farmers' network. These images convey their vision of a territory that rejects agroindustry and other extractive industries, promoting diversified production systems that coexist harmoniously with the local ecosystem. To counter the expansion of palm oil plantations and other industries that have led to land expropriation and natural resource contamination, the SANK Association has promoted land tenure regularization and the establishment of community cadasters. Hence, the entry point to agroecological transition in Alta Verapaz is linked to the principle of land and natural resources governance as a strategy to assert territorial claims against monoculture expansion.

Ilustration 1. Yellow and Green drawing, SANK

In the Pacific Coast of Cauca, the Chiyangua Foundation coordinates and provides technical support to the Matamba and Guasá network, which brings together 32 women's organizations from three municipalities in the region. Alongside the Chiyangua Foundation, the organization "Apoyo a Mujer" coordinates efforts in the municipality of Timbiquí, while "Asomo África" does so in the municipality of López. Under the slogan "Women, Culture, and Territory," the organizations of the Matamba and Guasá network, with support from Fundación ACUA, strive for the "dignification of Black women" and the promotion of their rights, as well as the valorization of traditional products and recipes, and recognition of the fundamental role of women in households, communities, and territories. The entry point for the agroecological transition in the Pacific Coast of Cauca is related to the principle of social values and diets.

In the experiences from the Sierra Sur and Costa de Oaxaca (Mexico) and San Nicolás (Chile), local and extraterritorial actors coordinate actions using participatory planning tools. In the Mexican case, territorial planning instruments have been crucial in countering land expropriation driven by mass tourism. In San Nicolás, development plans have curbed the advance of eucalyptus and pine plantations, as well as environmental contamination caused by cellulose factories. In these two territories, the entry points that drive agroecological transitions are associated with the principles of participation and land and natural resources governance.

The experiences in the Department of La Paz (Bolivia), the District of Comasagua (El Salvador), and the Municipality of Totonicapán (Guatemala) promote short supply chains, where organizations and networks of farming families, urban consumers, food enterprises, and restaurants share a common vision of healthy, responsible, and dignified food consumption. Consequently, the principles of connectivity and economic diversification underpin the agroecological transitions of these three initiatives.

Finally, the experiences in the coastal, Andean, and Amazon regions of Peru (ANPE), as well as in the State of Paraná in Brazil, have coordinated joint efforts with farming organizations, public entities, NGOs, and international cooperation agencies to promote Participatory Guarantee Systems (SPGs). The entry point to agroecological transitions driven by SPGs is based on a participatory process to define the protocols and mechanisms that operationalize these systems, along with advocacy efforts to ensure recognition of this certification by public authorities.

4.3.2. Strategies for promoting multiple principles in agroecology transition pathways

Within the framework of agroecological transitions examined in this study, three main strategies have been identified to activate a broad set of agroecological principles: (i) the development of methodological circuits that integrate various initiatives promoting these principles; (ii) the establishment of alternative markets that require the application of agroecological practices; and (iii) leveraging public resources to finance agroecological projects and initiatives. Although some documented experiences incorporate more than one of the identified strategies, the case in the State of Paraíba showcases how to effectively weave all three strategies.

Box 1: Territorial Experience in the State of Paraíba - Effective Articulation of Strategies for Applying Agroecological Principles

Methodological Circuit: The continuous farmer-to-farmer training methodologies, which promote visits and exchanges of experiences, serve as the central axis of the methodological circuit. Through these co-creation of knowledge strategies, the Polo of Borborema, agrarian unions, and ASPTA facilitate the diffusion and collective reflection on successful experiences in the management of water resources and the collective handling of heirloom seeds. By establishing **140 rotating funds** that facilitate quick access to cisterns for storing water, seeds, animals, and machinery, as well as a **network of 65 seed banks**, agricultural productivity in backyards has increased significantly, enhancing household food security, and boosting women's economic income. These initiatives have promoted principles of biodiversity as well as social values and diets. Simultaneously, the rotating funds for manure, animals, and fencing materials have incentivized principles of recycling, animal health, input reduction, and soil health. Other initiatives, such as the "March for the Lives of Women and for Agroecology" and the research network focused on heirloom seeds, have further bolstered the application of agroecological principles.

Mobilization and Execution of Public Resources: A key factor in consolidating and scaling the methodological circuit has been the success of coalition actors in influencing public programs at the federal level. The Polo, ASPTA, and the Articulation of the Semi-Arid Region (ASA) have managed to become executing entities for the programs "One Million Rural Cisterns," "One Land, Two Waters," and the "Seeds of the Semi-Arid", significantly expanding the network of seed banks and cisterns. To date, **11,000 cisterns** have been installed for drinking water**, 2,700 cisterns for food production**, adding **20 seed banks to the network**.

Public Procurement Markets Requiring Agroecological Practices: The Food Acquisition Programs (PAA) and the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) are institutional markets that offer up to 30% more for organic and/or agroecological products. Facilitating the inclusion of farming families in these markets has incentivized the adoption of agroecological practices and improved food security for children and youth in the region.

Methodological Circuit Strategy:

While various territorial actors have developed methodological circuits in several of the documented experiences, two circuits stand out in promoting various agroecological principles. In Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, a methodological circuit has been established primarily involving women and young farmers from the indigenous q'eqchi' community. Meanwhile, the experiences of the Polinizar Network in the Department of La Paz, Bolivia, have created a methodological circuit focused on connecting producers and consumers in La Paz.

Methodological Circuit in Alta Verapaz: Following the promotion of land titling and the establishment of a credit system for land purchases, the SANK Association recognizes that to promote the principle of land and natural resources governance, it is essential to encourage diversified agriculture: "*We must diversify to protect the land; we cannot simply tell people not to sell their land*" [2]. In collaboration with AVSF, indigenous authorities of the territory, and the Aj Awinel Network, SANK has implemented a methodological circuit that includes a network of farmer schools, crop diversification contests, and farmer markets and festivals, promoting a broad range of agroecological principles: biodiversity, co-creation of knowledge, social values and diets, connectivity, and participation. Additionally, SANK has integrated contests for backyard poultry and small animals, groups of women weavers, and youth clubs, further advancing the principles of economic diversification, animal health, and recycling.

A strategic aspect of this circuit is that 60% of the **11,000 participants** (**8,116 of whom are women**) who engaged in the methodological initiatives have attended at least three of them. Between 2019 and 2023 alone, **50 farmer schools, 32 agricultural competitions, 11 groups of women weavers,** and **20 youth groups** were established, significantly promoting various agroecological principles. A key factor in consolidating this methodological model has been the territorial coalition's ability to influence local governments, securing their co-financing of the awards and incentives provided within the framework of these initiatives.

Methodological Circuit of the Polinizar Network: the Polinizar Network has established a network of agritourism destinations across **24 rural and peri-urban communities** in the Department of La Paz, which have welcomed approximately **1,000 consumers** from the city of La Paz between 2018 and 2024. Through rural agritourism, visitors have the opportunity to share cultural experiences with host families, savor local cuisine, and purchase fresh produce and handicrafts directly. Agritourism promotes the principles of economic diversification, social values, healthy diets, and connectivity.

Additionally, the Polinizar Network facilitates the flow of products from the countryside to the city by forming partnerships with specialty stores located in La Paz. In these establishments, consumers can purchase both fresh and processed products from rural families within the Network, as well as transformed goods from urban micro-enterprises that source their raw materials from the rural communities of the Network.

Finally, the Polinizar Network organizes urban workshops where rural farmers teach urban consumers how to utilize the natural foods and medicinal plants they offer. These workshops not only promote social values and diets among consumers but also serve as informational spaces where participants are invited to join environmental conservation campaigns and efforts to

[2] Interview with Ernesto Tzi, co-founder of APROBA SANK and current Director.

protect biodiversity. Through these initiatives, principles of biodiversity, land and natural resource governance are addressed.

Markets Requiring the Adoption of Agroecological Practices:

In several of the cases analyzed, farmers seeking to participate in alternative short supply chains must meet a series of requirements and demands that involve the application of various agroecological principles. Therefore, the challenge of these transition pathways lies in motivating farming families to adopt and adhere to the standards set by these alternative food systems.

Farmers Basket in El Salvador: Families interested in participating in the farmers basket initiative must attend the Agroecological School (ECA) of the ACPACAC Cooperative, where they develop a planting plan and receive materials, inputs, and seeds for implementation. ACPACAC conducts follow-ups to ensure that production plans are adhered to and agroecological practices are adopted. This compliance promotes principles such as biodiversity, recycling, input reduction, and soil health. Additionally, membership in ACPACAC requires a commitment to market only the surplus of their production to ensure food security for their households, as well as participation in knowledge exchange tours. This fosters agroecological principles related to social values and diets, and the co-creation of knowledge.

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS):

PGS are certification instruments for organic and agroecological products that guarantee consumers that they are free of agrochemical inputs[3]. PGS promote various sustainable practices aligned with the principles of recycling, input reduction, soil health, biodiversity, co-creation of knowledge, and connectivity.

To advance PGS certification in Peru, the National Association of Ecological Producers (ANPE) and their allies sought an alternative certification system that would not be costly, bureaucratic, or reliant on the State or the engagement of a private company; they wanted a system of their own where they would serve as the certifiers. Today, certification through PGS is a requirement for producers affiliated with regional ANPE organizations to sell their products **in 960 eco-stores in Lima**, at **32 regional eco-fairs** operating weekly, and on two virtual platforms managed by ANPE. Currently, **10,088 farmers in Peru have benefited from the PGS certification process** (IFOAM website), the majority of whom are ANPE members. In parallel with the PGS certification, ANPE has developed the brand "Fruits of the Earth" to differentiate its products as agroecological foods, which is also used within consumer awareness strategies.

In the State of Paraná, Pioneiro territory, the State University of Northern Paraná (UENP), through its Nucleus of Studies in Agroecology and Territory (NEAT), has developed a series of participatory methodologies that promote agroecology practices which were implemented alongside public entities and other state universities. NEAT hosts one of the seven Certification Centers of the "Paraná Mais Orgânico" Program, which offers personalized assistance to farming families to help them meet the requirements established by Brazilian legislation for accessing PGS certification, as well as navigating the administrative processes necessary to sell ecological products in public procurement programs. As a result, in the Norte Pioneiro territory, **the**

[3] At the moment, GSPs certify mostly organic products, but experiences such as ANPE's show ways in which GSPs can be adapted for agroecological production.

percentage of organic foods supplied to the school feeding program reached 29.4%, exceeding the 20% target set for the state during the 2019-2021 period (PMO Project Data, 2021).

Mobilization of Public Resources:

In the case studies from the Sierra Sur and Costa de Oaxaca (Mexico) and San Nicolás (Chile), participation processes for land and natural resources governance have been crucial for capturing and channeling resources from public entities that fund projects promoting a broad set of agroecological principles.

In the Sierra Sur and Costa of Oaxaca, SICOBI and the Autonomous Group for Environmental Research (GAIA) have closely collaborated with CONAFOR to implement one of the first pilot experiences of the Payment for Environmental Services (PSA) program in Mexico. Between 2003 and 2013, the **five communities within SICOBI received over US $1.2 million in financial payments for these services**. Through a process of advocacy and collaboration, CONAFOR, SICOBI, and GAIA agreed that part of the PSA resources received by SICOBI would be directed to concurrent funds to finance five projects aimed at promoting a wider range of agroecological principles, including biodiversity, synergies, recycling, soil health, and animal welfare.

An interesting aspect of the transition in this territory is that, after 13 years of receiving resources from the PSA program, SICOBI and GAIA have succeeded in sustaining the agroecological transition through the creation of the Copalita Tourism Route and the Productos Territoriales enterprise. These initiatives have promoted principles such as economic diversification, connectivity, social values, and diets. Between 2015 and 2016, SICOBI reported **revenues exceeding US $100,000** from the sale of specialty coffee, organic honey, and visitors to the Copalita Route.

In San Nicolás, the San Nicolás Peasant Coordinating Committee (CCCSN) and the Department of Rural Development (DDR) of the Municipality of San Nicolás have successfully leveraged significant resources from the Local Development Program (PRODESAL) of the Agricultural Development Institute (INDAP) and other public programs to promote an agroecological model in the municipality. As a result of this process, in 2018, San Nicolás was **declared an agroecological municipality**, formalized through a municipal decree.

Among various activities and functions, the DDR and the CCCSN also support farming families in applying for public funds to gradually access infrastructure that facilitates their transition to agroecology. Through vegetable greenhouses, water storage systems, technical irrigation, worm composters, chicken coops, and fruit trees, the DDR and CCCSN promote principles of biodiversity, recycling, reduction of inputs, and soil health. They have also encouraged the co-creation of knowledge through exchange visits and connectivity via eco-fairs and other short supply markets. In coordination with the CCCSN, the DDR has successfully **leveraged over 1 million US Dollars in 2023** to further consolidate and expand the agroecological model of San Nicolás.

A summary of the application of agroecological principles in each documented experience is provided in Annex 4, which distinguishes between the agroecological principles that have initiated the transition pathways, as well as the primary and secondary principles promoted in each transformation process.

4.4. Multidimensional impacts of the experiences.

4.4.1. Women empowerment

In the vast majority of the cases analyzed, women have played a pivotal role in driving agroecological transitions. In regions such as Cauca's Pacific Coast (Colombia), the Comasagua District (El Salvador), the regional organization of ANPE in Huánuco (Peru), and the municipality of Totonicapán (Guatemala), 90% of the participants in these initiatives have been women. In the remaining cases, female participation is also predominant, highlighting the critical role of women in transforming food systems.

A key factor in advancing women's empowerment in several of the analyzed cases has been the recognition and valorization of backyard spaces within households. These spaces typically serve as venues for productive activities led by women, including the raising of small livestock, the establishment of vegetable gardens, and the cultivation of condiments, ornamental plants, and medicinal herbs. With appropriate investments and incentives, these areas have the potential to contribute significantly to the economic empowerment of women, transforming their social relationships within domestic, community, and territorial contexts.

In the Borborema territory of the Paraíba State in Brazil, the installation of cisterns and seed banks has enabled backyards to generate 24% of the average annual agricultural income of a productive unit, despite representing only 0.5% of the households' productive space (Galvão, 2015). "*When we started, the area around the house was very small and contained minimal resources. With the arrival of public policies, especially regarding water storage, women began to reorganize that space, leading to its expansion. This growth translated into increased food production and small-scale animal husbandry, allowing women to enter markets as protagonists*."[4]

In Alta Verapaz, the farmer contests and backyard animal competitions promote production in backyards, which is subsequently sold at weekly farmers' markets and annual municipal fairs. "*When I won the contest, I received 450 quetzals and bought a pig. After a year, I sold the pig for 4,000 quetzals and purchased a small plot of land—four* cuerda*—where I now grow my crops. If I hadn't participated, I wouldn't have been able to buy the pig. Now I have my crops: mucuy, coffee, orange, banana, mandarin, malanga, avocado, and yucca. Those four* cuerda *are mine. My husband had land, and now I do too*."[5]

Backyards are also critical spaces for women to diversify their income through activities such as agritourism, food services, and product transformation ventures. With the support of the Chiyangua Foundation, several organizations within the Matamba and Guasá Women's Network in Cauca's Pacific Coast have established businesses that offer products based on medicinal plants, condiments, and other items produced in their backyards. These transformed products are marketed through various short supply chain mechanisms, generating significant income for the women involved. Building on these ventures that value backyard-grown plants, these organizations have initiated the campaign for "co-responsible, non-violent masculinities," encouraging men and boys to support women-led initiatives. "*Our husbands have now become*

[4] Technician of AS-PTA; authority of STR Solánea and executive coordinator of the Polo Union.

[5] Sandra of the community of Chicucay in the municipality of Carchá, that participated in the farming school.

part of our organizations; they have recognized the importance of allowing us, as women, to work"[6].

Rural agritourism promoted by the Polinizar Network in the Department of La Paz has created economic alternatives for women: "*It's an opportunity for additional income. I prepare food for the agritourists, welcome them to my backyard, show them my lettuce production greenhouse, and those who are interested can buy directly. I also offer handicrafts such as hats, socks, and llama wool gloves.*[7]"

The case studies reveal the diverse impacts stemming from the economic empowerment of women. However, this process must be complemented by initiatives that promote their multidimensional empowerment. This involves addressing issues such as violence against women, fostering their leadership in social and political spaces, and improving their conditions of unpaid labor. While some of the documented experiences have tackled these issues, there is still a lack of qualitative evidence to support the impacts generated. Therefore, it is advised to conduct more in-depth research to understand how agroecological transitions can contribute to the multidimensional empowerment of women and girls.

4.4.2. Nutrition and health

Agroecological transitions have had a positive impact on the quality of food and health in rural communities by providing a healthier and more diverse diet while reducing dependence on processed products and agrochemical inputs.

On one hand, initiatives that promote crop diversification and traditional food practices have enhanced family nutrition. In the Borborema territory of Paraíba State, the mass installation of cisterns has provided "*better quality water, closer to home. This has reduced the incidence of diarrhea and various common health issues. Additionally, it has contributed to food production, transforming food sovereignty and food security*".[8] In Alta Verapaz, the methodological circuit that encompasses schools, contests, and farmers' fairs has resulted in families stating: "*By diversifying our crops, we can now obtain our food directly at home; we no longer need to buy it*"[9]. In the Pacific Coast of Cauca, efforts to valorize traditional products and recipes have led to "*changes in how condiments are used to flavor meals, successfully substituting products like Maggi*"[10] which are unhealthy.

Furthermore, marketing systems such as the Farmers Basket in the Comasagua District of El Salvador promote the introduction of new crops into productive systems, shifting from solely producing maize to cultivating over 22 varieties of vegetables and 8 varieties of fruits, along with raising backyard chickens. In San Nicolás, Chile, access to infrastructure boosted local household production leading to a shift towards a more varied and healthy diet.

Some agroecological transitions have encouraged urban consumers to purchase organic products, exemplified by the eco-fair in Huánuco, Peru, where one participant remarked, "*Buying products from this fair is a guarantee because I know who the producer is, how they produce it, and how*

[6] Esneda Montaño Obregón, legal representative of the Construyendo sueños Association).

[7] Interview with agritourism family host in the Choquecota community, May 2024.

[8] Interview with Union leader of STR Remigio.

[9] Interview with Martha Alicia of the community of Chamil of the munipality of Chamelco.

[10] (Teófila Betancourt, representante legal, Fundación chiyangua).

it is transported. I have confidence in these healthy, certified products that adhere to good practices; that's what I look for as a consumer"[11]. This process has been driven by a partnership between the Regional Consumers Association (ARECE), affiliated with ANPE, and the Departmental Association of Ecological Producers of Huánuco (ADPEH), which share the common goal of "raising awareness and educating consumers about the healthy consumption of agroecological products" through a social, political, and educational movement.

4.4.3. Resilience to Climate Change and Management of Natural Resources

Agroecological practices have positively impacted adaptation to climate change and promoted the sustainable management of natural resources. For example, in San Nicolás, practices that enhance ecological synergy have improved resilience to natural disasters: "*When the fires occurred in 2017, which severely affected us, no houses were burned. Why didn't these houses burn? Because they had green native tree corridors and tuna alleys*." [12] Similarly, several regional organizations of ANPE in Peru have promoted "*natural forest barriers*" [13] and other practices to strengthen resilience to adverse climate related events and enhance resource management.

In the Sierra Sur and Costa de Oaxaca, the Payment for Environmental Services program has conserved 9,669 hectares, aiding in the recovery of soil fertility and moisture while significantly reducing erosion and restoring environmental service flows. However, it is recognized that there is a need to strengthen these strategies on a larger scale. The experience of Utz Che' in Guatemala showcases sustainable management of natural resources with a focus on conserving the forest resources of Totonicapán. Additionally, its participation in the PROBOSQUE forest incentive program has enabled the integration of forest care actions with the agroecological transition.

In Alta Verapaz, efforts have been made to transition from monocultures affected by climate change to more resilient and diversified production systems. As one community member stated, "*Here in the community, we decided to start diversifying with SANK because it's becoming much hotter; cardamom is no longer viable, so we need to grow different types of crops*." [14]

4.4.4. Influence on Public Policies and Organizational strengthening

Advocacy efforts to influence public policies and the strengthening of grassroots organizations are processes that often intertwine. In some instances, grassroots organizations have played a pivotal role in the design and development of public policies, and conversely, national policies have supported the strengthening of these organizations.

In the case of San Nicolás, the Farmer Committees, in coordination with the Municipality, "*began to adjust subsidies and public funds to target agroecology*," as noted by a former member of the technical team of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This has been made possible thanks to public programs such as PRODESAL, which enable municipal governments to implement these initiatives. This institutional arrangement has resulted in technical assistance services and infrastructure investments that support agroecology transitions.

[11] Interview with a consumer of the ecological fair in Huánuco, June 2024.

[12] Interview with San Nicolas Municipal Government practitioner.

[13] Statement of young granadilla farmer, 2017.

[14] Carlos of the community of Samox, municipality of Cobán, participant of the famer school).

In the Borborema territory of the Paraíba State, it is noted that "*many of the ASA programs emerged from society, and we participated directly in the construction and negotiation with public authorities. The relationship with federal governments has always been very important.*"[15] This process of influencing large public programs has been facilitated by decentralization policies implemented by the Workers' Party government in Brazil. In the Sierra Sur and Costa of Oaxaca, the recognition of the Mexican Constitution and the National Agrarian Registry of territorial planning schemes has been key for SICOBI, GAIA, and local authorities in implementing regulations for natural resource management. As a result, 80% of producers no longer use agrochemicals and have adopted sustainable practices: "*We have succeeded in preventing burning, which was a very difficult goal, and now a large portion of producers no longer practices it.*[16]"

In the municipality of Totonicapán (Guatemala), the Utz Ché network of family farmers, has implemented various strategies to influence the framework of the Guatemalan School Nutrition Law. They have coordinated actions with schools and community councils to oversee the implementation of the nutrition program and have a voice in decisions regarding which products are purchased. This process has been strengthened by monitoring and auditing strategies to ensure compliance with the law, including: training for parents and civil society organizations on the legal framework and social auditing, the creation of community participation platforms, participatory citizen monitoring, and transparency and accountability initiatives.

In relation to synergies between territorial organizations and decentralized public institutions, the case of Norte Pioneiro in the State of Paraná, Brazil, stands out. Here, the state government invites public universities and other state entities to serve as executors of the Paraná Mais Orgânico (PMO) program. This collaboration has led to the enactment of a law that stipulates that 100% of the purchases made by the National School Feeding Program must come from family agriculture, allowing producers to access organic certification at no cost.

In Peru, the coordination of regional producer organizations with ANPE has been strategic in promoting advocacy processes and gaining access to projects that support agroecology, the preservation of agrobiodiversity, the protection of family farming, and the moratorium on genetically modified organisms (GMOs). "*As small women's organizations, we often go unnoticed; we are not visible. That's why we called together women from districts and provinces in the Amazon as a Mothers' Club, and we organized ourselves as ARPEAM and became members of ANPE to gain more weight in order to influence regulations and access projects... now we have a voice in different spaces.*[17]"

[15] Interview with ASPTA.

[16] Focus Group with SICOBI members, June 2024.

[17] Statement by ARPEAM President, May 2024.

CHAPTER 5. LESSONS LEARNED

5.1. Alignment of the Territorial Approach with Agroecological Principles

The 13 agroecological principles established by the HLPE are intrinsically linked to the five-stage food system transformation theory proposed by Stephen Gliessman (2007). However, one risk of this theory of change is the potential to interpret agroecological transitions as a linear process that advances through predetermined phases (Moeller et al., 2023; Anderson, 2019).

The ten case studies show that agroecological transitions are inherently diverse and do not follow a linear pathway through each of the five levels posited in Gliessman's theoretical framework. Each territorial context has its own unique particularities, challenges, and opportunities, resulting in distinct trajectories of change. Therefore, it is recommended to use Gliessman's theoretical framework as a tool for analyzing and characterizing different transition pathways, rather than viewing it strictly as a model of agroecological transformation.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that Gliessman's theoretical framework could benefit from the incorporation of a territorial level. This level could advocate for collaborative efforts among actors at different levels (territorial social coalitions) in the design and implementation of change pathways. Additionally, it would contextualize some of the agroecological principles to specific territorial characteristics and dynamics. For example, the principle of social values and diets is closely tied to the sociocultural particularities of each territory; the principle of land and natural resource governance is influenced by historical and political processes operating at the territorial level; and the principle of co-creation of knowledge entails the involvement of various local actors who share knowledge, practices, and experiences.

Despite the increased adoption of agroecological principles by international development and research organizations in recent years, the vast majority of farming families in Latin America are still unaware of them. These principles are more relevant to communities and groups of family farmers when they are directly connected to their experiences in agricultural production and are presented in a meaningful way (Caswel et. al., 2021).

In the ten case studies analyzed, actors from the territorial coalitions rarely refer to agroecological principles in public events, publications, or communications. In most cases, they share their visions for transforming food systems through narratives related to the territorial context, utilizing analogies, life stories, concrete examples, visual representations, and interactive activities to engage with the local population. The constant interaction of these actors with family farmers and their grassroots organizations positions them as key players in socializing the agroecological approach.

The comparative advantage of these coalitions lies in their nuanced understanding of the realities faced by local inhabitants, as well as the idiosyncrasies of public agents and the preferences of urban consumers. This enables them to design strategies and initiatives that effectively and appropriately promote agroecological principles within the local context.

In recent years, the FAO has developed tools to facilitate the participatory design and implementation of agroecological transitions. FAOs visual narratives tool enables the design of public policy packages that promote agroecological transitions (FAO, 2023). According to a recent

article published by FAO officials, the institution is in the process of developing a participatory instrument that will allow farming families, grassroots organizations, researchers, and civil society to design and implement agroecological transitions using visual narratives (Bicksler et al., 2023).

Based on the comparative analysis of the ten case studies and the key role played by territorial coalitions in promoting agroecological transitions, four recommendations are proposed to enhance participatory instruments aimed at designing and implementing these transitions:

- Apply territorial diagnostic tools that enable the adaptation of transformation pathways to specific territorial contexts.
- Conduct a mapping of actors and initiatives that promote agroecological principles, so design instruments for agroecological transitions incorporate these agents and their ongoing transformation processes.
- Develop a communication strategy that effectively conveys the agroecological approach, its principles, and the concept of transition pathways to farming families and their grassroots organizations.
- Promote inclusive processes of debate and co-construction that enable local inhabitants and actors, as well as external stakeholders, to define pathways for change based on a shared vision for the future of the territories food systems.

5.2. Political Advocacy to boost Agroecology transitions

By conducting an integrated analysis of the ten experiences, several political advocacy strategies that favor agroecological transition are identified. The cases that have made the most significant progress in terms of political advocacy are those driven by territorial coalitions with strong foundations, often featuring leadership from civil society that triggers social mobilization processes. These coalitions are composed of diverse entities—including grassroots organizations, NGOs, international cooperation, universities, businesses, and public institutions—that have cultivated high levels of trust. This trust, founded on shared objectives, visions, and values among coalition actors, enhances their advocacy capacity when interacting with public entities.

The documented experiences demonstrate that advocacy does not limit itself to a single issue or type of actor; rather, it encompasses multiple areas, such as productive aspects (transformation of agricultural practices), markets (generation and consolidation of markets), environmental protection (safeguarding biodiversity and water systems), and access to resources (struggles for territory and land ownership), among many others.

A common element among the various experiences that promote advocacy processes in public policies is their ability to **territorialize the design and execution of these policies**. This means that investments in infrastructure, technical assistance services, natural resource management, and the adjustment of regulatory frameworks must take into account the territorial characteristics and the priorities expressed by the population and their grassroots organizations.

Box 2: Public entities strategies to adapt Public Policies to territorial contexts:

- Establish institutional arrangements that enable the active participation of territorial actors in the design and implementation of public programs.
- Create mechanisms to channel resources from payments for environmental services towards territorial projects that promote agroecology.
- Design national technical assistance programs that are tailored to meet specific priorities demanded by territorial actors.
- Promote decentralized participatory processes in the development of policies, laws, and instruments associated with Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS).

Territorializing public policies has involved collaboration between public entities and territorial social coalitions. In addition to advocating with public institutions, these coalitions have implemented various strategies to mobilize communities and grassroots organizations in advocacy processes.

Box 3: Territorial social coalition strategies to adapt Public Policies to territorial contexts:

- Generate empirical and scientific evidence on agroecological practices that spark interest of farming families while also supporting advocacy processes.
- Establish participatory mechanisms for consensus-building with peasant and indigenous communities, farmer networks, and grassroots organizations to coordinate advocacy efforts.
- Mobilize civil society through periodic events, such as public forums during municipal election campaigns, annual marches and assemblies to gain the support and involvement of public authorities in transformation processes.
- Support the emergence of new leaderships that bring together diverse actors within the agroecological agenda.

5.3. Connection with diverse markets

Connecting family farmers with dynamic markets is crucial for ensuring the viability of agroecology transition pathways. Territorial coalitions have played a central role in establishing diverse markets, including traditional markets (markets, fairs, and farmer festivals), services (agritourism and gastronomy), and virtual markets. The establishment of these markets has supported the autonomy and resilience of farming families, allowing them to avoid reliance on a single buyer or source of income, such as the state or a specific intermediary. These markets represent an important source of income and financing, but they also serve as a communication channel where producers share experiences and highlight the comparative advantages of agroecology as a model for transforming food systems.

A key factor in the established short supply chains is that they serve as **alternative markets that go beyond mere buying and selling of products**. Some territorial coalitions have implemented various consumer awareness strategies, including educational initiatives on agroecological practices, healthy diets, and the importance of PGS. Within the framework of agritourism and gastronomy services, both consumers and farming families engage in experiential activities where values, knowledge, and cultural expressions are shared.

Box 4: Territorial social coalition strategies to link family farmers to multiple markets:

- Promote consumer awareness initiatives within various markets.
- Foster human connections and alignment of values between consumers and family farming.
- Encourage the use of social media to facilitate efforts in logistics (e.g., minimizing time spent selling produce), marketing (cost-effective), and dissemination (of the identity and values of alternative markets).
- Implement capacity-building processes to support the integration of farming families into alternative markets.
- Mobilize parents and civil society organizations in social monitoring and auditing processes related to public procurement markets associated with school feeding programs.

In some sites, the state has been instrumental in promoting public procurement markets that prioritize ecological products from family farming. However, in general, collaboration from the public sector in establishing short supply chain markets has been limited to specific actions, such as designating public spaces and providing targeted financial support.

Box 5: Public entities strategies to link family farmers to multiple markets:

- Design public procurement markets that provide a premium for ecological products guaranteed by participatory certification systems.
- Designate public spaces for hosting fairs, festivals, and farmers' markets.
- Provide support to finance recreational and educational activities that promote the consumption of ecological, healthy, and culturally appropriate products.

Although some public entities can play a significant role in promoting short supply chain markets, the continuity of their support may be interrupted by the arrival of newly elected officials or new public servants who do not support these markets. In this volatile context, territorial coalitions play a crucial role by implementing contingency strategies, such as seeking support from other actors or developing new strategies to access markets. This adaptability allows them to sustain alternative markets and ensure that farming families continue to have access to sales opportunities, despite fluctuations in institutional support.

5.4. Promotion of Social Inclusion

By assessing all of the experiences documented, it is evident that the primary strategy employed by territorial coalitions to promote the social inclusion of women and youth in agroecological transitions has been to **support agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities to initiate empowerment processes**. The case studies reveal multiple strategies to enhance the economic empowerment of women and, in some instances, of youth.

However, it is essential that this process be complemented by other initiatives that promote their empowerment across multiple dimensions. In specific cases, complementary strategies and mechanisms have been developed to address gender-based violence and to encourage women's leadership in social and political spaces. These actions create a more equitable and participatory environment, where the contributions of women and youth to the transformation of food systems are recognized and valued.

Box 6: Territorial social coalition strategies to foster social inclusion:

- Promote non-agricultural activities and enterprises in which primarily women and youth participate: agritourism, gastronomy, cultural services, product transformation, and others.
- Boost productivity in backyard spaces to promote food security and the economic empowerment of women and elderly individuals.
- Facilitate training processes aimed at young people so they can be accredited as skilled local promoters of agroecological practices.
- Establish mechanisms that ensure the participation of women and youth in activities that promote agroecological practices, as well as in dialogue and decision-making processes.
- Develop mobilizing initiatives that recognize and value the work of women and youth.

In the vast majority of cases, public entities have provided marginal support for the empowerment and social inclusion of youth and women. However, in some instances where territorial coalitions have collaborated in the design and implementation of public programs and services, adjustments have been made to promote social inclusion and the empowerment of women.

Box 7: Public entities strategies to foster social inclusion:

- Direct investments in household backyards to boost productive and economic activities led by women.
- Establish coordination mechanisms between public entities and grassroots organizations within the framework of legal processes related to gender-based violence.
- Create dialogue mechanisms that connect public entities, both decentralized and centralized, with indigenous authorities, women's associations, and youth organizations.

Most programs and funding sources target excluded populations, particularly women and youth. However, older adults do not seem to be adequately recognized as actors, both within the local networks themselves and in public policies and projects funded by international cooperation organizations. It is important to further explore the role played by older adults, who are a significant part of the population that constitutes rural territories.

5.5. Sustainability of processes over time

The analyzed territorial coalitions promote long-term transformation processes, guided by a future vision for food systems. Consolidating agroecological transitions over time requires territorial coalitions to establish close alliances with the public sector, private sector, international cooperation, and civil society organizations at local, regional, national, and international levels. These expanded networks primarily enable the securing of permanent resources to finance the initiatives they promote. A comparative advantage of the analyzed territorial coalitions is their ability to **foster change pathways that transcend the immediate boundaries of projects**. In addition to having an extensive network of allies, some territorial coalitions have established inclusive business models and financial innovations that allow them to self-finance their transformation processes.

Box 8: Territorial social coalition strategies to sustain agroecology transitions

- Diversify the network of strategic alliances to secure resources and sustain processes and initiatives over time.
- Establish sustainable mechanisms that promote agroecological principles through: (i) permanent farmer-to-farmer learning systems; (ii) revolving funds for access to inputs and infrastructure; (iii) soft credit systems for land acquisition.
- Create inclusive business models in which NGOs and grassroot organizations offer services (such as tourism and gastronomy) whose revenues co-finance transformation activities and cover some operational costs.
- Implement agile and transparent administrative management mechanisms to comply with rules and norms demanded by international cooperation agencies, public entities, and the local population.

In some of the analyzed cases, public entities have played a key role in the initiation, consolidation, and expansion of agroecological transitions. Some of the public programs reviewed have channeled resources, provided technical assistance services, and made purchases and investments over several years. In those cases where these programs have been linked to change processes driven by territorial coalitions, the social and technological innovations promoted by these programs have persisted after their conclusion.

Box 9: Public entities strategies to sustain agroecology transitions:

- Link public programs with the processes and stakeholders operating in the territories, favoring their continuity even after the programs have concluded.
- Assign municipal government officials to focus exclusively on resources mobilization efforts to finance collective and family projects.
- Prioritize agroecological products and services within public procurement programs and purchases.

CHAPTER 6. PROPOSALS FOR AN ACTION RESEARCH AGENDA

This study documents and analyzes consolidated agroecological transitions through a comparative lens, offering insights into how to initiate, scale, and sustain transformative processes in an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient way. The longitudinal analysis of agroecological transitions highlights the significance of various actors operating at the territorial level to ensure the continuity of change processes, as well as their capability to adapt transition pathways to local contexts. Stakeholders organized in territorial coalitions design, implement, and sustain agroecological transitions from a multi-level perspective, allowing them to articulate and strengthen both horizontal and vertical scaling processes.

To enhance the research agenda established in this study, several lines of work are proposed to support ongoing agroecological transition pathways.

6.1 Learning Network among actors promoting Agroecological Transitions

Each agroecological transition follows its own unique pathway of change. However, methodologies, strategies, and innovations can be adapted to be effective in diverse territorial and institutional contexts. The aim of establishing a learning network is to enable actors from different territories to draw inspiration from other transformative processes, thereby adapting strategies, methodologies, and innovations to their specific contexts.

A learning network should include a diverse set of consolidated agroecological transition experiences that share insights with a broader group of actors engaged in transitions in other vulnerable regions of LAC. Topics to be addressed may include the following questions:

- What territorial context has triggered the agroecological transition? How was it initiated, and what were the main factors of success and challenges overcome?
- What key elements have contributed to forming territorial coalitions that share a common vision for transformation?
- What are the main strategies, innovations, and methodologies that have enabled the activation, scaling, and sustainability of agroecological transitions?
- What lessons have been learned from mistakes made during agroecological transitions?
- What trade-offs and dilemmas have been faced when promoting agroecological transitions?

6.2 Digital Platform to learn from Territorial Experiences

To maximize the benefits of the experiences, innovations, and knowledge generated within the learning network, a digital platform can be developed to reach a broader audience of Global South stakeholders. This platform should include the following products:

- A comprehensive documentation of experiences that includes an analysis of the application of the 13 agroecological principles.
- A toolbox for activating the 13 agroecological principles and promoting transformation pathways.

- A set of lessons learned and recommendations.
- Informational capsules that showcase how stakeholders are adapting strategies, methodologies, and innovations to their territorial and institutional contexts.
- An assessment of the results and impacts generated by the learning network.

This digital platform would serve as a vital resource for sharing knowledge and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders engaged in agroecological transitions.

6.3 Publication of a series of articles for knowledge dissemination

The experiences analyzed across different countries in the region showcase a wealth of knowledge that is not necessarily documented in publications such as articles, policy briefs, or reports. Documenting and disseminating the knowledge gained from agroecological transitions is crucial for enhancing the legitimacy of this agenda and for seeking new allies in the public, private, and civil society sectors.

Building on the findings and lessons learned from this study, the following themes and questions are proposed for further investigation:

Territorializing Public Policies

- What multi-stakeholder collaboration strategies—such as social mobilization, advocacy, and communication—have the potential to influence public policies so they adapt to specific territorial contexts and promote agroecological transitions?
- What regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements, and mechanisms enable territorial actors to become executing entities of public programs that promote agroecological principles?

Accessing dynamic markets

- What social, technological, and institutional innovations can efficiently connect farming families with consumers?
- What strategies and initiatives have proven effective in encouraging consumers to value agroecological products?
- What business models and management practices contribute to the sustainability of alternative markets established by civil society entities (such as NGOs, cooperatives, networks, and platforms)?

Social Inclusion

- What investments, strategies, and innovations addressing farming households promote the multidimensional empowerment of women and the elderly?
- Which initiatives, strategies, and alliances have been effective in combating violence against women and promoting their leadership in transforming food systems?
- What aspirations do young people have, and what strategies have effectively enabled them to lead agroecological transition processes in their territories?
- How do non-agricultural rural activities impact the social inclusion of youth and women?

Climate Change Adaptation

- What social and technological innovations have been effective in preventing and/or mitigating adverse climate events?
- What strategies and mechanisms have successfully channeled resources from projects and funds directed to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation to promote agroecological transitions?
- How have communication media (such as radios, cell phones, etc.) been utilized in initiatives focused on climate change adaptation and natural resource management?

Evaluation of Agroecological Transition Processes

- What are the costs associated with triggering agroecological transition at different scales? Where do these resources come from, and who participates in the process?
- What implications do these transitions have for the workload of the families leading them?

By addressing these issues and questions, future research can contribute valuable insights that support the ongoing development of agroecological transitions and facilitate the emergence of more inclusive and resilient food systems in Latin America and beyond.

REFERENCES

Altieri, M. (2010). “Agroecology: The Scientific Basis of Alternative Agriculture.” Division of Biological Control, University of California, Berkeley.

Altieri, M. (2022). “Propuesta metodológica para evaluar el escalamiento de iniciativas agroecológicas.” CELIA. Disponible en: https://celia.agroeco.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Boletin7-Propuesta-Metodologica-para-evaluar-el-escalamiento-de-iniciativas-2022-.pdf

Anderson, C.R., Bruil, J., Chappell, M.J., Kiss, C. y Pimbert, M.P. (2019). “From Transition to Domains of Transformation: Getting to Sustainable and Just Food Systems through Agroecology.” *Sustainability* 2019, *11*, 5272. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/su11195272

Berdegué, J. A.; Bebbington, A. y Escobal, J. (2015a). “Conceptualizing Spatial Diversity in Latin American Rural Development: Structures, Institutions, and Coalitions”. *World Development*. Volume 73. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.10.015

Berdegué, J. A.; Bebbington, A. y Escobal, J. (2015b). “Explaining Spatial Diversity in Latin American Rural Development: Structures, Institutions, and Coalitions”. *World Development*. Volume 73. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.10.015

Berdegué,J., Trivelli, C. y Corvalán, C. (2023). “Creating more and better employment in agrifood systems.” CGIAR. Disponible en: https://www.kismfoodmarkets.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/CGI08-307011-Template%20Project_EMAIL_7.27.2023.pdf

Bicksler, A., Mottet, A., Lucantoni, D., Rassoul Sy, M y Barrios, E. (2023). “The 10 Elements of Agroecology interconnected: Making them operational in FAO’s work on agroecology.” *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*. Volume 11 (1). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.2022.00041

CGIAR Initiative on Agroecology. (2023). “The Agroecology Transition: Different pathways to a single destination - Eight country experiences.” 32 p. Disponible en: https://hdl.handle.net/10568/138124

Chaves, V. E. J., y Weiler, C. C. (2016). "Los estudios de casos como enfoque metodológico." ACADEMO Revista de Investigación en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, 3(2).

Coe, E. y Coe, R. (2023). “Agroecological transitions in the mind.” *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*. Volume 11 (1): 00026. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.2022.00026

Darmaun, M., Hossard, L., de Tourdonnet, S., Chotte, J.-L., Lairez, J., Scopel, E., Faye, N. F., Chapuis-Lardy, L., Ndienor, M., Cissé, M. F. N., & Chevallier, T. (2023). “Co-designing a method to assess agroecological transitions: results of a case study in Senegal.” *Italian Journal of Agronomy*. Volume 18(4). DOI: https://doi.org/10.4081/ija.2023.2195

Escudero, J., Delfín, L. A., y Gutiérrez, L. (2008). "El estudio de caso como estrategia de investigación en las ciencias sociales." Revista Ciencia Administrativa, 1. Disponible en: https://www.uv.mx/iiesca/files/2012/12/estudio2008-1.pdf

FAO. (2018). “Los 10 elementos de la agroecología. Guía para la transición hacia sistemas alimentarios y agrícolas sostenibles.”. Disponible en: https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/d3b4a39e-5ca8-4938-b09f-b368b72a5be6/content

FAO. (2023). “Harnessing the potential of the 10 elements of agroecology to facilitate agrifood systems transformation.” Disponible en: https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/49709687-5c98-482e-b48c-8fd5d5e856bd/content

Fernández, I., Hernández, R., Trivelli, C. y Schejtman, A. (2012). “Las coaliciones transformadoras y los dilemas del desarrollo inclusivo en las zonas rurales de América Latina”. Documento de Trabajo N° 107. Programa Dinámicas Territoriales Rurales. Rimisp, Santiago, Chile. Disponible en: https://www.rimisp.org/wp-content/files_mf/1366287608N1072012CoalicionestransformadoraszonasruralesALFernandezHernandezTrivelliSchejtman.pdf

Galvão, A. (2015). “Pela vida das mulheres e pela agrocologia: agricultoras da Borborema reescrevem suas historias.” *Agriculturas*. Volume 12 (4). Disponible en: https://aspta.redelivre.org.br/files/2019/09/Agriculturas_V12N43-Artigo1.pdf

Gliessman (2007). Gliessman, S.R. 2007. Agroecology: the ecology of sustainable food systems. 2nd edition. Boca Raton, USA, CRC Press. 384 pp.

Gliessman, S. (2018). “Breaking away from industrial food and farming systems. Seven case studies of agroecological transition.” IPES FOOD. Disponible en: https://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/CS2_web.pdf

HLPE. (2019). “Enfoques agroecológicos y otros enfoques innovadores.” Disponible en: https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/HLPE/reports/HLPE_Report_14_ES.pdf

Jones, S.K., Bergamini, N., Beggi, F. *et al*. (2022). “Research strategies to catalyze agroecological transitions in low- and middle-income countries.” *Sustain Sci*. Volume 17. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-022-01163-6

LEISA. (2003). “Ocho estudios de caso.” Volume 19. Disponible en: https://leisa-al.org/web/wp-content/uploads/vol19n0.pdf

LEISA. (2016). “Agroecología y los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible.” Disponible en: https://www.leisa-al.info/index.php/journal/issue/view/46/48

LEISA. (2019). “Agricultura urbana en América Latina.” Volumen 35 (3). Disponible en: https://leisa-al.org/web/revista/volumen-35-numero-03/

LEISA. (2020). “Mujeres, biodiversidad y alimentación: la valorización de la vida a través de experiencias agroecológicas.” Volume 36 (1). Disponible en: https://leisa-al.org/web/wp-content/uploads/vol36n1.pdf

LEISA. (2021). “Agroecología e investigación participativa: experiencias en los Andes.” Volume 37 (1). Disponible en: https://leisa-al.org/web/revista/volumen-37-numero-01/

LEISA. (2023). “Colaboraciones para la agrobiodiversidad”. Volume 38 (2). Disponible en: https://leisa-al.org/web/wp-content/uploads/vol38n2.pdf

Moeller, N. et al. (2023). “Measuring agroecology: Introducing a methodological framework and a community of practice approach.” *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene* 5 January 2023; 11 (1). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.2023.00042

Ranaboldo, C. (2006). Identidad cultural y desarrollo territorial rural. Rimisp. Disponible en: https://www.rimisp.org/wp-content/files_mf/135938091514.pdf

Sachet, E. et al. (2021). “Agroecological Transitions: A Systematic Review of Research Approaches and Prospects for Participatory Action Methods”. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*. Volume 5.DOI: https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2021.709401

Schejtman, A. y Berdegué, J. (2004). “Desarrollo territorial rural”. Rimisp. Disponible en: https://www.rimisp.org/wp-content/files_mf/1363093392schejtman_y_berdegue2004_desarrollo_territorial_rural_5_rimisp_CArdumen.pdf

Stake, R. E. (2008). "Multiple case study analysis." The Guilford Press.

Wezel, A., Herren, B.G., Kerr, R.B.; Barrios, E., Rodríguez, A., y Sinclair, F. (2020). “Agroecological principles and elements and their implications for transitioning to sustainable food systems. A review.” *Agron. Sustain. Dev.* **40**, 40 https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-020-00646-z

Yáñez, R. (2024). Bienestar subjetivo en la ruralidad latinoamericana. Construcción de una narrativa bottom-up. Revista Austral De Ciencias Sociales, (46), 329–351. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4206/rev.austral.cienc.soc.2024.n46-16

Yin, R. K. (2003). "Case study research: Design and methods." 3rd ed. Sage Publications.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Link between principles and elements of agroecology

10 elements of agroecology (FAO)	13 agroecological principles (HLPE)
1. Diversity	3. Soil health 4. Animal health 5. Biodiversity 7. Economic diversification
2. Synergies	3. Soil health 6. Synergies
3. Efficiency	2. Input reduction
4. Resilience	3. Soil health 4. Animal health
5. Recycling	1. Recycling
6. Co-creation and knowledge sharing	8. Co-creation of knowledge
7. Human and social values	9. Social values and diets 10. Justice 13. Participation
8. Food culture and traditions	9. Social values and diets
9. Circular economy	7. Economic diversification 11. Connectivity
10. Responsible governance	12. Land and natural resource governance

Annex 2. Ten noteworthy experiences of agroecological transition in Latin America description (case studies)

1. Coast, Highlands and Amazon (Peru)

The National Association of Ecological Producers (ANPE) of Peru is a national organization that practices and promotes agroecology by organizing producer families into 22 regional associations. The experience includes the case of ANPE and two of its regional associations, the Regional Association of Ecological Producers of the Amazon (ARPEAM) and the Departmental Association of Ecological Producers of Huánuco (ADPEH). ANPE aims to transform food systems towards ecological and healthy production, working with public and private actors to promote policies that defend biodiversity, cultural diversity and sustainable value chains. ARPEAM emerged from the Entrepreneurial Mothers' Club in Amazonas, focusing on local agrobiodiversity, while ADPEH in Huánuco has brought together producers committed to agroecology, contributing to environmental protection and local economic development.

2. San Nicolás (Chile)

The initiative in the municipality of San Nicolás, Ñuble region, articulates networks and public and private initiatives to promote family agricultural production. Its basic organization is the Peasant Coordination Committee, which brings together 27 peasant committees from 24 localities in the municipality. These committees, in coordination with the municipality's Rural Development Department, channel public funds and various projects to promote more sustainable forestry and livestock production. Initially focused on ensuring a healthy livelihood for farming families, the initiative has evolved to create a sustainable production model that benefits the community.

3. State of Paraíba (Brazil)

The Borborema Pole, located in the state of Paraíba, in the northeastern region of Brazil, is a network of organizations that promotes agroecology through the articulation of 14 rural workers' unions, more than 150 community associations, and a marketing cooperative called CoopBorborema. In collaboration with the NGO AS-PTA Family Agriculture and Agroecology, they implement collective strategies of agroecological innovation and experimentation to consolidate local development based on diversified and resilient production systems. Since 1993, their motto "Living with the semi-arid" has guided their actions to improve access to inputs and water resources, with an impact on national public policies.

4. La Paz department (Bolivia)

Polinizar Network is an urban-rural movement in the department of La Paz, Bolivia, that promotes agroecology and agrotourism to strengthen direct relationships between producers and consumers. Its guidelines are based on the protection of biodiversity, the appreciation of traditional food systems and the promotion of a sustainable economy that takes into account the environmental and social costs of production. It has 24 agritourism destinations managed by 24 communities, and through agritourism experiences with a monthly flow of 30 to 50 visitors, the network promotes agroecological practices and local economic development, while promoting a model of responsible and conscious tourism.

5. Alta Verapaz (Guatemala)

SANK's initiative aims to strengthen the governance of the Q'eqchi' territory so that indigenous communities can exercise greater control over their lands and develop diversified and sustainable agriculture. To this purpose, methods and initiatives such as farmers' schools, competitions, markets and fairs, youth clubs and weaving groups are implemented, with the broad participation of women and young people. The experience covers 200 communities in six municipalities of Alto Verapaz, contributing to local socio-economic development and cultural preservation of the Q'eqchi' territory.

6. Sierra Sur and Coast of Oaxaca (Mexico)

The Community System for Biodiversity (SICOBI) is a community land management initiative that emerged from community land management plans in the Copalita-Zimatán-Huatulco Hydrological Complex. Formalized in 2009 as an association of communities, its objective is to coordinate the productive activities of farmers, market products, and strengthen territorial control and management. It is composed of five agrarian communities in Oaxaca, covering thousands of hectares that are home to 12 natural ecosystems. SICOBI promotes the sustainable use of resources and the provision of environmental goods and services, benefiting hundreds of families who participate in productive activities with technical assistance.

7. State of Paraná (Brazil)

The State University of Northern Paraná (UENP) promotes the agroecological transition of family farming in the Pioneer North through the Center for Agroecology and Territories Studies (NEAT). Located in Bandeirantes, NEAT works in partnership with public institutions and civil organizations to transform conventional farming methods into ecological production, providing research, training and technical assistance. NEAT also participates in the "Paraná Mais Orgânico" program, facilitating product certification and supporting family farmers in 29 municipalities of the Northern Pioneer Integration Territory, covering hundreds of thousands of hectares and thousands of farms.

8. Municipality of Totonicapán, Department of Totonicapán (Guatemala)

The Utz Che network of family farmers in Totonicapán is made up of 75 indigenous K'iche' families which part of a larger Utz Che' network, which brings together more than 40 indigenous communities and agricultural associations in Guatemala. The initiative promotes agroecological transition through methods such as peasant competitions, peasant schools, and agroecological markets. It has also participated in national advocacy processes on issues such as the School Lunch Law. The network includes communities such as Vásquez, Quiacquix and Juchanep, who are working to manage their communal lands and forests to strengthen food sovereignty and sustainable development.

9. District of Comasagua, Department of La Libertad Sur (El Salvador)

The Canasta Campesina Agricultural Production Cooperative Association (ACPACAC), located in the district of Comasagua, department of La Libertad, is made up of women and young farmers dedicated to the production, collection and marketing of organic products such as vegetables, aromatic herbs, fruits and eggs. Their approach allows them to meet local food

needs and market surpluses through a fair and solidarity-based system known as "Canasta Campesina," which distributes baskets of products to subscribing consumers every 15 days. In addition to production, ACPACAC implements social programs such as scholarships for young people and the "Green Awareness" program in schools.

10. Department of Cauca (Colombia)

The Chiyangua Foundation, located in the municipality of Guapi, Department of Cauca, promotes the socio-cultural well-being and empowerment of rural black women on the Pacific Coast. Through economic activities that value traditional knowledge and crafts, the Foundation has promoted the Matamba and Guasá Network, which brings together 35 organizations in Guapi, López and Timbiquí. Their approach integrates the strengthening of traditional crops with the defense of the human rights of Afro-descendant women, allowing them to revalue their agricultural traditions and generate income. They currently manage a chain of businesses, including markets, three restaurants and a tourist route, benefiting hundreds of families in the region.

Annex 3. Socio-economic indicators of the territories

Country	Territory	General description	Rural population, territory and country (%)	Indigenous population, territory and country (%)	Income poverty, territory and country (%)
Perú	Sierra	High concentration of rural population with limited access to basic services. Poverty is high, and indigenous people face discrimination and lack of opportunities.	NA y 20,7[1]	NA y 24,9[1]	37,4[2] y 30,1[2]
	Amazon (rainforest)	Rural indigenous population with high levels of poverty and marginalization. Exploitation of natural resources threatens their way of life and access to basic services.	NA y 20,7[1]	NA y 24,9[1]	31,0[2] y 30,1[2]
Chile	Municipality of San Nicolás	Predominantly agricultural, it faces limitations in basic services. The large rural population is economically vulnerable and dependent on subsistence agriculture.	57,9[3] y 12,2[3]	0,1[3] y 13,0[3]	10,8[4] y 6,5[4]
Brazil	Municipality of Borborema	Semi-arid region with high dependence on family farming, affected by drought and rural poverty. Small farmers struggle to maintain biodiversity and autonomy.	NA y 12,0[5]	0,1[6] y 0,8[6]	61,7[8] y 31,6[7]
	State of Paraná	Affected by the expansion of agribusiness and the marginalization of indigenous communities. High levels of rural poverty and unequal access to natural resources.	NA y 12,0[5]	0,3[6] y 0,8[6]	39,1[8] y 31,6[7]
Bolivia	La Paz department	It has high rates of rural poverty and extreme poverty. The rates are much higher in indigenous communities than in the non-indigenous population.	32,4[11] y 29,0[5]	ND y 41,0[9]	37,6[10] y 34,6[10]
Guatemala	Alta Verapaz deparment	Es uno de los departamentos con mayor riqueza natural y el más pobre del país. Presenta alta pobreza extrema y desnutrición. La mayoría de su población es indígena y enfrenta carencias en servicios básicos.	69,0[12] y 46,0[12]	93,0[*12] y 42,0[*12]	90,3[13] y 56,0[13]
	Municipality of Totonicapán	A mostly indigenous population facing extreme poverty and high levels of marginalization in a rural context. They struggle to access basic services.	51,0[12] y 46,0[12]	97,0[*12] y 42,0[*12]	62,1[**13] y 56,0[13]
México	State of Oaxaca	The local economy is based on agriculture and handicrafts, although it lacks infrastructure. It has a significant indigenous population, as well as high rurality and poverty.	51,0[14] y 21,0[14]	31,2[14] y 19,4[14]	69,0[15] y 48,8[15]
El Salvador	Municipality of Comasagua	It is a highly rural area and faces a number of challenges in terms of access to basic services.	75,8[16] y 25,0[5]	ND y 0,2[16]	13,2[**17] y 31,9[17]
Colombia	Department of Cauca	It has a large rural and Afro-descendant population. It faces major challenges in terms of access to basic services.	60,4[19] y 23,7[18]	25,1[19] y 4,3[19]	45,3[20] y 33,0[20]

[*] Applies only to Maya (the majority of Guatemala's indigenous population).
[**] Corresponds to the department indicator
[1] Census 2017, INEI
[2] BCRP, 2020
[3] Census 2017, INE
[4] Casen 2022
[5] World Bank, 2023
[6] Census 2022, IBGE
[7] IBGE, 2022
[8] IBGE, 2003
[9] Census 2012, INE
[10] INE, 2018
[11] INE, 2020
[12] Census 2018, INE
[13] ENCOVI, 2023
[14] Census 2020, INEGI
[15] Coneval, 2018
[16] Census 2007, DYGESTIC
[17] DYGESTIC, 2014
[18] DANE, 2022
[19] Census 2018, DANE
[20] DANE, 2023

Annex 4. Application of Principles in Agroecological Transition Experiences

Case of study (territory)	Entry point principle	Key principles applied	Secondary Principles Applied
Department of Alta Verapaz	Land and Natural Resources Governance	Biodiversity, co-creation of knowledge, social values and diets, connectivity and participation, economic diversification	Animal health, recycling, synergy
Coast, Highlands and Amazon	Participation	Connectivity, recycling, reduction of inputs, soil health	co-creation of knowledge
Department of La Paz	Connectivity	Economic diversification, social values and per diems, Fairness	Biodiversity, land and natural resource governance
Department of Cauca	Social values and diets	Connectivity, co-creation of knowledge, participation, economic diversification	Impartiality, Biodiversity
Municipality of Comasagua, Departamento f Libertad Sur	Connectivity	Biodiversity, recycling, input reduction, social values and diets, and co-creation of knowledge	Impartiality, animal health, soil health
State of Paraíba	Co-creation of knowledge	Biodiversity and social values and diets, connectivity, participation	Recycling, animal health, input reduction and soil health, land and natural resources governance fairness
State of Paraná	Co-creation of knowledge	Recycling, reduction of inputs, soil health	Imparcialidad, biodiversidad, participación y conectividad
Municipality of Totonicapán, Departament of Totonicapán	Co-creation of knowledge	Conectivity, biodiversity, social values and diets, participation	Impartiality, input reduction
San Nicolás, Ñuble Region	Participation and Land and Natural Resources Governance	Biodiversity, recycling, input reduction, co-creation of knowledge, connectivity	Connectivity, social values and diets, soil health
Sierra Sur and Coast of Oaxaca	Participation and Land and Natural Resources Governance	Biodiversity, synergies, soil health, economic diversification, connectivity, social values and diets, reduction of inputs	Recycling, animal health, Impartiality

www.rimisp.org

Chile · Ecuador · Colombia

RIMISP
Centro Latinoamericano
para el Desarrollo Rural