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5.2. ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE AS A STRATEGY TO
SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS
DEMONSTRATED IN A MEXICAN PROJECT

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The Humboldt-University of Berlin, Germany and the University of Chapingo, Mexico are working together on a project named "Development of Environmental Agriculture in Central Countries of Mexico". The study began two years ago. The main focus is the analysis and research of ecological agriculture as a strategy to sustainable rural development. My contribution will be to show the experiences with ecological agriculture on a long time project in Mexico in the State of Tlaxcala. The village Vicente Guerrero is located in the high area of Tlaxcala-Country (2600 m above sea level, on the north-side of Mexico City). Most of the fields are located on the hillsides. Water erosion is a big problem for soil fertilization. Corn, beans, pumpkins and wheat are the typical crops in this area. The village people work on small farms of 2-5 hectare land holdings. The project for integrated rural development started in 1982. It's target is to make environmental methods in agriculture save the employment of inhabitants and to consolidate the regional structure. This is the first time that it was acknowledged that there were negative results of the "green revolution" in Tlaxcala. The harvest was lower and the cost of fertilizer and pesticides has increased. Also, the soil has eroded. At this moment, eight farmers of Vicente Guerrero went in for a class on soil protection and soil conservation in Guatemala. This would be their first contact with the principles of ecological agriculture. After this course the farmers have started a consultation project in their own village and later for other farmers in the surrounding areas. Today eight advisors (2 women) are working with Vicente Guerrero. Many fields are being cultivated ecologically. Other responsibilities are the water management, feeding, traditional medicine, environmental education and national and international exchange of experiences. Here are some of the best demonstrations in the fields for normal living and some of the best examples of sustainable rural development.

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