



Tropentag, September 9-11, 2020, virtual conference

“Food and nutrition security and its resilience  
to global crises”

## How Is the Issue of Overageing of Cocoa Farming Households Influenced by their Endowment with Livelihood Capitals?

ALINE ROTH<sup>1</sup>, SONJA TRACHSEL<sup>2</sup>, SABINE DE CASTELBERG<sup>3</sup>, MONIKA SCHNEIDER<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Zhaw Life Sciences und Facility Management, Institute of Natural Resource Sciences,*

<sup>2</sup>*Zhaw Life Sciences und Facility Management, Switzerland*

<sup>3</sup>*Zhaw Life Sciences und Facility Management, Section for Coffee Competence Centre and Analytical Technologies,*

<sup>4</sup>*Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Department of International Cooperation, Switzerland*

### Abstract

The ageing of rural populations is a globally relevant and alarming topic. 70% of the cocoa producers in Alto Beni, Bolivia are over 50 years old and because of limited financial resources they have not the perspective to retire. Further, there are hardly any young farmers entering the cocoa production sector because of its missing profitability what contributes to migration to urban areas. This ongoing development could lead to a sudden drastic reduction in the number of cocoa farmers in the future of Alto Beni.

The master's thesis of Aline Roth reveals that cocoa farmer 60 years and older in Alto Beni plan to continue farm work as long as their state of health allows them to do so. Their insufficient pensions hinder them to retire which is why 80% of the farmers aspire to co-residence with their children in old age. In terms of farm succession, the results indicate, that the young generation is not motivated to take over a cocoa farm because of the low and fluctuating cocoa market prices and their bad image. The cocoa farmer is seen as a 'harvester' and not as a 'professional farmer' due to inefficient cultivating practices of the elder farmer generation.

The results indicate that how a farming household copes with ageing, does not depend on the family's endowment with livelihood capitals. But it was striking, that the surveyed households consisting of elderly farmers living alone presented the weakest endowments with livelihood capitals. However, as long as the older generation of workers cohabitate with their children, they were taken care of. It is undisputed that farmers in Alto Beni are better off if they are members of a farmers' organisation. But the advantages of farmer's organisation are not to the extent that they could afford to retire.

The hypothesis testing revealed that household's endowment with livelihood capitals did not affect the farmers consideration to retire. Further, the tested hypothesis indicated that farm succession does not depend on the household's endowment with livelihood capitals, nor on the number of implemented innovations on the farm neither on the children's degree of education.

**Keywords:** Alto Beni – Bolivia, Cocoa, Livelihood Assessment, overageing