

Tropentag 2023

International Research on Food Security, Natural
Resource Management and Rural Development

Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation: trade-offs and synergies

Book of abstracts

Editor: Eric Tielkes

Reviewers/scientific committee: Ayobami Adetoyinbo, Folkard Asch,
Christian Bateki Adjogo, Bonnie Blaimer, Michael Brüntrup,
Robert Cárcamo Mallen, Tsu-Wei Chen, Michelle Chevelev-Bonatti,
Claudia Coral, Teresa Da-Silva-Rosa, Emmanuel Donkor, Christoph Gornot,
Stef De Haan, Caroline Hambloch, Harry Hoffmann, Gudrun Keding,
Marcos Lana, Katharina Lohr, Dagmar Mithöfer, Janvier Ntwali, Regina Rößler,
Constanze Rybak, Lilli Scheiterle, Barbara Schröter, Johannes Schuller,
Verena Seufert, Stefan Sieber, Jonathan Steinke, Silke Stöber, Götz Uckert,
Martin Wiehle, Stefan Winter

Editorial assistance: Janna Pfister

Impressum

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

1. Aufl. - Göttingen: Cuvillier, 2023

Tropentag 2023: Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation: trade-offs and synergies Tielkes, E. (ed.) - Witzenhausen, DITSL

© DITSL

Steinstrasse 19, 37213 Witzenhausen

Telefon: 05542-6070

<https://www.ditsl.org>

Alle Rechte vorbehalten. Ohne ausdrückliche Genehmigung des Verlages ist es nicht gestattet, das Buch oder Teile daraus auf fotomechanischem Weg (Fotokopie, Mikrokopie) zu vervielfältigen.

The authors of the articles are solely responsible for the content of their contribution.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission of the copyright owners.

Online-Version: <http://www.tropentag.de/>

© CUVILLIER VERLAG, Göttingen 2023

Nonnenstieg 8, 37075 Göttingen

Telefon: 0551-54724-0

Telefax: 0551-54724-21

www.cuvillier.de

1. Auflage, 2023

Gedruckt auf umweltfreundlichem, säurefreiem Papier aus nachhaltiger Forstwirtschaft.

ISBN 978-3-7369-7880-5

eISBN 978-3-7369-6880-6

Highlighting project impact: The underestimated power of personal stories

EVA GOLDMANN, AKANKSHA SINGH

Research Inst. of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), International Cooperation, Switzerland

Measuring the impact of project interventions becomes a more and more common request from donor organisations. In the quest for measurable impact and the aim to assess project interventions, the scientific community commonly uses surveys. Indeed, well-planned surveys and interviews are crucial for quantifiable tools such as impact evaluation, which aims to establish a causal relationship between the project intervention and its impact on people's lives. However, these tools are highly demanding in costs and scientific conceptualisation, usually exceeding the project's scope. Often a false compromise is made, leading to extensive survey data, which lacks comparability across surveyed groups, causal connection with interventions, or baseline data. When such anonymous quantitative data lacks rigid scientific validation it tells us very little about the lives of the interviewed people. Conclusions from such data make it hard for us to understand the realities of people involved in the project and how the track of their lives might have changed through exposure to project interventions. We have tried out a diametrically different approach within the system comparison trial in the tropics (SysCom) in India. The project works with farmers and a team of national and international researchers on organic cotton. For the series "Faces of Organic Cotton", we have talked to eleven people involved at some level within the project, including farmers, researchers, cotton processors, and school children. The conversations followed general questions and were guided by curiosity to understand more of the interviewee's life beyond the project. The result was 11 highly personal stories, where the project and its effect are only one facets of people's lives. We have considered the inherent challenges of such an approach: translation, bias to over-positivity, and white saviorism. The stories were written in first person, attempting to represent their own stories in their own words as accurately as possible. The text was complemented by high-quality photographs and published on social media, websites, and a booklet. The reactions and feedback were very positive, allowing donors, companies, and consumers alike to understand better the impact of organic cotton in the region where it's grown.

Keywords: Cotton, impact, India, organic, participatory research, story telling

Contact Address: Eva Goldmann, Research Inst. of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), International Cooperation, Ackerstrasse 113 Box 219, 5070 Frick, Switzerland, e-mail: eva.goldmann@fibl.org