

## THE IMPACT OF RECOVERING THE *MESOAMERICAN MILPA* IN CENTRAL MEXICO

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Mexico is a mountainous country (75% of its territory), where agricultural production, carried out in 30 million ha, covers a wide range of systems. The highlands of Central Mexico (altitudes above 1800 m between 18° and 22° N) concentrate a large proportion of the population of the country and agricultural production in this area is characterised by smallholder *campesino* (peasant) agriculture. Agricultural policies and cultural conditions have determined agrodiversity.

Management of agrodiversity is reflected on landscape. In Central Mexico the variables that affect agrodiversity are physical (type of soil, weather conditions, steepness), and social ones (traditions, market, availability of labour, land tenure and *campesino*'s experiments).

The objective of this paper is to show the impact of recovering *mesoamerican milpa* in three indigenous communities of Central Mexico. The impact on organizational agrodiversity and landscape.

Agrodiversity research projects have been carried out in three indigenous communities in the mountains of Central Mexico. One objective of the projects is to recover the *mesoamerican milpa* through the establishment of demonstration sites.

*Campesinos* are encouraged to recover the intercropping pattern in all of their fields. People have designed some strategies to use their local resources. For example, how much seed of certain specie has to be sown when (to obtain good yields and in some cases to get good price in the market), where to establish the crop and what cropping system to practice.

Some of the results are that *campesinos* harvest more products for family consumption, increase biodiversity, obtain products for the local market and intensify the use of their resources.