

Transitioning to **AGROECOLOGY**

NUTRITION & HEALTH

ECONOMY
ENVIRONMENT
SOCIETY
CULTURE

Agroecology
is both a science
and a movement.



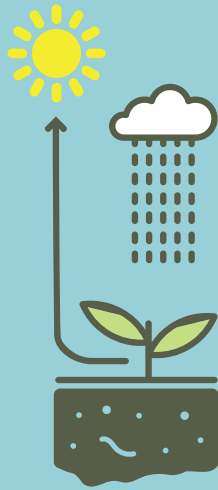
As a **science**, agroecology entails the application of ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of agricultural systems. Based on the interactions between plants, animals, soils and climate, agroecology seeks to optimize the productivity, sustainability and resilience of agroecosystems; promote positive ecological interactions; minimize or eliminate the use of external inputs; conserve natural resources through efficient usage and recycling; and enhance the functional biodiversity of farming systems.

As a **movement**, agroecology has expanded from being solely a set of agricultural practices, to being a principles-based approach to agricultural development, one grounded on equitable and just food systems, that valorize traditional, local knowledge and culture, and preserve the natural environment.

Supported by

Avec la
participation
de

Implemented by



Mada is committed to supporting smallholder farmers in Akkar transition to agroecology. Through material and technical support, **Mada** focuses on minimizing risks for the farmer, maximizing yield, and showcasing the various benefits of agroecology: nutritional, economic, environmental, social and cultural. This factsheet is the first in a series to be developed under the project *Wielding Agroecology to Transition Agriculture for Development (WATAD)*—under the Shabake II project supported by the Agence Francaise de Development (AFD) and the Centre de Crise et De Soutien and implemented by the French Public Agency for International Technical Cooperation - Expertise France. Under this project, **Mada** is building the individual and collective capacities of smallholder farmers in Akkar to transition to agroecology, and fostering the enabling environment for agroecology to prosper.

Nutrition & Human Health

Scientists and practitioners across the world are increasingly interested in the benefits of agroecology on nutrition and health, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations lists healthy, diversified and culturally appropriate diets as one of the Ten Elements of Agroecology. While many of these benefits have yet to be fully investigated and understood, there is mounting evidence on various positive linkages, which can be divided into three main categories:

1 Food Utilization

These are related to consumption, and include direct positive effects on nutrition and health, through improved food diversity, quality, and safety.

- **Diversity:** agroecological practices encourage the cultivation of a wide variety of crops, including traditional and indigenous species, promoting a more diverse and balanced diet.
- **Local Seasonality:** agroecology promotes the cultivation and consumption of seasonal and local crops, encouraging a greater connection to the natural rhythms of agriculture, and reducing reliance on packaged, processed products.
- **Quality and Safety:** agroecological practices focus on building healthy soils, reducing tillage, promoting natural nutrient cycling, and eliminating the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, and therefore aim to maximize nutrient content while minimizing exposure to potentially harmful chemical residues.

2 Food Handling

At farm-level, agroecology protects farmers, agricultural workers, and their families, from exposure to toxic and persistent synthetic agricultural inputs that enter the soil, air and water.

3 Food Access

Agroecology is more than a set of agricultural practices, and is meant to increase food access by ensuring affordability, and more equitable, shorter value chains – focusing on bringing producers and consumers closer, and greater resilience and financial independence of farming communities, which in turn ensure greater food security and nutrition through improved household budget allocation and distribution.