

Sustainability and food sovereignty perspectives from the community of El Tiple in Colombia, South America



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Introduction

El Tiple is one of the underprivileged Afro-Descendant communities enclosed amid a lush desert in the southwest of Colombia. The second-largest monoculture field of sugarcane in the Americas operated surrounding El Tiple territory. Sugarcane monoculture has impacted the community of El Tiple in economic, social and psychological dimensions. The communities have suffered an increasing shortage of water and food, directly proportional to the monoculture expansion. In addition, the use of organophosphates pesticide in sugarcane monocultures has exposed the community to harmful substances and affected the practice of family farming. Finally, the expansion of sugarcane monoculture has confined the community to a small territory with insufficient land for growing food and medicinal plants, which are essential for ancestral cooking practices and maintenance of community traditions.

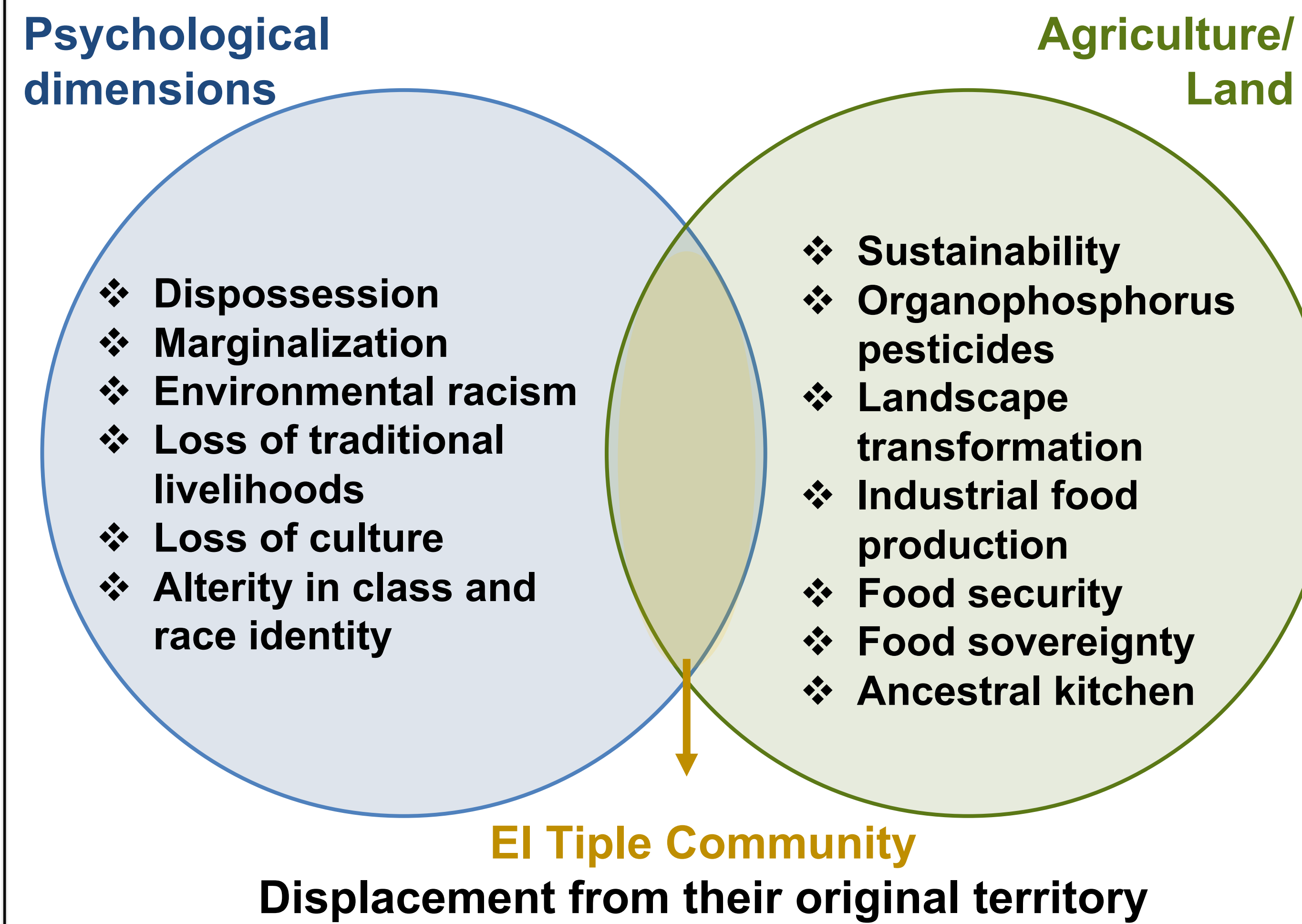


Figure 1. Top view of El Tiple territory surrounding by sugarcane monoculture field. Reference:

Research Goal

To better understand the psychological dimensions of **sustainability** and **food sovereignty** from the perspective of the community El Tiple in Colombia.

Core concepts

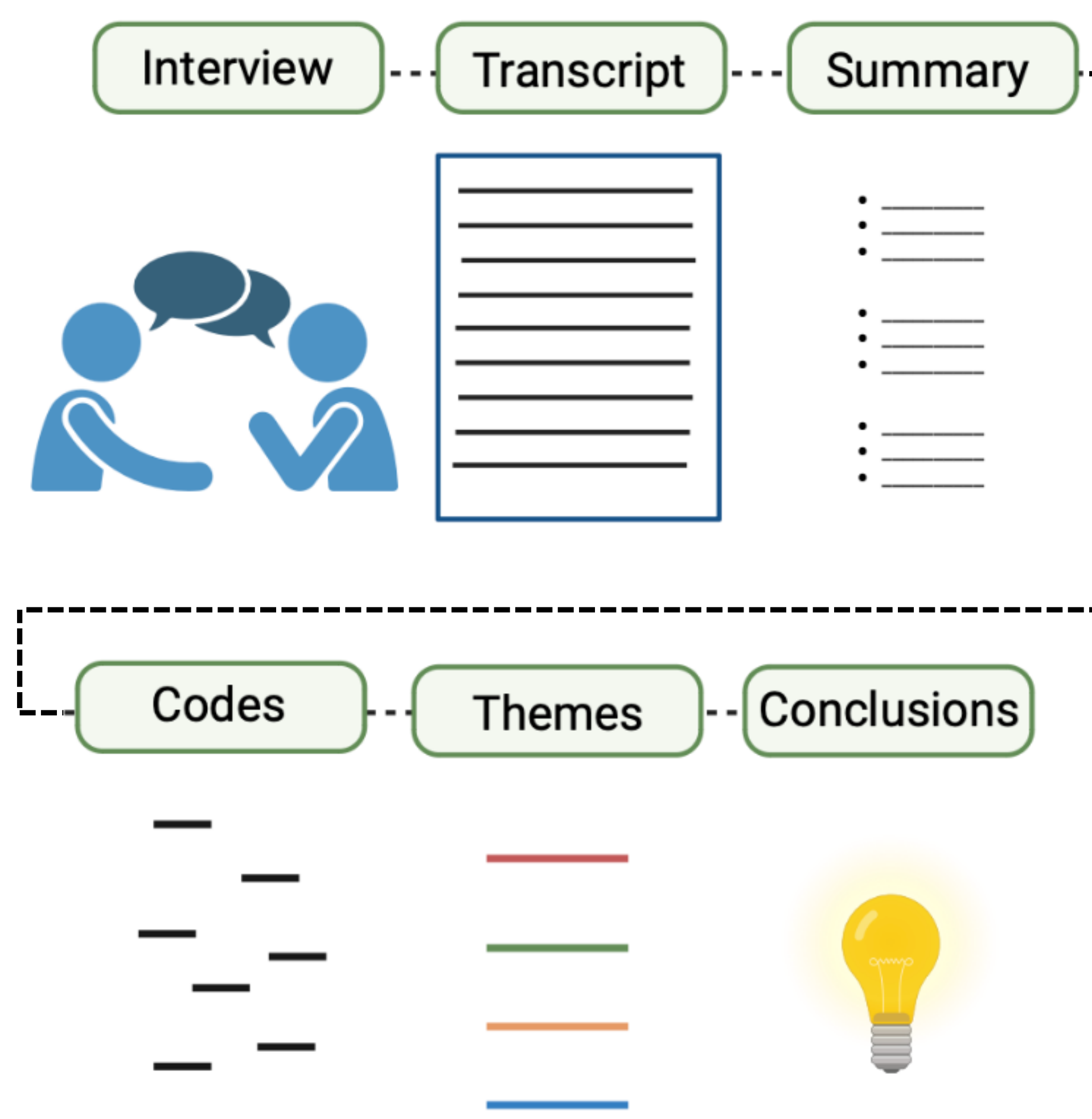


Approach

❖ Perform qualitative analysis from an interview with El Tiple community leader.

❖ Interview with El Tiple community leader was previous made by a collaborator in Colombia.

❖ Interview was performed in Spanish and then translated to English.



Results

❖ The interview was classified into **19** codes into **17** themes.

Codes	Themes	Illustrative quotes
Water is essential for the subsistence of the community	Water use	Groundwater is used as a drinking water source: "Groundwater was used for consumption"
Groundwater is used as a drinking water source		
Agrochemicals are a hazard for the community	Agrochemicals	community: "This is why we are concerned when we see that it will soon be misused from the application of agrochemicals and all of this because we know that if the aquifers were contaminated that would be a danger to the community"
Projects to reforest El Tiple	Deforestation	"It is what has suffered most because the forests have been destroyed. El Tiple does not have forests anymore. It is a continuous fight against deforestation because the borders of big terrains are full of trees".
	Knowledge transfer through generations	"I at least have kept up the tradition, and we try to help the young people, the young girls, keep it up as well and not lose the knowledge of their elders. That knowledge was taught to us, and now we are teaching it to the young people."
Informing the youth of the importance of ancestral knowledge of food	Food medicine	"These plants serve us they help the liver and colon and are medicinal in general."
Food is an essential part of medicine for the community.		
. Cooking with homegrown food is vital.	Sustenance food	"I add celery, onion, basil leaves, parsley, and everything else that I have from the garden."
. Grow vegetables in El Tiple without any chemicals.	Traditional family agriculture	"We cannot lose the tradition of growing our gardens and plants, such as squash." "...you could grow it in your garden without any chemicals."
Sustainability means the ability to conserve food resources	Sustainability	"...we make sure that every piece of farm remains is taken advantage of sowing-wise. Some may sow corn, beans, etc. and this is sold here. We are promoting that."
Growing your own food is better than buying it at a supermarket.	Food Self Sufficiency	"This is a food that is indispensable for us, and when it isn't grown, you need to Buy it at a supermarket, but if you grow some of your own, that is much better."

Conclusions

#1 For the people of El Tiple, sustainability means conserving food supplies and maintaining the land they have access to that hasn't been taken away.