BCFN YES! 2018 FINALISTS

Henry Anton Peller

USA

The Ohio State University - USA

Cathy Smith

UK

The University of Edinburgh - Scotland

"We believe in the power of people-centered science that supports farmers to organize, learn together, and amplify agroecological innovations.

YES! to participatory agroecology: Farmer-led plant breeding and soil regeneration in Maya milpas of southern Belize

In living memory, the Maya's lands in southern Belize have changed in ways that challenge agriculture and food security, with noxious weeds, soil degradation, erratic rainfall, and soaring temperatures. Farmers and scientists around the world are using agroecological innovations to confront these problems, including cover crops to regenerate topsoils and on-farm breeding for crop diversity & evolution. With groups of 20 farmers in 3 villages, we phenotype dozens of cover crop legumes and landrace maize cultivars in controlled farms. We select high-performing material, begin on-farm plant breeding via mass selection, and disseminate selected seeds. Farmer-to-farmer exchanges within and between villages share seeds and practices further. Presentations, publications, and documentary film communicate our story and results with global audiences.
We aim show the world that, in building climate and food security, participatory agroecology generates winning innovations and takes them to scale.

Barilla Center FOR FOOD & NUTRITION