

# **Organic Agriculture as a Sustainable Livelihood Strategy: Understand catalysts and barriers to adoption in southern India**

Stephanie Elizabeth Austin  
Departments of Geography and International Development Studies  
McGill University, Montréal, Canada  
2013

Co-Supervisors: Dr. Sarah Turner and Dr. Navin Ramankutty

## **Abstract**

Organic agriculture is often presented as a type of sustainable agriculture and development that can address some of the negative externalities of the Green Revolution (Ramesh, Singh, & Subba Rao, 2005). While the academic literature is divided on the potential for organic to contribute to food security (Badgley et al., 2005; Seufert, Ramankutty, & Foley, 2012), there is consensus on the potential for organic agriculture to improve producers' health and reduce farmer poverty (Bakewell-Stone, Lieblein, & Francis, 2008; Ramesh et al., 2005). The primary aim of this research is to understand why farmers in the Kanchipuram district of Tamil Nadu state, southern India may or may not decide to adopt organic agriculture, and the impacts on household livelihoods if they decide to do so. This thesis is informed by semi-structured interviews with farmers and key informants conducted in Kanchipuram district in 2012. The sustainable livelihoods framework is used to analyze the potential for organic agriculture to contribute to a sustainable livelihood for farmers in Kanchipuram district.

