



DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCES understanding change in crop and seed diversity

A review of selected LinkS studies



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This report is based upon experiences and data from the FAO-LinKS project. Sabine Guendel, a senior scientist, compiled the key findings from the LinKS studies with other literature resources. Tom Osborn from the FAO Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Service provided extensive comments. Regina Laub from the FAO Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division provided technical input and guidance, and supervised the production of the report. Allison Loconto and Brett Shapiro, consultants, edited the report.

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Glossary of acronyms

CGN	Centre for Genetic Resources in the Netherlands
DFID	UK Department for International Development
GFU	Global Facilitation Unit on Under Utilized and Orphan Species
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICRISTAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
IPGRI	International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (now Bioversity)
LinKS project	Gender, Biodiversity and Local Knowledge Systems for Food Security in Southern Africa
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSSRF	Center for Research on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PGRFA	Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
PPB	Participatory Plant Breeding
QDS	Quality Declared Seed



Introduction

The FAO LinKS project (Gender, Biodiversity and Local Knowledge Systems for Food Security in Southern Africa) objective was to improve rural people's food security and promote the sustainable management of agro-biodiversity by encouraging institutions to recognize farmers' knowledge in their programmes and policies.

The LinKS project, which ended in 2006, was a seven-year regional project implemented in Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. One of the main activities of the project was to increase the visibility of men and women's knowledge of agro-biodiversity management for food security.¹ The second phase of the LinKS project included several studies on local seed management, gender roles and local knowledge systems in Mozambique and Tanzania. These projects were in response to the increased recognition of the importance of seed management and seed security for food security.²

Since most studies on local seed systems have been conducted only within the last ten years, (Sperling 2003), the LinKS study findings can contribute to an improved understanding of the complex relationships between seed management, agro-biodiversity, gender, local knowledge and food security.

The objective of this report is to place the findings from Mozambique and Tanzania into a broader context. Information from a variety of sources was used to identify key aspects that need to be addressed in future seed management interventions. Furthermore, the report aims to provide an analytical framework for decision makers and development practitioners to better understand how seed systems function and to identify ways in which these systems can be supported and strengthened.

1 For further information visit the LinKS website: <http://www.fao.org/sd/links/>

2 For further details on these projects please refer to Annex I