

ON-FARM MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF CROP GENETIC DIVERSITY *IN SITU* BY WOMEN IN BURKINA FASO

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Gender differences in on-farm management and conservation of crop genetic resources *in situ* was evaluated in Burkina Faso. 109 women and 48 men (Mossi, Bixa, Samo, Peuhl) from four villages (Médéga, Ouahigouya, Gourga, Pobè Mengao) were surveyed through individual and focus group interviews. Surveys were complemented through direct observations of activities in fields, granaries, markets, and places for processing. The women contribute to *in situ* conservation of crop diversity at various stages and levels of on-farm management and decision-making. In all villages, more than 70% of the women's time was devoted to on farm activities. In addition, 30 to 45% of ploughing, 95% of seeding, 40% of the weeding, 45% of the transportation of the harvest, 90% of the husking and 80% of the work for storing crop is performed by women. In some regions, according to their age and social rank, women intervene equally in the selection, distribution, exchange and storage of crop varieties in the village and neighbouring areas. Women are the main actors in the processing of grain to other food and fodder products as more than 95% of the harvest is processed by women. Retail marketing of local varieties was found to be done almost entirely by women while wholesale marketing was conducted by both by men and women. Women interviewed were well informed on the use of local materials to ensure healthy storage of grains. Women, especially Bixa people of Médéga, were found to play an important role in deciding on the selection of varieties to be planted for sorghum, pearl millet, ground nut and cowpea. For okra, considered a "female crop", women are entirely responsible for the selection, maintenance, and exchange of varieties. In contrast for frafra potato (*Solenstium* sp.) seeds are selected by men exclusively. The management of crop diversity on-farm by women of Burkina Faso is also governed by social-cultural and traditional demands. Women may be restricted from seed management during menstruation or seed selection maybe performed only by older women. Understanding who is responsible for the different activities involved in the management of crop diversity on-farm allows targeted support to the appropriate gender and age group.