

Policy encounters in the Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security program

WUR PPB course 2020



OXFAM

Origins of the SD=HS program



- 1990s: Keystone Dialogue and CBDC programme
- Hypothesis: “farmers can be breeders”
- Series of global coalitions of NGOs and NARS
 - long foot print over 20 years
- Financial sources: SE, NO, CA, NL govmts

SD=HS objective



To realize Farmers' Rights by empowering indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers to uphold their role in contributing to food and nutrition security and strengthening their adaptive capacities

Key words: crop diversity, farmer seed systems, climate change adjustment

Farmers' Rights as in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Principles of the SD=HS program (1)

- Community empowerment
- Gender equity
- Field-based adult learning
- Expert involvement
- Global level: "to link and learn"
 - in Guatemala, Peru, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nepal, Laos, China



Principles of the SD=HS program (2)

- Using **Farmer Field Schools** as central approach
- Areas of work
 - PPB
 - Nutrition and Local Food Plants (NUS)
 - Farmer Seed Enterprise
 - Policy
- All policy work “field-based”



Importance of policy and legislation

- No lasting effects in absence of supportive policy
- From the field to national legislation and international policy (and back again)
- The products of PPB need to be used: how to create a supportive policy environment?
- Institutionalisation major SD=HS driver
 - Scaling up and scaling out



Four policies with major field impact

- National seed laws
- International agreements and domestic IPR legislation
 - designed to regulate formal seed systems
 - often advised by western consultants or conformity required (UPOV)
- Nutrition policy and legislation
- Climate change policy



Seed policy and legislation (1)

- Why seed laws?
 - to protect farmer against poor seed
 - Identity, purity, viability, contamination
- Common requirements
 - Registration of producer
 - Requirements on education, facilities
 - Registration of crop varieties
 - Multi-site multi-annual trials
 - Certification of seed lots
 - Field inspections

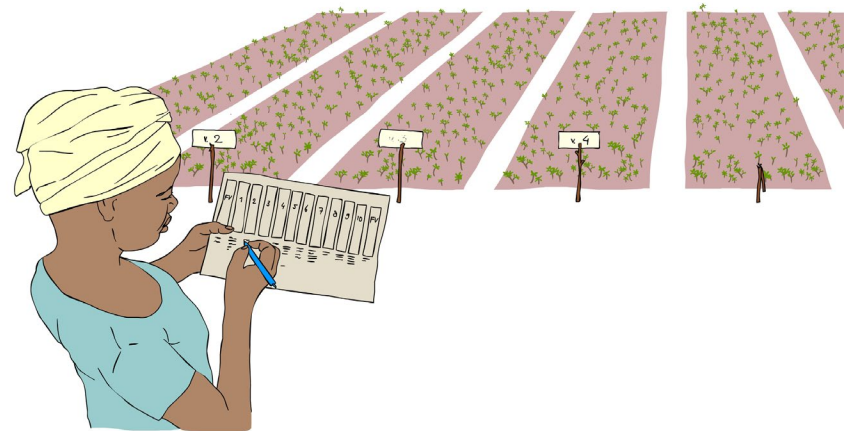


Seed policy and legislation (2)

- Bottlenecks and barriers
 - Limited processing and storage facilities in communities
 - Farmers' varieties, including PPB varieties, adapted to local conditions → multisite trials not relevant
 - Multi-site trials too costly
 - **Not a bottleneck: meeting certification standards**
- Hence: informal marketing, regional government support
 - Vietnam Mekong Delta seed clubs provide 35% of rice seed demand
 - Some countries: lesser demands (Peru, Nepal)

Seed policy and legislation (3)

- Policy advocacy
 - Stressing the role of farmers' seed system for national food and nutrition security
 - Recognising farmer breeders and seed producers
 - Less stringent variety registration requirements
 - Experimentation with authority support
 - Facilitating inspections for certification



Intellectual property rights (1)

- Breeders' rights and UPOV
 - Increasing number of countries and regions (as a result of WTO TRIPS agreement)
 - Breeders' rights allow use of protected varieties in breeding, including in PPB
 - Major bottleneck in sales: “farmers’ privilege”
 - borderline between original and selection can be unclear
 - Oxfam goal: re-interpretation of clause “for private and non-commercial use”
 - “Conflict” with ITPGRFA: Farmers’ Right “to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed/propagating material” (Art. 9.3)



Intellectual property rights (2)

- Patent legislation
 - patents of plant genetic materials appeared in the 1980s and spread across the world
 - 60% of the 126 countries in the Global South
- Patents granted
 - number of patents on plants and plant genetic material and on NBTs rapidly growing across the world (15-fold since 2005)
 - Big Four own most patents (Bayer, Syngenta, Corteva, BASF)
 - No limitation to western agriculture



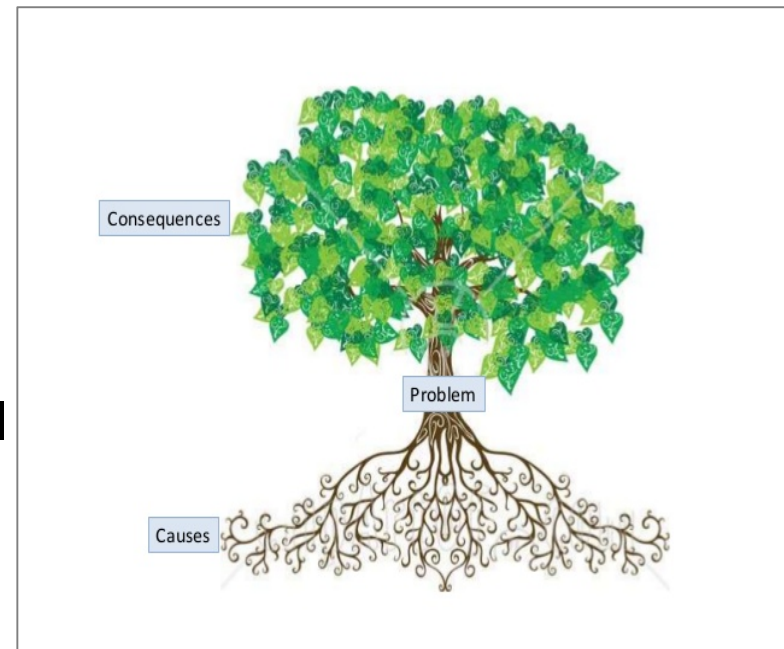
Intellectual property rights (3)

- Impact on PPB
 - Limited access to/penalised use of (privatised) crop diversity
 - Farmers' escape: farmer-bred sige-sige maize varieties occupy 35 – 50% of smallholder maize lands in Middle and Southern Philippines, containing protected Roundup resistance
- Policy advocacy
 - Oxfam a member of “No Patent on Seeds” coalition (Europe-focused but of global relevance)
 - Full smallholder exemption in legislation



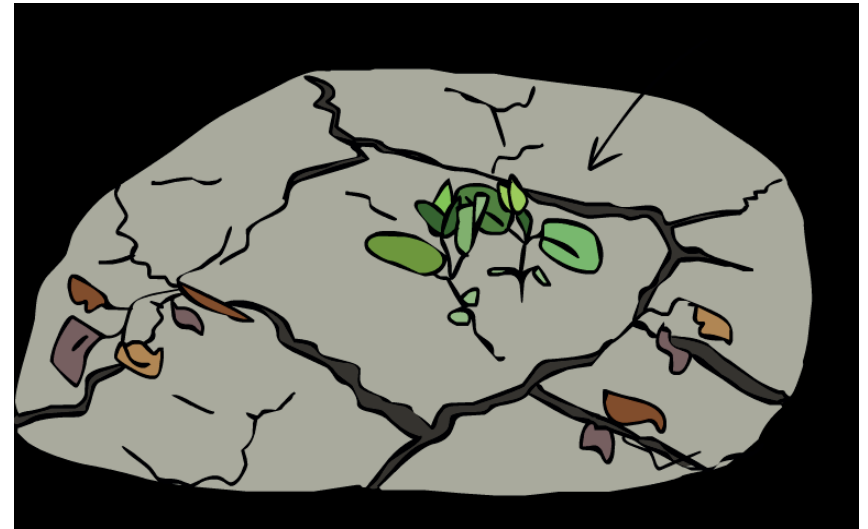
Nutrition policy and legislation

- Food and nutrition security
 - fight against malnutrition (child stunting, mineral and vitamin deficiencies)
 - **PPB focus on staples or also on vegetables and local food plants?**
 - linking health and agriculture departments
 - women mostly responsible for local food crops and diet, major role in traditional knowledge
- Policy advocacy
 - linking nutritionists and extensionists
 - promoting anti-malnutrition campaigns



Climate change related policies (1)

- IPCC arena
 - slowly growing recognition for impact of climate change on agricultural production/food and nutrition security
- Field impact of climate change
 - decreasing fitness of available germplasm
 - need to change crops and varieties (“how to de-maize Zimbabwe”)
 - need to re-allocate germplasm between regions



Climate change related policies (2)

- PPB challenges
 - setting breeding goals in anticipation of further climate change
 - staying ahead of the “climate change curve”
 - accessing proper PGRFA, including across borders (role of public breeding systems: NARS and CGIAR)
- Policy advocacy
 - promote changes in government subsidy programmes
 - promote adoption of new/forgotten crops (e.g. sorghum and millets in stead of maize; cowpea in stead of groundnut and beans)

The Treaty and Farmers' Rights

- ITPGRFA: international legislation on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture
 - Its Article 9 only place in international law on Farmers' Rights
- Elements of Farmers' Rights
 - protection of TK, right to participate in sharing benefits, right to participate in making decisions at national level
 - no limits on any rights that farmers have to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed/propagating material
- Impact on PPB activities
 - national adoption is support for PPB



Institutionalisation and PPB

- How to enhance impact and reach more farmer communities?
 - PPB initiatives a “drop on a sizzling plate” (anecdotal)
 - FFS in IPM had major effects on national policy and farmer behaviour
- Role of national institutions
 - full support and participation an absolute requirement
 - role of extension, financial support from local governments
- Building coalitions and promotion of national smallholder farmer policy

Messages

No lasting impact without supportive policy

PPB actors (farmers) form essential advocates for policy change

