

# Unlocking the power of NUS

Neglected and Underutilised Species



**FiBL** **SWISSAID** **AFSA** **CROPS4HD**

## Reviving neglected crops for a sustainable future

Hunger and malnutrition are widespread in large parts of Africa and Asia, with climate change and soil degradation adding to the problem. A promising but overlooked solution lies in the diversity of our food systems.

Neglected and underutilised species (NUS) are resilient, locally adapted plants that have been overlooked by governments and research but hold great potential for food security, nutrition, and sustainability. Small-scale farmers, as guardians of traditional crop varieties, play a vital role in preserving the world's remaining agrobiodiversity, a key to building resilient, diverse, and sustainable food systems.

### About the CROPS4HD Project

CROPS4HD (Consumption of Resilient Orphan Crops & Products for Healthier Diets) promotes the production and consumption of NUS in Tanzania, Chad, Niger, Zimbabwe and India. The project is implemented by SWISSAID, FiBL, and AFSA, and is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the European Commission, and other donors.



Scan the QR code to learn about CROPS4HD's journey to bring NUS back to the table.

NUS like amaranth and bambara beans offer both nutritional value and environmental benefits.

### Amaranth

Amaranth is a versatile and drought-tolerant crop with continuous harvest potential, making it a high-value solution for small-scale farmers. Rich in nutrients and versatile as both a leafy vegetable and grain, it offers significant benefits for farmers and consumers alike.



### Bambara

Bambara beans, Africa's resilient legume, thrive in challenging climates due to their drought and pest resistance. Rich in protein and minerals, these traditional beans offer significant nutritional value.



## Bringing farmers and consumers closer together

Reintroducing traditional crops requires coordinated action across the whole food system: from seed to plate. On the production side, this involves strengthening farmer-led seed systems, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, facilitating knowledge exchange within farmer groups, and improving farmers' access to local markets. Aligning production with consumer preferences and supporting direct marketing are key for farmers to grow and sell NUS successfully.

On the consumption side, raising awareness of the nutritional, cultural, and environmental benefits of NUS. Chefs, schools, nutritionists, and local influencers play a key role in promoting healthy and tasty recipes with NUS, while collaborations with retailers enhance the visibility and availability of these crops in markets and shops. Additionally, events like seed fairs, food festivals, and farm visits foster direct connections between farmers and consumers.



As farmers embrace sustainable agricultural practices, consumers explore tasty and nutritious recipes with NUS.

## The benefits of neglected and underutilised species

**Climate Resilience:** NUS cope better with harsh weather conditions, strengthening farmers' resilience to climate change.

**Enhanced Nutrition:** Diverse in micronutrients, protein, and antioxidants, NUS enrich diets and promote food security.

**Ecological Balance:** NUS foster healthy soils and boost biodiversity for resilient ecosystems.

**Preserving Heritage:** NUS safeguard invaluable traditional knowledge and inter-generational skills.

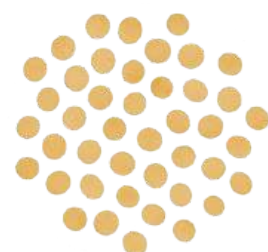
**Diversified Livelihoods:** Reliance on a wider range of crops and livestock can buffer households against market fluctuations and crop failures, leading to more stable livelihoods.

**Empowerment of Women:** In many communities, women play a central role in the cultivation, processing, and marketing of NUS. Increased recognition and demand for these species can empower women economically and socially.

**Social Equity:** NUS can benefit marginalised communities who often rely on these resources and possess valuable indigenous knowledge about cultivation and use.



FINGER MILLET



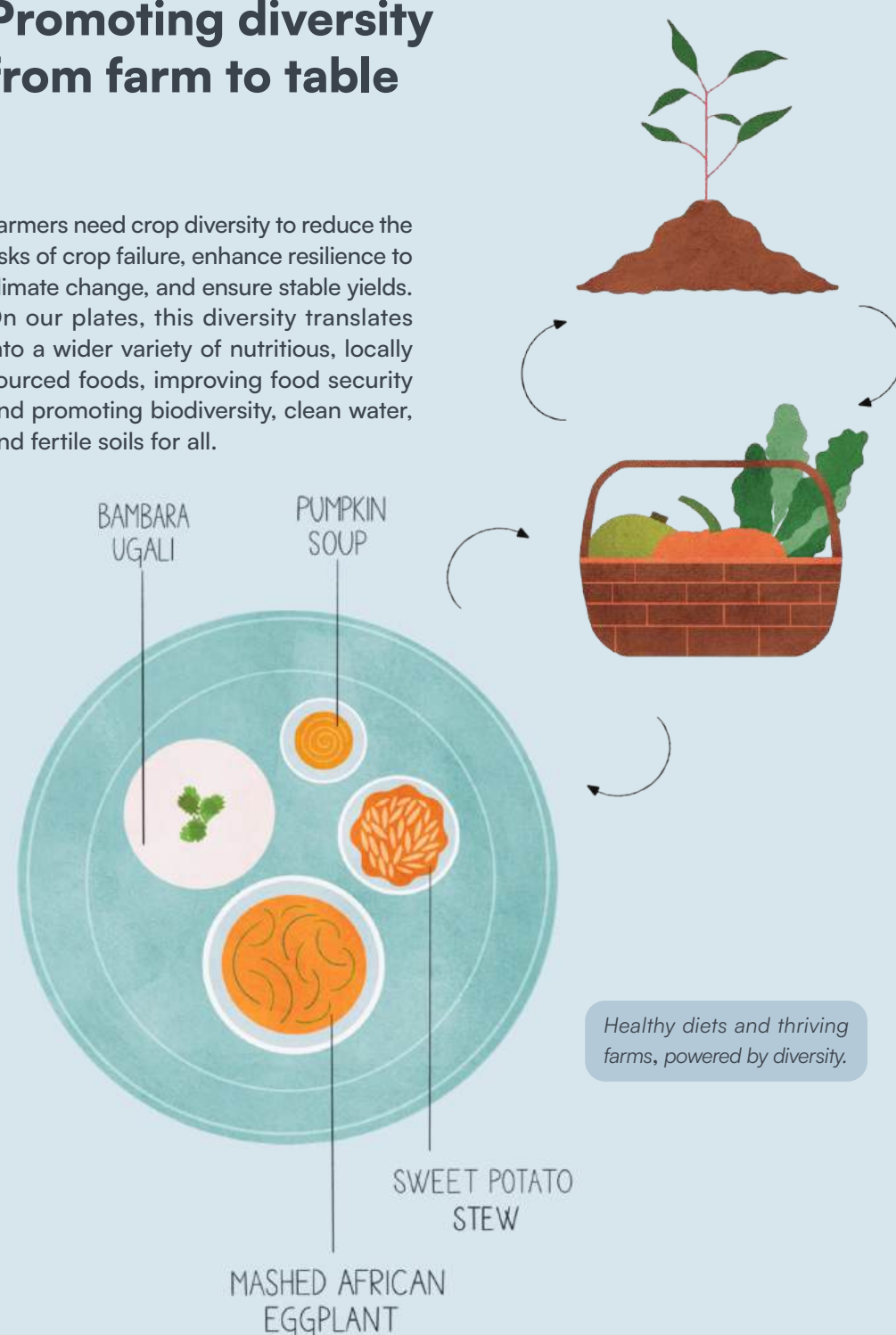
AMARANTH



BAMBARA

## Promoting diversity from farm to table

Farmers need crop diversity to reduce the risks of crop failure, enhance resilience to climate change, and ensure stable yields. On our plates, this diversity translates into a wider variety of nutritious, locally sourced foods, improving food security and promoting biodiversity, clean water, and fertile soils for all.



## Boosting climate resilience with agroecology

When integrated with agroecological practices, NUS are powerful allies in the fight against climate change. They enhance soil health, conserve water, boost agrobiodiversity, reduce reliance on chemical inputs, and make crops more resilient to extreme weather. At the same time, they offer nutritious food for communities. By embracing NUS, we can build resilient, sustainable food systems that nourish people and safeguard the planet for future generations.



## Watch how NUS are transforming lives in Tanzania through the CROPS4HD project



"I regularly buy sweet potato leaves. In my family, we cannot go without them, they really contribute to our health."

Agnes Aloyce Mvukiye



### Imprint

**Published by**  
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### Photo credits

Leone Ferrari (FiBL), Sri Kolari,  
Kiki & Miles Productions

### Printed by

Tipografia Cavalli

DOI - 10.5281/zenodo.15734920

### 2025© FiBL

### Publication Lead

**FiBL**

### Donors

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra  
Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC



An initiative of  
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# Cultivating

## Sustainable Futures



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