

Essegbemon Akpo
Christopher O. Ojiewo
Lucky O. Omoigui
Jean Claude Rubyogo
Rajeev K. Varshney

Sowing Legume Seeds, Reaping Cash

A Renaissance within Communities in
Sub-Saharan Africa

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Agathe Diama

Eleanor Manyassa

Essegbemon Akpo
International Crops Research Institute for
the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)
Nairobi, Kenya

Christopher O. Ojiewo
International Crops Research Institute for
the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)
Nairobi, Kenya

Lucky O. Omoigui
International Institute of Tropical
Agriculture (IITA)
Kano, Nigeria

Jean Claude Rubyogo
International Center for Tropical
Agriculture (CIAT)
Arusha, Tanzania

Rajeev K. Varshney
International Crops Research Institute for
the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)
Patancheru, India



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Abstract

The smallholder farmers' access to the outputs of the breeding programs' achievements has been very weak and hence calls for effective, more coherent, and well-articulated design of technology and seed delivery systems of food legume crops. The Tropical Legumes projects responded to this need.

This book shares impact stories and testimonies from various value chain actors who were part of the Tropical Legumes (TL) projects over the past 12 years. It presents the experiences of a diversity of actors within the grain legume value chains, with a focus on groundnut and common beans in Tanzania and Uganda, groundnut and cowpea in Nigeria, and groundnut in Ghana. All actors involved shared their feeling of being part of decade-long development project families. National agricultural research institutes, knowledge brokering organizations, NGOs, public seed companies, private seed companies, agro-dealers, individual seed entrepreneurs, farm implement makers, farmer cooperatives, farmer groups, individual farmers, women farmers, middlemen, processors, traders, and consumers were all involved in this experience. This book provides learning opportunities for development workers, technical staff, and project managers. It will also inspire development workers and project managers to share their own experiences for others to learn from.

Keywords

Grain legume productivity; Smallholder farmers; Impact stories; Multi-stakeholders; Sub-Saharan Africa; Tropical Legumes projects

Acknowledgments

Interviewees in Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, and Ghana

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Impact Story Collection

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The Tropical Legume projects transforming the lives of the under-served majority along the commodity value chains in the drought-prone areas

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About the Authors

Essegbemon Akpo is Seed Systems scientist with expertise in plant production, seed systems, innovation studies, participatory action research, and multi-stakeholder processes. He graduated from Wageningen University, the Netherlands. His 15 years experiences in agricultural research for development covered improved seed access facilitation for smallholder farmers, connection between biophysical, social, and institutional landscapes, participatory technology development, innovation platform support, and capacity building for farmers' organizations. He earned several academic awards that permitted him to pursue graduate studies (Research grant within the Convergence of Science Strengthening Agricultural Innovation Systems (CoS-SIS) in 2008, Research grant as part of the Convergence of Science for better Management of Crops and Soils (CoS) Project DGIS in 2005, Research grant as part of the Cowpea Project, Bénin, NWO-FAO in 2003). Dr. Akpo has authored over 15 publications including peer-reviewed papers, books, and conference papers.

Chris Ojiewo graduated from Okayama University, Japan. He is a Senior Scientist in Legume Breeding, Global Coordinator of Tropical Legumes III, HOPEII, and AVISA projects (funded by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), Cluster of Activities Leader on Science of Scaling Seed Technologies in the CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals, and Theme Leader of Seed Systems in the Global Research Program on Genetic Gains, ICRISAT. He has more than 60 peer-reviewed international publications and has delivered numerous oral and posters presentations in numerous international meetings. Dr. Ojiewo's research work focusses on basic, applied, and adaptive research and development activities aimed at raising farm productivity, nutrition, and income security for resource-poor smallholder farm households, especially women and youth in rural and peri-urban semi-arid tropics. With expertise in plant breeding and seed systems, he has done extensive work in the development and dissemination of high-yielding and stress (biotic and abiotic)-resilient varieties of vegetables and legumes with farmer- and market-preferred traits together with accompanying integrated crop management practices and efficient seed and technology dissemination systems. Besides promotion of vegetable-legume-cereal-livestock-based family garden intensification systems, improving productivity and profitability for smallholder farmers, gender equity,

youth empowerment, nutrition security, knowledge sharing, and solving the perpetual problem of food and nutritional insecurity of the less privileged in developing countries are core to his sense of purpose.

Lucky O. Omoigui graduated from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, in 2010. He is a Seed System specialist at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Kano Station. He has more than 74 peer-reviewed international publications and has delivered numerous oral and poster presentations in numerous international meetings. Dr. Omoigui was an Associate Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics at the University of Agriculture Makurdi from 2013 to 2016. He received several awards, among which are Most Outstanding Researcher in the University of Agriculture Makurdi in 2012, Excellent Research contribution to West African Cowpea Consortium in 2015, and Arthur Anderson Honour List Award for Best Graduating Student in 1999.

Jean Claude Rubyogo is a CIAT Senior Scientist based in Arusha, Tanzania. He focuses on seed systems research and development, technology transfer, and research product commercialization. For more than 30 years, he has contributed/led several research and development initiatives in various agricultural research areas including participatory crop research (both on station and on farm), testing agricultural technologies, and partnership to commercialize and scale up these proven technologies. For the last 15 years, he has been leading public–private multisectoral and multidisciplinary teams developing and deploying sustainable and impact-oriented bean seed systems to serve more than 27 million of smallholder farmers (58% being women) across several member countries of the Pan Africa Bean Research Alliance. Jean Claude has extensively published several articles, books, and book chapters on bean seed systems and technology transfer.

Rajeev K. Varshney is Research Program Director of Genetic Gains and Director of the Center of Excellence in Genomics and Systems Biology at ICRISAT. He has more than 15 years research experience in international agriculture. Before joining ICRISAT in 2005, he worked at IPK-Gatersleben, Germany, for five years. While working at ICRISAT, in his dual appointment for six year, he also served CGIAR Generation Challenge Program as Theme Leader. Varshney is recognized as a leader in applied genomics, genomics-assisted breeding, and translational genomics for agriculture. He has genome sequences of 9 crops including pigeonpea, chickpea, peanut, and pearl millet and several molecular breeding products in chickpea, peanut, and pigeonpea to his credit. Varshney is an elected Fellow of Leopoldina—German National Academy of Sciences, American Association of Advancement in Sciences (USA), the World Academy of Sciences, Crop Sciences Society of America, American Society of Agronomy, and all 4 leading science academies of India: Indian Academy of Sciences, Indian National Science Academy, the National Academy of Sciences, and National Academy of Agricultural Sciences. He provides leadership by serving as member/chair for several committees, editorial boards, funding organizations, and advisory boards in international agriculture research, development, and capacity building.



A Brief Overview of Smallholder Farmers' Access to Seed of Improved Legume Varieties

1

For decades, the vast majority of smallholder farmers in developing countries, mainly sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and to some extent South Asia (SA), heavily rely on non-improved and auto-saved variety seed, accounting for about 80% of their material used for planting. Though the seed use figures by farmers vary from one region to another, with West Africa showing the lowest rate of improved seed use (below 20%) and South Asia with much higher rate (up to 70%), the overall situation looks less encouraging. At the same time, substantial breakthroughs have been made by breeding programs, and many more are still in the pipeline. Some of the traits of recently developed varieties have targeted the consumers' demands and farmers' preferences.

The smallholder farmers' access to the outputs of the breeding programs' achievements has been very weak and hence calls for effective, more coherent, and well-articulated design of technology and seed delivery systems of food legume crops. The Tropical Legumes projects answered this historical call.

The Tropical Legumes projects (TL I, II, and III) are an international research and development initiative under the partnership of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), seven African countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda) and one Indian state (Uttar Pradesh), and others. It aimed to develop improved cultivars of common bean, cowpea, chickpea, and groundnut and deliver their seed at scale to millions of smallholders. Since the beginning of Tropical Legumes I (TL I) project in 2007, and the subsequent TL II and TL III projects, a lot has been achieved at different levels of the commodity value chain of each focus crop. The impact can be felt from farmers in remote communities who are now smiling all the way to the banks, to the research centers involved, thanks to this major research and development initiative led by ICRISAT.

This publication covers impact stories from an array of actors within the crop value chain, with a focus on groundnut and common beans in Tanzania and Uganda, groundnut and cowpea in Nigeria, and groundnut in Ghana. All actors were given an

opportunity to share their perceptions and stories for being part of TL families. These actors involve: National agricultural research institutes; knowledge brokering organizations, e.g., extension services and NGOs; public seed companies; private sector operators, e.g., private seed companies, agro-dealers, and individual seed entrepreneurs; farm implement makers; farmer organizations, e.g., farmer cooperatives, farmer groups, individual farmers, women farmers; and the end-pull investors, e.g., middlemen, processors, traders, and consumers. This document shares records of project achievements through impact stories, testimonies from various value chain actors who benefitted from the TL projects over the past 12 years.

It is our hope that the reader will get inspired reading through great field stories from stakeholders over the 12 years of research and development processes implemented to put smiles on faces of families in farming communities in the dryland areas of focus countries.

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