

THE PAN-AFRICA BEAN RESEARCH ALLIANCE (PABRA)

A partnership that links small farmers with research and with markets to improve nutrition, food security, incomes and community decision making

Beans are a low-cost and high-protein crop grown by small farmers, generally women, and are consumed by more than 100 million people in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. Many farmers have already adopted new seed varieties and pest management practices from this project that are boosting their production, thus strengthening household food security and creating surplus produce for sale to the region's local and urban markets. New varieties now under development will also benefit the health of women and children through their higher levels of iron and zinc.

A key challenge now is to build on better diets and income, achieved through development of varieties which respond to existing and new market opportunities. To exploit these opportunities farmers need to acquire information on markets, potential products, technologies and apply the knowledge through local participatory research. Increased income will enhance the well-being of farm families and give them new incentives to improve their management of the soil and other natural resources. At least 40% of bean production in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to be marketed with a retail market value of US \$ 452 million.

Purpose

To reduce poverty in Africa's rural communities through better nutrition, agro-enterprise development and management of natural resources, based on local participatory research.

Expected Outcomes

1. Increased utilization of environmentally friendly bean-based technologies

2. Enhanced capacity of communities in pilot areas to manage their resources and plan initiatives to meet their needs

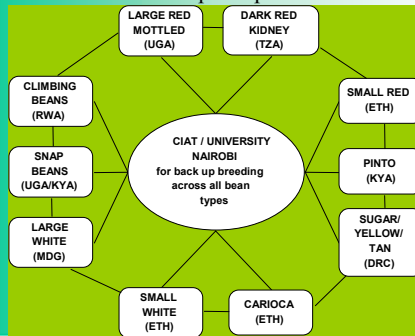
3. Strengthened institutional and organizational capacity of national scientists and staff from NGOs and rural service providers to effectively address clients' needs

Farmer research groups are effective in linking farmer experimentation and formal research, and in raising skills and confidence of women and the resource-poor



Results and Impact

Regional task sharing among ECABREN member countries for the development of bean varieties of the principal market classes



Traders are now buying new bean varieties from farmers in at least 12 countries



Farmer-selector cooks her favourite new bean variety



Each country uses rapid methods for disseminating promising new technologies— e.g. decentralized seed production, affordable small seed packs, leaflets, traditional drama



Yielding three times the traditional bush types, climbing beans now account for a third of all beans grown in Rwanda and have been spread to Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan.



Regional

- Eastern and Central Africa Bean Research Network (ECABREN)
- Southern Africa Bean Research Network (SABRN)
- African Highlands Initiative (AHI)
- West Africa Seed Project
- SADC Seed Networks

Partners

International

International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)

NGOs

- Community Enterprises Development Organizations
- Africare
- Adventist Development & Relief Agency
- CARE
- World Vision International
- Catholic Relief Services, East Africa
- Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM), a regional NGO with over 130 member NGOs

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