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Food Security through Seed Security: Experiences from the Integrated Food Security Programme — Eastern Kenya

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Abstract

Mwingi District located in the semi-arid lands of Eastern Kenya with bimodal but erratic/ unreliable rainfall, experiences frequent and recurrent droughts and subsequently food crop failures that result into food and seed shortage with its consequences on food security for the majority the resource poor farmers. Seed scarcity occurs in terms of quantity, quality and timely accessibility to the farming community. However, over time farmers in the district have developed some ecological, cultural and socio-economic coping mechanisms and strategies availing and accessing seeds. Nevertheless, more often these mechanisms have limitations. The application of participatory approaches and stakeholders' collaboration processes have been confirmed effective and efficient in strengthening the farmers' capacities in seed production and/or accessibility, subsequently enhancing food security in the target communities and creating more opportunities for other stakeholders in the sector e.g. commercial seed companies, local seed stockists and agricultural research institutions.

Keywords: Community participation and linkages, food security, formal and informal seed sector, seed security, stakeholders