India

Project title

Seeds for Life – Action with farmers in Uttar Pradesh to enhance Food Security in the context of Climate Change in India

Overall objective: To contribute to the development of sustainable food security in a rice and wheat producing region vulnerable to climate change in the Indo-Gangetic Plain covering 50 villages

Crops addressed: Rice (*Oryza*) and wheat (*Triticum et al.*).

Main activities

- Establish of 10 genebanks in farmers' fields
- Establish *in situ* seed conservation practices with farmers
- Diversify farming systems by introducing new crops and more varieties of rice and wheat
- Training and capacity building for 900 members of Self-Help Groups and 300 farmers in seed selection and conservation
- Application of systems for rice intensification and improved cultivation methods
- Introduction and cultivation of new crops and more varieties of rice and wheat

Implementing institution

Humana People to People India and Bioversity International

Related website

www.humana-india.org
www.bioversityinternational.org

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY FOR 50 villages, covering more than 650 families (about 4000 people) in Uttar Pradesh, is the focus of this BSF project. The region is the major rice and wheat producing area of Northern India, with 70% of its 200 million population dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. This includes female farmers organized into self-help groups, as well as other farmers' clubs for the establishment of System of Rice Intensification techniques, *in situ* seed conservation practices and the diversification of farming systems.

This project has helped establish direct interaction between farmers, field staff and scientists. The active participation of farmers' clubs and women's self-help groups has created a sense of ownership and involvement towards common objectives. These farmers have already been involved in establishing varietal trials, creating nurseries, transplanting and other best practices for sustainable rice intensification. Farmers' fairs and exchange visits have been organized to encourage the exchange of knowledge and good practices.

Since farmers at the selected project sites are very dependent on a few high yielding commercial varieties of rice and the over-use of chemical fertilizers, several new varieties of rice and rice germplasm have been introduced and farmers are participating in varietal trials and in the selection of the well performing varieties for seed multiplication. Furthermore, women have been engaged in nutrition and cooking workshops aimed at including new biodiversity-friendly food products into their daily meal preparation.

In addition to the traditional crops, new crops and more varieties of rice and wheat are being introduced by farmers in the area as optional choices. This project aims to introduce three new crops in the area: Amaranth, Moringa and Quinoa, which may increase farmers' production and income during fallow seasons.

Humana People to People India has succeeded in securing co-financing for sponsoring another project that presents synergies with the *Seeds for Life* initiative, namely, the project *Strengthening Rural Economy and Empowering Women Farmers of Unnao District through Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities*, which targets 10,000 poor women farmers in 200 villages of the Uttar Pradesh region. This initiative will provide 'end-to-end' solutions for women's empowerment through the introduction of better farming methods, diversification of cropping systems, introduction of new crops and creation of links with financial institutions and government programs related to health and insurance. The activities of this co-funded project will contribute to building sustainability of results of the BSF project.

This BSF project is expected to benefit about 4000 people in some of the most vulnerable agricultural communities in India and to engage 450 women's Self-Help Group and 200 farmers' club members in rice intensification and improved cultivation methods.

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