

# Democratising Agricultural Research for Food Sovereignty in West Africa

Michel Pimbert, Boukary Barry, Anne Berson  
and Khanh Tran-Thanh



Reclaiming  
**Diversity &  
Citizenship**

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## Foreword

Olivier De Schutter,  
United Nations  
Special Rapporteur  
on the right to food

Having adequate food is a basic human right. One vital step in making this human right a reality for all is to make agricultural research more democratic. This is why I applaud the efforts described here to organise citizens' juries and farmers' assessments of agricultural research in West Africa. Such processes make a significant contribution to the key values of participation and ownership that are at the heart of democracy. They demonstrate the importance, relevance and coming of age of participatory approaches in agricultural development.

Agricultural research has never been more critical to achieving global food security than it is today. Firstly, as we have always done, we need research to maintain crop and livestock performance in the fields in our continual 'arms race' with rapidly-evolving insects and other pests – what agronomists refer to as 'maintenance research'. Secondly, and much more importantly, new research and new thinking will be indispensable as we adapt our farming to the challenges of climate change. As we all know, it is the food-insecure regions and communities that will be the first to suffer from increasingly unpredictable and extreme weather – from excessive rains to severe drought – and from permanent climatic changes, such as a shift in rainfall patterns. We will need to create, or scale up, those farming

systems that show resilience to such changes. This task will require tremendous research and development efforts. Many 'low-tech' agroecological solutions already exist, such as agroforestry systems using self-fertilising trees or water-harvesting techniques, many of which have been developed by pioneering farmers. These will have to be scaled up and disseminated. Other solutions are more 'high-tech', and emanate from the science labs and the latest modern technical and scientific approaches, such as non-manipulative modern breeding techniques that can create cereal cultivars with shorter growing cycles, enabling farmers to harvest crops before the dry season arrives.

In our race against time, we must seize the complementary potential of both approaches: the science generated by the best of our experts and the unique knowledge developed by generations of farmers. To support only one without the other is not only to miss an opportunity, it is also a recipe for failure as we strive to cope with the challenges ahead of us.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has issued *Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security*.<sup>1</sup> These recommend that all states adopt and implement national strategies for realising the right to food (Guideline 3). The participation of vulnerable groups in the design of the policies that affect their food security is a core principle of a rights-based approach. Thus, food-insecure groups – such as smallholder farmers, herders and fishers

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1 The objective of the Voluntary Guidelines is to provide practical guidance to states in their implementation of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security in order to achieve the goals of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. They provide an additional instrument to combat hunger and poverty and to accelerate attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The Voluntary Guidelines represent the first attempt by governments to interpret an economic, social and cultural right and to recommend actions to be undertaken for its realisation. Moreover, they represent a step towards integrating human rights into the work of agencies dealing with food and agriculture.



– have a right to help set the priorities of any future agricultural research programme. Guideline 8.4 says that states should promote agricultural research and development, in particular to promote basic food production with its positive effects on basic incomes and its benefits to small and women farmers. Involving farmers themselves in defining the priorities of this research is key in ensuring that the efforts are well targeted and relevant to their needs.

Democratic agricultural research is thus important on both efficiency and on legitimacy grounds: research that is developed through participatory means does not only better serve the farmers working in the most difficult conditions, it also fulfils human rights law and standards. Moreover, it is the only way we can shift towards an agricultural research agenda with sustainability, food security, and the prioritization of small food producers at its heart, rather than an agenda which raises aggregate food production in large production units serving the global markets. In the past, the focus of agricultural research has been disproportionately weighted towards the needs of export-led agriculture. It relied on a reductionist and productivist approach to science which rewarded uniformity and compliance with standards, while neglecting agroecological approaches encompassing not only diverse and complex agricultural ecosystems, but the entire food system.

While this imbalance has been amply documented, the far-reaching consequences of the domination of a single type of science have been widely underestimated. It has been calculated that since the establishment of a modern agricultural research system in the United States in the 1850s, the ‘accumulated stock of agricultural knowledge’ – a financial measure of the stock of scientific knowledge – was 11 times larger than the value of agricultural output produced in any given year. In other words, for every \$100 of agricultural output in 1995 in the USA, there existed a \$1,100 stock of knowledge upon which to draw.<sup>2</sup> Modern agricultural

systems rely, therefore, not only on large subsidies, but on a wide scientific base. The problem is that this scientific basis has been built to suit the needs of a productivist agriculture and has neglected other approaches – such as agroecological sciences – better suited to help us face contemporary challenges such as climate change.

Exposing agricultural research to the public – presenting it as a democratic issue – will help counterbalance the influences of vested interests and level the playing field in favour of small producers. With transparency and accountability to those whom it is meant to serve, agricultural research could spread its benefits much more evenly across the community of farmers and consumers alike.

One has only to consider the dozens of examples collected by IIED in this volume to see the value of agricultural research that is co-designed by farmers and experts. Whether examples of participatory plant breeding projects, or farmers’ assessments of public research, they are a cause for hope, especially as they have withstood testing in a variety of settings. They demonstrate that the democratisation of agricultural research has begun. It has begun in farmers’ fields and in citizens’ juries. It must go all the way – not only to capital cities in food-insecure countries, but right to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in Rome - and to its newly-created ‘High Level Panel of Experts’. This CFS institution should become a ‘Security Council’ for global food security and it should epitomise the linkages between food producers, agricultural researchers and policy makers. These linkages must be our guiding vision.

*Olivier De Schutter was appointed the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food in March 2008 by the United Nations Human Rights Council. He is independent from any government or organization, and he reports to the Human Rights Council and to the UN General Assembly. For more on the work of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, visit [www.srfood.org](http://www.srfood.org)*

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2 Pardey, P.G., Beintema, N.M., 2001. Slow Magic: Agricultural R&D a Century After Mendel. Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators Initiative. International Food Policy Research Institute Report.





## Executive summary

In West Africa the agricultural research system is dependent on external funding and is externally oriented, which tends to make it detrimental to family farming. The products of agricultural research increasingly rely on the use of imported fertilisers and pesticides, and the use of traditional seeds and organic manure is declining. This approach increases farmers' dependence on the system, and on external inputs, and increases their likelihood of becoming indebted. Cultivable land is being degraded by the use of chemical products and poor agricultural practices. Farmers and other food producers are beginning to raise their voices to ensure that agricultural research better meets their needs.

In January 2006, the local government of Sikasso in Mali hosted the Citizen Space for Democratic Deliberation on GMOs and the Future of Farming in Mali. This unprecedented event in West Africa allowed ordinary farmers, both men and women, to make policy recommendations after considering expert evidence from different sources. Jurors asked for a fundamental re-orientation of public research away from a focus on input-intensive farming and the development of new GM seeds, to instead support agriculture which does not require high chemical inputs, to improve local seeds and landraces, and to regenerate local food systems and markets.

This event, and others like it elsewhere in the world, is part of an international action-research initiative known as “Democratising the Governance of Food Systems. Citizens Rethinking Food and Agricultural Research for the Public Good”. This initiative seeks to create safe spaces in which food providers and consumers can discuss how to build an agri-food research system that is democratic and accountable to wider society. An explicit aim of the entire process is to strengthen the voices and effectiveness of small-scale producers and other citizens in the governance of agricultural research, as well as in setting strategic research priorities and validating knowledge. This initiative, which started



in 2007, is now unfolding in four regions: West Africa, South Asia, West Asia and the Andean region in Latin America. This report describes the approach taken to date in West Africa.

### An inclusive and plural process

The West African action-research programme has made a conscious effort to include members of both advocacy and practitioner movements in all key aspects of this participatory process. A multi-actor steering group has been set up to co-ordinate and design the overall process of citizen deliberations. It is currently composed of representatives of 15 organisations from all sectors (government, academia, producer organisations, small-scale private sector, civil society and media).

The first step was an independent farmer-led assessment of public research on plant breeding and the management of agrobiodiversity in Mali. In 2009, African partners, *Biodiversité: Échanges et Diffusion d'Expériences* (BEDE) and IIED organised and facilitated this assessment of the work of Malian national agricultural research programmes (plant breeding and seed management) and of an international centre for agricultural research (ICRISAT). The assessment was conducted by and for farmers—both men and women—using participatory



methodologies. This allowed farmers to assess the quality of public research using their own criteria for evaluation and according to their own priorities.

The farmers involved in this assessment made the following recommendations:

- Research should be a service to farmers, to resolve whatever problems they might be encountering. Research objectives need to be set by the farmers.
- Research should take ecological farming as its basis.
- There should be support for farmers to conserve their own varieties of seeds and animal breeds.
- Farmers want to be better informed about the changing legislative landscape so they can better defend their rights to produce and sow their own seed.

These recommendations fed into the next stage of the process: two citizens'/farmer juries held in 2010 in Mali. The two citizens' juries complemented each other and allowed farmers, pastoralists,







fisherfolk, forest dwellers and food processors to hear contradictory evidence and specialist witness arguments on the following issues:

***Citizens' jury one: What kind of knowledge and agricultural research priorities do small scale producers and food processors want (or not)?*** This citizen jury, held in January 2010, involved 45 jurors drawn from different agroecological zones in Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Benin.

***Citizens' jury two: How can we democratise the governance of food and agricultural research?*** Held in February 2010, this citizens' jury included 40 people who questioned specialist witnesses from West African and European countries on this subject.

The jury for each event was selected by a steering committee. These jurors were drawn from different agroecological zones in Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Benin and were mainly involved in livestock rearing, fishing, farming, forest use, food

processing or as consumers. A total of 15 specialist witnesses from West African and European countries gave evidence during both citizens' juries. The role of the jurors was to consider all the evidence presented to them, and to assess the pros and cons of the specialist witnesses' contributions in the light of their own farming knowledge, priorities and aspirations. They were then asked to devise a series of recommendations which could be implemented to achieve their own vision on the governance and directions of food and agricultural research. Some of these recommendations are listed in the box below.

The citizens' juries took place under the patronage of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Professor Olivier de Schutter ([www.srfood.org](http://www.srfood.org)). This high level patronage helped ensure that the farmer juries and their recommendations on food and agricultural research enjoyed considerable 'political visibility' in West Africa and internationally.



### New directions for research that meet the needs of small farmers and other food producers

- Reconstruct agricultural policy to give farmers a central role in defining it and to ensure research focuses on the concerns and resources of the poorest sectors of society.
- Directly involve producers, users and consumers (both women and men) in controlling, conducting and monitoring research activities.
- Involve farmers in every stage of creating and selecting crop varieties and focus research on improving the productivity of local varieties (growing practices, local adaptation, land use, and soil fertility management). Take into account local products in research protocols and topics, and their potential to replace imported products.
- Find strategies to promote the storage, exchange and use of local seeds as a means of achieving food sovereignty. Hybrid seeds and GMOs should be avoided.
- Identify and investigate mechanisms that will enable the state and national economy to provide more funding to research, thereby avoiding dependence on external funding.
- Generate knowledge and technologies to support sustainable agriculture (agricultural tools and machines adapted to small-scale farming, use of natural mineral resources and compost, integrated pest management, mixed cropping).
- Involve research much more in producing knowledge on local biodiversity in order to add value to its use and values.
- Help producers to organise themselves to ensure that their voice is heard in policy-making processes for legislation and agricultural research and to strengthen their own research capacities.
- Increase efforts to circulate and disseminate the results of participatory research, especially using local languages.

There was considerable press, radio and TV coverage of both citizens' juries in Mali, as well as across West Africa and in Europe. National and regional media representatives from radio, TV and the written press worked with the project partners to organise a number of joint media events before, during and after the farmer/citizens' deliberations.

### Reflections on the process so far

- *Overcoming prejudice and conflict.* Participatory processes like these are often complicated and unpredictable, and relationships and conflicts within and between advocacy and practice-based organisations constantly need to be worked through to build the trust required for joint large-scale transformation. Patriarchal attitudes and lack of





gender sensitivity on the part of members of some of these groups were commonly encountered. Questions about the deliberative competence of 'ordinary' farmers also regularly surfaced. However, by experiencing a citizens' jury in action these prejudices can be broken down and the trust in ordinary farmers can be rebuilt. These efforts to democratise agricultural research are already encouraging new ways of working, alliances and convergence between practice-oriented sustainable agriculture networks and advocacy oriented peasant organisations in West Africa.

- *Ensuring a credible and trustworthy process.* Where the political stakes in the outcome of this process are high, safeguards are needed to ensure that the entire deliberative process is broadly credible, representative, trustworthy, fair and not captured by any interest group or perspective. Both

advocacy and practice oriented members of the steering group were closely involved in the highly sensitive choice of the members of the independent panels that oversaw the process. The entire process of citizens' deliberations was also filmed to create a video archive of the event. This important safeguard ensures that the process is transparent and open to further scrutiny by third parties not present during the events.

- *Converting the recommendations into actions.* A learning group has been set up comprising representatives from 24 African organisations with involvement in policy making and technical issues, drawn from divergent interests, institutions and sectors, including producers and agricultural researchers. This diverse platform allows interested parties to learn from both the process and outcomes of the citizen deliberations on



the transformation of agricultural research and may help link formal decision-making bodies and processes with the safe spaces in which expert and elite knowledge on agricultural research is put under public scrutiny.

- *Influencing policy and practice: the road ahead.* Following the citizens' juries, the West Africa steering group has prioritised activities designed to influence and change agricultural research policies and practice. In the next two years, the farmers' policy recommendations will be shared through i) policy dialogues in West Africa; and ii) international exchanges, dialogues and advocacy. Engagement with global institutions such as AGRA, IFAD, the FAO, the CGIAR and international donors will be important moments in this process of reclaiming research for the public good. A key starting point in these engagements with international organisations will be to make explicit the framing assumptions around diverse positions and knowledge claims. Opportunities for bringing other actors and voices into such processes—including farmers themselves and wider organised movements—will be seized to bring together different politics, perspectives, values, and interests and to aim for politically negotiated solutions. This will be a major challenge for all involved.





## Chapter 1. Democratising agricultural research for food sovereignty in West Africa

Throughout the world, the choices that are available to farmers, other food producers and consumers, and the environments in which they live and work, are mostly shaped by publicly-funded research. For a very long time, agricultural research has largely been thought of as the domain of scientific experts, with

farmers at the receiving end of the research outputs. If a variety or policy fails, farmers are often blamed for their “ignorance and inability” to farm correctly. The question is rarely asked: Is there something wrong with the research itself? For these reasons, there is an increasing need to explore ways of democratising the governance of science and technology, ensuring that it continues to serve the public good rather than narrow economic interests. This multimedia book reports on an initiative in West Africa to make the voices of farmers and other food producers heard—and count—in the process of agricultural research.





## 1.1. A brief history of the idea

At least four interrelated developments led to the birth of the initiative described here.

Between 2005 and 2007, Michel Pimbert spent time travelling in both developed and developing countries. He organised conversations in fields, villages, social gatherings and in the heart of donor communities. These conversations were with pastoralists, indigenous people, fisher folk, progressive scientists and intellectuals, consumers and farmers (both urban and rural). The common view heard time and time again was “*we have no say in what the scientists are doing*”, along with concern over the mismatch



between agricultural research and the reality of farming systems throughout the world. Small-scale producers and other people talked of a democratic deficit leading to a lack of citizen control over knowledge production, often with harmful consequences for people and the land. In both sustainable agriculture networks and peasant organisations people were asking: *What food and agricultural research do we need? For whom? Why? How? Where? And with what impacts?* Although understandings of the politics of knowledge differed, they collectively expressed increasing concern about *who* funds and controls the directions of agricultural research.

While these conversations were occurring, there were a number of very significant international and national developments taking place. The concept of ‘food sovereignty’ (Box 1) was becoming a part of the international vocabulary and more centre stage than ever before. One of the clearest demands of the food sovereignty movement is for citizens<sup>1</sup> to exercise their fundamental human right to decide their own food and agricultural policies. This implies that food providers and other citizens can and should frame strategic priorities and policies for agricultural research. In Bolivia and Mali, food sovereignty was enshrined in national agricultural policy. Other countries and coalitions were also pushing for an alternative paradigm for food and agriculture; discussions which later led to the adoption of national declarations or constitutional changes in favour of food sovereignty in Ecuador, Venezuela and Nepal for example.

At that time the consultations proposed by the bureau of the newly launched International Assessment of Agriculture Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) also catalysed advocacy-

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<sup>1</sup> Today, the concept of citizen is at times understood to exclude indigenous peoples and minority ethnic groups who are not considered to be part of the nation state. Yet, the word ‘citizen’ is originally derived from the latin *civis* and was in use *before* the emergence of the nation state. ‘Citizen’ referred to individuals active in a public body and involved in the management of community affairs. In this book the word citizen is used in this broad sense to include all people living and working in a given country.





### Box 1. Food sovereignty: what is it and how does it differ from food security?

Food sovereignty is a term coined by members of *Via Campesina* (an international peasant coalition) in 1996 to refer to the right of peoples to define their own food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries systems, in contrast to having food largely subject to international market forces.

*Via Campesina*'s seven principles of food sovereignty include:

**Food:** a basic human right. Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Each nation should declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right.

**Agrarian reform.** A genuine agrarian reform is necessary which gives landless and farming people – especially women – ownership and control of the land they work and returns territories to indigenous peoples. The right to land must be free of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology; the land belongs to those who work it.

**Protecting natural resources.** Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, and seeds and livestock breeds. The people who work the land must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to conserve biodiversity free of restrictive intellectual property rights. This can only be done from a sound economic basis with security of tenure, healthy soils and reduced use of agro-chemicals.

**Reorganising food trade.** Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. National agricultural policies must prioritize production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency. Food imports must not displace local production nor depress prices.





### Box 1. Food sovereignty: what is it and how does it differ from food security?

**Ending the globalisation of hunger.** Food sovereignty is undermined by multilateral institutions and by speculative capital. The growing control of multinational corporations over agricultural policies has been facilitated by the economic policies of multilateral organizations such as the WTO, World Bank and the IMF. Regulation and taxation of speculative capital and a strictly enforced Code of Conduct for TNCs is therefore needed.

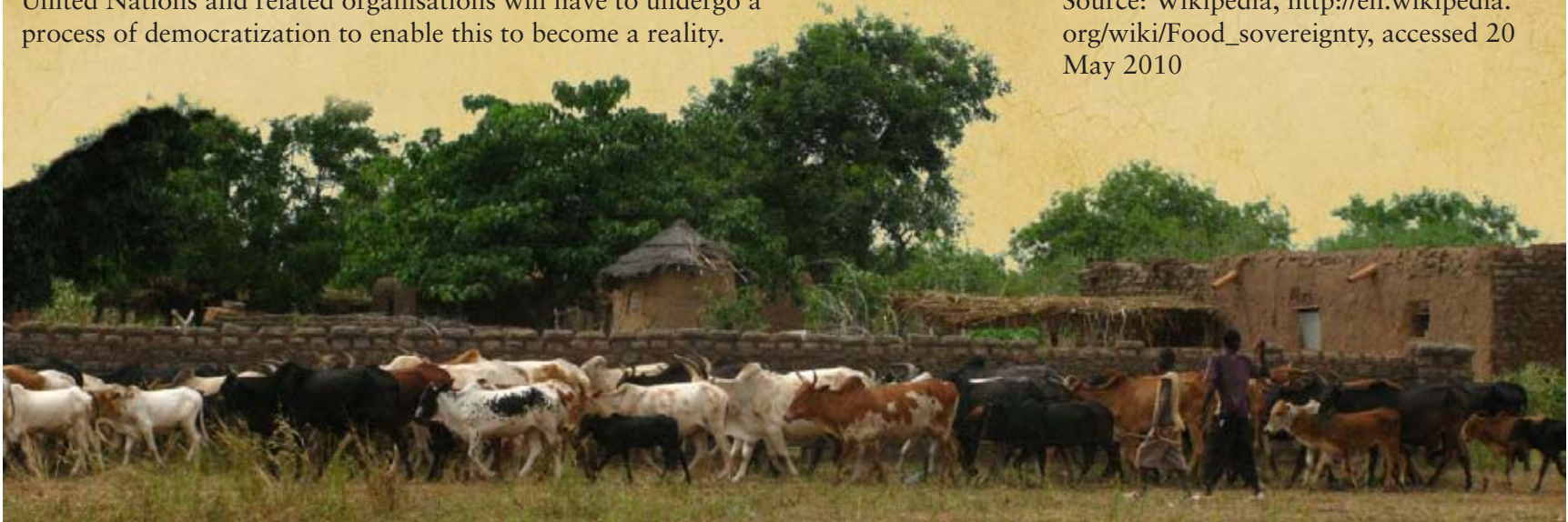
**Social peace.** Everyone has the right to be free from violence. Food must not be used as a weapon. Increasing levels of poverty and marginalization in the countryside, along with the growing oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, aggravate situations of injustice and hopelessness. The ongoing displacement, forced urbanisation, repression and increasing incidence of racism on smallholder farmers cannot be tolerated.

**Democratic control.** Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organisations will have to undergo a process of democratization to enable this to become a reality.

Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination. Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision making on food and rural issues.

Food sovereignty is increasingly being promoted as an alternative framework to the narrower concept of food security, which mostly focuses on the technical problem of providing adequate nutrition. For instance, a food security agenda that simply provides surplus grain to hungry people would probably be strongly criticised by food sovereignty advocates as just another form of commodity dumping, facilitating corporate penetration of foreign markets, undermining local food production, and possibly leading to irreversible biotech contamination of indigenous crops with patented varieties.

Source: Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food\\_sovereignty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_sovereignty), accessed 20 May 2010







based peasant organisations and rights-based civil society groups to engage with this international process.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the IAASTD was “to assess agricultural knowledge, science and technology (AKST) in order to use AKST more effectively to reduce hunger and poverty, improve rural livelihoods, and facilitate equitable, environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development” (IAASTD, 2008). The IAASTD has undoubtedly produced a landmark report that is both timely and remarkable in scope. This is the first independent global assessment which acknowledges that small-scale, low-impact farming sustains crucial ecological and social functions. Many of its more progressive recommendations, such as the need for much greater emphasis on agro-ecological approaches, are consistent with the food sovereignty paradigm and the quest for sustainable agriculture. However, the analysis and priorities of indigenous peoples, nomadic pastoralists, small farmers, food workers, forest dwellers, and food consumers are largely absent. Discussions among some members of the International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC),<sup>3</sup> selected individuals in Via Campesina, indigenous peoples’ organisations, pastoralist networks and others, led to a decision that rather than becoming involved in this rather top-down process, there was a need for a series of independent and parallel ‘popular or citizen spaces’ where people could gain confidence, discover their voice, analyse, mobilise and act. It was thought that, at the very least, these ‘citizen spaces’ could complement the IAASTD because this intergovernmental process has not developed any comprehensive mechanism for local perspectives to be directly included in discussions on agricultural research.

Last but not least, a citizens’ jury in Mali explored farmers’ views on genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) and the future of

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2 The IAASTD was launched as an intergovernmental process guided by a multi-stakeholder bureau, under the co-sponsorship of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), UNESCO, the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO).

3 See [www.foodsovereignty.org/new/whoweare.php](http://www.foodsovereignty.org/new/whoweare.php)





farming (Box 2). No fewer than 5 out of 26 recommendations from this intensive five days of citizen deliberations called for agricultural research to be re-organised to better serve the needs of small farmers. Jurors asked for a fundamental re-orientation of public research away from a focus on input-intensive farming and the development of new GM seeds, to instead support agriculture which does not require high chemical inputs, to improve local seeds and landraces, and to regenerate local food systems and markets. This unique event for West Africa demonstrated that citizens' juries can provide a safe space for farmers to reach an informed, evidence-based view on complicated and often controversial issues, which can then be passed on to policy makers.

All the events and processes described above provided the basis for an international action-research initiative known as “Democratising the Governance of Food Systems. Citizens Rethinking Food and Agricultural Research for the Public Good”.<sup>4</sup> This initiative seeks to create safe spaces in which food providers and consumers can discuss how to build an agri-food research system that is democratic and accountable to wider society. An explicit aim of the entire process is to strengthen the voices and effectiveness of small-scale producers and other citizens in the governance of agricultural research as well as in setting strategic research priorities and validating knowledge. This initiative, which started in 2007, is now unfolding in four regions, with one country acting as host for each region: West Africa (Mali), South Asia (India), West Asia (Iran) and the Andean region in Latin America (Bolivia).<sup>5</sup> The methodologies used build on earlier experiences with deliberative and inclusive

4 The research proposal was prepared by the Sustainable Agriculture, Biodiversity and Livelihoods Programme of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). It was widely circulated for comments to members of social movements engaged in food sovereignty and/or sustainable agriculture debates as well as other interested actors. To date, the following donors are funding this action research: The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), NOVIB-OXFAM and The Christensen Fund.

5 For more details on context, methodologies and process design see [www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/G02224.pdf](http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/G02224.pdf) and [www.excludedvoices.org](http://www.excludedvoices.org)



processes on the future of food and farming in India and elsewhere (Pimbert and Wakeford, 2002; Pimbert and Wakeford, 2003; Wakeford *et al.*, 2007). The remainder of this paper describes the work being conducted in West Africa as part of this initiative.



## Box 2. A citizen space for democratic deliberation on GMOs and the future of farming in Mali

In January 2006, the local government of Sikasso in Mali hosted the Citizen Space for Democratic Deliberation on GMOs and the future of farming in Mali. This ECID (l'Espace Citoyen d'Interpellation Démocratique), or citizens' jury, was an unprecedented event in West Africa. The ECID was designed to allow ordinary farmers, both men and women, to make policy recommendations after considering expert evidence from different sources. Its main objective was to create a safe space for communication and action in which small, medium and large-scale farmers could:

- better understand GMOs, their risks and advantages
- confront different viewpoints and cross-examine expert witnesses (see below), both in favour of and against GMOs and the industrialisation of agriculture
- formulate recommendations for policies on GMOs and the future of farming in Mali.

The citizens' jury on GMOs was organised by the government (the Regional Assembly) of the Sikasso region, with methodological support from the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London and the Réseau Interdisciplinaire Biosecurité in Geneva. A steering committee made up of representatives of 15 local, national and international institutions (government, civil society, research, farmer organisations...) was responsible for the design, organisation and facilitation of this deliberative process.

The citizens' jury focused on farmers/producers of the Sikasso region, which is home to about 1.6 million people. A region-wide selection process in seven districts of Sikasso identified 45 farmers as jurors. Clear and transparent criteria helped ensure a fair representation of the diverse types of farmers in the region (e.g. small versus medium-sized farms, women versus men). The citizens' jury allowed the jurors to cross-examine 14 international witnesses representing a broad range of views on this controversial issue. These included biotech scientists, agencies such as the FAO and farmers from South Africa and India with first-hand experience of growing GM crops. In January 2006, the 45 farmers voted against introducing genetically-modified crops in Mali. The farmers' verdict included the following statements:

*'As the number of small-scale producers in Mali represents 98% of the farming population and as crop genetic modification is only viable for large-scale producers—who represent only 2% of the farming population—this new technology should not be introduced'.*

*'Considering that the technology of organic cotton cultivation is already used in Mali, and given that it is highly viable in*





## Box 2. A citizen space for democratic deliberation on GMOs and the future of farming in Mali

*terms of women's participation, availability of a market and minimum guaranteed price, the cultivation of Bt cotton should not be encouraged; instead it should be stopped'.*

*'Women farmers should instead be given the technical training needed to produce organic sesame and cotton'.*

*'Farmers should be directly involved in agricultural research. Research on GMOs should never be carried out in the name of Malian farmers because we farmers do not want GMOs'.*

*'Research programmes must focus on improving and adding value to traditional crop varieties instead of working on transgenic crops'.*

*'Strategies are needed to promote organic farming which is based on local resources and local produce'.*

Birama Kone, a small farmer on the jury, said: *'GM crops are associated with the kind of farming that marginalises the mutual help and co-operation among farmers and our social and cultural life.'*

Overall, l'ECID has succeeded in politicising an issue of global importance and has allowed marginalised voices to question the dominant discourse in favour of GM crops and the industrialisation of agriculture. Seven local radio stations ensured that the entire deliberative process—cross-examination of expert evidence, deliberations, the jurors' verdict and recommendations—was broadcast live throughout the seven districts that make up the Sikasso region. Radio broadcasts were also heard in villages of neighbouring Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso—reaching a total of at least 1.7 million listeners.

The approval of national legislation needed for the introduction of GM crops in Mali has since been delayed. This is widely seen as a direct result of this jury's recommendations. Similarly, a key political debate in June 2006 on GMOs and the future of Malian agriculture was held in the National Assembly and is widely seen as a direct outcome of the citizens' jury process. However, the powerful nature of some of the global actors involved (e.g. USAID, the World Bank, Monsanto and Syngenta) means that they are constantly looking for new ways of avoiding the constraints of national legislation, for example by supporting high-level meetings and encouraging country governments to harmonise biosafety policies and intellectual property right laws for the entire West African region.

See: [www.iied.org/natural-resources/key-issues/food-and-agriculture/deliberative-democracy-citizens-juries](http://www.iied.org/natural-resources/key-issues/food-and-agriculture/deliberative-democracy-citizens-juries); La Revue Durable, 2006; IIED et al., 2006.



## Chapter 2. Making agricultural research relevant for farmers in West Africa

Discussions with partners in West Africa (Mali, Senegal, Benin, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso and Niger) have focused on the following questions: What food and agricultural research do we need? For whom? Why? How? Where? And with what impacts?

There is today increasing concern in West Africa about who funds and controls the directions of agricultural research. African partners have clearly expressed the need to explore ways of democratising the governance of science and technology, ensuring that it continues to serve the public good rather than narrow economic interests.

In West Africa, and Mali in particular, there is strong evidence for a growing convergence and shared vision between practice-oriented sustainable agriculture networks and advocacy-oriented organisations in the food sovereignty movement. Both types of organisation are deeply aware of the strategic importance of food and agricultural research, what agricultural research does and does not do, who controls it, and how pressures to privatise research are affecting farmers, human well being and the environment.

This coming together of different hearts and minds is also being facilitated by the participatory process and co-inquiry in which these different actors are directly engaged. As discussed below, the ways of working and the actual design of the farmer/citizen deliberations on the transformation of agricultural research are allowing shared understandings and joint actions to emerge, bringing together movements for advocacy and practice.







## 2.1 An inclusive and plural process

The West African part of the action-research programme Democratising the Governance of Food Systems has made a conscious effort to include members of both advocacy and practitioner movements in all key aspects of this participatory process. A multi-actor steering group has been set up to co-ordinate and design the overall process of citizen deliberations. The epicentre of these activities is in Mali, where the steering group is currently composed of representatives of 15 organisations from all sectors (government, academia, producer organisations, small-scale private sector, civil society and media, see Table 1). Sustainable agriculture organisations like the Malian organic farming network (*Mouvement biologique Malien - MOBIOM*) thus work with representatives of advocacy-oriented peasant organisations like the CNOP (*Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes du Mali*). The steering group also includes representatives of anti-globalisation groups who co-organised the World Social Forum in Bamako, in 2006, e.g. *Institut de Recherche et de Promotion des Alternatives en Développement* (IRPAD). Government linked organizations such as the Commission Régionale et Nationale des Utilisateurs de la Recherche (CRU/CNU) were part of the steering group too<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> These regional and national commissions (CRU/CNU) are made up of representatives of the users of research (e.g. producer organizations) as well as government officials who work with the regional Chambers of Agriculture (Chambres d'Agriculture). The CRU/CNU were created in 1990 as part of a broad range of institutional reforms of the national agricultural research system.



**Table 1. Organisations represented on the steering group**

1. Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes du Mali (CNOP)
2. Centre Djoliba
3. Institut de Recherche et de Promotion des Alternatives en Développement (IRPAD)
4. Union des Radios et Télévisions libres du Mali (URTEL)
5. Kene Conseils (KC)
6. Association des organisations professionnelles paysannes (AOPP) – Sikasso
7. Fédération Nationale des Femmes Rurales (FENAFER)
8. Regroupement pour la Défense des Consommateurs du Mali (REDECOMA)
9. Coalition des Alternatives Africaines Dette et Développement (CAD - Mali)
10. Association Malienne pour la Sécurité et la Souveraineté Alimentaire (AMASSA - Afrique Verte)
11. Commission Régionale des Utilisateurs de la Recherche (CRU) - Sikasso
12. Secrétariat de Concertation des ONG Maliennes (SECO ONG/Mali)
13. Mouvement Biologique Malien (MOBIOM)
14. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
15. Convergence des Femmes Rurales pour la Souveraineté Alimentaire (COFERSA)

The steering group meets regularly to reflect on methodological options, tools, constraints, opportunities, results and consequences, and adjusts activities as appropriate. The method of choice is «participatory action research,» i.e. a cycle of reflection-action-reflection controlled and decided by the steering group and farmers themselves (who are now becoming increasingly involved in this co-inquiry) (Box 3). In their first meeting, steering group members decided to re-name their process “Democratising Agricultural Research for Food Sovereignty”. The ease with which these representatives of sustainable agriculture and agrarian reform movements are able to work together is no doubt influenced by the outcomes of the 2007 International Forum on Food Sovereignty held in Nyeleni, in Mali ([www.nyeleni.org](http://www.nyeleni.org)). The Malian Government has adopted the notion of food sovereignty in its national agricultural policy (*Loi d’Orientation Agricole*). This has allowed the steering





### Box 3. Methodological pluralism

Rather than focusing on a single method (e.g. a citizens' jury), this action research combines a range of methodologies and tools from different traditions and locations, tailored to local needs and goals. These include:

- Participatory learning and action methods, visualisation in participatory programmes (VIPP)
- Participatory video (PV) and community radio as well as teleconferencing technology
- Setting up of multi-actor learning groups at different scales
- Scholarly studies for peer review publications and working papers (e.g. [www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/14535IIED.pdf](http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/14535IIED.pdf))
- Farmer-led audits and assessments of national research programmes
- Links and exchanges with other regional and international initiatives such as roundtables, seminars and workshops focusing on agricultural research in Africa, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the right to food and food sovereignty, etc.
- Methods for deliberative and inclusive processes (DIPs): citizens' juries but also citizen panels, scenario workshops, future search, multi-criteria mapping, etc.
- Methodological exchanges between regions involved in the Democratising agri-food research project to enhance mutual learning and development of a robust and well triangulated research process.





group to ask: “If food sovereignty is the national goal then how does agricultural research need to be re-oriented or transformed?”

## 2.2. Farmers’ assessments of public research in Mali

The first step in the process was to organise an independent farmer-led assessment of public research on plant breeding and the management of agro-biodiversity in Mali. The CNOP and other african partners, BEDE and IIED organised and facilitated this assessment of the work of national agricultural research programmes (plant breeding and seed management) in Mali and of an international centre for agricultural research (ICRISAT). The assessment was conducted by and for farmers—both men and women—using participatory methodologies. This allowed farmers to assess the quality of public research using their own criteria for evaluation and according to their own priorities. The assessments included discussions between farmers and researchers during a 12-day farmer “caravan” that visited 4 main agro-ecological zones in Mali in November 2009. Thirteen farmers from Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso and France participated in these discussions with scientists. The following video highlights key moments in this farmer-led assessment of public research:

The findings and conclusions were fed into the citizens’ juries that were subsequently held in January-February 2010 (described below). A full report on the process and outcomes of the farmers’ assessments of public research on plant breeding was produced: “*Les Variétés Améliorées des Stations de Recherche ne sont pas Toujours les Meilleures*” (BEDE, 2009).<sup>7</sup> Their findings are summarised below.

<sup>7</sup> Available in French at: [www.bede-asso.org/lang/fr/nos\\_actions/semences/sahel/Echange-paysans\\_Mali-2009.pdf](http://www.bede-asso.org/lang/fr/nos_actions/semences/sahel/Echange-paysans_Mali-2009.pdf)

*Local women stated that they prefer to sow local varieties which do not need fertiliser. They particularly appreciated a local variety of sorghum which is tolerant to the weed Striga, but this was becoming extinct. They find that sorghum is good for breastfeeding because it “gives good milk”.*



### 2.2.1. Agricultural research in West Africa

For more than 20 years, agricultural research by national systems and international organisations like ICRISAT in Mali has produced new varieties of cereals like sorghum and millet, and groundnuts, based on selections made in the research station. But very few varieties have been adopted by the peasants, who continue to favour their traditional varieties.

This constant failure has driven scientists to involve farmers more in the research process. However, this participation is still rather superficial because the research does not take the farmers' needs and conditions as its starting point. The farmers involved in the assessment caravan made the following observations and recommendations, which were then fed into the citizens' juries:

#### Observations

- Research still lacks meaningful involvement by farmers. Some programmes involve farmers more than others, but most are involved as labour and do not agree with what is being done in their own fields. Thus research protocols are often not respected. Under such conditions, success is not very likely. However, peasants are indispensable to researchers because without the diversity of varieties they have developed over generations researchers would have no material on which to work.
- There are few efforts made to include women in discussions or research projects, even though they are involved in all aspects of food production—cultivation, selection and conservation of seeds—and have a deeper understanding of culinary and nutritional quality than men.
- Research does not support sustainable farming or food sovereignty. The group observed the almost systematic use of chemical fertilisers in all research station experiments.



12:28 mins

#### Farmer Caravan in Mali

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This is totally out of step with the practices of most peasant farmers. The transfer of such practices into farmers' fields is inappropriate. While improved varieties might need synthetic fertilisers in order to succeed, this is not true of traditional varieties. Furthermore the types of improved hybrid varieties being promoted by the researchers increase farmers' dependence on the system, and on external inputs, and increase their likelihood of becoming indebted. The group wondered why so few of the researchers suggested using organic manure in their trials. They observed that the villages they visited had the capacity to produce enough organic manure to enrich their soils correctly, make their varieties more productive and very significantly reduce infestation by the noxious weed striga (Box 4), which thrives in poor soils.

- The large companies exert an overly strong pressure on the directions of research. And the legal context does not promote the conservation of traditional varieties. For example, certification laws dictate that only improved, certified seeds, listed in the catalogue, can be sold. Thus traditional varieties will gradually disappear along with the genetic diversity they represent. Certification is expensive and difficult for peasant farmers.



#### Box 4. An ecological approach to managing a noxious weed

The pretty pink flowers of a weed named Striga belie its devastating impact on cereal crops such as corn, sorghum, millet, and rice. Parasitic by nature, Striga compensates for the lack of its own root system by penetrating the roots of other plants, diverting essential nutrients from them, and stunting their growth. Striga infests an estimated two-thirds of the 73 million hectares devoted to cereal crops in Africa, resulting in crop losses of up to 70% among subsistence farmers. Striga accounts for an estimated 4.1 million tonnes in lost cereal yields each year, and is considered by many experts to be the greatest obstacle to food production in Africa, particularly in the Sahel region (IDRC, 2010). Part of ICRISAT's research in Mali is looking at cultural methods for reducing striga's impact, such as growing it with groundnuts along with applications of complex and simple fertilisers. However, the farmers involved in the caravan commented that these methods are not necessary as they have noticed that striga's adventitious roots disappear when the soil has had good applications of organic manure. The researchers' approach is incompatible with farmers' access to external inputs, which degrade the soil and are too expensive for them to buy.



#### Recommendations

- Research should be a service to farmers, to resolve whatever problems they might be encountering. Research objectives need to be set by the farmers and research guidelines translated into local languages. Farmers accept that they too must be clearer about what they want from research. Spaces for exchange between farmers and researchers are needed.
- Research should take ecological farming as its basis (i.e. take into account soil improvements by adding organic matter, composting, rotating crops, considering planting density and so on). This could be done by creating demonstration agroecological farms. There should also be support for farmers to conserve their own varieties of seeds and animal breeds. This allows them to sow them at the right time, to be confident of their quality, and to not be dependent on buying seed. However, in lean times rural families often have to eat their stored seed to stay alive, so a back up storage system is needed in fields, gardens and seed farms. A system of seed exchange also needs to be put in place.
- Farmers involved in the visit to ICRISAT noted that the hybrid varieties ICRISAT is producing cannot be resown year after year. They also require additions of artificial fertilisers which undermines the autonomy farmers are striving to maintain. Finally, there is a risk that the sterile genes, which the researchers insert into these varieties to facilitate crossing, could appear in the traditional varieties and sterilise them too.
- Farmers want to be better informed about the changing legislative landscape (such as regional rules on seed catalogues, property rights rules and legislation regarding GMOs in West Africa). In this way they can better defend their rights to produce and sow their own seed – rights which are threatened today by the laws described above, designed for industrial seed (Box 5).







### Box 5. The dangers of seed certification: lessons from France

The seed legislation framework is evolving in Mali in a similar way to what has happened in France. French farmers involved in the research caravan have witnessed the impact in France of certification and catalogue systems on small farmers and the diversity of crop varieties over the last 50 years. Nearly all traditional varieties have completely disappeared and a small number of improved varieties produced by the large commercial seed companies dominate the market (for wheat, 10 varieties cover 80% of the area under cereals). The new varieties listed in the catalogue are mostly hybrids, which cannot be resown and which depend on external inputs. It is forbidden to reproduce, exchange or resell these varieties independently of the catalogue. The catalogue varieties are almost all protected by intellectual property rights, through which the creator of the variety receives royalties each time it is multiplied. This system does not support small scale agriculture or food security. This explains why French peasants have created their own systems for multiplying and exchanging traditional varieties.



### 2.3. Citizens' juries on the governance of food and agricultural research

Following the farmer-led assessment described above, two citizens'/farmer juries were then held, the first in January and the second in February 2010. These two public events took place in Mali, in the village of Sélengué-Nyeléni where the International Forum on Food Sovereignty had been held in 2007 ([www.nyeleni.org](http://www.nyeleni.org)). The two six-day long citizens' juries were the climax of this regional process of deliberation and citizen inclusion in debates on the governance and transformation of food and agricultural research. In West Africa, these citizens' juries are called "*Espaces Citoyen d'Interpellation Démocratique (ECID) sur la Gouvernance de la Recherche sur l'Agriculture et l'Alimentation*".<sup>8</sup> The two ECIDs took place under the patronage of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Professor Olivier de Schutter ([www.srfood.org](http://www.srfood.org)). This high level patronage helped ensure that the citizens' juries on food and agricultural research enjoyed considerable 'political visibility' – both in West Africa and internationally.

The ECIDs—or citizens' juries—were designed as safe spaces in which expert and experiential knowledge were put under public scrutiny. The Nyeléni citizens' juries provided a safe communicative space in which people who might otherwise feel threatened by sharing their knowledge and experience with others were placed in carefully thought-out environments of mutual support and empathy. Within these spaces, perspectives from the social and natural sciences as well as the knowledge of farmers and local resource users could be confronted, negotiated and combined to develop visions of the future. The deliberative process thus recognised that there are differently situated forms of knowledge about food systems, livelihoods and environment, and each is partial and incomplete. Participatory learning, inclusion, dialogues and careful deliberation brought these multiple and separate realities together, combining the

<sup>8</sup> ECID in English – *Citizen Space for Democratic Deliberation on the Governance of Food and Agricultural Research*



strengths of outsiders' and local people's knowledge. The formation of a safe space for communication and action was a central objective for the steering group here.

The two citizens' juries complemented each other and allowed farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, forest dwellers and food processors to hear contradictory evidence and specialist witness arguments on the following issues:

1. *Citizens' jury one (ECID 1): What kind of knowledge and agricultural research priorities do small scale producers and food processors want (or not)?* Specialist witness presentations and farmer discussions focused on: i) different models of agricultural production; ii) land tenure and property rights; and iii) economics of food and agriculture.
2. *Citizens' jury two (ECID 2): How can we democratise the governance of food and agricultural research?* These discussions and specialist witness presentations focused on: i) the funding of research; ii) the organisation and practice of research; iii) partnerships between private-public sector; (iv) ways of working of scientists and researchers; (v) institutional innovations for greater citizen oversight and participation in the governance of research.

The following video clip briefly describes the origins, context, and design of the citizens' juries held in Nyeléni:

The main features of the citizens' juries included:

- *The jury members.* About 1000 farmers/food processors were recruited as possible candidates for the jury panels, from which about 50 were selected for each jury by the steering committee (see final participant lists in Annex A). The selection process was based on clear criteria to ensure proper representation of different socio-professional groups of food providers and gender balance. Based on a technique



8:56 mins

### Jury Process

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known as ‘snowballing’ (Atkinson and Flint, 2001), the jury selection process relied on names provided by both advocacy organisations and farmer-led sustainable agriculture networks, as well as other organisations (e.g. consumer groups and public research institutes) represented on the steering group. Through this process, jurors were drawn from different agroecological zones in Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Benin. The names and gender of all jurors are listed in Annex A, along with the countries/districts of origin of these small scale producers and food processors. The role of the jurors was to consider all the evidence presented to them, assessing the pros and cons of the specialist witnesses’ contributions in the light of their own farming knowledge, priorities and aspirations. The jurors were encouraged to critically assess the viability and relevance of all the expert evidence they heard on food and agricultural research. An important task of the jury was to devise a series of recommendations which

could be implemented to achieve their own vision on the governance and directions of food and agricultural research. The resulting policy recommendations and proposals were considered in both small groups and in plenary.

- *Specialist witnesses.* Specialist witnesses with different viewpoints and institutional affiliations were selected for each of the two citizens’ jury hearings. The diverse composition of the panel of witnesses (or subject-matter specialists) ensured that key sectors of society (industry, government, civil society organisations, producer organisations and academic institutions) contributed their views to the citizens’ jury hearings. A total of 15 specialist witnesses from West African and European countries gave evidence during both citizens’ juries (see lists in Annex B). After contributing their views to the public hearings, each specialist witness was interviewed and asked to summarise his/her main arguments. The video

## Invited specialist witnesses for citizens' jury 1 – Priorities for agricultural research

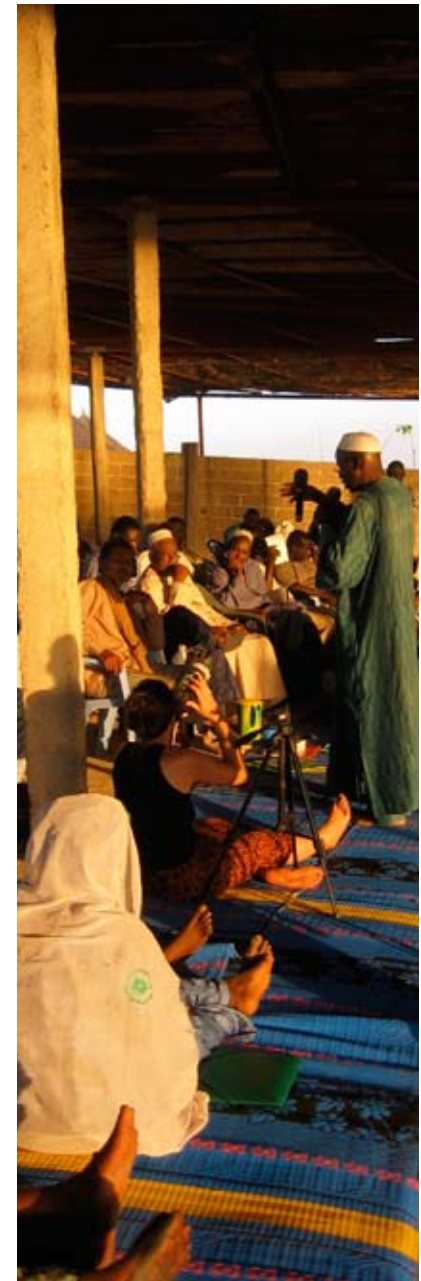
Name and affiliation of specialist witness	Title of presentation
1. Dr Samba Traoré, Director, Cinzana Research Station, Mali	What type of agricultural research is needed to increase agricultural production based on local cereals (sorghum, millet) while preserving the environment in Mali?
2. Dr Oumar Niangado, Director, Syngenta Fondation, Mali	What type of research and plant breeding are needed for sustainable agriculture and increased food security in West Africa?
3. Farmer specialist witness group: Omer Agoligan (Benin), Koro Sangare and Ousmane Sinare (Mali), Francisca Diouf (Senegal).	Seed selection: what type of agricultural research is needed?
4. Dr Amadou K. Coulibaly, Professor of Ecological Entomology, University of Mali, Katibougou	What type of research is needed in agro-ecology for sustainable agriculture and greater food sovereignty in West Africa?
5. Prof. Cheibane Coulibaly, Dean, University Mande Bukari, Mali	What social science research is needed to develop property right regimes based on the principles of subsidiarity and autonomy as well as on West African values, knowledge, and local institutions?
6. Dr Joan Kagwanja, Policy Officer, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Kenya <sup>a</sup>	The importance of research on gender issues in a value chain approach to the development of African agriculture and markets, including land markets.
7. Dr Marie Monimart, Independent Social Science Researcher	Why should agricultural research take into account gender relations when analysing access and control over land and other natural resources? How can gender biases be overcome in research on property rights?
8. Mohamadou Mogha, ROPPA, Burkina Faso <sup>b</sup>	The agricultural research policy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
9. Dr Aminata Dramane Traoré, Ex-Minister of Culture, Government of Mali	What research is needed to re-think macroeconomic policies for greater food and political sovereignty in West Africa?
10. Prof. Gilbert Rist, Institut Universitaire d' Etudes du Développement (IUED), Geneva, Switzerland	What kind of research is needed to develop an alternative economics that puts human well being, reciprocity and solidarity at the centre?

a. Dr Kagwanja was invited as a specialist witness but was unable to accept the organizers' invitation. Following a request from the ECIDs' steering group and IIED, the office of the Director of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa nominated two senior AGRA staff to participate in this deliberative process – one as possible specialist witness and the other as a member of the Regional Learning Group.

b. Mr Mogha agreed to give specialist evidence but was unable to participate in this citizens' jury







## Invited specialist witnesses for Citizens' Jury 2 - the Governance of Food and Agricultural Research

Name and affiliation of specialist witness	Title of presentation
1. Dr Adama Traoré, Executive Director, Centre Nationale pour la Recherche Agronomique (CNRA), Mali	An overview of the organisation and governance of agricultural research in Mali
2. Dr Oumar Niangado, Syngenta Foundation, Mali <sup>a</sup>	How should the governance of agricultural research change to strengthen partnerships between the private and public sectors – especially for plant breeding aimed at improving seeds in West Africa?
3. Farmer specialist witness group: Omer Agoligan (Benin), Koro Sangare and Ousmane Sinaré (Mali), Francisca Diouf (Senegal).	How can agricultural research be made more participatory and farmer-led in plant and livestock breeding programs?
4. Mr René Alphonse, President, Fédération des groupements interprofessionnels de la Filière Bétail et Viande (FEBEVIM), Mali	What changes in the governance and funding of agricultural research are required to better take into account the needs of livestock herders and pastoral societies in West Africa?
5. Dr Philippe De Leneer, University of Louvain, Belgium	How can the work of professional scientists be transformed to enable participatory research and a genuine co-construction of knowledge with farmers?
6. Dr Bino Temé, Director, Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER), Mali	What type of governance and funding are needed for agricultural research to achieve the objectives enshrined in the National Agricultural Policy (Loi d'Orientation Agricole) in Mali?
7. Prof. Neils Röling, Emeritus Professor, University of Wageningen, The Netherlands	Road maps for innovation for food and agriculture
8. Dr Amatévi Raoul Klutsé, Senior Researcher, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Ghana	AGRA's role in the governance of agricultural research. Can private sector led research and development feed the poor in Africa?
9. Dr Jacques Testart, President Sciences Citoyennes, Paris, France	Democratising agricultural research: the role of citizen-centered participatory processes

a. Dr Niangado agreed to be a specialist witness but was unable to attend this citizens' jury and give evidence.









interviews also invited specialist witnesses to share their reflections on how they personally experienced the citizens' jury process. These video film clips can be seen below and are organised in the order in which specialist witnesses appeared in front of the two citizens' juries.

- *Facilitators, translators and video film makers.* A team of culturally and gender-sensitive facilitators, translators and video film makers were chosen to co-ordinate and record the proceedings. The roles and work of the facilitators and translators are highlighted in this video clip:
- *Formation of a safe space in a rural setting.* Forming a safe space for communication and action was a central feature of this deliberative process. In the organisation of the citizens' juries, a power-equalising approach was consciously adopted to reverse many of the dominant polarities in policy processes. Reversals from normal roles and locations included:
  - Putting the perceptions, priorities and judgement of ordinary farmers and food processors centre stage.
  - Holding the process in a rural setting – in a location most likely to put small scale producers and food processors at ease. In this instance, the village of Nyeléni offered a familiar rural setting and safe space for all the farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers, fisherfolk, and food processors who participated in the citizens' juries. All the jurors lived and slept in the village of Nyeléni throughout the event.
  - Encouraging government bureaucrats, scientists and other specialist witnesses to travel to the village of Nyeléni to present evidence on the pros and cons of agricultural research policy and practice.
  - Ensuring that all the hearings and deliberations took place in the languages normally used by the small scale producers



2:38 mins

## Facilitators

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and food processors —Bambara, Sénoufo and Tamajek. All presentations that were made in French or English were systematically translated into the mother tongue of the jurors – with Bambara being the main language used.

- Ensuring that all food consumed by the jurors was familiar and an enjoyable source of healthy nourishment. The food served during the Nyeléni citizens’ juries was locally sourced from neighbouring farming communities. This clearly linked the citizens’ jury event to the local ecology and economy: whilst the jurors enjoyed eating healthy and abundant locally-sourced food, the nearby farming and fishing communities directly benefited from additional income and also felt they were part of the event too. Meals were prepared three times a day for about 100 to 120 people by a local collective of women farmers who provided a diversity of wholesome meals based on a revival of their traditional culinary knowledge. All participants—including



2:53 mins

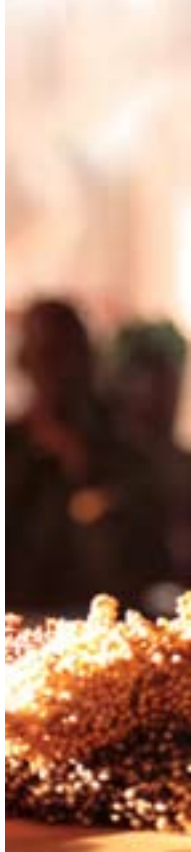
**Women  
Food  
Collective /  
Nyelini**

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invited specialist witnesses, oversight panel members and others—were served the same food as the farmer jurors. The following video introduces the women’s collective responsible for feeding all the participants and also shows the rural setting where the citizens’ juries took place:

- Using television and video technology to ensure transparency and free circulation of information on the process and the outcomes.
- *Independent oversight panels.* Both advocacy and practice oriented members of the steering group were closely involved in the highly sensitive choice of the members of the independent oversight panels. The main role of these oversight panels was to ensure that the entire deliberative process was broadly credible, representative, trustworthy, fair and not captured by any interest group or perspective. Such safeguards are needed where the political stakes in the outcome of this process are high. The





oversight panels were made up of eight individuals drawn from Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal, as well as from government agencies, academia, NGOs and the media (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Members of the independent oversight panel**

Name and country	Profession/organisation
Ousmane Sy, Mali	Centre for Political and Institutional Expertise in Africa (CEPIA)
Sékou Diarra, Mali	Helvetas
Daouda Diarra, Mali	Secretary, Loi d’Orientation Agricole, Ministry of Agriculture
Adam Thiam, Mali	Journalist
Blandine Sankara, Burkina Faso	Civil society organisations
Mohamed Haïdara, Mali	AMASSA/ Afrique verte
Hélène Wannehain, France	Sciences citoyennes, Paris
René Segebenou, Benin	Social scientist, civil society networks, West Africa

Notes: M. Ousmane Sy was the Chair of the Oversight Panel for the first citizens’ jury held in January 2010 (ECID 1).

M. René Segebenou was the Oversight Panel Chair for the second citizens’ jury held in February 2010 (ECID 2).

In the following videos, two members of the oversight panel—the first from Burkina Faso and the second from Benin—comment on the quality and validity of the citizens’ jury process and outcomes.



3:25 mins

**Blandine Sankara**  
Oversight panel member (Burkina Faso)

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5:57 mins

**René Segebenou**  
Oversight panel member (Benin)

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- *Media dialogues.* National and regional media representatives from radio, TV and the written press worked with the project partners to organise a number of joint media events before, during and after the farmer/citizen deliberations. A series of media dialogues focused in turn on i) why the issues are important for wider society; ii) how the citizen deliberations and entire process has been designed and facilitated, with whom and where; iii) the farmer/citizens' jury recommendations for what kind of agricultural research they want. There was considerable press, radio and TV coverage of both citizens' juries, in Mali as well as across West Africa and in Europe. The following video clip explains how media professionals significantly contributed to spreading the news on the process and outcomes of the *Espace Citoyens d'Interpellation Démocratique* (citizens' juries) held in Nyeléni.
- *Documentation and video archives.* The entire process of citizens' deliberations was filmed to create a video archive of



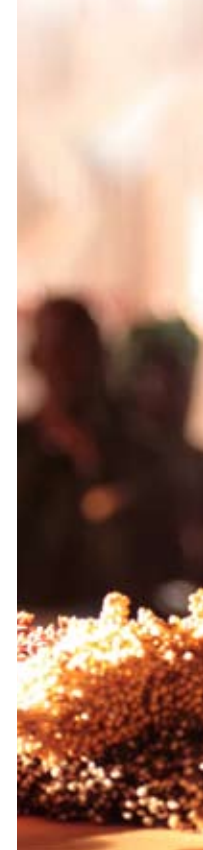
1:30 mins

## The Role of the Media

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the event. This is an important safeguard designed to ensure that the process is transparent and open to further scrutiny by third parties not present during the events. These video archives are available to any third party for viewing. In addition to this, the IIED project co-ordinator conducted a series of video recorded interviews with each specialist witness and selected members of the farmer juries and the independent oversight panel. The video recordings provide a summary of the main message and arguments made by each specialist witness. Videos also give valuable insights into how each person interviewed: i) experienced this event at a personal level; and ii) views the significance and impacts of the Nyeleni events. Some of this extensive video material has been edited into the short video clips (5 to 14 minutes) included in this multimedia publication. Once edited, more and longer video films will be posted on websites managed by West African partners and IIED ([www.excludedvoices.org](http://www.excludedvoices.org)).







- *Website.* The West Africa Steering Committee members have developed a website ([www.ecid-nyeleni.org](http://www.ecid-nyeleni.org)) to describe the process and outcomes of the West African citizens' juries on the directions and governance of agricultural research in both Bambara and French.

### 2.3.1. Outcomes

The small-scale producers and food processors who took part in the two citizens' juries were organised into four separate commissions:

1. Farmers' and Forest Users' Commission
2. Women's Commission
3. Herders' & Fishermen's Commission
4. Food Processors' Commission

As they listened and asked questions to the specialist witnesses, the jurors also reflected deeply on the significance of the entire deliberative process for their own lives and the future of agriculture in West Africa. Some of their questions, thoughts and hopes were shared in the following video film recording:



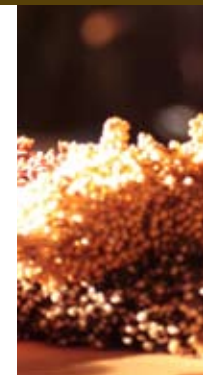
5:11 mins

**Reflections  
by farmer  
jurors**

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to view

or click here  
to view in  
browser

Each commission of jurors analysed the state of food and agriculture and of public research. The collective diagnosis and observations that grew out of these reflections are described below.





### *1. Models of agricultural production*

The use of traditional seeds is declining in West African farming. Certain hybrid seed varieties are unsuitable for local soils and customary practices. Moreover, certain types of externally supplied animal and fish semen are expensive.

The use of organic manure is declining, and trees in fields are being excessively felled. Agriculture in West Africa is increasingly based on the use of imported fertilisers and pesticides. As a result, cultivable land is being degraded by the use of chemical products and poor agricultural practices. The agricultural research system is dependent on external

funding. As a result, research on agriculture is oriented by outside interests, and this is detrimental to family farming.

### *2. Land tenure and property rights*

Large plots of land are being allocated to foreign investors for long periods. These policy options are having a negative impact on land management. There are numerous cases of land being expropriated from use for cultivation and housing by foreign investors. And it is difficult for women to gain access to land. More generally, there is increasingly high pressure on land from people and livestock.

### *3. The macro-economic context for food and agriculture*

The market is inequitable, with regulatory decisions taken by powerful external economic actors. Solidarity and social bonds are being eroded by financial greed. Producers are not involved in setting the price of agro-sylvo-pastoral products. Africa is used as a dumping ground by Europe. It is difficult to obtain funding for research. And agricultural producers are not routinely consulted prior to negotiations over external funding.

### *4. The directions and governance of food and agricultural research*

The government's allocation of funds for agricultural research is insufficient. Research in West Africa is largely externally-funded by donors, and therefore oriented towards donors' needs. The organisation of food and agricultural research in West Africa is also problematic. Research orientations and priorities are determined by donors and researchers alone. Women are under-represented in the bodies that make decisions about research. And research centres do not cover the whole country.





In the practice of research, producers are neither involved in—nor informed about—the different stages of agricultural research. Researchers work only with a very limited number of producers. Research findings are documented in a language that most producers do not understand. The results of research on livestock rearing and fishing are not sufficiently disseminated among herders, fisherfolk and others. Finally, agricultural research pays insufficient attention to food processing activities.

The ways of working of researchers do not sufficiently acknowledge the contributions of farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and food processors. Farmers and other

producers are not involved in drawing up strategic plans for agricultural research. Publications by researchers do not mention the participation and contributions made by producers. More generally, researchers are faced with a dilemma: either meet the producers' expectations or follow the orders from bosses above them in the research hierarchy.

Based on this collective analysis and the discussions after the presentations and cross examination of the specialist witnesses, the jurors developed a series of recommendations for policy makers. These are shown in Boxes 6 and 7 for each of the citizens' juries held in Nyeleni.



## Box 6. Recommendations of the citizens' jury on priorities for knowledge production and agricultural research

### A. Farmers' and Forest Users' Commission

1. Generate knowledge that will facilitate a fundamental rethink of agricultural policy: knowledge that fully recognises the work of farmers so that we can achieve food sovereignty and sustainable agriculture
2. Rebuild (reconstruct) agricultural policy by giving farmers a central role in defining this policy
3. Generate knowledge about local land tenure and its management in different communities and territories, and present this information in local languages so that everyone can understand it. Develop knowledge and practices to ensure that the interests of men, women and children are taken into account
4. Generate knowledge about markets and how they function, and develop strategies to promote and strengthen the local economy by adding value to local agricultural produce (greater security for farmers to avoid standing sales, predatory pricing, etc.)
5. Identify and investigate mechanisms that will enable the national economy to fund research, thereby avoiding dependence on external funding
6. Ensure research focuses on the concerns and resources of the poorest sectors of society
7. Involve farmers in every stage of creating and selecting varieties. Focus research on local varieties. Under no circumstances should the creation and selection of varieties produce hybrids and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).
8. Focus research on improving the productivity of local varieties (growing practices, local adaptation, land use, and soil fertility management)

9. Generate knowledge and technologies to support sustainable agriculture (agricultural tools and machines adapted to small-scale farming)
10. Involve research much more in producing knowledge on local biodiversity in order to add value to its use and values.
11. Conduct research on how to best use national mineral resources (e.g. Tilemsi phosphate and limestone)
12. Develop new strategies for integrated pest management and train producers to use them by taking into account local knowledge
13. Directly involve producers, users and consumers in controlling, conducting and monitoring research activities
14. Recognise and protect producers' landholdings and territories
15. Generate knowledge that will facilitate consultative and negotiated solutions to conflicts over land tenure and use
16. Develop mechanisms to implement the arrangements set out in the Framework Agricultural Law (*Loi d'Orientation Agricole*) for the retirement pension scheme of producers and for disaster management funds.

### B. Women's Commission

#### *Models of production*

1. Raise awareness/inform producers about good farming practices and maintaining the potential for soil productivity (combining and rotating crops, conserving crop residues, retaining tree and shrub species in fields)





## Box 6. Recommendations of the citizens' jury on priorities for knowledge production and agricultural research

2. Research should make an inventory of different local varieties of seeds, animal breeds, plants and fish fry so that they can be conserved and multiplied
3. Develop techniques to make more productive use of Tilemsi phosphate and organic manures
4. Train farmers in single animal traction and disseminate this practice on a large scale
5. Focus research activities on producers' concerns and needs
6. Involve male and female producers in the research process
7. Develop strategies to ensure that research is mainly funded by the state

### *Land tenure*

8. Devise strategies to increase women's representation on land tenure commissions to reach 50% and give them more responsibility
9. Develop research into how to allocate land titles to women
10. Develop strategies to prioritise riverside local residents (men, women and children) in the allocation of developed land (70% of land should be allocated to local riverside residents)
11. Provide producers with accurate information about land registration procedures
12. Generate new knowledge on tenure issues related to the management of croplands and the management of water used for irrigation

### *Macro-economic context*

13. Conduct more in-depth research into the impact and consequences of imported products (stock cubes, milk, seeds, tinned foods, etc.) on food quality

14. Take into account local products such as datou, soumbala, dried fish, etc. in research protocols and topics, and their potential to replace imported condiments like stock cubes
15. Develop procedures for consultation to identify producers' needs before starting any negotiations on priorities for agricultural research

### **C. Herders' & Fishermen's Commission**

#### *Models of production*

1. Develop strategies to establish a framework for consultations on natural resource management between the authorities and rural actors
2. Develop strategies to recognise and valorise the profession of livestock herding and fishing
3. Develop strategies for wide-scale dissemination and enforcement of the Pastoral Charter
4. Develop schemes to facilitate access to water on grazing lands by digging large-diameter wells and developing suitable waterholes
5. Research should develop strategies to promote the consumption of local food and agricultural produce
6. Develop strategies to replace plastic packaging with biodegradable materials
7. Research should develop strategies to replace pesticides with plant based products that are not harmful to human, animal and aquatic health

## Box 6. Recommendations of the citizens' jury on priorities for knowledge production and agricultural research

### *Land tenure*

8. Develop strategies to register locally-recognised land holdings and facilitate universal access to the land registry
9. Research should develop strategies to establish a framework for permanent consultation and dialogue between farmers and herders to facilitate good conflict management

### *Macro-economic context*

10. Find a mechanism for fostering the political will needed to implement measures that encourage the economic exchange and sale of agro-sylvo-pastoral products
11. Develop strategies to subsidise and support local food and agricultural products by involving different actors in the supply chain
12. Identify approaches and develop schemes that can enable producers to access funding tailored to their needs
13. Develop strategies to facilitate sales of our products on markets

## **D. Food Processors' Commission**

### *Models of production*

1. Develop mechanisms to ensure that agricultural research focuses on producers' real needs
2. Find strategies to promote local seeds as a means of achieving food sovereignty. Hybrid seeds and GMOs should be avoided.
3. Develop strategies to enable the state to provide material and financial support for agricultural research
4. Do research on mixed cropping systems and techniques, producing knowledge on how to give them more recognition and value

5. Identify ways to build on traditional knowledge and introduce village-level training to enhance local capacity to master production and processing skills and techniques
6. Identify strategies that will make producers, processors and markets more secure through the development of a convention
7. Build on and disseminate farmers' agro-ecological knowledge and innovations (on seeds, fertilisation, etc.)

### *Land tenure*

8. Develop strategies to get women recognised as fully-fledged professional farmers, rather than just as farmers' wives
9. Identify and develop ways of increasing women's representation on land allocation committees
10. Do in-depth research and reflect more deeply on the issue of land titles

### *Macro-economic context*

11. Conduct participatory research to clarify how water charges and development funds are managed
12. Conduct research into how the processing of local produce (fruit, fish, meat, milk, etc.) can provide the basis for a sound economy, nutrition and health
13. Develop innovations and appropriate technologies that will help support men and women food processors
14. Develop mechanisms to help protect the local market and local produce from unfair competition from imported products.









## Box 7. Citizens' jury recommendations on the governance of food and agricultural research

### A. Farmers' and Forest Users' Commission

#### *Research funding*

1. Agricultural research should be wholly government-funded to ensure its sovereignty
2. 10% of the national budget should be allocated to agricultural research

#### *Organisation of research*

3. Boost and strongly encourage participatory research by providing funding to the existing system

#### *Research practice*

4. Ensure that the land that is part of the national research estate is secured through legal means
5. Conduct off-station research, with agricultural producers fully participating in the design and execution of protocols and experiments

#### *Control over research*

6. Produce guidelines for a new type of agricultural research in which producers are involved in defining strategic research priorities and in the evaluation of results
7. Open up research to private national structures, with government providing the regulatory framework and rules
8. Train researchers and producers in participatory research methods and practices.

### B. Women's Commission

1. Research should be largely government-funded to guarantee food sovereignty
2. Establish consultative frameworks between the State, producers and researchers so that producers benefit more from the results of research
3. Develop strategies to encourage research institutions to employ young people, especially women
4. Promote women's participation in bodies that make decisions about agricultural research
5. Generate research information about local products so that they can be developed and given more value
6. Conduct research on seeds in order to adapt them to the local environment
7. Producers need to organise themselves to ensure that their concerns are fully reflected in legislation, - so that they can control agricultural research
8. Make innovations more accessible to producers (cost, proximity and timing).

### C. Livestock Herders' & Fishermen's Commission

1. Implement the legal arrangements for funding agricultural research, with particular emphasis on the livestock sector and fisheries
2. Conduct participatory research and put producers at the centre of the research process





## Box 7. Citizens' jury recommendations on the governance of food and agricultural research

3. Revitalise the Regional Commissions for Users of Research Findings (CRU) and make them more operational at the regional level
  4. Prepare and adopt a new, open and flexible type of memorandum of understanding between different research partners
  5. Observe the clauses in the memorandum of understanding (see 4)
  6. Consolidate partnerships between the actors involved in research
  7. Increase efforts to circulate and disseminate the results of participatory research
  8. Involve producers in the design, preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of research activities
  9. Strengthen producers' own research capacities
  10. De-concentrate and decentralise research structures to bring them closer to users
  11. Decision-makers should build on local knowledge and give more value to it
  12. Use local languages to disseminate the knowledge gained from research.
- D. Food Processors' Commission**
1. The State needs to invest more financial resources in agricultural research
  2. Organise citizen conferences to define the overarching policies and strategic priorities for agricultural research
  3. Involve producers in preparing national strategic plans for agricultural research
  4. Promote research that takes into account local social, economic and political realities
  5. Conduct more in-depth research into the techniques that can be used to process, develop, preserve and market local agricultural produce
  6. Increase the number of staff in research institutes and train them in participatory research
  7. Implement participatory research as agreed
  8. Involve elected officials in disseminating the results of agricultural research
  9. Develop mechanisms to implement the Framework Agricultural Law (Loi d'Orientation Agricole) and the Pastoral Charter
  10. Agricultural research should mainly focus on local varieties
  11. Establish frameworks for consultation between researchers and the users of research results so that they can participate in every stage of the research process
  12. Producers need to set up lobbying groups to defend their interests
  13. Facilitate and strengthen communication between the leaders of peasant farmer organisations and their grassroots members.









## Chapter 3. Reflections on the process so far<sup>9</sup>

### 3.1. A focus on experiential learning for change

The experiential learning built into the steering group's approach has been extended to a wider set of actors with the creation of a West African multi-stakeholder learning group. This now includes representatives from 25 African organisations (see Table 3). Invited individuals are “governance-connected”, drawn from divergent interests, institutions and sectors. Learning group members include representatives of peasant organisations advocating agrarian changes such as the ROPPA (*Le Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*<sup>10</sup>), as well as practitioner oriented groups promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, e.g. artisanal fisherfolk (*Association des Pêcheurs Résidents du Mali - APRAM*). It also includes representatives of National Agricultural Research Systems, such as the *Centre National de la Recherche Agronomique* (CNRA), and the steering group has invited the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa<sup>11</sup> (AGRA) to join this learning group.

9 This section draws extensively on Pimbert and Boukary, 2010.

10 [www.roppa.info](http://www.roppa.info).

11 [www.agra-alliance.org](http://www.agra-alliance.org).



**Table 3. Members of the Regional Learning Group**

Governance linked members	Technical and scientific members
1. Haut Conseil des Collectivités Territoriales (HCCT)	1. Plateforme Nationale des Riziculteurs du Mali
2. Conseil Economique, Social et Culturel (CESC)	2. Fédération Nationale des Organisations Productrices de Banane (FOPB)
3. Association des Consommateurs du Mali (ASCOMA)	3. Fédération des Groupements Interprofessionnels de la Filière Bétail et Viande (FEBEVIM)
4. Coalition pour la Protection du Patrimoine Génétique Africain (COPAGEN) – West Africa region	4. Fédération Nationale des Transformateurs des Produits Agroalimentaires du Mali (FENATRA)
5. Centre d'Expertise Politiques et Institutionnelles en Afrique (CEPIA)	5. Fédération Nationale des Producteurs Laitiers (FENALAIT) du Mali
6. Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA)	6. Fédération des Intervenants Avicoles du Mali (FIFAM)
7. Fédération des Collectifs d'ONG du Mali (FECONG/Mali)	7. Association des Pêcheurs Résidents du Mali (APRAM)
8. Conseil National de la Société Civile	8. Delta Survie - Sevaré
9. Commission Nationale des Utilisateurs des Résultats de la Recherche (CNU)	9. Association des Organisations Professionnelles Paysannes (AOPP) - Mali
10. Conseil de Concertation et d'appui aux ONG (CCA-ONG)	10. Fédération Malienne des Associations de Thérapeutes traditionnels et herboristes
11. Assemblée Régionale de Sikasso	11. Aide au Développement de la Médecine Traditionnelle
12. Biodiversité: Echange et Diffusion d'Expériences (BEDE) – France	12. Comité National de la Recherche Agricole (CNRA) - Mali
13. Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) – Africa	13. Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) - Africa





The learning group has no powers to influence the design of the farmer deliberations. Instead, this diverse platform allows interested parties to learn from both the process and outcomes of the citizen deliberations on the transformation of agricultural research. The learning group reflects the idea that good decisions can be made when they are based on engagement, dialogue, learning, and pragmatic choices. It provides a group of selected individuals with an informal and moderated space within which experiential learning, discussions and decisions can take place. It is hoped that by encouraging a participatory dynamic of experiential learning, new convergences will emerge among organisations associated with this initiative.

For example, the presence of ‘governance-connected’ members in the learning group may help link formal decision-making bodies and processes with the safe spaces in which expert and elite knowledge on agricultural research is put under public scrutiny. Similarly, it is hoped that the presence of federations of advocacy-based peasant organisations in the learning group will amplify the voices of West African farmers and link their policy recommendations to global social movements. This convergence between actors at local and international levels will be essential to build the necessary countervailing power to contest, transform and democratise national and international agricultural research for food sovereignty.

### 3.2. Reversing gender biases and prejudice against farmers

Inevitably a participatory process like this is non-linear and messy, with many contradictory ebbs and flows. Relationships and conflicts within and between advocacy and practice-based organisations constantly need to be worked through to build the trust required for joint large-scale transformation. Two recurring problems have been encountered:

1. The patriarchal attitudes and/or a lack of gender sensitivity shown by some farmer leaders. For example, “*We do not need*





2. Some peasant leaders and radical intellectuals often have doubts about the ability of ordinary farmers to understand complex issues and come up with the ‘right’ or ‘politically correct’ verdict in a citizens’ jury. All too often it is only after actually experiencing a citizens’ jury in action that such key figures in food sovereignty and sustainable agriculture movements feel safe enough “*to let go of their fears and power*” and trust ordinary farmers to act as rational citizens. This kind of ‘mind flip’ is reflected in a comment made by a well-known national peasant leader who was a specialist witness in the ECID de Sikasso (Box 2): “*One thing I discovered was that before going I thought I knew everything in the rural world because I am an intellectual and a farmer; but I realised that the truth is with the people who deal with farming. It has been a humbling truth – I learnt a lot from this process and I realised I didn’t know anything. The people who know are the farmers and they’ve never been to school*”.

*to include women in the citizens’ juries because they are not farmers*”: this astonishing comment was made by a senior member of one of the key peasant organisations in Mali, the AOPP (*Association des organisations professionnelles paysannes*). As a result, the AOPP stalled the preparatory process of the citizen jury on GMOs and the future of farming (Box 2). It took two months of discussions and negotiations among steering group members to convince this senior member of the AOPP that women did play a major role, not only in food preparation but also in the production of food, usually by farming small plots of land. In late July 2009, one of the heads of the AOPP threatened to remove his organisation from the steering group because he was unhappy that the *Convergence of Rural Women for Food Sovereignty*—another small producer organisation in Mali—had been formally accepted as a new member of the steering group. This decision was reversed – but only after a month of intense discussion and argument with some other members of the steering group.

Questions about the deliberative competence of ‘ordinary’ farmers regularly surfaced in the preparatory process for the citizen deliberations on agricultural research. However, there is evidence that the steering group is collectively developing a more mature understanding of what it takes to nurture and reclaim active forms of citizenship. Often repeated comments now include: “*This is really a school to learn about democratic practice and citizenship*” and “*Deep down we are all discovering how a more direct democracy can re-invigorate political life in our society*”. Commenting on the emancipatory quality of the process now unfolding in West Africa, one of the members of the independent oversight panel said: “*This is the sort of process that has been the missing link in bringing together local perspectives on farming and campaigners working for change at national and international levels*” (Adam Thiam, personal communication 2009).







Time will tell if these practices and insights encourage less prescriptive modes of advocacy in favour of more bottom up, deliberative processes that allow previously marginalised men and women to control the governance of agricultural research and directly participate in its transformation for food sovereignty. Meanwhile, it is clear that these efforts to democratise agricultural research are already encouraging new ways of working, alliances and convergence between practice-oriented sustainable agriculture networks and advocacy oriented peasant organisations in West Africa.

### 3.3. Influencing policy and practice: the road ahead

Following the outcomes of the citizens' juries, the West Africa steering group has prioritised activities designed to change agricultural research policies and practice. In the next two years, lessons learnt from these citizen deliberations and the farmers' policy recommendations will be shared through:

1. *Presentations and policy dialogues in West Africa.* In Mali for example, provincial government and local actors (farmers, food processors, urban based food consumers, etc.) are now being

approached in the country's nine administrative regions for discussing policy changes. The link between the citizens' juries recommendations and the implementation of the government's *Loi d'Orientation Agricole* (the national policy framework for food and agriculture) will be a key focus for discussion with decision makers. At a later date, interventions are planned for informing debates in Mali's National Assembly, as well as in the capital cities of Benin, Burkina Faso and Senegal.

As discussed elsewhere (Pimbert and Boukary, in preparation), the juries' recommendations are directly relevant for current debates on the future of food and farming in West Africa. Producer organisations and federations of peasant organisations in Mali (CNOP) and the West Africa region (ROPPA) are now using the juries' recommendations to develop strategies for policy and media dialogues, as well as political negotiations on the transformation of food and agricultural research for food sovereignty.

2. *International exchanges.* Partners involved in this global action research initiative have also planned a number of activities to facilitate:

- i) South-South exchange of experiences for mutual learning and joint action among all regional partners and other actors
- ii) South-North linkages and exchanges to foster wider public debate on the governance and directions of food and agricultural research in Europe and the USA.

Engagement with global institutions such as AGRA, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the FAO, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), international donors and foundations will be important moments in this process of reclaiming research for the public good. A key starting point in these engagements with these international organisations will be to make more explicit the framing assumptions around diverse positions and knowledge claims: to bring them centre stage. Opportunities of bringing other actors and voices into such processes—including farmers themselves and wider organised movements—will be seized to bring together different politics, perspectives, values, and interests and to aim for politically negotiated solutions. This will be a major challenge for all involved.





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## Annex A: Members of the citizens' juries, ECID 1 and 2

List of participants – Citizens' jury on priorities for agricultural research, 11th to 17th January 2010, Sélingué (Mali)

N°	Name & Surname	Gender		Provenance		Main livelihood	Size			Main activity				
		M	F	Commune	Village		S	M	L	1	2	3	4	5
1	Boukary Barry	X		Diankabou	Diankabou	Livestock keeper		X		X				
2	Amadou Koita	X		Ségou	Ségou	Livestock keeper			X	X				
3	Lamine Kounta	X		Léré	Léré	Livestock keeper	X			X				
4	Boubou Sidi Bocoum	X		Gathy loumo	Farimaké	Livestock keeper			X	X				
5	Fati Walet Hamalouta		X	Tombouctou	Tombouctou	Food processing	X							X
6	Aminata Traoré		X	Sikasso	Sikasso	Food processing		X						X
7	Oumarou Traoré	X		Kolokani	Sido	Farmer			X			X		
8	Cheicknè Dicko	X		Kolobo	Madina Sacko	Fishing			X	X				
9	Bakary Bamba	X		Yanfolila	Yanfolila	Market gardener			X				X	
10	Amadou Touré	X		Goundam	Goundam	Farmer	X					X		
11	Ibrahima Siboliya	X		Mopti	Mopti	Fishing		X			X			
12	Dramane Coulibaly	X		Sando	Tissala	Farmer		X				X		
13	Pierre Théra	X		Tominian	Souara	Food processing			X					X
14	Alou Sanogo	X		Kolondiéba	Kolondiéba	Farmer		X				X		
15	Yacouba Goïta	X		Yorosso	Benikorola	Nursery		X				X		
16	Allaye Diallo	X		Koury	Koury	Livestock keeper			X	X				
17	Drissa Sangaré	X		Sikasso	Sirama	Farmer			X			X		
18	Yousseuf Djourté	X		Kadiolo	Loulouni	Farmer		X				X		
19	Hawa Coulibaly		X	Fakolo	Zansoni	Farmer	X					X		
20	Boubacar Diallo	X		Bamako	Bamako	Urban consumer								
21	Oumou Ballo		X	Macina	Macina	Farmer	X					X		
22	Mamadou Keïta	X		Kita	Kita	Farmer		X				X		
23	Toukamady Sissoko	X		Gori	Gori	Farmer		X				X		



N°	Name & Surname	Gender		Provenance		Main livelihood	Size			Main activity				
		M	F	Commune	Village		S	M	L	1	2	3	4	5
24	Mamadou B Diarra	X		Bamako	Bamako	Urban consumer								
25	Mamadou Traoré	X		Toumanibougou	Mpèsérébougou	Farmer		X				X		
26	Awa Diarra		X	Massantola	Massantola	Farmer		X				X		
27	Noumoutènè Diarra		X	Masantola	N'goloblebougou	Farmer	X					X		
28	Didier Tolofon	X		Bénin	Allada	Food processing			X					X
29	Awa Sawadogo		X	Burkina Faso	Dapelogo	Food processing	X							X
30	Christoph Konkobo	X		Burkina Faso	Dapelogo	Market gardener		X				X		
31	Founè Konaté		X	Kayes	Kayes	Livestock keeper	X			X				
32	Eugénie Marques		X	Bénin	Zogbohouè	Market gardener		X				X		
33	Hawa Ario		X	Gao	Berrah	Market gardener		X				X		
34	Alhoussouna Dicko		X	Gao	Boya	Livestock keeper	X			X				
35	Fanta Soumaré		X	Kolondiéba	Kolondiéba	Food processing	X							X
36	Harouna Guédjou	X		Sénégal	Ziguinchor	Farmer		X				X		
37	Fatoumata Diallo		X	Bamako	Bamako	Food processing		X						X
38	Bintou Cissouma		X	Pelengana	Pelengana	Farmer		X				X		
39	Ami Dembélé		X	Ségou	Ségou	Farmer	X					X		
40	Badiallo Sylla		X	Nioro	Nioro	Market gardener		X				X		
41	Aïssata Bah		X	Sikasso	Sikasso	Food processing	X							X
42	Kadia Doumbia		X	Garalo	Garalo	Farmer		X				X		
43	Hamadoun Kalil	X		Tombouctou	Tombouctou	Livestock keeper		X		X				
44	Abdoulaye Sidi	X		G.Rarhous	Kano	Fishing			X		X			
45	Faliry Bolly	X		Kalasigida	Molodo	Livestock keeper		X				X		

**Key:** 1: Livestock rearing, 2 : fishing, 3 : farming, 4 : forest use, 5 : food processing.  
S: small, M : medium, L : large.

## List of participants – Citizens' jury on the governance of agricultural research, 1st to 7th February 2010, Sélingué (Mali)

N°	Name and surname	Gender		Provenance		Main livelihood	Size			Main activity				
		M	F	Commune	Village		S	M	L	1	2	3	4	5
1	David Sagara	X		Sikasso	Farakala	Livestock keeper	X			X				
2	Hamidou Koité	X		Mahina	Mahina	Farmer		X				X		
3	Mahi Keïta	X		Macina	Kemana	Livestock keeper	X				X			
4	Hamidi Sidibé	X		Yanfolila	Yanfolila	Livestock keeper		X		X				
5	Fanta Konaté		X	Bougouni	Bougouni	Livestock keeper								
6	Demba Barry	X		Farako	Kalabougou	Farmer		X				X		
7	Mohamed H. Maïga	X		Rharous	Hamzakoma	Livestock keeper			X	X				
8	Aminata minté Moulaye		X	Gao	Berrah	Food processing	X							X
9	Harouna Diallo	X		Madina coute	Marena	Farmer		X				X		
10	Hamadoun Cissé	X		Mopti	Mopti	Livestock keeper	X			X				
11	Moussa Diawara	X		Bougouni	Madina	Farmer								
12	Nabi Barama Sagara	X		Bougouni	Kebila	Farmer		X				X		
13	Kalifa Traoré	X		Kangaba	Tora	Farmer		X				X		
14	Saly Sissoko		X	Kayes	Kayes	Food processing	X							X
15	Salif Traoré	X		Kadiolo	Kadiolo	Food processing		X						X
16	Adama Tangara	X		Yangaso	Yangasso	Farmer		X				X		
17	Kassoum Tenintao	X		Kewa	Kouakourou	Pêcheur		X			X			
18	Djénéba Coulibaly		X	Gao	Gao	Food processing	X							X
19	Sitan Diarra		X	Bamako	Bamako	Food processing		X						X
20	Assétou Bah		X	Mandé	Ouèzindougou	Farmer			X			X		
21	Minian Diarra		X	Kolokani	Kolokani	Food processing	X							X
22	Moctar Diarra	X		Mandé	Kalababougou	Tree farmer		X					X	
23	Badou Soumouno	X		Bamako	Bamako	Urban consumer								
24	Abou Sanogo	X		Koutiala	Koniko	Farmer		X					X	



N°	Name and surname	Gender		Provenance		Main livelihood	Size			Main activity				
		M	F	Commune	Village		S	M	L	1	2	3	4	5
25	Boubou Diabira	X		Kayes	Kayes	Farmer			X			X		
26	Mama Sylla		X	Nioro	Nioro	Farmer		X				X		
27	Djélé J Cissé	X		Yorosso	Komé	Farmer		X				X		
28	Fatoumétou Zouboye		X	Bamako	Bamako	Urban consumer								
29	Hadèye Touré		X	Ansogo	Ansogo	Food processing	X							X
30	Bintou B Diarra		X	Ganadougou	Finkolo	Food processing	X							X
31	Minignan Coulibaly		X	Bamako	Bamako	Market gardener	X					X		
32	Awa Dembélé		X	Tominian	Tominian	Farmer		X				X		
33	Ténin Kanté		X	Yanfolila	Yanfolila	Farmer	X					X		
34	Fatoumata Saloum		X	Tombouctou	Tombouctou	Farmer			X			X		
35	Tada Mahamane		X	Tombouctou	Tombouctou	Farmer		X				X		
36	Dico Touré		X	Déboye	Ngarwaye	Farmer	X			X				
37	Amadou Mariko	X		Bamako	Bamako	Urban consumer								
38	Salimata Guindo		X	Barapirelie	Berelie	Farmer	X					X		
39	Assé Cissé	X		Tombouctou	Tombouctou	Farmer	X					X		
40	Bassira Goïta		X	Yorosso	Yorosso	Farmer	X					X		

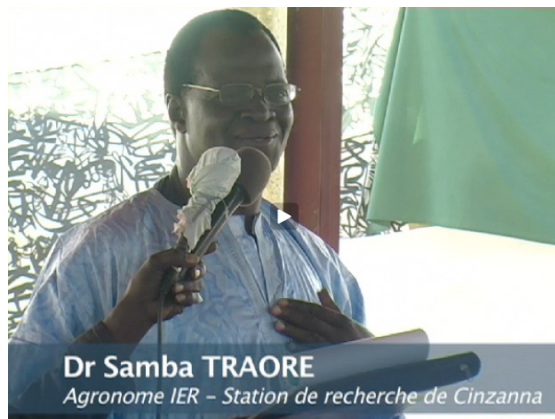
**Key :** 1 : Livestock rearing, 2 : fishing, 3 : farming, 4 : forest use, 5 : food processing.

S : small, M : medium, L : large.



## Annex B. Specialist witnesses for the citizens' juries, ECIDs 1 and 2

### Specialist witnesses for ECID 1



**Dr Samba TRAORE**

Agronome IER – Station de recherche de Cinzana



**Francisca DIOUF**

Paysanne, ASPSP – Sénégal



**Dr Amadou COULIBALY**

Agro-écologiste IPR de Katibougou – Mali

#### 1. Dr Samba Traoré, Director, Cinzana Research Station, Mali

What type of agricultural research is needed to increase agricultural production based on local cereals (sorghum, millet) while preserving the environment in Mali?

#### 2. Dr Oumar Niangado, Director, Syngenta Fondation, Mali

What type of research and plant breeding are needed for sustainable agriculture and increased food security in West Africa?

*Invited and agreed to give evidence. But could not participate in the event.*

#### 3. Farmer specialist witness group: Omer Agoligan (Benin), Koro Sangare and Ousmane Sinare (Mali), Francisca Diouf (Senegal).

Seed selection: what type of agricultural research is needed?

#### 4. Dr Amadou K. Coulibaly, Professor of Ecological Entomology, University of Mali, Katibougou

What type of research is needed in agro-ecology for sustainable agriculture and greater food sovereignty in West Africa?





## Specialist witnesses for ECID 1



### 5. Prof. Cheibane Coulibaly, Dean, University Mande Bukari, Mali

What social science research is needed to develop property right regimes (on land and other natural resources) based on the principles of subsidiarity and autonomy as well as on West African values, knowledge, and local institutions?

### 6. Dr Joan Kagwanja, Policy Officer, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Kenya

The importance of research on gender issues in a value chain approach to the development of African agriculture and markets, including land markets. *Invited but could not participate.*



### 7. Dr Marie Monimart, Independent Social Science Researcher

Why should agricultural research take into account gender relations when analysing access and control over land and other natural resources? How can gender biases be overcome in research on property rights?

### 8. CEDRAO. Mohamadou Masha, Executive Coordinator, ROPPA, Burkina Faso

The agricultural research policy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). *Invited and confirmed. But could not participate in the event.*



### 9. Dr Aminata Dramane Traoré, Ex-Minister of Culture, Government of Mali

What research is needed to re-think macroeconomic policies for greater food and political sovereignty in West Africa?



## Specialist witnesses for ECID 1



10. Prof. Gilbert Rist, Institut Universitaire d' Etudes du Développement (IUED), Geneva, Switzerland

Decolonising economics to make other worlds possible. What kind of research is needed to develop an alternative economics that puts human well being, reciprocity and solidarity at the centre?

## Specialist witnesses for ECID 2



1. Dr Adama Traoré, Executive Director, Centre Nationale pour la Recherche Agronomique (CNRA), Mali

An overview of the organisation and governance of agricultural research in Mali

2. Dr Oumar Niangado, Syngenta Foundation, Mali

How should the governance of agricultural research change to strengthen partnerships between the private and public sectors – especially for plant breeding aimed at improving seeds in West Africa?

*Invited and agreed to give evidence. But could not participate in the event.*



3. Farmer specialist witness group: Omer Agoligan (Benin), Koro Sangare and Ousmane Sinaré (Mali), Francisca Diouf (Senegal).

How can agricultural research be made more participatory and farmer-led in plant and livestock breeding programs?





## Specialist witnesses for ECID 2



**4. Mr René Alphonse, President,  
Fédération des groupements  
interprofessionnels de la Filière Bétail et  
Viande (FEBEVIM), Mali**

What changes in the governance and funding of agricultural research are required to better take into account the needs of livestock herders and pastoral societies in West Africa?



**5. Dr Philippe De Leneer, University of  
Louvain, Belgium**

How can the work of professional scientists be transformed to enable participatory research and a genuine co-construction of knowledge with farmers?



**6. Dr Bino Temé, Director, Institut  
d'Economie Rurale (IER), Mali**

What type of governance and funding are needed for agricultural research to achieve the objectives enshrined in the National Agricultural Policy (Loi d'Orientation Agricole) in Mali?



## Specialist witnesses for ECID 2



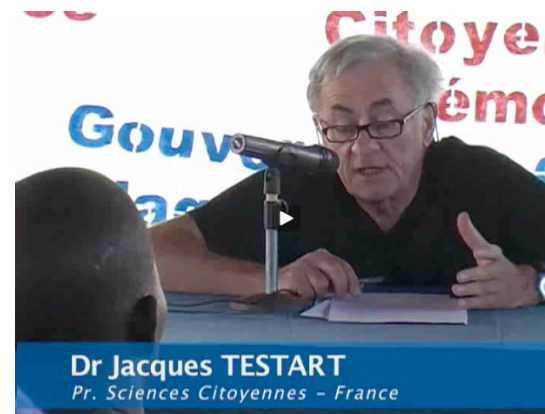
7. Prof. Neils RÖling, Emeritus Professor,  
University of Wageningen,  
The Netherlands

Road maps for innovation in food and  
agriculture



8. Dr Amatévi Raoul Klutsé, Senior  
Researcher, Alliance for a Green  
Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Ghana

AGRA's role in the governance of  
agricultural research. Can private sector  
led research and development feed the  
poor in Africa?



9. Dr Jacques Testart, President Sciences  
Citoyennes, Paris, France

Democratising agricultural research: the  
role of citizen-centered participatory  
processes







This multimedia book reports on an initiative in West Africa that seeks to create safe spaces in which food providers and consumers can discuss how to build an agri-food research system that is democratic and accountable to wider society. An explicit aim of the entire process is to strengthen the voices and effectiveness of small-scale producers and other citizens in the governance of agricultural research as well as in setting strategic research priorities and validating knowledge.

The book combines text, photos, video and audio recordings to describe the methodologies used in processes of deliberation and inclusion that involved small scale producers (farmers, pastoralists, fishermen and food processors) and holders of specialist knowledge on agricultural research. The policy recommendations that emerged out of two citizens' juries and farmer led assessments of agricultural research are presented here along with some critical reflections on the process so far. The outcomes of these citizen deliberations have significant implications for current debates on the future of food and farming in West Africa.

This multimedia publication is available both online and as hardcopy book.

*The Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship Series seeks to encourage debate outside mainstream policy and conceptual frameworks on the future of food, farming and land use. The opportunities and constraints to regenerating local food systems based on social and ecological diversity, human rights and more inclusive forms of citizenship are actively explored by contributors. Authors are encouraged to reflect deeply on the ways of working and outcomes of their research, highlighting implications for policy, knowledge, organisations and practice. The Reclaiming Diversity and Citizenship Series is published by the Food and Agriculture Team at the International Institute for Environment and Development.*

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Ministerie van Ruimtelijke Zaken  
**Ontwikkelingssamenwerking**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC

