

GB-NEWS

ISSUE 015 | AUG 28TH 2025

FARMER MANAGED SEED SYSTEMS IN THE DIGITAL AGE.

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For generations, farmers across Kenya have managed, saved, and exchanged their own seeds. These farmer managed seed systems (FMSS) are the foundation of food sovereignty, ensuring that communities retain control over what they plant, eat, and pass on to the next generation. Long before modern seed companies entered the picture, indigenous seeds, carefully selected and shared were the basis of resilience, culture, and nutrition.

But today, this foundation is under threat. Current seed policies and regulations in Kenya emphasize the certification and commercialization of seed, often favoring large companies and narrowing the definition of what counts as “legal” seeds. Many farmers find themselves in a difficult position: the very seeds they have saved and shared for decades are considered “informal,” even though they are central to household food security. The push towards certified hybrid and GMO varieties risks eroding the biodiversity that small-holder farmers have safeguarded for centuries.

It is a matter of farmers’ rights. Every farmer should have the right to keep, use and exchange their seeds without fear of criminalization or loss of access. Protecting farmer managed seed systems is about the future of food security in Kenya.

This is why we have taken a step forward by linking tradition with technology. Over the past year, G-BiACK has been



developing a Digital Seed Catalog System, a tool designed to document, protect, and amplify the value of indigenous seeds. Each entry in the catalog tells a story: where the seed came from, who shared it, its indigenous name, and the conditions it thrives in. Every seed is assigned a unique code and QR label, which connects physical seeds to digital records, making them traceable and visible beyond the confines of a single farm.

Our hope is that through digitalization, we can amplify the voices of farmers and remind policymakers that seeds are not just commodities, they are life, culture, and future.



Kitambasie Farmers during a farmer’s seeds event at Ndonyo community 2024.

As we continue to grow this work, we invite partners, communities, and policymakers to recognize that defending farmer-managed seed systems is defending food security itself. Because the right to keep our seeds is the right to keep our future. The path forward must protect biodiversity, uphold farmers’ rights, and embrace innovation.

YEP INTAKE



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

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Alone we do so little,
Together we can do so much.

SPIRITUAL VERSE

Two are better than one,
because they have a good
return of their labour.



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Hurry, September Intake Ends Soon!