

Community-based assessment of seed flow networks and variety selection in Eastern Kenya.

1st year student
Cameroon Field School
Research Area: Republic of Kenya
YOSHIKAWA Kumiko

Key words: seed, variety selection, social networking system

Background and objectives of this research

Natural evolutionary processes together with human-managed factors greatly contribute to crop diversity. However, it is not well understood what type of individuals in community play a significantly greater role in maintaining the crop diversity and what processes are involved. The purpose of my research is to declare how smallholders recognize different varieties to select and how individuals in the community gain possession of both formal and informal seeds.

In Eastern Kenya, many people forced to lack of food and water in dry season. Moreover lack of seed is serious problem for farmers in planting season so that most farmers start seeking seed using several sources, such as purchase, given, exchange and so on. The study will focus on identification of smallholders knowledge of different variety and on their processes involved in seed choice and utilization.

First, I conduct agro-diversity survey. The focus group meeting will be held in research village to discuss variety of each species planted in recent years and their morphological and perform differences. After Agro-diversity survey, I will conduct a structured interview in each household in a research village to clarify the map of seed flow networks of individuals in the community. The seed flow networks of 6 generation(sum of previous three season and after three season)will chased by follow-up survey on the farmers who exchange seed .

The research will show us farmers recognition and selection factors of different variety and also source of seed they obtain to keep crop diversity. Understanding how an informal seed system fundamentally occurs through the interpersonal relationships of the individuals creating their networks in the community will provide information on seed selection and what kinds of incentives are affective for local farmers to keep crop variety.

Pictures



Commercial crops in open-air market.



Traditional food "Kitheri" in Eastern Kenya.



Planting improved plant of cassava.



Making steamed cassava.