



Supporting small farmers. Sustaining biodiversity.



“GRAIN, an advocacy group that opposes large-scale agribusiness, has played a key role in bringing attention to what it calls the ‘global land grab’.”

—The New York Times Magazine

Who is GRAIN?

GRAIN began its work in the 1980s, when activists around the world first began drawing attention to the dramatic loss of genetic diversity on our farms—the very cornerstone of the world’s food supply. GRAIN was a pioneer in putting the issue on the United Nations agenda, introducing it into national debates and spreading awareness among grassroots organizations.

Some 20 years later, GRAIN has become one of the world’s leading international non-profit organizations struggling for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems. GRAIN conducts independent research and analysis that

is grounded in local realities; catalyzes action and cooperation at local, regional and international levels; and engages in capacity-sharing and movement-building with allies. GRAIN’s work reflects input from and collaboration with a broad network of local partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Beyond helping local communities in the global South, GRAIN is on the cutting edge of issues that affect us all, such as food safety and climate change. GRAIN’s research and analysis is recognized for being critical, trustworthy, and ahead of the curve. GRAIN connects the macro with the micro, keeping an eye on global trends while remaining connected to the grassroots level. GRAIN’s research

and analysis is respected and used by governments and multilateral policy makers from Brussels to Washington, D.C.—even those who disagree with GRAIN’s stance.

The Industrial Food System Doesn’t Feed the World

In hopes of combating hunger and climate change, governments around the world focus their investments on industrial agriculture and corporate-run food supply chains. Sadly, this model ignores small farmers and their complex farming and food distribution systems which have nourished humankind for more than 12,000 years. Today, over



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Today, over one billion people live in hunger due to an industrial food system that places global markets ahead of feeding people.

one billion people live in hunger due to an industrial food system that places global markets ahead of feeding people. Seventy-percent of those living in hunger are small scale food producers—a stark testament to the dysfunction of our current system.

The privatization of natural resources and knowledge, and the expansion of global agribusiness have destabilized community-driven food systems. The assaults take many forms: a massive new wave of land and water grabbing; the ongoing push for biofuels and genetically modified crops; and new seed laws that continue to shift power and resources from the rural poor to the global elite. These trends threaten family farming

systems and diminish local control over agriculture throughout the global South, while exposing more and more communities to food shortages.

GRAIN's Role in the Fight for Change

GRAIN monitors, investigates and exposes food and farming issues in partnership with a range of local groups, social movements and global networks. From the Philippines to Mexico City, GRAIN staff work in every time zone and in many languages, constantly monitoring new developments and sharing this information and analysis with partners, policy-makers and the public. By providing reliable research

and analysis, GRAIN occupies a crucial space in the international movement to protect biodiversity and promote community-controlled food systems.

In addition to conducting and distributing research, GRAIN helps link together social movements and groups that are working to create more diverse and just food and farming systems. GRAIN believes it is essential to partner with local groups to develop strategies and generate viable support mechanisms for community-controlled food systems. As a small organization, GRAIN leverages its organizational impact by collaborating with regional and international networks worldwide.



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“I’d like to use this opportunity to thank GRAIN for its pioneering work on this issue. GRAIN’s perspective helped bring the issue to international attention.”

—Jean-Philippe Audinet, IFAD

GRAIN in Action Around the World

Resisting the Corporate Green Revolution in Africa

In 2009, GRAIN conducted an analysis of the Green Revolution in Malawi, uncovering a vulnerable and politically sensitive situation among farmers. Despite rosy portrayals in the media and a program being touted as worthy of being scaled to the rest of Africa through the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the policies are moving farmers and indeed the whole country further away from food sovereignty. Meanwhile, farmers critical of the program are being silenced via

GRAIN works hard to ensure that its research and analysis reach a broad range of audiences. Information is shared worldwide through a variety of publications:

- **Seedling** - a quarterly English-language bulletin with a readership of 60,000, 40 percent of whom are based in the global South.

- **Biodiversidad** - a quarterly magazine in Spanish and Portuguese reflecting the concerns and analyses of NGOs and social movements in Latin America.
- **Soberanía Alimentaria** - a Spanish quarterly produced in partnership with the food sovereignty movement in Spain.
- **Semences de la Biodiversité** - a network

bulletin produced by and for members of the Francophone Coalition for the Protection of Africa’s Genetic Heritage (COPAGEN), of which GRAIN is an active member.

- **Other Publications:** GRAIN also produces in-depth briefings and short opinion pieces through its commentary series, *Against the Grain*.

threats and intimidation. In response, GRAIN is partnering with local farmers and activists to challenge AGRA and bring community-based alternatives to the table—a difficult task given the incredible resources and public relations machinery being invested by the Gates Foundation and transnational corporations. **Especially when local communities cannot safely voice their**

concerns for fear of retaliation, GRAIN’S studies showing how AGRA is pushing Africa in the wrong direction are vitally important.

Partnering with Women Farmers to Strengthen Seed Systems

Across Western Africa, women farmers are at the forefront of a movement to



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played an important role in shaping proposals to the intergovernmental negotiations and fostered new partnerships and cooperation in the process.

Helping Farmers Connect in Asia

After the massive floods in Pakistan in 2010, which killed thousands and affected 20 million, GRAIN helped link local partners, peasant groups and networks to coordinate a proactive plan for agricultural reconstruction. One of the plan's main objectives was to counter efforts by the Pakistani government and transnational seed companies to use the disaster as a way to introduce genetically modified and hybrid seeds. GRAIN and other organizations worked to help farmers rebuild their own seed systems independently. **As a result, Pakistani peasant networks are now linking up with farmers' seed saving networks in the Philippines.** The goal is to directly bring Filipino farmers to Pakistan to

resist genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and other new hybrid seeds and systems that threaten biodiversity and small farms. GRAIN has been conducting research with women's groups on the ground in Benin, Senegal, and other countries in Francophone Africa, in partnership with the COPAGEN network's efforts to strengthen family farming in the region. **GRAIN is now helping to document successful experiences in strengthening peasant seed systems in eight Francophone African countries.** Sharing lessons learned in West Africa will help catalyze other initiatives to safeguard biodiversity and protect food sovereignty across the African continent.

Supporting Peasant Mobilizations on Climate Change

GRAIN played a major role in helping local groups prepare for the Cochabamba Climate Summit, held in Bolivia in 2010. The organization worked closely with La Via Campesina to ensure that agriculture was a major focus of discussion at the summit. **The working group on climate and agriculture ended up being one of the best attended, and its conclusions and recommendations were included in the formal report from the Summit.** GRAIN also used the summit as an opportunity to disseminate findings about the role of peasant agriculture in reducing greenhouse gases. Throughout the summit, GRAIN



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“It was because of the GRAIN report that my government decided to initiate the process of drafting principles for responsible acquisition of land.”

—Sunichi Inoue, Japanese Government

share and strategize on how to rebuild Pakistani peasant seed systems—farmer-to-farmer capacity building at its best.

Spreading Information, Sharing Knowledge

To help combat the growing problem of land grabbing, GRAIN launched an open publishing website, farmlandgrab.org, in 2009. The site quickly became a well-respected and widely used resource by activists, researchers, journalists and even policy-makers working on land issues. By the end of 2010, the site contained more than 2,750 articles in a dozen languages, reached 1,000 visitors per day, and had 2,325 subscriptions to its weekly digest. The

site is the only venue where land grab contracts have been exposed to the public, and according to the World Bank, it is “the only source that can claim global coverage.” In early 2011, GRAIN launched French and Spanish versions of the site to better serve partners in Francophone Africa and Latin America.

GRAIN’s trilingual website, grain.org helps people access up-to date information on food and farming issues. The website attracts 300,000 visitors a year, 50% of whom are in the global South. In addition to French and Spanish translations of the website, GRAIN has translated publications into Portuguese, Arabic, Hindi, Lao, Mandarin and Bahasa Indonesia. Partners also produce further

translations, such as into local languages for use by community radios in Africa.

Building on Our Strengths for 2011 and Beyond

GRAIN sees both groundbreaking opportunities and great challenges in the coming years. Many of the issues that GRAIN has been championing for two decades are finally getting international attention, and GRAIN is positioned to provide sharp and critical analysis that can help further set the agenda and motivate meaningful change.



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GRAIN's work in the coming years will focus on three themes:

Land Grabbing

In 2008, GRAIN broke the story on land grabbing, and has continued to produce tracking and analysis on the issue ever since. As a result, GRAIN has become a central reference organization that policy makers, social movements and media turn to for the latest analysis of land grabbing. Immediate priorities are (1) to continue producing good information and analysis on landgrabbing so that communities can resist investors and government initiatives as they see it best; and (2) to help build strong public alliances

against land grabbing, to pressure for political change and get it stopped. Part of this task involves turning the interest in "investing in agriculture" into actual investing in food sovereignty and family farming. GRAIN also plans to do follow-up research on the link between land grabs and unsustainable water usage.

Food & Climate Change

Food and climate change will continue to be a central focus for GRAIN's work in the year ahead. GRAIN's analysis shows that the way we farm, fish, transport and refrigerate our food is responsible for half of the global greenhouse gases that throw the climate into disarray, not 20 percent as previously thought.

Alternative agricultural models based on smaller and more decentralized farms that emphasize biodiversity and sustainability over petrol and chemicals can play a crucial role in fighting the climate crisis. And small farms have historically been much more successful at distributing food equitably and avoiding the food shortages that have increased in recent years, even as industrial production has advanced. GRAIN is committed to bringing this message to an ever-broader audience, with more research, outreach, and stronger coalition building.

Building Local Seed Networks

Agricultural biodiversity remains one of GRAIN's top priority issues. Not only is biodiversity necessary for maintaining food sovereignty, it's a strong entry point at the local level for communities to regain control over their livelihoods. GRAIN will continue to support the efforts of regional and local seed networks in Latin America



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biodiversity-based food systems. Henk is the coordinator of GRAIN, and as such is responsible for the overall functioning of the organization as well as conducting global trends research, writing and outreach activities.

Renée Vellvé

Renée has been working on biodiversity issues since the early 1980s, when she became active with French peasant organizations and solidarity groups fighting for farmers' rights to use local seeds. In 1990, she helped Henk set up GRAIN in Barcelona, Spain, and has been with the organization since. For the past 15 years she has been based in the Philippines, from where she helps carry out GRAIN's global program on trade and agriculture. Some of the key areas she has been focusing on are intellectual property, people's struggles around free trade agreements and now land grabbing. Renée helps run the open-publishing websites **bilaterals.org** and **farmlandgrab.org**, and helps Henk with the overall coordination of GRAIN.

and Francophone Africa and share emerging knowledge and strategies with organizations working to build seed networks in other parts of the world.

GRAIN will also continue to produce critical analysis on transnational seed corporations and international development agencies leading the world further down the path of the industrial food system. New research will look at the global dairy industry, and the impact it has on pastoralists and peasant farmers. GRAIN also plans to analyze the role of the emerging agro-export giants such as Brazil, and take a critical look at the fertilizer industries.

About GRAIN's Founders

Henk Hobbelink

Henk is an agronomist by training. In the 1980s he worked with farmers in Peru on sustainable pest management. After that he worked with several Dutch and European NGOs drawing attention to the importance of agricultural biodiversity for the future of farming, and authored several books on the issue. In 1990 he co-founded GRAIN, together with Renée Vellvé, to put this work on a more solid footing. Over the past two decades he helped to grow GRAIN into a truly international collective that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and



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An Invitation to Join Us

After 20 years of cutting-edge research and advocacy, GRAIN has become a global leader on food security, biodiversity and community rights. We are committed to making a difference on these issues, but we need additional resources and support to make it happen.

As we build on our accomplishments and look to the future, we are seeking to develop new partnerships with people and organizations who share our commitment to these issues. We welcome those who are inspired to join us!

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