

Engaging with Academia and Research Institutions (ARIs) to support Family Farmers and Food System Transformation During and Post COVID-19 Pandemic in Asia



With technical assistance from the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Transforming research in support of agroecology and sustainable food systems

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Challenges for small and family farmers

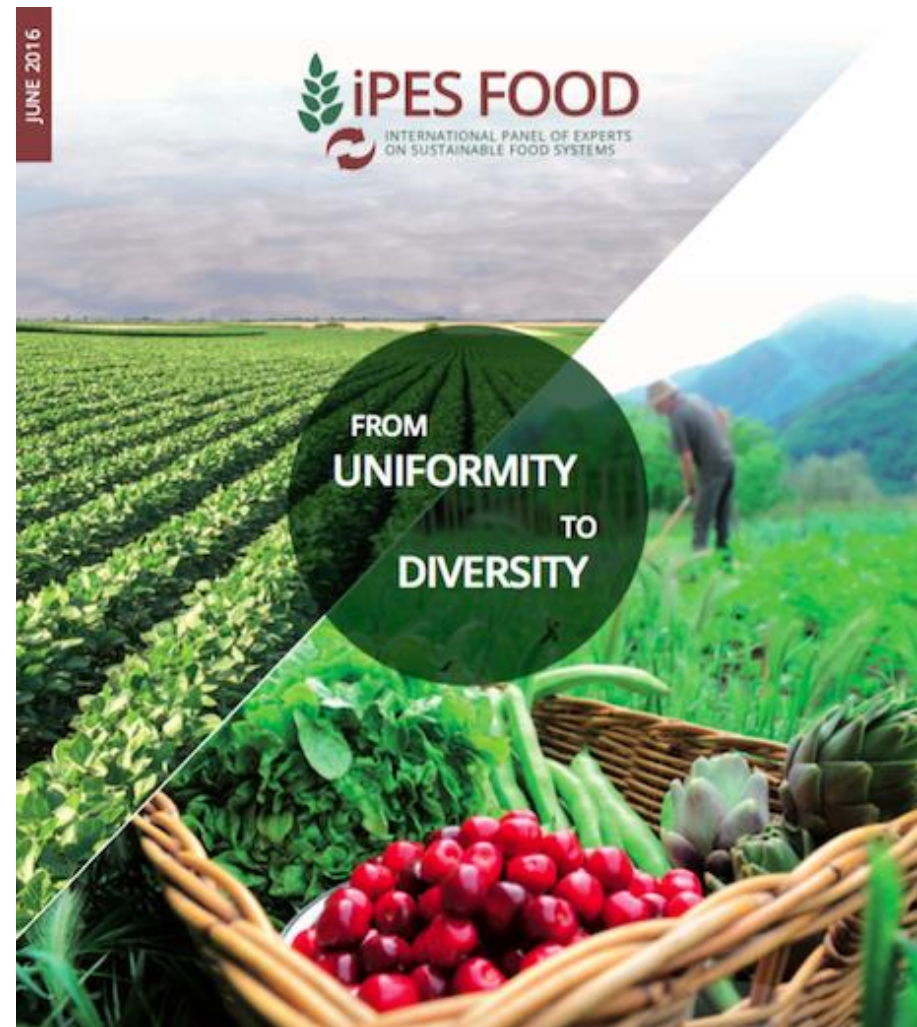
- Climate change
- Loss of agricultural biodiversity
- Low productivity
- Increased pest and diseases
- Declining soil fertility
- Lack of secure land tenure
- Lack of access to seeds, credit and markets



Photo courtesy of: Yiching Song/Farmers Seed Network China

Agroecology addresses multiple challenges

- Unique holistic capacity to reconcile economic, environmental and social dimensions simultaneously
- Sustainably increases productivity
- Rebuilds soil fertility
- Sustains yields over time
- Secures farm livelihoods, especially for smallholders
- Builds environmental and climate resilience
- Ensures adequate nutrition through diverse diets
- Supports circular and solidarity economies that reconnect producers and consumers



Shift in research needed

- **What** agricultural research is conducted?
- **How** are the innovations shared?
- **Who** participates in the research?



Photo courtesy of: Yiching Song/Farmers Seed Network China

Transforming the research agenda: co-creation of knowledge

- Research from the scientific community should complement and build on farmers' knowledge
- Accept farmers as equal partners in research and development, and innovators and co-creators of knowledge
- Integrate farmers into research and development systems and give them tools to do their own on-farm research



Photo courtesy of: Yiching Song/Farmers Seed Network China

Transforming the research agenda: farmers' participation

- Direct involvement of farmers in the formulation of the research agenda
- Identify research priorities in a participatory manner, enabling farmers to play a central role in defining strategic priorities for agricultural research
- Active participation of farmers in the process of technological innovation and dissemination



Photo courtesy of: Yiching Song/Farmers Seed Network China

Transforming the research agenda: the role of women

- Research efforts should recognize and facilitate the pivotal roles women play
- Open spaces for women to become more autonomous and empowered in the research process
- Address gender inequities
- Make specific effort to promote women's participation and learn from them



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Transforming the research agenda: knowledge sharing and networking

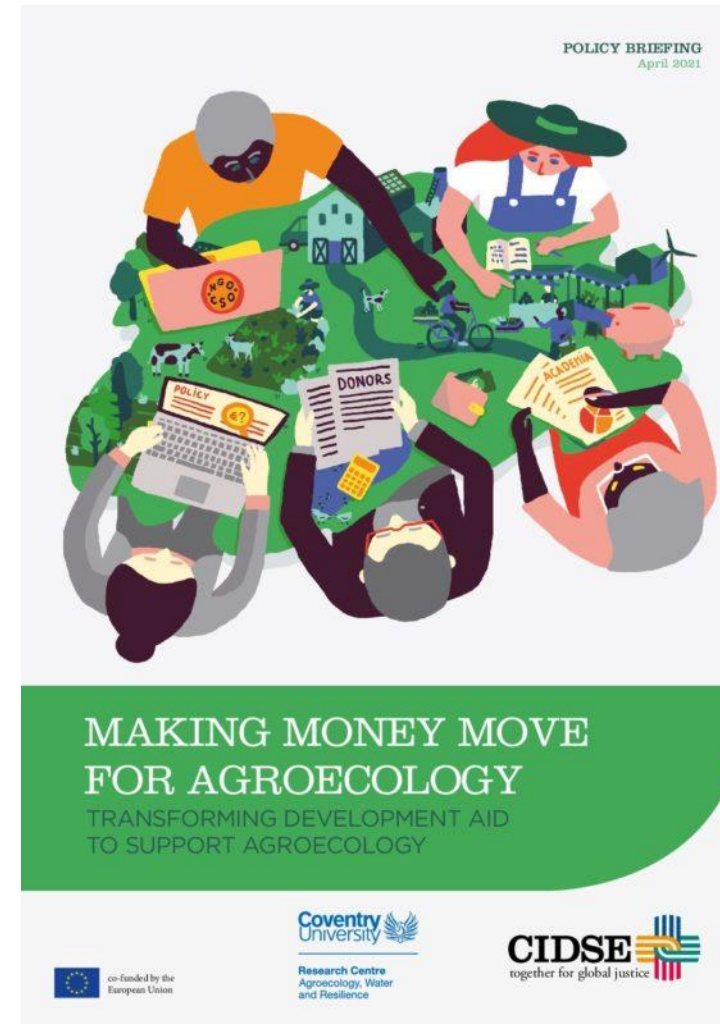
- Reorient research and extension systems to support farmer-to-farmer agroecological innovation
- Formal and informal means of education and knowledge sharing
- Increase capacities of farmer and community organizations to innovate and to share their knowledge with other farmers in farmer-to-farmer networks
- Strengthen networks and alliances to support, document, and share lessons and best practices
- Increase networking and knowledge sharing between farmers and researchers



Flickr photo from the South Asia: Alliance for Democratising Agricultural Research in South Asia (ADARSA) album. www.excludedvoices.org

Transforming the research agenda: resource mobilization

- Shift public research funding towards agroecology research and innovations, as well as to farmers' organizations
- Integrate agroecology components into other, potentially larger funding envelopes relating to climate change, gender, sustainable livelihoods and community economic development
- Repurpose funding and policies to shift away from funding detrimental forms of agriculture and development



Thank you!

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