

Traditional food crops as a source of community resilience in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This article draws upon local narratives and observations of food sustenance practices in relocated farming communities in Sebakwe, Zimbabwe. Local knowledge on traditional food crops and related agricultural practices were proven to be a source of local community resilience enabling residents to sustain their livelihoods. Local community agency in maintaining, cultivating and processing traditional food crops was found to sustain their culture and livelihoods, thereby providing community resilience in a changing environment.

Keywords: Agrobiodiversity; climate change; diversity; traditional food crops; food security; local knowledge; resilience; adaptive learning

Introduction

Resilience has been defined as the capacity of a system to absorb shock while maintaining function (Folke et al. 2002; Resilience Alliance 2008). With regards to social-ecological systems, this refers to the ability to withstand external stress and disturbance that results from social, political and biophysical environmental changes (Adger 2000). Links have been identified between ecological systems and social systems, reflecting the co-dependence and co-