



Canadian International
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Biodiversity in CIDA programming: A case study of support to USC Canada`s Seeds of Survival Program

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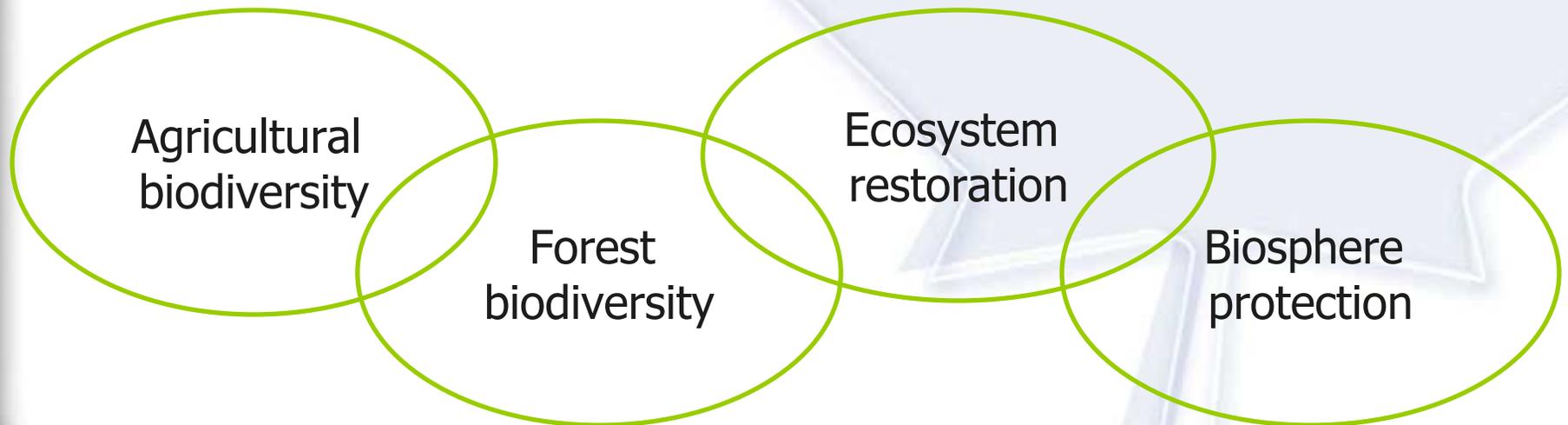
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Canada



Biodiversity programming at CIDA

- CIDA recognizes the importance of biodiversity in sustainable livelihoods strategies and in achieving our commitments to the MEAs and MDGs.
- Although biodiversity is not a programming priority for CIDA, support is provided through a number of key activities





Examples of biodiversity programming at CIDA include:

- Restoration of Mesopotamian Marshes in Iraq (University of Waterloo & University of Victoria)
- Kamchatka Protected Areas Management in Russia (UNDP)
- Restoration of coastal habitat and ecosystems in Sri Lanka (IUCN)
- Forest management on edges of National Parks in Cuba, Haiti & Dominican Rep. (Nature Canada)
- Restoration of degraded forests in Costa Rica, Dominican Rep. & Honduras (Falls Brook Centre)
- Seeds of Survival program - Participatory plant-breeding, seed/gene banks and seed exchange in 10 countries (USC Canada)



CIDA and USC Canada

▲ USC Canada (Unitarian Service Committee Canada)

- Core philosophy is to promote sustainable livelihoods through biodiversity-based agricultural programming.
- Long programming relationship (40+ yrs)
- Close programming relationship involving funding from multiple channels at CIDA (partnership & bilateral)
- Started the Seeds of Survival program (SoS) as bilateral funded project in Ethiopia in 1989



CIDA and USC Canada

- ▲ Seeds of Survival (SoS) program
 - Goal is to strengthen the resilience and food sovereignty of small-scale farming households and farming communities in the global south
- ▲ Objectives of the Seeds of Survival (SoS) program
 1. To conserve and enhance seed saving and traditional knowledge
 2. To enhance family nutrition and health through diversification of food crops
 3. To decrease dependency on external food
 4. To institutionalize the value of farm-based biodiversity
 5. To promote agro-biodiversity strategies



CIDA and USC Canada

▲ Rationale

- Farmers are knowledgeable producers, experts in local biodiversity and enhance productivity as agricultural scientists
- Traditional local crop varieties are affordable, often nutritionally superior, and better adapted to challenging growing conditions
- Promote dialogue between farmers, scientists and governments.
- On-farm collaboration offers the possibility of both increasing productivity and yield, while maintaining diversity



USC Canada: Seeds of Survival (SoS)

▲ Activities include:

1. the promotion of community seed and gene banks;
2. participatory plant breeding;
3. training and accompaniment in sustainable agriculture;
4. public education – school arboretums;
5. natural resource management - improving soil and water conservation and agro-forestry initiatives;
6. support to market gardens specifically for women farmers;
7. support to small agro-based enterprises and support to savings and credit



USC Canada: Seeds of Survival (SoS)

▲ Results include:

1. International meetings and workshops to encourage training and information sharing among farmers, scientists and government officials (> 350 agro-biodiversity practitioners trained).
2. Participants have established farm-based seed saving programs in at least 59 countries, helping spread biodiversity-based agricultural principles across the globe.
3. Credited with inspiring similar seed saving programs implemented by NGOs, FAO and CGIAR
4. Numerous spin-off agriculture-based micro-enterprises
5. Communities have improved community governance of natural resources, achieved greater food security, established sustainable livelihoods and increased income.



This seed and gene bank contains more than 150 varieties of beans developed by farmers in Yoro region, Honduras.

Source: USC Canada
(usc-canada.org)



Sorghum varieties stored in a community seed bank in Ethiopia

Source: USC Canada
(usc-canada.org)



In-situ field storage used to maintain diversity of tuber crops,
such as these potatoes varieties in Bolivia

Source: USC Canada
(usc-canada.org)



Local
variety

Commercial
variety

Frost damage to potato crop in Bolivia

Source: USC Canada
(usc-canada.org)



Commercial
variety

Local
variety

Frost damage to barley crop in Ethiopia

Source: USC Canada
(usc-canada.org)



CIDA and USC Canada

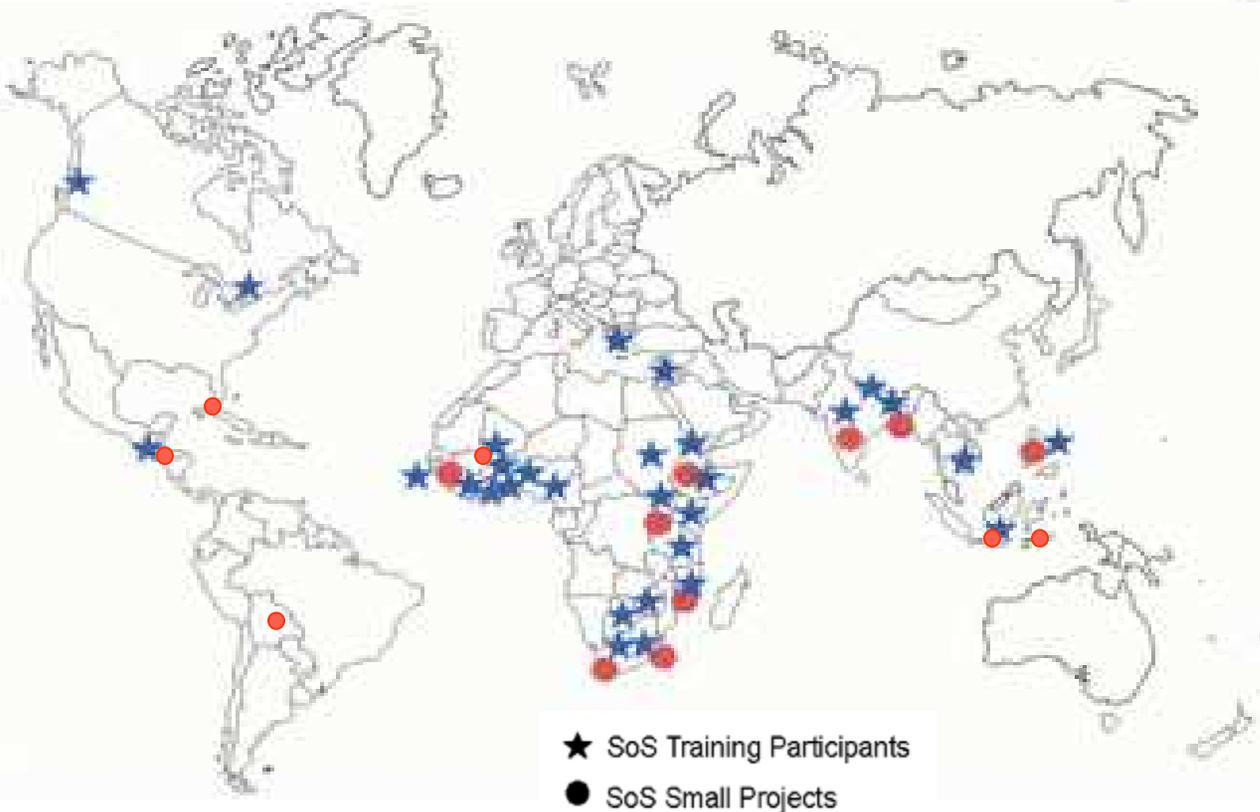
▲ Programming relationship

- SoS program began in Ethiopia, then moved to West Africa and eventually spread worldwide
 - SoS program maintained funding through responsive partnership programming channel
 - Occasionally, a bilateral country desk will reach-out and contract USC to establish a country-based SOS program (eg: Cuba)
- ▲ SoS is niche program but not the exclusive program between USC and CIDA



USC Canada: Seeds of Survival (SoS)

- ▲ Adapted to local conditions and has since spread throughout the world



- Bolivia
- Burkina Faso
- Cuba
- Ethiopia
- Honduras
- India
- Indonesia
- Mali
- Nepal
- Senegal
- Timor Leste



Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the SoS program

- ▶ Promotes sustainable livelihoods and sees agricultural and environmental sustainability as a prerequisite in achieving this goal.
- ▶ Emphasizes the harmony and synergy between the environment and maintaining the biodiversity of agricultural seed varieties.
- ▶ Emphasis on sustainable agriculture aims to have a positive effect on the environment both in agricultural practises in building infrastructures to reclaim degraded land and to preserve existing land and water resources.
- ▶ Training to build the capacity of local farmers and NGOs to promote environmentally positive agriculture.
- ▶ Agricultural research which emphasizes environmental sustainability.
- ▶ Program was considered compliant with SEA regulations.



Issues and Challenges

- ▲ DAC codes for biodiversity captures the “letter” but not the “spirit” of biodiversity programming

- 41030 Biodiversity
- 41020 Biosphere protection

- ▲ USC Program activities include, but not limited to the following:

015150 - Democratic participation and civil society; 031120 - Agricultural development; 031161 - Food crop production; 031166 - Agricultural extension; 031182 - Agricultural research; 031191 - Agricultural services; 031194 - Agricultural co-operatives; 011230 - Basic life skills for youth and adults; 041081 - Environmental education/training; **041030 - Bio-diversity**; etc...

- ▲ Any biodiversity project that has a functional activity (improve livelihoods or reduce poverty) is most likely to be coded as agriculture or forestry.