

# Increasing millet production in South Asia

## The challenge

Despite their nutritional benefits, tolerance for difficult growing conditions, and ease of storage, small millets have consistently been neglected by agricultural policy in South Asia, which has put the emphasis on cash crops and cereals like rice and wheat.

Minor millets have consistently been an important and nutritious part of the diets of small-scale farmers and indigenous groups in the area. Research is needed to help revitalize the development of improved millet species among small-scale farmers and indigenous groups in South Asia.

## The research

This project, supported by IDRC and DFATD through the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFS RF), aims to increase production and consumption of minor millets, pulses, and oil seeds in eight regions in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

To help reintroduce millets to regions where they were once more popular, researchers will work with local producers to test and validate a variety of agricultural management practices. They will then develop sustainable agriculture tool kits to help farmers to increase millet production in these countries. Researchers will also develop technologies that will reduce the drudgery of post-harvest millet processing for the women who usually perform this task.

## Expected outcomes

- Increased production and consumption of nutritious minor millets and pulses
- Conservation of threatened millet varieties and development of a breeding program
- Development of tool kits on sustainable agricultural practices
- Improved post-harvest technologies to make millet processing easier for women
- Improved efficiency of millet de-hulling technology

## LEAD RESEARCHERS

Dr. M. Karthikeyan, Development of Humane Action Foundation, India  
Kamal Khadka, Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development, Nepal  
Dr. Widanelage Sathis Pemruwan de Mel, Arthacharya Foundation, Sri Lanka  
Dr. Kirit Patel, Canadian Mennonite University, Canada  
Countries: India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka  
Funding: CA\$3.5 million  
Duration: March 2011 to August 2014

For more information on this project, contact Sara Ahmed, Senior Program Specialist, New Delhi, India (sahmed@idrc.ca) or Annie Wesley, Senior Program Specialist, Ottawa, Canada (awesley@idrc.ca).

The **Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFS RF)** is a program of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD).



Foreign Affairs, Trade and  
Development Canada

Affaires étrangères, Commerce  
et Développement Canada



**International Development Research Centre**  
PO Box 8500 Ottawa ON Canada K1G 3H9  
Phone: +1 613 236 6163 • Fax: +1 613 236 7293  
cifsrf@idrc.ca • www.idrc.ca/cifsrf