

Annex 2. Summary of the Anthropology Gender Group Surveys in 2017-2018. Abstract submitted to the 1st ICWL.

Role of women in maintaining on-farm wheat landraces diversity

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Key words: wheat, women, landraces, ecological anthropology

Abstract

The gender team of International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources Project (W2B-PR-41-TURKEY), conducted an anthropological field research in Turkey. The research questions were focused on the knowledge of women on wheat landraces, wheat production, the role of women in wheat production process and in decision-making process. We also wanted to motivate both men and women to continue growing the wheat landraces and maintain important on-farm wheat diversity. The local names, descriptions and qualities of landraces were collected during the study.

We used semi-structured interview method and our survey consisted of women from the villages participating in the project including both beneficiaries (included in the project) and other women involved in wheat production. We conducted individual and focus group interviews. The team visited twelve villages from nine districts of four provinces (Erzurum, Manisa, Mardin and Sirtak) from different regions of Turkey. Eleven focus groups and eleven personal interviews were conducted with a total number of forty six women.

In general, women have knowledge on wheat landraces but age affects how detailed their knowledge is. Ecological knowledge is transferred from mother to daughter until daughters migrate from the village. As the farming becomes more mechanized, the role of women in both decision and production process decreases. They mentioned that landraces are better, based on quality and taste but they are less productive. In some villages, where wheat landraces are preferred, local people exchange seeds they found productive or more suitable for hay to feed their animals, instead of buying. Only in one province all villagers knowingly use landraces being more suitable for the climate. They believe that the use of pesticides and fertilizers ruin the grain quality.

In regions where land sizes are small, people plant wheat landraces for their household needs, not for sale. In the past, they used to plant more wheat and different landraces or modern varieties. At present as their lands are small and the production is not for commercial they can not afford extra expenses. Farmers are motivated by the quality and taste of wheat landraces.

If lands are bigger wheat has commercial value and women prefer selling their wheat and use commercial, processed flour and bread in their houses so productivity is more important than taste or quality as long as they can sell the product. If people can not profit from wheat because of the prices and inputs, they try to produce different crops like tobacco, olive, chickpeas, pistachio, cauliflower, potato etc. Farmers can be motivated by commercial value of the wheat.

The current research contributes greatly to understanding of mechanisms and driving factors of on-farm wheat diversity with the ultimate project aim of conservation and expansion of this diversity in the target countries: Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran.