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# Pack 108, Item 8

Type: Drama

March 2018

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**Weogo bonbouda koglgo ya tond fan beogo néré (Preserving wild food plants ensures a better future for all)**

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### Notes to broadcaster

Agricultural biodiversity is the foundation of agriculture and at is vital to future generations. More than 940 species of cultivated plants are endangered globally. When a species or the varietal diversity within a species is lost, we also lose genes that could be important for improving crops, promoting resistance to pests and diseases, or adapting to the effects of climate change.

Agricultural biodiversity is defined as the diversity of crops and their wild relatives, trees, animals, microbes, and other species that contribute to agricultural production. This diversity is the result of interactions among people and the environment over thousands of years.  Using and maintaining agricultural biodiversity can help make agricultural ecosystems more resilient and productive, and can contribute to better nutrition, productivity, and livelihoods.

Farm households and rural communities have long used agricultural and tree biodiversity to diversify their diets, and to manage pests, diseases, and weather-related stress. In the past however, policy-makers and researchers considered these approaches economically uncompetitive. But more recently, scientific evidence has demonstrated that this biodiversity, used in combination with new technologies and approaches, has much to offer in addressing challenges related to malnutrition, adaptation to climate change, increasing productivity, and the shrinking diversity of our food supply.

In Burkina Faso, *Association pour la Protection de la Nature au Sahel* (APN Sahel) has been collaborating with Ouagadougou University and the National Research Institute, (INERA), in a participatory research and action project to survey and list seeds and wild and neglected plants and, based on farmers’ knowledge, document their characteristics and use. For example, in Toudoumzougou, farmers identified a local plant, *tougui*, that was believed to have disappeared. The plant is valued by farmers for its therapeutic qualities. Its seeds will be conserved in the community seed bank and reproduced in order to reintroduce the plant to farmers’ fields.

This drama tells the story of two co-wives who are hard-working farmers and compete with each other. Each looks at things from a different perspective, and maintains her field differently. Pougkienma grows many neglected, traditional food plants with value as both food and medicine and applies the advice of a farm worker who is knowledgeable about growing and use these plants, while Pougpaala simply wants to maximize her food crop yields.

You could use this drama as inspiration to produce a similar program on recovering traditional varieties or a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to present this drama as part of your regular farmer program, using voice actors to represent the speakers.

**POUGKIENMA** (“first wife” in Moore): First wife of Zaksooba, 40 years old.

You could follow the drama by interviewing farmers and experts about traditional food crops, especially those which are not current in favour, or about controversies between traditional and newer agricultural practices. Invite listeners to call-in or text-in with questions and comments.

Topics for discussion might include:

* What are the strengths and challenges of traditional seeds and of seeds developed by researchers and plant breeders?
* Are there farmers and others in your area who are benefiting by recovering traditional varieties? Or perhaps other traditional farming practices? What is their story?

Estimated running time: 25 minutes, with intro and outro music.

**POUGPAALA** (“new wife” in Moore): Second wife of Zaksooba, 30 years old.

**Sidnaba** (“truthful” in Moore): Farm worker in his twenties.

**ZAKSOOBA** (“head of family” in Moore): Polygamous farmer, 45 years old.

**NARRATOR:** Pougkienma and Pougpaala, co-wives and farmers, lived in the village of Nerwaya. Like many women, they farmed in their husband’s field.

One day, their husband, Zaksooba, took some land from the family forest and shared it equally between his two wives.

 This generated a real competition between the women, whose fields faced each other. In addition to food crops, Pougkienma grows many traditional but neglected food plants in her field, following the advice of a farm worker, Sidnaba. She makes the most of the nutritional and medicinal values of these neglected plants, and the opportunity to make money from them.

 Pougpaala sees things differently and wants only to maximize the yields of her food crops. How will things turn out for the two women? Let’s follow their story.

**SCENE 1**

**LOCATION:** FIELDS

**CAST:** Zaksooba, Pougpaala, POUGKIENMA

**SFX:** sOUND OF pickaxe

**ZAKSOOBA:** There you go. From now on, each of you has a field of the same size where you can do anything you want. You women always talk about not having access to farmlands. As a good husband, I am challenging you, and we will see what you are going to do with these fields.

**POUGPAALA:** (LAUGHS) Pougkienma is worn out. She is old and tired and will never beat me in farming.

**POUGKIENMA:** That’s what you think. The best soups are made in the oldest pans.

**POUGPAALA:** If it’s about talking, you are the best! But farming requires rigour and tenacity. And Zaksooba knows that I am the one who has these qualities!

**Pougkienma:** BURST OF LAUGHTER.

**SCENE 2**

**LOCATION:** POUGPAALA’S FIELD

**CAST:** Pougpaala, PouGkienma, Sidnaba

**SFX:** SOUND OF MACHETES AND HOES

**POUGPAALA:** Sidnaba, when I saw you working in Pougkienma’s field, I realized that you were a good farmer. That’s why I hired you. But I don’t want you to leave these wild plants in my field.

**SIDNABA:** When I cleared Pougkienma’s field, she insisted that I leave all kinds of wild and neglected plants—*kieglga*, *muguna*, *gaanka*, and others. [*Editor’s note: kieglga is the Moorè word for the bito tree, also called African ebony; mounga is the Moorè word for jujube tree, and gaanka is the Moorè word for jackalberry. For the common names of these plants in other languages, see the end of the script*.]

**POUGPAALA:** But we’re in my field, not in Pougkienma’s. Remove these *kieglga* and the other plants!

**SIDNABA:** As you wish!

**SFX:** SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS. Pougkienma arrives.

**POUGKIENMA:** Why did you ask him to cut the *kieglga*?

**POUGPAALA:** Me, I want to grow cereals, not wild plants.

**POUGKIENMA:** But these plants are as useful as cereals.

**POUGPAALA:** Maybe for you. But I will not waste this space by leaving wild plants in my field. I will use all my space to grow more cereals and beat you!

**POUGKIENMA:** But you are destroying nutritious and medicinal plants.

**POUGPAALA:** If I have a good yield with food crops, that is enough for me. If you think you can use your cunning against me, you are wasting your time. Sidnaba, don’t leave the *muguna* in the field. Just cut it.

**SIDNABA:** But your co-wife is right. These plants don’t really occupy a lot of space, so you’ll still get a good yield. Besides, if you sell *muguna* and *kieglga* fruits, this can compensate for the loss of income from food crops. For example, people use *kieglga* leaves to prepare couscous, the seeds are used to treat ulcers, and the bark is used to treat toothache.

**POUGPAALA:** That is not my concern! What I want is to have good food crop harvests.

**SIDNABA:** Excuse me. You are the boss!

**SCENE 3**

**LOCATION:** POUGPAALA’S FIELD

**CAST:** Pougpaala, PouGkienma

**SFX:** SOUND OF MACHETES AND HOES

**POUGPAALA:** You see how my field is taking shape. My yield will undoubtedly be better than yours.

**POUGKIENMA:** So you say. I thank God that, in addition to my grain harvest, I will enjoy the benefits that all the wild food plants in my field offer.

**POUGPAALA:** (LAUGHS) By using up all that space, you are guaranteeing that I will be the best farmer this year.

**POUGKIENMA:** Wild plants only occupy part of my farmland. But their benefits will compensate for the loss of income if I don’t grow as much grain—and perhaps they will do more than compensate.

**POUGPAALA:** What benefits are you talking about? Don’t you think that if they had benefits, everyone would grow them? They are just weeds!

**POUGKIENMA:**  You know, Pougpaala, wild plants have nutrients and medicinal elements. For example, the *toega* leaves and fruits are very rich in iron.

**POUGPAALA:** You have always been old-fashioned. Do you think we are still in the hunter-gatherer era or what? Do you think you can eat *kieglga* and *muguna* to survive?

**POUGKIENMA:** They can help me vary and supplement my diet. Besides, I can sell some fruits and leaves from these wild plants, and this will undoubtedly reduce my poverty. I can also use the plants to treat myself and my kids.

**POUGPAALA:** You are really crazy. Do you believe that I treat myself with bark and leaves?

**POUGKIENMA:** Do you know *kalyanga*?

**POUGPAALA:** No, I don’t know *kalyanga*—and I don’t want to know it!

**POUGKIENMA:** It’s too bad! Because it’s a wild vining plant, which helped people fight hunger for years when famine hit our village. But, because people kept destroying everything to farm or build houses, now this plant and others have disappeared from our village

**POUGPAALA:** This is exactly why I want a lot of food crops—to fight hunger.

**POUGKIENMA:** But this is not good for the environment! And what are we going to leave to our children?

**POUGPAALA:** (ANGRILY) Go to your field and do what you want! This is my field and I will do what I want!

**SOUND EFFECTS:** SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS. POUGKIENMA LEAVES THE FIELD.

**SCENE 4**

**LOCATION:** POUGKIENMA’S FIELD

**CAST:** PouGkienma, Sidnaba

**SFX:** FIELDWORK

**SIDNABA:** Pougkienma, you are tending your wild plants well.

**POUGKIENMA:** I try to do my best. You can see how well the *arzantiga* plants you sowed in my field have done. [*Editor’s note: arzantiga is the Moore word for moringa*.]

**SIDNABA:** Oh yes, you can see I tended them well. Usually, you plant *arzantiga* trees in the dry season, and you can start using the plants one month after planting.

**POUGKIENMA:** So I can already pick the leaves?

**SIDNABA:** Yes, but you must pick leaves starting from the bottom and moving to the top of the plant. If you can’t eat all the fresh leaves, you can sell them or dry them in the sun. Then, you can crush the dried leaves into powder in a mortar, and sell the powder.

 **POUGKIENMA:** Really? That’s great! I heard that you can use the leaves to make sauce?

**SIDNABA:** Yes.For example, if you want to cook a sauce with *arzantiga* leaves and groundnuts, you need fresh leaves and crushed groundnuts. First, you prepare the onions and the meat—if you have meat. Mix the leaves and the groundnuts with some water. Add more water, and let the mixture stew. If there is still water, let it evaporate over an open fire. Then serve with rice or *tô* [*Editor’s note: tô is a staple dish in Burkina, similar to fufu or ugali, and made with maize, sorghum, or millet.]*

**POUGKIENMA:** Hmm, that must be delicious!

**SIDNABA:** You can also prepare couscous in the same way you prepare it with *kieglga* leaves. The good thing about *arzantiga* is that its leaves, flowers, fruits, bark, and roots are all good for eating. The *kieglga* and the *toega* are very useful!

**POUGKIENMA:** I have even started to sell the *toedo*.

**SIDNABA:** It’s a good thing to sell the fruits, but it’s even more profitable to make and sell juice. My wife could show you how to make it.

**POUGKIENMA:** It would be a pleasure to learn how to make *toedo* juice.

**SIDNABA:** First, you need to crush the seeds to get powder from the *toedo* pulp. Then, you mix this powder with water. You can decide what quantity of water you want, but the thicker the juice, the better it will be. Let it rest for six hours. Use a sieve with very small holes to filter the mixture and then add some sugar. From this base, you can flavour the juice as you like. You can add mint leaves, bissap, or guava nectar. You can also add some milk. Stir in before serving.

**POUGKIENMA:** This is very good. Are there other ways to process the *toedo*?

**SIDNABA:** You can also make biscuits with it.

**POUGKIENMA:** Really! How?

**SIDNABA:** Boil rice in a pan, add some sweetened water, and then the powdered *toedo* pulp. Stir the mixture well to get a smooth paste. Add sugar to the paste, then reheat all the mixture in a cake pan.

**POUGKIENMA:** Thank you, Sidnaba. I will gradually become an agrofood producer in this village.

**SCENE 5**

**LOCATION:** ZAKSOOBA’S HOUSE

**CAST:** Zaksooba, Pougkienma

**ZAKSOOBA:** I have never eaten such good couscous! But I don’t know what kind of leaves you used.

**POUGKIENMA:** These are the leaves of the *arzantiga* trees I planted in my field.

**ZAKSOOBA:** Oh yes. They’re very good. The *toedo* juice is also very good. I have often heard about it, but I have never had the chance to drink it.

**POUGKIENMA:** I used to sell the *toedo* fruits from my field, but Sidnaba‘s wife showed me how to make juice with it, and I realized that you could get more money by selling the juice.

**ZAKSOOBA:** The couscous with the *kieglga* leaves is also very good, but I prefer the one with *arzantiga* leaves.

**POUGKIENMA:** Don’t worry. When you finish eating, I will give you some good tea made with *arzantiga* leaves.

**ZAKSOOBA:** Wow—can you make tea with *arzantiga* leaves?

**POUGKIENMA:** I just tear the leaves in pieces, then I add hot water and some lemon.

**ZAKSOOBA:** Oh yes, you are the best! (ZAKSOOBA AND HIS WIFE CLAP EACH OTHER’S HANDS)

**SFX:** SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS. POUGPAALA ARRIVES.

**POUGPAALA:** What is all this rude behaviour?

**ZAKSOOBA:**  What are you talking about?

**POUGPAALA:** Do you think what you are doing is a good thing?

For some time now, I’ve noticed that Pougkienma is your preferred wife. Well, that is your choice! What I don’t agree with is that you don’t treat us equally.

**ZAKSOOBA:** What are you insinuating?

**POUGPAALA:** Don’t pretend. You give lots of money to my co-wife, and to me you give a meagre amount.

**ZAKSOOBA:** Why do you say that?

**POUGPAALA:** I’ve noticed that Pougkienma’s meals are full of many ingredients. This certainly means that you give her more money to buy things in the market for cooking.

**POUGKIENMA:** (LAUGHS) What are you talking about? It is thanks to the advice of Sidnaba and his wife that I was able to grow and maintain some wild food plants in my field.

Everything I use for the meals and sell at the market comes from my field. You are the one who didn’t want to listen, Pougpaala. I did suggest at the beginning of the season that you not get rid of the wild food plants, but you didn’t listen.

**POUGPAALA:** (DISCOURAGED, REALIZES THAT POUGKIENMA HAS SUCCEEDED WHERE SHE HAS NOT) I don’t believe this!

**POUGKIENMA:** Why are you looking at me like that?

**POUGPAALA:** (WITH BITTERNESS) Well, I am gone, you two lovers.

**ZAKSOOBA**: You are the one who started, so you should listen till the end.

**POUGPAALA:** Okay, Pougkienma, I am listening. Finish what you want to tell me.

**POUGKIENMA**: I have nothing to tell you. I just want to show you the value of wild food plants. For example, yesterday, I used bark from the baobab tree to treat my daughter, Poko.

Hey, you have an ulcer. *Kieglga* seeds are effective against ulcers.

**POUGPAALA:** (HESITANTLY) How do they work?

**POUGKIENMA:** You remove the shells of the seeds and you soak the seeds in water overnight. In the morning, you drink this water on an empty stomach, and also in the evening before going to bed.

**POUGPAALA:** Just like that?

**POUGKIENMA:** Yes, just like that. In the meantime, you can start sucking the seeds. That will relieve your pain.

**SCENE 6**

**LOCATION:** POUGKIENMA’S STALL AT THE MARKET

**CAST:** Pougpaala, PouGkienma

**SFX:** MARKET atmosphere

**POUGKIENMA:** Come and see the *toedo* juice!!!

**POUGPAALA:** Good morning, big sister.

**POUGKIENMA:** Good morning, little sister.

**POUGPAALA:** How is your business going?

**POUGKIENMA:** Thank God, things are selling, but slowly.

**POUGPAALA:** Thanks, Pougkienma. Your medicine helped me a lot.

How can I also find wild food plants?

**POUGKIENMA:** Well, I can give you some roselle and *kelebdo* [*Editor’s note: Cleome gynandra*] seeds to plant.

**POUGPAALA:** I would be happy to have some to sow in my field.

**SFX:** THE CO-WIVES clap each other’S hands and laugh.

## Acknowledgments

Contributed by: Abdoul Aziz Nikiema, freelance producer.

Reviewed by: Abel Abga, Program manager, APN-Sahel, and Safietou Ouédraogo. APN-Sahel.

The writer would like to thank the following persons for their help with writing the script:

Minougou Richard, Coordinator, APN-SAHEL

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All interviews conducted in Toudoumzougou, Tenkodogo, Burkina Faso, on September 25-26, 2017.

**Common names of wild plants mentioned in the script**

***Adansonia digitata***

Afrikaans: *kremertartboom*

Arabic: *hahar*, *tebeldis*, *gangoleis* (fruit)

Bambara: *sira*, *n’sira*, *sito*

English: baobab, monkey bread, Ethiopian sour gourd, cream-of-tartar tree

French: baobab (tree); pain de singe (fruit), calabassier, arbre aux calebasses

Fulani: *bokki*, *bokchi*, *boko*

Hausa: *kuka* (dried leaves), *miya kuka* (soup)

Jola: *buback*

Kamba: *mwamba muru* (Bajun);

Maasai: *olmisera*

Malagasy: *bozo* (Sakalava dialect)

Malawi: *manyika*: *mubuyu*

Mandinko: *sito*

Manyika: *mubuyu*

Moore: *twege*

Nankani: *tua*

Ndebele: *umkomo*

Portuguese: *imbondeiro*

Shona: *mayuy*, *muuyu*, *tsongoro* (seeds)

Sudan: *tebeldi*, *humeira*

Swahili: *mbuyu*

Tsonga: *shimuwu*

Tswana: *mowana*

Twi: *odadie*

Venda: *muvuhuyu*

Wolof: *bui*, *lalo* (leaf powder)

Yoruba: *luru*, *ose*

Zulu: *isimuhu*, *umshimulu*

***Balanites aegyptiaca***

Amharic: *bedena*, *shifaraoul*

Arabic: *lalob*, *hidjihi*, *inteishit*, *heglig*

Ateso: *ekorete*

Bambara: *seguene*, *zegene*, *ségé né*

English: desert date, bito tree

French: dattier du désert, myrobalan d’Egypte, savonnier

Hausa: *aduwa*

Lugisho: *zomai*

Luo: *otho*, *sadhto*

Moore: *kieglga kielege*, *kielega*

Somali: *kullen*

Swahili: *mchunju*, *mjunju*

Tamasheq (Tuareg language): *taboraq*

Turkana: *eroronyit*

Wolof: *sump*

Zulu: *umgobandlovu*

***Capparis sepiaria***

English: wild caper bush

Moore: *kalyanga*

Shona: *chikatabvuwa*

***Cleome gynandra***

Afrkiaans: *snotterbelletjie*

Dioula: *wouin wouin*

English: spider plant, cat’s whiskers, spider flower, spiderwisp

French: feuilles caya, mozambé

Lango: *akeo*

Mandingo-Bambara: *naségé*

Maninka: *passo-ni-kuna*

Moore: *kelebdo*

Northern Sotho: *morotho*

Portuguese: *musambe*

Rufumbira: *isoga*

Runyankole/Rukiga: *eshogi*

Serer: *korgona*, *safoybidum*

Shona: *munyevhe*

Swahili: *mgagani*, *mkabili*, *mkabilishemsi*, *mwangani*, *mgange*

Venda: *murudi*

Wolof: *gor bu di daw*

Zulu: *ulude*

***Diospyros mespiliformis***

Afrikaans: *jakkalbessie*

Amharic: *ayeh*

Arabic: *jughan*, *abu*, *seleba*, *gugham*, *gughan*, *abu sebela*, *jokhan*

Ateso: *ekum*

Bemba: *muchenja*

English: jackalberry, swamp ebony, African ebony, ebony diospyros, West African ebony

Kikuyu: *mu-koro*

Lozi: *mutomwa*, *mupako*, *muchenje*

Lunda: *mutomwa*

Luo (Acholi): *chumu*

Moore: *muguna*, *gaanka*

Nyanja: *mchenja*, *mchenjasumu*, *mvimbe*

Oshiwambo: *eeyandi*

Somali: *kolati*

Swahili: *mgiriti*, *mjoho*, *mpweke*

Tigrigna: *ayeh*, *aye*

Tongan: *muchenje*

Tshivenda: *musuma*

Tsonga: *mgula*

***Hibiscus sabdariffa***

Dioula: *dâ*

English: roselle, sorrel

French: ketmie rose; oseille de Guinée

Mooré: *bito*

*This story was prepared with the support of The McLean Foundation.*

*FRI would also like to thank USC and its local partner, APN-Sahel, for its support in preparing this story.*