



in 2013

Towards community-controlled  
and biodiversity-based food systems





GRAIN staff, 2013

GRAIN is a small international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems. Our support takes the form of independent research and analysis, networking at the local, regional and international levels, and active cooperation and alliance-building with social movements.

For more than 20 years, GRAIN has been an active player in the global movement to challenge corporate power over people's food, farms and livelihoods. Governments around the world focus their support and attention on industrial agriculture and corporate-run food supply chains. Sadly, this model ignores small-scale producers and their complex farming and food distribution systems which have nourished humankind for more than 12,000 years. Today, almost one billion people live in hunger partly due to an industrial food system that puts global markets before feeding people. Seventy percent of those living in hunger are small-scale food producers – stark testament to how dysfunctional this system is.

GRAIN monitors, investigates and exposes food and farming issues in partnership with a range of local groups, social movements and global networks. From Indonesia to Benin to Mexico, GRAIN staff work in many time zones and languages, constantly monitoring new developments globally and on the ground, and sharing this information and analysis with partners, policy-makers and the public. By providing reliable research and analysis, enriched by a history of struggle and collaboration, GRAIN works to support the international movement to protect biodiversity and promote more democratic and just food systems.

In addition to conducting and sharing research, GRAIN helps link social movements and groups that are working to create more diverse food and farming systems and supports them towards achieving their objectives. GRAIN believes it is essential to partner with local groups to develop strategies and generate viable support mechanisms for community-controlled food systems. As a small organisation, GRAIN leverages its impact through active collaborations with regional and international networks worldwide.

GRAIN's work is currently organised around four interconnected themes:

- Corporations, power and the global food system
- Land grabbing
- People's control over seeds
- The climate crisis & agriculture

This publication reviews and reports on GRAIN's activities and achievements in 2013. We highlight examples of some of our most significant work, as well as reflections on our activities and impact. A more complete overview of our activities, outputs and achievements is available from GRAIN's coordination office on request ([grain@grain.org](mailto:grain@grain.org)).

This document is available from GRAIN's website at the following address:

<http://www.grain.org/e/4994>



# Landgrabbing

Five years ago, GRAIN published an [alarming report](#) warning about a new and massive trend of land grabbing in which rich countries and corporations snap up land used by farmers and pastoralists in poor countries, in the process throwing them off their land and destroying their livelihoods. Since then, this has become a huge issue for debate and action at the international, regional and national levels. Land grabbing has remained high on GRAIN's agenda over the past few years.

During 2013, we were increasingly involved in actions on the ground, directly supporting local struggles against land grabs.

## Land grabbing and corporate crime: the Senhuile project

In April 2013, we got an email from someone in Dakar asking if GRAIN could help uncover a possible connection between the Senhuile project and money laundering. The Senhuile project, in the north of the country, is one of the best

known international landgrabs in Senegal. It has provoked tremendous anger, riots and even deaths as agro-pastoral communities hotly resist its implementation on their lands. Currently, the project completely surrounds several villages, cutting residents off from access to water sources and grazing land. It is a desperate situation affecting 9,000 people who want their lands back.

To understand who is behind this project we first researched a string of connections between the company and offshore financial centres, high-profile corruption



Signpost for the bitterly contested Senhuile project. (Photo: GRAIN)

cases, tax fraud and more. We created an informal partnership with key groups in Italy and Senegal, including the affected communities. We were able to get a fairly clear picture of the murky history the key players behind the investment – Italy's Tampieri Financial Group, several Senegalese investors and Agro Bioethanol International, a shell company registered in New York.

Together with our partners, we [published our findings](#) in November, and the report caused a tremendous debate in Senegal and elsewhere. Later, in February 2014, we [helped organise a tour by members of the affected local communities to various European capitals](#) which drew a lot of media attention and further debate. Three months later, Benjamin Dummai, the Director-General of the project was [fired by his board of directors and subsequently arrested by Senegalese authorities](#). Local media has reported that he has been accused of embezzling almost half a million dollars. The local organisations reacted immediately to the news: *"Dummai's arrest and dismissal confirm our concerns about the murky international conglomerate behind Senhuile. We want this project shut down immediately."*

## Land grabbing in disguise: the G8's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

[The New Alliance](#) was set up by the richest countries in the world, supposedly to help lift people in Africa out of poverty. But in reality it is a scheme to open up the continent to foreign corporate control. In March, we published ["The G8 and land grabs in Africa"](#) detailing for the first time, by country and company, the land grabs envisaged by the G8 programme. We also highlighted cases where laws and regulations governing seeds were targeted for legislative change. Later in the year, other groups came out with similar reports, leading to increased mobilisation against this initiative. Many groups have asked us for more information, so we will take up new work on this in 2014.



The government, donors and corporations that tried to demolish Côte d'Ivoire's domestic rice sector are now conspiring to take it over – from farm to market. (Photo: Fulgence Zamblé)

## EU biofuels policies: the engine behind landgrabs

We produced a [special report on landgrabbing in the biofuels sector](#), which included publication of a dataset for groups monitoring these deals. The report

provides a listing of 293 reported land grabs around the world between 2002 and 2012 – covering over 17 million hectares – where the stated intention of the investors is the production of biofuels. It shows that EU policy is still, to date, the major driver of these landgrabs. There is a debate on the issue in the European Parliament now, but meaningful policy change has not yet happened.



**Jatropha has not lived up to its exaggerated promise, but the next generation of biofuels are yet to be developed. (Photo: CIFOR)**

## Karuturi guilty of tax evasion

Early in 2013, GRAIN and a new set of partners [blew the lid off a tax evasion case filed against Karuturi](#), the iconic Indian landgrabber in Africa. The work on this case started in 2012, when we began making the link between Karuturi as a tax-evading rose producer in Kenya and Karuturi the arrogant and conceited landgrabber in Ethiopia. This had us entering into conversations with activists from the Tax Justice Network, Forum Syd in Kenya, journalists, indigenous groups affected in Ethiopia and concerned farmers movements in India. In April 2013, we were finally able to go public with the news that Karuturi had been found guilty of tax evasion, the first time an African government did *not* settle such a case behind the scenes. Since then, it has all been downhill for this notorious landgrabber. In February 2014, the Kenyan arm of the company collapsed [and was put under receivership by the Kenyan government](#).

## Supporting struggles on the ground

In 2013, GRAIN got more directly involved in supporting resistance movements on the ground against landgrabs and agribusiness projects. This support work was often done as part of broad collectives and alliances with all sorts of other groups, some of whom we have never worked before. **Sierra Leone** is one example where we

spent a lot of time [trying to help Green Scenery and other local activist groups](#) fight off the Bolloré oil palm plantations which are being supported by the government against the wishes of the local communities. Together with others, we have been helping Sustainable Development Initiative in **Liberia** to fend off attacks from the government and from the corporations hostile to its work exposing the serious problems stemming from palm oil giant Sime Darby's local land deals. In **Cameroon**, [we have been supporting Nasako Bisingi](#) against libel suits and harassment from the US company Herakles Farms, which has been granted 20,000 ha to produce palm oil without the consent of the local people. We helped Bread for All and Cominsud prepare a regional strategy workshop among groups fighting land grabs in Central and West Africa. We also continued supporting work on the ProSavana case in **Mozambique**, and collaborated with the Anywaa Survival Organisation on land grabs in Gambella, **Ethiopia**.

In November, we had the great fortune of being invited to a networking meeting in Nigeria convened by World Rainforest Movement to discuss these and similar cases. There, we shared our knowledge and experience with agricultural land grabs while others brought in years of struggle against forestry projects. The meeting was important to forge links and develop strategies to help groups on the ground. For further information, please read the [Calabar Declaration](#).

But landgrabbing is not an issue only in Africa. After a trip to Sulawesi, Indonesia, we [published an article about the battle being waged by groups in Buol against a local palm oil company](#), which helped draw international attention and solidarity to their struggle. Throughout the year, we also were involved in several land grabbing debates and workshops in Latin America and Europe.

Workers at one of PT Hardaya's labour camps inside the Buol plantation: **"No matter how hard we work, we are always in debt."**  
(Photo: Pietro Paolini/Terra Project)





# The fight for seeds

Seeds are the key to resisting the industrial food system. They are the first link in the food chain, strongly anchored in local cultures and dependent on community traditions of seed saving and sharing to survive. Not surprisingly, seed fairs, trainings, exchanges and workshops are multiplying across the globe as a concrete way to say no to corporate control over our livelihoods and yes to people's food sovereignty. In many parts of the world, GRAIN is helping to promote and systematise seed-related activities, while at the same time supporting struggles against legislation that seek to bring seeds under control of agribusiness.

## Popular battles against corporate seed laws

Resistance to corporate efforts to control seeds exploded everywhere in 2013, but were particularly intense in Latin America and Europe. In Latin America, GRAIN staff were directly involved with partners on the front line of political debates in Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico and elsewhere. This involved briefing parliamentarians, collecting signatures, training students and doing radio and TV programmes. Much of the effort focused on preventing the adoption of new laws based on the 1991 Act of the UPOV (Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties) Convention, which promotes corporate control over seeds and outlaws farmers exchanges of seeds. In Europe, the debates and actions were equally heated, focusing on seed marketing and trade legislation. The EU is currently adopting a new directive on plant materials that would further limit what farmers and gardeners can do with their seeds.

This is what free trade looks like: **destroying 'unlicensed' seeds.** (Photo: ICA)





## Supporting the struggle over seeds in Colombia

In Colombia, a massive public wave of support to scuttle corporate seeds legislation arose during a national agrarian strike to protest the country's free trade agreements (FTAs). GRAIN had been closely monitoring the struggle and was dismayed that very little decent information was coming out in English. So we jumped in to produce [a report highlighting how public opinion was mobilised by the criminalisation of farm-saved seeds](#) that the US and EU FTAs require Colombia to



Melbourne, Australia: Colombians around the world marched in solidarity with farmers back home. (Photo: Erik Anderson/Flickr)

implement. This helped to strengthen international solidarity for the farmers' struggle in Colombia, which in turn contributed to the President of the country having to suspend the government's seeds resolution and offering a promise to write new rules on seed use "which will not affect small farmers."

## Stopping UPOV in Chile

The fight against the introduction of UPOV 91 laws was especially intense in Chile. The social opposition to the bill became very wide and diverse, and GRAIN participated in numerous mobilisations throughout the year. Our main role was to develop precise, well-grounded arguments against the bill being discussed in Parliament, as well as participating in numerous community meetings in rural and



urban areas, where this information was shared and discussed. A combination of the social pressure and the strength of the arguments had an impact on the Chilean Senate and a majority of senators indicated they would vote

Thousands of people protested against seed laws in Chile.

against the law. The government then withdrew the bill. There is now a new President in Chile, and she has promised to open a new round of discussion on UPOV 91, with the full and effective participation of social organisations. This is a major victory, but the work still needs to continue.

## Putting the picture together

On seed laws, perhaps our most important contribution in 2013 was a special report on what was going on in Latin America. Our report, "[Seed laws in Latin America: the offensive continues, so does popular resistance](#)" was prepared for a continental strategy meeting we organised on the matter in Paraguay but it has had clear value as a briefing for movements in other regions as well. It describes, from firsthand experience, the struggles in Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela and Chile, showing how real gains are now being made by people's movements. In most of these countries, the legal proposals to adopt UPOV type of legislation criminalising people's seeds is being successfully blocked by popular campaigns.

## Seed laws in Latin America" a hit in Zambia

*"What a wonderful and powerful article! It tells in a clear and convincing manner how seeds developed over thousands of years with the blood and sweat of the world's poor farmers are being stolen by huge, rich corporations and their lawyer henchmen who lie and coerce. This is the best statement on this topic I have ever read. You should read it also and distribute it as widely as possible. I can think of no better tool with which to outfit an army of peasants and other good people. Now that we have the tool, let's use it to turn the tide."*

Will Colston, Kenneth Kaunda Centre for Practical Agriculture, Mfuwe, Zambia, Jan 2014, commenting on our publication "[Seed laws in Latin America](#)"

## Yvapuruvu Declaration: seed laws – resisting dispossession

*“Seeds are the work of peoples and a part of their history. They have been created through collective work, creativity, experimentation, and stewardship. Seeds in turn have shaped peoples, making possible their specific and diverse ways of growing crops and feeding themselves, and allowing them to share and develop their world views. Seeds are therefore intimately linked to community standards, responsibilities, obligations, and rights. Seeds place responsibilities on us that precede our right to use them.”*

From the [“Yvapuruvu Declaration”](#) adopted at a regional seed network meeting of the major organisations working on seeds issues, held in November in Paraguay. GRAIN participated actively in the organisation of the meeting and the drafting of the statement.

## “Hands off our maize!”

Early 2013 we produced a major report called [“Hands off our maize!”](#) It documents the growing movement of resistance against GMOs in Mexico and how the intricate connections between industry, governmental agencies, and international organisations have created the tremendous push to replace native maize with corporate-developed transgenic varieties. Our report shows how communities have been able to stop the invasion and defend, instead, the life of the peoples and communities that are resisting.

## GMOs: Feeding or fooling the world?

In support of people’s struggle against transgenic crops, GRAIN produced a short analytical report on [“20 years of GMOs: feeding or fooling the world”](#), which put to rest several myths that are being kept alive by the corporate sector. It has proved quite popular on our website. We also jumped into the fight against Golden Rice in the Philippines which came to a head in August 2013 when one of the advanced experimental plots was sabotaged by activists. Together with partners in the region we produced [a media statement and backgrounder](#) to support the groups fighting on the ground.

## Working with La Vía Campesina

La Vía Campesina, the global peasant movement representing millions of small farmers across the world, has been an important partner for GRAIN for many years as they are on the forefront of the struggle for food sovereignty. We had the



honour of being invited LVC's 6th conference in Jakarta in June. We helped with some of the preparation of background materials and participated as support

workers in the conference itself. As the members of LVC only get together and decide policies at this level every five years, it was an important process.

In addition, we participated in multiple Vía Campesina related strategy and training seminars in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe. In October, we joined their European allies support group to accompany, strengthen and resource LVC in its work. In November, two GRAIN staff went to Zimbabwe to participate in an African seeds meeting and develop relations with the new international secretariat which has moved to Harare.

This kind of work allows us to attune our political programme to the needs of the peasant movement. We issued several joint media releases during the year and formalised a coalition with them on agroecology. But also, GRAIN's independent and strong minded positioning on some issues gives rise to debates and challenges. For example, we don't necessarily share the same view on the value of international legal or policy instruments and the fora that develop and oversee them. These differences of view are useful and helpful to continue reflection and debate between groups like ours and La Vía Campesina.

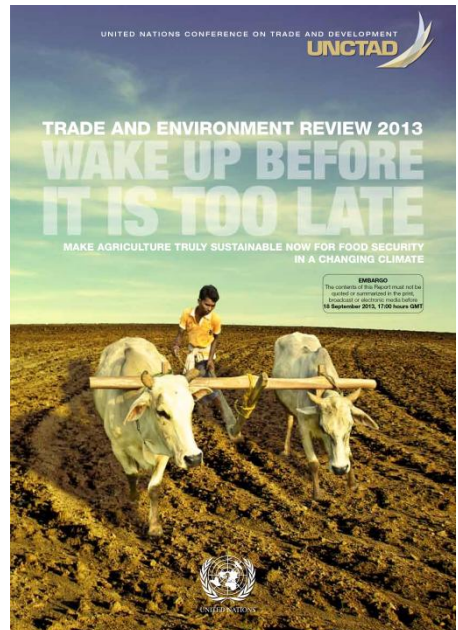


# Food, climate & the corporations

The climate crisis is one of the most formidable challenges that humanity faces today. It is driven by the expansive and destructive exploitation of natural resources by an industrial society that knows no limits. Our capacity to produce food is already being severely affected by this crisis, and projections for the future are alarming. The global industrial food system is one of the main drivers behind the climate crisis. As GRAIN has shown in several reports over the past years, the current industrial food system is responsible for around half of all global greenhouse gas emissions. It is a food system that not only fails to feed people, it is also leading us deeper into a global climate crisis of a scale and impact that humanity has never faced before.

## Wake up before it's too late

In September, UNCTAD released its [2013 Trade and Environment Report](#) with the strong title "Wake up before it is too late". It carried the central message that monoculture and industrial farming methods are not providing sufficient affordable food where it is needed, while causing mounting and unsustainable damage to the climate. GRAIN authored one chapter of the book, but we also learned a lot from the other contributors and felt it was important to help raise public awareness of this material. Therefore we issued a [joint media statement together with LVC and ETC Group](#) to draw attention to the message in the book, congratulating UNCTAD for its stand, and calling for serious action to move from industrial to peasant based farming.



## Don't turn farmers into 'climate smart' carbon traders!

Two months later, the world's governments met in Warsaw at the Conference of the Parties to the International Panel of Climate Change for another round of negotiations to do something about the climate crisis. But rather than confronting the real causes of the crisis, delegates were moving in the opposite direction. GRAIN again partnered with La Vía Campesina and the ETC Group to jointly produce a [media release](#) warning policy-makers and negotiators to avoid further institutionalising trade in carbon offsets as a strategy to make agriculture more "climate smart". "We are directly opposed to the carbon market approach to dealing with the climate crisis," stated Josie Riffaud of La Vía Campesina in the media release. "Turning our farmers' fields into carbon sinks – the rights to which can be sold on the carbon market – will only lead us further away from what we see as the real solution: food sovereignty. The carbon in our farms is not for sale!"

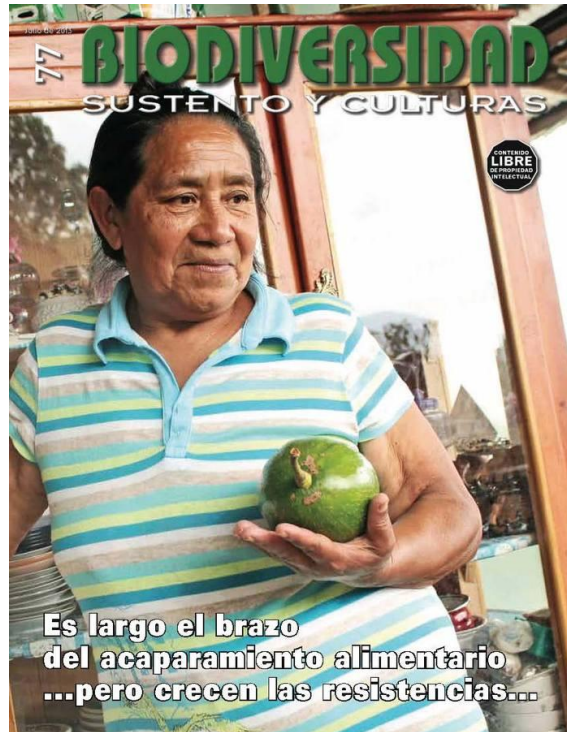
## GMOs to fight the climate crisis?

Yet another example how the corporate agenda is infiltrating the climate debate was a statement issued by Calestous Juma on climate change in Africa. Juma – a Kenyan national, former head of the Convention on Biological Diversity and eminent person in policy-making and scientific circles – brazenly declared in June that "Africa needs GMOs to fight climate change". The groups we work with in francophone Africa, the COPAGEN network amongst others, were shocked and angered by this and wanted to issue a rebuttal. We helped with the drafting and distribution of what turned into a well documented reply entitled ["No, Africa does not need GMOs!"](#) We also contributed to the development of evidence-based responses by COPAGEN to new policy proposals coming from the West African Economic and Monetary Union on GMOs and biosafety in West Africa. These papers were officially submitted to the WAEMU Secretariat in June.

# Information & outreach – the core of our work

In 2013, GRAIN published two in-depth “reports” ([one about land grabbing in Senegal](#) and one about the [resistance to GMOs in Mexico](#)) six issues of our “[Against the grain](#)” series, and a dozen [other publications](#) in various languages. Together with 10 other organisations and movements in Latin America, GRAIN co-publishes ‘[Biodiversidad, sustento y culturas](#)’. Four issues were produced in 2013, and circulated to a readership of over 12,000 people in the region. In yet other collaborative efforts, GRAIN participates in the production of the *Soberanía Alimentaria Magazine* together with farmers’ organisations and a network of NGOs in Spain, as well as in the international , and the collaborative bilaterals.org website, supporting the struggle against FTAs. Nyeleni Bulletin, a newsletter for the global food sovereignty movement, and the collaborative website bilaterals.org bilaterals.org, supporting the struggle against FTAs.

In 2013, GRAIN set up and launched its presence on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). The main purpose was to reach new people who we do not reach through other channels and help them access our website. We are now trying to learn more about how we can use these tools to create political momentum to effect change. We got going strongly on this front. By the end of the year we had close to 1,000 followers of our Twitter account, and almost 3,000 people ‘liking’ our Facebook page.





The "[New from GRAIN](#)" mailing list is GRAIN's primary tool to get news out about new publications or developments in three different languages. Almost 30,000 people and organisations are now subscribed to this list,

but the outreach figure is much higher as many people forward its contents on to other lists and websites. In 2013, we sent out about 30 New from GRAIN mailouts as well as 8 media releases.

[Grain.org](#) is GRAIN's trilingual website where we post all our materials and



much more. After a total overhaul the site is now simpler, lighter and easier to use. On the average, it is accessed by some 600 people per day, but sometimes many more when new content is made available.

[Farmlandgrab.org](#) is a site we launched six years ago to share information and discussion on landgrabbing. It is updated daily, and contains a wealth of materials,

**farmlandgrab.org**

the global rush for farmland and peoples' struggles against it



articles and studies on the issue. For many researchers, activists and policy makers, it is *the* place to go to find information on the phenomenon. Its readership remained stable in 2012 at around 700 unique visitors per day.

We have maintained [bilaterals.org](#) for a decade now, and it continues to be a major reference point for those interested in bilateral and regional trade and

**bilaterals.org**

an open-publishing website

everything that's not happening in the WTO  
todo aquello que no sucede en la OMC  
tout ne se négocie pas à l'OMC

investment deals, how they impact people and how

people are fighting back. It is run and updated as a collaborative partnership. In terms of visitors, it is the busiest site that we are involved in: during 2012 it received over 3,000 visitors per day.



# The organisation and how to support us

## Staff & Board

In 2013, GRAIN's [staff team](#) – mostly based in the Global South – was composed of nine programme staff and one finance and administration staff. In addition, we worked with two consultants helping us with web development and fundraising, as well as a few volunteers and interns. GRAIN functions as a collective, with a horizontal management system and participatory methods of decision-making.

GRAIN is governed by a [small board](#) composed of dedicated individuals acting in their personal capacity. The Board liaises with the staff over the development and implementation of the programme, as well as in the administration of the organisation. There is a regular rotation and renewal of Board members.

## GRAIN's team in 2013

**Devlin Kuyek**  
Montreal:  
research, global

**Ramón Vera Herrera**  
Mexico City:  
Biodiversidad magazine  
& programmes,  
Latin America

**Camila Montecinos**  
Santiago:  
research &  
programmes,  
Latin America

**Carlos Vicente**  
Buenos Aires:  
communications &  
programmes,  
Latin America

**Renée Vellvé**  
Paris: coordination &  
research, global

**Aitor Urkiola** ... **Camila Oda**  
Barcelona: finance and  
administration      Barcelona: administrative  
support

**Henk Hobbelink**  
Barcelona:  
coordination &  
research, global

**Bea Gascó**  
Valencia:  
fundraising  
consultant

**Paul Pantastico**  
Los Baños:  
web development  
consultant

**Kartini Samon**  
Jakarta:  
research &  
programmes, Asia

**Terna Gyuse**  
Cape Town:  
communications, global

**Jeanne Zoundjihékon**  
Cotonou:  
research & programmes  
Africa

**Brice Demagbo**  
Cotonou:  
administrative support



## Finances

GRAIN is financed by grants from NGOs, foundations, and – occasionally – governments and intergovernmental organisations, in addition to own income from publications, services, fees and donations. Donors support either our overall strategy and programme or specific parts of our work. Our autonomy is essential to us, and we strive to maintain a diversified support base. Below is a snapshot of our income in 2013.

### GRAIN 2013 income (in Euros)

Brot für Alle (CH)	55,000
Brot für die Welt (D)	70,000
CFH Foundation (USA)	11,348
CS Fund (USA)	30,520
Dutch government (NL)	2,488
EC-ASTM (LU)	7,614
EC-EJOLT (E)	34,871
International AgroEcology Fund (USA)	18,849
Isvara Foundation(CH)	19,368
Misereor / KZE (D)	60,000
Oxfam-Novib (NL)	170,000
SwedBio (S)	135,189
Swift Foundation (USA)	33,288
Swissaid (CH)	25,000
Other income (donations, fees, publications, etc.)	54,603
<b>Total income 2013</b>	<b>728,138</b>

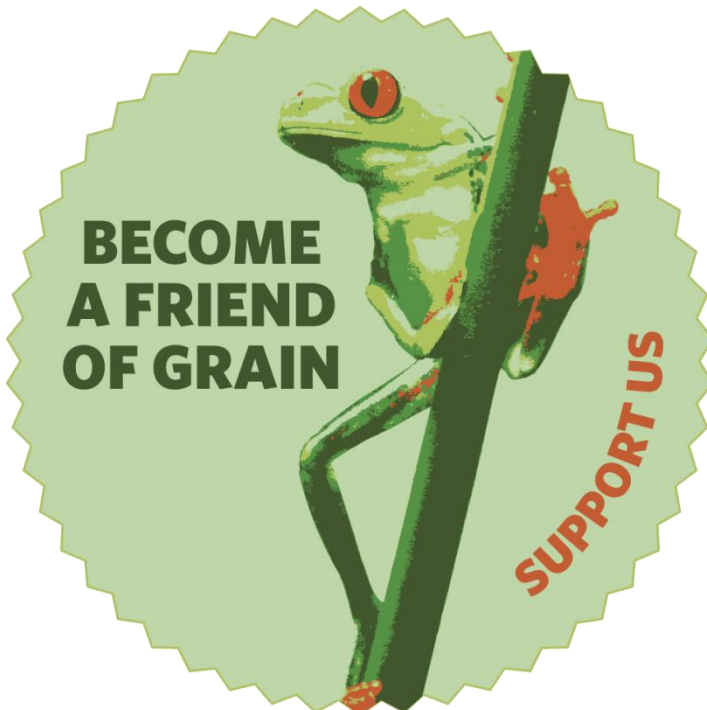
## Supporting GRAIN

GRAIN is a small group with a big agenda. We work to support small farmers and social movements around the world in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems.

We need your help to keep GRAIN strong and autonomous. GRAIN works with groups and movements on the ground who are directly fighting against the corporations, policies and projects that are displacing and criminalising farmers and their food systems.

Our information and analysis is available for free to everyone who needs it.

If you read and like GRAIN's materials, if you appreciate our take on things, and if you value our efforts to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for food sovereignty, please consider supporting GRAIN: [click here to find out how](#).





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