

Four African proverbs and GRAIN's name change tale

1 One goat cannot carry another goat's tail

Everyone must accept their lot in life.

When you are born you are given a name, and sometimes it takes your whole life to get used to it. But you always have a chance to change it - which is what we have decided to do. We are officially changing our name from Genetic Resources Action International to GRAIN.

2 A bird is in the air but its mind is on the ground

Wherever you are it is important to remember where you come from and what is important.

Genetic Resources Action International was established at the beginning of the 1990s to launch a decade of popular action against one of the most pervasive threats to world food security: genetic erosion. The loss of biological diversity destroys options for the future and robs people of a key resource base for survival. Central to our approach is the conviction that the conservation and use of biodiversity is too important to leave to scientists, governments and industry alone. Farmers and community organisations have nurtured genetic diversity for millennia, and continue to do so. Any effort in this field should take their experience as a starting point.

3 A peasant does not wander far from where his corn is roasting

Keep an eye on what is important.

One of the outcomes of the external evaluation of our work in 2003 was a suggestion to consider a possible name change, because the term "genetic resources" reflects a narrow and utilitarian approach toward the issues GRAIN is working on. Some of our partners felt uncomfortable with this portrayal of GRAIN. Moreover, Board members contested that the word "resources" was inappropriate given its exploitative nature and the attitude this term implies towards the natural world. We felt we needed a name that more fully encompassed action research on biodiversity, rights and livelihoods in the globalising food system. After some discussion and recognising that it would be impossible to find a single word or short phrase that could encompass the scope of our work, we decided to keep it simple. We would continue to call ourselves 'GRAIN', but as a stand-alone name, not an acronym for Genetic Resources Action International'.

4 When you know who her friend is, you know who she is.

You can tell a lot about a person by the people around them

The foundations of our work lie in daily networking, communications and information activities. By changing our name we hope to enhance these activities, by giving people a more accurate picture of who we are and what we are about. We hope it will strengthen our capacities and those of our many partners the world over in mobilising popular concern and constructive action for safeguarding the world's biodiversity.



GRAIN's October 2004 *Against the grain* report entitled "Iraq's new patent law: a declaration of war against farmers" has been selected to be included in *Censored 2006*. This annual publication produced by Project Censored features the 25 most important news stories not covered by the corporate media in 2004-5. Other stories included in this year's book address government secrecy, media failures in Iraq, national voter fraud, citizen surveillance, and environmental disasters.

The Project Censored media research project based in Sonoma State University in the US publishes a list of 25 important news stories that the media sidelined or ignored.

Read the *Against the grain* at www.grain.org/articles/?id=6
See the book and find out more about Project Censored at www.projectcensored.org.

