



Sustaining the Soil: Indigenous Soil and Water Conservation in Africa: Volume 3

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Indigenous soil and water conservation practices are rarely acknowledged in the design of conventional development projects. Instead, the history of soil and water conservation in Africa has been one of imposing external solutions without regard for local practice. There is a remarkably diverse range of locally developed and adapted technologies for the conservation of water and soil, well suited to their particular site and socio-economic conditions. But such measures have been ignored, and sometimes even overturned, by external solutions.

Sustaining the Soil documents farmers' practices, exploring the origins and adaptations carried out by farmers over generations, in response to changing circumstances. Through a comparative analysis of conservation measures - from the humid zones of West Africa to the arid lands of the Sudan, from rock terraces in Morocco to the grass strips of Swaziland - the book explores the various factors that influence adoption and adaptation; farmers' perceptions of conservation needs; and the institutional and policy settings most favorable to more effective land husbandry.

For the first time on an Africa-wide scale, this book shows that indigenous techniques work, and are being used successfully to conserve and harvest soil and water. These insights combine to suggest new ways forward for governments and agencies attempting to support sustainable land management in Africa, involving a fusion of traditional and modern approaches, which makes the most of both the new and the old.

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