

### **Project Update: December 2003**

Indigenous knowledge is fundamental to our team's work. More recently, a strong positive correlation has been shown between loss of indigenous knowledge and the loss of biodiversity. Our work reveals that though there were more households in which females harvested resources from the woodland vegetation, they had limited knowledge about the individual species harvested in terms of diversity.

However, females were more knowledgeable in species that were no longer readily available to them for medicine, fuelwood, wild fruits, etc. More interestingly, younger females aged 30 years and below were more conversant with the diversity of species utilised in the homestead compared to the elderly ones. We conclude that indigenous people have knowledge, skills and resources that need to be mobilised towards the wise-use of biodiversity. Finally, females need to be made major targets of conservation programmes as more and more females are becoming household heads and significant resource users in rural areas where most biodiversity still occurs.