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A number of global initiatives have recognized the nexus between biodiversity, agriculture and nutrition and are calling for greater mainstreaming of agricultural biodiversity into policies and practices targeting food and nutrition security. They also acknowledge the potential of biodiversity to help meet various Sustainable Development Goals, especially those linked to food systems. Opportunities exist for developing nutrition-sensitive markets and value chains for nutrient-rich underutilized species while transforming subsistence farms into profitable businesses and enhancing the livelihoods of family farmers who are often the principal custodians of this diversity. The GEF-funded project Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition (BFN) explores the barriers and opportunities of this approach in Kenya and Brazil, two countries rich in agricultural biodiversity but burdened with malnutrition. While in Brazil a long history of institutional food procurement exists, Kenya recently increased its commitment to improving the health and welfare of its citizens through several national policies that encourage sustainable and nutritious agricultural systems and the market development of smallholder farmers. Under the umbrella of BFN, the two countries share experiences and lessons learned about linking smallholder farmers to institutional markets. BFN identified Brazil's national Food Procurement Program and the School Feeding Program as the most promising policy instruments for diversifying institutional food procurement and improving diets while supporting family farming. Kenya is adopting a localized approach that, if successful, could be outscaled as a model for the budding National School Feeding Strategy based on a home-grown school feeding approach with direct purchase of food produced by smallholder farmers.