



Community Seed Banks Workshop
Friday, 22 September 2017, 9:30-17:00
Iran room -B116, FAO Headquarters
Rome, Italy

Community Seed Banks (CSB) have been in existence for decades in many parts of the world, in different forms and with various functions. However, some of their main aims have been to address the loss of agricultural genetic diversity and to enhance access to seeds adapted to local conditions, which the market does not provide for adequately. CSBs are often based on a participatory approach of community crop management and crop improvement.

In recent years, several case studies and analysis on CSBs worldwide have been published. Most of these studies focus on examples of countries in “the South”, whilst very little has been published on the different forms of CSBs in “the West”.

The EU project DIVERSIFOOD (www.diversifood.eu) aims at mapping Community Seed Banks in Europe and at collecting and comparing their history, functions and experiences. European CSBs are often part of civil society initiatives and associations. They are often “communities of practice” rather than communities in a geographic / regional sense.

Within this framework **DIVERSIFOOD project** in collaboration with the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources** (ITPGRFA) and **Bioversity International** decided to convene an international workshop aiming at presenting and sharing experiences and knowledge among the actors involved in Community Seed Banks in different regions of the world.

The workshop will bring together experts, practitioners and farmers of Europe, Asia, Africa and America and offer a unique possibility to share their views around the following questions:

- What approaches, components and modalities characterise CSB models in “the West” in comparison to “the South”, and what can they learn from each other?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats to CSBs?
- What policies and practices are required to promote the role of CSBs as safeguards and promoters of agricultural diversity?

The outcomes of the workshop will be presented in a side event during the next Governing Body of the ITPGRFA (Kigali Oct-Nov 2017) and will feed a specific report published in 2018 by DIVERSIFOOD project.