



FAO WORKSHOP

Regional workshop on Permaculture and Community Seed Production for ECA Region

Venue: Virtual workshop (Zoom meeting)
When: 15 November 2022 10:30-13:00 Budapest Time (CET)
Language: English-Russian (Simultaneous interpretation provided)
Registration <https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJIsce6urDgtGNwn9DPJ3r2hwYED30vFm3hN>

Concept Note and Draft Agenda

Background

Permaculture and Community Seeds Production continue to develop dynamically in Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region as in many parts of the world. The increased demand for locally and organically produced nutritive food and resilient seeds provides an opportunity to develop the permaculture in the region and fulfil countries' desires to protect the environment, biodiversity and family farming.

The concept of permaculture is a design system for sustainable living and land use, first articulated by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in Australia in the mid-1970s. Definitions of permaculture slightly vary among authors and practitioners. However, all of them either implicitly or explicitly depict permaculture system as one mimicking the patterns and relationships found in natural ecosystems, which can be achieved by producers if they observe and interact with the agroecosystem, apply self-regulation, accept feedback, integrate biodiversity, use small and slow solutions and follow other permaculture principles. The core ethical pillars of permaculture are care of Earth, care of people and fair share translated into 12 design principles, all of which make it very close to agroecology. However, the principles of permaculture are not new, they come into contact with practices that have existed long before the green and industrial revolution. Acquiring a diversity of forms of tightly integrated terrestrial (sometimes aquatic too) systems combining crop and animal production in a harmonious ensemble, permaculture means that farmers adopt practices which are nature-based and efficient. By using mainly locally available resources in a regenerative way, permaculture helps to reverse soil degradation, restore soil fertility, and biodiversity and create climate-resilient production systems, and restore genetic resources.

Seeds represent one of the key elements in permaculture system, as by saving seeds producers develop crop varieties, which fit their needs in terms of taste, but most importantly, adaptability to local climate conditions, resistance to pests and diseases. Local and traditional crop varieties grown for centuries under different conditions represent the most important source of agrobiodiversity, and are genetically more diverse than modern varieties and, therefore possess higher potential to withstand environmental stresses, such as lack of water or nutrients. Although much of agrobiodiversity has been lost due to specialization in agriculture, and monoculture production, community seeds production never ceased and in one or another form has been present in many countries in the region. Private seed savers, community seed banks, seed savers' networks, scientific

institutes and non-government organizations have been involved in and supporting seeds production for the local farmers and their communities.

Although both permaculture and community seeds production are expanding, the evidence and awareness about their contribution to the development of resilient agriculture systems are scarce. Knowing the advantages and benefits that these offer to local communities is crucial for scaling up the existing good practices.

FAO has completed three publications “Regional Review on Permaculture”, “Community Seeds Production in Europe and Central Asia” and “Foraging Spontaneous Plants”. The reports include the introduction into permaculture, foraging and community seeds concept, their benefits for producers and consumers, the techniques used, and an analysis of existing initiatives and good practices. The Reports aim to serve as a basis to fit future developments for an updated scenario and promote networking in the region and in respective countries.

The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia in the framework of the seed system programme, and in collaboration with the Moldovan Association Gradina Moldovei, are organizing this virtual regional workshop on Permaculture, foraging and Community Seeds Production.

Objectives of the webinar

The main objective of the seminar is to

- Promote permaculture development in the region with raising awareness on permaculture, foraging and community seeds production as part of the regional platform on green agriculture, strengthening organizations capacities for development, and identifying opportunities for permaculture and community seeds of ECA member countries.
- Share the findings and the key recommendations of the review report studies on Permaculture, Foraging spontaneous plants and Community Seeds Production in the ECA with focus on discussion with stakeholders, for updating and validating the recommendations.
- Share country experiences and lessons learned and discuss on key aspects, such as the strengths of the existing initiatives, and respective constraints for their development.
- Offer the opportunity to discuss knowledge and capacity gaps and needs to prioritize for developing the permaculture, foraging and community seeds in the region, while offering an opportunity to collectively reflect on the possible regional project which can support the existing initiatives and practices, contributing to data and knowledge development for both farmers and academia for further upscaling.

Expected results

1. Findings on Permaculture, Foraging spontaneous plants and Community seed production shared and commented by participants as to finalize the three reports
2. Priority needs identified with the participants
3. Regional project idea formulated for scaling up

Target audiences

Interested FAO staff and consultants, governmental representatives from ECA member countries, and other national experts, small-scale food producers’ organizations, civil society organizations, research and academia with interest for the development of permaculture and community seeds in the region.

Regional workshop on Permaculture and Community Seed Production

Programme - 15 November 2022

10:30	<p>Moderator's Welcome Sophie Treinen, <i>Communication for Development Officer, FAO</i></p>
10:35	<p>Opening remarks Tania Santivanez, <i>Agriculture and Climate Change Team Leader, FAO REU</i></p>
10:45	<p>FAO Regional Study "Review report on permaculture in the ECA region." Anya Coutinho, <i>Public Association Gradina Moldovei, Moldova</i></p>
11:00	<p>FAO Case Study "Permaculture for small-scale family farms in Ukraine" Taras Suhodoliskii, <i>Ukraine</i></p>
11:10	<p>FAO report "Eat your way through nature": the role of foraging plants - relationship between permaculture and spontaneous plants Wateki Talyana Tobert, <i>Russia and Associazione Italiana di Fitoalimurgia, Italy</i></p>
11:20	<p>FAO Regional Study "Review report on community seeds production (CSP) in the ECA region." Anatolii Albin, <i>Association Gradina Moldovei, Moldova</i></p>
11:35	<p>Creation of seed-savers' network "Dyikan Muras" in partnership with academia: Case of Kyrgyzstan Aida Jamangulova, <i>ADI, Kyrgyzstan</i></p>
11:45-12:30	<p>Group discussion in break out rooms Permaculture and Community Seeds Production in ECA region</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What are the strengths and opportunities that we can build upon to promote and apply permaculture / community seeds production in the region?</i> 2. <i>What are the constraints that we need to overcome? And what are the recommendations to overcome them</i> 3. <i>Based on the strengths and needs you have, what would be like to incorporate into the future regional project?</i>
12:30-12:50	<p>Reporting from the breakout rooms and discussion for a joint project Group representatives and discussions with participants</p>
12:50-13:00	<p>Closing remarks Viliami Fakava, <i>FAO REU Plant Production and Protection Officer</i></p>