

In Memoriam Anja Christinck



Dr. Anja Christinck passed away on the 19th of August, 2022 in Germany. She lived her passions of supporting family and friends and contributing to empowering farmers in their management and use of genetic diversity in many different ways.

Her doctoral research in Rajasthan, India for her PhD degree from the University of Hohenheim (2002) introduced her to social science methodologies, after working as an agronomist in Ecuador and Germany. At the same time, she introduced her team of plant breeder colleagues to the power of collaboration across disciplines. The issue of social difference (e.g. gender) and how it influences activities, outcomes and efficiency of research projects in relation to their goals has been a core issue of her work, as a researcher and consultant.

Her part-time association with the German Institute for Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture of the University of Kassel provided her the opportunity to continue working on these issues with students and other researchers, while conceptualizing her practical expertise with organizing multi-actor approaches, stakeholder involvement and gender-sensitive research at the scientific level. With her special gift and skills as a writer these concepts and their applications to seed systems management and other complex multi-actor processes in agriculture were published and are widely used.

One thematic focus of her work was plant breeding, seed system development and agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use. She supported plant breeding programs with insightful evaluations; she contributed to expert consultation processes for government bodies, and their implementing agencies, at national, European and international levels. She most recently supported the Secretariat on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, at FAO, on the implementation options for its farmers' rights articles.

Her long-term experiences with addressing the question of how natural science research processes need to be organized to effectively contribute towards goals such as sustainability, food and nutrition security or gender equity as well as her practical expertise with the organization of multi-stakeholder cooperation and learning most recently supported the Seed for Resilience project of the Global Crop Diversity Trust. She supported the five African Genebanks who are developing and implementing their own strategies for germplasm user engagement. Her advice and encouragement of all project partners to explore new ways of working and collaborating with the creators of the genetic diversity the genebanks conserve will be thoroughly missed. Anja was a colleague and friend to many. Her collaborative spirit, appreciation of beauty and indomitable courage will continue to inspire family, friends, and colleagues throughout the world.