

# BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL ROME, ITALY

ANNE MERRILL '18



# BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL

**Vision:** *agricultural biodiversity nourishes people and sustains the planet*

**Mission:** *to deliver scientific evidence, management practices and policy options to use and safeguard agricultural and tree biodiversity to attain sustainable global food and nutrition security*

- headquartered in Maccarese, Rome, Italy
- intern in the Communications Department
- valued how Bioversity affects the lives of individuals, communities, and regional landscapes



# RESPONSIBILITIES

- broader role than anticipated, participating in staff meetings with other departments
- researched scientific studies and synthesized information for web pages appearing on the Bioversity website and in the annual report
- interviewed scientists from south Asia, Africa, and South America to glean background information for articles
- researched the life of a prominent scientist, interviewed his co-scientists, and published an article celebrating his accomplishments
- interviewed a scientist and reviewed her group's long-term study, then distilled the information for donors and wrote an article for the 2015 annual report
- researched facts and prepared PowerPoint presentations for use by senior management
- edited and posted hundreds of submissions for Bioversity's photo contest on Women and Agricultural Biodiversity
- wrote and edited daily social media posts (twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr)
- proofread and edited the 2014 annual report
- researched photo image bank, cropped, and published photos for the website, articles, development, and publicity
- proofread monthly newsletter, located and uploaded photos



# IMPACT ON ORGANIZATION

- my articles and webpages distilling studies into “teaser” paragraphs and summaries written for donors and the general public are published by Bioversity
- one of my articles was the front page of Bioversity’s website for over two weeks (including a byline and reference to IIP)
- my writing will appear in Bioversity’s upcoming annual report



Bioversity International: research for development in agricultural and tree biodiversity

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Vegetables for sale at a market in Guatemala. Credit: Bioversity International/J.Fanzer

Research / Research portfolio / Marketing diversity

## The challenge

From a total of 250,000 known plant species, approximately 7,000 have been used for human food since the origin of agriculture. Out of these, just three—rice, wheat, and maize—provide more than 50% of the world’s plant-derived calories.

The reduction of agricultural biodiversity in global food systems is of increasing concern—leading to a lack of available foods to constitute diversified diets, particularly in the developing world.

## Research portfolio

Adaptation to climate change  
Agricultural ecosystems  
Conservation & use of bananas & tree crops  
Conservation of crop diversity  
Diet diversity



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## Celebrating 90 Years – Geneticist M.S. Swaminathan

07 Aug 2015



Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan celebrates his 90th birthday today, a man who remains driven by his passionate belief that agricultural biodiversity is key for food and livelihood security – a passion that has transformed agriculture in his native India as well as across the world.

Speaking in tribute to the importance of his work, M. Ann Tutwiler, Director General, said “Everyone here at Bioversity International would like to wish M.S. Swaminathan a very special 90th birthday. We have enjoyed a close collaboration from the day we first

opened our doors in 1974 as the International Board of Plant Genetic Resources. On our 40th birthday last year, we were honoured that M.S. Swaminathan sent us a personal video message (view it above). We look forward to many more years of collaborative working to promote the importance of agricultural biodiversity to nourish people and sustain the planet.”

Known as the ‘Father of the Green Revolution,’ M.S. Swaminathan was inspired to pursue a career in agricultural science after seeing widespread malnutrition in Asia and famines in Bengal and China. His creativity and advanced education in genetics led to his developing a new wheat seed that produced high yields, was disease resistant, and suited Indian growing

## Latest News

Director General Blog

Newsletter

Media

## News

Research initiatives  
Healthy diets  
Farms, forests, landscapes  
Genetic resources

Research areas  
Agricultural ecosystems  
Climate change  
Conservation of bananas and tree crops  
Conservation of crop diversity  
Diet diversity

Read more about Marketing Diversity [here](#)

Written by Anne Merrill, Princeton University International Internship Program





# IMPACT ON ORGANIZATION



# WORK ENVIRONMENT

- traditional office environment
- upscale suburb of Rome, Italy
- weekly office meetings with entire staff (including *cornetto*!)





# PART OF A TEAM

- extremely welcoming team
- tremendous support
- clear directions
- opportunities to direct my research to my interests
- enhanced with discussions over lunch, coffee breaks, and occasional field trips



**Marta**



**Oonagh**



**Sam**



**Nora**



**Erica**





# PERSONAL IMPACT

- **my understanding of environmental concerns and agriculture was incredibly broadened by this internship**
- **access to scientists and their research was fascinating—from work tracing viable, nutritious grains, testing various leafy greens, and genetically modifying crops to thrive in the changing climate**
- **engaging with policy makers helped me appreciate the complexity of introducing agricultural changes when faced with political challenges**
- **interning in this dynamic firm affirmed the rewards of working towards a cause that I believe in**

# CULTURAL AWARENESS

- **working with and getting to know my coworkers helped me appreciate the connections gained from a shared passion**
- **in an office of non-native English speakers, I learned the value of native fluency in communicating scientific reports**
- **observing a global company first-hand**
- **how connected the world is—acting globally in this global world is critical**

# COFFEE COFFEE (ESSENTIAL TO ITALIAN CULTURE!)

