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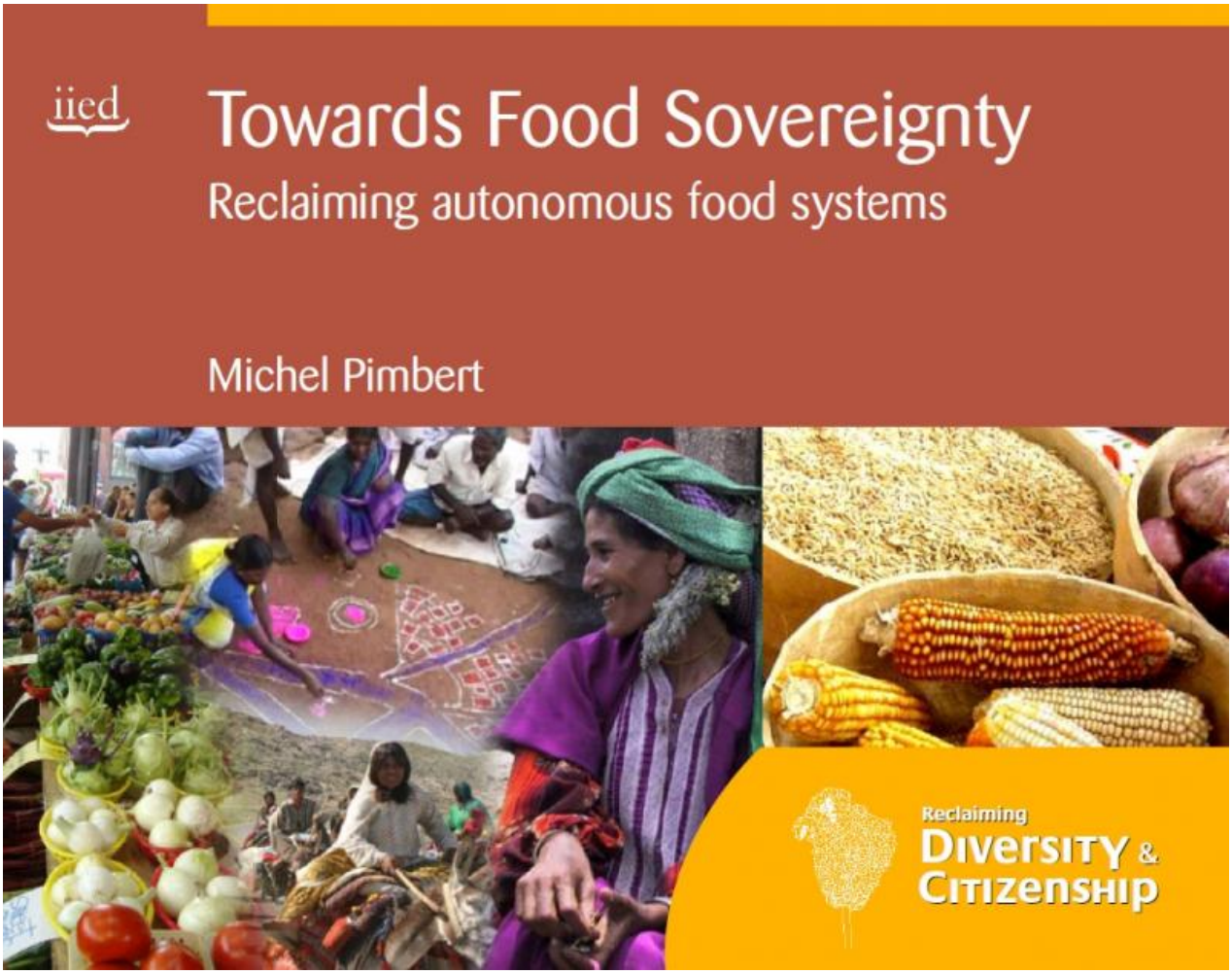

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Pimbert, Michel. “Reclaiming Citizenship, Empowering Civil Society in Policy-making.” Chap. 5 in *Towards Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming Autonomous Food Systems*. London: IIED, 2009.

The food sovereignty paradigm is deeply transformative in its vision, policies, and practice. It implies a fundamentally new conception of citizenship: economic, political, social, and cultural. For example, the food sovereignty paradigm affirms the fundamental right of peoples to define their food and agricultural policies. This

implies that food providers and consumers are directly involved in framing policies and institutional choices. However, existing decision-making and policy processes that are based on models of representative democracy are inadequate for transformation towards food sovereignty. A more discursive and direct democracy is now needed for citizens to exercise their right to participate in decision-making.

This chapter explores processes that can help claim active forms of citizenship, including learning from the rich history of face-to-face democracy, strengthening local organizations, using the potential of community controlled media (such as digital video, radio, press, and Internet), and engaging in deliberative and inclusive processes (DIPs) that can significantly enhance citizen voice and agency in decision-making today. Learning how to nurture citizenship and competence to act in the public interest is also emphasized throughout this chapter.

(text by Michel Pimbert)

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