

Farmer First Revisited

Innovation for Agricultural Research and Development

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with a foreword by Robert Chambers

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Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (ACP-EU)

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) was established in 1983 under the Lomé Convention between the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States and the European Union Member States. Since 2000, it has operated within the framework of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement. CTA's tasks are to develop and provide services that improve access to information for agricultural and rural development, and to strengthen the capacity of ACP countries to produce, acquire, exchange and utilise information in this area. CTA's programmes are designed to: provide a wide range of information products and services and enhance awareness of relevant information sources; promote the integrated use of appropriate communication channels and intensify contacts and information exchange (particularly intra-ACP); and develop ACP capacity to generate and manage agricultural information and to formulate ICM strategies, including those relevant to science and technology. CTA's work incorporates new developments in methodologies and cross-cutting issues such as gender and social capital.

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Advocacy coalitions to build participatory processes in the Altiplano: increasing human capacities to adapt to change

Cecilia Turin

More than 30 years of development interventions have not led to a decline in natural resources degradation or a reduction in poverty for the indigenous Aymara communities residing in the Altiplano of Andean South America. The lack of genuine participation in policy processes and top-down development interventions are major contributors to these poor results. To address some of these challenges the USAID-funded Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Management Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM CRSP) launched a project in partnership with several regional and national institutions in the Andes in June 2006 entitled 'Adapting to Change in the Andes: Practices and Strategies to Address Climate and Market Risks in Vulnerable Agro-Ecosystems' (Valdivia et al., 2006). Working with Aymara communities in Bolivia and Peru, the project aims to contribute to the reduction of vulnerability, food insecurity and natural resources degradation through participatory action research and advocacy approaches.

In order to achieve this, five specific objectives were identified: 1) develop a shared understanding of the Altiplano ecosystem; 2) understand how livelihood strategies are developed in response to farmer perceptions; 3) link local and new knowledge for natural resources management; 4) increase human capacities across people (farmers, researchers, development agents), communities (rural communities, universities, NGOs), disciplines (biophysical, social sciences) and countries (Peru, Bolivia, US); and 5) assist communities to develop strategies with local institutions that contribute to resilience.

A research methodology was developed based on the 'Community Capital Framework' (CCF) and 'Advocacy Coalitions Framework' (ACF). Both approaches are different from those that have already been tried in the Altiplano. This combined methodology emphasizes cultural, human, social and political capital as key subjects to be considered, recognizing the importance of being in a particular socio-cultural and environmental context. The CCF considers seven forms of capital: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and physical. Application of this approach showed that in the past most development interventions were focused on building natural, financial and physical capital rather than cultural, human, social and political capital, which are the main strengths of these ancient Aymara communities.

The ACF was employed to study and to understand the relationships among actors and different levels and sectors around natural resources management

issues (Fernandez-Baca, 2004). It is based on stakeholder analysis, which aims to understand the positions of different social actors on a specific issue over time. ACF consists of the formation of 'advocacy coalitions' among key actors and among institutions with the same aim, to encourage them to work together toward common goals. During this process external and internal linkages are strengthened through bonding and bridging, thus increasing the social capital inside and outside the community. At the same time this process increases communication between key actors, establishing a two-way dialogue that allows participants of advocacy coalitions to access diverse resources, mainly information and knowledge. This access to information and knowledge empowers key actors, fostering active participation in the decision-making and policy-making process around issues of concern to the community, and thus increasing political capital. The redistribution of power among actors strengthens advocacy coalitions and changes occur due to favouring of one belief system over another (Fernandez-Baca, 2004; Flora et al., 2006).

ACF has been especially useful in natural resource management policies in many countries. In Ecuador, for example, ACF was used to help rural communities to negotiate with the government and mining enterprises to have more participation in the governance of an important bio-reserve (Flora et al., 2006). The ACF in the Altiplano region is providing new insights to improve the impact of research and development interventions for adaptation to climatic and economic change. We expect the ACF to lead to reduced vulnerability and increased environmental conservation through a process by which livelihood strategies are developed through increased community agency.

Farmers' movements and the struggle for food sovereignty in Latin America

Maria Arce Moreira and Patrick M. Mulvany

Towards food sovereignty

Throughout Latin America there is an active process of discussion and promotion of the principles of food sovereignty often complementary to the agroecological movement and those involved in campaigns against free trade agreements and genetic engineering (Windfuhr and Jonsen, 2005; Via Campesina, 1996). The proposed 'corridor of food sovereignty' stretching from Ecuador through Peru to Bolivia, as well as parts of Central America, is an example of efforts by civil society to generate debate and influence national and local policies over local control of food systems.