

BGMS-B2: Case study: Rural agroindustry in the Andes

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Case study: "Can Rural Agroindustry become a key element to promote local development in the Andes?"

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The Andean rural ecosystem is populated largely by small owners/ producers, farmers or commoners (Chiriboga, 96), who based on its own efforts have managed to develop technologies and markets, contributing to its own subsistence and for feeding urban populations. They have a range of livestock products, that driven appropriately could become important source of income.

Most of its production is oriented to the market (A. Tealdo, 1997). But this linkage is given in conditions of lack of equity and of erosion of the biodiversity, since its profitability is low or null and the production should respond to the requirements of the market putting aside crops that are not commercial, leading to a productive specialization.

In the Andean rural regions it has been demonstrated by diagnoses of the rural agroindustry performed in various countries (Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, etc.), that there exist more than 800,000 productive units that generate jobs and income for approximately 2.0 million people, mainly women and rural young people. But this production is scattered with limited technological and business capacity, with ignorance of the laws and market techniques, and with the imminent risk of being excluded, because they are not prepared for competing. However, they have productive potential, with health products, exotic, ecological, with human potential, with knowledge and experience. The challenge is how to mobilize this potential, so that it becomes a tool of sustainable development for rural regions and reduction of poverty?

The case of Sucse-Sócota

The district of Sócota is located in the Northeastern Area of the Department of Cajamarca - Peru. This is composed by 29 rural communities, of which 17 communities, that is 1247 families devote themselves to the crop of arracacha (*Arracacia xanthorrhiza*), Andean root that is characterized by its starch of easy digestibility and by its high content of minerals mainly Calcium, Phosphorus, Iron and vitamin A and B. There also exist 3 communities (Sucse, San Antonio and La Unión) with 167 families that devoted themselves to processing of the root obtaining a traditional sweet dessert called "Rallado" it is a mixture of honey of sugarcane and roots of arracacha. It is in this locality where the greatest biodiversity of arracacha is found at Andean level. The reason for this is probably that they have been related to the market through traditional processing that permits the generation of added value that benefits the actors of the productive chain at local level.

In this micro-watershed there exist an horizontal integration between producers, processors, and merchants. The producing families sell the root to the processors who in turn are growers of sugarcane, these interact with providers of services and with the merchants who are members of the same community.

60% of the processing families are owners of a craft agro industry of family type however 100% of families live from the processing of the "Rallado", the families that do not have implements rent,

provide or utilize that from their neighbors in exchange for labor.

In the preparation all the family participates, however, there are very defined roles: The men are those which grind the cane, grate the arracacha and beat the mixture, the women prepare the mixture, boil it, packs it, stir the fire, and care of the stored product. The local sale is performed by the women while the major sales are done by males. The principal energy source for the activity is the spirit of the cane.

It is processed throughout the entire year, however the sale is restricted to the local markets that only made it possible to generate the minimum vital salary for a family. The reasons: inadequate technical and sanitary quality of the product, a disorganized production, and the ignorance regarding the requirements of other markets.

In order to overcome these limitations, with the support of the IDRC-Canada, there was implemented the project "Development of Agroindustries and Markets for the Arracacha", led by CIP/CONDESAN in alliances with local institutions such as: NGO-ESCAES, the Municipality of Súcota, University of Cajamarca, etc. who participate in the project assuming diverse roles in order to respond jointly to the complexity of the problems of the producer.

The project intended to know, identify the limitations, and strengthen the systems setup by the organizations of production, of services, the products, the people, its knowledge, its networks of relations, etc. Based on research-participatory action involving all the actors.

Segments and niches were studied and identified from market to local, regional, and national level. Based of the preferences of the consumers the innovations were performed in the production chain.

What has been achieved:

In the theoretical side, it has achieved to implement a series of principles such as:

Human Development and the possibility of strengthening the existing Social Capital; which is participatory, beyond the slogan of action-legalization; and is systemic, as a possibility of study the production chains focused on the permanent interaction with other subsystems; the promising processes under way, as the revaluation of the local knowledge.

In the technical productive side:

* The improvement of the efficiency of the agronomic and agroindustrial processes, on the basis of the demand and in harmony with nature. * The development of the local markets to regional and national scales. * The promotion of the product utilizing tools of participatory marketing.

A communitarian enterprise has been constituted. In this regard we share here the testimony of Don Manuel (elderly person of the community):

"Our enterprise is the hope of work and a better future for our children and grandchildren, who will enjoy a better life than ours"

This effort initiated in 1999, stimulating the local development, has improved the income of over 1200 families and has potential to continue to be developed possibly on the basis of alliances with the private sector.

The rural leaders of Súcota jointly with other micro centrum leaders of Bolivia and Ecuador have currently constituted the International Network of Producers and Processors of Arracacha, as a regional mechanism oriented to the conservation, reassessment, and comprehensive promotion of

this promising Andean native root.

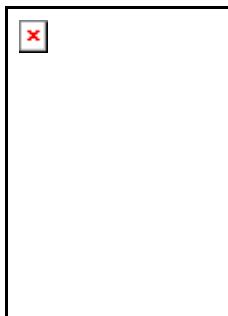
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