Strengthening pro-poor agricultural innovation for food security in the Andean region: AAP 2010

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Total Cost (EUR): 5 000 000

EU contracted amount (EUR): 5 000 000

Duration: December 2010 - April 2015

Implementing organisation: INTERNATIONAL POTATO CENTER (CIP)

Benefitting zone: South America Region

STORY: Innovation for food security and sovereignty in the Andes

I feel good because my son’s weight has improved and he has grown more than last year. The nurse says it is because I gave him more native potatoes than rice and pasta.
Haydé - native potato producer from Ataya, Huancavelica

CONTEXT

In Peru potato is one of the most important crops in the agricultural sector. More than 3,000 native potato varieties are grown in the highland areas where the evidence indicates that malnutrition persists, especially in children under three years of age (42.4% in Huancavelica and 29% in Apurímac). Anemia and chronic malnutrition in these areas are mainly caused by iron and zinc deficiency. Knowledge dissemination of native potato nutritional properties along with the improvement of mothers’ nutritional education are key factors to respond to these problems.

OBJECTIVES

To improve food security and nutrition of rural populations in the Andean region, by strengthening agricultural innovation in potato based production systems at different levels (local, regional and national) in four countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

RESULTS

- 5,300 farmer families diversified their production and consumption.
- 3,700 children and women are aware of the nutritional quality of native potato varieties with higher content of iron and zinc and include them in the diet.

TESTIMONY

A rediscovered treasure that feeds its people

Haydé, a mother from Atalla (Huancavelica), finishes harvesting colored potatoes early in the morning in her field located at 3,900 meters above sea level. Two years ago, she was questioning whether she
should continue planting these potatoes, but now the situation has changed, as she can not only feed her family with those potatoes but also sell them in urban markets. For small farmers from the Peruvian Andes, potato is the main crop and a major source of income and food, while preserving ancestral customs. In Peru, potato is also one of the most important crops for its socioeconomic aspect: nearly 700 thousand families in the highlands region produce the majority of the four million tons of potatoes per year.

Haydé remembers the explanations of the health personnel and technicians who visited her fields.

"They told me that these potatoes have more vitamins and some substances that could make us stronger, but we didn’t know about that. We remember how years ago our families could be kept well fed and they did not have many illnesses. From now on, our children will not only eat the food that we buy in the market but also we will use these potatoes that have been studied and, we now know, they are very nutritious".

The results obtained by the project indicate that native varieties can become an alternative to complement the requirements of macro and micro nutrients for vulnerable populations.

Since the native potato segment has been commercially developed in the recent years through other CIP supported initiatives, small producers, who have already identified more nutritious native potato varieties, will have greater opportunity to generate higher incomes and access to higher quality food, improving the nutritional status of their families. Haydé leaves the health center with a big smile on her face, having been congratulated by the nurse for her son's weight gain.

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

- EU Contribution: €4 906 542
- Nutritional education programmes aimed at children and mothers.
- Workshops with farmers, health staff and technicians from public and private firms to strengthen capacity in production, nutrition, health and management.

**PARTNERS**

- [International Potato Center (CIP)](http://www.cip.org)

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