

FACT SHEET

CGIAR's Partnership with Civil Society in Latin America Select Examples

Research is a collaborative enterprise, and CGIAR scientists working at the 15 CGIAR Centers collaborate with a broad spectrum of civil society, including farmers, farmer associations, and community-based organizations. Participatory research is one-way to ensure that the results of CGIAR research reach poor farmers fast, and improve the lives and livelihood opportunities of poor farmers. The examples below provide a snapshot of current participatory research projects and other significant civil society partnership programs.

- **Comités de Investigación Agrícola Local (CIALs)** are local agricultural research committees where farmers express their views on the development and evaluation of agricultural technologies. The committees are coordinated by CIAT. Researchers benefit from accurate feedback from farmers, and farmers in turn are encouraged to evaluate new options for increasing agricultural productivity and improving the management of natural resources. Currently, 249 local committees are active in eight Latin American countries. Benefits of the committees range from increased local capacity in formal research methods and improved local planning and management skills to greater availability of improved seed and food security. In Cauca, Colombia, over 80 percent of farmers from the village of Pescador adopted a bean variety recommended by the local committee. CIAT has estimated a 78 percent rate of return on investments in developing the CIAL approach (www.ciat.cgiar.org).
- **Learning Alliances for agricultural enterprise development in Latin America:** CIAT, in partnership with CARE, Catholic Relief Services, and others, is developing "learning alliances" in Central America. A novel approach, such alliances comprise coalitions of research-and-development organizations who together implement jointly-designed development approaches and interventions in specific areas, with a strong, overt focus on building local capacities. The partners, including farmers, reflect collectively on which approaches are working and identify those that are not. The lessons learned are put into practice leading to new cycles of learning. In Nicaragua, thanks to this participatory learning process, development of agroenterprises which began in one municipality has now been scaled up to ten municipalities (www.ciat.cgiar.org).
- **Fighting bacterial wilt in the Andes.** CIP scientists have developed an inexpensive detection kit that can be used within an organized seed system to eliminate infected seed before it reaches farmers fields. Even though crop rotation can help eliminate the pathogen from farmers' fields, the suggested method of abandoning potato cultivation for a few years is neither an economically nor socially viable option for thousands of poor farmers who depend on this tuber crop for their food, income, and nutrition needs. With CIP's participation, farmer researcher groups have identified a promising solution where farmers working in highly infested soils succeed in sanitizing their fields in 9 to 17 months by planting three successive non-solanaceous horticultural crops with high market value

(for example onion, leak, cabbage) or two successive food security crops such as lupine, sweetpotato, or arracacha (and Andean root crop) after the potato harvest. Not only could farmers recover their field for potato production in a very short time but potato commercial yields were tripled. (www.cipotato.org).

- **CIMMYT and the Patronato of Sonora:** In CIMMYT's research station in the Yaqui Valley, Sonora, an area in the northwestern part of Mexico, a group of private farmers and the Agricultural Research and Experimentation Board of the State of Sonora (known by its Spanish acronym, Patronato) has donated a new sprinkler device and drip irrigation system to CIMMYT that can help scientists to reduce and control water wastage and better manage this precious resource in a dry area. The immediate beneficiaries of the research are Yaqui valley farmers who cultivate wheat, maize and other crops. Patronato's leaders work voluntarily and ensure that the organization only invests in research solving farmer's production constraints. (www.cimmyt.org).
- **Self Help International,** a US-based NGO is promoting Quality Protein Maize in Nicaragua. Developed by CIMMYT and partners, the new, more nutritious maize is helping combat malnutrition in an area at the southern tip of Lake Nicaragua (near Costa Rica) that has the second highest maternal death rates in the world. In another example, when Hurricane Mitch struck, Self Help International worked with CGIAR Centers to launch an innovative seed bank program that involved giving farmers a bag of seed to be repaid with two bags after the harvest, enabling other farmers to benefit from the new technology. By December 2002, more than 7,000 farmers were planting the new maize seed. (www.cimmyt.org)
- **Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion** (known by its Spanish acronym, CONDESAN) collaborates with the "Water For Food" Challenge Program (W&F CP) in the Andean river basins. CONDESAN supports the challenge program by linking its research networks, infrastructure and combined experience to ensure its efficient implementation of research activities. By combining the challenge program with other regional initiatives, CONDESAN helps avoid duplication of efforts while promoting complementarities and fostering synergetic relationships. The principal focus of this coordination effort is to promote an ecoregional approach to solving development challenges in the Andes region.
- **Conserving agricultural biodiversity:** Cassava, corn, beans, potato and sweetpotato are major crops of Latin America. The Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional (known by its Spanish acronym, CINEVESTAV) brings together leading national research programs and CGIAR Centers to promote conservation activities throughout the region. For example, IPGRI launched a global collaborative project in nine Latin American countries for strengthening the scientific basis of *in situ* conservation in crop plants and integrating agricultural biodiversity in agricultural development strategies. Similarly, the Latin American and Caribbean Consortium to Support Cassava Research and Development (CLAYUCA) is working to increase cassava production and enhance marketing opportunities for poor farmers throughout Latin America (www.ipgri.cgiar.org).

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