

Summary of Second Week E-Conference

Innovation systems for food security and nutrition: understanding the capacities needed - invitation to an e-conference

Discussions from 25 to 29 April on questions 3 and 4

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Question #3: The concept “institution” comprises a number of formal and informal ‘rules of the game’, including relationships between organizations, regulations and behaviours. Which are the most essential institutions that should be strengthened to foster innovation in FSN-Agricultural Innovation Systems and why?

- Because the appropriate changes depend on the specific innovation, it is necessary to conduct an assessment that includes all the potential actors and then identify appropriate measures. Particular emphasis should be put on formal institutions that are easier to change and through these influence the informal (cultures, trust)
- Special attention should be put on research organizations, extension and advisory services, but civil organizations (farmers organizations, youth, women associations, etc.) should not be overlooked
- Local organizations are often not included in capacity development activities, which creates problems when implementation is decentralized. The private sector should also be included in capacity development activities.
- It is important that all actors become aware of the need and opportunities created by the other partners in the innovation process.
- Capacities developed for one project are not maintained when it ends and are replaced by new capacities needed for new projects. Some NGOs have built strong capacities and have been able to maintain and strengthen them over time, especially when there is continuity in the management team.
- Some interventions to strengthen the AIS at the system level: facilitate the activities of catalytic agents; stakeholders platforms that include smallholders, women and the youth; strengthening closer links between public and private actors; strengthen public and private programs designed to assist family farmers in, for example, complying with the standards and requirements, mainly related to quality and safety, established by government regulations and the standards of the principal distributors in food markets
- Once capacities have been developed they can be maintained by
 - encouraging or nurturing a culture of learning and teamwork within the organization
 - codifying staff knowledge to make it explicit and available to the organizational learning pool
 - developing Standard Operating Procedure
- It is important to make sure that innovation activities and capacity development projects in particular are not captured by elites

Question #4: Which initiatives for developing capacities for FSN-Agricultural Innovation Systems are being implemented or planned in the country where your activities are devoted to the achievement of SDGs 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being) and 12 (responsible consumption and production)?

- Brazil: Zero Hunger supporting vulnerable people reflects on nutrition and with food consumption
- Guatemala: Information to small-scale producers on climate change, production technology, etc in local languages provided by a platform comprised of universities, coops, and associations. Support by US Department of Agriculture
- Mexico: 300 scholarships for MSc and PhD international students, managed and implemented by IICA and Mexico's National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT)
- Central America: Agriculture technologies available to 4000 small-scale farmers through local innovation consortia. EU funded program.
- Central America: 25 families trained on vegetable production on community kitchen gardens. It included solid waste management and disposal, production of handcraft goods, gender and entrepreneurship. The project enhanced their technical skills and access to innovations that enabled them to improve their income and food security
- Mexico: Improve joint actions for economic integration
- Caribbean: strengthen women's producer network
- Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Panama, and Paraguay: design of policies, plans, and agreements on agricultural, rural development and food security.
- Pakistan: Multi-sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies shifting from emergency mode to long-term sustain interventions.

During the second week we also discussed general issues considering innovation (AIS) and the lack of understanding on what innovation really is, and the misconception from researchers and development workers on what farmers need and how decisions are made at the household level.