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APPRI International Workshop: Learning, producing and sharing innovations. Tools for co-construction and sustainable implementation of innovations in dryland Africa
Atelier International APPRI: Apprentissage, Production et Partage d'Innovations: quels outils pour le renforcement des capacités, les mesures d'accompagnement, la co-construction et la mise en œuvre durable d'innovations dans les zones rurales sèches en Afrique?

Clavel Danièle

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Atelier international **APPRI** 2008
Apprentissage, Production
et Partage d'Innovations

Quels outils pour la co-construction et la mise en œuvre durable
d'innovations dans les zones rurales sèches en Afrique?



Learning, producing and sharing innovations. Tools for co-construction and sustainable implementation of innovations in dryland Africa

Ouagadougou, Hôtel Palm Beach, 20-24 octobre 2008

APPRI Workshop's main outcomes

Danièle Clavel (clavel@cirad.fr) , Cirad-BIOS, Montpellier (France)



APPRI Workshop, Ouagadougou, 21-24 October 2008

Outcomes

Danièle Clavel (clavel@cirad.fr), Cirad-BIOS, Montpellier (France)

In a context of strong pressure on natural resources, if agricultural production is to be sustained and sustainable, it must be considered not only in biophysical terms but also in social and economic terms. The food supply and income of rural African populations can only be improved if the impact of technical results can be guaranteed, whilst ensuring the ecological sustainability of technical systems, particularly in environments where ecological balances have been weakened by drought. Technical and institutional innovation will be crucial in achieving that goal.

1. Purpose of the APPRI international workshop

The APPRI workshop "*Learning, producing and sharing innovations. Tools for co-construction and sustainable implementation of innovations in dryland Africa*" took place from 21 to 24 October 2008, at the Palm Beach Hotel in Ouagadougou. The participants in this workshop came from the world of research, NGOs and farmer organizations, either for targeted talks on the main topics, practices, concepts, tools, methods and systems, or to take part in or chair discussions.

Numerous experiences exist in Africa and one challenge of the workshop was to compare them to the farmer universities (UNICAMPO) in the Brazilian Nordeste, a semi-arid region where farms show great similarities with the small family farms in the drylands of Africa.

The main purpose of APPRI 2008 was to analyse actual practices in the field in order to identify the knowledge needed and the methods and tools to be developed to enable production of shared know-how and to improve the impact of agricultural innovations. It was also a matter of constructing a multiple-stakeholder partnership for agricultural development in Africa, especially in the zones most affected by drought.

2. Main results

The workshop's scientific programme included ample time for group discussions between stakeholders. It concerned tools and methods to strengthen capacities and accompanying measures for co-construction and sustainable implementation of innovations in the rural drylands of Africa. Some twenty papers were selected and spread over 4 sessions: (i) innovation practices, (ii) tools, resources and methods, (iii) institutional arrangements (iv) monitoring and participatory evaluation.

The APPRI network

The participants opted for a semi-formal multiple-stakeholder network for rural development in Africa sharing a common vision of innovation. The group laid the foundations for a joint approach and concepts, which are summed up below.

The novel APPRI approach

A presentation of practices and tools provided a picture that led in particular to the following observations:

- A multiplicity of more or less participatory practices
- Highly contextualized practices, specific to a particular environment

- The methods used are not particularly generic hence the need for global and flexible approaches
- Problem of impact, sustainability and perpetuation, and of a change of scale

Ideas and concepts

Starting from two consensual key ideas, two basic concepts for action were discussed and approved by the participants.

Key idea 1:

Tackle innovation in the broad sense as defined by UN/UNDP from reports on human development: right to health, access to knowledge and access to the resources required to achieve a decent standard of living and be in a position to take part in community life. Innovation therefore has a social, cultural and political role. Hence, there is a need to define fundamental principles to lay down a charter for rural innovation.

Key idea 2:

The role of increasing stakeholder capacities is fundamental. Capacity building should enable the formulation of true needs and civil/political expression. Such an increase in capacities involves:

- improving access to knowledge: create appropriate forums, develop knowledge media and appropriate contents
- improving communication between stakeholders and between civil society (media, groups) and stakeholders
- supporting action that brings skills into play
- creating links/relations: importance of mobility and local facilities
- implementing initiatives co-constructed at all levels of intervention
- taking into account the perpetuation and sustainability of innovations/interventions

Concept 1: The Peasant University is seen as a social innovation, a focal point for knowledge bringing together research, rural development staff, farmer organizations and producer groups, rural communities and local authorities. A concept-tool such as the "innovation caravan" can be promoted to participate in sharing and disseminating knowledge. The model described is that of the UNICAMPO-association-peasant university, Nordeste, Brazil.

Concept 2: The Innovation Caravan, a travelling forum, is a strategy for mobilizing all stakeholders, from public authorities to scientific research, for which a central objective is to improve the access of populations to information, particularly about communal development policies. This information, passed on from village to village, enables collective mobilization of communities as a force for proposals in the defence of their interests. The model is that of the "Citizens' anti-hunger caravan" launched by the COSADER NGO group in Cameroon.

3. Research needs

All in all, this amounts to analysing factors for an innovation to be taken on board and for transformation of a technological innovation into human progress, in order to promote global approaches and contextualized (co-constructed) participatory methods.

- Identify and analyse the existing situation
- Search for common analysis frameworks and indicators to identify the causes and factors of failures and successes

- Develop methods for co-analysis of needs
- Work on appropriate communication and exchange materials
- Search for integrated impact indicators
- Research/action on information exchange systems

4. Prospects

The follow-on from this workshop is as follows:

Editorial initiative:

- On-line indexing of paper abstracts: HAL open access platform, <http://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/>
- An overview is being drafted for publication: "Stakeholders in Rural Innovation in Dryland Africa. Review and analysis of practices and approaches" *Quae / CTA editions*.

Multiple-stakeholder semi-formal network for rural development in Africa sharing a common vision of innovation: to be embodied by way of unifying projects.

Alliance strategy with operators working in the zone, FARA/Gfar, CTA, PAEPARD phase 1 and 2 (Platform for African-European Partnership on Agricultural Research for Development) WBI (World Bank Institute), to develop and promote the APPRI initiative.