Tools to achieve food policy sustainability in marginalized and isolated communities

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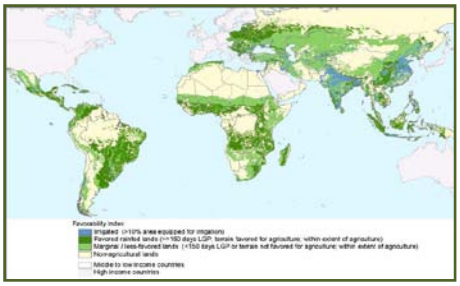
Introduction

A major food policy challenge in medium and low-income countries is to go beyond the specific actions to eradicate malnutrition to sustain the achievements, especially in in Marginalized and Isolated Communities (MIC) where the political goal is to accomplish food self-sufficiency.

Marginalized communities include farmlands in low and middle-income countries where the growing period is less than 150 days, high plains, hills, hilly lowlands and rugged mountain areas. Communities in state of isolation include those located more than two hours from the nearest market. Depending on the estimates, between 12 and 15% of the world population live in MICs.

The studies in the MICs reveal serious shortcomings in the social, economic, health and educational fields. The nutritional situation is part of traditional groups that have been in conditions of food insecurity generation after generation. The analyses conducted show substantial differences compared to the national averages with levels that are clearly inadequate in absolute terms.

Figure 1. Marginalized and isolated areas map



Source: Alpert *et al.* (2009:19), based on Sebastian (2009)

Objective

To identify what are the specific objectives that governments should have to achieve self-sufficiency in isolated and marginalized communities

Metodology

To answer the question, we analyzed six cooperation and development projects implemented in isolated and marginalized areas where food self-sufficiency had been accomplished in a sustainable way.

The projects were completed in Mexico, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, Mali, Niger and Vietnam. After selecting the projects, the factors contributing to sustainability were identified.

Theses projects sharing certain formal requirements: among the measurable and quantifiable objectives are achieve food security, rely on similar starting indicators, address the causes of food insecurity identified by the affected families, the requirements should be formulated, managed and evaluated in the same manner, preferably following the logical framework, have similar budgets and reach completion. In order to extrapolate conclusions, the projects should be implemented in MICs that are the most different possible, in different countries and, preferably, in different continents.

To accomplish it, 42 MICs were projects were developed were visited and 256 interviews performed between February 2008 and December 2012. In addition, 32 interviews were conducted to the directors and/or coordinators of 13 local development organizations working with the MICS.

Figure 2. Fotographs of the MIC's visited were the projects were developed

Source: own elaboration

Results

The identified contributing specific objectives supported by the course of action and share capital were:

- **Specific objective 1.** Autonomous community agricultural banks managed by the families. They were given the option to renew the infrastructure and equipment at project completion, since the economic capital remained (and increased) in the community and was managed autonomously and safely.
- **Specific objective 2** Improved agricultural knowledge that allowed the families to adapt, renew and fix additional infrastructure as well as implement and research new techniques at project completion
- **Specific objective 3.** Nutritional knowledge that created the awareness required to maintain and to increase results over time.

Figure 3. Photographs of the specific objectives

Source: own elaboration

With this information it is possible create a model which includes a Planning Matrix and a chronogram. The Planning Matrix gathers the expected results and the chronogram organizes the necessary activities to achieve those three results. Every result includes an indicator, the verification source and the required hypothesis to follow-up expected achievements under certain parameters.

The proposed model can improve sustainable land productivity to accomplish food security while reducing logging. Indirectly, it will help families to continue to live in the MICs without having to migrate. It will ensure global agricultural biodiversity and manage fragile ecosystems throughout the world, since the role of the MICs is specially relevant in the preservation of certain species that will help us to adapt to the new climatic context, as the concentration of species is every time greater, specially of seeds. Besides, the harvest and the varieties that are managed by farmers could improve the response capacity to specific diseases and to future nutritional needs.

Bibliografy

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