

Summary document:
**SANE (Scaling-up successful
agroecological experiences
in Latin America)**



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September 2004

This publication is also available electronically on the World Wide Web at the following address:

http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-64886-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

The complete version of the project final report is available at

http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-64887-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Acknowledgements:

In addition to the Centro de Educación y Tecnología (CET) - Chiloe team, the following persons contributed: Eulogio Muñoz of the Asociación Cubana de Técnicos Agrícolas y Forestales (ACTAF) - Cuba; Ruben Figueroa of the Equipo de Desarrollo Agropecuario de Cajamarca - Centro de Investigación, Educación y Desarrollo (EDAC/CIED) – Peru; Rolando Bunch of the Asociación de Consejeros para una Agricultura Sostenible, Ecológica y Humana (COSECHA) – Honduras. We thank Julio Berdegué (Centro Latinoamericano de Desarrollo Rural- Rimisp) and Paul Engel (Centro Europeo de Gestión de Políticas de Desarrollo - ECDPM) for their comments

This study was made possible through the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada.

Images: Carlos Venegas

Initial analytical framework for developing the experience ¹

The Project “Scaling-up Successful Agroecological Experiences in Latin America” represents a second phase of the Project “Sustainable Agriculture Networking and Extension” (SANE), which was financed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) within the framework of the Minga Programme “Managing Natural Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean”.

This Project, called SANE II, started from the assumption that some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Cuba, Chile, Honduras and Peru have been promoting agroecological initiatives for several years with tangible benefits for specific rural communities. Examples of such NGOs are the Grupo de Agricultura Orgánica de la Asociación Cubana de Técnicos Agrícolas y Forestales (GAO-ACTAF), the Centro de Educación y Tecnología (CET), the Asociación de Consejeros para una Agricultura Sostenible, Ecológica y Humana (COSECHA) and the Equipo de Desarrollo Agropecuario del Centro de Investigación, Educación y Desarrollo (EDAC-CIED). Considering the results of these initiatives, two basic questions emerge: (1) Why these benefits have not been disseminated more widely and (2) how to “scale-up” these projects to enable wider impact.

In the context of this Project, scaling-up was defined as *“achieving notable increase in the knowledge and management of agroecological principles and technologies among producers of communities, agroecological zones and different socio-economic conditions and among institutional actors linked to the promotion of production in the rural sector”*. At the same time, the agroecological focus took into account environmental, technical, economic, social and cultural aspects as an integral set of useful tools for achieving sustainable rural development.

The *main objective* of SANE II was *“To support the process of agricultural development in rural sectors through institutional coordination and the training of farmers and*

¹ Scaling-up of Successful Agroecological Experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean. Monitoring Framework. Working Document. Concepción - Chile, 2000. Collaboration of Paul Engel.

technicians as a strategy to promote agroecological principles and technologies. The key purpose is to scale-up agroecological initiatives that, in Cuba, Chile, Honduras and Peru, have reached a significant level of success in terms of poverty reduction, improved food security and natural resource management, and spreading the benefits of these initiatives among more farmers over wider areas". From the methodological viewpoint, the objective was "to monitor these four scaling-up experiences and then undertake a comparative analysis to evaluate the impact of the different strategies employed, and systematize lessons learned, disseminating them widely to enlighten other development processes awaiting expansion".

The main *hypothesis* of SANE II stated that scaling-up is possible if participating NGOs are able to:

- a) Network effectively with farmer associations and other institutions;
- b) Strengthen links, training, dissemination and validation at a farmer-to-farmer level;
- c) Strengthen the role of rural promoters; and
- d) Improve farmer participation in niche markets.

Working in the following *five dimensions* is key to scaling-up:

- 1. Technology - production development;
- 2. Organizational development;
- 3. Institutional networking;
- 4. Commercial development; and
- 5. Political consensus at local, regional and national scale.

<i>Five Key Dimensions of the Scaling-up Process</i>	
Dimensions	Variables
1. TECHNOLOGY- PRODUCTION DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recovery and validation of technologies generated by producers b. Adaptive management and increased use of technology in production, on farm c. Integration of technological teams with farmers (experimenters) of the area
2. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establishment and/or strengthening of farmer organizations b. Development of proposals c. Diversification of membership, with (micro) businessmen, amongst others d. Development of adequate knowledge, skills and/or abilities in the (leaders) farmers
3. INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Involvement of institutional, academic or other pertinent actors b. Creation/strengthening of interactive spaces and of interinstitutional coordination c. Training technicians and professionals in relevant matters d. Evaluation of the technical/economic viability of agroecological alternatives e. Development of appropriate services (credit, certification, etc.)
4. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Monitoring markets of agroecological products b. Training managerial staff in aspects of commercial management and marketing c. Identification of pertinent market niches d. Diversification of the market of agroecological products e. Development of products that reflect the essence of rural production f. Evaluating rural agroecological products (transformation, certification, etc.) g. Linkage of agrocommercial chains to consumers
5. POLITICAL CONSENSUS AT LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SCALE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creation / strengthening of room for interaction with local, regional and national governments

Assessing the experience

The four participating institutions, based on their aims and specializations, and in the contexts in which they interacted, emphasized different aspects in their scaling-up strategies. The analysis shows these differences with no intention of evaluating or, worse, rigidly grading them either in comparison, or against an “ideal model”. The variety of focuses and methodologies has been a distinctive element of SANE. Also, it is important to remember that the project was developed over a period of 3 years. Thus it would be dangerous to reach definitive conclusions about the impacts obtained and their influencing factors by using a relatively limited experience on such a complex process as scaling-up.

Nevertheless, using objectively analyzed information produced in the SANE framework, discussions on development in the community and valuable external investigations, we can make an assessment that facilitates critical reflection among the institutions linked to agroecology and sustainable rural development that show interest in scaling-up. We believe that the institutions’ capacity for (self) criticism should be an integral part of their operation, as a key factor for innovation and learning, which are essential in justifying to society the need for permanent and suitable institutions.

We hope then that this document, which arises from a collective effort, can feed a debate that decidedly is still open, requiring more research and experiences.

We would like to publicly acknowledge the dedication of the four institutions participating in SANE II that, despite conflicting positions, different approaches and actions, difficult agreements, and yet also unforeseen commonalities and complementarities, have given us a clear signal of the rich “biodiversity” that can contribute to this debate, if only we know how to listen.

The assessment of the experience is presented here under two aspects: i) support coming from the different dimensions to agroecological scaling-up; and ii) the main lessons identified.

Box 1

What are the relevant dimensions for scaling-up?

Experience has shown that it is important to focus on and regroup the dimensions to be prioritized in a scaling-up strategy. In this sense, scaling-up has more possibilities of being channelled through a process that includes, in an interconnected way, the dimensions of:

- Institutional networking
- Linkages between knowledge systems
- Linkages with markets

Institutional networking

As has been strongly shown in the Chilean case, agroecological scaling-up has greater options if institutional networking is assumed as a strategic and priority axis, provided that diverse public and private entities and social organizations from the rural sectors can be included. In the latter, rural promoters, experimenting farmers and innovative leaders play an important but not unique role, according to context.

It is in this framework, and in separation, that organizational development makes sense as a component that concerns all institutions and organizations that aim to strengthen learning and innovation processes.

Political consensus has not found enough agreement between SANE participants, who, instead of strengthening “spaces of interaction”, opted to produce concrete contributions aimed at influencing the formulation and implementation of policies and public investments at different levels, depending on the country. Successes in this line appear more evident at a local/regional level (Chile).

The technology-production area reflects the base from which wider scaling-up processes can be reliably suggested. However, it is confirmed that, when technology and/or technological proposals are given too central a part, agroecological NGOs run the risk of falling into some of the errors of traditional research and extension programmes.

Examples of these are: a rigidity of the proposal, little importance given to different producer demands, emphasis on training packages and weak interinstitutional synergy for suggesting alternatives in areas that are not just technological.

Linkages between knowledge systems

In itself, this was not a dimension considered from the start of SANE II but arose as a broad consulting area that can include different approaches to training, education and, in general, to the learning processes. The components of the initial hypothesis relating to exchange, training, transference and validation at farmer-to-farmer level, as well as the support of rural promoters, found a wider framework in linkages between knowledge systems. In this framework lies the opportunity to creatively include and connect existing experiences, whether academic or communal, scientific or personal, into a system that generates knowledge. At the same time, an area such as that of technology-production development can be seen as influenced by many different learning processes.

Linkages with markets

This includes, from the initial hypothesis, the strengthening of farmer participation in niche markets and the area of commercial development. Rather than check the validity of the proposal relative to niche markets, other paths were searched for, such as the linkage of small-scale producers and farmers with various types of markets with different characteristics. The most promising signs seem to originate, at least at first, in the connection with local markets and in their assessment, including “specialist products and processes”.

However, many gaps remain in this area showing how urgent it is to update the agroecological proposal in terms of its “coexistence” with the real world, and particularly with economic aspects linked to rural production and commercialization.

Box 2

What has been learned?

The main lessons taken from the SANE II experience are related with the following:

- Combined approaches of scaling-up and peasant farmer empowerment
- Systemic and prioritized approach of the different dimensions of scaling-up: Practice and theory
- Constructing a culture of meeting and dialogue as base for scaling-up
- Identifying key actors for change: Women and young people
- Limitations of training for scaling-up
- The search for an innovative model of higher education as long-term commitment for scaling-up
- The markets: The need for new focuses for an approach in terms of scaling-up
- Monitoring scaling-up as a learning process

Combined approaches² of scaling-up and peasant farmer empowerment

The SANE II experience confirms that scaling thinking only “outwards” (for example, through training to multiply directly, from an institution, the number of those involved in the changes that come from applying one or more practices or technologies) brings in modest results. Consequently, a combination is needed with scaling “upwards”, understood as effort made to modify organizations, strengthen interinstitutional networking and influence different decision areas. Likewise, scaling “downwards” is basic

² See under references: NGO Committee, GFAR, CGIAR, 1991; IIRR, 2000; Uvin et al., 2000; Anderson and Hancock, 2001; Douthwaite and Schulz, 2001; Holt-Giménez, 2001. For a deeper discussion on scaling approaches, see Chapter 1 of the document in full, which had the strong support of Simon Carter (http://web.idrc.ca/es/ev-64887-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

in that it backs decentralization emphasizing local responsibilities, appropriation of processes and acquisition of proactive capacities, elements that allow more flexible answers adjusted to diverse contexts. In this sense, diffusion and replication are not seen as mechanical methodologies in which technology transfer is central, but rather as social learning processes where the role of the main local actors, that is the small-scale producers, peasant farmers and their social organizations, is fundamental.

A key element for combining the different scaling approaches is the movement towards peasant farmer empowerment as an aim without which it is difficult to speak of equity in the framework of the fight against poverty and of sustainable development. Without this strategic objective, the use of one or more linked approaches can appear merely functional to a technocratic demand and not assume the transforming political character that is at the base of scaling-up.

Systemic and prioritized approach of the different dimensions of scaling-up: Practice and theory

In forming the conceptual and analytical framework of scaling-up, and defining the methodological tools for putting it into operation, we need to define:

- a) The linkage between scaling-up dimensions. Scaling strategies must be established that include a better linkage between the different dimensions. Scaling-up has diverse entries and possibilities, and a single approach could be limiting.
- b) Prioritization of institutional networking. Depending on the contexts and, in particular, on the settings of local area development, institutional networking should be prioritized as permitting stronger connection between the different dimensions. We emphasize the connection between institutional networking and local development, because this is where more visible processes and products have been shown.

However, even in the implementation, it is basic to analyze the gains and losses linked to the deepening or a greater prominence of one or more dimensions over the rest. Absolutely realistic questions must be asked such as: What happens when, from an integral holistic proposal like agroecology, a relevant group of peasant farmers internalizes only one part, putting together agroecological and technological elements, practices and processes that come from other approaches? What happens when,

despite distinct dimensions useful for scaling-up, the actors involved decide to opt for just one of them, for example that of commercial development?

The above could show rural logic and rationality convincingly in terms of its capacity to evaluate and decide. To what extent is this contradictory to what especially the “purists” consider as “agroecology” and “agroecological scaling-up”? The main question is: To what extent is this “agroecological purism” favourable to the fight against poverty and to the empowerment of the poor, and responds to its strategies and demands? The risk of making a new religion of agroecology, and its consequent scaling-up, destined to win adherents, can be very high. SANE attempts to show that this would be harmful, and insists on flexibility and learning as tools that will permit combining, in time and space, practice with theory.

Constructing a culture of meeting and dialogue as base for scaling-up

The contrast between the Chilean experience and that of the other three countries shows that elements contributing to constructing a culture of meeting and dialogue, based in institutional networking, are linked to changes in roles and attitudes, such as:

- a) *Institutional critical self-evaluation.* One of the requirements for institutional networking is the capacity to carry out self-evaluation as an NGO, critically analyzing both the advances obtained in agroecological work and what blocks its greater scaling-up. This implies: i) moving from inward-looking and sometimes defensive thinking to identifying the weaknesses that lead to poor coordination and building of cooperation; ii) “revolutionizing” approaches and methods given that a major aim cannot come from micro and highly detailed experiences, often those of NGOs, without modifying, sometimes radically, the institution’s way of thinking and acting; and iii) keeping work directly with communities as an example of what is possible and practicable, transcending limits through producing systematized contributions useful for updating approaches and methodologies.
- b) *Prior technical base as support.* Networking needs facilitating and promoting authority. An NGO cannot assume or self-assign itself this role if it is not adequately known and respected in the field in which it decides to intervene. Having credibility in the area largely depends on the work previously done in terms of validating concrete agroecological experiences with rural communities and populations. Thus it is important not only to carry them out but also to document them at technical, scientific and economic level. The weaker, less visible, systematic and innovative the work developed by the institution, the more disperse and well measured the results, the less formed the human resources available and more competitive the surroundings,

then the more difficulties will be encountered in exercising this facilitating role and gaining the confidence of others.

- c) *Progressive prioritization of institutional relations.* Although at first a type of wide and diffuse linkage can show progress in a relatively short period, it is important to prioritize the institutions with which to relate intensively. This prioritization will depend doubtless on existing opportunities in each context. However, experience shows that some basic and common parameters should be considered, such as: i) avoid concentrating on a single type of entity, whether peasant farmer organizations, NGOs, municipalities or others, in that more results are produced making the most of the comparative advantages of each; ii) count on sufficiently solid institutional considerations that permit medium- and long-term projections; and iii) put together institutions and people with a favourable attitude towards collaboration oriented to obtaining effective and concrete results.
- d) *Relations with the State from autonomy and proposal capacity.* NGOs must break the barrier of their relationship with institutions and public programmes that in many cases originates from a self-assertive tradition, and of the recent possibility of imprudently becoming “executing organizations” in order to access public funds. This does not signify denying the institutional profile and mission but rather innovating and strengthening through dialogue and proposals to the state sector. There are difficulties in this respect; constructing common spaces can be conflictive, it is not a simple way forward, achievements can have little permanency in time, but the gains in terms of scaling-up can become substantial. Possibly this option is sufficiently more viable in countries with some institutional culture and thus not in those where the change of government automatically signifies a complete change of policies and public institutional bodies.
- e) *Individual profile of the rural organizations.* The role of rural organizations in networking can be developed on different levels according to the characteristics, functions and levels at which they work. However, a common element is that, whatever the type of organization, distinctive participation should be sought, with capacity for dialogue and decision taking. Institutional leadership does not decrease on the base of general training and the old schema of “strengthening grass-roots organizations”. Rather, work should include concrete assignments and the channelling of responsibilities and resources of grass-roots organizations, which, without unnecessary interventions, allows real technology transfer from the start. Paternalism towards rural organizations is a way of maintaining a status quo where it is thought that they will always need a support institution to take their hand to cross the river.
- f) *The role of innovation.* The culture of meeting and dialogue, moulded in institutional networking, can be used simply to keep the status quo “more organized”. Therefore, its real contribution to scaling-up is the capacity to innovate linked to sustainability. When paternalism and aid mentality, for example, predominate over the decision capacity of the peasant farmers and their organizations, this linkage does not help scaling-up. The same applies to networking that does not include an

institutional contribution to new ways of educating and training citizens. In this line, the networking challenge is to build enriching bridges towards new opportunities.

- g) *Jointly responsible local development.* Institutional networking thought out at local development level opens wider and more challenging horizons than a simple self-centred municipalism in a specific local government. It concerns the construction of citizenship, the co-responsibility of public and private authorities and actors, and the formation of human resources inserted in the territory. These are elements that move away from the vision of a decentralized State that has to resolve everything, including the development of the production-economy field.

Identifying key actors for change: Women and young people

Although it must be pointed out that gender and generation analysis was quite weak during the SANE experience, the information collected justifies bringing into debate some factors that should be considered more carefully in future regarding scaling-up:

- a) *Not just institutions and organizations: individual actors.* Scaling-up is done not only by institutions and organizations of different kinds, but also by persons with faces and names. Some of them, by their creativity, capacity for innovation and experimentation, location, needs and many other factors, show a greater propensity for change and, in this case, for adoption of agroecological principles and practices. COSECHA in Honduras invites us to think of this when focusing on “agricultural development centred on people”. However, to say “people” is to say much and little at the same time. In scaling-up processes, it seems key to identify precisely those local dynamic actors that, sometimes with greater forcefulness than external institutions, can be catalyzing vectors of change in their environments.
- b) *Agroecology looks like a woman.* The four experiences, with their subtle variations, show that agroecological scaling-up has a very marked gender dimension. In the Chilean case, it has been proved that more than 60 % of those who have adopted the innovations in a more structural and sustainable manner are women. The Cuban case shows that where female peasant farmers take decisions on their properties regarding production for the family, the agroecological commitment bears quicker and more integral results than in areas where there are state exploitations with male wage earners. Positive connections were shown between female peasant farmers and: i) the use of natural resources and local biodiversity based on the recovery of traditional practices and knowledge, in many cases passed on from generation to generation by women; ii) the gradual diversification of properties; iii) the multiplication of on- and off-farm activities directed both at food security and increased incomes; iv) linkage with markets; v) a new type of organization, open to learning, and not determined by traditional and hierarchical forms of participation that favour males; and vi) the predisposition to acquire new knowledge and adopt new technologies. Contrary to what is argued about women’s rejection of innovations, their openness to and capacity for adoption of “the new” seems to be directly proportional to ways of learning that favour exchange between peers, take them into

account as subjects with their own strategies and demands, and do not impose technological packages and recipes. In this framework, institutions that have wrongly prioritized dialogue with male peasant farmers are challenged to change their attitude and strategy if they wish to interest a relevant sector of agricultural settlers.

- c) Young people as hope for the future. The options taken by the four institutions under different approaches that can complement one another, points out a common logic in the long-term commitment to a new formation of human resources. It is not only about “recycling” or “updating” the peasant farmers, rural promoters, technicians and professionals that are active in society, but also about contributing to a critical mass that includes, above all, the younger generation.

Limitations of training for scaling-up

SANE II shows that, in all the countries considered, the role of the training (technical, organizational, administrative or of whatever content) developed by an NGO, with or without the active participation of peasant farmers, is not a sufficient vector to reach important levels of scaling-up. Another lesson learned is that public and private institutions, including NGOs, use no or few training models. In this regard, some factors for consideration are:

- a) *New areas for capacity development.* Experience has shown that development operators, technicians and professionals of different kinds have weaknesses not only in terms of technical proposals. On the contrary, including in cases where technological solvency was established in the management of agroecological practices, very weak areas of knowledge were evident. In other words, having a specialist in green manures or biological control of pests before you does not mean you are facing a person with sufficient capacity to confront agroecological scaling-up. SANE shows that new capacities are needed in connection with, for example: i) the approach to the rural and not just agricultural dimension; ii) movement from the production sphere to that of commercialization and marketing, which implies a type of ability dictated by “knowing how to do business” and not possibly having studied “how business is run”; iii) acquiring a new attitude in the relation between technicians and peasant farmers that obviates vertical technology transfer and the arrogance of some who believe they know more than others; iv) development of specific dialogue with traditionally marginal sectors such as women, indigenous communities and, in many cases, young people; and v) solvency in the socio-economic and systemic analysis of agroecological proposals.
- b) *Prior experience and continuous learning in the management of formative processes.* Knowledge and prior experiences of the institutions/trainers represent a necessary but insufficient condition. It is important to permanently recreate and redefine the contents and methods used in training schemes, making them flexible

and dynamic according to constantly changing settings and demands, so that the technical teams keep updated and strengthen their capacities.

- c) *Individual contributions, appropriation and diffusion.* Experience shows that if poor rural populations invest their own resources, tangible and intangible, to be trained, or receive technical assistance, this increases the probabilities of appropriation. Likewise, their recognition by those around them increases the probabilities of knowledge transmission and diffusion. The motivating elements are not necessarily monetary, as shown by Cuba and Honduras where the increase in value of peasant farmer knowledge with respect to their peers worked instead. At the same time, without dismissing the above, in Peru and Chile, the results of training received were important, translated into improved incomes, to contribute to the formation of leaders with influence in their area.
- d) *Learning from real experience, and learning among peers.* The best training results were usually associated to: i) “in situ” verification of peasant farmer knowledge applied in the smallholding or in business, through internships and exchange tours; and ii) discussion of concrete experiences that, systematized, provide evidence of both technical and economic results. Farmer-to-farmer methodology and participative development of technologies have much to contribute in this area and can be updated / complemented through: i) an approximation to the “rural”, which implies among other aspects working on the assets of the poor and not only on themes linked to the farm; ii) competitive mechanisms, such as those applied in the Andean zones³, which function as stimulants for experimentation and land exchange, as well as for developing individual investments.

The search for an innovative model of higher education as long-term commitment for scaling-up

In contrast to training, SANE II, at least in two countries (Chile and Cuba) with substantive lessons for the others, has allowed reflection and solid advance in a key dimension for scaling-up: the search for an innovative model of higher education. In this sphere, which was not initially foreseen as a dimension of scaling-up, multiple perspectives are found that combine with the linkage between learning systems and institutional networking.

³ In Peru and Bolivia, with the support of development programs such as those of the Fondo de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA), or with their own funds, local organizations promote competitive mechanisms in rural communities. These competitions mobilize dozens of rural families, above all in the management of their natural resources. The idea concerns mechanisms that allow learning during practice and evaluation of local peasant farmer experts on the one hand, and on the other hand involves ex post prizes for the effort that each family made, going beyond the aid concept of the gift and stimulating public/private competition of investments. For further information on the Peruvian experience, see, for example: Pierre de Zutter et al. 2004.

- a) *“The University Builds the Country”*. Academia meets the country. In an innovative model of higher education, the university should base its legitimacy in horizontal dialogue surrounded by institutions, social organizations and other actors that provide work experiences and programmes. These, systematized, analyzed and eventually enriched through scientific research, should be a vital part of the formative strategy. The Chilean experience shows that this dialogue alone can produce a strong, connected institutional environment, promoting a learning model that responds to the demands of a country from the viewpoint of the region and its people, in particular, in this case, from the rural population. The university can contribute to the country’s construction in that its links with the region are real and continue strengthening. In other words, a university that listens to the voices, lessons learned, errors and difficulties of a specific region is capable of including all this, valued, in the formative experience. The university can be like a classroom open to the participation and interaction of different actors, teachers, researchers, students, peasant farmers and others. Some elements, structured in a coherent curriculum, show this new local university reflection and practice. Examples of these elements are themes such as land protection, conflict resolution on natural resources, sustainable development and the participation of rural and indigenous communities, traditional knowledge, agroecology, protection of biodiversity, territorial legislation and the valuation of regional culture, interculturality, alternative health mechanisms, and the inclusion of gender, ethnic and generation dimensions.
- b) *“The Regional College of Agriculture”*. Overcoming national frontiers. In the Cuban case, learning has led to defining as core idea the creation of a Regional College of Agriculture with agroecological principles, which ought to be represented in various Latin American countries. It is assumed that access and control of agroecological knowledge is a way of achieving true autonomy in the management of farming systems. A large body of people dedicated to agriculture would exist that today need the knowledge required to plan and manage their systems in harmony with natural resources, lower their production costs, be economically viable, and contribute to the guarantee of food security and sovereignty of their families and communities. This new paradigm requires a more active role of the research and teaching institutions in forming human capital, and in generating and validating the knowledge that gives support to societies to build and assimilate the new agrarian culture. This type of confirmation would not be exclusive to a single country despite their existing differences. For this reason, on the basis of a substantive increase of agroecological scaling-up, the College is suggested as an instrument that transcends frontiers and encloses different types of users. In this line, an extensive range of qualifications would be offered, from training course diplomas to science doctorates.

The markets: The need for new focuses for an approach in terms of scaling-up

Among the different dimensions foreseen in the scaling-up strategies of SANE II, the commercial dimension has least advanced. Therefore, the lessons learned still represent tentative guidelines for further exploration.

- a) *Investment in markets that reward culture, identity and difference.* This is an area that presents opportunities above all for groups of peasant farmers and indigenous communities located in spaces with attractive links to tangible and intangible cultural patrimony. In these environments, the need arises to contribute to developing new capacities both among local actors, to identify, revalue and add value, and among service providers, including not only professionals and technicians but also specialists and local leaders.
- b) *Legal protection of rural resources.* Peru and Chile have biodiversity resources with enormous potential for entering the export market but there is no protection of ownership of local genetic material. Local strategies can be designed to protect the resources, knowing that they do not resolve the problem but can be of help. A concrete example in the Chilean case is the commercialization of local varieties of potato: a mechanism utilized by peasant farmers is to ask for the support of consumers, informing them through events, labels, containers, etc., that the product is ancestrally protected and that there is a permanent danger that these varieties may be appropriated by businessmen not peasant farmers. However, this type of initiative clearly is insufficient if a favourable regulating legal framework is not achieved, a possibility that is seen as confused and rather distant. The intellectual protection of rural resources, processes and knowledge is an area that, at international level, is recently being tackled and with views that, on the whole, do not favour rural communities. Rather, the above constitutes a warning to initiatives that can be makeshift and damaging for peasant farmers.
- c) *Regulatory frames.* Commercial development involves bottlenecks that must be resolved to have real possibilities of remaining in the market. One of the most important is to comply with the existing standards in national regulatory frames in the sanitary and tax areas. Including in countries where normativeness is more permissive, or the treatment of small-scale producers and micro and small businesses is not clearly resolved, the need arises to move towards formalization with an eye to guaranteeing healthy products for the consumers. In all cases, the regulatory frames are key in terms of exportation. Therefore, pertinent information needs to be channelled to the producers, and qualified technical aid is needed to overcome the different barriers. Note that the certification of organic products, initially presented as essential in some institutional strategies, has not been defined finally as a central tool, at least at the level of local and national markets.
- d) *Clarity on the impact on incomes.* Initiatives oriented to transformation and commercialization, associated with the organizational strengthening of rural

undertakings, must undertake responsibly the calculation and monitoring of income indicators. Experience has shown that NGOs are not always clear about this aspect, or consider it secondary from the viewpoint of training producers. However, not being able to show results convincingly along this axis reduces the validity and consistency of a proposal of commercial development linked to scaling-up.

- e) *Role of the institutions. Business facilitating investments.* Some minimum characteristics are needed so that an institution that decides to support processes of linking with markets can do so efficiently. Entering this complex field, sometimes an unknown one to NGOs, only as a way of attracting the interest of cooperation and finding new financing, can be very harmful. Therefore, the NGO, without either institutional experience or competence in this respect, and not having developed initiatives directed at the market, can become a bad and even dangerous associate for peasant farmers and their organizations. The Chilean experience shows that, on the base of the linkage between public and private organizations, it is possible to move in the area not of “doing business” but rather of facilitating investments that improve the commercial scene (information and communication initiatives, fitting out public spaces for markets and fairs, expanding public services such as roads and transport, among others).

A critical lesson of the SANE experience regarding markets suggests that agroecology faces a fate of “bifurcation” between a current that attempts a better coexistence with the world and its imperfections, thus also with economic and market mechanisms, and an agroecology enclosed by holistic and integral principles that would not be willing to yield and reach some pact with this reality.

There is evidence that big businessmen are entering organic production in an increasingly aggressive manner. It is no longer thought of as a small niche but rather as a response to the demands of wide sectors of consumers for “healthy” products. Facing these tendencies, what chances of success has a strategy based on “alternative markets for alternative products”? And even so, what makes us think that the functioning of these alternative markets would be distinctive from that of conventional markets?

On the other hand, greater reflection is needed about the argument that different markets would exist and proposals would be needed for several of them. Certainly there are different markets, but some grow and others get smaller, some the peasant farmers can reach, others will crush them in competition, still others may leave them marginalized because of low profitability. If it is a question of scaling-up, is the strategy of aiming at all the different markets adequate?

The above questions require solid answers based on knowledge that permit responsible decision taking and not ultimately believing, as has happened in other contexts, that “*peasant farmers must produce jams and preserves for the common market of the NGO technicians...*”.

Monitoring scaling-up as a learning process

The SANE II experience indicates some key elements for making a learning process of the monitoring. These are:

- a) *Times and resources for scaling-up.* Some of the points stressed based on the SANE experience (institutional networking; training and education) imply a long-term commitment. The partial results obtained indicate that definitive conclusions on scaling-up cannot be reached from the experience of 3 years. This raises questions about the time needed to carry out consistent and continuing efforts that achieve relevant impacts in scaling-up, about the costs that this signifies and of who should pay and/or contribute to processes of this kind that go beyond the logic of a short-duration project.
- b) *Institutional qualification for scaling-up processes.* To implement experiences oriented to scaling-up, the criteria for selecting participating institutions need to be refined. Organizations need to be selected that have a consolidated development, certain permanence and stability, but also are innovative, have mature relations with the social organizations present in the region and have sufficiently trained human resources. These elements can offer reasonable security so that there is motivation and commitment for an initiative of this type, creating a favourable environment for joint work and good results.
- c) *Commitment to scaling-up requires a new institutional context.* For NGOs to overcome their actual limitations for monitoring scaling-up processes they need to take strategic options in aspects such as: i) the role they wish to give research and systematization processes leading to analytical examinations that include more than the micro experience; ii) overcoming activism, freeing some personnel time to dedicate to these processes; iii) investment in training and updating their own human resources; iv) the more systematic use of internships and exchanges, but also of the means of virtual communication to establish solid and permanent bridges to other actors and experiences. The above implies forging a new NGO profile. Obviously, for institutions dependent on external resources, this is subject to the type of relations that they manage to construct with sources of international cooperation and/or public funds. Consequently, the changes and efforts that NGOs will be able to develop will be not be enough if approaches and dynamics are not modified in the donor community, or at least in some of the cooperation agencies, betting on processes of knowledge building through developing innovative experiences and diffusing lessons learned, and not only on carrying out work and activities. The IDRC constitutes a good option for exercising influence in these spheres, as it has shown in supporting

SANE II. Finally, the SANE II experience on monitoring shows the need not only for referring to the NGOs but also for gradually involving a group of local actors that share in the cause of the scaling-up strategies. Therefore, it is urgent to forge participatory and multi-actor mechanisms that expand the direct participation of these actors, not only with the right to give opinions, but also to research, systematize, analyze and evaluate.

- d) *The need for precise monitoring tools.* It seems useful to combine the aspects that have worked best from the analytical framework adopted in SANE II with the approach and mechanisms presented, for example, in a proposal such as that of Outcome Mapping (Earl et al., 2002). Putting the following principles into operation is considered of interest, some of which were present, perhaps in a more intuitive than explicit manner, in the monitoring of SANE II: i) make flexible the definition of the impacts taking into account the concept of “outcomes”⁴; ii) promote the involvement of partners, delegating power and responsibility to actors within the system; iii) overcome the race for leadership of institutions and agencies, avoiding a simple reading of the net positive effects as direct results of their projects and programmes, favouring and analyzing instead the identification and analysis of logical linkages between interventions and changes in behaviour; and iv) recognize that each direct partner has its own logic and own way of confronting responsibility. However, it is not a matter of “marriage” with a single methodology, but rather of basing oneself on a plurality of methodologies that are sufficiently simple as to make monitoring an integral part of the scaling-up, and not a straightjacket.

⁴ The “outcomes” are understood as changes in behaviour, relationships, actions and/or activities in the people, groups and organizations with which a programme works directly. The former implies emphasizing the concept that development is achieved for and by people and it is they that actively participate in defining the necessary changes.

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