



ALBOAN

ONG JESUITA PARA LA  
EDUCACIÓN Y EL DESARROLLO

## Participation: the key to development. Four experiences of citizen participation



GARAPENERAKO  
LANKIDETZAREN  
EUSKAL AGENTZIA  
AGENCIA VASCA DE  
COOPERACIÓN PARA  
EL DESARROLLO



EUSKO JAURLARITZA  
GOBIERNO VASCO



**Participation: the key to development.  
Four experiences of citizen participation**



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**ALBOAN**

Padre Lojendio 2, 2º • 48008 Bilbao  
Tel.: 944 151 135 • Fax: 944 161 938  
alboanbi@alboan.org  
www.alboan.org

**ENTRECULTURAS**

C/ Pablo Aranda 3 • Madrid 28006  
Tel.: 902 444 844 • Fax: 915 902 673  
entreculturas@entreculturas.org  
www.entreculturas.org

Authors: Adivasi Kheti Yojna, **ALBOAN**, Ccaijo, Cipca,  
Entreculturas, Inades-Formation Burundi

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Participation is a sphere of interest for development, since it is an indispensable component for the exercise of citizenship. The creation and re-creation of spaces for participation that allow the generation of collective and social capacities is currently an important challenge. The processes of participation are not easy; they require that there be different elements coordinated to produce changes in people and societies.

In recent years, citizen participation in meeting spaces with State representatives is becoming a common practice. These experiences begin to take shape and generate results in different countries in the South. This kind of participation has helped to strengthen the democratic systems of developing countries; that has allowed, in certain cases, to improve public policies and to generate results in terms of human development.

In the analysis on development, there is an ever increasing conviction about the strong connection between the existence of efficient states and an empowered citizenship. They are not isolated spheres: they complement each other. As a consequence, there is a gradual awareness of the need to face the issue of governance with a stress on wider social processes and, specially, on citizen participation.

However, in the sphere of development cooperation, we observe that an important part of the donor interventions in governance are related to the work of state institutions, from the central State or sub-state organizations. On the other hand, citizen organizations and civil society tend to occupy marginal positions in this matter. It may appear that the true work of governance takes place only in the state sphere, especially in relation to the strengthening of the executive power. The reality is that there is no acknowledgment about the work carried out in the sphere of the civil society, or in the state-society scope where they converge and meet.

For that reason, and for the sake of the education for development within the framework of the cooperation development program entitled “Empowerment of the civil society for the democratic governance in the process of decentralization, in Piura, Moquegua and Cusco-Peru”<sup>1</sup>, we have designed a process of research and reflection related to certain spaces for concerted action. This work focuses, through systematization, on four experiences of citizen participation in spaces of encounter between the State and the civil society, with the aim to recover the generated learnings and results.

This publication presents, in the first place, an approach to the theoretical debate on participation. Secondly, the theoretical-methodological elements that have oriented this participative research are introduced, so as to understand how the four specific experiences have been systematized. The four study cases are experiences of participation and concerted action with the State of Peru, India and Burundi. Two are experiences in Peru, in the regions of Cusco and Piura. One of them is related to the local sphere, and the other to the regional sphere. The experience in India depicts the community implication within the enforcement of two specific acts. The experience in Burundi, finally, shows the dialogue between small companies, social organizations and distributors, and state entities in charge of the management and commercialization of coffee.

The publication ends with a series of conclusions, learnings and recommendations drawn from the systematization process, which aim to become clues for the actors participating in the kind of spaces for concerted action. In addition, we have drawn certain proposals from these experiences, which we offer as orientations for the strategies of cooperation development in the sphere of governance and citizen participation.

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## Acknowledgements:

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We want to thank the following organizations: CCAIJO and CIPCA, in Peru, Inades-Formation Burundi; and Adivasi Kheti Yojna, in India.

This acknowledgement is especially for:

- The community leaders of Ccatca, the local and provincial authorities of Quispicanchi, and the workers and former workers of CCAIJO.
- The members of the "Consejo Regional de Desarrollo Agrario" (Regional Council for Agricultural Development) of Piura: regional authorities and representatives of associations and producer groups.
- The federation of coffee producers of Burundi.
- The Adivasis communities of Bhiloda in the region of Gujerat.

Thanks to all these people who devoted long hours to remember and shared their experiences, it was possible to draw some learnings and recommendations about participation and its relation to development.



## 2. PARTICIPATION AS THE KEY TO DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1. Introduction

Participation is part of the concepts of development and democracy. It is impossible to talk about welfare today without considering the dimension of participation, which implies people's capacity for making decisions on issues that affect their lives.

To understand the cases of citizen participation that we have systematized, it is necessary to review some of the key concepts on participation that will help to explain the formal spaces of participation.

A first definition of participation is that understood as the “mobilization of all the society according to their true interests, for the construction of transparent rules in the management and participation of the resources that may direct us towards the common good<sup>2</sup>”.

Taking into account the experiences we have analyzed, we are aware that knowing and participating are easier said than done. Frequently, people mobilize and become aware of participation when their closest interests are being affected by decisions about which they have had no intervention.

The promotion of spaces for participation has been strengthened in recent years, both by society groups and the by governments of different countries. The construction of spaces of dialogue and participation has been promoted as part of a vision where people are the active subjects of their own development, rights and duties.

For that reason, in ALBOAN and Entreculturas, together with four Adivasi Kheti Yojna, Ccaijo, Cipca, Inades-Formation Burundi, we share the conviction that

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<sup>2</sup> From Cornwall, A. 2002.

there is no possible development without the voice and participation of groups of the civil society with a leading role in their own development. We insist on building a society where the opinion and viewpoint of excluded people are heard and taken into account in the decision making and the design of public policies that directly affect their lives.

In this chapter, we will find concepts that have helped us to define the research and to establish categories of the systematization analysis. The experiences reviewed in this exercise are diverse, but they share common elements that allow approaching participation as a **process** of empowerment, and from where a number of learnings about the experience can be drawn.

## 2.2. Participation as a central key to human development

The recognition of participation as a central element to development has its origin in certain tensions generated around the concept and promotion of development. One such tension is the old idea that people living in conditions of poverty are passive beings, receptors and beneficiaries of development policies. The promotion of participation of people that should “develop” involves a change of view on such people, moving from “beneficiary population” to “citizens”. Participation implies empowerment. In other words, “participation always implies a transaction of power” (Dubois, 2000). Those who do not participate and are not listened to are excluded people; and if their participation is deemed indispensable for their development, it is essential to pull down the barrier that prevents their inclusion.

If we consider poverty and exclusion as the lack of access to opportunities and to the exercise of liberties, then participation implies the generation of conditions to access those opportunities. But it is precisely that restitution of possibilities and the exercise of liberties what implies a negotiation of power. For this change of view to be consistent with a true development, it must acknowledge that excluded people have the power and capacity for taking decisions, a power yet to be exercised or manifested. A person is poor not only due to the lack of income or material possessions, but because “it does not have the possibility of participating in the decisions that prevent his/her life from reaching the levels deemed necessary for its development” (Dubois, 2000: 55).

It has been erroneously thought that people living in conditions of poverty focus all their efforts in survival and in the satisfaction of their basic needs, not

worrying about less immediate issues. However, the work of many organizations and communities in different countries around the world accounts for the enthusiasm in participation, and the emergence of multiple movements that arise from the need to defend their rights, to restore proposals, to develop and to be included in a society that has condemned them to obscurity.

The idea of participation is closely related to that of citizenship. Participation is the possibility for people to feel part of a political community, by means of the free exercise of their rights and duties. Participation implies considering that people have power in themselves, and that the exercise of participation helps them to recover, rescue or update that power, reconfiguring both private and public social relations.

If we understand participation as a liberating and empowering exercise, we must assume that participation is a process. A process that generates capacities and gradually transforms structures for the acknowledgment of the power of the other person. To participate implies having the capacity to propose, decide and create spaces where it is possible to exercise rights effectively, becoming an active part of the economy, politics and social life of the community. The promotion of participation entails the acceptance of democratic values at all levels of society.

Participation must have its origin in the excluded groups, and must incorporate and respect their particular interests, rhythms and processes. At times, these processes seem to have scarce results, but the process in itself, as a space for dialogue and on-going support, develops individual, collective and relational capacities that will yield greater results in the future. Therefore, a true participation is the one that favors the transformation of people and their own environments.

Table 1. Definition of participation

“The participation of the groups of impoverished people in spaces for dialogue and concerted action has as one of its main objectives the definition of policies and programs “pro poor people”, so that the problems related to poverty and exclusion may enter the public agenda. That those affected by the design of solutions may participate, and that public resources are distributed more fairly. Another idea is that the participation of “the poor” strengthens the collective activities and helps to democratize the local power. It allows them to solve their problems and necessities collectively”.

Source: Bebbington et al. 2005.

### 2.3. Civil society and spaces of participation: who participates?

This denial of the capacities and powers for participation, within the deep crisis of the democratic systems, has provoked deep divisions between those who decide the policies and their “users” or “beneficiaries”. There is evidence in many contexts of a strong estrangement between the political class and society, and the representative democracy is beginning to question its incompetence to generate efficient mechanisms of participation and dialogue with the represented society.

With the consolidation of the representative democracy, there has been a double crisis: of participation and of political representation (Velásquez and González, 2003). The citizenship shows no interest to participate in the political scenario, and does not feel represented by its ruling class.

This crisis of the democratic systems is reflected in the little access to information and power that the groups of society have. The representative democracy creates voids, especially in the delegation of power and the representation of minorities, aspects where a wide strata of society can not make their rights acknowledged.

In this framework, citizen participation can be an instrument that contributes to redesign the relationship between citizenship and democracy, assisting it to become more deliberative and reflective, and contributing to a political, more participative and transparent action. A key element in participative democracy is the role of social movements in the institutionalization of cultural diversity and in the new significance of politics (Velásquez and González, 2003). Social movements can not be separated from the political field, as long as they try to transform the dominant practices, increase the spaces for the exercise of citizenship and ensure the insertion of excluded people in politics.

Thus, as part of the measures for the democratization of development, new spaces have been created to make it easier for citizenship to relate among themselves, deliberate, and create spheres and frameworks of reference where they may find possible solutions to their needs. But some questions arise: Who participates, and who should participate? Who is invited to participate? Who have the right to participate? As it has been explained before, participation is an exercise of freedom and, as such, wide groups of society are not considered capable and/or not have the necessary capacity.



In the social world, a constant reference is made to the participation of civil society, understanding it (in general terms) as the place in society where groups of citizen actions have their space.

To look at society in those terms, it is necessary to have a broad vision that allows to incorporate the diversity and complexity of the organizations that conform it (Carmen and Volkhart, 2007). This civil society, formally organized or agglutinated more informally, configures itself as a central actor in democratization processes. It is nowadays stated that there can not be strengthened states with weakened societies. To talk about development, it is necessary to ask ourselves what kind of society is being built, and what exercise of citizenship is being carried out. States are weak or strong depending on the society they are configured in.

In the current context of Latin America, for example, immersed in a moment of inflection and crisis, it is necessary to reflect upon how governments and citizenship are creating feasible collective projects that will allow to strengthen a debilitated democracy but that, at the same time, will direct it towards processes of sustainable and inclusive development.

That is why it is necessary to build ways of democratic governability at all levels of society; to strengthen and legitimate the institutions, to promote debates on the State and the economy and, specially, to activate and strengthen groups in civil society so that they participate in this debate. It is necessary to link all the citizenship to the organizations of civil society. These organizations become relevant subjects in the democratic construction, the government control, and the development of new mechanisms for dialogue and inclusion aimed at the definition of public policies.

The participation of civil society in these groups can help to go deeper into social and political transformation. In recent years, new spaces have been opened with the aim to contribute to the changes of policies carried out in different countries, handle conflicts according to the democratic rules, ensure legal systems, control the government action in certain areas, etc. Though it is true that there is a clear progress in the creation of such spaces in the civil society, it is also true that there still are huge “gaps” to fill, gaps where dialogues like those related to market regulation or development models are possible. It seems that the spaces of citizen participation are more frequently related to political debate. However, the important economic decisions still bypass society, and they generate a growing distance between the governments and the societies they serve.

The background debate is about how to involve society in the deliberation of common interest, and in what spaces and areas are decisions taken. It is also about how those interests of society and its organized groups are understood by public institutions. The promotion of spaces of participation must direct us to the creation of a citizenship interested in public, social and political areas. Such interest can help formal groups of civil society, and citizenship in general, to build the conditions for the dialogue and negotiation with the State, truly oriented towards common good.

#### 2.4. Categories and concepts for the analysis of the spaces of agreement

To initiate this approach and analysis of the spaces of concerted action systematized in this research, there have been considered a number of dimensions for the analysis that will be included in the instruments of observation and discussion, and that will give shape to the exercise of systematization of the experiences of participation.

##### **The asymmetry of power and its analysis**

It is possible to approach these spaces from the proposal of John Gaventa (2006), who explains how, in the participation within these contexts, the key element is the asymmetry of power and the possibility to identify, manage and regulate it. The dynamics of power is explained in three possible dimensions: Level, space, and form.

Gaventa understands that “political spaces” are those institutional channels, and political and social practices, through which citizens (particularly those living in poverty) participate to improve their living conditions. Those same spaces can be occupied in specific moments and opportunities by different groups of civil society, groups that claim the right to active citizenship and which have the possibility of influencing the decisions of governments that affect their lives and interests.

The proposed classification includes **three kinds of spaces**: Closed (the processes of decision making that are normally closed to citizens, and that correspond to bureaucracy, elected representatives or expert people); invited (where citizens are invited by institutions, authorities or governments to participate); and created/claimed (that may come into being as a result of popular mobilizations; they are spaces where social actors have the hegemony and create these spaces themselves).

Taking this proposal into account for the analysis of the spaces for concerted action, it can be said that the groups in civil society act for power using different strategies and spaces. Among others, the spaces for concerted action analyzed are areas of visible power that call for public debates, greater transparency, a design of agreed public policies, etc. There can be other groups (or the same groups that participate in the space for concerted action) that mobilize to “lobby” for and to influence in a privileged way the elements for the political debate or a certain program. Finally, those same groups can work and insist in the sphere of social awareness, of the invisible, that contributes to generate the citizen support that means power and backup for the proposal and protests.



## 3. METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL: SYSTEMATIZATION

### 3.1. Introduction

Being aware that there are few theoretical and practical contributions about citizen participation in spaces of dialogue and meeting between the State and the civil society, this work aims to recover experiences in that area that may offer elements for reflection and analysis. The objective is centered in the recovery of the process of participation that may offer us keys to understand how citizens participate, and what results can be obtained in these spaces for concerted action.

The methodology that has guided this study regards as central the contributions of the protagonists in the case studies. In this case, we have selected two experiences of citizen participation within the framework of decentralization in Peru, one experience of citizen participation in India, and one experience of concerted action in the coffee sector of Burundi. They are experiences with the following actors: Grass root communities and community organizations; State representatives; and an organization of strengthening and on-going support on both sides.

Systematization, as a methodological tool, proposes that the subjects themselves reconstruct and interpret the experiences they have lived. The objective of this methodology is that the same people that lived the experience remember it, understand its underlying logics, and draw conclusions, learnings and recommendations that may help them and other people as guidance for future interventions.

We have decided to use this tool, in order to recognize the potentialities and difficulties of the spaces for participation and concerted action from everyday practice. In that sense, methodology allows us to link experience to theory, and thus we can generate new questions and new insights.

Table 2. Contributions of the methodological proposal of systematization

- A collective and shared review of our practices.
- Appropriation by those that have experienced the experience.
- New learning.
- Clues to propose working alternatives that can be generalised.
- New knowledge that can help to link what is considered and the academic aspect with the specific practices.

Source: Systematization, a new look at our practices. Guide to the systematization of social transformation experiences (2004).

### 3.2. Systematization, an option to generate knowledge

From what we have previously mentioned, it can be inferred that systematization is a participative methodology that allows a collective and shared revision of practical work, and that contributes to the appropriation of the lived experience to generate a new learning.

In ALBOAN, the definition of systematization elaborated during a project we carried out together with the Pedro Arrupe Institute of Human Rights and Hegoa is used. “From our perspective, systematization is the critical interpretation of an experience, which is ordered and reconstructed to discover or explain the logics of the process experienced, the factors that have intervened in that process, how they have been interrelated, why that has happened and to use this to build new knowledge<sup>3</sup>”.

This work assumes systematization as a tool to relate research to evaluation. As a tool related to the research, it allows us to recognize and reassert the experiences of citizen participation in public spaces of encounter with the State, learn from practice, contrast it with the theoretical development and generate new learnings.

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<sup>3</sup> AAVV, Systematization, a new look at our practices. Guide to the systematization of social transformation experiences. Bilbao, ALBOAN et al. 2004: 14.

Table 3. Contributions of systematization to the generation of knowledge

**It is an intentioned knowledge production.** At the epistemological level, a position that is aware of from where, why and how the social knowledge occurs.

**It is a collective knowledge production.** The very social players take the main decisions of the research: the what, the why, the wherefore and how to achieve it.

**It acknowledges the complexity of the social action practices, the object of the systematization.** It is conditioned by the contexts, relations, meaning construction, production of effects that are envisaged or not, etc.

**Seeks to reconstruct the practice in its density.** The aim is to produce a descriptive account of the experience from the dialogue of approaches and know how.

**Seeks a critical interpretation of the logics and meanings that build up the experience.** In addition to reconstructing the experience, it aspires to depict its own specific logics, of the meaning that construct it.

**Seeks to foster social intervention practice.** It is based on a pragmatic interest: Improving the practice.

**It helps to conceptualise social practices in general.** It seeks to understand the meanings that make up social practices, and from there, prepare interpretation outlines that allow the social aspect to be understood: the balance of various systematizations on a single practice field may generate more far-reaching theoretical reflections.

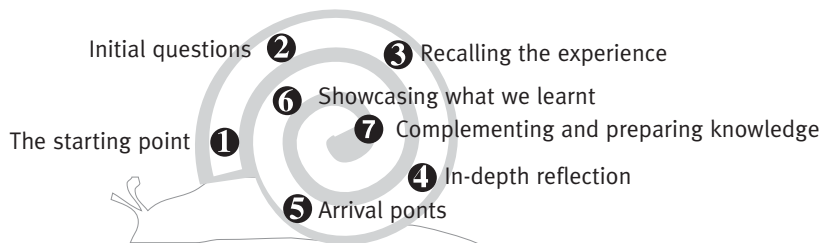
Source: Systematization, a new look at our practices. Guide to the systematization of social transformation experiences (2004).

### 3.3. Steps of the systematization process

In order to carry out this process of research, analysis and interpretation of the lived experience, we have followed these steps:

Table 4. Steps of the systematization process

- **Step 1: The starting point**  
To have participated in the experience, and to have the will to carry out the systematization.
- **Step 2: Initial questions**  
Definition of expectations, and of:  
For what do we want to systematize? (Goal)  
Which experience do we want to systematize? (Purpose)  
In which central aspects of the experience are we interested? (Core)
- **Step 3: Recalling the experience**  
To rebuild the story, to order, classify the information, recognize key moments.
- **Step 4: In-depth reflection**  
To analyze and critically interpret the process of dialogue with the theoretical contributions available.
- **Step 5: Arrival points**  
To formulate conclusions, learnings and recommendations.
- **Step 6: Showcasing what we learnt**
- **Step 7: Complementing and preparing knowledge**  
To carry out a systematization of systematizations, to group several experiences with similar subjects to make new learnings.



Source: Based on, *The systematization adventure. How to look and learn about our practices from our practices* (2006).



In the analysis of the experiences<sup>4</sup> that are introduced below, two meetings were planned in order to carry out participative workshops. This work should have been dynamized by a team of systematization constituted *ad hoc* within the organizations Adivasi Kheti Yojna, Ccaijo, Cipca, Inades-Formation Burundi and with the participation of members of ALBOAN and Entreculturas. At first, the idea was to raise the initial questions and to start the recovery of the lived process. In a second stage, after some time, we would count with the recovery of the lived process and some criteria for the background reflection. Thus, in the second meeting, we would approach the critical interpretation and the meeting points, that is, the conclusions, learnings and recommendations. This practice made this development possible in some of the experiences. In others, due to the difficulties to contact with all the people at the same time, some workshops were replaced with semi-structured interviews. That was as a limitation to the joint construction of knowledge, a limitation that had to be assumed during the research process.

Once we made the first approach to the preliminary conclusions, learnings and recommendations, we carried out a seminar of exchange among the representatives of the four experiences in this publication. A seminar to deepen the analysis of the experiences, to define those elements that, to a certain extent, are common to all of them, and to formulate new questions to the own experiences.

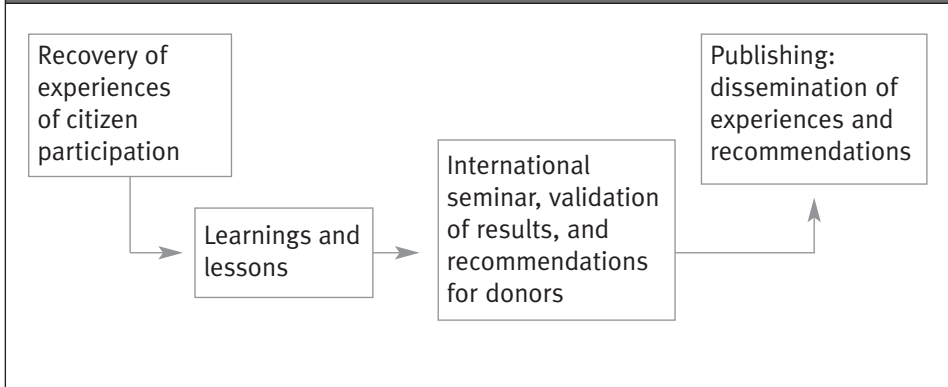
After this seminar, we carried out another one with public organizations and the presence of the representatives from the experiences, where we introduced those learnings that we considered essential for the financing and development of activities related to the policies of cooperation.

Finally, the publication of several documents, detailed at the beginning of this publication, and the work of promotion of these experiences and resources, are still important tasks that contribute to the generation of a new knowledge and learnings in the process of concerted action between the civil society and the State.

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<sup>4</sup> The methodological proposal is based on the issues developed in: *The systematization adventure. How to look and learn about our practices from our practices*, available from ALBOAN and in its webpage.

Table 5. Work itinerary



Source: In-house.

### 3.4. What has been systematized, and what for?

The commitment to systematization was a methodological option that allowed a process of research and reflection in a participative way with all the main actors of the experience. Systematization facilitates:

- To acknowledge what has been done.
- To remember what has been started.
- To analyze and recognize not only the failures but also the advances made, as well as the critical points we have come across.
- To analyze specific processes within a broader context.
- To learn from practice.
- To generate new knowledge from our own practice.
- To improve our practices.
- To make progress in our work in the field of social transformation.

In the specific case of the following experiences, we detail what has been systematized and what it has been systematized for:

Table 6. Asociación Jesús Obrero (CAIJO),  
Quispicanchi province, Cusco, Peru

- **Goal:** To recover the experience of water harvesting in the Micro basin of Ccatcca, through the construction of micro dams, as a valid proposal to store rainwater in the Peruvian mountain range, and as a dynamic element of community participation and organization in the local sphere.
- **Purpose:** The construction of micro dams, an experience that started in 2001 and ended in December 2006 in the micro basin of Ccatcca, Quispicanchi province, and its connection with the local spaces for concerted action.
- **Core:** The participation and organization of the involved actors (civil society, local government and the promoter institution) for the construction of micro dams, the management of water and its incorporation to the spaces of dialogue between the government and the civil society.

Source: In-house.

Table 7. Center for the Research and Promotion of the Farmers  
(CIPCA, in Spanish), Piura region, Peru

- **Goal:** To recover and critically reflect on the functionality of CORDA as a space of interrelation between the State and the Civil Society, for the generation of political proposals for the agricultural sector in the regional area.
- **Purpose:** The experience of connecting the Civil Society with the State for the generation of public policies of CORDA during the period of 2004-2009.
- **Core:** The participation and organization of CORDA in the process of concerted action for the elaboration, implementation and follow-up of public policies in the agricultural sector.

Source: In-house.

Table 8. Inades-Formation Burundi

- **Goal:** To recover the experience of education and organization of the farmers working in the coffee sector, promoted by Inades-Formation Burundi, as a case of empowerment of the coffee producers in Burundi during the process of privatization of the coffee sector.
- **Purpose:** The process of education, support and organization of the farmers working in the coffee sector, promoted by Inades-Formation during 2007 and 2008.
- **Core:** The experience will recover the participation and organization of the involved actors: Inades-Formation, the organizations of coffee producers, and the public powers in the process of privatization of the coffee sector.

Source: In-house.

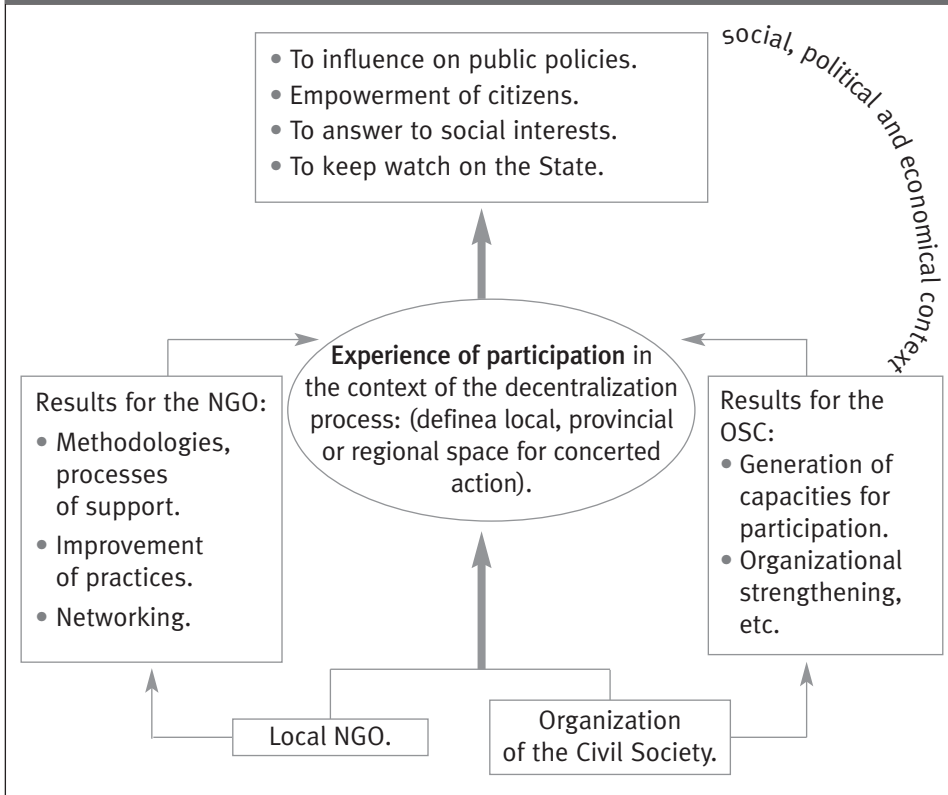
Table 9. Adivasi Kheti Yojna (AKY)

- **Goal:** To recover and critically reflect on the model of community empowerment in the promotion of the participative democracy promoted by Adivasi Kheti Yojna with the communities of Adivasis in the district of Sabarkhanta in Gujarat.
- **Purpose:** The process of training and on-going support in the communities of Adivasis, during the last six years (2003-2006), so that they may exercise their rights as citizens in the implementation of the following laws: REGA (Rural Employment Act); RTI (Right to Information Act)
- **Core:** Participation and organization of the involved actors (beneficiary population and AKY) in the promotion of participative democracy.

Source: In-house.

On the other hand, the promoting organizations of systematization, both local organizations working with grassroots communities and ALBOAN, had our own agenda on systematization, subsequently shared with the communities. The following chart shows a diagram of the potentiality of this tool and the purpose of the study: the generation of learnings and recommendations for the policies of international cooperation, thus influencing the definition of public policies related to the participation of civil society in spaces for concerted action.

Table 10. Structure of the systematization of experiences of citizen participation



Source: In-house.

### 3.5. Recalling the experience and in-depth reflection

We want to highlight the recovery of history and, in particular, of critical reflection, since they are two key moments of the methodological process that should be specially considered.

The recovery of history has been (and generally is) a very interesting moment of the shared work and dialogue, a moment of common strengthening and gradual recognition of the work done and the learnings it has generated. This part of the process is very attractive for the people involved in the process; it is generally a moment of high participation, of reunion with persons who have participated in

the experience but who had not been involved for long. This moment also allows discovering new elements in the experience already lived.

The second part, the critical research, is more difficult for people. Sometimes, a lot of time and effort have been devoted to the recovery of history, and when the time comes for the critical research, the group has nothing to work with. The role of the team in charge of facilitating the systematization and contrasting the theory is then important, to see if it provides new questions or approaches. It is generally the dynamic team that proposes certain critical questions, or some fields of debate, that can work as elements of contrast during the workshops with the people who had lived the experience. In any case, it is convenient to highlight that the idea is to critically analyze history and interpret it. Not with the goal of seeking solutions or responsibilities, but rather to understand why the things that happened did so, and to carry out a true and deep reflection. At this point, it is useful to remember all the work already done, and to reconsider the questions that have come up along the experience. Starting from the line of each process, we should propose new questions to the experience to find out: Why the things that happened did happen? The idea, finally, is to let the experience question us. It may seem that the questions exceed the capacity to answer them, but with systematization, going back to the initial line, the theory, and dialogue with the experience, there can be found answers to almost all questions and, what is even more interesting, answers that may even surprise us.

### 3.6. Conclusions, learnings and recommendations

In systematization, both the process as the “specific results” are important, because they empower and generate learnings. To group the drawing conclusions, learnings and recommendations, the following criterion has been used.

The **conclusions** make reference to the first answer about the analysis of the experience, it has a general nature and is related to the initial line of the analysis. **Learnings** are those reflections and practical implementations generated by the experience. They imply a greater deepening of the conclusions drawn by the experience. And finally, **recommendations** are specific actions for our association, and generalizations to share with other associations, and to consider in future experiences that could be similar.

In the cases we focus on, we have made a special effort at the end of each experience in order to specify those conclusions, learnings and recommendations that correspond to each involved agent.

### 3. 7. A global look

The experience of having carried out a process of systematization like this has been satisfactory, because it has allowed us to share work and a methodology with Adivasi Kheti Yojna, Ccaijo, Cipca, Inades-Formation Burundi. It has made it possible for us to reflect and dialogue in a straight way with all the agents of these processes of international cooperation: Communities and community organizations; second-level allied organizations; representatives of public institutions, and the promoter organization in the North. This has generated an insight, a sharing of experiences and challenges, and recognition of the fact that there are more issues and strategies that bind us than those that separate us. It has also allowed the organizations themselves to enjoy a direct exchange with the people responsible for defining policies and programs of international cooperation at the level of public institutions in the North.

However, it has not been a road free from difficulties. In the first place, it has implied an institutional effort in the selection of the experiences, the training of the people that implemented the methodology, and in the on-going support and contrast of the own experiences.

The process of bringing people together around an experience which has already been lived has varied according to the experience. In some cases, people have had a great will and motivation to participate in the elaboration of the systematization and, in others, due to the change of persons and the responsibilities of the participants, their involvement has been more complicated.

The elaboration of the texts that take the experiences in has been carried out by a team in charge of the systematization, with supervision from the participating organizations. Experience indicated that writing a text implies an important challenge, particularly to organizations more used to action.

The process of systematization has allowed to recognize the deficiencies of research that social organizations have, the lack of reflection about the practice, and the importance of incorporating these participative processes (such as systematization) to certain projects with learnings that we consider strategic.

It is worth mentioning that the process of systematization has been positively valued by the people who participated in it. Systematization has facilitated a space of shared training, meeting and reflection, regarded as very enriching. It

has facilitated to meet and rediscover each other not only physically, but also at the level of affections, convictions, commitments and dreams.

The fact of wanting to know more deeply about the experiences and to learn from them implies an important acknowledgment to all the people involved.

The meeting and exchange of different experiences has been one of the aspects valued in this process. There has been a contact generated among the different experiences, the enrichment of the learnings and the ways of carrying them out, as well as possible collaborations among them.

There is no doubt that the learnings elaborated jointly have given us the possibility of becoming aware of elements to improve the practice, external aspects that influence and determine them and that must be taken into account, and that have also facilitated us to become aware of groups excluded from the majority of our processes. All these elements are challenges to face and to take into account in the next support to processes of participation and concerted action.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that both flexibility and clarity about the road to follow are essential. The challenge is the balance, since even when all the experiences and organizations start from a similar scheme, the organizations' creativity, the previous experiences, the time available, and the own dynamics and the group we are working with require a certain degree of adaptation. This richness and creativity make it possible to share and learn from the experiences.



## 4. CHANGING THE COLOR OF CCATCCA: AN EXPERIENCE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE QUALITY

### 4.1. Understanding the case: context of the experience

**Changing the color of Ccatcca** is the systematization of an experience of citizen participation and community organization in the district of Ccatcca, in the province of Quispicanchi, in Cusco, Peru. The district of Ccatcca is one of the poorest of Peru; one of its most significant problems is the scarcity of water and extreme poverty. Ccatcca is an indigenous area with high level of social marginalization.

The “harvest of water” has been a central element for the fulfillment of a broader objective of CCAIJO (Center for the Agro-Industrial Training Jesús Obrero-CCAIJO, now called Association Jesús Obrero), organization that promoted the experience: improving production and the agricultural productive returns, thus contributing to the improvement of the incomes of families in situation of extreme poverty. The initial project was to create the capacity to store water and to manage it properly, to provide communities with the collective capacity for negotiations and political dialogue in the district.

### Decentralization process

The current government of the Cusco region has not had a great leadership in the process of decentralization. However, it has been complying with regulations in relation to the process of participation and concerted action. On the one hand, it has devised the participative regional budget, though it is expected to improve the participation of the regional government in relation to debating its own projects. On the other hand, it has acknowledged the conformation of the Council of Regional Coordination (CCR, in Spanish) as a consulting and coordinating body of the regional government with the municipalities. This council is integrated by the

provincial town halls and by the representation of the civil society, with the capacities and attributions designated by law<sup>5</sup>. 60% of its members are regional and municipal authorities; 40% are representatives of the civil society<sup>6</sup>. Even when it is true that the regulation does not set forth a quota of participation from organizations traditionally excluded (indigenous women and youth, among others), there is a will to promote its participation and integration in the CCR.

The specific role of the CCR is to coordinate and give its opinion about key aspects of the regional management, among others: The annual participative budget, the concerted plan of development, the general vision, and the strategic guidelines of the programs that make up the concerted regional plan of development<sup>7</sup>. This council is also driving the update of the Regional Plan of Development of Cusco, and it has also approved the Regional Project of Education.

As for concerted action, steps have been taken to open up new sectorial spaces. They are Regional Councils to deal with issues of women and human rights; they still have not been opened, but there exist ordinances for their creation. Up to date, there exist 14 regional councils, as for example: The participative regional council on education, on women, on agriculture, or on tourism, among others.

### **Political context of Quispicanchi and Ccatcca**

The process of decentralization mentioned before is also the reason why, since 2003, there is a prioritization of the investment of municipalities through their participative budget in concerted action with social, political, and productive organizations of each locality. In that sense, the Provincial Municipality of Quispicanchi promotes the strengthening of spaces for concerted action like the Multisectorial Committee, to address the social issues of Quispicanchi, Council of Local Coordination, and to give priority to local policies that can promote the development of the province.

In the district of Ccatcca, the process for concerted action is even stronger, since it promotes the creation of the Council of Development Management of the District of Ccatcca “Allin Kausaypac”. This space was created when municipalities were

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<sup>5</sup> Organic Law of Regional Governments. Fourth paragraph, art. 11, Law Nr. 27902; law that modifies the Organic Law of Regional Governments Nr. 27867 for the regulation of the participation of provincial mayors and the civil society in regional governments, and to strengthen the decentralization and regionalization processes.

<sup>6</sup> Out of 40% of the representatives of the civil society in the CCR, the third part must belong to the business and producers' sector.

<sup>7</sup> Council of Regional Coordination. Guide for an active participation. Program Pro decentralization-PRODES. Peru, May 2006: 18.

still not compelled to promote one in each locality. During the period of Juvenal Ormachea (2002-2006), priority was given in this space to policies of local investment and there was a planning of the process of participative budget.

### **Social context in Quispicanchi**

According to the Population Census carried out in 2005, the population of the province of Quispicanchi was of 82,202 inhabitants, which represents a 7% of the regional population. The districts of Urcos and Camanti show rates of degrowth (-1.4% and -2%), associated to a high migration. On the other hand, the districts of Ccatcca and Ocongate show rates of positive and high growth (2.8% and 1.7%, respectively), which could be explained by the greater economic movement of those areas as a result of the construction of the interoceanic highway.

The level of poverty and extreme poverty in Quispicanchi is significant. According to the map of poverty elaborated by the Cooperation Fund for Social Development-FONCODES, for 2005, the districts of Quispicanchi have been rated as follows: Extreme poverty (Ccatcca, Ocongate, Marcapata, Cusipata and Quiquijana); very poor (Urcos, Andahuaylillas, Huaró, Lucre Oropesa and Camanti).

### **Regarding education**

Within Quispicanchi, Urcos y Ocongate are the districts that gather together almost the third part of the student population, which could be related to the greater concentration of population in these areas.

This situation diminishes the opportunities for both the young people to study some technical career and for the people with some disability that can not access to education. According to a study carried out by the Peruvian Institute of Education on human rights and peace, the average of years of study in Quispicanchi is 3.9 for boys, and 1.5 for girls; thus, the female population is mostly illiterate (55.2%). This situation, together with other factors, will contribute to reduce competitiveness and opportunities

### **Basic services unfulfilled**

Another indicator of the level of development of a place is the level of basic services not rendered, as follows: According to the last national census (year 2005), it is verified that 91.4% of the population in Quispicanchi had one or more basic needs unfulfilled. Also, 70% of the population lives in rural areas, where water, electricity and sewage services are scarce (and practically non existent in the last case).

In 2000, the province had 17 Health centers<sup>8</sup> and currently it has 2 more, 1 in the populated center of Tinki and another one in Incacancha.

### **Birth and death rates**

According to data from the Regional Health Direction of Cusco for 2005, the districts with greater birth rates were: Ocongate, Ccatca, Ccarhuayo, Marcapata, and Quiquijana with 40.2, 29.9, 29.4, 29.4 and 25.6‰, respectively, figures superior to the provincial average (22.7‰). On the other hand, the rate of infant mortality during 2005 in the province was of 49.5‰ live births.

### **Malnutrition**

Chronic malnutrition is one of the main problems in the province of Quispicanchi; in 2005<sup>9</sup> it was the second province, after Chumbivilcas, with 47.7% children from 6 to 9 years old suffering from chronic malnutrition, while in the region the rate is 33.7%; at national level, that percentage is 21.9%.

## **4.2. The road so far: CCAIJO and its commitment to local human development**

### **The change of paradigm and the new model of intervention: From beneficiary population to active citizenship**

CCAIJO is an organization of the Society of Jesus that has been working for over 20 years in the province of Quispicanchi; its mission is to work for human development in the region, specially that of the more impoverished communities. In 2010, CCAIJO devised a new strategic planning in which it revises some of its areas of work; but, above all, reflects on the approach from which its interventions in the province are carried out, and defines new ways to address, from now on, the relation with the population and the way of promoting development.

This change of paradigm represented for CCAIJO an important job of awareness and training in the communities it was working with, to start moving (as CCAIJO itself) towards a vision centered in the exercise of citizenship from an approach of rights. From now on, the insistence will be placed on the communities themselves, so that they take over their own development, participate, contribute and, above all, decide.

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<sup>8</sup> CCAIJO, Diagnóstico de la Provincia de Quispicanchi, CCAIJO, 2000: 68.

<sup>9</sup> III National Census of Talla in Escolares 2005, MINEDU.

This model, though directed at communities and their population, also incorporates local government as essential actors, as well as the training and on-going support for the creation of institutional capacities.

This model is based in the experience of CCAIJO on popular education, and in the broad previous experience on projects of rural development of the organization. The change was favored by new movements about development that promoted a broader look on human development. The talk on the generation of capacities and the strengthening of the socio-political dimension of development were key elements that set the new approaches and intervention of CCAIJO.

### **Water harvesting**

One of the big challenges of CCAIJO during this decade has been the commitment to the productive improvement of the communities in the province of Quispicanchi and, particularly, of the least advantaged districts. The objective is to help the communities develop productive capacities, and that they have access to the necessary infrastructure. In this region, the scarcity of water shows how geographical conditions determine, to a great extent, the productive activities and the quality of family life.

In this context, water harvesting was conceived as a project that would enable them to store rain water in small reservoirs, to use it through the year, thus broadening the productive initiatives of the communities. “Water harvesting” was a strange idea for the communities; that is why CCAIJO had to give detailed explanations of how that “harvest” could be carried out, and what it would bring about.

### **Water as a driving element**

Ccatcca was selected as a region in urgent need of water, and also as a space where CCAIJO had not intervened in all its history. The relations with the community had not been developed, and there were precedents of unsuccessful projects promoted by other social organizations. Ccatcca is identified as a district that meets certain conditions, where it is possible to develop a new working strategy, thought and designed as an integral intervention that will swing around a driving element: water.

In the district of Ccatcca, there had been confrontations among families about the use of water, especially in times of drought. In addition to the management of the conflict about water, there was also a vital need of water in order to extend the farming areas.

As an answer to this problem, and to the obvious needs among the people, CCAIJO suggested water harvesting as an idea to reach several objectives; among them, the most important is probably the possibility that the community takes a leading role as citizens, and that they involve themselves in the whole process of water harvesting, making it their initiative.

Before the intervention in Ccatacca, CCAIJO had initiated the construction of micro dams in other micro basins that supposed a learning not only from the technical point of view and of infrastructure, but also as a key element for the resolution of the social conflict generated in the basin due to the use of water. These previous experiences facilitated the recognition of local leaders.

### **Awareness campaign: “Ccatcca, I want you green”**

The first strategy was the awareness campaign, “Ccatcca, I want you green”. This campaign was a strategy for citizen participation, directed at first to community leaders, community organizations and the small producers in the district. This awareness program was centered in the problem with water, in the possible solution of the recovery of rain water and, specially, in making people the builders of their own development.

CCAIJO organized visits with the community leaders to other micro dams previously built in other districts. These “internships” are remembered by all as an important moment when they witnessed what the project meant, the work that lay ahead, and the possibilities that could arise from it.

CCAIJO’s support to the community organization and the unhurried and permanent dialogue bore results. Building a relationship of trust and negotiation with community leaders was essential to begin to walk this road together. The CCAIJO team participated in the community assemblies with multiple visual and oral resources to convince them that water harvesting was possible.

The awareness strategy reached not only the community leaders, but also extended among the people and the local authorities. They used the radio and visual elements such as boards, wall messages, etc., with the slogan “Ccatcca, I want you green”, that awakened the interest and hope of the community that they could have water for their crops. The message permanently transmitted was that of the mobilization of the communities’ capacities, of their possibility of contributing with resources, but specially, that of recovering water and managing it properly.

The campaign was favorably received, and an arduous process of awareness and dialogue was initiated among district authorities, community leaders and CCAIJO.

It is worthy mentioning that there were also some obstacles to overcome. Among them, and in addition to the natural resistance to the unknown, there were groups within certain communities that strongly opposed the project. The existence of Núcleos Ejecutores<sup>10</sup> (Enforcer Groups), within the communities complicated negotiations and influenced the decision process. In addition, those groups had investment power and water harvesting, was outside their scope of influence.

### **The integral strategy of intervention: technological intervention and ability training**

The project of water harvesting has a very important base of technological innovation. The construction of micro dams incorporates a technology adequate to the conditions of the area, uses material from the region, and formulates an organization proposal around this work not only in terms of the building of the dam, but also for its subsequent management and the management of water.

The micro dams are built in strategic places, chosen by the community with the assistance of CCAIJO's technical staff. Once the best plots of land were identified, the next step was to negotiate about those lands for the building of the micro dam. Communal policies were crucial at that point, since the ceded lands had to be replaced by others in similar conditions, so that the families donating the lands were not affected. Though the technical counseling was important to define the terrain, the negotiation was carried entirely out by the community, its assembly and its committee.

Innovation could not only be seen in the idea of collecting the rain water of those districts, but also in the fact that the CCAIJO team decided to use the material already present in the area; costs, therefore, were accessible, and material easier to obtain.

For this project, the community contributed not only with their land, but also with manpower. It was a hard labor that generated tensions and negotiations within the community, but which also contributed with a great amount to the project's cost. The building of micro dams implied not only contributing with manpower,

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<sup>10</sup> The "Núcleos Ejecutores" are groups created during the Fujimori period, which received government funds to carry out works in the communities. This organization created by the government did not recognize community organizations, and broke with the traditional process of organization and decision making. The "núcleos ejecutores" were a precedent of a bad project management between this group in power and the traditional organization.

but also with training and acquisition of knowledge for the maintenance of the dam, the design of the channels for distribution, its building and the utilization of the irrigation system that had been implemented in the area.

The micro dams were the first step towards the beginning of a process of training that would allow communities to manage their own water and, at the same time, generate new and productive proposals. Water harvesting was the first step towards obtaining an indispensable resource as water, a resource that was always considered a means for other objectives such as the increase of the productive possibilities, the strengthening of community and collective capacities, or the improvement of family incomes in the area.

### **The interdisciplinary team and the on-going support of the experience**

The team built for this project defines itself as an “authentic working team”. A common objective was chosen, and people could integrate and put into play their professional and personal capacities, to complement each other and strengthen the role of CCAIJO in the district of Ccatcca.

The technical team had to learn how to “make an artificial pond”, how to build a “Qocha”<sup>11</sup> with local materials, how to design an irrigation system, or to manage the water. CCAIJO invested in the training of people but, above all, facilitated the composition of a multidisciplinary team, with the training and ability to suggest proposals and make decisions. The entry in Ccatcca was facilitated by the presence of quechua-speaking professionals, who were able to communicate in the same language spoken by the community leaders and to understand participative and assembly procedures, as well as traditional organization.

Within CCAIJO, the team found openness and wide possibilities to create, propose and contribute with ideas. The work of this multidisciplinary team, able to dialogue and to contribute ideas to the project and to the same CCAIJO, permitted to start working on cross subjects of the experience: issues like gender and the idea of citizenship were incorporated to the model.

The strategy of intervention envisaged, since the first moment, the strengthening of the organizational capacities of the community, raising their awareness, and training of community leaders not only on technical issues, but also for the improvement of the community social tissue.

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<sup>11</sup> “Qocha”, Quechuan word that means “tank” or “dam”.



### 4.3. Key strategies for the success of the experience

#### **Strengthening the traditional organization**

The ever present idea was to help the community to make the water harvesting their own, to make the dam their own, so that then they dared to participate in others scopes of social, economic and political life in the area. Another element of the proposal was to initiate a dialogue not only between the leaders of the communities, or within a community, but also to begin negotiations with the authorities of the district to have them participate in the project, strengthen it and, at some moment, taking responsibility for satisfying this need for people.

The organized communities pushed the provincial authority to get support for the construction. The municipality of Ccatcca contributed to the financing of the work with machinery, and the leadership of the Mayor helped to get the provincial government involved and working jointly to carry out the project.

The construction of this work was the first exercise of collaboration in Ccatcca between CCAIJO and the communities. This collaboration was characterized by a high degree of prominence of its leaders and the district and provincial governments.

#### **Community leaderships**

The role played by the community managers was essential for the success of the water harvesting. The leaders were the first objective group to support the proposals but, above all, they themselves remember how important it was to imagine a Ccatcca of “another color”. The scarcity of water is and has been a deeply felt need of the people. Actually, the work of dialogue that CCAIJO initiated with the community did not revolve around this need, but around how to solve it and how to appropriate the project and whatever came out of it.

The leaders that participated in this project recognized how difficult it was, in many occasions, to build the qochas. They had to face difficulties not only in the negotiation of the lands, but also with the confidence of the community in the project, in the dialogue, and in the conviction that it was possible to dam the rain water. One of the biggest difficulties was to offset catastrophic opinions as those of churches or political groups in the community that predicted the failure of the water harvesting.

For some managers, negotiation was not easy: it took time and effort. But, finally, everyone recognized with satisfaction that there are qochas in each of

their communities. To have led the process of construction, the negotiations and the starting of the water harvesting, makes them feel proud for having contributed with their work, their time and, above all, their commitment.

The community representatives are aware that there is still a lot to do, but all of them were convinced that only by working together, trusting one another and committing to the collective work, they would be able to achieve better things for their community. Today they have proudly shown us the new crops, the grasslands, the irrigation system, the improvements in the distribution of water, etc. Although Ccatcca is still an area of high marginalization, water harvesting has meant for many families a qualitative change in their productive choices, and therefore, in their life quality.

### **The coordination of participation in the spaces for concerted action**

Even though water was the driving element around which the participation of society was coordinated, the dialogue between the actors was advancing and generating spaces for concerted action, and all that facilitated a joint vision on the development of the district of Ccatcca.

Community assemblies and the groups and organizations that existed in Ccatcca began to feel restless about the development of the region. The leaders were aware that they had the water, and that then they needed to negotiate with the authorities for them to promote other kinds of projects and investments.

The team of CCAIJO in the district, in tune with the strategy of driving the development in the region, played the role of promoter in this space for concerted action. It offered technical assistance and training for the formulation of the plan, and facilitated the spaces for dialogue, so that the communities could take decisions about the priority projects for the district, but also to coordinate strategies of incidence in view of the nearing change of district government.

The district government showed openness and political will for dialogue. The participation of CCAIJO as facilitator of that space gave confidence to the community and the local government, making work easier. Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of this space is that it was able to summon other organizations like Agustina Rivas, or the committees of PRONAMACHS, to add them to these spaces for concerted action, with the objective of proposing and deciding together.

## **New ways of organization**

As it has already been mentioned, the community participated before, during and after the building of the qochas, performing different roles with different levels of commitment and in different activities, with a leading role from beginning to end. Before the construction, and once the negotiation of the lands where the qocha was to be built was finished, the community assembly appointed a Work Commission. This organization was formed within the assembly itself with the objective to take responsibility and manage the labors for the construction. These work commissions were very important to manage the work and the relations with the community and the CCAIJO team.

Once the dams were finished, the next decision was how to distribute the water, how to manage it and how to get organized, with a reasonable and efficient use of such resource. Once again, the “knowledge” of the community was the best instrument for the technical staff of CCAIJO to contribute with their insights about the irrigation plan.

CCAIJO, in addition to its counseling, also committed itself to offering training and technical support to set into motion the water distribution system, and to helping the community finding a way of organizing the system administration.

From the municipality it was promoted that the care and management of water be incorporated as a communal statute. Once the distribution plan was carried out, and the new irrigation system was set into motion, the community needed to organize itself for the management and maintenance of such system. Almost immediately, the irrigation commissions were constituted. Their objectives are organization and training, so that users could make an efficient use of water and infrastructure.

The irrigation commission became a new space of organization, with power and decision-making capacity on this resource. The commission belongs to the community assembly, and their members are appointed in the assembly for specific periods of time that help to strengthen traditional organization, and also to achieve a dynamic management to administrate water efficiently.

## **Changes in the local government and participative budgets**

The agreement signed during the electing campaign, during which the candidates agreed to observe the processes of development in the district, was also observed by the new mayor. In addition to this agreement with society, the knowledge of the new mayor about the situation of water in the region, and the trust in the

reliable work carried out by CCAIJO, were also crucial. The new mayor knew that water harvesting had potential, and that it could help to improve the life quality of the people living in the district.

This change of the local government helped the community, the government, and the social organizations advance to a vision of development reoriented towards the rural areas, and to make a greater commitment with new projects and with the proposal of development made by the municipality. With the impulse to this new vision of development in Ccatcca, and the commitment assumed by the mayor for transparency and the opening of spaces for participation and concerted action, the Management Council for District Development (CGDD) is consolidated and is a referent of concerted action in the region of Cusco.

The law of participative budgets was approved by the country that year. This law gives new impulse to the spaces of participation, and the participatory budget becomes an important tool to ensure the construction of qochas, with financing from the local government. This national impulse to the spaces of participatory budget was a key element for the continuity of water harvesting.

### **Promotion of new productive sectors**

As it has already been explained, one of the central objectives of water harvesting was to have water for our crops. Having water all year round meant breaking away from temporary agriculture, and also promoting new crops.

Once more, the community answered enthusiastically. They had managed to get water, then an irrigation system, and now the moment of trying new crops in their small lots came. The role of leaders was essential once again. The community got together and organized themselves to start the new activities; they put into motion their own resources (knowledge, time, savings, etc.) and, since they had water and pasture, they were able to feed the livestock, to reforest some areas and to start new projects, such as the rearing of Guinea pigs and cattle. Women became the protagonists of this stage of the project: they assumed the leading role in the new productive sectors.

### **Transfer of technology and change of leading roles in the community**

The Peruvian process of decentralization, with a dimension of greater financing to regional and local governments and, in the case of Cusco, the payment of the mining canon, represented a significant increment of the region's public funds. Thanks to these new funds, municipalities could finance these and other works;

but the central issue of the transfer was not about financing, but rather about the way to build the qochas, and the way to organize and coordinate with the community before, during and after the construction of the micro dam.

CCAIJO thus ended its intervention in the construction of micro dams and in the impulse to water harvesting. After these constructions, CCAIJO continued implementing other kind of strategies, stemming from the capacity to recollect and manage water properly.

#### 4.4. Arrival points: conclusions, learnings and recommendations

##### Conclusions, learnings and recommendations for the communities

##### Conclusion 1: Participation and social representation: a channel for the solution of common problems

###### Learning.

The participation of the communities is necessary for the solution of common problems.

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###### Recommendation.

To encourage participative processes so that the communities themselves have leading roles in the management and resolution of the common problems.

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**Conclusion 2: The opening to the support of external agents in participative projects is a window to new possibilities**

The objective of encouraging new initiatives of participation in the district was to move from a very supervised participation, with permanent on-going support, to a participation that integrates the main groups of the area and that allows them to articulate collectively in order to participate in those matters (political, economic, social and environmental) that affect them. At first, the processes of participation were promoted by an agent “external” to the community (CCAIJO), who assumed the role of guide and supporter for the participation and organization around an objective in common: To have irrigation water in the district.

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**Recommendation.**

Opening to the counseling of external agents, provided they respect the opinions of the community.

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**Conclusion 3: Technical contributions, together with coexistence, trust, and the work of “colleagues”, essential for the success of the experience.**

The communities claim that they have had a “collective awakening” in issues related to production, irrigation and productive infrastructure.

For the community leaders, the presence of CCAIJO in Ccatcca was a key element that facilitated participation. They assure that the integration of the technical team in the community, coexistence, trust and the work of “colleagues” were essential to believe in the proposal and start walking together.

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**Learnings.**

To implicate the communities in participative processes is vital to offer them solutions for basic problems.

The relational aspects of horizontal management encourage the participation of many members of the community.

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**Recommendations.**

To identify the basic problems of the communities and search solutions through participative processes.

It is advisable to complement the training and the technical contributions with relations in horizontal management within the communities.

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**Conclusion 4: It is necessary to count on experience and the necessary spaces in order to learn and practice participation**

This experience has provided the community with new elements for its organization. Having the necessary information, and dinamizing the permanent meetings between managers and the organizers of the assembly, has facilitated important learnings for the community management board in their role as managers, as well as improvements in their relations with the assembly.

The community assembly is now valued as an authority for decisions. The assembly recovers and exercises its capacity for decision-making and the setting of community rules obeyed and valued by the people. The creation of irrigation commissions and, later, of the district irrigation commission, allows them to participate as users and managers of that priceless resource for the region that water is.

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**Learnings.**

Both experience and the spaces for it to have place are necessary for participation.

The acknowledgement by the community of the spaces for participation is essential for it to be significant for the people and the community.

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**Recommendation.**

To consolidate the spaces of participation in the community, and to strengthen, within them, the capacities of people.

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### **Conclusion 5: When it can be decided, participation is an interesting strategy**

It is possible that the capacity of decision-making could have been a central element in the process of assuming a more active role in participation.

In relation with the spaces for concerted action, it can be said that the CGDD emerged when CCAIJO began its work in Ccatcca.

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#### **Learnings.**

The decision-making is essential for the development of community participation.

The decision-making within the community strengthens and empowers the communities in their relation with other actors.

As long as the communities show their capacities and leadership, local authorities trust them for the development of the proposals.

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#### **Recommendations.**

To consolidate the spaces of participation and those with decision making capacity, and to strengthen, within them, the capacities of people.

When the community has the necessary strength, it is important to invite it and support it in the process of concerted action with other actors.

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### **Conclusion 6: The successful experiences of participation at a local level encourage participation in superior levels**

If community organization is strengthened and is empowered with decision making capacities, it has an impact on the participation in the spaces for concerted action of the district.

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#### **Learning.**

Becoming familiar with the experiences of other places facilitates and encourages the acceptance of new things in the community, and helps to fight for them.

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#### **Recommendation.**

The contact among communities and successful experiences not only generates learnings, but also helps to introduce new solutions to the problems of the communities.

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**Conclusion 7: The challenges assumed collectively are more successful and appear “less tedious”**

**Learning.**

United and with joint responsibilities, we are stronger.

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**Conclusion 8: The knowledge of successful community experiences in other places encourages the incorporation of new strategies**

**Learning.**

Becoming familiar with experiences of other communities stimulates the introduction of new ways and strategies to deal with problems.

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**Recommendation.**

Linking different solution experiences with common problems can generate new alternatives.

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**Conclusion 9: We must take advantage of those elements outside of the context that benefit us**

During the water harvest, the decentralization process boosted the spaces for concerted action in the local and regional sphere. That is why this opportunity is taken and linked to the results already obtained in the recovery and management of water, to widen the vision on development beyond this resource and to allow a shared reflexion on the development of Ccatcca.

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**Learning.**

It is advisable to capitalize those context elements that can benefit and strengthen us.

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**Recommendation.**

A permanent analysis of the context, in order to assess if there are any elements that can strengthen or weaken us.

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## Conclusions, learnings and recommendations for Ccaijo

### **Conclusion 10: In the rural space, it is necessary to carry out projects that combine specific technical developments with the promotion of participation**

CCAJO offered a project, with information and technical assistance, to which the citizens decided to join under a supervised plan for the organization.

The promotion of participation has been a permanent element throughout the experience. The assessment of this dimension by the protagonists themselves proves that, in spite of many difficulties, water harvesting has achieved a double goal: It has contributed to solve the problem of water scarcity, and strengthened the participation and social capacities of the communities in the district of Ccatcca.

#### **Learning.**

The balance between the contribution of technical knowledge and the encouraging of participation and appropriation of that knowledge is essential for the feasibility of the projects.

#### **Recommendation.**

To combine technical elements with methodological elements and elements that strengthen the community capacities, as well as of appropriation of the processes.

### **Conclusion 11: Knowing similar experiences, which were successful in other places, works as a trigger for the communities**

#### **Learning.**

The contact between community experiences works as a motivating and enriching element in the solution to the problems of the community.

#### **Recommendation.**

To facilitate the contact between community experiences can work as a convincing and motivating element for some of the proposals made to the communities.

**Conclusion 12: Horizontal relations with the community are essential for the success of the proposal**

The promotion of participation and organization is related to a horizontal and personal communication with the communities. That takes a specific time and rhythm that can not be imposed or hurried.

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**Learnings.**

Horizontal relations with the community are essential for the success of the proposal.

The communities, once motivated, can contribute with much more than imagined.

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**Recommendation.**

To pay attention to horizontal relations with the communities, since it facilitates and encourages their implication and appropriation of the proposal.

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**Conclusion 13: The combination of training and support, both in technical and participative aspects, is necessary for this kind of project**

Participation must be accompanied by training and technical assistance.

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**Learning.**

To combine aspects of training and assistance, both of technical aspects and community strengthening, benefits the development of the project.

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**Recommendation.**

In the training and assistance proposals it is essential to combine technical aspects and community strengthening.

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**Conclusion 14: A committed multi disciplinary team is the key to success**

Relying on a team committed to the proposal has been one of the keys to the success of water harvesting. The integral vision with which the project has been formulated and carried out has made people “look up” and participate with a multidisciplinary approach to solve permanently complex problems.

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**Learnings.**

It is necessary to count on a multidisciplinary team to balance technical and participative elements.

A committed and motivated team is essential to obtain the motivation and implication of the community.

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**Recommendation.**

To create multidisciplinary, committed and motivated teams is essential for the development of this kind of project.

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**Conclusion 15: The change from the approach of participation as an instrument to the participation as a right contributes to the increasing prominence of the communities**

The objectives of participation are transformed; at first, participation is only an instrument, a means to achieve a specific end that helped them change a situation. This idea of participation as a means begins to transform itself, and people and their leaders understand that getting organized and participating in other spaces, and with new actors, can benefit their communities, but that participation is also a responsibility and a right.

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**Learning.**

It is necessary to understand participation as a process that integrates a specific methodology, which implies a right to the communities that exercise their development.

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**Recommendation.**

To understand the work with other communities around participation as a process that goes from a methodology or instrument to the right that communities have to exercise in their development.

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**Conclusion 16: The work with local authorities  
benefits all the committed actors**

CCAIJO recognizes the valuable aspect of its relation with local authorities: “it has made us interested in the political issues. We do not endorse any political party option, but we follow attentively what happens, and we know we must have a political vision for our actions”. The incorporation of dimensions such as the participation in the projects of CCAIJO has favored the reflection on the broadening of the spaces of influence, on how to coordinate their local experience with the regional area, and how to permanently dynamize spaces for dialogue and participation for the citizens.

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**Learning.**

The work with the local authorities is necessary and can be beneficial for the viability of the project in the community.

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**Recommendation.**

The work with the local authorities is necessary and can be essential for the viability of the project in the community, and for the prominence of the communities in their own development.

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## Conclusions, learnings and recommendations for local authorities

### **Conclusion 17: The weakness of local authorities is the consequence of personalism and of the little institutional capacity**

The institutional weakness of the district governments is evident when spaces fail or are truly difficult to manage when the external agent working as motivator (like CCAIJO) is missing.

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#### **Learning.**

It is necessary to strengthen participative and communicative leaderships in the local authorities and in the institutions themselves.

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#### **Recommendations.**

The strengthening of the local authorities and of their capacities for a shared leadership is essential for the empowerment of democracy and human development.

The existence of a motivating institution for participative processes contributes to their success.

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### **Conclusion 18: Dialogue as a means of working with the communities**

#### **Learning.**

The dialogue with the communities is the key strategy for the development and exercise of citizenship.

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#### **Recommendation.**

To prepare all actors for the dialogue is strategic.

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**Conclusion 19: The legitimacy of the local organizations is essential for the success of the projects**

**Learning.**

The legitimacy of the promoting organizations has a clear relevance in the development of projects.

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**Conclusion 20: The balance between social dimension and techniques is an interesting strategy for the work with communities**

**Recommendation.**

In projects of community development, a strategy that promotes participation is its integration in projects of productive development and of improvement of life conditions.

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**Conclusion 21: The viability of the participative projects beyond the project itself or the specific experience**

**Recommendation.**

In the design of the processes and projects, it is convenient to integrate the strategies and conditions that facilitate the viability of the processes beyond the project itself.

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**Conclusion 22: Women find in projects and processes of improvement of the life conditions of their communities an opportunity for their process of empowerment**

**Recommendation.**

With the objective of facilitating the empowerment of women within rural communities, their implication in productive projects or the improvement of the life conditions is a strategy that could be successful.

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## **5. REGIONAL COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CHALLENGE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFINITION OF PUBLIC POLICIES**

### **5.1. Understanding the case: context of the experience**

The experience analyzed poses a case of interrelation between the State and the civil society in a specific sphere: The development of the agricultural sector in the regional area of Peru. We want to focus on the new approaches for participation, their processes and the commitment to the construction of public policies based on concerted action. We have approached the experience with the intention of finding an answer, from practice, to the following questions: Is it possible to participate from the bases in the definition of policies that affect the lives of people? How are these interactions between State and Civil Society improved, and which are the results obtained so far?

These answers shall be obtained when reviewing the history and process lived by the Regional Council of Agricultural Development (CORDA) of Piura, Peru. This council is a space of dialogue and interrelation between government institutions and representatives from the region's civil society. CORDA has been configured, since 2003, as a space for concerted action with the goal of contributing to the formulation of policies oriented to the development of the regional agricultural sector.

#### **Economic-productive context in Piura<sup>12</sup>**

The region of Piura enjoys a diverse economic potential, especially in the productive sectors of hydrocarbons, traditional and modern agriculture, fishing

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<sup>12</sup> Information taken from the document of the formulation of the Program: Empowerment of the civil society for the democratic governance in the framework of decentralization, in Piura, Moquegua and Cusco-Peru. ALBOAN 2007.

and services. The national economic policy has given a strong impulse to the large investments, without modifying the primarily exporting model of development that sentences more than 40% of the population to poverty; this is even worse in the rural areas and, especially, among women.

Unemployment and informal jobs show the same tendencies as in the rest of Peru (more than 50% of the active population). The region of Piura has low levels of social development, the family income per capita does not reach 60 dollars a month, and the rate of enrolment in secondary education does not reach 70%. Within the region itself, the difference between the coastal and Andean regions is evident. Poverty is much more dramatic in rural areas.

The economic dynamism of Piura is not the same among the productive sectors. The development of the oil activity in the jungle region (which contributes with 40% to the national production), and the large investments in the exploitation of other natural resources carried out by transnational companies that have come to the region in the last years, is having a deep and unequal impact on the region's economy.

As mentioned before, agriculture is one of Piura's traditional sectors, and it is characterized by the almost neglect and lack of regional policies that may favor the sector. It is one of the most important fields, not only because it generates work, but also because of the potential that imply the almost 140,000 hectare of agricultural crops, most of them with regulated irrigation, and of which 90% belongs to small productions in the coastal areas and the mountains with units that, in average, have 1.8 hectares each.

The main crops in the region of Piura are based on rice, Pima cotton, corn, mango, banana trees, lemon, organic coffee, and beans. Following a national trend, the regional government of Piura promotes projects that favor the large agricultural corporations that have recently bought almost 15 thousand hectare for the production of agro fuel; this has generated evident tensions with the communities that live in the area.

On the other hand, several initiatives have been recently implemented in the mountains of Piura that have incremented their social, political and economic visibility. Among them, it is worth mentioning the strengthening of the business initiatives of small coffee productions supported by the associative business management, which count with their own exporting company (Central Piurana de Cafetaleros-CEPICAFE). At a regional level, the land market is being prioritized in

order to facilitate large investments, particularly for crops of agricultural export and the production of consumables for biofuels.

Mechanisms of economic liberalization are being implemented in Peru in general, and in the region of Piura in particular. The greatest impact for the agricultural sector comes from the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, which risks the viability if the small agriculture (almost 90% of the agricultural area of the region), since it will allow the entry into the country of several products that would compete with the regional production at subsidized prices, as in the cases of cotton, rice, corn, dairies, etc. That calls for the generation of government policies in order to reduce that vulnerability, and to activate the social participation for the concerted action and the design of public policies that generate better conditions for the small producers. Consequently, the analysis of the space for concerted action related to the agricultural sector is very relevant. Its strengthening and public presence can mean the difference for the majority of the small producers of the region.

## **5.2. The road covered by the regional council of agricultural development of Piura (CORDA)**

The origin of CORDA goes back to the initiative of actors of the civil society as an answer to the conditions of the Peruvian and regional context. During the second wave of decentralization process in Peru (initiated in 2001, during the government of Toledo), sub-national governments implemented a series of measures and mechanisms in order to activate the concerted action and the participation of the civil society. This activated social movements and organizations that have been generating new spaces for the dialogue between the State and the civil society. This context has propitiated, in spite of the social disarticulation that Peru has undergone in the last years, that specific groups organize and decide to participate in more structured spaces for concerted action and political dialogue.

### **The initiative of the Civil Society**

In the year 2003, in parallel to the process of decentralization, the “Colegio de Ingenieros de Piura” (CIP) and the “Facultad de Agronomía de la Universidad Nacional de Piura” (UNP), organized meetings with specialists in the agricultural sector in order to generate an analysis on the regional agriculture, and to promote action guidelines and promotion of the agricultural development. The initiative

was supported by leaders of the sector that saw and opportunity to encourage opinions and to contribute to the development of the field. This proposal was generated, among other things, by the climatological and governmental situation, contexts that had an impact on, and implied an opportunity for, the development of the sector.

The original proposal was to generate a space of technical support in issues related to agriculture, but that initial idea was modified as time went by. However, it was the seed of the current space for concerted action. This council is beginning to integrate with government personalities (management of regional development), and with specialists of agricultural research (people from the academic world), that generate a common vision of what would be, in no time, the Regional Council of Agricultural Development (CORDA).

One of the initiatives that strengthened this emergent space was the explicit invitation to the Regional President, offering the support of this group of specialists for the formulation of agricultural policies in the region. This group enjoyed, on the one hand, the capacities of research and generation of knowledge of the university and, on the other hand, the experiences and knowledge of specific people in the agricultural sector. The invitation was welcome, and the Regional President resolved to incorporate the farmers as leading actors to be taken into account. The “Junta de San Lorenzo” became an active agent, as representatives of a region that was in conflict at the time, due to the installation of a mining company.

That is how CORDA began to develop itself. One of the achievements of this first group was a governmental ordinance that defined its configuration and launching. According to that decree, the essential objectives of CORDA are: “To plan, order, and promote the agricultural production of the region of Piura, and to be an instrument for concerted action between the representatives of the agricultural producers, the State, and other institutions related to and interested in the agricultural regional development, for the implementation of agricultural regional policies in the mid and long term.”<sup>13</sup>

The civil society insisted that the President of the government led that space as a political measure that would allow this council to have a real influence in the definition of policies for the agricultural sector. Finally, the representation was delegated in the General Manager of the Piura Government.

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<sup>13</sup> Regional ordinance N° 025/GRP-CR.

Table 11. How does CODA work?

- It is formed by representatives of 7 instances of the Regional Government and 12 representatives of the civil society.
- For its operation, the position of Technical Secretary, that depends on the Management of Economic Development of the Piura Government, was created.
- They meet once a month, and are organized in working committees according to the fields that define the working plan.
- It does not have a budget for its work.

Source: In-house.

### **The first steps**

CORDA started working in 2004, with the first process for concerted action in the region. As part of that first ordinance, and of CODA's structure, the council was granted a permanent position, the Technical Secretary, in charge of energizing and setting this council into motion. One of the first goals was to generate CODA's own set of regulations, that allowed it to be operative and that granted it a structure with the necessary representation (sectors of civil society, the academic world and the government) in the process for concerted action.

That set of rules, approved the same year of 2004, included the participation of agricultural institutions of the region, such as: The Special Project Chira-Piura and the Peruvian Engineers' Association - Departmental Council of Piura; producers' association and producers that, up to that moment had not been involved; "Juntas de Usuarios de Riego" (with the exception of the one that manages the water in the mountains); and public instances linked to the agricultural sector. However, the Council never managed to summon fundamental actors from the area, leading to the questioning of their representativity. The problem still exists.

Table 12. How is CORDA formed?

State	Civil Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaired by the President of the Regional Government or representative.</li> <li>• Regional Director of Agriculture.</li> <li>• Representative of the Local Government (not appointed yet).</li> <li>• Representative of the drainage basin of Chira-Piura.</li> <li>• General Manager of AGROBANCO.</li> <li>• Manager of the special project Chira-Piura.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 representatives of the producers of the Sierra (agricultural, stock breeders and forest representatives).</li> <li>• 3 representatives of the producers in the coastal area<sup>14</sup>.</li> <li>• President of the Users' Board in each area of the region.</li> <li>• Representative of the Agricultural Engineers' Association.</li> <li>• Dean of the Faculty of Agronomy, National University of Piura.</li> </ul>

Source: In-house.

The “Juntas de Usuarios” had a strong presence and, in some way, influenced in order to prioritize their own agenda and needs. This strong participation explains why the subject “water” was so important during the first years of life of CORDA. Drought had caused serious damage to farmers, and it was necessary to support the small production. This attention to the problem of water and its link with crops oriented one of CORDA’s first decisions: the prohibition of the rice-sowing campaign in specific areas. This ordinance became an essential event for CORDA in the definition of public policies.

The decision was a paradigmatic conflict within CORDA. The group of users was divided between those who did not obey the prohibition to grow this crop, arguing reasons of sustainability and rationality regarding the use of water, and those who did obey it because they considered the use of water and, therefore, the crop, were limited. Due to pressures from this last group, the government gave in and rejected the ordinance that had come from the council. The representatives of the civil society inferred that the political affairs have overcome what

<sup>14</sup> These groups are: Central Piurana de Pequeños Productores de Banano Orgánico (CEPIBO); Asociación de Productores de Mango del Valle del Alto Piura (APROMALPI); and the Comités zonales de Productores Algodoneros (COSAPAL).

was “pertinent”, the technical opinion and the agreement reached by the council. The social and media impact influenced, positively and negatively, the function and action of the council.

During that time, a Strategic Plan of Agricultural Development was generated. This process, encouraged by several NGOs and citizen groups, facilitated the analysis of agriculture in the region, and of the opportunities to encourage new policies. This plan was not approved completely, but it was an element for the process of formulation of the *Concerted Plan of Regional Development*.

The concern to activate the sector originated proposals for the incorporation of new crops that were profitable and sustainable, and that allowed to diversify the productive options in the area. From there, a research on the viability of a date crop was carried out. But the research was not followed-up, and the proposal had no continuity.

In addition to these decisions, CORDA initiated a reflection about the cotton sector. The problems of the sector were debated, and new proposals were made to the Regional Direction of Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture. This experience is just an example of the difficulty to generate public policies in the sector, due to the still fragile institutional character and the recent beginning of the regional government. Until that moment, there co-existed government instances of different levels, but they had to coordinate for the implementation of public policies in the agricultural sector. As a matter of fact, the proposals pointed at the modification of the law about the national program of formalization of the cotton trade, which was debated in the Congress of the Republic. In spite of everything, the proposals were incorporated; for example, the restriction to the use of hybrid seeds, the incorporation of the Pima cotton and the credit attention from AGRO-BANCO, as well as the constitution of a permanent commission to follow up this important subject for the cotton sector.

### **Advancing towards concerted action**

During the following years, CORDA will keep making efforts to incorporate other representatives of groups of producers. One step towards the improvement of the operation of the board was to create working groups or commissions that facilitated the formulation of specific proposals out of the research and the analysis of a specific sub sector. The following working groups and commissions began to consolidate:

- **Commission to formulate proposals related to the research and transfer of technology.** This group obtained the generation of recommendations for the creation of the Center for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer (CRIAT). This role was taken by the Regional Institute of Science and Technology, which undertook the quality of the agricultural sector as the priority line of research.
- **The technical commission for the operation of the hydraulic system Chira-Piura** in charge of regulating the operation and maintenance of that system, as well as the regulation of the use of water and avoidance of problems around it.
- **Conformation of the commission for the use and conservation of soil.** This group had as objective the regulation of the use and the conservation of the soil in the district of medium and low Piura. It formulated a series of proposals to the regional government which, one year later, were the subject of dialogues with government instances for its implementation.
- **Formation of the technical team of Pima cotton.** This team was formed to study the situation of production, research and commercialization of this kind of cotton. In 2007, this group presented recommendations aimed at the optimization of the crops and to update regulations. These recommendations were heard by the government, the commission was consolidated and started to generate recommendations on the commercialization, production and articulation of these productive phases for the improvement of the subsector.

This arrangement of teams gave an answer to different problems: To specialize participation and orientate the representatives from subsectors to the debate on issues that were more significant for the represented people. Thus, the generation of proposals was gradually consolidated and CORDA started to elaborate recommendations and proposals. The council was thus committed to the devising of the Agricultural Agenda, promoted by the rural coordinator, which called for an update of the Agricultural Development Plan and, above all, allowed to focus attention on the problems the sector was facing at that moment. The agenda was presented and debated with different actors in the sector, but in spite of all the work and determination, it was not possible to reach an agreement, and it could not be assumed by the Presidency of the regional government.

During the first half of 2006, the Plan for Regional Development was carried out, coordinated in sub zones (according to similar geographical characteristics, by basins, etc). In CORDA, they worked for the incorporation of the three guidelines



that had been developed in the Strategic Plan of Regional Agricultural Development<sup>15</sup>. A regulation for the formulation, approval and supervision of the plans for crops and irrigation was also developed. The objective of CORDA was to contribute with elements to organize the agricultural campaign and the use of resources. The social conflict about water was intense, but it was possible to reduce it in order to organize the utilization of resources.

In this stage, CORDA won an important ally for its strengthening: CIPCA. That year, CIPCA offered a capacitation program designed ad hoc to strengthen the capacities of the council, and specially for the formulation of public policies. In addition to the great interest on the subject, the members of CORDA together with CIPCA initiated a process of formulation of operating plans to orientate the work of the council, generate follow-ups and revision mechanisms of the commitments.

Another sphere that summons groups of the civil society is the space for the Participative Budget (PP). In 2007, several members of CORDA participated in the debate of the PP, with the idea to introduce in that space the debates and orientations that were being generated in the council for agricultural development. One of the achievements of this participation was the decision to destine a budget allocation for the running of the regional councils.

In 2007, a new council called CORECA (Regional Council for the Agricultural Concerted Action) was formed, driven by the central government and, specifically, by the agricultural commission of the Council of the Republic. That year, a law was passed that, within the framework of the decentralization process, regulated the creation of these councils. This fact is very interesting in the life of CORDA because, even when at the beginning it was experienced as a difficulty, things have found their place since then. The CORECA was formed, but has not had an impact on the agricultural policy, or an operation that allows channeling the participation or encouraging the strategic role that this space could have. CORDA had made some advance, as it had convening power among the groups of civil society, and

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<sup>15</sup> **A. Integral Management of Basins and Territorial Development:** "To achieve that the agricultural actors of the Piura region plan and manage the rational use of their Natural Resources (water, soil, and vegetal cover) using modern technologies that ensure their sustainable offer in the hydrographical basins, and improve the life quality of the population". **B. Human Capital, and Organizational and Institutional Development for Competitiveness:** "Agricultural Producers Organized within a strong institutional framework achieve a competitive and sustainable agriculture in productive chains". **C. Technology and Production for the Sustainable Development:** "To increase the production, productivity and rentability of the main crops and breedings in a sustainable way." Source: Plan Estratégico Regional Concertado de Desarrollo Agrario de la Región Piura. October, 2006.

there were consensus among its members to continue the work, without giving up the political space won.

That year, the first operative plan for CORDA is formulated. The goal was to organize the work, promote its role and improve the internal functioning. This 2008 operative plan was approved, and some of its main lines of action are: The periodicity of the meetings; the issues to deal with; the spaces for capacitation and the mechanisms for the revision of agreements, and the follow up of already debated issues.

The concerns about the future of the sector, the tensions with the extracting industry in the area, and the condition of the Peruvian and international economy originated deep debates amidst the council. Thanks to this analysis of the context, the need for capacitation on issues related to international commerce was seen; there was a specific proposal to structure a process of capacitation about the Free Trade Agreement, in order to orientate public policies for the region about the better use of the opportunities generated by the Agreement and to attenuate the negative impacts.

### **5.3. Key elements in the space for concerted action**

The spaces for participation and concerted action are never neutral (Corwall, 2007). That is, those spaces that citizens are invited to join, or that they themselves create, tend to repeat some characteristics deeply related to the context and the power relations that take place in it, that permeate and are repeated in the space for participation itself. In the case of CORDA, though it is true that the initiative came from the civil society and that it is a unique case of regional origin, there are still certain limitations in the participation that have to do with the configuration of the space and the process of concerted action happening there, which is a reflex of the political culture of the region.

#### **Creation of a space owned by the people**

Its members define this council as a body for democratic debate, open to contributing to the design of the public policies in the agricultural sector. We found consensus about the appraisal of the existence of CORDA and its relation with the regional agricultural policy, but it is also true that there are tensions in the visions and expectations of what CORDA should be. The assessment about CORDA varies depending on the precedence of the actors. For the representation

of the government, this space is configured as a place to dialogue, get nearer to the citizenship and listen to the opinions of the base, but not to take binding decisions. For the government, concerted action in this space includes the proposal, listening and dialogue, but not necessarily the commitment of follow up what has been agreed there.

For the representation of the civil society, this council helps to facilitate democracy, to generate political consensus and to integrate the voices of the sector that have never participated in the definition of programs and/or policies. For the participating groups of production, this council represents the opportunity to get involved in the management of their government and to support the improvement in their region. After some years, the consensus about the goal of CORDA can be expressed as: “A space that has the capacity to propose policies, plans and programs to organize and promote the agricultural activity in agreement with the diverse actors in the sector”.

The members of CORDA consider that this space is still at a stage which is more reactive than assertive for the needs of the sector. There is an agreement between the civil society and the government about the idea that CORDA has still not generated an integral approach or created synergies for the regional agricultural development. That is to say, it gives a situational answer to the problems that are generated, but it has not been able to build a sectorial vision to a medium and long term from consensus.

## **Participation**

CORDA incorporates actors from the civil society and the government within a space of regulated relations. Those who participate understand that their goal is not to legitimate power but to orientate the debate towards the development of the region in order to beneficiate the least favored groups. The participation in this space has its difficulties and potentialities, and through them they make decisions and strengthen capacities that allow the continuity and deepening of participation.

**The motivation** for participation is very much related to the nature of the participating organization. It is important to reconcile the secret motivations that seek the resolution of specific problems with a broader vision of the sector and the development of the region.

Another element that encourages motivation are the subjects included; issues that generate interest. The participating people acknowledge that the interest for

participation is driven by an individual motivation and by the impact that it can have on the subsector represented by each organization.

One element that has helped to generate a better shared vision has been the structuring of commissions or **work teams**, which act responsibly in the generation of a proposal of the follow up of a specific program. This structure allows organizing participation and generating “sub spaces” of greater specialization and depth in their subjects.

Another element that encourages participation in the **environment** of respect and openness gradually generated within the council. The participating people increase their trust to participate and to express their points of view. This characteristic is related to the training received by the members of CORDA, and to the generation of mechanisms that organize and regulate the times and ways of participation.

The fact that the **decision making** of the Council has an impact is important for participation. In that sense, negative experiences discourage participation.

### **Representativity**

For the members of CORDA, participation in this space implies a **strong commitment** both at a personal level and at that of their organizations. The council implies organization, broadening of horizons, and a disposition to negotiate, to work their own resistances, to dialogue. From an operative point of view, to be a representative in CORDA requires to devote time, personal efforts and self-sacrifice. Participation can become costly many times, the results can be difficult to appreciate in a short term, and the relation with the represented organization can become stressing. Believing in these spaces implies committing to the generation of **individual and collective capacities**, to learning and trusting that the permanence and compromise of each of the members shall help to obtain results in the area of development.

The participation in CORDA exceeds the old consulting practices and has opened **possibilities of expression, of a shared analysis, of influence and exchange**. The CORDA is becoming an “active subject”, and its powers increase because it is part of a political community. This capacity generated out of concerted action has a lot to do with the people taking part in it, with how the relations between representatives and the whole of society encouraged are, with the bases, etc.

That is why the members of CORDA agree in the importance of **representations** in this space. An important effort has been made in order to incorporate producer’s

organizations and to broaden the spectrum, but some key subsectors, such as municipalities or representatives from indigenous communities, are still missing. The agricultural industry and the big producers are other subsectors with no representation. CORDA appears with the mission to give voice to those groups that have no individual capacity of incidence or that traditionally have been silenced in political dialogue. The members of CORDA clearly understand that the large producers have impact capacity individually, and this space aims to give priority to those groups that face more difficulties when it comes to be heard and seen, and on which public policies have a great impact.

It is thus established that those who participate are dynamic groups, with solid bases and a certain structure that allows them to represent the sector, to have continuance and to build capacities. The challenge is how to incorporate other groups that need to be strengthened in their capacities for participation and their look on the relevance of taking part in spaces for concerted action.

Another point that generates worries in terms of participation is the dependence upon representation of **specific leaders**. There are doubts or difficulties in the “two-way” communication with the social base.

### **The commitment to the generation of capacities**

During the years of existence of CORDA, their members have had to **know and understand** what a public policy is and how they can influence in its design and implementation. The generation of new proposals requires a technical knowledge, the analysis of the environment, the relation with specialized organizations and, consequently, to reach a political consensus (that implies strategies of lobby and incidence strategies) for it to be an initiative driven by all the members. For the members of CORDA it has been necessary to understand that the incidence in public policies implies a broad conception of how to influence the generation of guidelines, procedures and/or regulations concerning agriculture, as well as how to assess the results of such proposals. The ordinances and recommendations generated so far have been significant for the sector but they still are of a reactive nature; there is an acknowledgement of the need to orientate towards a project for the integral development of the region.

CIPCA has placed an important role in **training**. The strategy was to provide the members of CORDA with capacities in the field of public policy, from the ability to understand the budgets, or the information on government income, to the language necessary to discuss and debate with technical specialists or elaborate an

operative plan and follow up the agreements and indicators. That is, to provide the groups of the civil society with capacities for concerted action.

### **Women: Absent in CORDA**

When speaking about new ways of participation, we must be careful and ask ourselves if those new ways can transform or perpetuate the status quo. In CORDA that reality is reflected in the Peruvian agricultural sector, where the spaces for decision and representation are taken up by men. Only one woman has participated in CORDA during all these years, and she was the Technical Secretary, that is, she did not represent any group of the civil society or had a political position. This absence questions whose participation in these new ways of concerted actions is being opened to.

### **Rotation: A constant characteristic in government participation**

The regional government has shown political will for CORDA to remain as a space of dialogue with civil society. However, in the case of the agricultural sector at a regional level, there coexist two government representations: on the one hand, the “Dirección Regional de Agricultura” (Department of Regional Agriculture), and on the other hand, the “Gerencia de Desarrollo Económico” (Management of Economic Development). Both institutions participate in CORDA and contribute with their vision and competences to the debate and generation of proposals.

For CORDA, the presence of the “Gerencia Regional de Desarrollo Económico” has been very important because this management has not only taken the role of negotiator but also the **Technical Secretary** of the council, which helps to energize and promote the space for concerted action. For this council to be operative, the Technical Secretary has to play a central role. The paradox is that during the short history of CORDA, the rotation of this position has been important. And, on the other hand, its operating capacity and good performance as council will depend to a great extent on its technical capacity, its convening power, and the capacity to develop networks and relations. It is a position that implies a high personal commitment, knowledge of the sector and political capacities to support the concerted action.

It can also be seen how people who hold positions both in the Regional Management as in the Management of Economic Development, have changed repeatedly during these years. This constant rotation of people in government positions and, therefore, in CORDA, makes it very difficult for the council to make a steady progress.

#### 5.4. CIPCA and the alliance for the strengthening of CORDA

As it has been recognized in the recovery of the process, during 2005 CIPCA and CORDA started to strengthen relations and to generate alliances for the improvement of the space. CIPCA is an organization with a great experience and prestige in the region of Piura. During its more than 35 years of life, it has devoted efforts to generate development proposals together with a political reading of the context and the promotion of initiatives of participation and organization within the civil society. CIPCA is **acknowledged** both by the groups of civil society and the organized groups of production, as well as by the government itself, as a key actor for the development of the agricultural sector. Its contribution is oriented both by the **technical knowledge about the agricultural sector** and by the **political and social nature** of its proposals. This legitimacy as a center of research and promoter of development initiatives has allowed CIPCA to encourage and accompany spaces for dialogue and interrelation between the State and the civil society.

CIPCA's commitment to ally with spaces like CORDA represents the realization of its institutional strategy to serving as a bond between civil society and the regional government. The process of decentralization in Peru was interpreted by CIPCA as a great opportunity to encourage actions of governance and of strengthening of democracy. For that reason, the promotion of participation in traditionally excluded groups of the region, and the strengthening of the spaces for concerted action created during the last years have been defined as work areas at regional level. These spaces are considered authorities with the ability to propose public policies focused on regional development.

In 2005, CIPCA organized a forum to which the different regional councils were invited in order to reflect on the process of decentralization and participation. The main goal was to create a meeting space for the different regional councils and to articulate the participation of the civil society. From that year on, CIPCA aimed its efforts to the strengthening of CORDA, participating in the space on a permanent basis and encouraging concerted action. CIPCA has offered to provide specialized training to the members of CORDA, and has committed itself to accompany the space's daily life, providing it with useful tools for the operation, dialogue and negotiation.

Its strategy identifies three dimensions: **Support, training and counseling**. Aimed at three subjects: Individual persons, the organizations they belong to, and the council as a space of dialogue between the State and the civil society.

CIPCA has defined that the training it offers to this and other spaces for concerted action must have a balance between technical training (specific of the sector's elements), methodological training (management of the space for concerted action, negotiation tools and incidence), and communications and political incidence training (contextual and legislative aspects, etc.)

By the same token, CIPCA has oriented its supporting efforts towards the representation of civil society, trying to sharpen the political look on the work for concerted action and strengthening its capacities for incidence, analysis and negotiation.

## 5.5. Arrival points: conclusions, learnings and recommendations

### Conclusions, learnings and recommendations for the representation of Civil Society

#### Conclusion 1: The political moment and the process of decentralization in Peru have been essential to advocate this space for concerted action from civil society

#### Learnings.

An initiative of the civil society that binds and commits the government representatives, it is sustainable thanks to the commitment and participation of its members and the social acknowledgement that it generates.

It is necessary to carry out a permanent analysis of the context, which allows us to identify possibilities, issues of interest and to suggest proposals.

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#### Recommendations.

In the creation of spaces for dialogue between the State and the civil society, it is important to favor the participation of all the parts, and to encourage the commitment and acknowledgement of the parts involved.

To carry out periodical analysis of the context, identifying and assessing opportunities, issues of interest and possibilities for the fulfillment of our action.

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**Conclusion 2: The participation in CODA demands motivation, generation of capacities, dedication and continuity for the definition of public policies oriented to the development of the region**

**Learnings.**

Participating in a space for concerted action implies understanding participation as a process, and assuming it as a value, both individually and collectively.

Participation requires training, generation of capacities, and long-term continuity and investment.

Motivation and an environment of collaboration and consensus facilitate the participation of all the actors.

In the motivation for participation, the generation of more specific methodologies and spaces to analyze issues of specific interest are important.

The role of representatives is fundamental; they must be leaders that facilitate the communication with the people they represent, and that they empower the transfer of leadership.

It is necessary to seek mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge among the different participants of CODA so that the knowledge is not lost.

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**Recommendations.**

It is necessary to advocate the motivation and commitment of the members, to invest in the generation of capacities and to support the construction of the participative process.

The participation in these spaces of people with knowledge and experience in the sector to support the training and the process of participation facilitates the development of such processes.

It is necessary to generate spaces for concerted action, with an atmosphere of collaboration and consensus.

The work carried out within commissions and specific groups makes it possible to tackle issues of interest and the motivation of all the groups.

It is necessary to generate representative leaderships that can effectively communicate with their bases, and with the capacity to transfer their knowledge.

The spaces for concerted action must include mechanisms that ensure the transference between the outgoing representatives and the newly appointed ones.

**Conclusion 3: The structuring axis of CORDA must be the planning of the integral development, and not only the reaction to specific situations**

**Learnings.**

It is necessary to understand what a public policy is, how it is designed, what its implementation implies, and how it can be influenced to prosper.

The participation in CORDA requires a broad look to the development of the region, go beyond the interests of the group that one represents and assume a proactive attitude in order to identify the needs and opportunities for the implementation of new public policies and of the existing ones.

The decisions taken in that space for concerted action have to be binding.

The negative experiences detract the attention and the trust in the space for concerted action.

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**Recommendations.**

It is necessary to coordinate with institutions and/or organizations that are able to design and assess public policies to empower the networking and strengthen the proposals suggested by the civil society.

It is important to advocate, within the space for concerted action, dynamics that allow defining broader development goals that take the participation and the efforts to superior goals, instead of giving answers to temporary demands.

The decisions agreed upon in the spaces for concerted action have to be assumed by all the actors so that motivation and the legitimacy of the space remain.

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#### **Conclusion 4: Consolidating the representation of all the subsectors is necessary for the legitimacy of the space and the impulse of new proposals**

CORDA has achieved the continuance and the recognition, both from the government and from the sector, for different reasons. One of them is to have achieved the participation of sector leaders and organizations of producers' representatives of the region. CORDA has been questioned regarding the legitimacy of its representation, that is, if all subsectors were included and all debated proposals had been consented by the bases and the different groups whom the measure has affected.

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#### **Learnings.**

The representatives of civil society acknowledge the importance to broaden the space and to achieve the participation of other subsectors that are not being represented.

The legitimacy of the participating organizations in CORDA is essential; that is why it is necessary for there to be a responsible leadership and a fluent communication with the associated persons and communities. Representation implies the generation of efficient mechanisms of communication with the bases, and the strengthening of the organizations themselves.

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#### **Recommendations.**

The spaces for concerted action must be broad and inclusive in order to ensure the legitimacy of the concerted action in the name of the participating civil society.

The organizations of the civil society that participate in the space for concerted action must take on the responsibility of generating mechanisms for the bases' participation and efficient communication channels, and of strengthening their own organizations.

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**Conclusions, learnings and recommendations on CIPCA  
Centro de investigación y promoción del campesinado**

**Conclusion 5: CIPCA is committed to promoting the participation of the different groups of society, specially strengthening the role of sectors traditionally excluded from the regional political dialogue**

In the face of the evident social polarization in Plura, CIPCA has chosen to work with the least favored groups and communities. The advisory and strengthening of the regional producers' organization is related to the work with groups with few individual and collective capacities in the spaces for concerted action and participation of the region.

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**Learnings.**

The groups of civil society who have less organizational and participation capacities are excluded from the dynamics of the regional political dialogue.

The exclusion of women in all groups that CIPCA works with has a special relevance.

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**Recommendations.**

The support organizations must facilitate resources and on-going support to strengthen the inclusion of the sectors least favored in the processes of concerted action.

It is necessary to pay special attention to exclusion, especially women's, within each group.

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**Conclusion 6: In order to achieve capacity of incidence, the members of CORDA have been closely accompanied, specially the representatives of the civil society who have been provided with training and relevant information for the process of decision-making**

With regard to the spaces for concerted action, CIPCA has taken the role of trainer and promoter of dynamics within these spaces, oriented to the generation of proposals, the strengthening of the political dialogue and the operating capacity of the space. CIPCA has offered to provide specialized training to the members of CORDA, and has committed itself to accompany the space's daily life, providing it with useful tools for the operation, dialogue and negotiation.

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#### **Learnings.**

In the process of training, it is important to take into account a necessary balance between technical training (specific of the sector's elements), methodological training (management of the space for concerted action, negotiation tools and incidence), and communications and political incidence training (contextual, legislative aspects, etc.).

The training proposals should be adapted to the needs and characteristics of the group they are aimed at; it is important to take into account if they are women, a farmers' group, an urban group...

It is essential to deepen the political sight to training and on-going support.

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#### **Recommendations.**

In the training processes offered and proposed to the organizations and representatives of civil society in spaces for concerted action, there must be an investment in technical subjects but also in processes of methodology, incidence, participation and context analysis.

Each training proposal requires an adaptation effort taking into account the group it is aimed at and its specific needs (whether they are women, peasants, city people...).

It is necessary to invest in the generation of capacities, and in the organization that accompanies and encourages the spaces for concerted action.

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**Conclusion 7: In order to strengthen this space for concerted action, CIPCA offers CORDA its history, prestige and credibility.**

The absence of shared visions on development, and the lack of mechanisms for the spaces of concerted action to meet their objectives, has generated a greater demand of advisory and training from CIPCA as advocacy organization. This demands, above all, the trust deposited in CIPCA by the different actors that participate in the spaces for concerted action, and proves the importance that the organization has for that space.

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**Learnings.**

CIPCA has had to learn to play a “hinge” role in the concerted action, and to generate open spaces of dialogue and trust with the different actors.

The experience of CIPCA in the region, the accumulated knowledge in the sector, and the quality work they had painstakingly carried out all these years, have been essential for the role performed.

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**Recommendations.**

The facilitating organization of these spaces has to keep a critical and propositional stand with the government and a respectful and open dialogue with all the involved actors.

In order to support the processes of dialogue between the State and the Civil Society, it is necessary to strengthen the supporting organizations (to generate capacities of research, incidence and technical assistance, of political dialogue, credibility and prestige in the face of the involved actors).

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## Conclusions, learnings and recommendations linked to the Regional Government

### Conclusion 8: The regional government has shown political will for CORDA to remain as a space of dialogue with civil society

The lack of human, technical, and budget resources questions the role of the government as a promoter of those spaces for concerted action.

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#### Learnings.

The spaces of concerted action are an instrument to develop relations with the citizens in a stable and committed way.

The Technical Secretary plays a key role in the performance of the spaces for concerted action.

If the agreements undertaken in the spaces for concerted action are not respected, there is no creation of government conditions or legitimization of the spaces for concerted action as promoters of policies for regional development.

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#### Recommendations.

The government needs to generate greater capacities for the dialogue and negotiation with the organized groups of the civil society.

The Technical Secretary of the spaces for concerted action requires that the person in charge of the job has a deep knowledge of the sector, capacity for political dialogue and management, and resources to carry out the task.

It is necessary to establish mechanisms for the follow-up, verification, and sanction with respect to the compliance of the agreements undertaken in the spaces for concerted action.

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## **6. THE PROCESS OF LIBERALIZATION IN THE COFFEE SECTOR: THE BURUNDI GOVERNMENT AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COFFEE PRODUCERS**

### **6.1. Understanding the case: privatization of the Burundi coffee sector**

Burundi is a small country of central Africa, with an extension similar to that of Galicia. This country has had a development based almost exclusively on agriculture and coffee production. It has lived a period of civil war between 1993 and 2005, and in the last years has been focused on a project of self-reconstruction. In the country there coexist a traditional system, in which orality plays a key role, and a democratic and institutional system. In the country there is also a desire for reconstruction in relation to the sufferings and pains generated by the civil war.

In this context, a presidential decree of 2005 liberalized the coffee sector. And in 2007, a speech of the President changes completely the configuration of the coffee's property system. The privatization of the coffee sector propitiates the possibility that new actors be incorporated to the different levels of the productive process of coffee. Therefore, there is an opening for the incorporation and participation of new groups in the implementation and development of that privatization. A space that is used by different cooperatives of production, and supported by social organizations.

This is the context in which the case we have analyzed takes place. But we offer some other specific context elements.

#### **Political and economic context of the Burundi coffee sector**

The first attempts of privatization of the coffee sector in Burundi began in 1993. That year, the country suffered a war that made the whole socio-political life stagger. War disrupted the development processes of the country in general, and the

privatization process of the coffee sector in particular. Towards 2000, the government of Burundi relaunched the program for the privatization of the coffee sector.

The process legally started by the government between 2000 and 2005 and it encouraged the participation of different actors of the sector at different levels. There was a progressive and timid liberalization with the fundamental worry to make the peasantry participate in it, knowing that coffee is a seasonal crop or survival.

During the period 2000-2005, the country was devastated internally by the war. At an international level, there was a fluctuation in the price of coffee. The coffee sector was internally characterized by its chaotic organization. Amidst this disorder, the peasantry organizations started working to control and neutralize the fraud in the weighing processes, since for the illiterate farmers it was difficult to control the weight of its produce and transform this weight in real value. Within this framework, Inades-Formation was asked to organize the peasantry. The entrance of Inades-Formation Burundi in the coffee sector took place in 1996, after winning the call organized by the Burundi Coffee Office (OCIBU), the government organization in charge of managing the sector at that time.

In 2005, due to the presidential decree, it was acknowledged that the entire sector had freedom to participate in any level of the coffee sector. That was the effective liberalization of the sector. In 2008, the government envisaged the selling of washing stations, and of the coffee depulping and washing factories. The international tender was launched in 2009.

With this situation, the OCIBU, a public institution with the responsibility of organizing and managing the sector, saw how its authority and responsibility were modified. From then on, the OCIBU dealt only with quality controls and the regulation of the sector. Meanwhile, two new institutions have been formed:

- **The Authority for the Regulation of the Coffee Sector** (“ARFIC”), which replaces OCIBU since November 2009; and
- **The Interprofessional Coffee Organization:** Producers, depulpers, exporters, researchers, harvesters, transporters...

The goal is that all collectives participate and take responsibility, at one level or another, within the sector, and that there is continuous dialogue and negotiation among them.

## **The proposals of the public power: the president's speech**

In one of his speeches of 2007, the President of the Republic acknowledged the producers' ownership of coffee. This declaration has helped to position the producers within the process. In his speech, the President stated that from production to exportation, coffee belonged to those who produced it. The criticism and the consequences of that speech affect the role that other actors must play.

When acknowledging that coffee belonged to the producer collective, from production to exportation, the President's speech forgot, or did not recognize, the role played in the transformation of coffee by the other actors, from production to exportation. Unfortunately, the farmers took the speech literally, without analyzing it in depth. In a space where oral tradition is still strong, the word of honor of the Chief of State was equivalent to an official document on the issue. Thus, the questioning of the unyielding attitude of the producers should be relative, since an important local reality can not be forgotten: the value of the word given by a Chief of State.

## **6.2. The actors involved**

### **The productive sector of coffee**

In the process of liberalization of the coffee sector, the producers are the center of the dynamic. They are the main actors of the sector. Without this group, there would be no sector. In the process of liberalization, the actions and participation of the producers were characterized by:

- The difference among the producers' understanding of what was at stake in the coffee sector.
- The discontinuity of the production, and the lack of motivation in the productive group.
- The difficulty to restore the information to the base, by the leadership of the federations that did not played their role properly.
- The tension at the core of the confederation and the federations about the management of the internal resources destined to improve the group's performance.
- The difficulty to understand properly the reform process of the sector.

## The Inades-Formation organization

The African Institute for the Economic and Social Development in Burundi, Inades-Formation Burundi, was created in 1974 as a non-profit national association. It is a member of the pan African net Inades-Formation International. As part of its mission, Inades-Formation Burundi has committed to support rural populations in the path of their own development.

Inades-Formation Burundi works in 3 areas:

- **Agricultural sector:** Coffee, tea, cotton... strategic for the national economy. These sectors are the only chance of survival for the country.
- **Financing of the rural world:** Mobilization of endogenous and exogenous resources. Auto managed savings-credit, solidarity fund for self-development. Institution of microfinancing managed by and for the peasantry.
- **Management of natural resources:** Struggle against the degradation of the lands, rehabilitation of the cultivation fields, relaunching of the productive capacities.

The work of Inades-Formation is aimed at the improvement of the peasantry's living conditions, the purchasing power of the farmers. The work carried out in the sector consisted of opening spaces for dialogue. In spite of the contradictions that may still exist, it must be acknowledged that there have been achievements that must be kept and shared in the whole of the Burundi society.

Inades-Formation has intervened to support the producers, in order to help them organize and, especially, to increase their participation power in the debate on the liberalization of the coffee sector. In the realization of this task, Inades-Formation realized that this group felt restless about the possibility that the expected answers might not arrive in time. From time to time, it was necessary to harmonize the speed desired by the producers with the speed of events in reality.

Among the jobs performed by Inades-Formation, the following can be mentioned:

- Raising awareness on equity.
- Organization of a national workshop about the role of the organizations working in the sector.
- Raising awareness through radio programs. Systematization of the experience.

- Participation in the reflection workshops and the decision-making.
- Negotiations of the rental expenses; State grants.
- Training of the producers for the management of the recollection centers.

## **Government**

The government of Burundi, following instructions from the World Bank, decided to withdraw from the production sectors. That decision took place in 1993, the same year the war started. Towards 2000, the program was relaunched. There was a progressive and timid liberalization with the fundamental worry to make the peasantry participate in it, knowing that coffee is a seasonal crop and key for their survival.

All this time, the government took the initiative to create spaces for debate, exchange and reflection, that is, spaces for concerted action and for negotiation among the actors of the coffee sector. In addition, the already mentioned speech of the President of the Republic must be remembered, in which he explicitly acknowledged the ownership of the producer group. Unfortunately, this declaration was not accompanied by the appropriate measures. This created a confusion that still goes on amidst the coffee sector.

Among the actions that have come from the government and that had facilitated or complicated the process, the following can be mentioned:

- The launching of a commission of follow up and coordination of the reforms, with the participation of different actors, including the producer group.
- The updating of the members of the administration commission of OCIBU, which integrated the producers.
- In 2007, the authorization to the producer group to sell the coffee directly.
- In 2008, the contradiction that implied the decision to suspend the authorization to producers for direct sales.

## **The Burundi Association of Coffee Exporters (ABEC)**

ABEC is an organization that gathers the Burundi coffee exporters. This group of exporters represents in Burundi the multinational companies working in the coffee sector at a world level. Its impact on the process is summarized as follows:

- It has fought direct sales: they are close to the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of Bujumbura.
- It has carried out a campaign on “criminalization” of the agent (the intermediary salesman who represents the producers group).
- It has raised awareness among the farmer that they should perform the grain depulping at home; in that way, 72% of the production income that was paid to the factory has been revised downwards.
- It has lobbied against the producers associations at certain levels of state services, such as the Provincial Directions of Agriculture and Livestock.

### **The Management Societies of the Washing Stations (SOGESTAL)**

The SOGESTAL are the societies that manage the washing stations. There are 5 SOGESTALS (that manage from 25 to 32 washing stations). Since the liberalization process was launched, the possibility of selling the washing stations was always very present. The context that surrounded the sector along the process prompted a certain disorganization in the SOGESTAL, and coffee was losing quality in the factory.

Among the progresses of the liberalization process of the sector, the improvement of the relations between the producers sector and the SOGESTAL is worth mentioning, since they continue to perform a joint management. There is also a positive evolution between SOGESTAL and OCIBU. In summary, the transparency related to management is gradually consolidating.

As of today, the difficulty is still the absence of a contract between the producer sector and SOGESTAL, due to the lack of agreement on the contents of the document. According to the authorities of SOGESTAL, producers should pay the production costs. And the margin of such production should be negotiated between the SOGESTAL and the producer sector. SOGESTAL has presented figures that represent the production cost, and the producer is hesitant to pay this cost in addition to the service taxes corresponding to them. In the debate of the liberalizing reform, the SOGESTALS and the producer sector have presented proposals about how things were to be done, but the State has not taken those proposals into account.

### 6.3. Impacts of the liberalization process of coffee in social organizations

#### **The work of Inades-Formation in the organization process of the producer sector of coffee**

During the 10 past years, there has been a very close collaboration between Inades-Formation and other actors of the sector. In OCIBU, for instance, Inades-Formation is acknowledged for its efficient intervention to defend the rights of the coffee producers.

Inades-Formation has always supported the producer sector in the following specific tasks:

- General assemblies.
- Support to the organization and context analysis.
- Technical support for a better reflection on the debate (workshops).
- Organization of radio programs to give voice to producers so that people in charge of making decisions may know their point of view.

In addition to the operative activities, there also are activities for continuous advisory.

#### **The organizations of coffee producers**

The farmers' organization is formed around the washing stations. There are federations at a provincial level, coordinated by a national confederation (CNAC). The organizations of coffee producers provide technical support to the peasantry, so that they improve their crops qualitatively and quantitatively.

With the goal of helping and improving the producers' job, the producers' organization are offered the opportunity to visit neighboring countries to see what is being done there, and to improve work in the coffee sector.

Thanks to the training sessions and workshops organized by Inades-Formation, the participative capacities of producers have been strengthened and their level of understanding has improved. The training sessions were developed through the following stages:

- Participation in the organization.
- Collective mobilization.

- Reflection on their place within the sector (CNAC and Inades-Formation).
- Protection of the producers that protest and question sales, because their interests have not been taken into account.

In the work carried out by Inades-Formation, leadership training was the center of certain activities at federation and confederation levels.

#### **6.4. Results and challenges of the process of dialogue between the government and civil society**

The government's will to privatize the sector responded to the pressure of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, arisen from the internal need of relaunch and of economic growth. Thus, in the process of liberalization, the government decided to withdraw from the activities of transformation and production of coffee, since those activities could be appropriately carried out in the private sector.

Along the liberalization process of coffee, the Burundi government has kept disseminating the spirit of the reform, the scientific research and the input management. The government's main preoccupation is the profitability of each actor within the sector. In its own words, it has not wanted to change everything because it finds resistance. The producers and other intermediary actors feel worried. The role of the government is to calm the actors down, and to open the dialogue. For the public power, it is not easy to abandon certain prerogatives in the management of the sector. But the essential part of the process is that everyone has accepted the base's principles, the rules of the game, in spite of all the concerns.

Since the dialogue continues, we can not talk about a defined result of the process at this level. As the process advances, misunderstandings disappear and the distrust among the actors diminishes. In summary, a sincere dialogue was gradually established among the actor, and the participative capacity of producers grows from day to day.

However, it is worth mentioning that the government should respect the promise made to the coffee producers and, above all, it should avoid making populist decisions or giving unfeasible speeches that could complicate the process and the good faith of the people involved.



## 6.5. Arrival points: conclusions, learnings and recommendations

### Conclusions, learnings and recommendations for the organizations of the coffee sector

#### Conclusion 1: Based on this experience, to analyze the context, reflect, work together and benefit from the possibilities

The coffee producers have decided to imply themselves in the reform process of the sector opened in their country. They have taken the unparalleled opportunity to participate actively in the future of the sector, together with the political class in charge of taking decisions. For that purpose, many have organized themselves in FO (Farmers Organizations), and had mad their way to associative movements of greater reach, such as regional federations or the CNAC (National Confederation), grouping up to 20% of the country producers (out of 600,000 families, 100,000 have been organized). All that is the result of a resolute will to analyze the situation and to reflect about the future, and which requires a process of organization in the hills and at a provincial and national level.

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#### Learnings.

The need to have a permanent look on the context and to evaluate the possibilities being offered.

The work carried out and organized jointly strengthens us.

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#### Recommendations.

To analyze the context, trying to identify and assess the opportunities and possibilities in order to carry out our action.

To encourage the groups to organize themselves with a goal in common in order to have a greater capacity of negotiation and impact.

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## **Conclusion 2: Opening to permanent training: A key element of success and change**

For this organization to be plausible, it needed many actions and reactions to the process, unknown to the producers who, until then, were isolated and centered on the growth of the product. Creation of associative movements at different levels, search of funds for its continuity (headquarters and recollection centers), coordination of some of those institutions in assembly, management control of resources and financing, incidence methods, dialogue and negotiation with other actors, knowledge about the reform and the functioning of the sector at all stages, etc.

Thus, the producer's group has let the Inades-Formation Burundi do its work, a task that involves support and training on the subject along the entire process.

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### **Learning.**

It is important to identify the subjects of the training, since they could come from other institutions to reinforce the own organizations, its production and policy.

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### **Recommendations.**

It is important to encourage the commencement to permanent training.

Permanent training in relation with the sector of production, organization, negotiation and legislation is the key to the process, as it is also the contact made with other institutions.

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### **Conclusion 3: Elements that reinforced the organization: Legitimacy, leadership, and communication**

During the last years, coffee producers have reinforced their image before the government and society, because they have been capable of mobilizing their strengths when problems arise: The attempts to sell factories; the campaigns of discredit carried out by the exporting group and the people in charge of the factories to instill doubts about the representativity of the movement; and, lastly, the liberalization strategy of the sector taken by the government in 2008. These and other problems have led to permanent demonstrations and protests, appeals to courts, radio debates, and top-level meetings that have given the representation of the producer group the status of valid and respected interlocutor before the government.

Still, many producers have yet not understood the spirit of the reform. It is the government who has the responsibility and obligation to adequately explain the reform process to the citizenship. Until now, the producers show a strong resistance to negotiate the transfer of certain parts of the sector to other actors, justified by each other's distrust. This distrust was originated in the past, when the producers did not make much profit within the sector. The great beneficiary was the exporting group.

Through the years, there has been a great need to count with a leadership beyond reproach in the different production groups, since there have been many cases of bad management of resources or lack of information to the groups by a leadership that has not fulfilled its obligations. A common concern detected among certain organizations is the weak alternation of the positions of responsibility, which accounts for the distrust of the producers' organizations.

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#### **Learning.**

The legitimacy of the organizations has a great importance and, because of that, it is necessary to achieve a responsible leadership, capable of promoting a fluent communication with the associated people and communities.

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#### **Recommendations.**

It is indispensable to bear in mind the internal work of the organizations and their reinforcement, taking special care of the democratic organization, reinforcement and the rotation of leadership, as well as the communication with the associates.

To watch over the legitimacy of social organizations, both at an internal as an external level, through constant training and communication.

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## **Conclusions, learnings and recommendations for Inades-Formation Burundi**

Inades-Formation was chosen by the government to accompany the producers' group throughout the process. It has achieved good results in the field work and in the training in rural areas of the country, due to its good relations and the proximity with the government, the farmers and other actors.

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### **Conclusion 4: Acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the advocacy organization**

Inades-Formation has proved its capacity to mobilize the producer's sector through the training and radio debates carried out during the last years. Inades-Formation has dominated the media space gathering representatives from all areas. This is an important element, taking into account the role of the radio in Sub-Saharan Africa.

This body has also managed to open channels of access and direct dialogue with the government and its representatives in the sectors of OCIBU, DPAE, etc. It has won the confidence of the government thanks to their well-done work.

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#### **Recommendations.**

A good media communication is essential to justify stances, mobilize and count with the support of allies in the social fight.

The legitimacy and acknowledgment of the intermediary organizations plays a key role in the presentation of proposals. This acknowledgment must arise from both parts: From grassroot communities and local or governmental organizations.

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## Conclusion 5: Systematization of experiences

Inades-Formation has compiled the fruits of their work in several documents, as can be seen in those held by ALBOAN (*Libera mi palabra y mi café florecerá* and *Hablemos con una sola voz. Nuestro café producirá*). This last year, however, Inades-Formation has received from ALBOAN an alternative methodology for the systematization of experiences. This methodology has been used to organize the work of the last 4 years (2005-2008) in the coffee sector, based on a consensus for the appropriation of the process, that is, “to capitalize the process”.

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### Recommendation.

It is important to favor social organizations in the gathering of data, and to carry a record of the actions performed, the new spaces and the increase of resources for the analysis and learning of experiences.

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## Conclusion 6: The need for an integral formation of the producers

The representatives from Inades-Formation have admitted that, throughout the organization process of coffee producers, priority has been given to training in advocacy, over the information on contents and spirit of the reform. Unfortunately, this was done to the detriment of the knowledge of the legal instruments and the real consequences for the group and its opponents in the sector. Another limitation of this training process is that, sometimes, they have inferred that the producers wanted to go faster than the process and, that therefore, it was impossible to meet their demands within the expected period.

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### Learnings.

In the process of training, it is important to take into account a necessary balance between technical training (specific of the sector's elements), methodological training (management of the space for concerted action, negotiation tools and incidence), and communications and political incidence training (contextual and legislative aspects, etc.)

It is important to take into consideration the different work rhythms demanded by the parts; when those rhythms can not be followed, it is sensible to inform the producers' group about it, explaining the reasons.

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### Recommendations.

In the training processes offered and proposed to organizations and/or communities, it is important to keep a balance among the strategical and tactical aspects, the contents and methodologies, the organizational reinforcement and the external recognition.

The knowledge of what the involved actors expect is essential, just as the clarification of the possible causes and development rhythm of the experience, so as not to harbor false expectation that may lead to failure and the discouragement of the actors involved.

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## Conclusions, learnings and recommendations for the public institutions

### **Conclusion 7: They have assumed the new role of the producers' group acknowledged by the President, and they naturally accept the dialogue with its representatives**

Authorities have played a key role during the process, because they stand in the middle of the reform process of the sector demanded by the World Bank. It is therefore logical to infer that their role has been to facilitate the process. It is also true that it has been very difficult to change the mind of the many actors with incidence in the sector, specially in the rural area (DPAES, agents with local training), which saw producers as a risk to their jobs.

#### **Learning.**

When the moment comes to introduce political reforms, it is necessary to implement the reform and its mechanisms in a satisfactory way.

#### **Recommendation.**

The changes in the organization and/or the structure must have a political proposal of change, as well as the necessary mechanisms and tools to carry them out.

### **Conclusion 8: They face the pressures of certain traditional managers (exporting and transforming) to leave the producers' group aside**

The politics of the Burundi government is evidently in the hands of the elites that have traditionally held the economic power of the country; and the coffee sector is no exception. That is how certain changes in the government's position can be analyzed, such as the sale of the transformation factories, and the possibility of the producers' group of selling coffee directly.

#### **Recommendation.**

It is necessary to negotiate with all the involved actors in order to be successful when introducing political changes.

### **Conclusion 9: True acceptance of the new role in the sector**

At the beginning of the process it was necessary to open multiple spaces for concerted action, something that had never happened up to that date. It would be important to seek a solution for the dialogue among the different groups in conflict (producers, intermediaries, exporters). Government grants privileges only to some people: those who represent people with economic power.

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#### **Learning.**

The dialogue between the parts is the best way to reach agreements to introduce political changes, as well as the implementations of such policies.

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#### **Recommendation.**

It is important to consider the dialogue between all the parts in order to introduce changes and/or develop specific policies.

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## **7. THE WAY AHEAD: ADIVASIS CLAIMING RIGHTS. A STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, AND THE NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT IN BHILODA, GUJARAT**

### **7.1. Understanding the case: context in Bhiloda**

In 2005, the Parliament of India passed two of the most relevant pieces of pro-poor legislation: the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and the Right to Information Act (RTI). Both are the result of a long social fight for a more efficient and pro-poor Indian democracy, largely led by civil society. The NREGA legally guarantees one hundred days of work to any adult member of any rural household willing to do public manual labor paid at the minimum wage. The RTI ratifies the right of all Indian citizens to request information from a public authority, who must respond within a period of thirty days. This case study aims to reflect on the role played by the Jesuit mission in Bhiloda, and by the Adivasi communities themselves, when it comes to promoting the implementation of both acts in three selected villages: Budharasan, Ode and Saliyat.

Detailed below is the context in which the experience has taken place, the implications of the implementation of these acts, and the conclusions, learning and recommendations generated by the experience.

### **The people and their land: Rural Adivasis and forest inhabitants**

Bhiloda is located at the heart of the Sabarkantha district, in the north-eastern area of the state of Gujarat, which borders the state of Rajasthan. According to

data of the Indian Census 2001<sup>16</sup>, the total population of the sub-district (or *taluka*) of Bhiloda was of 206,000 inhabitants, from which 114,000 (55.3%) were adivasis, and officially recognized as “Scheduled Tribes”. Taking into account that in all the state of Gujarat, 15% of its 50 million inhabitants call themselves adivasis, their concentration in the area of Bhiloda is relatively high. Specifically, in the villages where this experience takes place the percentages are around 70% and 100% of adivasi population.

The adivasi group is completely immersed in the same quick modernization process that the whole of the Indian nation is going through. It is in the process of being absorbed by the dominant current through administration, laws, religion, education, caste, politics and development. However, this complex process of modernization and integration into the dominant current can not be considered neither neutral nor disconnected from the past. It is being built on a long history of cultural prejudices, economic domination and brutal oppression of the tribes in Indian society, something that in Gujarat has coincided with one of the quickest growth rates of all the country, and with the emergence of the right-wing religion fundamentalism of Hinduism. All this has placed the tribes of Gujarat in a delicate position of changes amidst the persistence of ideological and structural conditions for inequality.

In general terms, it is possible to note that in the district of Bhiloda there has been a significant social progress during the last 20 years, due to several factors, the actors and processes involved. One of them is the broad access to education and the increase of the levels of education awareness among parents, as an essential indicator of social progress. Another element, also considered a facilitator of the process, is the fact that education has enabled the access to government jobs, especially in the army and in the police forces, but also to jobs in teaching; all that has allowed some adivasi members to improve their lives and to experience an ascending process of social mobility.

In spite of this few cases of “social mobility” and of the improvement of some of the indicators of social progress, poverty among the adivasi group is widespread and vulnerability is high.

The settlement model of the Dungri Garasias tribe of Bhiloda is famous for its dispersion and an intense sense of independence. Social and political unity, even at the village level, has been threatened due to the implementation of new economic policies, fundamentalism and general manipulation of such divisions by political

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<sup>16</sup> Census is conducted in India every 10 years. At the moment of the fieldwork, the reference was census 2001.

parties that intend to divide communities aggravated by the influence of religious sects that aim to achieve political gain.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the wide gender gap that still exists in Bhiloda. One of the most notable indicators of the dramatic inequalities between genders is the high illiteracy rate among women, specially among older ones. Female illiteracy makes them easy victims of all kinds of exploitation, and makes it more difficult for them to participate and *leej* practice (covering the face) effectively their rights as citizens. The persistence of social practices such as the in most of the villages near Bhiloda is also an important indicator of structural deeply-ingrained gender inequality.

### **The Mission in Bhiloda and AKY: 50 years**

During almost 50 uninterrupted years, the Society of Jesus has developed educational and social activities in the *taluka* of Bhiloda. The mission of Mankora-Bhiloda is located only one kilometer away from the center of Bhiloda, and has become a renowned institution in the area. In addition to these important educational activities, the mission of Bhiloda has a reputation for its activities of social development. Most of them have been organized by the Adivasi Kheti Yojna association.

Adivasi Kheti Yojna (AKY) means “project of the adivasi land”, and was officially turned legal into an association on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1966. Its memorandum of association stipulates as purposes of the association the execution of a wide range of activities related to charity, and the promotion of social services and rural development.

However its 43 years of existence, AKY has developed a very broad spectrum of activities of social and rural development, and has undergone an important evolution and transformation. Parallel to other similar changes experimented by the Indian society in general, as well as of the rural and adivasi worlds.

Specifically, in 2006 AKY started a project under the name “Raising awareness for capacity building, self trust, unity, and the integral development of the Adivasis in Sabarkantha”. The proposed strategy to create self-help groups in the villages divided men and women as a first step towards the construction and promotion of the adivasi unity and identity in the area. During the following years, AKY has gone further into that line of work, and has advanced towards a better coordination with local institutions through awareness, as explained in the following sections.

## 7.2. RTI and NREGA: a vision from above

### Introduction: The long internal struggle

In 2005, the Indian parliament passed two of the most relevant acts in favor of people living in poverty: the Right to Information Act (RTI) and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). Both acts are the result of a long fight, led by the civil society, in favor of a more efficient Indian democracy more favorable to poor people. The grass-root social movements such as the MKSS have been the pioneer organizations in the promotion of the right to information in India.

Among those working for democracy and the fight against poverty inequality, there is a point of agreement regarding the following: Unless there is a strong enactment and implementation, these acts shall become two more of the many that decorate the statute, but which have little value for citizens. There are no doubts that their implementation is the challenge.

### General vision on the RTI Act

The **Right to Information Act of 2005** (Act No. 22/2005) grants all Indian citizens access to the records of the Central Government and the State Governments. By virtue of these regulations, all citizens that request information to a “public authority” (a government body or “State instrument”), must be answered within a 30-day period. The law also demands that all public authorities computerize their records for their wide distribution, and that they proactively publish certain categories of information.

By virtue of the law, all corresponding authorities must appoint a **Public Information Officer** (PIO). All persons can file a request to the PIO to obtain information in writing. If the request corresponds to another public authority (in part or in whole), it is the responsibility of the PIO to send the requesting parties to the other corresponding PIO within a period of no more than 5 days. In addition, all public authorities must appoint an Assistant Public Information Officer (APIO) for the reception of requests and appeals related to the RTI that must be sent to the PIOs of their public authority.

If the information is not provided within the stipulated period, the request will be considered refused. Refusal with or without reasons can represent grounds for appeal or complaint. In addition, all the information must be provided at no cost.

In article 26, it is established that the central government and the state government of the Republic of India must take the necessary steps to: develop educational programs for the communities with special disadvantages, according to the RTI; encourage public authorities to participate in the development and organizations of such programs; promote a timely dissemination of clear information to the people; train the government officers and develop training materials, compile and disseminate a Users' Guide in the respective official languages; publish names, postal addresses and contact information of the PIOs, and all other information such as notices in relation to the relevant fees, solutions available by law in case the request is refused, etc.

### **General vision on the NREG Act**

The **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)** was passed on August 25th, 2005. It provides legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment during each financial year to adults in all rural homes who are willing to perform unskilled public manual labors for the minimum wage established by law.

The law was passed with the goal of improving the purchasing power of the rural villagers, mainly with skilled or semi-skilled jobs for designed people living in rural areas of India, both if they live under the poverty line or not. Approximately one third of the stipulated workforce must be women. The law does not allow discrimination between men and women. Therefore, both should be paid the same salary. All adults can ask for a job, not only those living under the poverty line.

A new public work can start when there are available at least 50 workers that can not be absorbed by the existing schemes. If the job according to the scheme is not provided within fifteen days after reception of the application, the applicant shall be paid a daily unemployment wage.

### **7.3. RTI and NREGA: a vision from below**

#### **Background**

The analysis of the laws at the local level shows the complex factors involved in the practice of democracy and the sanction of labor rights. The reality is that there is no immediate relation between the approval of a law and its implementation, and that a lot of effort is needed, as well as hard and creative work, in order to achieve such implementation, regardless of the quality of the law itself. A law can be effective and produce the desired impacts only when its implementation is guaranteed.

## Facts and processes: Budhasaran, Oad and Saliyat

Since 2006, AKY has actively participated in the implementation of RTI and NREGA in its area of influence around the district of Sabarkhanta. When we analyze the activities directed towards the implementation of those acts in the three villages, it is important to notice the difference between the number of rounds and the number of times that requests have been made in the three villages.

### Budhasaran

The collective action of the inhabitants of the villages of Budhasaran in relation to NREGA and RTI led to 5 rounds for NREGA works that were carried out as from 2006, a new People's Information Center in February of 2009, and three important requests of information under the RTI in relation with the works in the village school, the ration shops and the works in the *Gram Panchayat*. It is also relevant that, in 2009, the village claimed the propriety rights on the land for 162 households under the Forest Rights Act.

In November 2006, according to the testimonies of the villagers, AKY organized a key training meeting on the NREGA with the lawyer Himanshu Banker in the mission headquarters. This training encouraged the collective decision to demand public works in Budhasaran under the NREGA. The village organized itself to obtain family employment cards, which was the first step to initiate the works under the NREGA.

It was a process of unlearning in relation to the knowledge created about public works programs developed in Budhasaran, based on previous experiences. For this process of unlearning, the inhabitants of the village and AKY played a very active role in order to raise awareness, and specially, to educate the villagers on the details about the NREGA that could have a direct impact on their wages.

In general, the villagers consider that the NREGA helps to alleviate their poverty, and that it makes the construction and maintenance of some of the most essential rural infrastructures possible.

In Budhasaran, the villagers faced the resistance of public employees when they had to issue the working cards, alleging that the NREGA implies an overburden of administrative work. They decided to start filling the application forms themselves, and they only requested the public employees to sign them.

In relation with the implementation of the RTI, the inhabitants of Budhasaran have exercised their right to information three times, when they requested clear and concise information about three of their daily realities: the works carried out in the school, the ration shop, and the *Gram Panchayat*.

Aware of the importance that claiming their right to information has for the improvement of their life conditions, the village leaders in Budhasaran decided to go ahead with the implementation of the RTI, and analyze the possibilities to open a People's Information Center (PIC) in the village. The idea came up during one of the leader's exposure trip to Koliyari, in Rajasthan, where they already had a PIC. He commented what he had seen when he returned, and the government body and the village leaders analyzed the possibilities to open one in Budhasaran.

### **Ode**

Even though poverty levels and the general need for work are similar in both villages; the inhabitants of Ode have only managed to organize for two rounds of NREGA works. However, they proudly related the process that led to the inauguration new People's Information Center on February 29th, 2009.

When it comes to identifying the main obstacles and difficulties that they had to face in order to claim their rights and implement the actions, the four groups that participated in the workshops mentioned "the village's way of thinking and the false rumors". In that sense, they observed that certain members of the community, specially the eldest, laughed at the venture. The people responsible of the PIC also observed that some neighbor villagers repeated to them: "You will never marry your daughters off if you rent your house to a Christian organization" an indicator of religious politics coming negatively into play. Finally, they remarked that the public employees of the forest department gave them wrong advice when they tried to claim their rights, for they gave them the wrong request forms (photocopies, not originals), and they also detected serious mistakes during the procedure.

### **Saliyat**

Saliyat is the poorest and more remote village of the three studied. Most of its inhabitants have worked thanks to the NREGA, and had a very positive opinion about the act; they mentioned its impact to alleviate poverty, which reduces the need to emigrate to other nearby cities, or to agricultural land to work as labourers.

They also valued positively the public works carried out in the village; they built a bridge that helps them in their daily life.

Though they were not able to clearly describe the administrative process, all the people were aware of the importance of the job cards as a requisite for claiming their rights. They also noted the positive role of certain members of the *gram panchayat* when they had to solve the difficulties during the three first rounds; an indicator of a certain level of awareness about their rights.

#### 7.4. RTI and NREGA: a vision from within

##### **Milestones**

The three communities (Budhasaran, Ode y Saliyat), have been able to identify some “critical” moments that have given them the impulse to reach the final results.

##### **Training, programs or exposure camps**

Since 2005, training and/or exposure programs have been carried out, which helped a central group of leaders to increase their awareness and specific knowledge about both acts. Both the board of directors and the team of facilitators, have qualified these training as “vital” to explain how the acts could be implemented. Some of these training courses and exposure trips have led to important decision-making, such as the group of leaders and the villagers with the NREGA and RTI processes took the collective decision of claiming those rights and go ahead.

The training courses, the exposure programs and camps have been qualified as extremely relevant by the village leaders, the supporting people from AKY, and the team of facilitators. The possibility of interacting with other people and organizations that perform a similar social work is also highly appreciated, as well as the in situ visits to places involved in pioneer experiences.

##### **Collective decisions**

Intimately related to those activities are the collective decisions, taken mostly at the village land, in order to implement their rights. The following can be mentioned: the decision to appoint 28 people to be in charge of the process; the key decisions in Ode and Budhasaran of beginning the works of NREGA; opening the People’s Information Center, and requesting information under the RTI. All these decisions had been collectively taken after long debates. It is also important to mention the role of leadership in this process of decision-making, and the role of youth and women at the level of the village. Some participants indicated that they had better answers from young people and from women than from the elders,



especially in Ode, where certain decisions were taken in an atmosphere of distrust and false rumors.

### **Meetings or celebrations in specific symbolic dates**

The third category of milestones is related to the meetings or celebrations in specific symbolic dates. Those are days in which culture, music and dance mix with awareness and education in a day of collective Adivasi joy and pride. There is a clear identification of one of the most important and significant milestones for the participating people: The first time they celebrated the International Adivasi Day, on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006. They also identify the celebration of Woman's Day (March 8th) and the day of Human Rights (December 10th), and the Adivasi *Mahasabha* with Adivasis from other states (January 14-15). These celebrations are considered milestones for the creation of an Adivasis sense of unity.

### **Obstacles and openings**

There is a shared vision in relation to the main obstacles and openings that AKY has faced in the implementation of the RTI and NREGA during these last years.

Among the external obstacles, the first that can be mentioned is the "lack of knowledge" of the government employees and elected representatives, specially the *Talati* (officer) and the *Sarpanch*, in relation to the RTI and the NREGA. This "lack of knowledge" has been connected to a general "resistance to change" and a "resistance to leave the comfort zone", but also to the "fear of losing power". Other people pointed out the subject of the "economic interests" of those persons that hold positions of power, and had benefited from what looks like unfortunate corruption at the level of the village.

On the subject of the internal obstacles and opportunities, the analysis has also been clear. The lack of unity and fragmentation are the main internal obstacles that AKY had to face at the level of the villages. Fragmentation can be considered as a structural variable, and a very important internal obstacle to any venture aiming to organize a collective action. In the case of the village of Ode, the fact that AKY is labeled as a "Christian" organization led to a situation in which villagers did not want to get involved and expressed their "fear of evangelization", and even to "become isolated" if they related to Christian people (see remark about the daughters).

Other of the most important internal obstacles that have been mentioned is: change of mentality and mental paradigms among the neighbors in relation to government works and the implication of the NGOs. We could call it a process

of unlearning and relearning: the villagers had to unlearn that jobs were not random gifts, but something they had to claim for themselves and for what they had to fight for. In addition, they had to unlearn their approach to the work of NGOs and the evolution of AKY, from an approach based on charity to one based on rights. In part related to this, it was also mentioned as an obstacle the low level of political awareness, the low levels of education and the additional difficulties that working with illiterate people entail. The deep gender gap and the “participation inhibitors” women face are also considered obstacles related to the patriarchal and masculine nature of their society. As one of AKY’s internal forces was considered the beginning of an adivasi sense of pride and unity, the solid orientation obtained from the fathers of the mission, their connections and networks with other adivasi and rights organizations, and the possibility of obtaining financial support for the continuity of their activities.

## Results and impacts

The results and impacts related to the implementation of the RTI and the NREGA have been debated at different levels. We have appreciated a great difference in the elements of speech used by the villages, and that used by the village leaders and the members of the team of facilitators. The latter clearly center their analysis in the change of power relations and the possibilities of collective action and unity through tribal identity, while the villagers center their attention on the direct impacts on their standards of life.

The first identified impact was **unity**. Unity has been explained as unity at the level of the village and at the level of the tribe. When describing how unity was achieved in the villages, they talked both of the self-help groups and of the collective action undertaken in order to implement the NREGA rounds and to request relevant information under RTI. A significant phrase that represents this idea is the one mentioned during one of the workshops: “collective is better”, and the overwhelming use of the “meeting under a tree” symbol. On the other hand, they have also referred to unity through tribal identity, and it has been mentioned how celebrations and meetings have helped to strengthen tribal identity and to reunite Adivasis from different social spheres, including the collective regarded as “intellectual”.

The second impact, a consequence of AKY’s involvement in the implementation of RTI and NREGA is the **taking of power and the change in the power relations** that can be represented with the phrase “power is in the hands of people”. The

change in the power relation provides a sort of development advantage to the neighbors, for now they are in a better position to talk by themselves about their development needs, and to promote the collective decisions that may be favorable to their interests and needs.

A third category of impacts is related to the **improvement of life conditions**, intimately related to the activities that generate income, such as the self-help groups or the NREGA rounds. This category of impacts has been explained by the village group, the village leaders and the management board.

## 7.5. Arrival points: conclusions, learnings and recommendations

### Conclusion 1: The cost of “unlearning” in processes of social change

In processes of social change, it is possible that to “unlearn” is a challenge as significant as “learning”. It implies an extra burden, and it demands a greater awareness to avoid, correct and build the behaviors and mentalities previously learned. We consider that AKY has assumed this extra burden of “unlearning” and “relearning” in a double sense: as an NGO, making the transition from a charity-based approach to another rights-based approach, and as an NGO working on the awareness in relation to the planning of public works funded by the government. It has faced the challenge to “change” the mentalities of the villagers about the role of NGOs and the role of government in development. It has placed the development of rights and duties in the hands of the people.

The creation of self-help groups without any access restrictions, the strengthening of the sense of propriety in the groups with an innovative organization format (AKY Banchat Mandal), the lack of interference, the lower visibility of the catholic priests, and the change in the focus on the activities have been essential in the process of unlearning in relation to NGOs.

In addition, the actors directly involved with the implementation of both acts had to face the additional effort of committing to the awareness process about NREGA and RTI.

In brief, the processes of social change as the one described through the Bhiloda experience must internalize the effort of “unlearning” with regard to the mentalities, behaviors and practices previously learned.

### **Learning and recommendation for all the actors**

#### **Learning.**

Before implementing any changes, it is important to carefully consider and analyze previously learned practices, mentalities and behaviors.

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#### **Recommendation.**

To include an analysis of the previously learned practices, mentalities and behaviors for the design of projects and programs that seek to introduce a social change.

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### **Learning and recommendation for AKY- Bachat Mandal**

#### **Learning.**

To unlearn and relearn is more effective when the community leaders themselves are intensely involved in the process of change.

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#### **Recommendation.**

To design specific strategies for the involvement of local leaders in the activities specially at the first stages of a new intervention.

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### **Learning and recommendation for AKY- the Mission**

#### **Learning.**

When there is a change towards a rights-based approach, it is important to assess and internalize the cost of “unlearning”.

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#### **Recommendation.**

To anticipate the possible misunderstandings or problems that the change of approach may cause, and to react assertively, offering alternatives to the conflicts.

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## Learning and recommendation for the international community

### Learning.

There are negative and positive impacts from previous interventions within a specific context, that should be assessed before planning a new intervention.

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### Recommendation.

To acknowledge previous negative impacts and to assess if the approach could be designed differently in order to generate less “negative” impacts.

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## Conclusion 2: Claiming rights through collective action is a key strategy

One of the most important lessons in relation to the participation of the different actors in the implementation of the RTI and the NREGA, is that collective action, is a key strategy for these essential rights to become effective for people.

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## Learnings and recommendations for all groups of actors

### Learnings.

There is a need to conceptualize rights within a broader perspective of collective action.

The costs of learning all the specificities of the laws and of claiming rights are high, and they require time and diverse means to be implemented.

To claim rights individually or at home can be very costly and have a low impact.

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### Recommendations.

In the design of projects that imply the learning of new legal frameworks, it is worth taking into consideration the necessary time and resources, since they are usually medium and long-term projects.

It is appropriate to identify strategies that seek to strengthen collective action in order to efficiently implement individual rights.

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## **Learning and recommendation for AKY- Bachat Mandal and AKY-the Mission**

### **Learning.**

When collective action is organized around problems and needs directly related to the individual and the “common good”, self-help groups are an instrument that facilitate the people’s implication.

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### **Recommendation.**

To promote self-help groups and other socio-economic activities that help to build collective action.

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## **Recommendation for the international community**

### **Recommendation.**

To promote a better coordination between the socio-economical and awareness activities, in order to strengthen the collective action when working with very poor or vulnerable populations, is a strategy for success.

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## **Conclusion 3. Unity through tribal identity and the search of the common interest**

Collective action requires unity and the acknowledgement of common interests and similarities. One of the ways in which AKY has faced Bhiloda’s enormously fragmented context is encouraging the awareness and pride about one of the elements all adivasi people in the area share: tribal identity.

Both tribal identity and the search of simple common goals at the level of the village have proved to be efficient to encourage unity among the adivasis.

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## Learnings and recommendations for all the actors

### Learnings.

There is a need to clearly identify the elements that unite people, especially in fragmented contexts where there are social divisions.

It is necessary to acknowledge the role of culture and identity as means for unity. Symbolic elements associated with culture and identity like celebrations, meetings and festivities, have proved to be strategic for the development of tribal unity.

The strategy of strengthening tribal unity through a multifaceted approach that combines the celebration of tribal pride with the search of common interests, has proved to be essential.

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### Recommendations.

Increasing the participation of key tribal people in the area is essential for the development of mobilization.

The use of and resource to the symbolic dimensions of tribal identity, through the promotion of cultural activities, is a strategy to reach the groups which are further away from such issues.

In order to create unity, it is convenient to generate spaces and ways of sharing material and non-material resources within the community.

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## Learning and recommendation for the international community

### Learning.

There is a need to better integrate the symbolic components of culture and identity in development projects and programs.

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### Recommendation.

When working in highly fragmented contexts, it is necessary to design strategies to integrate culture and identity as roads to unity.

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#### **Conclusion 4: Returning ownership and leadership as sustainable strategies of community organization**

Community ownership and leadership in development processes and interventions is an essential starting point for the successful implication in social networks. AKY's (the mission) careful process of returning ownership to the people has been organized around the organizational structure created with AKY's Bachat Mandal. At the level of the village, the promotion of self-help groups' leadership has also been a starting point from where to develop the sense of unity needed for collective action and ownership.

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#### **Learning and recommendation for all the actors**

##### **Learning.**

Democratic ownership by the communities themselves is necessary in order to efficiently organize collective action.

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##### **Recommendation.**

When working with the communities it is necessary to develop organizational methods as close to the communities themselves as possible.

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#### **Learnings and recommendations for AKY- Bachat Mandal**

##### **Learnings.**

The diverse composition of AKY Bachat Mandal's Administrative Staff has increased the legitimacy and representativity of the organization.

The organization of the self-help groups' leadership around a group of villages increases the efficiency of the organizational method and its territorial representativity.

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##### **Recommendations.**

When generating groups that assume leadership, it is convenient that they are representative of their environment, to strengthen their legitimacy.

The self-help group is an efficient strategy of organizational and territorial representativity.

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## **Learnings and recommendations for AKY- the Mission**

### **Learnings.**

Returning “ownership” to the communities has proved to be a successful strategy to evolve towards a rights based approach.

Providing strategical, financial and logistic support to AKY Bachat Mandal has been a key element for the implementation of both acts.

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### **Recommendations.**

In the processes of social change it is necessary to provide strategic and financial support in the mid and long term.

It is convenient to encourage local associations to diversify their financing sources, and to plan for the mid and long term.

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## **Learning and recommendation for the international community**

### **Learning.**

Democratic ownership and local leadership are key elements for community organization.

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### **Recommendation.**

Is it necessary to facilitate and support the processes of democratization by strengthening of local leadership and community organizations.

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### **Conclusion 5: Awareness: a matter of time, persistence and results**

There seems to be a relation between education and awareness. However, such relation is not automatic. The highest levels of formal education do not necessarily imply higher levels of awareness about their rights. A greater education can prepare people to better understand the complexities of participation, and to practice democracy; but education does not necessarily “buy” democracy. At the same time, illiteracy and general human vulnerability do not necessarily imply a lack of awareness or understanding of the rights and participation in a democracy. It can make the awareness process more difficult and exhausting, but the organizations should develop strategies to achieve them.

Experience has shown that awareness is a matter of time, persistence and results. When villagers see and experience that the right to work becomes a reality that needs to be claimed collectively and that counts with a number of rules and regulations, awareness is more effective.

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### **Learnings and recommendations for all the actors**

#### **Learnings.**

It is important to consider awareness from a multidimensional approach, paying special attention to the presentation of results.

The generalized illiteracy, especially among women, must be fought in order to increase the awareness levels on rights.

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#### **Recommendations.**

It is necessary to design awareness strategies that show the relation between standards of rights and the improvement of life quality, both individual and collective.

The fight against illiteracy is an essential step for the processes of participation and citizen participation.

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### **Learning and recommendation AKY- Bachat Mandal and AKY-the Mission**

#### **Learning.**

It is important that the members of the Board of Trustees closely screen the process in their respective communities.

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#### **Recommendation.**

It is important to promote the participation of people that lead the activities in order to achieve greater legitimization and learnings.

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### **Learning and recommendation for the international community**

#### **Learning.**

Awareness in relation to rights is a long-range task.

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#### **Recommendation.**

The awareness projects and programs require the development of long-term financial schemes.

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### **Conclusion 6. Awareness: a matter of training and networking**

AKY's experience in Bhiloda has proved how the knowledge of the laws, and not only a general idea about them, is fundamental for the success of some of the stories related in this study. That knowledge has been achieved throughout the training activities and the networking (such as exposure fields, collaboration efforts with other institutions, exchanges) that have been positively described by the village leaders, the facilitators and the trustees. This knowledge has provided the village leaders with the necessary confidence to face the resistance of government employees and elected representatives, somehow putting the power in the hands of the people. In addition, the results have increased overall villagers' awareness.

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### **Learning and recommendation for all the actors**

#### **Learning.**

A strong knowledge of the contents of legal provisions empowers communities.

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#### **Recommendation.**

To design strategies that strengthen the legal knowledge of the involved actors.

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### **Learning for AKY- Bachat Mandal**

#### **Learning.**

Several key interventions by the members of the Board of Trustees and local leaders have been effective for the successful implementation of the acts.

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### **Learning and recommendation for AKY-the Mission, and the community**

#### **Learning.**

The mission's capacity to network and connect with other legal professionals has been very effective to overcome the lack of collaboration and bottlenecks.

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#### **Recommendation.**

To support and encourage the networking of the local organizations.

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### Conclusion 7. Gender: awareness in silence?

Gender inequality is a world-level phenomenon. Patriarchy is deeply rooted in the minds of the community and determines a great part of our individual and collective behaviors. Bhiloda is no exception. There is an enormous evidence of inequality reflected, for example, in the higher illiteracy rates among women, or in the persistence of the practice of the *Leej* (covering the face).

But one of the most surprising aspects of gender inequality in the villages is the silence of women at the highest levels of society. In spite of AKY's efforts to make female voices heard, the success rates have been relatively low, and the strategies to counteract it are unknown to AKY. However, the leaders and the Board of Trustees have also acknowledged that this silence does not imply a lack of awareness among women. AKY has verified that women and young people are among the most fervent adherents to innovative activities.

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### Learning and recommendation for all the groups

#### Learning.

Women are actively participating in spite of structural limitations.

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#### Recommendation.

It is urgent to integrate the gender approach into the interventions, adjusting them to the cultural context.

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### **Learning and recommendation for AKY- Bachat Mandal**

#### **Learning.**

Women are participating in the Board of Trustees.

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#### **Recommendation.**

The equitable participation of men and women in representative councils is an effective representation strategy of women in contexts of low representativity.

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### **Recommendation for AKY- the Mission**

#### **Recommendation.**

To overcome the difficulties of the organization itself, it is useful networking with other organizations that work actively among women in order to develop common strategies that integrate the gender perspective in all the different projects.

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### **Recommendation for AKY and the international community**

#### **Recommendation.**

It is important to take into account the needs of specific capacitation among women when developing awareness programs.

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## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is much richness in the analyzed experiences. There are four experiences from three different countries. Two in Peru, one in India and another one in Burundi. There are thousands of experiences of citizen participation in the entire world. We have, undoubtedly, been able to reach only one part of the richness of so many experiences of participation in this analysis.

Both, because they are only four cases and due to the limitation of not been able to capture the experience in all its integrity, we do not pretend that the following learnings and recommendations can be also applied to the whole diversity of participation experiences that are being carried out in Peru, Burundi and India. However, having been able to compare experiences of different continents, this has confirmed us that certain elements repeat themselves and are key to the processes of participation between the civil society and the State; that is why, we feel encouraged to introduce these clues, both for reflection and for action, for those who want to venture into the spaces of participation.

For the presentation of these conclusions and recommendations, we will mention three sections that have configured our proposal of research. In the first place, the learnings and recommendations in relation to the motivation and implementation of the citizen participation that are summarized under the idea of “wanting to participate”. In the second place, the learnings and recommendations related to the idea of being able to participate. The focus will be on the mechanisms and proposals that facilitate and make the participation of people possible. And, in the third place, the learnings and recommendations related to the spaces that make participation possible: *the spaces for participation and concerted action*

*civil society-State*. The final point shall be the recommendations arisen during the process in relation to *international cooperation* and its support to proposals for participation and concerted action.

A common reflection to all of them is that the context elements play a key role to make the experiences of concerted action and citizen participation possible or difficult. Therefore, it is important that all actors have a periodic look and analysis on the context in order to detect those elements that could make the starting of strategies related to participation and concerted action possible or limited.

### 8.1. Citizen participation: the desire to participate, in first place

The goodness of citizen participation and implication is not “a priori” assumed by all people and groups. Some have a positive impression about participation as a way of solving daily problems, and value participation as an interesting strategy for the management of public things; others regard participation as an additional effort that generates no efforts and no benefits.

That is the reason why it is necessary to develop the awareness of the groups so that they acknowledge the contributions of participation. Awareness is a task to be carried out in the mid and long term. To achieve it, according to the experiences analyzed, it is necessary to have time, to be persistent, and to be able to offer specific results of participation. Looking at and knowing other experiences and the impacts they may have had on the daily lives of people, is how many analyzed experiences have been able to mobilize participation. In this task of awareness, the clear and key challenge is to pay special attention to the most marginalized groups, and to have for them a specific approach. The specific work with women and with issues related to gender, and making women be seen as agents for participation, is essential in many of the experiences analyzed. It is important that they see themselves and behave as such, and that the communities they live in recognize them as a group with much to contribute.

In order to motivate this participation, the existence of a group with collective identity and a common interest has appeared as a key element. In most of the cases, the claim that certain rights were not being respected has helped this identity and common interest become a collective action in which participation is a key instrument to obtain respect and the implementation of the right or rights claimed.



In that sense, it is necessary to encourage spaces and process for participation from the very core of the communities themselves, so that people begin to appropriate and practice participation in their nearest areas. The positive experiences of citizen participation in any areas are key elements to motivate participation. These positive experiences could come both from the community experience itself and from the experience of other communities. Visiting and becoming familiar with the experiences of others in order to see successful practices of participation and management of different problems has a great influence on the preparation of participation processes within the communities.

Participation is to be seen and experienced as a process of development and growth, both individual and collective. The collective element is also essential for the success of participation. The capacity of incidence and transformation of a specific person is limited, but with groups there are more possibilities for success and, at the same time, the “burden” of participation is less heavy. At the same time, participative processes have to contribute not only to the development of the representative of the group, but also have to impact on the whole group; only then that representativity and participation will not lose its sense and will not be questioned.

It is important to become aware that the task of awareness does not end with the incorporation of our group or community to participative processes since it is necessary, on the one hand, to analyze if within my group all persons have the same possibilities to participate and, on the other hand, to incorporate other groups in the processes for concerted action. As long as the space for participation summons all the involved groups, and it is possible to broaden that representation, it will be possible to take more appropriate and pertinent decisions, and the space for participation will gain more legitimacy. In that sense, from our option, it is required to always pay special attention to those groups with less capacities or possibilities of participation.

The experiences previously presented are real processes of effective inclusion of excluded people. In order to incorporate some of those specific groups we have generated some learnings. Summarizing what has been previously presented, we would like to highlight that, in the case of rural groups, the successful experiences have been those that combine the solution of specific technical problems with the promotion of participation. In order to involve all the groups, it is convenient to present participation as a mechanism or as a means to solve specific problems, or to solve specific problems with participation as a mechanism of incorporation of all

worries and sensitivities. In that sense, in the case of rural women, it is interesting to notice the improvement of their economic conditions through productive processes strengthening, and at the same time, their political and citizen participation.

## **8.2. Knowing how to participate. Learning and unlearning: a requirement for all the involved bodies**

The process of participation requires a constant opening to other people and groups. This opening entails a continuous learning and unlearning: to learn new ways of doing; new ways of relating themselves to others; and also new proposals. It also entails the unlearning of some ways of doing, of traditional approaches and solutions.

Training, as mentioned before, becomes a key strategy for the realization of participation and learning. In addition to wanting, it is important to know how to participate. This learning of new ways of participation requires an intercultural acknowledgment between genders and generations, to make it possible for those traditional ways of participation to be included in more institutional strategies of participation; and also that the groups with no experience of institutionalized participation may acquire certain skills and capacities that allow them to participate, defend their proposals and use all the necessary means to be successful with them.

In most of the experiences analyzed, this training has been carried out by an intermediary organization. The role of this organization was one of the requirements of the studied experiences. These organizations have carried out training, guidance and counseling in the spaces for concerted action and participation between the civil society and the State. Therefore, it can not be asserted that these intermediary organizations in the spaces for concerted action are necessary, but it can be stated that, in the analyzed experiences, they have played an important role strengthening capacities in the civil society and in the state, and offering guidance and support to both parts.

The opening to the involvement of intermediary organizations in the processes for concerted action has been, in all cases, an open window to new possibilities. The contributions have been related both to the specific technical knowledge and to the generation of a space of trust and shared work. These agents have contributed to identify the basic problems, and to offer possible solutions to them. In any case, for their role to be efficient, it has been important to take special care of the horizontal relations with the communities, the interdisciplinary perspective of the group and the technical contributions that have arisen.

Intermediary organizations can contribute to communities and local authorities with training and support, in technical and participative aspects. In these training processes, it is advisable to reach a balance between the technical, methodological, communicative areas, as well as with the training for political incidence. That is why an interdisciplinary team is needed; and things will work out even better if the team is involved and committed. The training offered by the team has to adapt to the needs and interests of the different groups the team is working with and, even though some of the contents are repeated in all the cases, the methodology and approaches have to be adequate to the specific groups: women, farmers, city people... This formation must not lose its political component and look that facilitates a participation with two options: an option for the improvement of the conditions of all people; and an option for the respect of the environment that surrounds us and the future generations. The investment in continuous training is, therefore, essential; not only for the groups we are working with but also for the intermediary organization itself, and the public institutions. In addition to the learning process, the unlearning is also included in these training processes. The unlearning entails the awareness to avoid, correct, and build on the behaviors and mentalities previously learnt.

A key element, both in the processes of training and in the mechanisms that facilitate the effectiveness of this participation is the learning and the setting of mechanisms that make the handling of conflicts possible.

Training and the generation of capacities to participate in spaces for concerted action is a heartfelt need arising from these processes. In addition to training, other elements are also necessary to favor participation, such as: the generation of a consensus a collaboration environment; the issues dealt with in that space; and the creation of specific spaces (for instances, commissions) to deal with issues that the different groups have a specific interest in.

The decision-making within the community strengthens and empowers the communities in their relation with other actors. This process of participation facilitates the development of capacities in the community, the strengthening of new leaderships and of authorities that trust in participation.

Once the participation is assured within the communities, it is possible to begin the concerted action with other actors. At this moment, leaderships that stand for grassroots organizations play a key role. Communication between the representative and the people represented, and the mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge

in the case of rotation of representatives, are strategic elements for the good participation in the spaces for concerted action.

The on-going support to groups, and networking among them, is related to this training. In the studied cases, the intermediary organizations have played a role that facilitated the support that has worked as counseling or guidance for the practice of the learnt knowledge. However, the support works in two directions, because the contact with the communities and public institutions allows us to identify new needs of training that may solve the contextual problems or the needs of the different groups.

The on-going support and work facilitates: awareness about the need of planning the development of public policies; and that the spaces of participation are not experienced as reactive spaces, but spaces with a proactive nature. In the spaces for concerted action it is essential to acquire capacities for proposal-making.

At the same time, it is necessary to facilitate a process in which the communities themselves move from a participation approach as an instrument to improve or solve certain problems, to a participation approach as a citizen right. This step shall contribute to the feasibility of the participative processes beyond the specific process or experience, and will confirm part of the political culture of the area. This support during the acquisition of a leading role in local communities, as well as the encouragement of community leaderships (both through self-help groups, as in the case of India, of leadership in specific commissions, as in Peru), are a starting point to develop both the sense of unity necessary for action, and the consensus and key strategies to choose from in the participative process.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the systematization of the experiences of previous participations is an element that contributes to the awareness of the processes carried out, and the results obtained. This systematization facilitates not only the incorporation of the learnings to the training processes and the actions of the same organizations, but it also makes possible to facilitate references for third organizations or groups that might want to incorporate to the participation processes.

All the actions suggested in this section are headed towards the balancing of the asymmetries of power, information, and institutional capacities between the governments and groups of the civil society. And they are also headed to the participation of all the groups present in the context, provided they have the capacity to know, argue, suggest alternatives and participate in the decision-making about the aspects that concern them more directly.

### 8.3. Being able to participate: the importance of the spaces for decision making

The fact that there are spaces for meeting and for concerted action between the State representatives and the civil society is an element that contributes to the participative process. These spaces are necessary for the deepening of democracy as well as for the citizenship to express their worries, problems, and to facilitate a dialogue between those with the responsibility to govern and the citizens. In this sense, the political will of the public institutions and the bodies of the civil society are essential.

The spaces for concerted action have value in themselves, since they are spaces in which participation can be implemented and developed. That is why the creation of these spaces is necessary, either by the political will of those with the responsibility to govern or the citizenship itself. Spaces that must have certain specific characteristics if they want to be deemed legitimate by all the parts: they have to summon all the actors involved in the specific subjects; they have to be recognized by the community as spaces of their own; they have to be spaces in which participation affects the decision making; they must have mechanisms and resources that allow their functioning and follow-up; they have to generate mechanisms for the decision making and to deal with conflicts.

Legitimacy, leadership, and communication are key aspects that facilitate both the recognition of the participants of those spaces for participation and concerted actions, and of those who organize them. Legitimacy is specified in the acknowledgement by other actors that the institution or group can contribute to the participative process. In some cases, legitimacy is achieved because the group itself is the subject or “object” of the decisions that will be taken, or because the group lives in the territory about which regulations are being made. In the case of social organizations, the analyzed experiences show how the legitimacy of many of them, especially of those we call intermediary organizations, is based on their trajectory as social organizations. Its history, prestige, legitimacy, and authority make the social organizations acknowledged as leading actors in the spaces for participation. A legitimacy that many public institutions try to strengthen through the spaces for participation. The fact that public institutions promote the participation of new groups strengthens both the participative processes, and the legitimacy of those groups and of the public institutions themselves.

It is evident that the political context and the policies on cooperation are contributing the generation and impulse of spaces for participation of the civil society.

In that sense, a learning from the experiences is that the encouragement of the spaces for participation at local level can strengthen the capacities of the communities so that they can participate in spaces away from the local one, and allow to combine the strengthening of the spaces “from below”. The analyzed experiences show how the participation in regional spaces, or in a superior level, is considered necessary when there is a trajectory of participation in other levels nearer to the group level.

In any case, the spaces for participation and concerted action have to be spaces open to dialogue, where all actors can express their opinions, worries, suggestions; and where those are received with respect and consideration by the rest of the participant groups. It is necessary, therefore, to strengthen leaderships for dialogue and participation both in social bodies as in public institutions. And to strengthen the institutionalism of the spaces for concerted action.

In the development of the institutionalism of the spaces for participation, it is convenient to define: the subjects that can be analyzed in the space; the procedure of decision making or the relation with public policies; follow-up mechanisms for the agreements taken; sanctioning mechanisms for those groups that do not obey decisions; and processes for the transfer of information in the rotation of representation. In any case, in those spaces for concerted action that involve many actors and an environment of more regional character, it has been relevant to count with a person that encourages and facilitates the work. The person who assumes the responsibility of energizing or acting as technical secretary in the space for concerted action, must have a deep knowledge about the sector, capacity of management and political dialogue, and also count with the necessary resources to carry out his/her work.

All these learnings encourage us to keep supporting participation in the processes of concerted action between the civil society and the State. To participate and encourage the participation of other groups, with the certainty of good results, is worth the effort. At the same time, it is important to be aware that, for this participation to be satisfactory for all the parts involved and, specially, for the most disadvantaged groups, it is necessary to want, to know and to be able to participate according to the conditions that we have mentioned before.

Finally, only mention that certain learnings and recommendations have been formulated for international cooperation.

#### 8.4. Learnings and recommendations for international cooperation

Participation is a right of all people and groups. The international community involved in development cooperation should facilitate and invite to develop this right, especially in the case of those groups facing greatest difficulties, either because of the context, the local dynamics, or the lack of experience or knowledge.

In this sense, participation, in addition to being a methodological proposal, is also a way to the full development both of people and of communities. These experiences show that, even with limitations, the commitment to create, strengthen and sustain spaces for participation strengthens the possibilities of the citizens. These cases are supported by strategies that provide the groups of civil society with capacities in the field of public policy, from the access to information or the understanding of how to formulate a regional policy, to the acquiring of a language to debate and argue their proposals.

The experiences show that it is possible to provide communities with tools that strengthen their own development and the development of their communities. That is why it is worth encouraging and supporting the elements that facilitate the participation of groups with motivation, awareness, training, counseling, on-going support, and the generation of spaces for citizen participation.

It is undoubtedly not enough to offer the spaces, but we must also create the conditions and possibilities in the people and groups for those spaces to have meaning and influence in their daily life.

That is why we propose international cooperation their support and encouragement of:

- **The participative processes in the North and the South**, for the strengthening of democracy and the concerted action in local groups, grassroots communities, and in the NGOs themselves, or intermediary authorities that include components of: **Training, exchange** (South-South, North-South), **on-going support in participation, reflection, systematization, communication and incidence.**
- More specifically, support in the **coordination of participative and sectorial projects (economic, educative...)**. In a special way, the support to those processes that could strengthen the most excluded groups, and women, and that contribute to changing gender, cultural, and class roles.
- **The strengthening of the civil society and the local governments for the creation of spaces for concerted action**, especially around international

cooperation in the North and the South with minimum conditions for their functioning (vision, planning, periodicity). As spaces of participation oriented to the generation of consensus and/or participated public policies.

- Of the commitment to the work of strengthening and consolidation of **intermediary organizations** in the North and in the South that are able to accompany and promote this kind of participative processes for concerted action.

The proposed key tools or actions are:

- **Previous actions of awareness** and of generation of a favorable environment in the institution and the communities, so that the actions of diagnosis and planning in favor of participation and equality are seen as a need, and not as an imposition.
- To continue **supporting positive actions and gender transversalization**, but adapting rhythms to the local reality.
- **Training and development of responsible people and instruments capable of answering to those different realities.**
- Institutional strengthening of the local organizations that accompany and promote these processes of participation and concerted action.
- **The encouragement of exchanges and stays in the North and the South** of the people responsible of community organizations and second-level organizations.
- The support of processes of **incidence** in those contexts where there are no spaces for concerted action, or where those do not meet the minimum conditions.

And, finally, to mention the conditions necessary for that cooperation:

- Long-range **proposals and commitments** with the groups, which facilitate to work in terms of processes.
- Flexible **instruments** that facilitate the predictability of the aid for long-range interventions and those in terms of processes.
- To promote the **reflection and training on advance indicators** with a gender approach:
  - That allows recognizing **intermediate advances** and the improvement especially of the most disadvantaged groups.



- That responds to the description of participative process, both in the **quantity** and the **quality** of results.
- Financing of **time and resources** for the processes of training, support and starting of those spaces for concerted action.



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