



Tropentag, October 11-13, 2006, Bonn

“Prosperity and Poverty in a Globalised World—
Challenges for Agricultural Research”

Endogenous Poverty Assessment as a Contribution to Pro-poor Oriented Research Design — A Case Study in Potato-producing Communities in the Central Highlands of Peru

GISELA GLIMMANN¹, ANDRE FABIAN¹, JÜRGEN KROSCHER², SIMONE SEHER¹, EILEEN GEHRKE¹,
IVONNE ANTEZANA¹, SIMON FREUND¹

¹*Humboldt University Berlin, Centre for Advanced Training in Rural Development (SLE), Germany*

²*International Potato Center, Integrated Crop Management Division, Peru*

Abstract

The International Potato Center (CIP) seeks to reduce poverty and achieve food security in developing countries through scientific research and related activities on potato, sweetpotato, and other Andean root and tuber crops. The CIP's 2003-vision exercise paved the way for a more consequent orientation of the Center's research towards pro-poor impacts and contributing effectively to the Millennium Development Goals.

The objective of the present study was to contribute to a better understanding of what poverty or well-being for small-scale farmers means and how farmers perceive potato production in the context of poverty alleviation, and inform institutions to plan future interventions. Therefore, the degree, dynamics and causes of poverty in four potato producing Andean Highland communities of Peru were assessed. This was achieved through the “Participatory Approach to Poverty Assessment” (PAPA), which has been developed as a multidimensional approach aiming at capturing farmers' own concepts about poverty-related factors and opportunities for improving the living situation, including the role of non-tangible assets e.g., social support. The study illustrates that well-being of households is associated to a diversified, market-oriented agricultural production strategy, to access to institutions for the provision of information, technologies, inputs or credit, to income diversification and to social support within the communities. The intensification of potato production is an important strategy to improve livelihood, especially if farmers got access to markets. The study revealed that agricultural support measures are often selectively applied, mostly to best-educated farmers; in contrast, poorer households have less access to agricultural support and often have different needs.

The study concludes that holistic interventions are needed taking into account the heterogeneity of poverty causes. A pre-intervention assessment, e.g. through PAPA, which mirrors the endogenous perception and necessities at community and individual level, could serve as a basis for targeting research and development activities. As a consequence, conducting participatory research and disseminating results would support the community aspiration contributing more effectively to poverty alleviation.

Keywords: Institutional learning, Pro-poor targeting, potato production