



Tropentag, September 15-17, 2021, hybrid conference

“Towards shifting paradigms in agriculture
for a healthy and sustainable future”

Agricultural Support for Coca Substitution in La Montañita and Puerto Rico, Caquetá, Colombia 2018–2019

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Abstract

Since 1974, Colombia have been subjected to several strategies to eradicate illicit use crops, those involve: aerial spraying of glyphosate, manual eradication and conditional crop substitution, measures that have not yet solved the problem. After the peace agreement in 2016 arose The Comprehensive National Program for the Substitution of crops for illicit use (PNIS in Spanish) with the same approach as previous initiatives. In 2019, an analysis of this programme took place in the municipalities of La Montañita and Puerto Rico in Caquetá, with the technical teams of the programme through surveys (50) and semi-structured interviews (6) that were described and coded with the QDA Miner lite® free software. During PNIS implementation it was identified that the technical territorial capacity allows its strengthening due to the employment of local technical labour that facilitated the bonds of trust with beneficiaries. Some already known sustainable agricultural practices that were not implemented before due to lack of financial resources were in place and awareness on better management of natural resources towards a sustainable approach of the agroecosystems was raised. Furthermore, the programme served people located in distant places who have never received technical accompaniment or financial support. However, the programme did not synchronise with the local capacities and resources, territorial economy and among its own activities. There were delays in the delivery of the financial resources, and the contracting of technical operators to work continuously. For the program, the total eradication of illicit use crops was mandatory, ignoring the complexity of the transition from an illicit economy to a legal one (that has not establish yet), causing, among other things, that some producers were left adrift, subjected to displacement, hunger and uncertainty. The complexities of its implementation reveal the particularities of the technical agricultural teams, the conditions of the Immediate Attention Plan, the agricultural development and value chain gave elements to rethink on implementation approaches and the transformative potential of technical accompaniment considering the National Agricultural Innovation System that was sanctioned by law in 2017 to create the agricultural extension service to promote productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability with innovation as its axis.

Acknowledgments: Interviewed, Fondo Colombia en Paz and Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural de Colombia-MADR

Keywords: Agricultural development, alternative development, drug policy, peacebuilding.

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