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Production of training materials – “research guides”- for international agricultural research, training and communication

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Abstract

The “Father of the Green Revolution”, Norman Borlaug, once expressed that the Green Revolution would not have been possible without training. A training study, commissioned by the Science Council of the CGIAR, and concluded in 2006, confirmed that “Training is regarded as an indispensable element of Centers’ research, ...” with the aim of strengthening the institutional capacity of national agricultural research systems (NARS) to undertake collaborative scientific research. Through experience at the International Potato Center (CIP), Lima, Perú, the need for training materials became evident. Thus, CIP’s training program guided scientists through the production of 25 technical information bulletins (TIBs) in English and Spanish. An introductory statement explains: “CIP’s technical information bulletins (TIBs) contain information for potato production, training and research. Although directed at an intermediate professional level, the information can be adapted for communication with farmers.” To encourage adaptation, CIP placed emphasis on simple language and presentation, while maintaining scientific precision. Therefore, the instructional design considered specific criteria with respect to structure, format, writing and editing. Each TIB included an evaluation sheet, addressed to CIP, for continued adjustment in content and presentation. In effect, the TIBs were used in newspaper advice for farmers, and - partially - translated into French, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, Greek, Hindi, Urdu ... as far as it became known. Additionally, CIP authorised the Editorial Agropecuaria Hemisferio Sur, Uruguay, to reproduce and commercialise the TIBs in South America, Mexico and Spain. With the experience from CIP, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan, Nigeria, initiated the production of - eventually 70 - now named “IITA Research Guides (IRGs)” in English and French. Subjects include crop production, social sciences, plant pathology, entomology, (research) farm management,... Further translations and adaptations have not been known so far, however training and workshops resulted in the production of similar training materials by NARS institutions in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire and Zambia.

Keywords: CGIAR, training, training materials