

Introduction

A collaborative research project on the biodiversity of Andean root and tuber crops was carried out in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru from 1993 to 1997. The International Potato Center (CIP) was engaged as a major partner and facilitator in this undertaking. CIP, with guidance and financial support from COSUDE-Switzerland, organized the coordination and management of the project, and participated in the research.

The project—Collaborative Program on the Biodiversity of Andean Root and Tuber Crops (ARTC)—employed a uniquely participatory planning approach to research and its monitoring, and through networking brought together researchers who otherwise would have worked in isolation. This collaborative approach had a positive impact on capacity building of national programs in a wide range of institutions.

Research carried out on nine Andean root and tuber crops achieved significant progress in expanding the understanding of the ranges of biodiversity in each of them. Major efforts focused on conservation of germplasm, production of better planting materials, and understanding production as it relates to consumption systems. These efforts were backed by a range of training opportunities and the strengthening of partnerships between collaborators, including those between technical personnel and farmers.

The report identifies, for each area of research, major results and constraints. It should be emphasized that the constraints have become identifiable over time and that they act as indicators for future research needs.

The research was broad-based, and the progress made is in large part due to the many capable scientists in the participating countries and to the dedication of the coordinator, Dr. M. Holle.

The report also addresses future needs for research on Andean root and tuber crops. These needs, largely unforeseeable five years ago, form the base for strategic research that would maximize impact on poverty alleviation of Andean smallholder families, address national requirements in implementing aspects of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and address international concerns on mountain development.



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