



Initiatives for Moving from Subsistence Farming to Profitable Agriculture Sierra Productiva, Peru

The rural regions of Cusco, Ica and La Libertad are three of Peru's most deprived areas. Most of the inhabitants are subsistence farmers. The aim of Sierra Productiva is to introduce small farmers to more profitable farming models through simple technical innovations and to improve their living conditions. The goal is economic and social inclusion. Instituto para una Alternativa Agraria (IAA), in San Agustín in Cusco, developed the program and, together with Siemens Stiftung and other partners, has been implementing it since 2011.

18 Steps to Sustainable Development

The program, which partners with small farmers over a three-year period, implements 18 development steps in areas including irrigation, energy, and land management. Siemens Stiftung is focused on the areas of water and energy, specifically on the availability of safe drinking water and solar thermal water heating. Possibilities to store water and the efficient use and provision of drinking water are of fundamental importance to the project.

Long-standing knowledge from local farming communities is combined with new insights to strengthen small agricultural production and create market opportunities. The long-term aim is to develop so-called "ecological districts" that focus on the environmentally sound use of resources. In this way, farmers should be able to increase the low income they currently generate from selling their produce.



Individual Initiatives and Joint Responsibility as Core Elements

Altogether, 500 families are participating in Sierra Productiva. Right from the start, they are involved in developing the project and defining a common vision. The program takes into consideration their various cultures, customs, and languages. Personal contributions and joint responsibility are essential, including the transfer of knowledge and learning from one another. That is the reason why the local community advisors known as “Yachachiq” (a Quechua word for “those who know”) are so important for the implementation of the project.

The implementation of the Sierra Productiva approach in other remote communities outside the Peruvian Andes shows how the principle of “learning from one another” tailored to the cultural environment can lead to inclusion and spur social and economic development.

Partners

- Instituto para una Alternativa Agraria (IAA), Peru
- Communities in the participating districts
- ProSynergy, foundation of the Korean company SK Energy
- Pau i Solidaritat Foundation, Spain

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