

## **Agrobiodiversity and local economic Circuits: The experience in Humahuaca Canyon in Jujuy, Argentina**

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### **Introduction**

The Humahuaca canyon, a territory located in southern-central Andes, is made up of: (a) a great longitudinal Andean valley located between 2000 and 3500 m.a.s.l, with northern-southern direction; (b) a group of transversal valleys; and (c) areas of mountainous slopes that reaches a hill line with permanent snow.

It is profusely confirmed and documented that the canyon has exceptional climatic and eco physiological conditions that permits a broad biodiversity resource, support, and structure of the natural heritage.

On the other hand, throughout the historical process the canyon has been part of different communication paths since pre-Hispanic times, this has been adding special shades since in this expansion of human linkages have been being created synergies based on the landscape that gave a series of singular characteristics from what is affective, cultural, patrimonial and from the identity.

All these conditions permit the approach to the market from a different message.

### **Rural markets motivating big challenges**

The need for conserving the resources lead to propose how to strengthen the structural motive that causes their loss. For the farmers, the most powerful reason was the lost of a space to exchange the seed. The rural market of "papa criolla" as we call it, has the objective to meet and to recognize, in order to motivate to recover from this recognized and own space, the need for generating economic returns that make possible the strengthen of the productive systems and the mobile to interact with another sector like the enterprise; a sector devoted to trade elite food products. Another cause of replacement of species has to do with the profitability.

The missing of productive spaces, where the local resources are conserved in the sector more articulated to the channels of communication, is accelerated. Less than 10% of the farmers cultivate in their property potatoes, ocas, quinoas, etc. while in the most remote sectors, the 84% of its productive strategy is based on the local resources This suggests a separate observation where paradoxically, the ones that have a fluent relation of interaction with the horticultural market have exponentially vulnerable spaces since the relation cost benefit opens an ever-growing gap.

### **Dialogue of knowledge**

From the possibility of articulating the producer to the business sector, a series of interactions are established, where communication has different codes. In the experience of trading with varieties of potato we could assess different stages in the process.

*The volumes of production:* 30 tons of different varieties of potato were marketed. In the local context, this is a volume that involves an additional work of collection and costs that brought the necessary articulation with the local governments for the transport subject to the place of collection.

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*The required product:* the required product was not only different with regard to its colors and flavors but also to its size (30 grams, 50 grams), in the area are valued the better products with a weight higher than 80 grams and the ones with lower weights are provided to the farm or are kept as seed.

*The fear of what is different:* overcoming a series of questions like: why do others will want to consume what I have assigned for the pigs? Why do they will want to take my seed with different size to another place? These, with a series of other questions, unleash the learning processes

All these factors that are involved in the coordination of the market with the gondola producer with the property are important because they are giving us the knowledge that is needed for marketing.

### **Articulation to the Supermarket**

The dissemination and distribution of the food has been in the history of the civilization the principal tool that have had the human beings in order to get cohesion, identity and culture to develop peoples and nations. This phenomenon results from the fact that the food is simultaneously and indissolubly a support media and also a communications medium. **The food is the energy and the message at the same time.** (J. Yanovsky)

**What represents or what means this attitude of the consumer?** Basically that he does not have restrictions in order to appraise a **dietary message** that represents a sign of affection, great care, and effort devoted to him.

The meat and the potato, in our country, are consumed in almost equal volume per person/year. Both are ingredients of more than 50% of the plates with which daily the Argentines are fed. Even more, we could say that **potato + meat** are the unified symbol of the fast foods chains throughout the world. It is noteworthy, however, that while the meat as input represents 10.5% of the average of the dietary expenditure, the potato only represents the 1.2%. This substantial difference, we sustain, is not a result of an underestimation of the people to the tuber, but a significant lack of the system to gave the consumers a different message of the potato. Specifically, the potato market could duplicate its value if there is developed a business strategy that might make the differentiated horticultural specie, the **second decoration** of distinction and identity of our communities. This appraisal is solidly supported in historical and daily backgrounds. The potato is one of the food that the South American peoples provided to the world and their dissemination was a universal boom, being today the horticultural specie mostly consumed by the human specie. The Brazilians, despite being five times fewer consumers of potato that the Argentines, pay for it up to two and three times more, because they differentiate and appreciate its excellence. Strategic reserves exist to differentiate the potato in quality and diversity among those with aboriginal background settled on the northwestern Argentine (mainly Jujuy and Salta) (Fragment of the presentation letter of Dr. J. Yanovsky to the Supermarket Coto).

This global perception of what the market means opens a without number of questions. These are the opportunities and the challenges but at the same time generate alerts with regard to the marketing codes because we should inestimably care the concept of crop breeding and their association or values as territory, culture and life because those are the ones that will generate the necessary inward force to make them differed.

### **The local economic circuit**

Historically the potatoes from the canyon were only marketed informally in the towns and rarely in the city markets, in addition they were related to carnival festivities, Holy Week etc., and therefore the space of sale of this product was reduced, usually associated with traditional foods.

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What was the effect of the presence of the varieties of potatoes in the gondolas of the Buenos Aires Supermarket in Jujuy?, basically in the perception of the product from other time and space, motivated by the association of other perceptions in the consumer related to the message of value that caused that the potatoes translated to the consumers complementary messages to those which had had in Jujuy; this made possible that today this product can be found in the gondolas of fruit stores, groceries and supermarkets of the city or other neighbors.

It is also good to stop in the analysis of the economic relations of the actors involved in the marketing. Despite interpreting some codes from the different sectors, a set of ensembles are necessary to procure that the efforts do not fall into a single sector. The farmers should not consider the supermarket as the most desired goal but as promotional tools for a given sector that facilitate the access to other sectors as chains of chef, ethnic cuisine, and also strengthen local unexploited markets for example, Humahuaca Canyon is a place promoted from the tourism sector where in less than 5% of the restaurants could be consumed this product. In the city 3% of the places offer this food. This year has been increased the consumption in the near and neighboring city in 45%, since at the same time we can find them in the fair and in the gondola and aims with different point of views to sectors of complementary consumers. Other products were also promoted together with the potato like corn, meat of lamb, meat of lama and natural dressings.

The new concept of Cluster told us about various economic actors in a geographical interrelated concentration and upon doing it, they create a dynamic process where all of them can improve its performance, competitiveness and sustainability in a long-term.

Rethinking the strategies of marketing from the vision of Cluster could make possible the increase of opportunities for circuits of site development, or combination of strategies and products of several elements and initiate the change in one of the elements which leads to better opportunities for other cluster companies as response to the greatest specialization.

### **Return to the property**

The in situ conservation from the broad concept of relation of the men, the women, and the children with the environment in a synergy of warmth and affection from the vision of life, is the fundamental basis to offer the world the necessary "hug." The territory, the culture, and the identity are vital factors to create synergies that permit the sustainability of the system from the strengthening of the harmonious interaction with the natural resources. This in turn makes possible that from different approaches, the rules of the market is neither a product nor this or that variety, instead it is the message received through the biodiversity in the Andes and other mountains.

*"But the Indian of America has not died*

*has lie to sleep a long dream*

*only awaits the called of his Gods*

*to make all the fire shine*

*and the clamor of the Llullaillaco"*

Fragment from a poet of Jujuy