

**“Sowing the Andean Diet: Escalating the use of Agrobiodiversity to Improve
Child Nutrition in Communities in Huancavelica.
Project 14-092 - Huancavelica 2014- 2018**

Year three of project 2016

The communities in Ambato are characterized by a high rate of child malnutrition, scarcity of land highly vulnerable to unpredictable climate which reduces yields which causes high temporary migration of young people. The main project objective is to contribute to a more diverse diet in the Ambato community; we are actively involved in increasing the production, availability, access and consumption of more nutritious food, as well as strengthening capacities mainly of mothers to better understand infant nutrition. We liaise with personnel from the Health post, the program for infant support “CUNA MAS”, municipal authorities and the Agrarian Agency to carry out joint work in capacity building and incidence. In 2016, activities in Castillapata, Ambato Centro, Tacsana and Paltamachay were intense: the introduction of biofortified potatoes, through participatory selection took place in four communities. Only Tacsana was able to keep seed for this growing season due to drought and early frost the other three communities were only able to use the harvest for food. Seed supplied by CIP’s breeding program for research purposes is insufficient to stock a large number of farming families with seed. Our strategy was to buy in vitro plantlets from CIP and contract a seed Co. to produce “tuberlets”, which we multiplied in a field in Quilcas. This seed (harvested in May 2016) was distributed to 139 mothers who had children under 2 years of age (12.5 kg) to plant in October 2016. The remaining small tubers were again multiplied in greenhouses, and when harvested there was enough seed for ½ ha for the 2016-17 season. The process of participatory selection in 4 communities continues, and we expect to identify 6-8 candidate clones for the final selection. Furthermore we have distributed as mixture of 45 native varieties to families living at higher altitudes who have little diversity (see map) <http://ccrp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/SimpleViewer/index.html?appid=270da0425dea49ae84e10fca8f130d1f>

Other stake holders interested in biofortified potatoes, is Agrarian Agency, and associations of potato producers would like to participate in the escalation of seed production of biofortified potato .

To increase the consumption of food of animal origin, forage have sown by many families to expand number of guinea pigs and chickens . Five 2 week old chicks were provided to 200 mothers who have children under 2 years, as initial capital. These were accompanied by 4 training sessions on raising healthy chicken.

The second objective which involves improving nutrition through training; five workshops were held in each village to women’s groups,: a) complementary feeding, b) exclusive breast feeding, c) food groups, d) consistency of baby diets, and high iron food. The big step forward this year was the selection and training of local nutrition promoters for each village. They made home visits to families

with children under 2 years to see how the child is faring, discuss with the mothers what food is available and advise on increase in food and frequency if needed. A food frequency survey was conducted. Participatory videos as a training strategy have a good acceptance by women who took the lead in the first videos, where they are in the process of filming their perception of bottlenecks and solution to malnutrition for discussion. Together with local authorities and the municipality, fairs organized to foster consumption of meat, chicken and eggs through cooking competitions were organized. The National University of Huancavelica has been participating in aspects of our research.