

Methods presentation February 2013

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Knowledge sustainability for local development in rural areas of the global south

Abstract:

Local development processes in rural areas of the global south show persistent gaps or failures between knowledge needs for development—understood as local capacity building means or innovation sources—and the knowledge offer available for local communities. This phenomenon will be addressed here as the 'knowledge sustainability' problem.

To address the subject of 'knowledge sustainability' questions will relate to the actual and possible roles of local knowledge; those of the local innovation and knowledge actors, sources and means; those of the science, technology and innovation (STI) sector in this processes; and finally those of other sectors (e.g. educative/technical education sector). It is also necessary to address knowledge capture, circulation and sharing in and outside of the local framework.

Field research will take place on the context of activities of PROCASUR. This is a non-profit organisation whose role of knowledge broker for the IFAD--International fund for agricultural development--allows it access to best practices in rural development in Africa, Latin America and Southern Asia. The most important methodological tool developed by PROCASUR is the 'learning route': a peer to peer traveling learning method that takes the knowledge of local talents as its main input. This scenario of 'best practices' on different rural development innovations grants access to deepen on diverse local environments while having clear account of the local actor's role on endogenous processes, which is a privileged point of view on the context of this research.

Thus, this doctoral research aims at exploring and developing conceptual tools leading to define and strengthen the concept of 'knowledge sustainability' in the context of local development processes on rural areas. It also aims at creating a conceptual and methodological framework to explore its analysis scope. This, by comparative analysis of local development processes, and to deepen in the role and interaction dynamics between different actors related to this phenomenon.