

The T'ikapapa partnership experience

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Extreme poverty and rich biodiversity coexist in the Peruvian Andes, a region that is home to more than 3000 native potato varieties. Potatoes are an integral part of the Andean culture, but despite their excellent taste and value to local people, most of the varieties are little known in urban markets. A growing demand for specialty food however offers a great opportunity to generate sustainable incomes.

Therefore, T'ikapapa model links small operation farmers, who preserve and produce hundreds of native Andean potatoes varieties, with other potato chain partners to take advantage of high-value niche markets in urban centers in Peru. The model promotes potato biodiversity conservation and environmentally-friendly potato production techniques, social marketing, and technical assistance for the improvement of the livelihoods of farm families. The T'ikapapa partnership model gained international recognition winning both SEED Award and the World Challenge Award in 2007. Public incidence through media and press coverage -both locally and internationally- has helped to raise awareness of native Peruvian potatoes.

Recent developments in 2009 include official registration of native Peruvian potatoes for quality seed production, and in 2010 the development of a labeling system to promote "native" potatoes consumption and utilization (www.papasandinas.org/sello). Impact studies show higher cultivation areas of a greater number of native potato varieties in participating and non participating communities in the supply chain to urban markets.