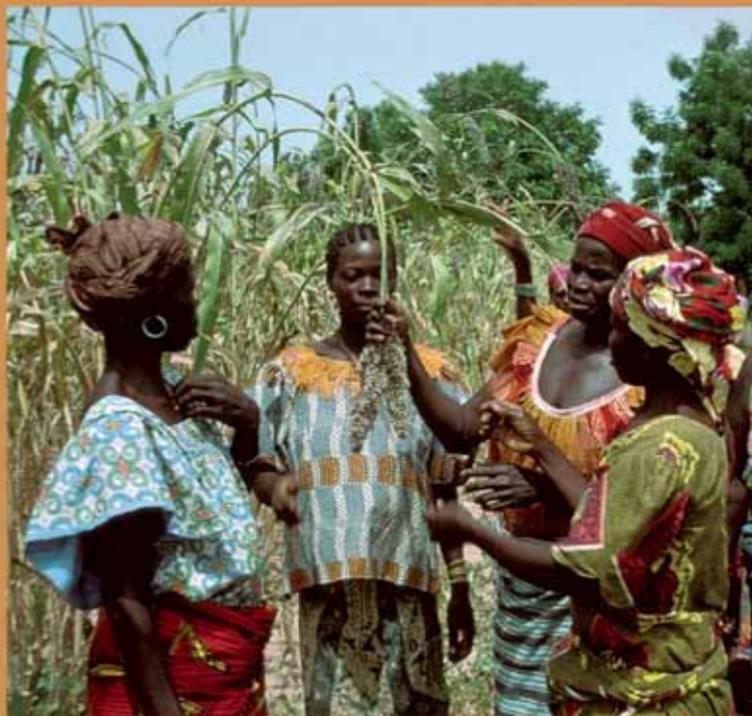




Innovating with rural stakeholders in the developing world

Action research in partnership

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Box 20. Technical innovations for plantain producers in central Cameroon

L. Temple and M. Kwa

Plantain producers in central and southern Cameroon find it difficult to expand their plantation with high-yielding resistant plants. In fact, conventional techniques of propagation by suckers encourage viral contamination.

An ARP was initiated in 2000 involving researchers, the staff of a development project, and producers. It helped perfect new techniques among the farmers for producing healthy suckers through micro-cuttings. The techniques were subsequently adopted by nursery owners who proposed modifications to the original methods based on their expertise and experience. This led to the establishment of a network of nursery owners that notched up sales of 100,000 seedlings. A monitoring and evaluation program of the corresponding partnership set-ups since 2002 led to the updating of concerns facing agricultural research. In this particular case, the success of the new techniques led to an increase in thefts from nurseries, so much so that nurseries had to be moved closer to human habitation. However, the use of sawdust in these nurseries led to the proliferation of termite hills, thus posing a risk for houses. Consequently the ARP, which had initially aimed at the creation of a new technology, had to initiate new research to solve the problem of termite attacks.

Box 21. Institutional innovation

L. Temple and M. Kwa

The ARP approach implemented in central and southern Cameroon created conditions for the emergence of two organizations that are complementary but located in different areas.

The first is an inter-professional network for plantain (Ribap, Cameroon) that consists of about 50 nursery owners (growers) and supervisors (field advisors). Its objective is to improve the techno-economic performance of member nurseries.

The second organization is an association of plantain growers in Leikie at Sa'a (Aspabal). It consists of 11 nursery owners whose main activity is the sharing of information on marketing opportunities, sharing of experiences, and commercial promotion of the new plantain material. These different initiatives institutionalize a network of experimenter-farmers based on seedling production.