Food Security: From University to Territory - Strengthening the University Management for Learning and Practice in the Field of Food Security.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to food security in marginalised areas of the Caribbean, through networking the participating universities and local civil society organisations. Management systems and university capacities for learning and practice concerning food security will be improved via the strengthening of the Agronomy Faculty and laboratory at UCE and through the development and implementation of a curriculum in agronomy with a concentration in food security. The target is to train 50 teachers and 60 specialist (in the Dominican Republic and Haiti) to deliver teaching as well as extension to marginalised communities. The project will target communities (of Local Economic Development Agencies) in six (6) regions with high levels of poverty in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, focusing studies and research on local products with beneficial nutritional qualities and improved local/regional product value chains.

Challenge

The Dominican Republic is a country primarily dependent on agricultural exports based on primary and derivative products. The competencies and options however at university level in agronomy for professionals and technicians are limited and the demand for students wishing to follow a career in agronomy and related careers is virtually non-existent due to low profitability of the agricultural sector. Only some universities maintain currently this offer.

Focus

Diagram of the actions, actors and responsibilities inherent of the project.

Map of description of the action.
The project will target professionals of agronomy as well as graduates in subjects related to agronomy and food safety.

The specific goal of the project is to “strengthening university capacity and management for learning in the field of food security in areas of poverty”. Both institutional structures need to be improved as well as the academic capacities of university teachers and extension workers.

- The first component is aimed at “improved university academic structures in the field related to food security”,
- The second component targets the “promotion of synergies between universities and the regions for local sustainable development”.
- The third component aims to raise awareness of and improve nutritional quality through “food and nutrition education based on local products.”

**Rationale**

This action responds to the needs of universities and technical centers to enhance agronomic training. The project will contribute significantly to training human resources required to ensure the food security of the poor communities.

**Method**

The project is based on an open and participatory process that will provide the opportunity to expand and improve responsiveness to the problems of food security through the training of high-level teachers and specialists in agronomy. The project will promote a process of empowerment through knowledge both theoretical and practical with an emphasis on community ownership. We refer to a process of dual training, which has been used successfully by combining the lectures in the university classroom and practical training with farmers in selected areas.

To ensure the development of activities within the framework of the dual training, the project proposes the creation of an implementation structure described on the picture below.

**Results**

The expected impact of the project will be:

- Increase the training of teacher specialists in the field of food and agronomy.
- Increase in educational quality in the field of food security.
- Integration of UCE and other universities with common objectives in matters of food security.
- The sustainability of the project is ensured by the possibility that the teachers and specialist beneficiaries will be integrated in universities and other educational institutions, LEDA and other community organizations in the territory.
- Encourage, through educational activities, organizations of producers, members of the LEDA, to increase the quality of food in the territories involved.