Incubation workshop "Improving access to food through agroecology: public policy scenarios in favor of the agroecological transition"

CIRAD, Montpellier, 25-27 February 2020

Agroecology in Madagascar
Agroecology, Organic Agriculture and Agroecology Transition (AET)?

• Agroecology:

  • Development actors (GSDM, others) : design and management of sustainable agro-ecosystems - More agricultural practices than food system reflection

  • Researchers (two approaches)
    ✓ Technical vision (cropping system and breeding system) - Driving force: taking into account the negative environmental externalities of the green revolution model and resources degradations
    ✓ More political approach, jointly advocating a technical paradigm change and a food systems recomposition, breaking with the industrialization of production and consumption models.

→ A third design more adapted for Madagascar : Traditional agriculture - It is not a question of greening an intensive agricultural practices, but of intensifying practices that are mostly agro-ecological (ecological intensification).
Agroecology, Organic Agriculture and Agroecology Transition (AET)?

• **Organic agriculture or production (A law is being legislated):**
  
  • A method of production using farming and breeding practices that respect natural balances. Thus, it excludes the use of synthetic chemicals and GMOs.
  
  → Many correspondences with agroecology but the main difference (in our opinion) is that it takes less account of the socio-economic aspects of the food system “in break with the industrialization of production and consumption models”.

• **Agroecology transition:**
  
  • The trajectory of traditional agriculture is about agroecological intensification. It is important to consider the accompaniment and reinforcement of this agroecological intensification (which are conceived as a reaction to conventional intensification), that appears to be the most adapted to the resources and vulnerability of these farms.
  
  • T Raharison thesis: Transition to ecological intensification (conventional models - dominant reference frames: public policies, institutional-value chains actors, etc.).
Application of the concepts? Practices ? Type of productions ? Chains ?

• Concepts constantly in balance with conventional intensification in development projects.  
  ✓ Policy discourse (decision-makers/donors): Agroecology concepts used in relation to environmental protection, sustainability ... and in some cases the resilience of small-scale farmers. 
  ✓ Agricultural intensification implemented through most development projects is still the green revolution (often through agribusiness, public-private partnerships).

• For us, the options of intensification concern all types of productions, systems and value chains.

• See also multisectorality (Cf T Raharison thesis): implementation of public actions highly sector-based (sector-specific reference frameworks, networks of actors, policy instruments, etc.).

Forms of Public Action Contributing to agroecology transition

• Strongly based on donor-supported development projects. Some donors interested in supporting AET, notably AFD, EU, German cooperation.

• United Nations conventions are increasingly oriented towards AET ... but potential mechanisms are still strongly mobilized and almost exclusively for forest/ressources conservation.
Interest and involvement related to the topics of the project proposal

• SPAD's scientific commitment - Agroecology, sustainability of production systems, small-scale farmers
• T Raharison thesis "Institutional conditions for the transition to ecological intensification in the context of small-scale farmers. Case of Madagascar “
• Within the dP SPAD - Work of M Razafimahatratra - Bioeconomic models of farmers, and mostly oriented on Agroecology impact analysis.

Research feasibility

• Given the achievements ... very promising feasibility.
• A large amount of data is currently available on family farms, particularly in the highlands of Madagascar by SPAD... but also in other areas through the GSDM.
• The DP SPAD and the GSDM are good arrangements for research and development with trained and mostly motivated human resources. The DP SPAD brings together human resources from five research institutions. The GSDM is the emanation of several institutions involved in rural development and focused on agroecology.