

“ Travelling from “subsidies to the business model”: The secrets of Myko on action learning in agriculture”

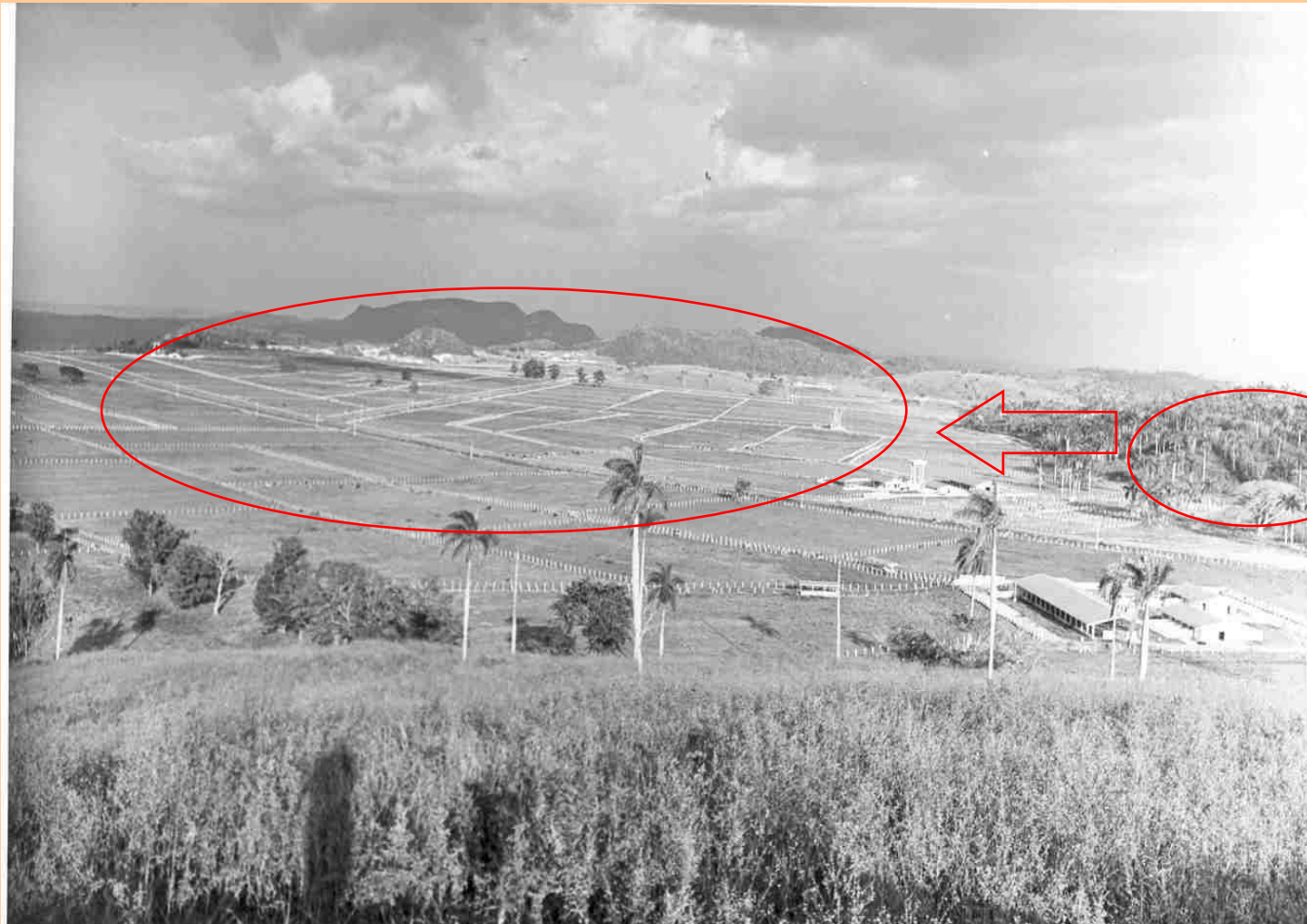


Foto: Michel
Pou

Let me introduce Myko in Freiburg:

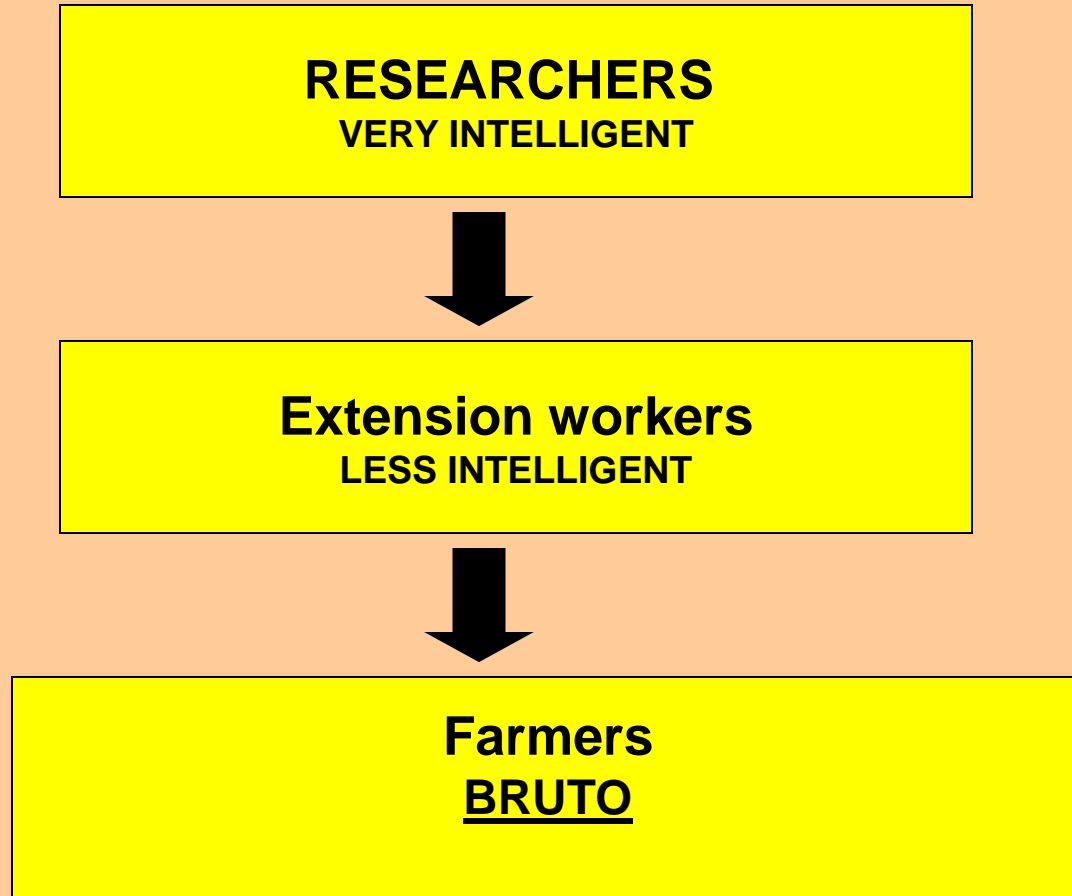
Myko is one of the 11 million of cubans living in Cuba.

How was Myko educated?



Dairy farm highly specialised

Hierarchy of knowledge...



Consumers?



ICRA

1989

Comparison of agro-chemical imports pre and post collapse of the socialist block.

Agrochemical	1989 Imports	1992 Imports	Reduction %
Petroleum (Mt)	13,000,000	6,100,000	53
Fertilisers (Mt)	1,300,00	300,000	77
Chemicals (Millions of USD)	80.0	30.0	62

Source: Rosset and Benjamin, 1993.

FOOD GOT SCARCE



Myko's salary drops down to 3 USA Dollars
a month



Myko had to play in
the bars to get
some tips to
cover family and
PhD



Foto: Michel
Pou

Myko realised that small farmers were facing the crisis differently

Myko Decided to Learn from Farmers

What did Myko promote?

Four key points

1. Diversity Seed Fair Open Source Model



2. Farmer Experimentation



3. Innovation Festival



4. Learning in Action



To change a paradigm people need to learn by changing realities

Agrobiodiversity Pollinators



“Agrobiodiversity Pollinators” similarly carry the best elements of one farmers-community businesses to another, thereby fertilizing all socioeconomic changes and creating a healthy food system

Agrobiodiversity Pollinators
SPREAD DOZEN-HUNDRED
CROP VARIETIES AND
PROMOTED FARMERS
TRIALS ALL OVER THE
ISLAND

Agro-biodiversity Chain Reaction



Year 1

150 Champion Farmers

+

X 5

20 representatives of R&D organisations and value food chains

=

Total= 170 catalysers

Year 2

1360 Champion Farmers

+

30 Agrobiodiversity Pollinators

X 8

60 representative of R&D organisations and value food chains

+

=

Total = 1450 catalysers

X 8

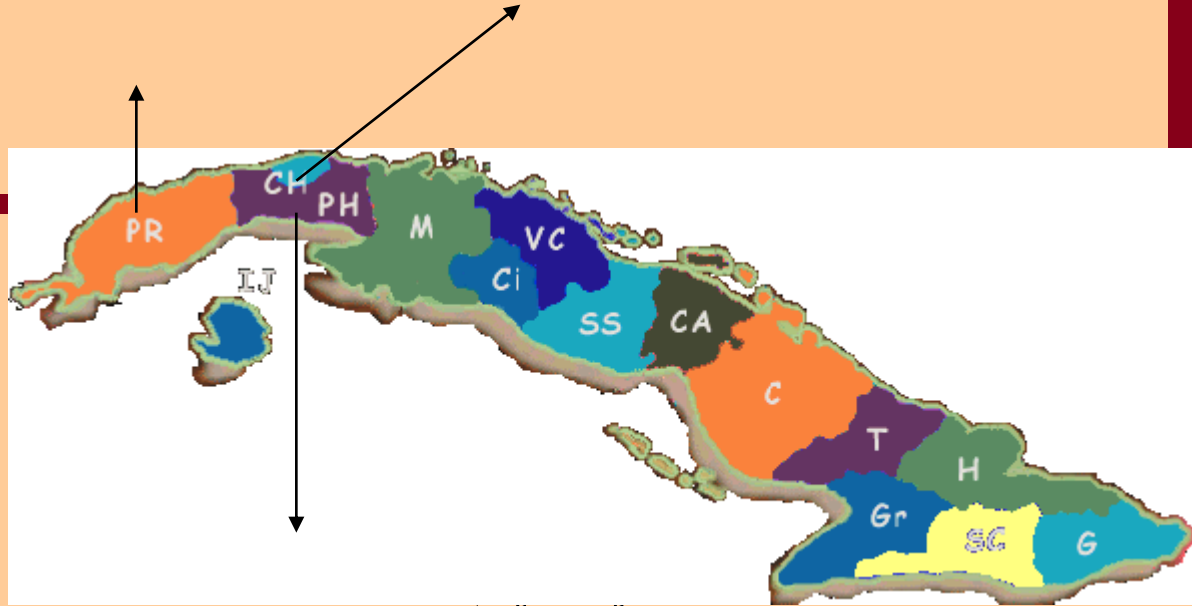
11600 Farmers

Training 30 Agrobiodiversity Pollinators

Landscape in 2000

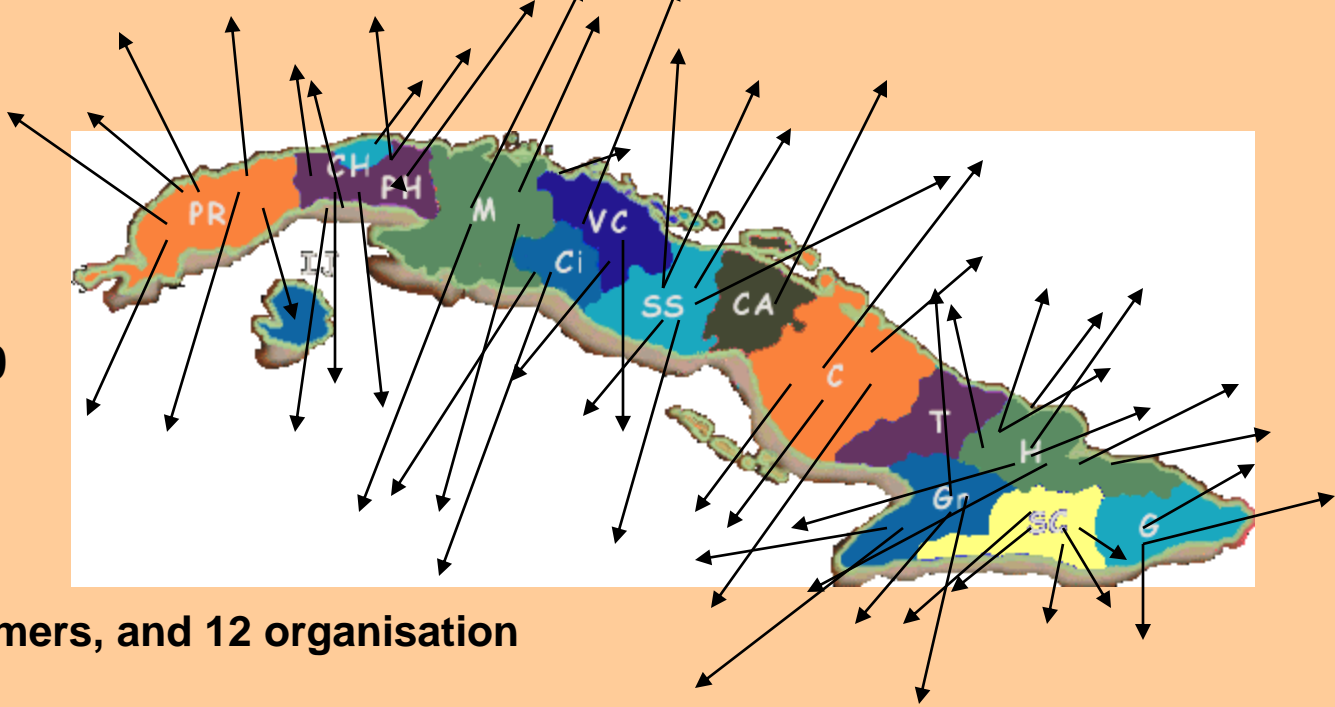
25 farmers

7 individuals from 3 organisations



Landscape of 2010

More than 50.000 farmers, and 12 organisation participating



Results

Increased Crops Yield



Farmers breeding

Conventional
Seeds

Increased Crop Diversity



- TOMATO 3.....42
- MAIZE 4.....52
- BEANS 5..... 198
- RICE 6..... 45

Social Recognition



PROFITS



Foto: Maikel Márquez

Energy and Buisnesses. Squashes example



Coventional
Plant Breeding

Farmers Breeding

Yield	6-8 tons ha ⁻¹	6-8 tons ha ⁻¹
Energetic requirements (kcal ha ⁻¹)	17 Millon	4 Millon
Income ha ⁻¹ (Cuban Pesos)	-462	372

The big surprise!!!



Behind every champion farmer
we discovered one or more
business models!!!!!!

Agrobiodiversity Management Enterprises

Myko applied this approach in Bolivia



México



Limitations



- Project coordination individuals did not like “chaotic process”. They could not control the process
- Socialist Government organizations were skeptical with the word “business”
- Formal seed sector only recognizes improved seed by professional breeders

Participants happy!!!!!!! . Mainly farmers-female organizations

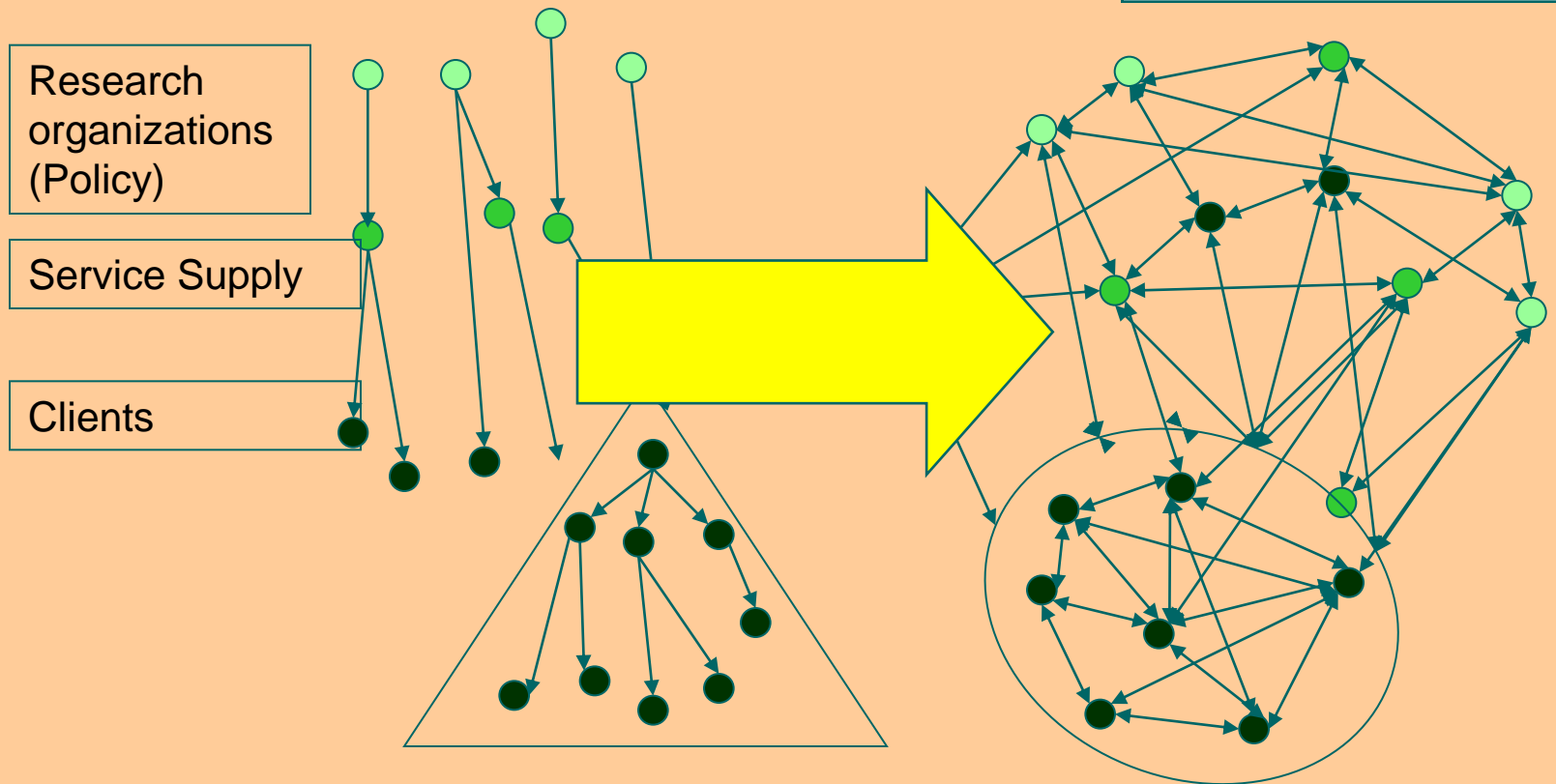


Lesson learnt/ Challenges

Transit from Centralized Innovation Systems to Decentralized Innovation Systems

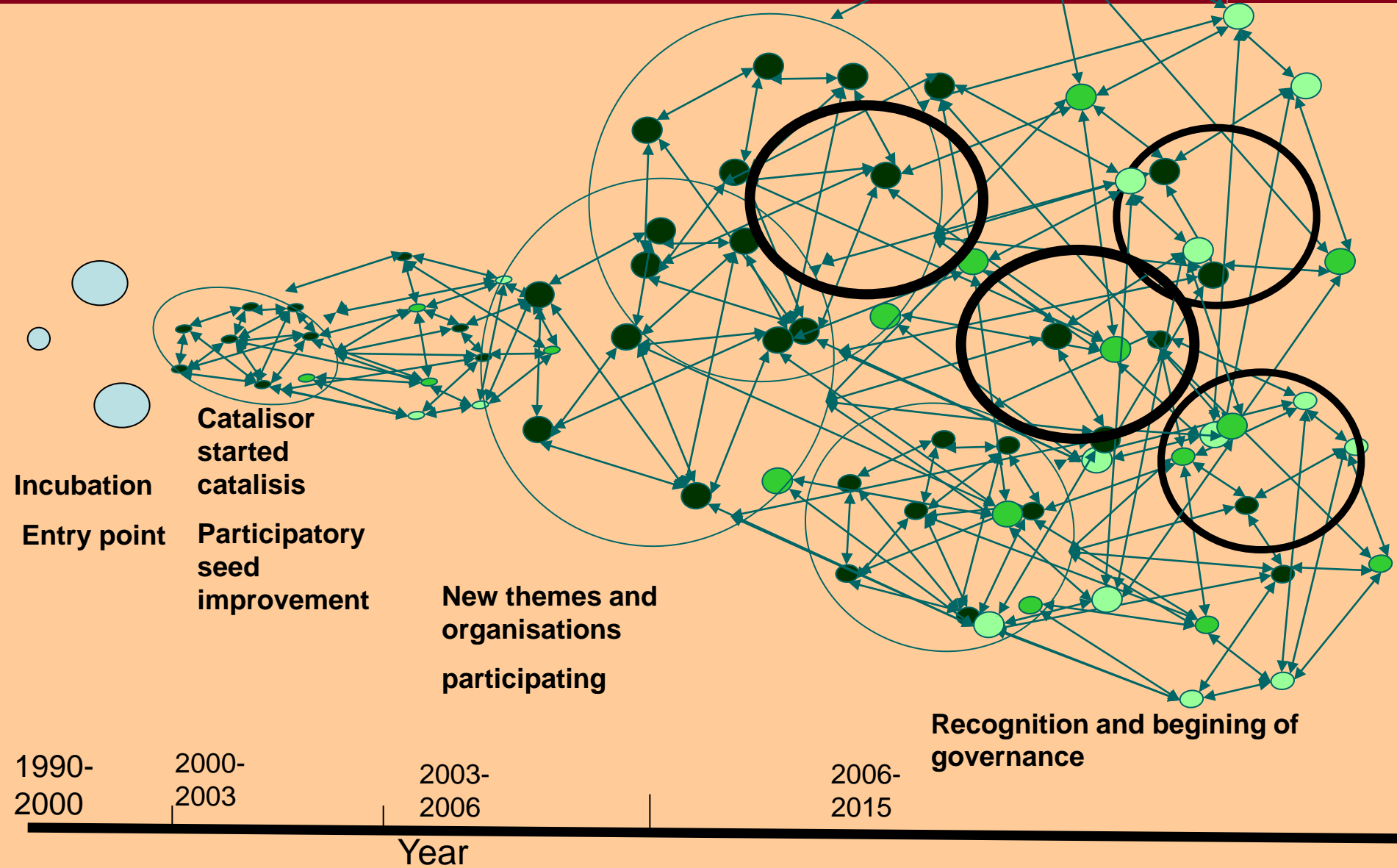
Centralized

Decentralized



The PIAL experience in Cuba over time

Twenty Five Year Long

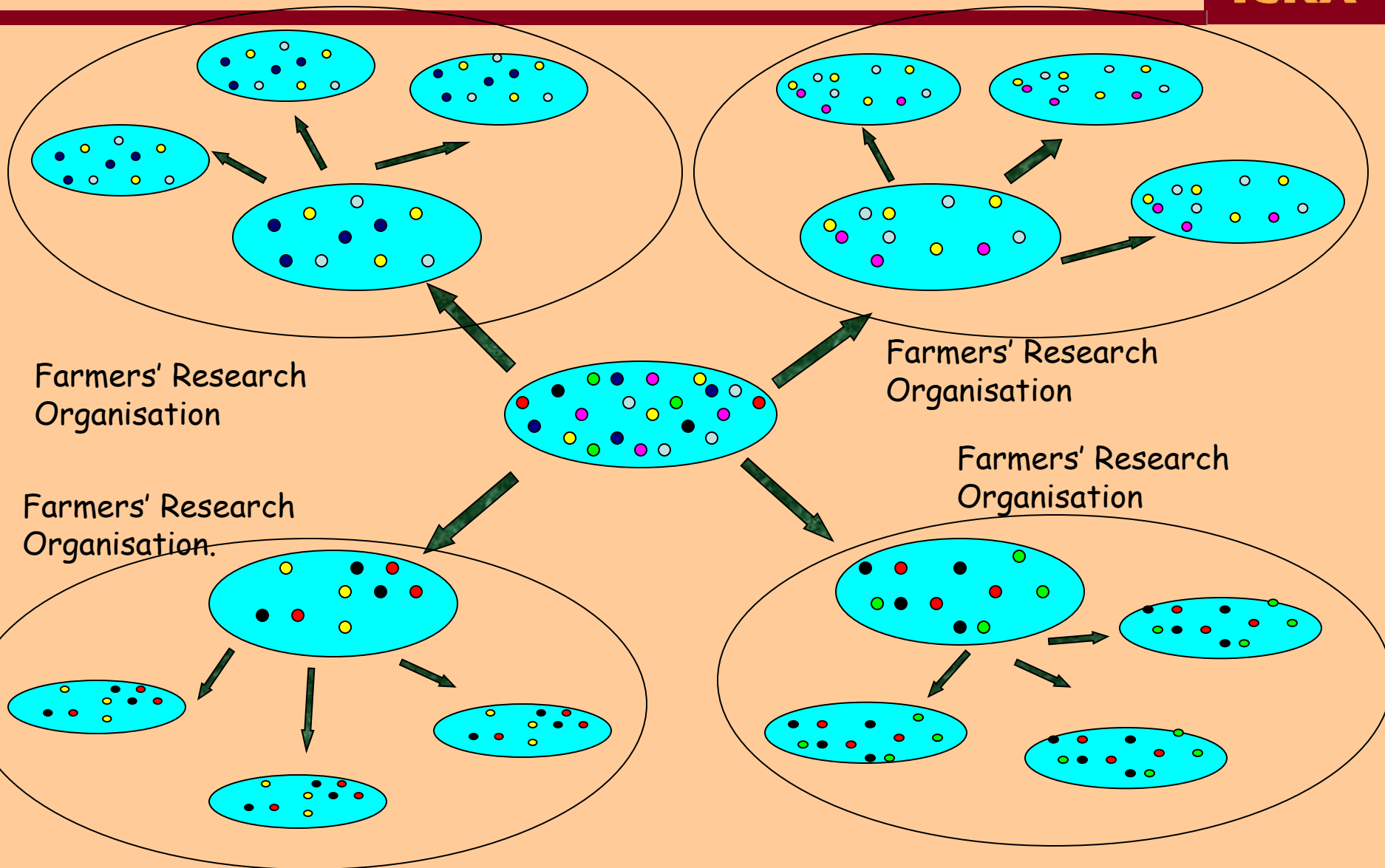


Action Learning can be an accelerator

Innovation in agriculture is not only for scientists...
Institutions and organisations who break linkages with informal
knowledge got sick very soon... Illiterate persons can be geniuses..



Simplicity



Action Research/Learning



You do not know how food systems is working until you start to change it.

NORMALLY, PARADIGM CHANGE IS ASSOCIATED WITH CRISIS

Provoke a Crisis?

Promote Changes in the official educational organization curriculums towards more “Dynamic Education” to learn from stakeholders’ diversity?



Eduardo Calves

When Plant breeders like me are leading
plant breeding business: Bureaucracy
increases and business opportunities are far
away



When Farmers and others champions of a seed value chain are leading breeding business: crop diversity increases and business opportunities come true



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