

World Café ARM 08

13. Should GCP consider a deeper engagement in advocacy?

Host: Theresa Fulton

It was generally agreed that GCP does need more advocacy, to increase awareness. The issues are what type of information, to whom and how?

**Discussions topics included:**

- There is a lack of a “common vision” that needs to be addressed before further advocacy would be effective. For example, if the use of “hubs” or “centers of excellence” is to be encouraged, then the community has to agree that this is the right idea, donors need to be persuaded, and clients need to be encouraged to use the hubs and not try to fund new labs everywhere. It is not clear that this is happening.
- There is still a gap in the delivery process into actual products. In the case of new varieties, this could be addressed by encouraging donors to fund in-country indigenous seed companies.
- CG centers and NARS need to be encouraged to collaborate rather than competing, use each other’s complementary strengths, and share more information. People seem to have no idea what people around them are doing, and how to take advantage of nearby people/facilities.
- GCP needs to make a bigger effort to get out “success stories”, not only to the inner community but to more NARS, newspapers, donors, and government agencies. This would increase awareness and encourage collaboration, and could increase the willingness of govt agencies to put resources into national programs.
- Scientists need to be more in touch with what is going on with plant breeders and in the field, timelines of real breeding programs, etc. They should be encouraged to visit the fields in developing countries. Possibly videos could be made of some of these visits to encourage others or increase awareness of those that can’t go.

**Possible action points:**

- Advocacy to donors: Donors need to be encouraged to target resources in efficient ways (made aware of not funding equipment where no one can use it and no way to maintain it, not buying reagents for places where there is no power for the freezers, etc). They should be made aware of success stories (both key individuals and high-quality institutions) and hubs, to make resource use more efficient.

- Need in-country studies as to what are the specific needs inhibiting delivery of GCP products.
- More public awareness efforts: publications, success stories, to newspapers, perhaps booklets for government people and policy makers, info for high schools and general public. This will increase overall awareness and in the longterm increased support. Encourage NARS public relations groups to get success stories out.
- Increase number of NARS that are aware of GCP. Inform them of usable information coming out of the program (eg. The new “toolbox”, protocols, etc), success stories, hubs that are in their region.
- Common vision: Make sure GCP is projecting a common vision (not sure how to do this!).
- Increase awareness among scientists of in-the-field plant breeding.