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ASSETS OF RESILIENCE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE: HARNESSING CO-LEARNING THROUGH QUECHUA INDIGENOUS AND PEASANT COMMUNITIES IN THE PERUVIAN ANDES

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Background and Objectives: The Peruvian Andes food system harbors a rich agricultural biodiversity for Quechua peasant communities: However, unfavorable socioeconomic conditions in rural areas, combined with the escalating effects of climate change, exacerbate gaps in food security and nutrition, underscoring the need to foster resilient communities. This study aimed to examine the value of community assets for resilience, food security, and

nutrition in Quechua peasant communities in Cusco, Peru. Methods: We conducted a participatory qualitative study using asset-mapping workshops with peasants from 13 high-Andean communities in the districts of Combapata and Yanaoca (characterized by high social vulnerability and climate-related impacts). The workshops included key stakeholders from local agricultural networks, ensuring a diversity of perspectives across genders. The discussions —led by a bilingual Quechua-Spanish facilitator— were transcribed and translated, then coded and analyzed using ATLAS.ti. Results: Participants identified a range of community assets, grouped into five categories (Supplementary): (1) natural resources, (2) traditional knowledge and practices, (3) material and physical assets, (4) community and institutional social networks, and (5) family social capital. These assets were linked to the communities' capacity to sustain agriculture in the face of more frequent frosts and rising temperatures during the planting season, as well as to generate income and ensure household food security (especially for children). Elements of local biodiversity stood out: rivers and natural springs as sources of water security, and native crops and animal species that contribute to a nutritious diet. Additionally, participants emphasized “ayni” (a traditional system of mutual aid) and other cooperative practices among families, and recognized the central role of women in agriculture, food provisioning, and household emotional support. Conclusions: Resilience among Quechua peasant communities hinges on an interrelated set of assets that underpin their capacity to strengthen the food system and safeguard food security in the context of climate change.

Palavras-chave: food security; food system; climate change; indigenous people; participatory research.