

PROLINNOVA–GHANA ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017

INTRODUCTION

During 2017, Prolinnova–Ghana re-organised its National Steering Committee (NSC) into seven members to strengthen the Country Platform (CP)’s governance and supported smallholder farmers in selected communities on participatory innovation development (PID) and local innovation processes under the three-year (2016–2019) Proli-FaNS project. The host NGO (ACDEP) also organised capacity building and learning sessions for farmers at community level and for institutional stakeholders and national platform members. The detailed achievements in the year 2017 are as follows.

LOCAL INNOVATION AND PID ACTIVITIES WITH FARMERS

Identification, documentation and sharing of local innovations:

Over the years, Prolinnova–Ghana partners have supported smallholder farmers’ local innovation processes in northern Ghana. In 2017, 34 new innovations by 22 women and 12 men were identified and promoted or developed through PID in Bongo and Yendi Districts under the Promoting Local Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security (Proli-FaNS) project being funded through Misereor. In May and June 2017, the Evangelical Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency (EPDRA) and the Navrongo-Bolgatanga Catholic Diocese Development Office (NABOCADO), both NGO partners in the CP, organised field days in communities in Yendi and Bongo respectively, where innovators shared their innovations on food security, agro-processing and crop storage for inspiration and adaptation by other farmers. Some innovators also shared their innovations on local radio in Bolgatanga, whilst 10 women showcased their innovations at the annual National Farmers Day celebration in Bongo and Yendi Districts and also received awards and certificates from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

PID activities and results:

Six innovations – three each in the Bongo and Yendi Proli-FaNS action-learning sites – were the focus of farmer-led joint experimentation. The innovations are:

- Soap-making using local herbs and materials, by a women’s group in Yendi District
- Preservation of dried cassava with dried grounded pepper, by a male farmer in Yendi District
- Using *dawadawa* fruit powder to improve the nutritional content of ‘wasawasa’ food, by two women innovators in Yendi District
- Using saltpetre to purify shea butter to enhance its market, by a women’s group in Bongo District
- Social innovation to develop and enforce community by-laws to protect the vegetation of the Soe-Yidongo community in Bongo District
- Processing of sweet potato into flour to add value and prolong storage, by a woman innovator.

The experiments were jointly designed, planned and conducted by three women groups, two female innovators, one male innovator and one community with field extension workers and gender officers of the Department of Agriculture, a researcher from the Animal Research Institute, a nutritionist from the University for Development Studies, staff of Forestry Commission and local NGO field staff. So far, four out the six cases have been successfully completed and the outcomes shared at

community level with other farmers and local institutional stakeholders. The processes and outcomes of the PID will be fully documented in 2018 to facilitate wider dissemination and for policy-dialogue activities. The innovators appreciate the great improvement and value addition to their innovations through PID.

CAPACITY BUILDING

PID training for partners and stakeholders:

Two members of technical support team (Working Group) of Prolinnova–Ghana, namely Patricia Formadi of the University for Development Studies and Zimi Alhassan of the Department of Agriculture, participated in a 4-day PID training for Proli-FaNS anglophone CPs in Nairobi in February 2017. Chesha Wettasinha, Prolinnova International Support Team (IST) member and Righa Makonge of Prolinnova–Kenya facilitated the workshop. Back in Ghana, our two trainees replicated the trainings at the Bongo and Yendi action-learning sites for NGO field staff, local multistakeholder platform (MSP) members and Working Group members. This strengthened their capacities to support farmers’ experimentation and local innovation processes in their food and nutrition security activities.

Preparation and sharing of Prolinnova guidelines:

With support of IST members (Chesha Wettasinha and Ann Waters-Bayer), Prolinnova–Ghana prepared and shared a number of guidelines with other CPs for implementing the Proli-FaNS project. The guidelines, which were also posted on the Prolinnova website (www.prolinnova.net), include *Communication within the Proli-FaNS project*, *Identification of local innovations for food and nutrition security*, *Documentation of local innovations*, and *Proli-FaNS Monitoring and Evaluation framework*.

Experience-sharing and planning workshop with CP partners held in November in Tamale:

Fourteen persons (11 male and 3 female) comprising field staff of site implementing NGOs, local MSP members, the ACDEP project team and Prolinnova–Ghana Working Group / Technical Support team members took part in an experience-sharing and planning workshop on Proli-FaNS in November in Tamale. Participants shared and exchanged experiences and challenges with PID and local innovation (LI) processes under Proli-FaNS for learning and to improve project implementation. We subsequently planned activities for the remaining period of Year 2 up to July 2018 including how to implement Local Innovation Support Facilities (LISFs) to resource innovators to enhance PID and LI results.

NETWORKING AND POLICY DIALOGUE ACTIVITIES

IPW 2017 meeting in Tamale, Ghana in May 2017:

Prolinnova–Ghana and ACDEP were assisted by IST and POG members to host the 2017 annual Prolinnova International Partners Workshop (IPW) in Tamale, Ghana, from 15–19 May 2017. Thirty-eight participants from Africa, Asia and Europe in the Prolinnova International network and Friends of Prolinnova attended the IPW. Misereor and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), who co-sponsored the IPW, were also represented. The participation of Prolinnova–Ghana’s major research and development (R&D) partners, farmer innovators and the media, coupled with speeches and an exhibition of innovations at the opening ceremony, promoted publicity and policy dialogue on PID and LI and further strengthened local networking among CP partners.

CIKOD (Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development), a partner of Prolinnova–Ghana, participated and shared their achievements and experiences using multiple participatory approaches such as indigenous knowledge, endogenous development and social organisation to achieve sustainable food security, food sovereignty, land and water management and eco-agriculture in rural communities.

National Steering Committee meetings:

The NSC of Prolinnova–Ghana was active and held two meetings in April and July 2017. The meetings were convened by ACDEP and attended by its seven members, comprising three women and four men from government research and extension institutions, NGO, private sector and the University for Development Studies. Issues discussed at the meetings and actions taken included:

- Elaboration of the mandate and responsibilities of the NSC
- Hosting IPW 2017 in May in Tamale, and planning other policy-dialogue activities
- Discussing strategies to expand membership of the national platform, with potential members identified as CIKOD, CARE, Oxfam, GIZ and Science & Technical Policy Research Institute of the Council for Scientific & Industrial Research of Ghana (CSIR-STEPRI)
- Discussing fundraising strategies including potential funding agencies to submit proposals
- Reviewing and approving Ghana’s Year 2 work plan and budget for the Proli-FaNS project.

National Farmers Day and Awards Ceremony:

Prolinnova–Ghana, through the two local NGO partners for Proli-FaNS, participated in the 2017 annual National Farmers Day and Awards Ceremonies in Bongo and Yendi Districts. The Ministry of Agriculture holds the event yearly in all regions and districts to recognise and award deserving farmers in various disciplines. The local NGO partners collaborated with the local Departments of Agriculture to select and award certificates to five women innovators each in Bongo and Yendi for their outstanding innovations in food, nutrition and income generation.

CHALLENGES FACED

A major challenge faced was our unsuccessful effort to source additional funding to support PID and LI processes, policy dialogue and capacity-building activities. We shall however continue to explore funding opportunities and submit proposals whenever possible. Another challenge was the limited number of experienced people to effectively facilitate the PID and LI processes with farmers. Most of the experienced members have retired or taken up higher roles in their organisations and have little time to spare. We will focus our effort in the next few years to building capacities of the younger members of the partner organisations through identifying and engaging them more regularly on field support and monitoring activities.

CONCLUSION

Prolinnova–Ghana remained active in 2017, supporting PID and LI activities at community level and using the learning to strengthen the capacities of field workers and research and development organisations in extension and development approaches which seek to put local farmers in the driving seat of leading their own development processes for greater empowerment and sustainability. In 2018, our focus will be on policy-dialogue activities with policymakers and R&D partners to institutionalise PID and LI approaches in order to achieve greater impact at the farmer and community levels in the northern parts of Ghana.