

SOCIAL LEARNING LINKING KNOWLEDGE WITH ACTION (SOLLINKKA)

PROLINNOVA–Kenya Report 2013



Famer showing her innovation – pesticide made from local plants

15 December 2013

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A: Introduction

Social Learning Linking Knowledge with Action (SOLLINKKA) is a one-year project to contribute to the CGIAR CCAFS Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security. SOLLINKKA contributes to the social learning process of CCAFS through Participatory Innovation Development (PID) in PROLINNOVA. This enables multiple stakeholders to gain mutual understanding of a situation and to co-generate relevant knowledge based on joint action and reflection. The PROLINNOVA–CCAFS partnership gives PROLINNOVA a chance to expand its PID activities and CCAFS a chance to explore how the PROLINNOVA approach enhances community resilience to change specifically in diverse smallholder farming systems. The intensification and scaling out of local activities and processes will increase community resilience to climate change by scaling up local innovations and decentralizing and promoting local innovation processes.

The main activities of this project were engaging in social learning on ground level to demonstrate the value of the PID approach in strengthening resilience of farming communities in the face of change, including climate change. This was done through, for example:

- Facilitation of multistakeholder learning platforms (MSPs)
- Transdisciplinary collaboration in PID
- Scaling up LISFs as mechanisms to change the power balance in decision-making about agricultural research and/in development (ARD)
- Process documentation and farmer-led documentation as tools for joint learning
- Various forms of communication relevant for smallholders.

The SOLLINKKA project in Kenya is implemented by PROLINNOVA–Kenya (PK), in which World Neighbors (WN) acts on behalf of the PK secretariat to adhere to the overall project vision and objectives as well as activities.

B: Activities

- 1. Training partners in PID:** PK in partnership with KARI (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute) organised a training course on PID and Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF) for KARI staff in the Adaptive Research and Outreach Department and some other stakeholders (development workers and farmers) in Kenya (22 participants in total). The course, funded by Nuffic (Netherlands), was designed to contribute to SOLLINKKA/Combining Local Innovation Capacities with Scientific Research (CLIC–SR) activities. The training focused primarily on the competencies needed to support farmer-led participatory research building on local innovation processes, as well as to strengthen linkages between the partners in PK. The training was in three stages: i) a 5-day course on PID in February; ii) a period of field practice as part of regular work; and iii) reflection on field experiences and deepening of insights into the PID approach. The main trainer was Laurens van Veldhuizen (PROLINNOVA International Secretariat), supported by PK members Geoffrey Kamau (KARI) and Ann Murangiri (SACDEP, Sustainable Agriculture Community Development).

In October, brief refresher training in PID in Machakos was combined with a meeting with the Local Steering Committee (LSC), farmer innovators, NGO staff and KARI researchers to design farmer-led experimentation (use of nurseries to cultivate finger millet experiment). Training in PID in Baringo was scheduled for late November 2013 but postponed until January 2014. This is a new operational area for PK and far from the national team members who are key in building the capacity of the farmers and other

local actors; therefore, several activities must be combined and implemented during relatively short visits of the resource persons. The training will be used as a platform to form an LSC in Baringo, which will play a pivotal role in coordinating and managing the LISF. It is also expected that the farmers will identify additional local innovations as candidates for joint experimentation, in addition to those identified during the field survey undertaken in Baringo in late 2012.

- 2. Week on Agricultural Innovation in Africa** – PK in partnership with several governmental and non-governmental organizations organized the Week on Agricultural Innovation in Nairobi between (WAIA) which took place between 25 and 31 May 2013. WAIA consisted of a series of international meetings and events on agricultural innovation and development key among them was the Eastern Africa Farmer Innovation Fair (EAFIF). EAFIF was a two-day event which showcased farmer-led innovations from individual and groups of smallholder farmers from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The fair was to bring attention on the importance of farmer innovation in agricultural development, to recognize and celebrate the creativity of smallholder farmers and more importantly to bring various stakeholders - policymakers, researchers, farmers, non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector to learn, share ideas and knowledge through networking and social interactions. The fair had 50 innovators and over 1500 people visited the exhibition stands. The innovations exhibited were on crop production, livestock production, marketing technology and social innovations, and soil and water management. The EAFIF played a significant role in creating awareness on farmer innovations in Eastern Africa. In Kenya it stimulated organisation of local farmer fairs to provide more opportunities to interact, share and learn among stakeholders at the local levels. In addition, it facilitated the development of various documentations – publications, videos and photos that have been shared online and also distributed in various forums. The WAIA events provided a solid ground for undertaking SOLLINKKA activities in Nyando and Mwala Districts.
- 3. Joint experimentation** on the use of nurseries to cultivate finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*) is being undertaken in Machakos and Mwala Districts in Eastern Kenya. A farmer, Mr. Simon Masila, from Kalama Division in Machakos District came up with an innovation of planting the crop in a nursery before the onset of rains and then transplanting the seedlings to the main farm at the start of the rains. The conventional way of cultivating finger millet is broadcasting the seeds. This method with current climatic conditions rarely allows the crop to reach maturity, resulting in low harvests. A PID team composed of various stakeholders – Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) Katumani, Ministry of Agriculture and African Institute for Economic and Social development (¹INADES–Formation and the farmer groups – has negotiated a PID process and is together working on joint experimentation with finger millet nurseries. The purposes of the experimentation are to validate this farmer-developed innovation and to assess the appropriate nursery size and management methods, transplanting approach and possibilities of scaling out the innovation to other parts of Eastern Kenya. The experimentation is ongoing and results are expected in February 2014.
- 4. Farmer innovation fairs:** A farmer innovation fair was held on 27 August 2013 in Machakos organized by the PK Local Steering Committee (LSC) in Kiatuni market in Machakos County with the theme “Innovation(s) for adaption of climate change”. The fair was to showcase farmer-led innovations and provide a forum for learning and sharing ideas and knowledge and was attended by over 300 farmers among other local-level stakeholders. Farmer innovators from Lower Eastern Region displayed various innovations in cropping, water management, horticulture, manure preparation and application, and farm equipment – many of which had been developed to cope with climate variations. The PK National Coordinator and an intern attended the Machakos fair on behalf of the PK Secretariat. A similar fair was held on 17 December 2013 in

¹ Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social

Western Kenya and targets farmers from Nyando and Nyakach Districts. This fair is expected to attract over 30 farmer innovators and over 300 other stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, who have expressed interest in attending. The fair will be used as a forum for social learning to gain and share knowledge and develop actions to address various agriculture development challenges. In addition, the fair will be used to identify and document innovations within the greater Nyando District as well as to provide a means to identify opportunities for joint experimentation.

5. **A multistakeholder policy workshop** was held on 14–15 November 2013 at the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Nairobi. Twenty five (25) participants from research, NGOs and farmer groups were present. The workshop provided a platform for sharing findings and recommendations of a policy study report by Martin Odendo, a consultant. The aim was to investigate policy opportunities to mainstreaming PID within the national policy and institutional frameworks. The policy study undertook a situation analysis of ARD, innovation policies and programmes; assessed policy and institutional barriers and opportunities for promoting local innovation; discussed issues of integrating local innovation and PID into national and institutional policies; and lastly, examined the policy-influencing experiences related to PID. The workshop objectives were:
 - a. To introduce the PID debate with policy influencers to carry it to a higher level of engagement, especially within the agricultural sector;
 - b. To attain new insights and additional inputs into policy direction, based on the current situation on the ground as seen by ARD stakeholders;
 - c. To discuss the policy way forward for PID and any relevant concerns; and
 - d. To identify approaches to mainstream PID within PK member organizations.

The discussions and outputs of the workshop also supported in enriching the policy study, whose recommendations will be critical in supporting PK in identifying specific policies to focus on in promoting and mainstreaming PID and in supporting policymakers in influencing policy with respect to PID.

6. **Policy brief:** A policy brief based on the experience of joint experimentation on finger millet is being developed and expected to be finalized, printed and distributed by January 2014. In addition, the policy study report findings will also support in developing various policy briefs targeting various stakeholders at both national and county level.
7. **Breakfast meeting for decision-makers:** Initially, the plan was to conduct one national breakfast meeting in 2013. However, after various discussions and assessing the current political dispensation within the country, the PK National Steering Committee (NSC) recommended that the breakfast meetings be done on a regional level targeting the county governments and key stakeholders within the counties. The breakfast meetings have been planned for January 2014.
8. **International Year of Family Farming Conference:** The United Nations General Assembly declared 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF). INADES–Formation, a member of PK, organized a conference on 25–27 November 2013 in Machakos to discuss IYFF. PK was represented by Teresiah Ng'ang'a from the PK Secretariat and Makonge Righa from WN. PK had an opportunity to share some local innovation experiences related to small livestock, and the JOLISAA² case on dairy goats in Mwingi was used as the case study. The conference discussed policies that support sustainable development of family farming, reinforcing the legitimacy of the farmer associations to represent the family farming interests, increasing awareness of civil society on the role of family farming and recognition of the role of women in family farming, among other issues affecting family farmers.

² JOint Learning in Innovation Systems in Africa Agriculture, an EU-funded project in which PK collaborated

9. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) visits: M&E visits have been conducted in Machakos and Nyando Districts by the PK secretariat and through PK members trained in PID and working in the two districts: from the Community Rehabilitation and Environmental Protection Programme (CREP), WN, KARI, INADES–Formation and the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture. The purposes of the monitoring trips were to assess the progress of the farmer innovators and to provide support (technical and administrative) to the farmers as well as to the Local Steering Committees.

C: Way forward

There are many small-scale farmers undertaking and promoting various innovations within their localities. The innovations are mainly to address the various agricultural challenges they face and to enhance agricultural productivity. In addition, many of the innovations are to address the various changes they face such as lower soil fertility, increased incidence of pests and climate change and also due to the various social, cultural and economic changes they experience within their locality. Participatory approaches to research and development such as those applied by PK provide space for a suitable process of social learning – for interactive feedback that will be able to scale up and scale out innovations and innovation processes and support farmers in enhancing food security, improving livelihoods and strengthening resilience to change, including climate change. The PK work in SOLLINKKA will support further identification of farmer innovations and building the innovative capacity of farmers and their communities.