PROLINNOVA–Philippines Update 2016

Introduction

PROLINNOVA–Philippines was recognized as a CP in August 2013. It was conceptualized to explore models of local innovation platforms (municipal level) to bring together stakeholders and to serve as units for fostering innovation development and for promoting and out scaling farmer innovations while bringing national planners to recognize the value of local-level out scaling as being as important basis for upscaling. Evidence-based advocacy through proof-of-concept sites demonstrating effective models is expected to result in policy influencing.

PROLINNOVA–Philippines aims to enhance the Rural Agricultural Services at the local (municipal) level through the introduction of multi-stakeholder innovation development platforms. Specifically, it aims to:

a. use an innovation development approach to leverage the nutritional and livelihood contributions of agriculture and allied sciences;
b. identify and document local innovations, innovation processes and innovators among farmers by enhancing capacities at different levels: communities, academe, local government units and NGOs;
c. facilitate the establishment of local-level multi-stakeholder platforms for the testing, adoption, adaptation and sharing of innovations in agriculture and natural resource management, and provision of rural advisory services; and,
d. raise awareness on participatory innovation development (PID) approaches among policymaking and academic institutions.

Achievements in 2016

Capitalizing the presence of IIRR on the ground with its work in its learning communities, IIRR continue to link PROLINNOVA agenda to its work on the ground. IIRR currently works in the municipality of Guinayangan, Quezon, where it engages farmers and farmer groups towards innovation development for their livelihood resilience building.

1. IIRR facilitated first meeting with other stakeholders in Region where Quezon Province belongs (Region 4A). A meeting with representatives from the state university, research stations in the region where conducted to discuss their joining PROLINNOVA Philippines. The representatives expressed interest in the network. Below are the names and their respective organizations:
   a) Felino J. Gutierrez, Jr. - Director Extension Services, Southern Luzon State University (SLSU), extension
   b) Aida P. Luistro, Senior Agriculturist, Southern Tagalog Integrated Agricultural Research (STIARC)
   c) Belina Rosales, Municipal Agriculturist, Municipality of Guinayangan
   d) Roberto Gajo, Provincial Agriculturist, Quezon Province
2. International Farmer Innovation Day was celebrated with a roving workshop for farmer co-operators from Guinayangan (see Annex 1: Farmer Innovators inspire their peers)

3. Testing the community innovation fund at the community level (see Annex 2: Community Innovation Fund)
ANNEX 1: INTERNATIONAL FARMER INNOVATION DAY

Farmer innovators inspire their peers
Darlyn Angeles

IIRR celebrated the 2016 International Farmer Innovation Day by bringing farmers from Guinayangan to farmer innovators across Region 4. Through a roving workshop, farmers were able to visit and learn from their peers.

Farmer inventor

Mr. Cesar Mamaril is a rice farmer from Bae, Laguna. He has been practicing organic rice farming through focusing on soil health. Mr. Mamaril is also a farmer researcher actively partnering with local scientists. He invented a farmer-friendly tool to measure soil nutrients. The minus-one-element technique is a simple experiment to determine what nutrient is deficient or insufficient that limits the growth of a crop. “Identify first what is limiting in the soil and be assured of an increase yield,” he pointed out in one of his sharing. He further pointed out the value of diversification in rice farms. Through the Sorjan method, farmers allocate an area for growing vegetables, fruit bearing trees, and fishpond. Originally from Indonesia, the practice maximizes productivity of the farms that ensures regular income and food security. Mr. Mamaril also shared his decision to focus on more marketable varieties of rice like the glutinous, pigmented and aromatic varieties as it commands a higher price in the market.
Diligence pays
Meanwhile, farmers from Guinayangan were inspired by one hard working farmer from Silang, Cavite. Mr. Julian Aguilar revealed how he increased his family’s income by maximizing his 3 hectare land. He is practicing multiple cropping by planting cacao, coffee, dragon fruit, pineapple, calamansi, pomelo, coconut, and many others. In fact he earns Php 6,000 a week just selling the leaves of chili pepper. But the most important message he gave to the farmers is to make use of the knowledge they learn from trainings, seminars and from this roving workshop if they want their lives to improve. Learning is useless unless they practice it.

Rising from adversity
In Nagcarlan, Laguna, two members of the Laguna Cacao Farmers Association or LACABA revealed how they built their livelihood after a major typhoon hit their farm. In 2014, typhoon Glenda (international name Rammasun) hit region 4 and completely destroyed most of the fruit farms of Nagcalan farmers. This did not stop Mr. Fred Dereza and Rodel Dorado to rise from this misfortune; instead they started to look for alternative crops they can grow with more returns. Both started to attend seminars in cacao production. They organized other farmers and sought the support of the local government. Now they went beyond production but engaged in value addition through production of tablea chocolate. He brought the farmers from Guinayangan to the production area and showed the whole process including the proper technique for fermenting tablea. Mr. Dorado further illustrated the proper way to collect seeds for seedling propagation.

Starting from small
Another inspiring innovator farmer is Mr. Renato Belen or endearingly called MangAto. Ato Belen Farm is a known source of quality fruit tree seedlings where all IIRR fruit trees distributed to farmer cooperators are also purchased. From a mere 200 square meter and a capital of Php 700, MangAto was able to grow his farm to 2.3 hectares with sheer hard work and exceptional diligence. Guinayangan farmers learned that there is business in seedling raising. They also had a quick lesson in grafting.

The value of the roving workshop is not only to broaden the knowledge of farmers to other available approaches and farming systems but more importantly to offer inspiration, motivation and encouragement that farming is a viable livelihood. Providing opportunity for new perspectives, roving workshops allows farmers to go beyond what they have been accustomed to. New knowledge brings new opportunities and drive to test new things.
Testing the Concept of Innovation Fund in IIRR Learning Communities

Introduction

Farmers rarely have access to support to implement their own ideas and innovations. The risks involved in trying something new are high for resource poor farmers.

PROLINNOVA network acknowledged the gap in participatory research and participation of farmers in research and development. The network launched the Innovation Support Funds to allow farmers do their own research and experimentation in 2004. The local innovation support fund was tested to see how local funding can be accessed by farmers and develop innovations that they want to test. The fund has the following elements:

- Farmers have control over the funds, however managed by a CSO
- Promotes interaction between farmers and scientist/researchers/extensionist to enhance and refine innovations
- Grant to encourage farmers experiment without worrying about the risks of experimentation
- Linkage to financial support for successful innovations
- Grant not a an investment or credit fund

Replicating PROLINNOVA’s local innovation support funds (LISFs) in Guinayangan

The ISF in Guinayangan seeks to support small landed and vulnerable farming households who have no capacity to take risks. The ISF promotes group building and support group of farmers who are willing to work together to address specific production issue.

There are several systems that the project tested to implement the concept of innovation fund in Quezon: direct provision of support and direct grant.

Direct provision

The project provided direct materials (e.g. goats, swine, seeds) to farmer co-operators in a village to test through participatory innovation/technology development process of select climate smart approaches/technology. This decreases the risk for farmers as they do not need to invest but still have the opportunity to test the approach. After the experimentation and if successful, farmers are required to return the initial investment in kind. For example for farmers who tested reduction of commercial feeds by using alternative and local available materials such as rice bran, legumes, root and tuber crops, etc., they will return 1-2 gilts and pass it on to another farmer including the technology.
For crops, farmers are given small amounts of seeds for testing through participatory varietal selection. Usually farmers with extra land for the experiment conduct the PVS. After the PVS, they select the best variety and the project will buy back the seeds for distribution to more farmers. The farmer who conducted the PVS has the option to multiply for his own use and sell if he/she wants to.

To ensure access to these materials, IIRR promoted the establishment of farmer managed community support structures so materials can be sourced locally. Breeding centers for quality small livestock (native swine, goats, poultry) and crop and tree nurseries were established.

**Direct grant to support testing and participatory action research**

For direct grants, the project provides counterpart to support a farmer’s idea or experiment. The farmer also provides his/her counterpart, most of the time their labor. Farmers were organized into learning groups where social learning happens. Below show the process:

Any member of farmer learning group is eligible to apply for the grant. The grant will support the following: a) the innovation will provide possible solution to identified livelihood issue due to climate variability, b) materials/equipment/supplies needed to test the innovation, and c) cost of labor is NOT covered. The agreed process is detailed below:
Process

- Farmer researcher and extension officer (IIRR/OMA staff) will submit application form (see Form 1 below) based on the agreed proposed solution identified during the farmer learning group.
- Proposal will be reviewed by IIRR review team
- Once approved, farmer will be informed. IIRR/OMA staff will assist farmer to implement the PTD/PAR.
- After the “testing”, the farmer researcher will present the result during one of the FLG meeting

Currently 48 farmers accessed the innovation fund. Forty (40%) are female and sixty (60%) are male. The average amount requested was Php 3,000 with Php 5,000 as the highest and Php 2,000 lowest. The table below shows the climate related issues they wanted to find solutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues and Challenges</th>
<th>Proposed Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IFG is affected by drought thus there is lesser feed source</td>
<td>Feed formulation trial on native pig with consideration to IFG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences prolonged drought in the area</td>
<td>PVS of drought tolerant rice varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences prolonged drought in the area</td>
<td>Trial of drought tolerant crops like dwarf coconut, cacao and pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences prolonged drought in the area</td>
<td>Field trial of drought tolerant crops such as black pepper and cacao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFG is affected by drought thus there is lesser feed source</td>
<td>Feed formulation trial on native pig with consideration to IFG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No enough irrigation during transplanting</td>
<td>PVS of different upland rice varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is saline water intrusion in rice field areas</td>
<td>PVS of saline tolerant varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertilizer management after upland rice production</td>
<td>Intercropping of peanut and corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no available male native pig for breeding.</td>
<td>Native pig production is a part of risk diversification. Buy male pig for breeding purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong typhoon and prolonged drought affects farming system in the area</td>
<td>Field trial of drought tolerant crops such as black pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forage for goats is affected by drought</td>
<td>Management different kinds of foods for goats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong typhoon and prolonged drought affects farming system in the area</td>
<td>Observation trial on black pepper, cacao and banana &quot;señorita&quot; production under coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers need an alternative source of livelihood aside from coconut. Coconut is easily affected by typhoon.</td>
<td>PVS and observation trial of cacao as intercrop in coconut plantation</td>
</tr>
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<td>PVS of 2 variety of black pepper</td>
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<td>Observation trial on paminta production under coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong winds due to typhoon greatly affects for copras</td>
<td>Establish trial areas of dwarf coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Management different kinds of foods for goats</td>
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</table>

1 As part of the farming learning group process, farmers will analyze their situation and identify issues and challenges brought about by the changing climate and weather variability to their agricultural production. After identifying these issues and challenges, possible solutions will be deliberated FLG process (identification of production issues and identification of possible solutions for testing)
| IFG is affected by drought thus there is lesser feed source | Feed formulation trial on native pig with consideration to IFG |
| Rice production is affected by prolonged drought | PVS of drought tolerant rice varieties |

The process started early this year. An initial year assessment will be conducted to assess the effectiveness and impact of the innovation fund concept late this year. The results will be documented through a working paper on innovation fund.