

PROLINNOVA CAMEROUN

PROMoting Local INNOVation

in ecologically-oriented agriculture and natural resource management

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Report of the activities of PROLINNOVA CAMEROON from the 15th until 17th of October 2011

PROLINNOVA Cameroon seeks to develop the country's agriculture by integrating endogenous solutions into rural development policies and strategies. It is putting in place a framework for spreading local innovations and for continuous cooperation between smallholders, agricultural advisers and research scientists in research and development.¹

Being a member of the international network since late March 2011 only, PROLINNOVA Cameroon is just at the beginning of this project. The first step consists therefore in identifying local innovations in agriculture.

Due to celebration of three international days from the 15th until the 17th October 2011 next to the city hall in Yaoundé we had the opportunity to present its activities and plans to a wider public.

During the whole time the network assisted the events at the stand of COSADER (NGO Collective for Rural Development and Food Security), member of the National Steering Committee. In order to be better known as well as in the civil society as among high representatives and leaders we handed out our new leaflets and were ready for discussions at the stand.



FAO Representative in Cameroon Ousmane Guindo (man on the left) visiting the stand

Thereby at the occasion of the “Rural Women Day” on the 15th of October the representative of UNWOMEN visited the information desk, as one important topic in our

1 q.v. mission formulated on PROLINNOVA's website: prolinnova.net.

work is the gender aspect and women's role in agriculture. Moreover Ousmane Guindo, representative of the FAO, honored PROLINNOVA Cameroon with his interest and advice.

At the World Food Day, the 16th of October, PROLINNOVA Cameroon animated at its stand a “Farmers' Innovation Matinee”. Immediately the question “What is an innovation?” arises. Starting with the example of Serge Ayangma, who tells about his own experiences in beekeeping and how he adapted and modified general knowledge to the conditions of local beekeepers in Central Cameroon, it could be asserted that “local innovation” means a process of developing *new* and *better* ways of doing things, in terms of technology, socio-economic organization or institutional configuration.²

Thereafter the two GLEN-interns Joséphine Aubert (France) and Karin Willnauer (Germany) presented the hitherto results of their project which consists of interviewing, listing and classifying local innovations of farmers in the Center region of Cameroon. They showed the different examples of innovations already known by PROLINNOVA in the sector of agriculture, beekeeping and transformation. At the end they gave suggestions, how this project could continue in the future.



Presentation of the two interns' project within PROLINNOVA

Afterward an intensive discussion started with about 25 participants, members of the United Nations and of the civil society like rural women and farmers from different regions in Cameroon, who showed a huge interest in the activities of PROLINNOVA and confirmed the missing connections between the farmers as well as the need to work with the indigenous knowledge already existing among them. In order to change this situation, we concluded to strengthen our effort to link the innovative farmers, to identify new ones, to create a bigger platform and install “Local Innovation Days” as a fixed period in the year, where the actors can meet in person to exchange about their experiences, difficulties and new ideas. It came out very clear that the participants expect now from us to stay in touch with them and keep

2 q.v. Definition in PROLINNOVA WP 30: Frequently Asked Questions. Oct. 2009.

them updated about the next plans. Another aspect, which should be followed up after the discussion are the products' price policies.



Discussion at the "Farmers' Innovations Matinee"

In the afternoon, Mrs Christine Andela, country coordinator of PROLINNOVA Cameroon, participated in a public discussion with representatives of the FAO about food security, its challenges and opportunities in Cameroon.

The next day, the UNDP hosted the "International Day for Eradication of Poverty", where we have invited again lots of interested guests to our stand, providing fresh fruit and vegetable juices produced by Mrs Anne-Marie Gweth, one of the innovative farmers of the network, very active in transforming local products.

We can conclude that this first public action was a huge success. Nevertheless there is still a lot to do, but the feed-backs we got during those three days motivate us strongly to continue in this direction.