

Action Research
on
PROLINNOVA Network

REFLECTION OF FINDINGS

**GLOBAL PROGRAMME
and
CASE STUDY OF NEPAL PROGRAMME**

(Sharad R, Tanzania, March 2011)

STRUCTURE

A. Chapter: I

o **Global Programme**

- ✓ Events and Processes
- ✓ Findings
- ✓ Recommendations

B. Chapter: II

o **Nepal Case Study**

- ✓ Events and Processes
- ✓ Findings
- ✓ Recommendations

CONTEXT

- What is so special about Networks?

ORGN.

MISSION/GOAL



INSTRUMENTS



COMPETENCES



PEOPLE

Controlled
Environment

Vs.



Network

PEOPLE



ENERGY



CONNECTION



FOCUS/GOAL

Unknown
Areas

Chapter: I **Global Programme**

EVENTS & PROCESSES

1. PM&E workshop, Ethiopia (26 Aug'-3 Sep' 2010)

Session on Action Research on Networks

- History/Time-line of PROLINNOVA programme as a global network.
- Collection of narratives/perspectives (personal interviews).
- Compilation of Findings and sharing.
- Feedback collection and incorporation.

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EVENTS & PROCESSES

2. Workshop on Networking for Development, Ede, Netherlands (13 Sep'-17 Sep' 2010)

Background and Processes

- 5 different network representatives participate organised by MDF consult.
- Findings from the Ethiopia workshop presented and discussed.
- New tools applied to analyse/assess these findings

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Tools/Methodology

- Time line
- Collection of narratives through interviews (Observations and perspectives)
- Circle of Coherence (Interactions)
- Spiral of Innovations (Achievements)
- Triangle of Change (Positions)

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FINDINGS

A. Time Line (History) of Prolinnova

Summary of Time Line (Global Perspective)

- **1992 – 2004:** *Ignition Phase* – the Conception and Launching of PROLINNOVA Network
- **2005 – 2007:** *The Evolution and Growth* phase of International Network
- **2008 – 2009:** *Robust and Dynamic* Network Sailing through a Stormy Period
- **2010:** Despite the *Turbulence*, the Network looks back and plans forward

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Mapping the Time Line (History)

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Global Programme

KEY POSITIVE MOMENTS:

- Conception and launching with diverse partners – as a new experience.
- Piloting of capacity building and consensus building events (eg: IPW, PID training)
- Induction of committed individuals in the network.
- Replacement of some non-active members by more active and committed individuals.
- The decentralisation process initiated by handing over ownership to partners at CP level.
- Launching of new pilots (FLD, FAIR/LISF) and expansion of network.
- Recognition of local innovations at policy level (CPs).
- Sharing of knowledge and experiences between network members/partners.
- Evidence of successful pilots and its relevance begins to emerge.
- Development and documentation of important papers: Beyond 2010 and M&E framework.
- Launching of PROLINNOVA website and operationalisation of electronic evaluation.
- Successful fundraising initiatives in some countries.

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KEY NEGATIVE MOMENTS:

- There were no takers during the conception phase of PROLINNOVA programme.
- The first PID training as a pilot failed to bring clarity in some areas of intervention. (eg: LI documentation process, PID, M&E).
- Committed individuals resign and some key network member organisations pull out of the network.
- Management problem and conflict within organisation and between networks.
- Pilot projects fail to meet expectations.
- Proposals rejected.
- Low focus on the documentation process of the network itself.
- Documentation and communication in English for Francophone network members (language barrier).

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FLASH MOMENTS:

- Process of decentralisation with the formation of POG evolved as the need of the moment and was not pre-planned.
- Type or the management style of lead organisation shapes the way for network functions at CP level.
- Entry of some individuals contributes significantly in the management and institutional strengthening process of the network.
- The management failures or problems at CP level leads to constructive learning for networks at all levels of operation (international, regional and national).
- The implementation of FAIR/LISF contributes towards strengthening the PROLINNOVA programme as a whole.
- Corrective measures was possible after the external evaluation was carried out and insights gained on the issues. Ownership at CP level, for example, was one of the most highlighted issues.
- The development of strategy paper "Beyond 2010" was a significant moment as this was the first strategic paper of the network.
- Lack of funds tests the resilience of the network. Demonstrates evidence of success to raise funds at the country level.
- Active participation of some key members of the network at CP level leads to quick and significant outputs and outcomes.
- PROLINNOVA also contributes towards the development of R&D methodologies.
- Member/s who resigned from the network continue to provide support.

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FINDINGS

2. Structure, Functions and Interactions

- Interactions and communication between IST and CP level not a complex process (meetings/workshop, website, skype, yahoogroups).
- Few concerns regarding adequate interaction between ETC and CP network members in the current process (Eg: Francophone).

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FINDINGS

- Role of 'individuals' and 'people' within the network have been prominent (attributing towards success and failures)
- CP level Network structure as lead organisations have formed this as suited to the national and local context Lead organisations have shaped the way the network functions at CP level (respective management and delivery strategies).
- Analysis reveals that the factor of resource availability – people and finance – is the main attributing factor behind increase and decrease in energy levels within the networks.
- Level of energy and the resulting factors cannot be realised without analysis at respective CP level.

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- Coordinating organisations have been the critical source of learning for the whole network (maintain relationships/communicating btwn partners and IST)

3. Achievements (Spiral of Innovations)

- Achieved significantly if we consider the chain of events and results (since 1992)
- Full spiral/cycle of achievements – *planning, development, realisation, dissemination and embedding* - completed within a specified period of time (Example of Embedding: Institutionalisation or mainstreaming Prolinnova organisation or in other organisations) [..\..\..\Desktop\Spiral.JPG](#)

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❑ Achievements (Spiral of Innovations)

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- Also leads to the conclusion that the successful completion of a particular 'Spiral of Innovation' has the potential to create another spiral of its own (Eg: FAIR, Climate Change, FLD – projects)
- Findings on the general 'international perspective'. Achievements or the spiral completed at country-level networks can be assessed at respective CP level.

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4. Positions (Triangle of Change)

- Indications that role and functions of different entities within the network has changed overtime.
- No significant change at the international (secretariat) level
- Country level more dynamic with people coming in and out
- Few CPs have shifted from being mere 'implementers' to 'facilitators' and 'change agents'.
- In depth assessment not carried out at Global programme or CP level yet.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- Support initiatives to re-assess shared vision or aspiration (one bench mark of measuring 'healthy organisation') at the global/regional Programme level
- Help to develop country-level partnership strategies, sharing and replication between North-South as well as South-South network actors and stakeholders.
- Important documentation such as the "Strategy Paper: Beyond 2010" should be able to distinguish between "People" and "Organisations" as appropriate (People/individual as the key attributing factor).
- Strengthen the information flow link/mechanism between donors and country-level networks.

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General

- Capacity-building and cross-learning initiatives to be continued.
- More strategic and increased frequency in the interaction between CP networks, regional as well as international networks is required to allow more space for learning and sharing.
- Improve on the documentation process.

Country Level

- Drive comes from individuals involved in the network. Learning based on this experience should be documented and shared.
- Common interests and approaches (for example, farmer-centric/led approaches) of member organisations and individual members have to be explored and encouraged.
- Each country coordinators need to facilitate more effectively and take corrective measures (if required) in issues that affect communication at both international and country level network.

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Country Level

- The M&E system and mechanisms need to be strengthened at the country level as a part of the programme and not as a different component (embedding)
- Coordinating organisations or the secretariat need to have a clear understanding of needs and aspirations of network members: help to retain relevant individuals/organisations.
- Explore ways and means to strengthen the documentation processes and practices amongst network members with IST support.
- Network analysis should be a part of review or evaluation process.

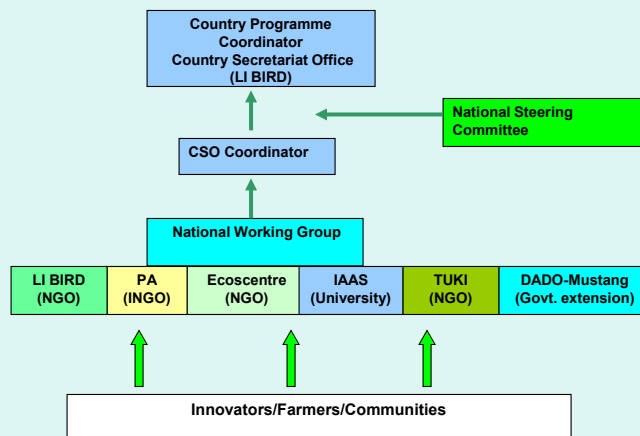
CASE STUDY OF PROLINNOVA NEPAL PROGRAMME

Chapter: II Nepal Programme: Case Study

INTRODUCTION

- Initiated in the year 2004 led by LI-BIRD (6 member partners)
- 2 members (INGOs) exit within 2 years. NGO and govt. extension office joins in.
- Structure remains the same with LI BIRD as the coordinator (CPC and PC)
- CP activities implemented through consortium of partners (NWG)

Chapter: II Nepal Programme: Case Study



Chapter: II

Nepal Programme: Case Study

EVENTS & PROCESSES

1. Network Analysis Workshop (Pokhara)

Overview

- One-day network analysis workshop held back-to-back with the National Working Group (NWG) meeting _ 3rd December 2010
- Part of action plan (Ede) main objective to explore issues and solutions relevant to the existence and continued functioning of the PROLINNOVA country programme as a network in Nepal.
- Current (7) and past (2) NWG members participated.
- Session covered assessment of major observations (Positive, Negative and Flash moments) and underlying issues of network members (shared vision, positioning, interactions).

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

EVENTS & PROCESSES

1. Network Analysis Workshop (Pokhara)

Methodology and Tools

Four major elements:

- (i) Shared vision/aspiration (Meta cards, compilation)
- (ii) Time Line (moments): Posting on the 'wall'
- (iii) Level and quality of interactions (Circle of Coherence)
- (iv) Plenary discussion (way forward)

Chapter: II

Nepal Programme: Case Study

EVENTS & PROCESSES

1. Collection of Narratives: Individual perspectives

Background, Methodology and Tools

- Original idea to hold personal interviews but not possible due to the time constraint and scattered locations.
- Questionnaire was developed as an alternative and circulated to all members of the network (on an individual basis) through e-mail.
- Follow up with each member through telephone for clarifications as well as to ensure responses
- Assured of confidentiality (refer to annex)
- Out of seven targeted respondents two did not respond

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

Six questions (Last 2 questions not for PC and CPC)

- (i) What are the most significant positive as well as negative moments you have experienced being a member of PROLINNOVA National Working Group?
- (ii) Do people really matter in the network or are organisations more important?
- (iii) Do we need additional members joining in? Who and why?
- (iv) If we want to continue the existence of the network, what are the steps that we will need to undertake?
- (v) How important is the role of the Programme Coordinator and CSO Coordinator in leading the network?
- (vi) Do you think that these two people mentioned above are leading the initiative satisfactorily?

Chapter: II

Nepal Programme: Case Study

FINDINGS

□ Turn-over: Trend and Status

- Maximum turnover of individual members have occurred within the coordinating organization - LI BIRD with 8 members leaving (2 Country Programme Coordinators, 2 Project Coordinators and 4 focal persons/representatives)
- This trend has been reflected in the 'timeline' and also from individual perspectives as negative moments
- 100% drop out of International NGO partners. Practical Action is the only partner that remains as a strategic partner without any role in the implementation of programme activities. Attributed to: *difference in organizational priorities and objectives, lack of adequate resources, lack of incentive in the absence of clear influencing strategy and practices (Susan K: rewarding partnerships).*
- No significant attempts to bring in more stakeholders into the network's fold. Most likely because of the small amount of resources that has to be distributed among partners.

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

□ Shared Vision and Aspirations

Divergent views grouped under 4 major elements:

1. Advocacy and Policy influence
 - Advocate for a better policy environment for promoting local innovation practices and knowledge
 - Decisive role of farmers in policy level
2. Promoting Local Innovation/s
 - Involve organizations involved in participatory research and local innovation
 - Promoting/Supporting local innovation for improving the livelihoods of rural people
 - Acts as a forum to collect local innovations from all over Nepal and disseminate, validate and carry out further PID

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

Shared Vision and Aspirations

3. Platform for sharing/working together volunteering contributions

- Enable farmers to play a more decisive role
- Network partners working together and sharing resources and experiences for the promotion of local innovation
- Function as a broad learning network
- Inclusion of other members who believe in the LI/PID approach
- People-centered network that strengthen Farmers/Farmer organizations
- Self reliance (operating with own resources)
- Continued learning and sharing of experiences
- Network with joint ownership for continuing local innovation connecting to enhanced livelihoods

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

Shared Vision and Aspirations

4. Mainstreaming/ Institutionalization

- Network partners internalize PROLINNOVA principles and approaches in their organizations
- Mainstreaming farmers' knowledge in the national system of research, education and extension

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

□ Shared Vision and Aspirations

Definition Compiled:

- *A Sharing and learning network*
 - » *With broad (er) group of partners, including farmers (innovators), farmer organization*
 - » *that works together*
 - » *Contribute voluntarily*
 - » *Towards promoting local innovation for sustainable livelihoods*
- *In aspects of ;*
 - *Policy influence/advocacy*
 - *Mainstreaming approach in education, research and extension*

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

□ Time Line (History)

- Reflects moments based on normal chain of 'project' events from 2003 (inception) till the end of 2010 - ***planned and achieved over the years.***
- Moments related with fund raising, development of partnership strategies, partnership structures and functions, institutionalization, and donor influencing/lobby does not feature significantly– ***Programme/Project Vs. Network?***
- Synthesised observations shows:
 - Only a few observations in the first 3 years (2003-2005) – *formative stage*
 - Sudden increase of moments indicating a peak period of programme (2006-2009)
 - Highest recorded moments (positive and negative) in the year 2009. *Significant positive moment:* National events and targets achieved, *Significant negative moment:* Turnovers
 - Sudden decline in number of moments reflected in the final year 2010.
- [.\\..\\..\\Desktop\\Nepal history.doc](#)

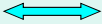

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

□ Positions and Interactions (Circle of Coherence)

- o Members do not feel 'restrained' to communicate with the each other or the secretariat, neither have the tendency to challenge each other.
- o Pattern of interactions indicates that the tendencies of individuals from the current 'interactive' mode may lead to passive conditions in the absence of a conducive environment for interaction.

Example:

Dialogue  **Exchange** —  **Conform**
(Past and current movements) (Tendency)




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Nepal Programme: Case Study

□ Positions and Interactions (Circle of Coherence)

- o However, members like Tuki and PA constantly moving

Example (PA):

Dialogue  **Exchange**  **Structure** —  **Flee**
(Past and current movements) (Tendency)

- o Almost all shows the tendency to wait – watch - agree on the further developments initiated by the coordinating organization.
- o The majority is most likely to agree with further developments, while for the rest, it will depend on many internal and external factors. But none will “challenge”.

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

□ INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

- **Preference: People Vs. Organisation**
 - 3 respondents felt that people comes first (individuals can bring with them unbiased time and resources)
 - 2 respondents felt that both are equally important
 - 1 respondent felt that an organisation is more important than people or individuals in a network

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

□ INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

- **Additional Membership**
 - All the respondents feel the need to create space for other organisations to join the network.
 - But reasons behind (WHY) differs:
 - Quantity (number) is important in terms of coverage and outreach.
 - Common/similar organisational philosophy approaches and experience is important to ensure quality output. Quantity is not important.
 - Some institutions are required in order to fill the expertise gap (eg: R&D) and strengthen the capacity of network

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

- ❑ **INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES**
- ***Additional Membership***
 - Government sector
 - Directorate of Livestock
 - Directorate of Forestry
 - Academia and Research Institutes
 - National Agriculture Research Council (NARC)
 - Forestry and Agricultural Engineering
 - NGOs/Formal Groups
 - Nepal Permaculture Group (NPG)
 - Forest Action
 - USC Canada
 - Women Groups
 - Forest User Groups

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

- ❑ **INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES**
- ***Role of Country Secretariat Office***
 - All respondents agree on the significant role of CSO.
 - Except one, rest of the respondents indicates areas that can be improved in terms of coordination and communication.
- ❑ **INDICATIVE OUTCOMES OF FINDINGS**
 - * **Positive indicators**
 - * **Areas of improvement**

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

WAY FORWARD

- Insights by Dr. Shreeram (current Country Programme Coordinator)

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Nepal Programme: Case Study

LEARNING

- Network assessment tools can be customized as per the objective and context of individual country programmes.
- More appropriate for someone outside the programme or the network to facilitate such process (eg: A member from the Cambodian network may do a better job for Nepal and vice versa).
- Network analysis is not just an extractive process; it is also an empowering process.

Food for Thought

Programme and Network are two different things. Network without a program is neither viable nor sustainable. Prolinnova Nepal should be run as a program that is run by a group of committed organizations believing in its core values, and from such a program should emerge a network that adds value to the Program by reaching out a wide range of R&D organizations, and by sharing the experiences and bringing back necessary feedback.

Chapter: II **Nepal Programme: Case Study**

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