

Progress report on Promoting Local Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security (Proli-FaNS) project in Ghana for the period January–April 2019

1. Introduction

To date, Prolinnova–Ghana has selected, documented and promoted 38 local innovations, and nine of these were subjected to participatory innovation development (PID) to add value and increase the benefits to the innovators. Twenty outstanding women innovators have been recognised and awarded by the Department of Agriculture. Key activities implemented in the period were: implementing PID on three local innovations, supporting innovators to share and scale out outcomes of completed PID cases to other farmers and communities, conducting farmer innovation fairs at each learning site, preparing brochures for dissemination and advocacy, monitoring and providing inputs to innovators of completed PID cases to expand their innovations, and preparing for the 2019 International Partners Workshop (IPW) / Proli-FaNS partners’ meeting in Senegal.

2. Activities implemented and results achieved

FARMER-LED RESEARCH

a) Implementation of new PID processes

In the previous quarter (August–December 2018), three new PID processes were designed and community sensitisation undertaken for joint experimentation at the Bongo and Yendi action-learning sites. During this reporting period, the PID processes were facilitated and monitored by the local NGO with the involvement of co-researchers. The progress made was as follows:

Bongo site: Monitoring and technical support were provided by the project technical team and the field implementation team in the two ongoing PID processes: one with a women’s group on preserving Bambara beans using liquid waste from sheabutter processing, and another with a male innovator on using concoctions of two local herbs to manage African swine fever (ASF) in pigs, involving different concentrations and forms (liquid/powder) and different ways of propagating the herbs. The different treatments for storing the Bambara beans with the liquid waste were observed and data recorded; germination tests will be done in June to assess results. In the second PID case, various propagation methods are being tried so as to conserve the two local herbs for treating ASF. The veterinary officer monitored the application of solutions of different concentrations of the powdered herbs to the experimental pigs in order to assess the efficacy of the concoctions in treating the sick pigs. Both PID cases will be concluded and evaluated by end of June 2019.

Yendi site: The PID process in Yendi is on improving the nutritional value of local bean cake (*kooshie*), working with a woman *kooshie* seller, Ms Sana Baba. The innovator and other women in her community had been trained about ten years ago by agricultural extension and nutrition officers to fortify *kooshie* by adding one part of soybean to three parts of the main cowpea flour for nutritional enhancement. Sana discovered that the reduced proportion of the cowpea makes the cake very oily, heavy and not liked by many customers in the community. Through experimentation with various combinations of the two flour materials, she succeeded in producing a much-liked cake by mixing the soyabean and cowpea flour in the proportion of 1:6. This produced a lighter and tastier bean cake. It

also absorbed less oil, thus reducing spending on oil, and increased her daily sales. Sana wanted to explore how to improve the nutritional content of her *kooshie* but at a low cost.

The PID process is being facilitated by three nutrition experts from the Department of Agriculture and the Catholic Diocese, both in Yendi, and the University for Development Studies (UDS) in Tamale. As part of the PID process, the women in the community were given general education on the importance of the three food categories/groups (energy giving, body building and protective foods) and clean water. During the PID, different recipes for *kooshie*, including mixing and substituting the original bean flour with cowpea or soybean flour and moringa leaves, were developed and tested. Before the PID process ended, the woman innovator is already incorporating moringa leaves into her *kooshie*, and has reported on diversified sources of flour, increased nutrition, and higher quantity (from addition of more foodstuffs), quality and profit from her *kooshie*. The PID process will be concluded in the next quarter (May–July 2019) and the full process will be documented and sharing of the outcomes commenced.



Improved and diversified products from local legume products, including kooshie, resulting from PID process at the Yendi site (Photo: Naomi Zaato, Dept of Agriculture)

b) Sharing and outscaling completed PID cases

Bongo site: Two new communities (Adaboya and Akansiringa) in Bongo and the Bunbong Community in Yendi were sensitised on the Tree Chief concept for protecting community vegetation. This was a local innovation identified and jointly developed in the Kabre Community in the Bongo learning site. The dissemination resulted in greater understanding of this concept among the communities and local chiefs, and led the Akansiringa Community to adopt the innovation and installing a Tree Chief in a ceremony involving key institutional stakeholders, local traditional chiefs and community members. The project provided two toasters to support the processing activities of two new sheabutter-making groups that had adopted the sheabutter processing methods improved through PID. The two groups were further trained by the original innovative women's group to manage and use the toasters effectively and sustainably. The groups were happy and encouraged, as the toasters will improve their processing capacity as well as help reduce drudgery and stress associated with toasting of crushed sheanuts.



***Ceremony for installing a new Tree Chief for Akansiringa Community in Bongo
(Photo: Dominic Avea, field officer of NABOCADO)***

Yendi site: The Sunsong Suhudoo women’s group, which had been supported in PID to improve the quality and market for their soap products for income to supplement household food security, were trained during the reporting period in packaging of their products. Their soaps are now packaged in different forms and well labelled, making them more attractive to compete with other soaps in the market. With the skills gained, the women reported that the commercial scale of their business has increased. Yendi also hosted the Bongo multistakeholder platform (MSP) to introduce the Tree Chief concept to the Bunbong Community for possible adaptation. The visit was based on a request from the local chief following an exchange visit by Yendi innovators to Bongo in early 2018.

c) Involvement of two female university students on PID for their first-degree thesis

Two female first-degree students of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences in UDS (Tamale) undertook their final-year thesis work to further validate and promote consumption of nutritious *wasawasa* food and sweet potato products developed through PID. They were supervised by their lecturer, who is a member of the ProInnova–Ghana technical team and had facilitated the main PID processes with the women innovators to improve the two local foods. The students conducted interviews on the PID in the communities and on campus, did recipe demonstrations and sensory evaluation of the recipes on campus, and thereby promoted awareness and consumption of local nutritious foods, and contributed to institutionalisation of the PID approach within the Department.

ADVOCACY FOR INSTITUTIONALISATION

Two farmer innovation fairs were organised in April in the Bongo and Yendi action-learning sites for innovators to exhibit and share their local innovations with other farmers, institutional stakeholders, policymakers, traditional authorities and the general public. At both events, the participants also included National Steering Committee members, local MSP members, women’s groups, bank officials, local entrepreneurs and media people who published about and also broadcast the events. Approximately 500 participants attended both events, in which 14 innovations were exhibited in Yendi and 13 in Bongo. The innovations were on food processing and nutritional improvement, income-earning products, ethnoveterinary medicines, organic and climate-resilient crops, fuel-efficient cookstoves and crop storage. More than half of the exhibitors at the fairs were women. The innovators shared their innovations and innovation processes with the guests and stakeholders, and also learnt from each other. This helped to increase awareness on the approach of promoting local innovation and

PID, exposed important innovations for wider adoption or adaptation by other farmers, and revealed business opportunities for the local entrepreneurs who attended the events. The women's innovativeness and achievements in food and nutrition using local innovation were highly recognised and appreciated in the speeches of the guest speakers, thereby drawing attention of government and political authorities to commit funds and the political will to support farmer innovation and the PID approach for sustainable improvement of the lives of the rural people.

DOCUMENTATION

The Country Platform (CP) printed 500 calendars on local innovation and PID activities and distributed them to institutional stakeholders, CP members, MSP members, local innovators, traditional authorities etc. The calendars included different photographs and captions about PID processes undertaken in the action-learning sites. The CP also produced a total of 500 brochures on six completed PID cases and distributed them to participants at the two local innovation fairs and to CP members and institutional stakeholders and at the 2019 IPW / Proli-FaNS meeting held in Senegal. In June, the brochures will be uploaded onto the Prolinnova websites for the general public. By the end of the Proli-FaNS project in July, the CP will produce and finalise the PID process reports on nine cases and a catalogue with all the selected and profiled local innovations.

PROJECT M&E AND COORDINATION

The CP coordinator and the focal point for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) undertook regular field monitoring visits and held review meetings at the action-learning sites. The site-based NGOs and implementation teams also visited and backstopped the local innovation and PID processes. **The end-term evaluation** of the Proli-FaNS project was undertaken from January to April 2019 by a consultant team led by Rosaine Yegbemey from the University of Parakou in the Republic of Benin. This team was selected from three bidders through a competitive process. It made field visits to Burkina Faso and Ghana (two of the five CPs in the project) for interviews and data collection. The draft report was reviewed and improved by project partners (ACDEP, Prolinnova Oversight Group co-chair, International Support Team members, subregional coordinator for West & Central Africa and the five CPs). The lead consultant also presented the findings at the Proli-FaNS partners meeting in Senegal. The final evaluation report will be submitted to Misereor by end of June.

3. Progress in achieving project objectives

Thirty-eight innovations out of the targeted 40 have so far been selected and profiled. Of these, 29 have so far been disseminated and nine subjected to PID for improvement. Outcomes of six completed PID cases have been shared and promoted in surrounding communities, including training of other farmers/women's groups by the innovators. This has led the innovators to scale out and increase commercialisation of their improved innovations. Twenty outstanding women innovators have so far been recognised and given certificates and awards (farm inputs, small processing tools/equipment) by the Department of Agriculture for their achievements in local innovation. Women involved in the project have acquired capacities in PID and feel more confident, valued and appreciated by men and by research and development actors than before. Fundraising efforts have been very positive, with the submission of two proposals to Misereor: one to validate and promote farmer innovation in ethnoveterinary medicine, and the other to implement a follow-on project to Proli-FaNS.

4. Challenge faced and lesson learned

- Inadequate project budgets to involve more farmers and communities, involve more other stakeholders and undertake wider learning and scaling-out activities. The local NGOs supplemented the project activities through cash and in-kind contributions.