

Strengthening Community Resilience to Change: Combining Local Innovative Capacity with Scientific Research (CLIC–SR)

Report for

January–December 2013



Joint experimentation: Farmers weeding finger millet nursery

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A: INTRODUCTION

The Combining Local Innovative Capacity with Scientific Research (CLIC–SR) project builds on experiences of promoting farmer-led joint innovation, based on the recognition of grassroots and local people’s initiatives in dealing with change, including climate change (CC). This is expected to enhance their local adaptive capacities and increase their resilience to change. The CLIC–SR project is being implemented in two counties in Kenya, Baringo and Machakos, which are vulnerable to change inclusive of climate change.

B: ACTIVITIES

The activities highlighted below are a continuation of activities implemented earlier at the start of the CLIC–SR project between September and December 2013 (some of those activities were concluded in January 2014). The activities conducted were field surveys in Baringo and Machakos that were designed to identify changes that the communities perceive to have experienced and how they are responding to them, including identifying existing local innovations that communities are engaging in to adapt to change; and a training in Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Participatory Innovation Development (PID) to build the capacity of partner organizations supporting the implementation of the CLIC–SR project and farmer-led innovation.

i. The East Africa Farmer Innovation Fair

The Eastern Africa Farmer Innovation Fair (EAFIF), although not an activity under the original plan for CLIC-SR, was organized by PK together with numerous other organizations in Kenya to showcase the achievements of individual and groups of smallholder farmers – men and women – from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in improving their farming and their livelihoods. This contributed to the CLIC-SR project aims and drew the attention of local innovations by bringing farmers and scientists together in direct discussions. It was the first such fair ever in Eastern Africa and was held on 28–29 May 2013. This two-day event drew attention to the importance of farmer innovation in agricultural development; it recognized and celebrated the creativity of smallholder farmers, and brought policymakers and the general public in Kenya in contact with farmer innovators. It also provided an opportunity for participants in the Agricultural Innovation Systems in Africa (AISA) international workshop (29–31 May) to meet and engage with farmer innovators. PK was the local co-organizer of the AISA workshop, which was opened at the fair (see <http://aisa2013.wikispaces.com>).

ii. PROLINNOVA network meetings (IPW, POG, JOLISAA, CLIC-SR and LINEX-CCA)

PROLINNOVA–Kenya was proud to host the PROLINNOVA International Partners Workshop (IPW), the PROLINNOVA Oversight Group (POG) meeting and the internal meeting of the JOLISAA Consortium in May 2013. PK also hosted the annual meetings of the PROLINNOVA initiatives in Asia and Eastern Africa: LINEX–CCA (Local Innovation and Experimentation for Climate Change Adaptation in Asia, funded by Misereor) and CLIC–SR. All these events were held back-to-back and partly overlapping in the Week on Agricultural Innovation in Africa in order to maximize synergies and minimize costs of travel of the participants.

iii. PK planning meeting

Funds for the year 2013 were received in June 2013, when the PROLINNOVA–Kenya (PK) team re-organized its work plans to be able to implement activities within the remaining timeframe. This delay was primarily due to the fact that PK and the PROLINNOVA International Secretariat were focusing in the first half of the year on organizing the Eastern African Farmer Innovation Fair, at which farmers from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa – including some of those involved in the CLIC–SR activities – exhibited their innovations.

After the fair, PK held a planning meeting with its CLIC–SR implementing partners to revise the project work plan for the period July–December 2013. This two-day meeting was held on 11–12 July 2013 at the SACDEP (Sustainable Agriculture Community Development Programmes) training facility in Thika, Kenya. It was attended by 11 persons from the five key partner organizations implementing the project – Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), INADES¹–Formation, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Network for Ecofarming in Africa (NECOFA), World Neighbors – and by the PK coordinator. The participants developed work plans and budgets for the two project areas, Baringo and Machakos, and a work plan to guide the policy-influencing activities. The revised work plans and budgets were shared with the National Steering Committee (NSC) for approval.

iv. Study on policy influencing – constraints, challenges and opportunities

A study was undertaken to review the relevant policies and institutional frameworks on agricultural research and development (ARD) in Kenya with the aim of identifying barriers and opportunities for promoting local innovation and farmer-led joint research. The study also aimed at examining policy-influencing experiences related to PID so as to draw key lessons to support PK in developing policy-influencing strategies with respect to upscaling PID and the Local Innovation Support Fund (LISF).

v. Farmer innovation fairs

The Machakos LISF Local Steering Committee organized a farmer innovation fair on 27 August 2013 at Kiatuni market in Kyangala Location, Kalama Division in Machakos County. The theme for the fair was “Innovation(s) for adaptation to climate change”. The fair featured farmer innovators from Lower Eastern Region, who displayed various innovations in crop production, water harvesting and management, horticulture, manure preparation and application, and farm machinery and equipment. Many of the innovations exhibited were developed to cope with climate variations. The PK platform was represented by the National Coordinator, Treazah Ng’ang’a, and an intern, Kelvin Wanyala, who used the opportunity to popularize PK and its work.

A similar farmer innovation fair was held in Nyando on 18 November 2013 and attracted farmers and stakeholders from the greater Nyando basin area. The fair was coordinated by PK partner Community Rehabilitation and Environmental Protection Programme (CREPP) in collaboration with the Local Steering Committee (LSC).

vi. Joint experimentation in Machakos

A farmer, Mr Simon Masila, from Kalama Division in Machakos District came up with an innovation of planting finger millet in a nursery before the onset of rains and then transplanting the seedlings to

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the main farm at the start of the rains. The conventional way of cultivating finger millet is broadcasting the seeds. The PID team composed of various partners – KARI Katumani Center, the MoA and INADES–Formation – negotiated a PID process with farmer groups to do joint experimentation on 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 the Eastern Kenya Region. The PID team in Machakos started its activities with a local planning meeting on 8 October 2013. Researchers from KARI Katumani, the MoA and INADES–Formation are working with the farmer innovator and a group of farmers in the joint experimentation. They met with these farmer groups and the community in general to jointly plan and design the experimentation. The farmer groups involved in the experimentation were trained in data collection, for which they are responsible, and to achieve clarity on their roles and the roles of the other partners in the experimentation. The experimentation is ongoing and results are expected in February 2014.

vii. Joint experimentation in Baringo

A brief meeting was held with Practical Action, a non-governmental organization (NGO) member of PK that expressed its interest to continue supporting the work in Baringo as lead partner in this project area. It was observed that the current innovations identified in the region are not rainfall dependent. The first set of three activities had to do with setting up the Local Innovation Support Fund, the community training and selection of the Local Steering Committee (LSC), which could later identify some of the local innovations in the region. These were scheduled for the week of 25–29 November 2013 but were postponed to February 2014. The report on the field survey coordinated by Practical Action in Baringo is in the process of completion.

The challenge with kick starting the activities in Baringo was that it is a new area that requires ground breaking and more training by the national PK team to the county team. Because limited time was left before close of the year, it was difficult to get all the relevant stakeholders to agree on a date for the meeting and training sessions, which are now scheduled to start in February 2014. The lead person from Practical Action left the organisation in 2013, which created a temporary vacuum. The new lead person from Practical Action is now Sam Owili, who also took part in the field studies.

viii. Training on PID

PK conducted two training sessions on PID with funding support from NUFFIC (Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education). The one-week main training took place in February 2013 at the Green Belt Movement (GBM) Learning Centre in Nairobi. This was followed by three months of field work and later a three-day refresher training in June 2013 at Thayu Retreat and Conference Centre, Limuru. The aim of the second session was to share field experiences of the participants as well as to refresh the participants' skills and expertise required to champion the promotion of local innovation in agriculture and natural resource management in Kenya. Both training sessions were hosted by PK and co-organized by KARI together with the PROLINNOVA International Secretariat based at ETC Foundation. The training sessions were attended by 22 participants from diverse organisation and backgrounds – farmers, researchers and development workers.

ix. Multi-stakeholder policy workshop

A multi-stakeholder policy workshop was held on 14–15 November 2013 at the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Nairobi. Twenty-five 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 in Kenya. The policy study undertook a situation analysis of ARD, innovation policies and programs; assessed policy and institutional barriers and opportunities for promoting local innovation; raised integration issues on local innovation into national and institutional policies; and examined Kenyan 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 input into policy direction based on the current situation on the ground by ARD stakeholders;
- c. To discuss the policy way forward for PID and any relevant concerns; and
- d. To identify approaches of mainstreaming PID within PK member organizations.

The discussions and outputs of the workshop also helped in enriching the policy study, the recommendations of which will be critical in supporting PK in identifying specific policies to focus on when promoting and mainstreaming PID and when supporting policymakers in influencing policy with respect to PID. The workshop also provided opportunity to share progress and experiences of the joint experimentation on finger millet and also for a participant (John Gathenya) from the University of Reading in the United Kingdom to share how climate data could be used to support efforts to influence policy.

viii. Monitoring and evaluation

M&E responsibilities in the CLIC–SR project lie with KARI. Geoffrey Kamau visited the Mwala site as part of his M&E session. He noted the spread of the finger millet nursery and transplanting innovation in the region and its integration into other projects. For example, the MoA and the farmers in conservation agriculture project chose to grow finger millet and to use the nursery innovation. The results were evident, as the crop was almost ready for harvest and yield was assured yet the other crops planted conventionally, including finger millet, were not comparable and no yield was expected. In addition, for the joint experimentation, the PID team has development targets and timelines that they have to achieve, and the team uses these indicators to collect the data and monitor the progress of their experimentation.

In summary, as shown in the M&E overview in Appendix 1, during this first year, two field studies were conducted, eight local innovations were identified and one case of joint experimentation was started up and is ongoing. Training of farmers in local innovation and PID was undertaken: 30 farmers were trained in a workshop and, through farmer innovation fairs (EAFIF and local fairs in Nyando and Machakos), many more farmers learned about local innovation and adaptive strategies. Thirty-nine staff members from research and agricultural and NRM development organisations were trained in PID. Furthermore, various staff members from the agricultural and NRM organisations attended the farmer innovation fairs. Two staff members from CLIC–SR implementing partners took part in a

training workshop in Ethiopia on climate statistics, organised by the Walker Institute, University of Reading. For the purpose of learning and sharing in Kenya, a multi-stakeholder workshop was held with representatives from the key agricultural and NRM organizations. This provided a platform to create awareness on PID and to advocate for mainstreaming this approach within policy and government institutions.

C: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- i. **Lean secretariat:** The PK secretariat is thin and, the added burden of organizing the Week on Agriculture Innovation in Africa, including the EAFIF, took valuable time that could not be devoted to CLIC–SR. This particularly affected the Baringo site on account of the reasons mentioned above.
- ii. **PK strongholds** are the network partners, who often depend on student interns and volunteers, which is a mutual benefit for the students who want to gain experience. But in the current tough times, there is need to support the students with transport and lunch allowances as a means of motivating and inspiring them. However, this requires resources that were not within the CLIC–SR budget. This makes it complicated, as the students can manage only short-term assignments; they cannot engage in long-term activities. There is therefore the need for a lot of handing over of some of the PK program activities from one intern to the next, thereby stretching the capacities of the already lean secretariat.
- iii. **Partner staff turnover:** PK partners play a pivotal key role in implementing PK activities, specifically in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. However, when staff members already trained in concepts and approaches of local innovation and PID leave the partner organisations, there is a huge gap left that and more orientation and training have to be given. This leads to delays in and sometimes poor implementation of activities.
- iv. **Limited resources:** PK is constrained by financial resources to support the effective and efficient implementation of its program and operations across the various counties. CCAFS International joined up with CLIC–SR to support some activities that were found needful in Machakos and Nyando counties and at the national level which could not be covered by the CLIC–SR project. However this was only for one year (2013). Inflation and the increasing cost of living further exacerbate the problem.
- v. **PID promotion:** There is need to continue and intensify efforts to promote PID by means of awareness creation and sensitization through workshops, media and other avenues. The PID concept is still relatively new in mainstream ARD organisations, but considerable progress has been made by the participants in the NUFFIC-funded training. PK needs to expand and broaden its reach to target as many and as diverse ARD stakeholders as possible.

Appendix 1: Summary sheet – CLIC–SR targets (3 years) and achievements in Year 1

S.I. No.	Outputs	Target (3 years)	Achievements	
			Year 1	Year 1(2013)
1.1	Field studies on how communities perceive the main changes affecting their livelihoods	6 innovations	6	Two field studies were conducted and 8 innovations identified
1.2	Farmer-led joint innovation development	6 case studies		Farmer-led joint experimentation on one innovation was started and is ongoing
1.3	Training for strengthening local adaptive capacity	800 farmers	275	30 farmers were trained in a workshop and, through farmer innovation fairs (EAFIF and the local Nyando and Machakos fairs) many more farmers learned about local innovation and adaptive strategies
2.1	Staff training on PID and CC issues	400 local staff	140	Two trainings were conducted and 39 staff members from agricultural and NRM development organizations were trained. Thirty percent were of those trained were women. Numerous staff members from the agriculture and NRM organizations also took part in the farmer innovation fairs. Two staff members of CLIC–SR partner organizations took part in a climate statistics training in Ethiopia organised by the Walker Institute
3.1-3.4a	Sharing and learning with multiple stakeholders (meetings/events)	24 meetings total for 4 CPs, # of key national ARD organizations involved		A multi-stakeholder workshop was held that had representatives from the key agriculture and NRM organizations. In addition, PK participated in various local, national and international fora where they shared and created awareness on relevance and effectiveness of PID, such as the Dublin conference on hunger, nutrition and climate in April and the Agricultural Innovation Systems in Africa (AISA) workshop in May in Nairobi
3.1-3.4b	Sharing and influencing other stakeholders (publications, policies, paper presentations)	1 international policy brief, one country-specific 4-page policy brief per country, 6 examples of successful innovation, 2 case studies on FLID, 2 articles to journals, etc, 3 contributions to int'l conf, 1 booklet published		PK members contributed to writing two papers that were presented in international fora One multi-stakeholder workshop held to share findings of policy study A policy study was made (on the basis of the report, a policy brief is being developed)
		Understanding policy constraints and opportunities		
4.1-4.2	Mainstreaming PID through policy dialogue	Attending country alliance/ platform meetings, report on one high-profile event per CP		