



PROLINNOVA–KENYA

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A farmer demonstrating her sack garden irrigation system innovation

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGC	A Growing Culture
ASCCA	Africa Symposium for Climate Change Adaptation
CC	climate change
CLIC-SR	Combining Local Innovative Capacity with Scientific Research
CP	Country Platform
FaReNe	Farmer-led Research Networks
IK	indigenous knowledge
IST	International Support Team
JE	joint experimentation
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization
LFS	Library for Food Sovereignty
LISF	Local Innovative Support Fund/Facility
LSC	Local Steering Committee
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NECOFA	Network for Eco-farming in Kenya
NETFUND	National Environment Trust Fund
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NRM	natural resource management
NSC	National Steering Committee
PARI	Program of Accompanying Research for Agricultural Innovation
PK	Prolinnova–Kenya
POG	Prolinnova Oversight Group
Proli-FaNS	Promoting Local Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security
WN	World Neighbors
WRF	World Rural Forum

1.0 BACKGROUND

Prolinnova is an international multi-stakeholder platform that promotes local innovation processes in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management (NRM). It focuses on recognising the dynamics of indigenous knowledge (IK) and enhancing capacities of farmers (including pastoralists, fishers and forest dwellers) to adjust to change – to develop their own site-appropriate systems and institutions of resource management so as to gain food security, sustain their livelihoods and safeguard the environment. In several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, diverse organisations have joined forces to promote local innovation processes in agriculture and NRM. They have formed Country Platforms (CPs), designed their own programmes and agreed on joint international activities for mutual learning and policy dialogue.

In Kenya, the Prolinnova CP was initiated in January 2007 as a network through which farmers, researchers, development agents, entrepreneurs and policymakers share experiences and lessons to promote and sustain local innovation. The overall goal of Prolinnova–Kenya (PK) is to enhance the capacities of farmers to innovate and develop appropriate systems of resource management to achieve food security, sustain their livelihoods and safeguard the environment while taking cognisance of the dynamics of indigenous knowledge.

A National Steering Committee (NSC) oversees the operations of PK. The Committee is comprised of representatives from World Neighbors (WN), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), INADES Formation Kenya and ETC East Africa. However, the wider network is comprised of other partners from academia, government departments such as the Ministry of Agriculture, other NGOs and CBOs and farmers. At the local level, the NSC is supported in the management of the network through Local Steering Committees (LSCs). These are community-level committees that undertake networking and promoting local innovation at the local level as well as coordinating PK activities such as the Local Innovation Support Fund/Facility (LISF) and monitoring activities. These committees comprise farmer representatives, NGOs, government department staff and researchers.

2.0 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

2.1 Introduction

PK implemented two projects in 2016: Combining Local Innovative Capacity with Scientific Research (CLIC–SR) and Promoting local innovation for Food and Nutrition Security (Proli-FaNS) project. The CLIC–SR project was in its last phase and came to an end in June 2016 while the Proli-FaNS project was initiated in August 2016. In addition, the PK network held coordination meetings, attended the IPW, participated in the Africa Symposium for Climate Change Adaptation (ASSCA) in Ethiopia and a stakeholder meeting in Uganda organised by the American NGO and Prolinnova partner “A Growing Culture” (AGC).

2.2 Projects

a. Combining Local Innovative Capacity with Scientific Research (CLIC–SR)

The CLIC–SR project was a three-year project that started in August 2012. The project aimed at promoting farmer-led joint innovation that builds on the creativity of local people through

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building local adaptive capacities and strengthening community resilience to change, including climate change (CC). This was a multi-country project implemented in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. In Kenya, the project was implemented in two sites, Baringo and Machakos Counties, that are vulnerable to change including CC. PK implemented a budget-neutral extension of the project in January–June 2016.

During the extension period, the following activities were undertaken.

i. Farmer- led joint experimentation

Farmer-led joint experimentation on local innovations involving farmer innovators and various partners in extension and research was implemented with the aim to better understand, validate and improve on local innovations. Two out of four innovations that had been previously identified and supported through the LISF underwent a joint experimentation (JE) process.

The innovations were:

Use of egg shape to pre-determine sex of the chick - development of an egg selector: This innovation was developed by Ms Christine Kilonzi, a farmer innovator from Mwingi. In an effort to simplify the egg selection process, an attempt was made to develop a prototype to support poultry keepers to hatch chicks of their preferred choice. Egg shape characteristics of male and female eggs were collected and subjected to mathematical analysis in an effort to develop a prototype model.

Rejuvenation of old pawpaw trees through capping: Gloria Musyoka, a farmer innovator, came up with a method to rejuvenate aging pawpaw trees by capping the shoots to encourage new growth and prolong the productivity of pawpaw trees. This delays senescence and increases the tree's productivity by ensuring reduced competition for nutrients. The purpose of the joint experiment was to assess the level of productivity of capped pawpaw trees.

ii. Joint experimentation workshop

After undertaking the JE, a one-day workshop was conducted on 10 May 2016 to review the process and results of the JE and finalise the process documentation of the experimentation. The workshop was attended by the four farmer innovators who were involved in the JE process; the agricultural extension officer for Mwingi Sub-County, who played the backstopping role during the experimentation; and the PK Coordinator, who facilitated the process. The workshop used structured questions to support the farmer innovators in presenting their perceptions of the process. Thereafter, a participatory session was held to share and learn and fill in any gaps as well as to provide recommendations on catalysing locally defined experimentation.

iii. Supporting innovations through LISF

Ten proposals were funded through the LISF in Baringo and Machakos Counties with the main objective of further encouraging and catalysing locally defined innovations. The proposals underwent several stages of screening and vetting, and finally approval and fund disbursement. The funds were disbursed through the LSCs, which were responsible for managing the fund at the grassroots level.

iv. Monitoring, evaluation and documentation

PK through two of its members – Network for Eco-farming in Kenya (NECOFA), a local NGO in Baringo, and INADES Formation Kenya in Machakos – undertook monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the activities on the ground including the JE and innovations supported through

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LISF. The main purpose of the M&E was to track implementation to ensure activities were undertaken as planned and the funds utilised efficiently. Recommendations were continuously provided to enhance implementation and support realisation of the expected outputs and outcomes.

v. CLIC–SR final evaluation

PK was among the CPs that were part of the final evaluation exercise of the CLIC–SR project. An external consultant engaged PK for three days in March 2016 and had discussions with members of the NSC and project-implementing partners, including a one-day field visit. The findings of the evaluation allowed the CP members to learn from their experiences and also provided support in planning the network’s future.

b. Promoting local innovation for Food and Nutrition Security (Proli-FaNS)

The Promoting Local Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security (Proli-FaNS) project is a three-year initiative supported by Misereor/Catholic Central Agency for Development Aid (KZE) that commenced in August 2016 and is being implemented in five countries (Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Kenya).

PK participated in the project’s inception workshop held in Accra, Ghana, on 14–19 November 2016. The platform was represented by WN and KALRO, two members of the NSC. The workshop participants developed strategies and guidelines for implementing the project as well as workplans and budgets. In Kenya, the project is being implemented in Kisumu and Makeni Counties as action-learning sites. To kick-start the project, initial community consultation meetings were conducted in both sites in October and November 2016.

2.3 Africa Symposium for Climate Change Adaptation Conference

PK participated in the Africa Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation (ASCCA) held on 21–23 February 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PK together with members of the International Support Team (IST) developed and submitted an abstract that was accepted and further developed a paper titled: *‘Supporting farmer innovation for climate change adaptation and improvement of resilience in the farming systems of Machakos and Kitui Counties, Kenya’*. The paper was amongst 45 other papers presented at the symposium. Through this conference, PK promoted the LISF concept as an adaptation mechanism for climate change, including the important role of farmer innovation in dealing with climate change and other challenges to improving food security and NRM. The paper was accepted for publication in 2017 by Springer International Publishing AG, an international publisher of academic journals.

2.4 Management and coordination meetings

a. National Steering Committee meetings

The NSC held meetings in June, September and December 2016 to discuss pertinent network issues, appraise progress and determine general direction of the network. The general issues deliberated on included project updates, network membership, opportunities for funding farmer innovators, finance and resource mobilisation. In addition to the meetings, the NSC members had virtual meetings to discuss and plan strategies for PK operations and projects.

b. Local Steering Committees meetings

The Baringo and Machakos LSCs held regular meetings to plan project activities specifically related to promoting farmer innovation, implementation of LISF and monitoring of activities. The

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LSCs were further responsible for drawing up agreements between the grantees (innovators) supported through the LISF and the LSC, establishing the terms of disbursement as well as stipulating the implementation schedule.

2.5 International Partners Workshop

PK took part in the 2016 International Partners Workshop (IPW) held in Thiès, Senegal, on 15–19 May. The workshop brought together 45 participants from various CPs, the IST, the Prolinnova Oversight Group (POG) as well as Friends of Prolinnova to review progress made by the network. The workshop provided an avenue to share progress as well as lessons and experiences gained from the regional projects: CLIC–SR in eastern Africa and the Farmer-led Research Networks (FaReNe) project in West Africa. The IPW participants discussed the overall plans of Prolinnova such as the regionalisation process to decentralise operations in the Africa, Asia and Latin America regions, as embedded in the network’s strategic plan for 2016–20.

2.6 Participation in innovation selection for Program of Accompanying Research for Agricultural Innovation

Four PK members were invited to be resource persons in selection and validation of farmer innovations in Siaya, Kakamega and Bungoma Counties from 12 to 14 October 2016 under the Program of Accompanying Research for Agricultural Innovation (PARI). This is a project being implemented in Africa and India by the Center for Development Research, University of Bonn, Germany, in collaboration with various partners. The main goal of the project is to contribute to sustainable agricultural growth and food and nutrition security by contributing to the development of the agri-food sector through the identification, assessment and upscaling of innovations. In Africa, FARA (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa) is coordinating the project with several partners in different countries, in which KALRO is the Kenyan partner. The top farmer innovators were awarded various prizes and the winning innovations will be the focus of joint experimentation.

2.7 Library for Food Sovereignty

The Prolinnova network entered into a partnership with A Growing Culture (AGC) to develop a knowledge base for showcasing and making accessible local innovations and farmer-led documentation. In this connection, PK was invited by AGC to a regional stakeholders’ meeting in Kikandwa, Uganda, on 19–22 September to discuss the development of the Library for Food Sovereignty (LFS). The LFS is a farmer-led and farmer-managed information resource focusing on local knowledge and farmer-led documentation through creating a digital space for communities to exchange, showcase and build upon the knowledge of the world’s farmers.

2.8 Farmer Innovator Award

A farmer innovator from Western Kenya, Mr Joe Ouko, received an award from the National Environment Trust Fund (NETFUND), a state corporation under the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities in Kenya. NETFUND’s goal is to empower Kenyans to sustainably manage the environment through promotion and support of green growth. NETFUND called for proposals for its green innovations award that aimed to promote and showcase climate-smart innovations. Joe sent his application and his innovation on dairy goat feed was among those found interesting and selected for participation in the award process. NETFUND officials visited his farm in Nyakach, Kisumu County, to see for themselves his innovation and Joe was invited to various NETFUND meetings. The award had five

categories: individuals, small and medium enterprises, civil society organisations, women groups, and primary and secondary schools. Joe's innovation was placed in the civil society organisation category, as he had submitted it under Nyando District Dairy Goats (NYADDAGO) association, a farmer's self-help group. He came third in this category. The third-place winners were awarded Ksh 250,000 (USD 2500) to be used to support improvement of their innovations.

3.0 FUTURE PLANS AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Strengthening NSC: PK is in the process of increasing and diversifying the membership of the NSC as a way of strengthening it. This is to be done through membership recruitment drives that will support the identification of various organisations, both public and private, to be invited to join the NSC, for example, universities, farmer organisations, agro-enterprises, NGOs and governmental organisations.

The NSC also intends to finalise the CP guiding principles, as these will enable the formalisation and strengthening of the network's governance structure. The guidelines will define the leadership roles and operational procedures of the network.

3.2 Membership drive: At the start of the CP in 2007, there were several organisations interested in the network. However, over the years, their participation in the network's activities has greatly declined. PK plans to follow up with these inactive members in addition to identifying other stakeholders to become members of the platform. One of the strategies is to have forums where both old and new members can share and learn from each other and updates on the progress of the network can be provided. In addition, a write-up on the CP is to be developed that can be shared with potential new members.

3.3 Fundraising: The CP intends to enhance its resource mobilisation through development of proposals for funding, including collaborating with other CPs to develop multi-country proposals. PK also intends to establish strategic linkages at the national, regional and international levels with both private and public organisations that could attract funding.

3.4 Supporting regionalisation process: Part of Prolinnova's global strategy is to establish regional platforms. Already steps have been initiated in Africa to establish two regional platforms (Eastern & Southern Africa & West and Central Africa). PK is committed to supporting the formation and operationalisation of these regional platforms, as they will strengthen networking, sharing and learning, advocacy and fundraising, which will also support the development of individual CPs.