

Social Dimensions in ARD:

How Civil Society Fosters Partnerships to Promote Local Innovation

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Outline

- **Concepts of quality in agricultural research**
- **Farmer innovation**
- **Strengthening links between informal and formal research**
- **Addressing social dimensions in ARD**
- **Increasing farmer influence in ARD**
- **Roles of CSOs in fostering multistakeholder partnerships in ARD**

Quality of agricultural science

- **In ARD, scientific technical excellence is necessary but not sufficient**
- **Social, cultural and political conditions of farmers must be recognised**
- **Quality of science is socially constructed**
- **Good agricultural science needs to be accountable to farmers and consumers**

“Mode 2” science

(Helga Nowotny *et al*)

New paradigm of knowledge production that is

- **socially distributed**
- **application oriented**
- **transdisciplinary**
- **subject to multiple accountabilities.**

Implications for research priorities, science quality assessment and research funding

Assessing the quality of research

Civil society's assessment:

- Social and political responsibility
- MDGs, e.g. addressing poverty, environmental sustainability, gender equality, partnerships for development

Farmers' assessment:

- According to their own criteria
- Suiting their conditions, also in economic and socio-cultural terms



Need for research approaches that:

- **Incorporate local knowledge of the ecological, socio-economic and institutional environment**
- **Stimulate local people's creativity**
- **Enhance their own development efforts**
- **Support them in developing their own site-specific solutions**
- **Enhance their capacities to adapt**
- **Help them access new and relevant information**

Farmer innovation

- **Local experimentation is part of the “performance” of farming**
- **Farmers are innovating on their own initiative**
- **Farmer innovation builds on indigenous and other sources of knowledge**
- **Useful innovation results from social interaction between a myriad of actors**
- **First step to genuine partnership in ARD: recognise local innovation and appreciate the knowledge and creativity behind it**

Participatory Technology / Innovation Development (PTD / PID)

- **Joint exploration and experimentation by farmers, development agents and scientists to discover new ways to improve farmers' livelihoods**
- **PID encompasses not only technical but also socioeconomic and institutional innovation**
- **Thus far, practised mainly by NGOs, and not well linked with formal research**

Why are CSOs actively seeking ARD partnerships?

- **Good ARD requires concerted action of all stakeholders**
- **NGOs see that the need to:**
 - **encourage scientists to engage in ARD with small scale farmers**
 - **improve their own links with research, as many questions come up in PID that need input from scientists**

Prolinnova objectives:

- **Demonstrate effectiveness of user-led innovation for sustainable development**
- **Foster strong farmer-extension-research partnerships in local experimentation and innovation**
- **Integrate participatory approaches to innovation into agricultural research, extension and education**
- **Pilot decentralised funding mechanisms to promote local innovation**
- **Set up platforms for learning about promoting local innovation**

Prolinnova seeks primarily:

- To **increase capacities** of farmers, extension, research and other stakeholders to work together (and to develop locally-appropriate innovations that improve the lives of the poor)
- By **building multistakeholder platforms** in ARD to:
 - reflect on current approaches and methods
 - analyse how these favour or hinder local innovation and PID
 - plan and carry out joint activities to enhance agricultural innovation

Country Programmes:

Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nepal, Niger, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

- Develop **inventories** of local innovations, innovators and supporting agencies
- Create national and subnational **stakeholder platforms** to learn about local innovation, PID and how to institutionalise it
- **Build capacities** to identify and document local innovation and **to engage in PID**
- PM&E of joint activities, outcomes and impacts
- Engage in **policy dialogue** about agricultural research, extension and education

Addressing social dimensions in extension and research

- A motivating approach for **agricultural extension**
- Main challenges: motivations, attitudes and beliefs of **research scientists**
- How to deal with **institutional obstacles**?
 - prevailing view of what “good” science is
 - organisational structures: resistance to new ideas and learning from others
 - lack of incentives for researchers to engage in PID
 - little attention to process and approaches, rather than technologies to transfer

From personal to institutional change

- **Learn by working together on the ground**
- **Attract individual researchers to identify local innovations and engage in PID**
- **Stimulate reflection on identity of researchers and how they interact with others in ARD**
- **Infect researchers with enthusiasm of farmers**
- **Individual change stimulates institutional change**

Addressing social dimensions at farming-community level

- **Recognising local capacities and raising local people's self esteem**
- **Local innovations as foci for participatory situation analysis**
- **Community assessment of socio-economic and cultural implications of innovations**
- **Examining gender dimensions to open up space for changing roles**

Women's innovation
in poultry-keeping in
South Africa



Increasing farmers' influence on decision-making in formal ARD

- **Farmers' innovations already indicate local priorities**
- **Common interest farmers' research groups can help strengthen local organisation**
- **Engaging in PID builds up farmers' confidence to dialogue with scientists and policymakers and prepares them to take part in national and regional ARD fora**
- **Community managed funds to support local research and innovation**

Major roles of CSOs in promoting local innovation

- Facilitate multistakeholder **social learning processes**:
 - create space to interact
 - deconstruct beliefs
 - mediate disputes
 - negotiate agreements
- Offer “**learning grounds**” to stimulate change in agricultural education – content and teaching methods
- Engage in **policy dialogue**:
 - analyse how policy affects local innovation
 - use PID experiences to stimulate policy dialogue

Roles of CSOs in North

- **Facilitate international networking and learning:**
 - help analyse country experiences in building ARD partnerships
 - help develop strategies for institutional change
- **Training and coaching / “backstopping”**
(identifying farmer innovation, PID, PM&E etc)
- **Engage in international policy dialogue** and open up space for Southern partners to bring in their own experiences and views

In conclusion – 1:

- **The quality of agricultural science has strong socioeconomic, cultural and political dimensions.**
- **The diversity of ecological and social conditions of smallholder farmers requires multiple innovations and local adaptations of technology.**
- **“Poor” farmers are rich in innovativeness: their ideas offer entry points for PID.**
- **Genuine partnership between farmers, extension and research is possible only when the external actors appreciate local creativity.**

In conclusion – 2:

- **Prolinnova promotes local innovation, stimulates PID and seeks to increase farmers' influence on decision making in formal ARD**
- **Southern CSOs facilitate building of national partnerships for ARD, create learning grounds for stakeholders and engage in policy dialogue**
- **Northern CSOs facilitate international networking, comparative analysis and cross country learning, and linking of the local and global spheres**

How can other European institutes contribute?

- **Re-examine approaches in ARD**
- **Examine own behaviour toward different actors in ARD**
- **How do we find out what farmers are already trying to do to improve their situation**
- **Reflect on “Participation”:**
 - are we setting good examples?
 - are we learning from the South?
 - are we integrating the concept and practice into our institutions of higher learning?

Thank you for your attention

Farmer innovation in
SWC in remote area
of northern Ethiopia

