

1. Introduction

During this reporting period, Prolinnova–Kenya (PK) takes pride in engaging Maseno University for a successful inclusion of the LI/PID approach in their newly revised curriculum for the School of Agriculture. This is a milestone of the year as PK as the greater Prolinnova network is focused on institutionalising this approach.

2. Achievements, challenges and perspectives

- Identifying, documenting and sharing innovations and Participatory Innovation Development (PID) results

PK cumulatively identified 25 local innovations under the SULCI-FaNS project. In this reporting year, much focus was on the completion of the documentation of these innovations as well as their dissemination for wider application and/or adaptation. PK organised this documentation into a booklet profiling all the local innovations identified under both Proli-FaNS and SULCI-FaNS. The PID outcomes of the cases were also documented in a booklet. PK also contributed an article to the March 2022 issue of the *Appropriate Technology* magazine. The article written by the Coordinator was about the Covid-19 pandemic and local innovation, dubbed “Learning from Covid-19 to improve food and nutrition security”. The article featured two local innovators, one male and one female.

- Capacity strengthening and organisational development

PK was involved in a number of capacity-strengthening activities, especially virtual hosted events. On 28 January, Jacob Wanyama, the Prolinnova Subregional Coordinator for Eastern & Southern Africa, held a virtual meeting with the PK Coordinator on resource mobilisation and institutionalisation. On 7–10 June, PK built the capacity of innovators involved in the Nyando Basin Lofoda Enterprises on the PID approach and promotion of local innovation processes. This was under the Innovation Small Grants Accelerator Project, funded by the Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). On 17 October, the PK Coordinator backstopped Prolinnova–Sudan and a group in South Sudan on the PID approach under the Nuffic Orange Knowledge Programme being facilitated by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). Similar training to the two teams was offered on 10–18 November.

- Networking and policy dialogue

PK participated in various activities that aimed at not only enhancing its visibility but also strategically positioning itself for further networking with other likeminded stakeholders. Locally, PK engaged various agricultural research and development (ARD) actors to lobby for institutionalisation of the PID approach. These engagements were facilitated by the SULCI-FaNS project, which included a policy-dialogue component. Additionally, the PK Coordinator participated in a Gobeshona Global Conference, a virtual event convened by UNDP under the theme of Locally Led Adaptation Finance, Innovation and Scale. During this event, the Coordinator shared information about the PID approach in ARD as the key to food and nutrition security which should be embraced by both public and private actors in the ARD sphere, citing evidence from the outcomes of the PK-facilitated field experiments and engagements with small-scale farmers.

Throughout the year, PK – through UNDP – was linked with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for a joint study on local innovations, focusing on the business model side of the innovations. This was a welcome indulgence, as it is timely with the current Prolinnova’s dream of helping locally developed innovations become commercialised. The team of six MBA students and their lecturer also virtually engaged the Kisumu innovators in Nyakach for a study on business analysis.

PK participated in the Agricultural Society of Kenya Shows in Machakos in July. During this event, three PK innovators from the Makueni action-learning site showcased their innovations. John Musumbi, a farmer innovator who showcased his organic pesticides and fertilizers during this event, was later given TV coverage for a live interview on his local innovations. In September, PK through the woman innovator Rebecca Dero took part in the European Tropentag Conference at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. In the same month, Rebecca plus the PK Coordinator and a PK member from northern Kenya took part in the Agrecol Autumn Workshop near Dresden, Germany. On 23–24 November, PK took part in a CGIAR partners workshop at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) campus in Nairobi.

- *Fundraising and management of Local Innovation Support Funds/Facilities (LISFs) & other mechanisms for supporting local innovators*

Resource mobilisation, especially fundraising, is very key to sustainability and continuity of PK activities. During this reporting year, PK engaged their UNDP’s focal person Clint Bertlet for a potential second phase of the ongoing ISGAP project in Nyakach. PK did not manage to acquire any additional externally funded project besides the SULCI-FaNS and ISGAP projects.

Through SULCI-FaNS, a total of 20 innovators received support to improve their innovations from the LISF. The awards were non-refundable and were meant to help innovators acquire inputs and services for developing and improving their local innovations. The issue of sustainability beyond the project life is very uncertain and may need some further brainstorming and deliberations to generate a strategy towards achieving that.

- *Difficulties/challenges faced during implementation of the activities*

- i. Influencing the policy of an already operating organisation/institution is not a walk in the park. It has a fair share of challenges/bottlenecks which are seriously hard to break.
- ii. Very limited resources, especially funds, to meet the needs of the innovators who are really enthusiastic about developing their local innovations but lack financial assistance.
- iii. Not many calls are aligned to Prolinnova work and not all potential donors are familiar with the Prolinnova approach.

- *Lessons learnt and plans for 2023*

Lessons learnt:

- i. The PID approach is slowly being embraced. Institutionalising it will, however, take much longer.
- ii. Rural communities are continuing to innovate, especially on agricultural solutions due to the adverse effects climate change is posing on their crops and livestock. They are willing to share their innovations with their communities and beyond, as was manifested by over 70% of the LISF applicants who also wanted funds to organise and facilitate community-level events to share local innovations and PID outcomes with other farmers.

- iii. Recognition of innovators is very key in the promotion of local innovation processes. The few innovators who have been awarded have shown that their morale has been boosted and they are very confident in sharing information about their innovations.

2023 plans:

- i. Implement the “Expanding the promotion of local innovations for food security and healthy nutrition to strengthen resilience with focus on women” (ELI-FaNS) project
- ii. Introduce PK to Busia-Bunyala, a new action-learning site for the ELI-FaNS project
- iii. Identify and document at least eight local innovations
- iv. Undertake resource mobilisation
- v. Network with other stakeholders for expansion of PK membership.

3. Assessment of network functioning

1. *Extent of reaching goals and objectives of CP:* 4 – above average. All activities and milestones achieved as planned. The remaining one bit of the scale is for the unachieved fundraising goal.
2. *Governance at CP level:* 5 – excellent. Very active NSC and cooperating LSCs.
3. *Functioning of CP secretariat:* 5 – good coordination of CP activities and resourceful host organisation with a superb support from the NSC.
4. *Communication between and among partners within your CP:* 3 – fairly good. Communication channel needs to be looked into and streamlined for an efficacious communication.
5. *Relationship with other CPs, (Sub)Regional Coordinator, International Support Team (IST) and Prolinnova Oversight Group (POG):* 5 – Back-back correspondences with the SRC, IST and POG. Good flow of information and these entities have come in handy to assist PK whenever and wherever appropriate.
6. *Achievements in terms of capacity strengthening:* 3 – fairly well achieved. Limited training and coaching to network partners, especially the LSCs and other site-based stakeholders.
7. *Achievements in terms of mobilising resources at CP and subregional level:* 1 – poor this year. Nothing much came to fruition.

4. Conclusion

This reporting year has been a productive year with PK undertaking all it planned for the year. Local innovations are creating immense impacts on the livelihoods of the innovators and, by extension, their communities. This can be seen from the success stories that innovators are narrating, the latest being John Musumbi’s engagement by the Kasikeu Ward Agricultural Office to teach farmers on organic farming. He is earning a token of appreciation for this engagement, thus an additional income.