



## **FARMER-LED DOCUMENTATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE/NRM**

### **Workshop announcement and call for experiences**

PELUM Association - Uganda and PROLINNOVA have taken the initiative to organise an exchange and capacity building workshop on farmer-led documentation for sustainable agriculture and natural resource management (NRM). This five-day event will take place from 6th- 10th November in Uganda.

#### **BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

It is increasingly clear that successful development of sustainable agriculture and NRM depends on the effective interaction between knowledge and experiences of local farmer communities with expertise of development agents. NGOs, CBOs and other development organisations therefore seek to mobilise, document and share local knowledge as an important part of the development process. In many cases, however, this is done in an extractive mode, where outsiders control the process and local knowledge and experiences are stored in their offices.

There are, however, isolated experiences with what is called “farmer-led documentation” as an empowering process in which local communities take the lead role in the documentation process and where results are used by community members for purposes of internal learning (within the community) and exchange between communities (horizontal sharing) and communities, development agents and policy makers (vertical). These documentation and knowledge sharing processes assist in making relevant experiences and good practices at community level visible as a starting point for further farmer-led agricultural development. Some make effective use of traditional methods and media such as storytelling, drama or dance whereas others have introduced successfully the use of modern ICTs including digital photo and video.

Though development agents show an increasing interest in farmer-led documentation, little is known of the best designs of such documentation processes, and the available and appropriate media and their use, including those making use of modern ICTs. Another set of important questions relate to the impacts of farmer-led documentation, how farmer-documentation has led to knowledge spread, a wider development process and ultimately to livelihoods improvements. The three organisations have therefore joined hands to organise a workshop to start answering these questions.

#### **WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES**

##### **General objective**

This workshop is organised to facilitate the exchange between organisations involved in farmer-led documentation and sustainable agriculture / natural resources management and to reinforce their capacities for local knowledge mobilisation, documentation and sharing.

### **Specific objectives**

- To increase the insight on the role of local knowledge in agricultural development, its mobilisation and documentation by communities, leading to sharing in and between communities and between a community and policy makers.
- To share and analyse how different traditional and modern media can be used for farmer-led documentation and develop lessons on the use of such documentation.
- To encourage development organisations to integrate farmer-led documentation efforts into their regular agricultural and NRM programmes.
- To facilitate learning between the participants and through them, between their organisations, during the workshop as well as afterwards.

### **WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY**

The event will be divided in both *joint and parallel sessions*, interactive and conducive for mutual learning, with case study presentations, guest speakers and facilitated group discussions. A '*crash course*' in farmer-led documentation during the first part of the workshop will provide participants with an overview of the basic issues on farmer-led knowledge sharing and will create the framework and starting-points for further exchanges.

At the end of the workshop participants will be asked to reflect on what was learned and prepare a *realistic action plan* regarding the integration of (elements of) farmer-led documentation in their own activities, their organisation and/or country programmes.

The workshop will provide enough room for participants to share their expectations and reflections on both the meeting itself and the issues discussed.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

The workshop will bring together a relatively small group of development practitioners (maximum 20) with experiences in farmer-led documentation in the field of sustainable agriculture and natural resources management. There will also be a few places for people with relevant experiences in using community-led documentation in other fields (local planning, health).

Participants will be expected to prepare and present during the workshop a summary of their experiences and lessons learned.

### **Other important details regarding participation**

- Communication before and during the meetings will be mostly in English. Write-ups of experiences and other inputs to the workshop can be handled in French and Spanish too.
- The organisers can cover costs (including travel and accommodation) for a limited number of participants. It will be an advantage if you have the opportunity to cover your own expenses.

### **HOW TO EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST?**

If you are interested to take part in this workshop, please send a message to the contact addresses below explaining briefly your current involvement in local (agriculture/NRM) development, your experiences with farmer-led documentation that you will be able to share and the opportunities you and your organisation see for further using farmer-led documentation and applying the learning from attending the workshop. Please also indicate whether you can cover own expenses or wish to apply to the organisers to cover these. Deadline for application is 31<sup>st</sup> August 2006

September                      All applications will be reviewed, cases identified and an initial selection of participants will be made and made known to applicants before 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006. This selection will be based on the relevance of the experiences of the applicant and on his or her opportunities to apply lessons learned during the meeting.

September-  
October

Selected participants will be asked to prepare a case study that illustrates their experience with farmer-led documentation and the way this is used in knowledge sharing and agricultural development/NRM at large. A first short write-up of the case should be submitted before 6<sup>th</sup> October. In the months before the workshop guidelines and support will be provided to help the participants prepare content and supporting material for an interactive session in which their case is presented and discussed. A final draft of the case study is expected before 27<sup>th</sup> October 2006. Before the meeting all case studies will be made available to all participants for further consultations and reading.

Applications for participation should be sent to Dorine Ruter using the contact details given below. You may also contact them for any questions you have on this workshop.

Feel free to forward this document to people in your network for whom this workshop may be relevant.

Dorine Ruter

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Contact person for the Workshop  
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Contact person for this workshop:  
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## ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

PELUM Association is a regional network of civil society organisations working in eastern, central and southern Africa. It aims to enhance the capacity of member organisations in working towards sustainable local community livelihoods and empowered small scale farmers

[www.pelum.org.zm](http://www.pelum.org.zm)

**Oxfam Novib** is fighting for a just world without poverty. Together with people, organisations, businesses and governments. Through projects and lobby. Locally and internationally. Because poverty and injustice are global problems. They are about unjust economic and political relationships.

<http://www.novib.nl>

**PROLINNOVA** aims to promote local innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management. Its focus is on recognising the dynamics of indigenous knowledge and learning how development agents can strengthen the capacities of farmers to adjust to changing conditions.

[www.prolinnova.org](http://www.prolinnova.org)