

Fanos Mekonnen Birke & Ann Waters-Bayer

Institutionalisation: process through which new ideas and practices are introduced, accepted and applied by individuals and organisations so as to become part of “the norm”. This process requires deliberate change within an organisation.

Participatory Innovation Development (PID) takes local innovation as a point of entry to develop innovations in a farmer-led and expert-supported manner.

PROLINNOVA in Tahtay Maychew District

PROLINNOVA–Ethiopia seeks to integrate PID into institutions of research, development and education. Tahtay Maychew (TM) District Office of Agriculture (DOA) is a partner of PROLINNOVA–Ethiopia in Tigray Region.



Location of TM District



Visiting innovative farmer's orchard (Photo: Fanos Mekonnen)

Framework for understanding PID institutionalisation

Aspects	Mission	Structure	Human resources
Technical: the nuts and bolts	Planning, design, M&E	Tasks, linkages strategies, technologies	Skills, capacity building
Political: the power game	Policy, budget	Decision-making processes	Accountability, incentives, rewards
Socio-cultural: identity and behavior	Organisational values	Routines, norms, traditions	Behaviour, attitudes

Source: after Lizares-Bodegon et al (2002) Participatory Technology Development for agricultural improvement: challenges for institutional integration, IIRR, Philippines

Results and discussion

- A non-enabling environment led to limited inclusion of PID in formal work procedures, planning and reporting of DOA
- Individual interest, commitment and change in attitude paved way to internalise PID in DOA
- Existing extension structures could be adjusted to accommodate PID approach
- Partnerships with other line offices and farmers helped bridge gaps, e.g. in budget and skills
- Timeliness and relevance of the local innovations for the priorities of decision-makers facilitated PID integration
- PID self-assessment tool enabled DOA staff to gain clear picture of where they were in the process and to identify factors favouring and hindering institutionalisation of PID

Methods

Case study through interviews and focus group discussion with farmers, extensionists and other stakeholders at different levels; development and testing self-assessment tool to measure PID institutionalisation



Stakeholders analyse level of institutionalising PID in DOA (Photo: Fanos Mekonnen)



Empowering women and youth to share their innovation processes and results (Photo: Fanos Mekonnen)

Conclusions

Factors that favoured institutionalisation of PID:

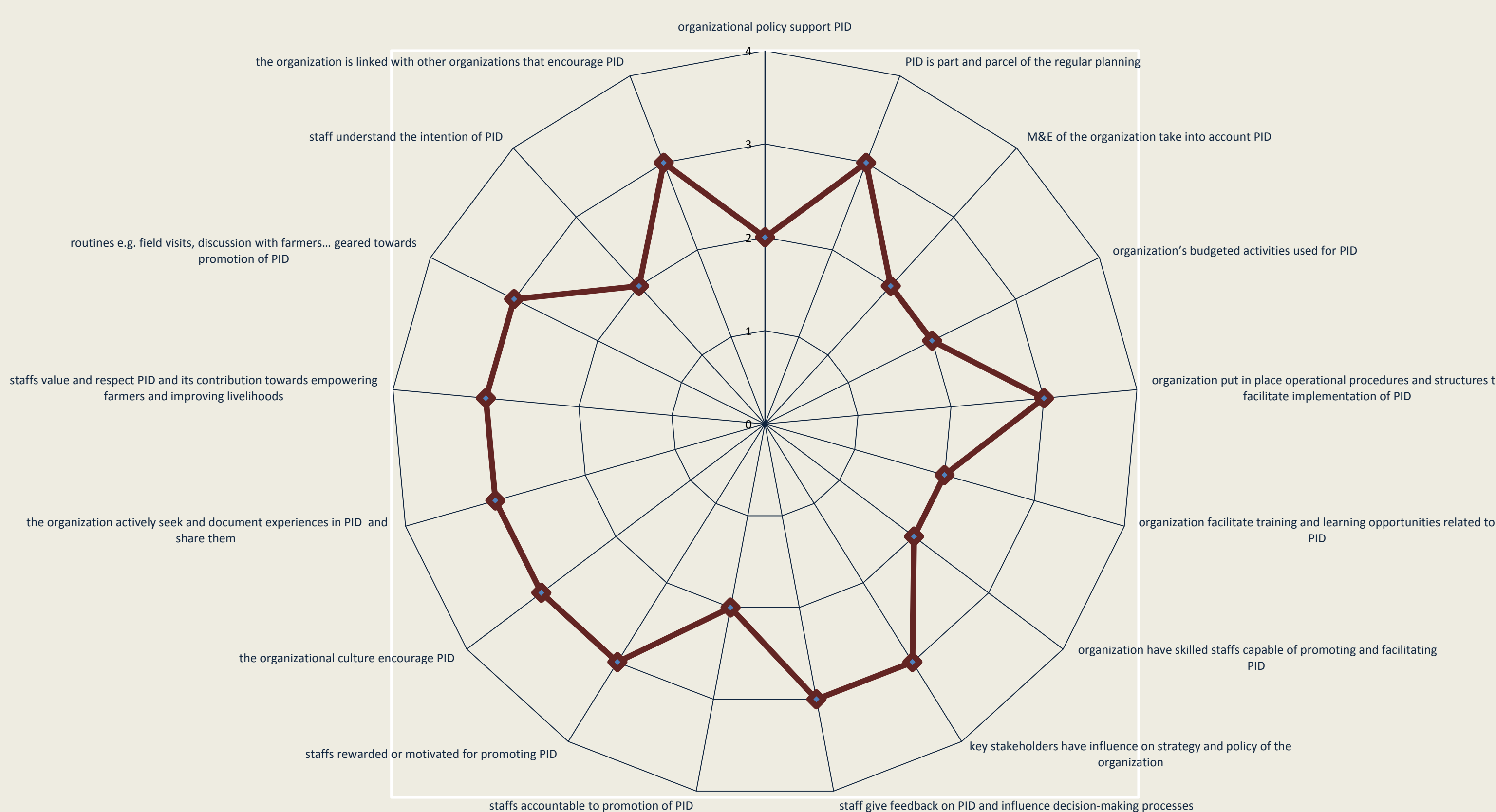
- Tradition of recognising farmers' “good practice” dating back to civil war (1974–91) and subsequent work in Indigenous Soil and Water Conservation Project in Tigray (1997–2001)
- Capacity development and making DOA accountable for PID
- Close collaboration among PROLINNOVA partners

Factors that constrained institutionalisation of PID:

- Limited room for manoeuvre in formal organisational structure and strategy of regional extension system
- Insufficient resource allocation
- Limited individual capacities to promote PID on wide scale

Recommendation:

PROLINNOVA–Ethiopia multistakeholder platform needs to strengthen links among members at national and regional level and strategise clearly how to institutionalise PID as an approach to extension and thus a process for development.



Spiderweb showing PID integration in DOA (0 = no integration; 4 = full integration)