



ileia

Centre for learning on
sustainable agriculture

Establishment of National Networks in Sudan, Morocco and Algeria



Final technical report

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Executive summary

As part of its process to strengthen knowledge management in the Middle East and North Africa, KariaNet embarked on the second phase of a multi year collaboration with ILEIA. This led to the current project entitled 'Establishment of national networks in Sudan, Algeria and Morocco'.

Building on the results of an earlier project, the current project aimed at building these national networks by employing three strategies. The first was to deepen the documentation skills of rural development practitioners in Sudan, share the results and achieve tangible documentation products. The second strategy enabled KariaNet members in Algeria and Morocco to adopt practice-based knowledge management as an integral part of their day-to-day work. The third component that was originally envisaged was the documentation of a Share Fair in Sudan. While the workshops took place as planned, the documentation of the Share Fair could not be implemented due to recurrent rescheduling by the organizers.

In the three countries, ILEIA and its sister organization IED Afrique (based in Senegal) carried out trainings on analysis and documentation of field experiences. Participants learned how to select an activity to document, how to describe it, how to analyse the factors behind success or failure, how to capture and communicate these lessons, and finally how to integrate this methodology in daily work processes.

The three workshops were successful in numbers of participants (25 on average) and led to the desired results in terms of perceived and demonstrated increased skills, better national networking and tangible outputs. The evaluations with participants show that they are very satisfied with the workshops methodology and facilitation as well as with the outcomes.

While improvements can be made in better planning of these activities in the future, the results of the project are very positive.

ILEIA is very grateful for the pleasant cooperation with with Karianet, IDRC and IFAD and looks forward to future joint initiatives.

1. Introduction

Karianet seeks to mainstream knowledge management into development practice in countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa through different knowledge sharing practices, capacity building, applied research and pertinent networking activities. In that context, KariaNet invited ILEIA to implement a series of supportive activities.

This second project between Karianet and ILEIA builds on the results and achievements of the first one. Key objectives are the establishment of a viable knowledge management network and the formation of thematic knowledge sharing networks in all the project countries.

The objectives of this second Karianet- ILEIA project were to:

- (a) Deepen the documentation skills of practitioners in Sudan, building on the documentation processes started in 2012, and enable them to achieve tangible documentation products that can be shared;
- (b) Document the Knowledge Share Fair and assess the lessons learned;
- (c) Enable network members in Algeria and Morocco to adopt practice-based knowledge management as an integral part of their day-to-day work.



2. Project implementation

As part of this project, ILEIA:

(a) facilitated a follow-up training in Sudan on documentation, working towards knowledge products;

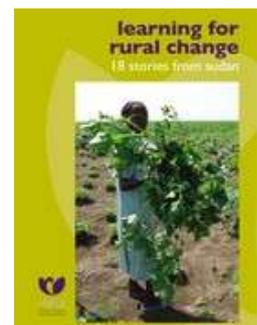
Building on the skills developed in earlier documentation processes with KariaNet, and involving other practitioners, we consolidated the documentation of field-based experiences in Sudan. From 12-15 February 2013, ILEIA organised a Documentation and Communication Training for professionals involved in IFAD-funded projects in Sudan. In this hands-on training, 22 men and women participated, combining various methodologies related to documentation and communication. The innovation at this workshop is that, after careful discussion with the KariaNet coordination office, we put stronger emphasis on writing stories and finalising a tangible product. Participants were guided in the preparation of these materials.

The training strengthened the skills of participants to analyse, document and communicate, and we shared techniques to do so. A video was made by KariaNet's film maker that captured the spirit of the training, see http://youtu.be/6Y_F60x98wM. We were also joined by the IFAD representative for Sudan on the last day. For more details, we refer to the separate training report.

A two page article about the Sudan workshop featured in the September 2013 issue of Farming Matters, reaching tens of thousands of readers. It can be read online here: <http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/magazines/global/education-for-change/documentation-in-sudan> and is also attached as pdf in the annex.

(b) prepared a case booklet with project experiences;

All participants were challenged to write an article during the second part of the workshop, using the knowledge generated during the documentation process. Everyone managed to do so. Some chose to co-author their article, but the majority wrote individually. These first drafts were edited and revised during the workshop, resulting in nearly-finished knowledge products at the end of the four days. These articles were further edited by the ILEIA team, and the finished products were compiled in an 80 page book with the title **'Learning for rural change; 18 Stories from Sudan'**. The book will be presented and distributed at the Share Fair, to be held in Khartoum in July 2013. The booklet is available in pdf and as separate stories in html at <http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/resources/pubs/learning-for-rural-change/>



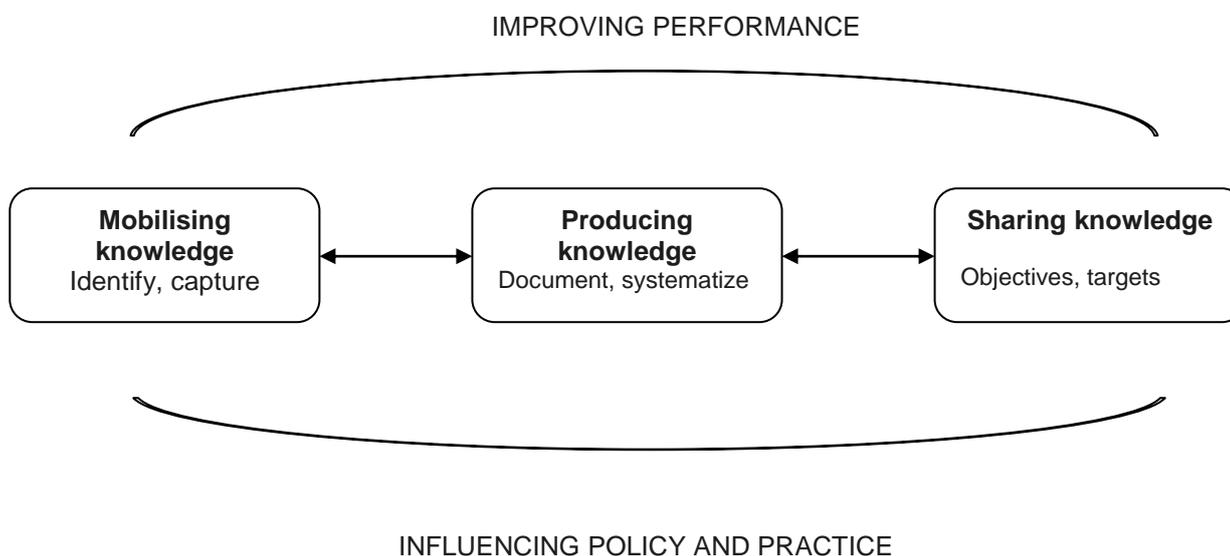
(d) consolidated an online community of Sudanese practitioners;

This was implemented by the Kenana network, an established Egyptian organization for online knowledge management. Aside from this being a capacity building activity this was also a networking activity to cement the national network. ILEIA has been requested by IDRC to include this activity in her proposal and budget. The amount was handed over to IFAD's central coordination Unit in Sudan. There were no contractual relationships, as Kenana is directly accountable to IDRC. ILEIA does not bear any responsibility for the results of this component of the project.

(e) facilitated two capacity-building workshops on practice-based knowledge management for KariaNet members from Algeria and Morocco.

These workshops were facilitated by IED Afrique, ILEIA's sister organisation based in Senegal. The first of these workshops took place in Alger from 18 to 21 June with 29 participants. The second took place in Agadir from 25 to 28 June 2013, with 26 participants.

The participants strengthened their knowledge management capacities in the context of better integration of this practice in projects / programs. They learned about a conceptual framework for knowledge management for development while exchanging experiences about knowledge management initiatives underway in the country. Finally, the participants learned skills to implement, coordinate and monitor knowledge management systems. Below is one of the charts about knowledge management and project performance that was presented and discussed at the workshops. We refer to the separate project reports for more details.





Morocco workshop participants, June 2013

Changes from original project proposal

One of the components of the original proposal has not been implemented, which is the documentation of the Sudan Share Fair. This activity was originally planned for the end of March 2013. It was postponed by the organizers, first to July, then to September, and then to an undefined date in the future. After careful consultation with KariaNet, it was decided that ILEIA would no longer be involved in documenting the ShareFair.

Furthermore, the workshops in Morocco and Algeria, originally planned to take place in April were postponed to the end of June. As a result, our project was extended to 1 October 2013.

3. Analysis and evaluation

Sudan workshop and booklet

From the viewpoint of both the participants and ILEIA, the Sudan documentation training and the preparation of the book have been very successful. All of the participants were very actively involved, drew out important lessons from their work, and the result of the booklet is something we can all be proud of. The logistics of the training were well organised. Coaching the participants and finalising the book took more days than envisaged originally, which we see as a lesson learned. But the output is very worthy of this extra time investment.

The participant evaluation generated various insights. Participants liked the variety of tools and methods used in the training, as well as the fact that the training was output-oriented. Many of them would like to see more videos of successful projects, are interested in learning about other outputs than articles, and are asking for more time. The lessons learned at the workshop evolved mostly around the basic principles of documentation such as institutional support, the questions that helped analyse experiences ('what were the factors for success?') and the importance of communicating in an attractive way.

Participants indicated that they will share their new knowledge with their colleagues and try to use the documentation methodology in their own work. The facilitators were considered interactive, professional and helpful. People strongly expressed a desire to keep connected with each other and to see the results of the joint work.

After printing, the booklets have been sent to Sudan and to the KariaNet coordination office in Cairo with the aim to distribute them among workshop participants and staff at IFAD and IDRC and the ministries. IFAD acknowledged the importance of having a tangible result of this workshop and expressed compliments about the form and content of the booklet. It has inspired IFAD to develop similar products for Ethiopia, Yemen, Zimbabwe and Swaziland.



Participants of the Sudan documentation workshop

Algeria and Morocco workshops

Training in knowledge management for KariaNet Morocco and Algeria was a very rich exchange of sharing knowledge and practices of the various participants. The workshops helped to strengthen the participants' understanding of knowledge management and to start similar processes in their organization. They learned about the various stages of documentation and capitalization process including planning, setting boundaries, description, analysis, editing and sharing the results.

A lot of discussion evolved around the choice of topics to be documented. According to participants (researchers, local development organizations and associations of producers), each project has a multitude of aspects to be documented, and they felt that the identification of specific themes was difficult. So the group came up with a set of criteria for selecting an experience to document, such as innovation, value-added results, relevance of the approach, sustainability. This was an interesting innovation to the documentation methodology.

The workshop resulted in fruitful dialogue between participants which reinforced the feeling that knowledge sharing plays a major role to improve the efficiency and visibility of operations and strengthening the networks. A mailing list was created to provide for Karianet Algeria to continue discussions to develop an action plan. The meeting also allowed the networks to identify the capitalization of experiences as a major focus of capacity building to promote knowledge sharing. All participants stated that lessons learned can be integrated into their work.

The most popular aspect of the trainings was the facilitation and methodology, as indicated by moving testimonies during evaluation session. The discovery of IED Afrique, an organization from Sub-Saharan Africa with a pragmatic approach to knowledge management for development, turned out to be a major element of satisfaction .

Regarding areas for improvement, participants thought among other things that the duration of the workshop was too short. They proposed to increase the number of trainings. The introduction of a field visit to the workshop was also discussed as an option during the evaluation.



Algeria workshop participants, June 2013

3. Conclusions

Based on the experiences and lessons learned in this project, we have the following conclusions.

The workshops in Sudan, Algeria and Morocco were all highly appreciated by workshop participants. From their testimonies and evaluation forms, we can see that they have indeed learnt important insights about knowledge management and documentation, such as the need to go deeper when analysing experiences, and always ask the question 'what was the factor that made this or that successful (or not)?'.

Furthermore, there were empowerment effects from learning about how to start a knowledge management process in your own organisation, or how to actually produce a tangible and shareable story from your own experience. It made participants feel proud and capable that they authored a chapter in a book. We are grateful to note that the facilitation was generally appreciated as interactive, professional and helpful.

All project activities have been executed with great satisfaction. The only area where we encountered difficulty has been around scheduling.

Solid planning has remained a problematic issue in the projects with KariaNet. In this case especially with regards to the Knowledge Share Fair in Sudan, for which our tickets were bought, visa organised and days booked just before the event was postponed- and this happened three times. We regret that this means we had to cancel our participation in the Share Fair altogether and will not be able to document it. However, we do understand the complex and turbulent political context of North Africa and assume that this has impeded better planning and staying on schedule.

We are grateful to IDRC, IFAD and Karianet for the pleasant cooperation and we look much forward to future collaboration that will help us advance our mutual goal of sustainable rural development.

Annexes

All annexes are sent along as separate files

- **Annex I: Sudan workshop report (including list of participants)**
- **Annex II: Booklet: Learning for rural change. 18 stories from Sudan**
- **Annex III: Farming Matters article including one Sudanese participant story**
- **Annex IV: Algeria workshop report (including list of participants)**
- **Annex V: Morocco workshop report (including list of participants)**

