

ILAC at a glance

What is the ILAC Initiative?

The Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative works to boost the contributions that agricultural research and development (R&D) is making to cut poverty worldwide.

The major challenge is that even successful poverty-reducing research options are often not widely applied or adopted. The various partners that make up ILAC are addressing this by improving the ability of researchers and others involved in R&D to (i) work with a wide range of stakeholders, (ii) learn from the results of their work, (iii) share their knowledge and (iv) put that knowledge to work in agricultural innovation processes.

“To be serious about poverty, the agricultural research and development community has to be serious about institutional learning and change.”

Robert Chambers

ILAC's Approach

Innovation, collaboration, and the fostering of increased demand are all needed for poverty-reducing research to have the maximum impact. ILAC is therefore using an innovation systems approach to improve our understanding of the processes behind agricultural change, and to guide interventions that aim to stimulate innovations that benefit the poor.

What are ILAC's Aims?

ILAC's efforts focus on strengthening the capacity of partnerships, alliances, consortia, networks, eco-regional initiatives and other collaborative arrangements that actively engage the poor. It aims to

1. Generate new knowledge on innovation processes through applied research and evaluation
2. Strengthen capacity in terms of the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to foster pro-poor innovation
3. Foster leadership and supportive policies for pro-poor innovation in agricultural R&D
4. Improve communication and knowledge sharing among practitioners and leaders of pro-poor agricultural innovation processes.

Current Major Activities

ILAC's Learning Laboratory

ILAC is bringing the members of various collaborative R&D programs together to

- share good and bad experiences
- identify common barriers to pro-poor innovation, and
- plan applied research to overcome them.

This Learning Laboratory will also test new approaches for planning, managing, and evaluating collaborative programs, and will evaluate and learn from the results of this research.

Impact Evaluation Project

ILAC is starting a major project to develop new approaches and methods for assessing the impacts of collaborative agricultural R&D programmes on poverty reduction. This effort is responding to calls from the recent international "Rethinking Impact" workshop for new methods and other support for evaluating the impacts of complex, applied research.

Training and Capacity Development

ILAC conducts an annual course for agricultural R&D managers on Facilitating Participatory Decision Making. New courses on Social Network Analysis and Planning for Policy Influence are being developed and tested. These courses fill a void in developing research skills and approaches needed for collaborative and applied R&D.

Communication and Knowledge Sharing

ILAC is developing a new web-based knowledge portal and continues the development of its popular series of ILAC Briefs on topics such as evaluation for learning and use, participatory decision making, and organizational culture.

ILAC Partners and Supporters

ILAC is an inter-centre initiative of the CGIAR. ILAC is generously supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The DFID Research Into Use Programme is supporting a scoping study for the impact assessment project. Current major partners include:

- Network for Linking Users to Researchers for Banana and Plantain Improvement, Bioversity International
- Mainstreaming Impact Group, CIAT
- Impacts Targeting Unit, CIMMYT
- Users' Perspectives With Agricultural Research and Development (UPWARD) Network, CIP
- Andean Change Program and Impact Enhancement Division, CIP
- African Highlands Initiative, ICRAF
- Innovation Works: Linking Knowledge with Action, ILRI
- Xavier Institute of Management, India
- CGIAR Systemwide Program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis for Technology Development and Institutional Innovation (PRGA Program)
- CGIAR Central Advisory Service on Intellectual Property
- Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex
- Community at Work
- Overseas Development Institute
- Centre for Applied Social Research, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

For more information about the ILAC Initiative, visit www.cgiar-ilac.org



Promoting collaborative
pro-poor agricultural innovation