



# FINAL REPORT

## Institutional Learning and Change Initiative (ILAC) – A CGIAR Initiative to enhance the contributions of agricultural research to sustainable poverty reduction

Final report contract number: **Activity 11117**  
Reporting Period: January 2006 – June 2007

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With effect from 1 December 2006, IPGRI and INIBAP operate under the name "Bioversity International", Bioversity for short. This new name echoes our new strategy which focuses on improving people's lives through biodiversity research.

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## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Project overview.....	1
3	Project management and staffing.....	1
4	Project description.....	1
5	Funding history and in kind support.....	2
6	Activities during the reporting period .....	3
6.1	Leadership, coordination and technical support .....	3
6.2	Strategic studies and methods .....	3
6.3	Workshops and training .....	4
6.4	Communications .....	5
6.5	Unanticipated opportunities.....	8
6.6	Lesson learning and planning for the future .....	9
7	Future directions for ILAC.....	11
	Annex 1. Complete list of ILAC Briefs.....	13
	Annex 2. Proposal for an ILAC Sourcebook .....	15

## 1 Introduction

With the participation of CGIAR centres and support from key donors, since 2003 the Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative has been exploring ways to improve the contributions of agricultural research to sustainable poverty reduction. Emphasis has been on developing and field testing methods for speeding up learning from research successes and failures and putting the lessons into practice. This report describes the ILAC Initiative's activities and achievements from January 2006 to June 2007, identifies lessons learned and outlines future directions for the initiative.

## 2 Project overview

**Project title:** The Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC)

**Donor reference:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands - Activity 11117

**Reporting period:** January 2006 - June 2007

## 3 Project management and staffing

The ILAC Initiative has a small Management Team made up of:

- Jamie Watts (Project Coordinator, Bioversity International).
- Douglas Horton (Senior Honorary Fellow, Bioversity International)
- Cristina Sette (ILAC Programme Specialist, Bioversity International)

An "ILAC Core Team" serves as an informal advisory group for the project. Its members include focal points for ILAC case studies and other professionals with expertise in learning and change. Members of the ILAC Core Team include the following:

- Robert Chambers (Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex)
- Boru Douthwaite (Technology Policy Analyst, CIAT)
- Andy Hall (UN University, INTECH)
- Shambu Prasad (Associate Professor, Xavier Institute of Management, India)
- Charles Staver (Commodities for Livelihoods Programme, Bioversity International)
- Roberto La Rovere (Impacts Specialist, CIMMYT)
- Ronald Mackay (Senior Honorary Fellow, Bioversity International)

In addition, the following consultants were engaged in the project during the reporting period:

- Sam Kaner (Director of Community at Work, senior management advisor and lead trainer for workshops on Facilitating Participatory Decision Making)
- Michael Quinn Patton (Organizational development and evaluation consultant, Utilization-Focused Evaluation)
- Arnold Love (Senior evaluation consultant investigating strengthening ILAC in the CGIAR)
- Marian Fuchs-Carsch (Project design and fund raising consultant)

## 4 Project description

During the reporting period, ILAC sought to strengthen the capacity of CGIAR Centres, programmes and partners for learning for improved performance to enhance their contributions to poverty reduction. To achieve this aim, ILAC pursued the following objectives:

1. Develop personal and professional capacities for learning and change among researchers and managers
2. Strengthen learning in planning, monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)

3. Strengthen learning in partnerships, networks, alliances, inter-centre initiatives & system-wide and ecoregional programmes (SWEPs)
4. Expand theoretical and applied knowledge related to learning and change in the context of agricultural research
5. Widely share the evolving knowledge and experiences of ILAC

ILAC developed, field tested and introduced methods and tools that focus and accelerate organizational learning and institutional change in CGIAR centres and their partners, to help expand the contributions of agricultural research to sustainable poverty reduction. To support ILAC, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided a grant to ILAC of 150,000 Euros for the following areas of work:

Area of work	Description of work
Leadership, coordination & technical support	Project coordination, programme specialist, project assistant and specialist consultants
Strategic studies and methods	Adapting and developing methods to foster ILAC
Workshops & training	Training in facilitating participatory decision making
Communications	ILAC Briefs, newsletter, web site and other publications
Unanticipated opportunities	Representation at strategic meetings or other high priority opportunities that arise
PM&E & lesson learning	Documentation of lessons learned

## 5 Funding history and in kind support

### a. Grants received (2003-2006)

The following grants have been received by the ILAC Initiative since its beginning in 2003:

Donor	Year	Amount
Rockefeller Foundation	2003	US\$75,000
Rockefeller Foundation	2004-2005	US\$200,000
Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit and Bundesministerium für Zusammenarbeit (GTZ-BMZ)	2004	€80,000
The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS)	2005	€150,000
Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit and Bundesministerium für Zusammenarbeit (GTZ-BMZ)	2005	€25,000
The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS)	2006	€150,000

### b. In-kind support

Biodiversity International has hosted the ILAC Initiative since early 2004. ILRI and CIMMYT co-sponsored training workshops on Facilitating Participatory Decision Making. Ten CGIAR centres and one Challenge Programme covered travel and accommodation costs for participants in the facilitation workshops (Challenge Programme on Water and Food, Biodiversity International, CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, ICRISAT, IFPRI, ILRI, IRRI, and IWMI). CIAT, Biodiversity International, ICRISAT, CIMMYT and CIP co-sponsored five ILAC pilot projects in 2005-2006.

## 6 Activities during the reporting period

### 6.1 Leadership, coordination and technical support

Funding support to leadership, coordination and technical support was used to provide basic staffing and supervision to the project. Specifically, Jamie Watts served as project coordinator to provide technical support, supervision and representation for the project. Douglas Horton was employed for 2.5 months to provide technical support to the development of concepts, methods and proposals and to represent the project. Cristina Sette was employed from July 2006 through April 2007 to manage publications and communications processes. Oonagh Darby provided administrative support to the project.

During 2006 and early 2007 ILAC representatives attended several meetings and workshops to introduce ILAC concepts and approaches. This representation aimed to build understanding of ILAC and generate interest in collaboration for future ILAC activities. A list of meetings attended is shown below:

Dates	Meeting	ILAC participation/representation
July 10-11, 2006	KM4Dev "Knowledge, Learning and Change in International Development"	Jamie Watts and Boru Douthwaite delivered presentations based on ILAC work
July 15-21, 2006	ILAC training course on facilitating participatory decision making	Jamie Watts attended the course to represent the ILAC Initiative
September 5-8, 2006	ILAC training course on facilitating participatory decision making	Doug Horton attended the course to represent the ILAC Initiative
November 10, 2006	Meeting with DGIS	Doug Horton and Jamie Watts met with DGIS representatives to discuss a possible next phase of the ILAC Initiative
December 5-7, 2006	Annual General Meeting of the CGIAR	ILAC was represented at the AGM by Bioversity International senior management.
March 22-23, 2007	World Bank "Agricultural Innovation Systems" Workshop	Jamie Watts represented ILAC at the meeting, served as a rapporteur for the session on "Innovation system responses to market opportunities" and participated in the working group on "innovation systems indicators"
March 26-27, 2007	ILRI/ODI/ECAPAPA Enhancing Pro-Poor Policy Outcomes	Jamie Watts represented ILAC at this workshop.

### 6.2 Strategic studies and methods

Methods papers were developed on two key topics by leaders in the respective fields: utilization-focused evaluation and facilitating participatory decision-making. These papers -- adaptations of existing methodologies to the context of the CGIAR and its partner organizations -- are being published as ILAC Briefs.

The paper on utilization focused evaluation was prepared by Dr. Michael Quinn Patton an organizational management consultant and evaluation expert. Dr Patton is past President of the American Evaluation Association (AEA). He is the author of five evaluation books including "Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods" (3rd edition, 2002) and (3rd ed. (1997). The two previous editions of that book have been used in over 300 universities. Dr. Patton drafted an ILAC Brief on Utilization-focused evaluation drawing from his book.

The paper on participatory decision making was prepared by Dr. Sam Kaner, a leading expert on consensus decision-making. He is the senior author of *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*, and over the past 20 years he has been a featured speaker at conferences of several professional associations, including the National Organization Development Network and the International Association of Facilitators. He has worked with many corporate clients including Hewlett-Packard, PricewaterhouseCoopers and many other Fortune 500 companies and numerous public sector clients including the CGIAR, IDRC and many schools, community-based organizations and government agencies. Dr Kaner is the founder of the consulting firm *Community at Work*, and he has been its Executive Director since 1986. Dr. Kaner drafted an ILAC Brief on facilitating participatory decision making based on his experiences as a trainer on this topic for ILAC and the methods described in his book.

A study on strengthening ILAC in the CGIAR was carried out in 2005 and 2006, by Dr. Arnold Love an internationally recognized evaluation consultant based in Toronto. He is author of *Internal Evaluation: Building Organizations from Within* (Sage, 1991) and a forthcoming book on implementation analysis (Sage); editor of the Canadian Evaluation Society's *Evaluation Methods Sourcebook Series* and of special issues of *New Directions for Program Evaluation* and the *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*. He taught evaluation at the National Centre for Non-profit Management at York University and business research methods at the Centre for Innovative Management at Athabasca University; served 2 years as President of the Canadian Evaluation Society and in 1966 received its National Award for Distinguished Contribution to Evaluation. The American Evaluation Association (AEA) recognized Dr. Love (1998) for his contributions to building a worldwide evaluation community.

### **6.3 Workshops and training**

The ability to facilitate participatory decision making processes is a strategic skill for collaborative researchers because professionals are increasingly called upon to manage teams and participatory processes. Responding to this need, ILAC developed a training programme for CGIAR scientists and managers in collaboration with Community at Work, a US-based consulting firm specialising in participatory decision making. This training on "Group Facilitation Skills for Participatory Decision-Making" was first held in 2005, when forty people were trained in two workshops. In 2006, an additional thirty nine people from the following 10 CGIAR Centres and one System-Wide Programme: ILRI, ICRISAT, IFPRI, CIMMYT, IWMI, Bioversity International, CIAT, IRRI, and CIP and the Challenge Programme for Water and Food.

The 2006 training workshops were hosted and co-sponsored by ILRI and CIMMYT. The profile of 2006 trainees included 57% top and middle-level managers, 38% senior research scientists and 5% programme support staff.

ILAC supported the costs of the trainers, their travel and materials. Each trainee received a copy of the book "Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making" by Sam Kaner, Director of Community at Work and lead trainer for the workshops. The travel and accommodation costs of the trainees were paid by their own organizations.

An evaluation carried out of the 2006 training indicated that most of those trained had applied the skills they learned in meetings and workshops and many have gone on to train others in their own centres or work groups. As indicated in the quotations below (from the participants' evaluations), most participants were highly enthusiastic about the course:

*"It was one of the best workshops/training that I have been to."*

*“...the training was useful and important particularly in my context where I work with multiple partner institutions...”*

*“Surprised at how much there was to learn about facilitation, pleased with the very practical nature of the course and especially aware that it’s just a beginning.”*

*“The course was very useful in developing facilitation skills. I look forward to using the tools and techniques in my work.”*

The full evaluation report is available on the ILAC website ([www.cgiar-ilac.org](http://www.cgiar-ilac.org)).

An electronic discussion group on facilitation in the CGIAR was established to respond to a request from trainees to provide a platform for staff in CGIAR centres and programmes to exchange ideas and experiences on facilitation that will help to improve capacity to work with partners in a collaborative and participatory way and increase the ability of trainees to act as facilitators in their own centres, programmes and projects.

Two centres (Bioversity International and ILRI) have gone on to organize and sponsor additional facilitation training for their own managers and staff.

Since 2005, the ILAC training has reached approximately 80 participants from 14 CGIAR centres (all centres have participated except WARDA) and from four Challenge Programmes or System Wide Initiatives (Central Advisory Service on Intellectual Property, ICT-KM, Challenge Programme on Water and Food, System wide Livestock Programme)<sup>1</sup>.

## **6.4 Communications**

### **6.4.1 ILAC Briefs**

ILAC Briefs disseminate key concepts, experiences and tools for institutional learning and change. In previous years a total of eleven briefs were finalized. The complete list of ILAC Briefs is in Annex 1. Three ILAC Briefs were published in 2006:

Amariles, F., Peralta, G. and Johnson, N. (2006). Linking Diversity to Organizational Effectiveness: Lessons from a culture study at CIAT. ILAC Brief No. 12. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy

Shambu Prasad, C., Hall, A. and Thummuru, L. (2006). Engaging Scientists through Institutional Histories. ILAC Brief No. 14. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy

Thiele, G., Devaux, A., Velasco, C. and Manrique, K. (2006). Horizontal Evaluation: Stimulating social learning among peers. ILAC Brief No. 13. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy

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<sup>1</sup> There was also one participant from the Global Crop Diversity Trust.

One thousand copies of each brief have been printed and distributed. Briefs are also posted on the ILAC web site. From December 2006 to June 2007 these briefs were downloaded over one thousand times as shown below:

Brief 12: 814 downloads

Brief 13: 199 downloads

Brief 14: 96 downloads

Six additional briefs were drafted in 2006 and will be published in 2007:

- Hesse, E. and Sette, C. Forthcoming. *Collaborative E-learning for Sharing Knowledge*. ILAC Brief. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative.
- Kaner, S. Forthcoming. *Facilitating Participatory Decision-Making*. ILAC Brief. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative.
- La Rovere, R., Dixon, J. and Hellin, J. Forthcoming. *Enriching Impact Assessment at CIMMYT*. ILAC Brief. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative.
- Lilja, N. and Bellon, M. Forthcoming. *Participatory Research Projects in CIMMYT*. ILAC Brief. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative
- Mackay, R., Douthwaite, B., Alvarez, S., Watts, J. and Sette, C. Forthcoming. *Impact Pathways*. ILAC Brief. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative.
- Patton, M.Q. Forthcoming. *Utilization-focused Evaluation*. ILAC Brief. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative.

#### 6.4.2 ILAC Website

The ILAC website (<http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/>) was launched in July 2005. All ILAC publications and reports are available on the ILAC website, as well as basic information about ILAC Initiative and numerous resources and links. The website is continuously being improved and new features and information are being added.

The website monitoring system indicates that visitors reach ILAC website mainly through Google search using the search string 'ilac cgiar'. During 2006 the website received about 5,000 visits.

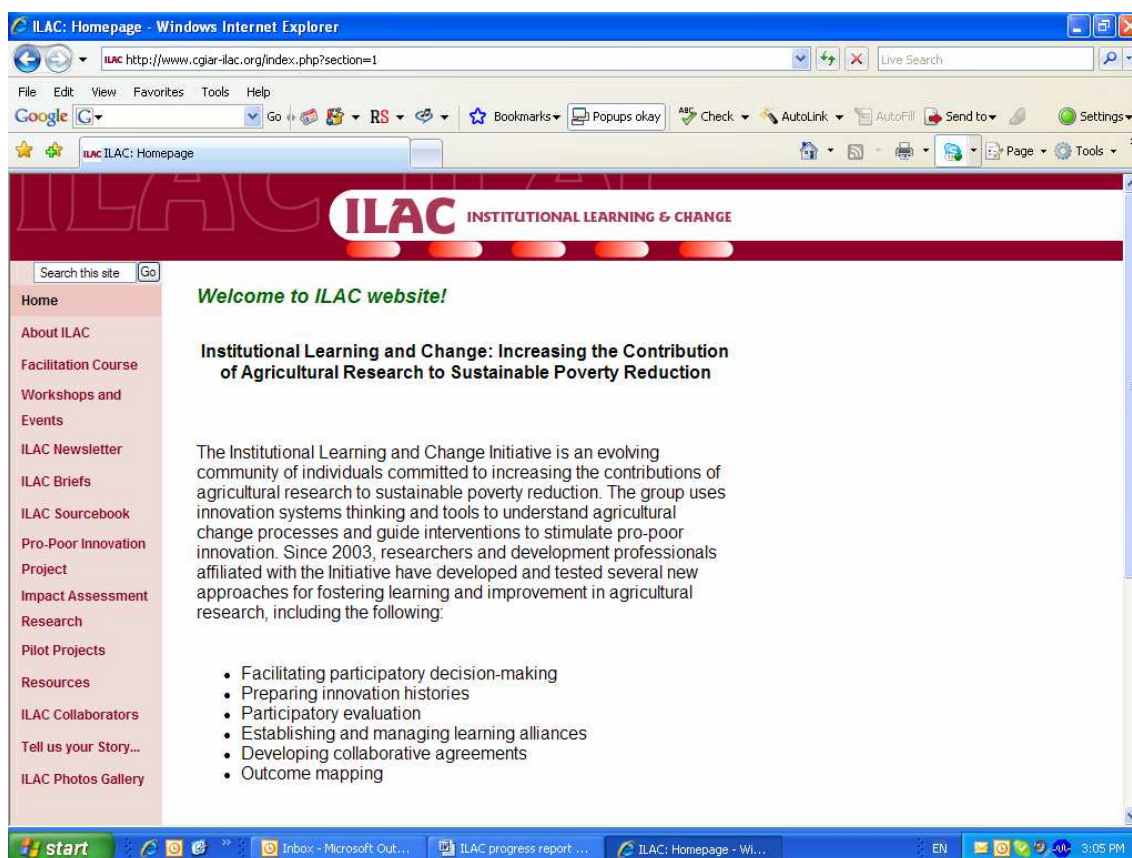
Over 34,000 files, documents and images from the ILAC website were accessed in 2006, representing an average of over 6 files accessed per visitor.

The following documents were downloaded most frequently:

- Shambu Prasad, C. (2006) *System of Rice Intensification in India Innovation History and Institutional Challenges*, WWF International - ICRISAT Dialogue Project, ICRISAT, India (**486 downloads**)
- Douthwaite, B. and Ashby, J. (2005) *Innovation Histories: A method from learning from experience*. ILAC Brief No.5. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy. (**333 downloads**)
- Shambu Prasad C, Hall AJ and Wani SP. (2005) *Institutional history of watershed research: The evolution of ICRISAT's work on natural resources in India*. Global Theme on Agroecosystems Report no. 12. International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics. 40 pp. Patancheru 502 324, Andhra Pradesh, India. (**257 downloads**)
- Lundy, M., Gottret, M. V. and Ashby, J. (2005) *Learning Alliances: An approach for building multistakeholder innovation systems*. ILAC Brief No. 8. Consultative Group on

International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy. **(227 downloads)**

- Acosta, A. and Douthwaite, B. (2005) Appreciative Inquiry: An approach for learning and change based on our own best practices. ILAC Brief No. 6. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy. **(221 downloads)**
- Shambu Prasad C, Laxmi T and Wani SP. (2006) *Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) at ICRISAT: A Case Study of the Tata-ICRISAT Project*. Global Theme on Agroecosystems Report no. 19. International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics. 44 pp. Patancheru 502 324, Andhra Pradesh, India. **(191 downloads)**
- Smutylo, T. (2005) Outcome Mapping: A method for tracking behavioural changes in development programs. ILAC Brief No. 7. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy. **(188 downloads)**



### 6.4.3 ILAC Newsletter

Three ILAC Newsletters were produced between January 2006 and June 2007. The newsletter is used to communicate broadly to a large group about ILAC, to introduce ILAC concepts and methods to a broad range of people who might not otherwise be informed about them, to stimulate new partnerships and collaboration and to generally maintain the visibility of ILAC. In 2006, the newsletter was redesigned to include an introductory article. The articles included were:

- Interview with Dr. Sam Kaner on participatory decision making by Cristina Sette (October 2006)
- Stimulating pro-poor innovation with the participatory market chain approach by Thomas Bernet and Andre Devaux (January 2007)
- Impact pathways by Ronald Mackay (May 2007)

Topics regularly covered in the newsletters include new ILAC publications, news about the ILAC website and upcoming events (ILAC events and related events organized by others).

The newsletter is distributed electronically and there are thus no additional costs associated with increasingly broader distribution. The ILAC mailing list is being constantly updated and currently includes 853 contacts. Newsletters were distributed to this list as well as all CGIAR staff. Starting in 2006, the newsletter is sent to the 380 members of the discussion group for the Pelican Initiative at the request of the discussion group moderator. The Pelican Initiative ("Platform for Evidence-based Learning & Communications for Social Change") seeks to bring together development practitioners from different disciplines, specialists and policy makers to share experiences on three themes:

- Evidence and learning for policy change;
- Learning in organisations and among partners;
- Society-wide learning among a multitude of stakeholders.

All issues of the newsletter are available on the ILAC website.

#### **6.4.4 ILAC Virtual Sourcebook**

During an ILAC workshop in October 2005, participants proposed that an ILAC Sourcebook be developed to support efforts by scientists and research managers who wish to introduce and mainstream ILAC in their work. A proposal for the Sourcebook is in Annex 2.

Since funding was not available for a printed version of a Sourcebook, ILAC began to develop a "virtual" sourcebook using "Wiki" technology. In October 2006 the basic framework for the virtual Sourcebook was established on a Wiki site, which included the set of existing ILAC Briefs as the starting point and core.

During 2006 three chapters providing background and context were drafted and are currently under review. These chapters are:

- "The learning organization and its implications for ILAC"
- "Managing research organizations in response to institutional change"
- "Introduction to tools and approaches for fostering ILAC"

By using the Wiki technology, authors can revise their briefs and add additional material in the form of links to case studies, research reports, more detailed guidelines, tools, websites, and other resources. Readers are also invited to contribute to the virtual book. This will serve as a peer-review mechanism and will help identify gaps in the range of topics covered and to suggest ways to improve the presentation of each. In this way, users and potential users of the sourcebook will be involved in its development. The ILAC Sourcebook can be found at <http://ilac-sourcebook.pbwiki.com/>

#### **6.5 Unanticipated opportunities**

Funding support was provided to Boru Douthwaite to attend the KM4Dev workshop. Boru Douthwaite was co-sponsored by ILAC and presented on learning from innovation histories and impact pathways, which was derived in part by ILAC sponsored research on the topic. Jamie Watts also attended this meeting but was sponsored by the hosting organization, the Institute for Development Studies. She presented a framework for institutionalising change in organizations derived from ILAC experiences.

In October 2006, the ILAC management team came together with a senior advisor, Dr. Marian Fuchs-Carsch to discuss fundraising strategies and design a new project proposal. Dr. Fuchs-Carsch worked for years with numerous public sector organizations in the design

of projects in health, agriculture, energy, education, family planning and environment. Her work includes training scientists and development staff in project design and proposal preparation, advising managers on strategic planning and other ways of improving donor relations and fundraising.

## 6.6 Lesson learning and planning for the future

An effort to draw lessons from the ILAC Initiative began in late 2005 when ILAC was invited to present lessons at an impact assessment workshop convened by the CGIAR System-wide Program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis for Technology Development and Institutional Innovation (PRGA Program) and CIMMYT.

ILAC case studies imply that institutional learning and change for poverty alleviation involves three inter-related elements:

**Institutions:** Agricultural innovation (improvement) takes place within systems of multiple players at different levels, and norms and rules that govern their interactions

**Experiential Learning:** Analyzing and understanding the work we do and learning as a (social) process of reflection and analysis

**Change:** Applying lessons learned in order to improve our programmes

There are several implications for impact assessment in this context. First, if agricultural innovation (improvement) takes place within systems of multiple players at different levels, and norms and rules that govern their interactions then impact must be defined within a partnership context and assessed accordingly. Secondly, if impact assessment is to maximize its contribution to learning, then it must promote a process of reflection and analysis among those responsible for the programme. Finally, if impact assessment is to contribute to the direct uptake of lessons to programme improvement, then it must be oriented towards this as its objective and designed accordingly.

The following specific actions could be taken to expand the contribution of impact assessment to learning and change:

- Ensure that IA has learning and programme improvement objectives
- Focus on questions of target audiences
- Select from a wide variety of methods to address the questions of relevance
- Use collaborative approaches to interpret findings and develop recommendations
- Report in ways that facilitate understanding / assimilation & suggest practical uses
- Assess the *processes* by which impact is (or isn't) achieved, as well as the *magnitude* of impacts
- Assess the roles that different agents play in achieving impact
- Broaden the scope of impact assessments to include changes in institutions, policies and capacity

Institutional issues associated with adopting such practices include:

- The need for a supportive culture that encourages learning and risk-taking
- Impact assessors must have a clear / formal mandate to support organizational learning and change in addition to producing reports
- Organizations must support training of staff (e.g. facilitation skills, participatory process management, monitoring and evaluation skills, diagnostic skills)
- Adequate time and other resources must be dedicated specifically to learning

Following the workshop, ILAC was invited to further develop the lessons in a journal article for a special edition of *Experimental Agriculture* which would include 8 of the 25 papers presented at the workshop. A participatory self assessment and writing process was undertaken by the case study teams to develop the paper, entitled “Transforming Impact Assessment: Beginning the Quiet Revolution of Institutional Learning and Change.” It is expected that this paper will be published in late 2007.

Another lesson learning activity that began in 2005 and carried over into 2006 was the contracting of an external evaluation expert (Dr. Arnold Love) to conduct a series of interviews to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of ILAC, and to identify ways forward. More than twenty people from several CGIAR centres, inter-centre initiatives, the CGIAR Science Council and CGIAR Secretariat, and ILAC donor organizations were interviewed either by telephone or face to face to discuss ILAC progress to date and issues associated with institutionalizing learning and change in planning, monitoring and evaluation across the CGIAR. The support and commitment of CGIAR Centre Directors General was seen as critical to stimulating change from within the centres themselves. Some evaluation mechanisms such as the performance measurement system, Centre Commissioned External Reviews (CCERS), evaluation quality standards and others could be entry points for ILAC to influence the CGIAR system. However, the interviews also revealed a tension between learning and change objectives promoted by ILAC and the Science Council and CGIAR evaluation and impact assessment processes, which tend to focus on accountability and advocacy rather than learning and improvement.

One major finding was that ILAC sends mixed messages about its mission. Sometimes ILAC presents itself as an initiative that promotes new evaluation processes focused on self assessment, learning and institutional change. Other times ILAC presents itself as being concerned with broader issues of innovation, partnership and the flow of information between farmers and researchers. In order to address this problem it was recommended that ILAC develop a “logic model” for its work that captures how it intends to bring about change. An important part of clarifying ILAC’s objectives and identity is identifying which specific behaviours ILAC is promoting among target groups, most directly the “boundary partners” which are research managers and researchers themselves. ILAC could also help create plausible impact pathways linking outputs to outcomes and impacts at the level of poverty alleviation and then develop and promote new methods and tools for measuring development results and assessing contextual factors that need to be in place to achieve these results.

Faced with the end of funding in 2006, the ILAC management team met in November, 2006 with a project design and fund raising advisor to develop ideas for a new and expanded phase of ILAC building upon lessons learned (see also Section 7.5). The group discussed feedback from ILAC donors and others that fund raising proposals were too CGIAR-centric and focused too greatly on CGIAR evaluation and impact assessment reform. The group was at a decision point to either continue to operate the ILAC Initiative as a small communications mechanism at current funding levels (averaging around \$150,000 per year) or to redirect the project towards a more inclusive and strategic direction focused on enhancing the CGIAR contribution to poverty alleviation. Rather than continuing to face impact assessment and evaluation processes head on, a decision was taken to shift the focus from impact assessment and evaluation *per se* to enhancing impacts through partnerships for innovation and to support groups that are already utilizing ILAC approaches but which lack visibility, resources and credibility. To increase its likelihood of success, ILAC decided to focus in its next phase on the following:

- Making a strong case for the urgency of change
- Recruiting allies from different stakeholder groups who will support the initiative
- Going beyond awareness raising and provide training, mentoring, and support to enable the successful uptake of new approaches

- Building change into ongoing initiatives in ways that generate value, rather than making it a stand-alone activity, which adds an extra burden on staff
- Collaborating with and building upon other CGIAR change initiatives dealing with related matters (e.g. the various system-wide programmes and other initiatives)
- Seeking opportunities to create a number of “small wins” early on, to generate positive momentum
- Showcasing successful activities that demonstrate the benefits of ILAC

## 7 Future directions for ILAC

Beginning in November 2006 Bioversity International negotiated with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs for support for a larger-scale ILAC Initiative with a longer time horizon. This resulted in a decision by DGIS to fund ILAC at the level of 2.5 million Euros over a five year period. The new grant will enable ILAC to make a more significant contribution to learning and performance improvement in agricultural innovation processes and will serve as the basis for securing additional funding support.

The *goal* of the five-year project is to increase the contributions of agricultural research to sustainable poverty reduction. To achieve this goal, the project will work with collaborative programmes to strengthen their capacity to promote pro-poor agricultural innovation.

The project’s *specific objectives* are to:

1. Identify, support and draw lessons from promising collaborative pro-poor agricultural innovation programmes
2. Develop the capacity of collaborative programmes for pro-poor agricultural innovation
3. Foster visionary leadership and organizations that are more supportive of pro-poor agricultural innovation
4. Facilitate knowledge sharing within the emerging community of rural innovation professionals

To achieve these objectives, ILAC will conduct activities within the following four areas:

*ILAC Learning Laboratory.* Identifying, supporting and drawing and recording lessons from promising collaborative pro-poor agricultural innovation programmes

*Capacity Development.* Developing the capacity of collaborative programmes and their staff to encourage pro-poor agricultural innovation

*Building Leadership & Support.* Fostering visionary leadership and organizations so that they become more supportive of pro-poor agricultural innovation

*Knowledge sharing.* Facilitating knowledge sharing within the emerging community of rural innovation professionals

The project is expected to produce the following major outcomes:

- At least 10 collaborative programmes that are employing more effective approaches for pro-poor innovation
- At least four collaborative programmes for which the results (contributions / impacts) of the application of innovation systems concepts and approaches has been documented in impact assessments
- A vibrant international community of agricultural innovation professionals, living and working in both North and South, supported by appropriate knowledge sharing tools and resources
- A coalition of professionals committed to pro-poor agricultural innovation, with demonstrated capacity to influence research and development policy at national, regional and international.

After operating a limited project over a three-year start up phase, ILAC is prepared to move forward to implement an expanded and more strategic project with the support from DGIS for its core functions. The new project focuses on collaborative partnerships in agricultural research for poverty alleviation. Immediate action is being taken to develop a logic model for the project as a basis for: (a) refinement of work plans, and (b) monitoring and evaluation. ILAC Learning Lab case teams will be selected based on criteria derived from the logic model and on their own interest and commitment to participating in the ILAC Initiative. ILAC publication policies and procedures will be refined to ensure that appropriate means are employed to reach key target audiences. It is anticipated that the first planning meeting, bringing together the ILAC management team with Learning Lab case teams, will be in late 2007. A policy forum is being planned in the spring of 2008 in collaboration with the Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PRGA) inter-centre initiative to investigate new paradigms for impact on poverty alleviation. Fund raising will be a high priority, particularly for research on impact assessment and technical support to ILAC Learning Lab case teams.

The following core values will guide development of the ILAC Initiative in the future:

- Effective management of research within a complex and diverse system of partners
- Learning and continuous adaptation for improvement
- Agricultural innovation and market linkages
- Demonstrating and documenting impact on poverty alleviation

Bioversity International and the ILAC team look forward to facing the challenges of implementing the new project.

## Annex 1. Complete list of ILAC Briefs

Acosta, A. and Douthwaite, B. (2005). *Appreciative Inquiry: An approach for learning and change based on our own best practices*. ILAC Brief No. 6. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Acosta, A. S., Jones, M. and Kaufmann, R. v. (2005). *The Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Program: An experiment in mainstreaming institutional learning and change*. ILAC Brief No. 9. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Amariles, F., Peralta, G. and Johnson, N. (2006). *Linking Diversity to Organizational Effectiveness: Lessons from a culture study at CIAT*. ILAC Brief No. 12. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Baldini, K. K. (2005). *Human Resources Management, Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Learning*. ILAC Brief No. 11. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Douthwaite, B. and Ashby, J. (2005). *Innovation Histories: A method from learning from experience*. ILAC Brief No.5. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Hall, A., Mytelka, L. and Oyeyinka, B. (2005). *Innovation Systems: Implications for agricultural policy and practice*. ILAC Brief No. 2. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Henson-Apollonio, V. (2005). *Collaborative Agreements: A 'how to' guide*. ILAC Brief No. 4. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

ILAC (2005). *The Institutional Learning and Change Initiative: An introduction*. ILAC Brief No. 1. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Lundy, M., Gottret, M. V. and Ashby, J. (2005). *Learning Alliances: An approach for building multistakeholder innovation systems*. ILAC Brief No. 8. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Shambu Prasad, C., Hall, A. and Thummuru, L. (2006). *Engaging Scientists through Institutional Histories*. ILAC Brief No. 14. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Smutylo, T. (2005). *Outcome Mapping: A method for tracking behavioural changes in development programs*. ILAC Brief No. 7. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Staiger, S., Russell, N. and Hewlitt, A. (2005). *Making the Most of Meetings: An entry point for knowledge sharing*. ILAC Brief No. 10. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Thiele, G., Devaux, A., Velasco, C. and Manrique, K. (2006). *Horizontal Evaluation: Stimulating social learning among peers*. ILAC Brief No. 13. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

Watts, J. (2005). *Learning-oriented Evaluation: A tool for promoting institutional learning and program improvement*. ILAC Brief No. 3. Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Rome, Italy.

## Annex 2. Proposal for an ILAC Sourcebook

The following proposal for an ILAC Sourcebook was drafted in July 23, 2007.

### Summary

Institutional learning and change (ILAC) is a set of principles and approaches for fostering organizational learning and institutional changes that improve the contributions of agricultural research to the Millennium Development Goals set out by the United Nations. This publication aims to support efforts by researchers and research managers to introduce and mainstream ILAC in their work.

Based on the work of a group of professionals who have developed and applied approaches for ILAC, the book will be written in a jargon-free style that talks directly to those responsible for and involved in agricultural research and development. Throughout the book, examples will be presented from agricultural research and development organizations that have successfully employed these principles and approaches.

The Sourcebook will be produced in two versions.

**A web version** of the Sourcebook will be developed on the ILAC Website, using a set of existing ILAC Briefs as the starting point and core. Authors of each brief will revise their briefs and add additional material in the form of links to case studies, research reports, more detailed guidelines, tools, websites, and other useful resources. New ILAC Briefs will be added, as they are prepared, to fill out a rich menu of resources for ILAC and lessons from experiences with their use. Users of the website will be invited to contribute to the web-based book. This will serve as a peer-review mechanism and will help identify gaps in the range of topics covered and to suggest ways to improve the presentation of each. In this way, potential users of the sourcebook will be involved in its development.

**A printed version** of the Sourcebook will be published when funding comes available, based on materials developed in the web version.

The ILAC Sourcebook will have four main parts. Part 1 will introduce concepts and conceptual frameworks, Part 2 will outline a range of tools and approaches for fostering ILAC. Part 3 will present a set of cases in which approaches for ILAC have been applied in agricultural research and development organizations. Part 4 will provide suggestions based on experience for overcoming common challenges that face those endeavouring to introduce learning approaches into traditional research settings.

### Background

Throughout the world, the pace of environmental, social, economic and technological change is accelerating, with major implications for the world's poor and their agricultural development prospects. Traditional transfer-of-technology approaches to agricultural research can no longer keep pace with the complex, diverse, risk-prone and dynamic situations faced by poor farmers. To be more successful in reducing poverty and increasing the sustainability of production, agricultural research and development organizations must become "learning organizations", fully in touch with field realities, with a keen eye to learn from their own and others experiences, and possessing the capacity to transform lessons learned into action.

By its nature, applied research for development is a risky enterprise. Since research involves trial and error in which only a small proportion of research paths achieve their intended goals and contribute to reducing poverty, results cannot be predicted with certainty. To optimise their effectiveness, development-oriented research organizations must engender a culture that encourages learning, not only from successes but also from failures.

Continuous learning and adjustment are hallmarks of effective research design and implementation. Effective research management requires that plans and evaluations address the institutional context of research, the relevance and viability of objectives, the validity of problem definitions, and core assumptions that underlay all of these.

To foster more rapid and profound learning and performance improvement, the ILAC Initiative has emerged as a grass-roots initiative in the CGIAR. With support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and GTZ, researchers affiliated with this initiative have experimented with a number of promising approaches for fostering learning and change in agricultural research and development organizations. The proposed Sourcebook will present a selection of these tools and approaches in a form that is accessible to researchers and managers in CGIAR centres and other organizations concerned with agricultural research for development.

### **Target Audience and Style**

The Sourcebook is intended for use by all those who are responsible for planning, managing, carrying out and evaluating research and development activities and who wish to improve the effectiveness of research in contributing to the Millennium Development Goals. The Sourcebook will be especially important for researchers and research managers who are affiliated with the CGIAR and its partner organizations throughout the world. Donors and others striving to foster more effective research for development will also find the book useful.

The Sourcebook will be written in a jargon-free style that talks directly to those with little or no formal training in the social sciences or organizational development. Throughout the book, examples and illustrations will be drawn from organizations that are intimately involved with research for development.

### **Preparation of the Book and Authorship**

Each section of the Sourcebook will be authored by an agricultural researcher, a manager or an innovation specialist who has been involved in developing and promoting ILAC within the CGIAR or in a partner organization. The book as a whole will be produced by an editorial team.

The Sourcebook will draw on “ILAC Briefs” and other publications. To date, 14 ILAC Briefs have been published on the following topics:

1. The ILAC Initiative
2. Innovation systems
3. Learning-oriented evaluation
4. Collaborative agreements
5. Innovation histories
6. Appreciative inquiry
7. Outcome mapping
8. Learning alliances
9. The Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme
10. Making the most of meetings
11. Human resources management
12. Diversity and Organizational Effectiveness: Lessons from a Culture Study at CIAT
13. Horizontal Evaluation: Stimulating Social Learning Among Peers
14. Engaging Scientists through Institutional Histories

The authors are now completing and refining sections of the Sourcebook in order to make a preliminary web version available by the end of 2006. A complete manuscript is to be ready for review by mid-2008. After the manuscript is peer reviewed, the Editorial Committee will come together as a final writing team to revise and finalize the manuscript on the basis of the review. Commercial publication of the Sourcebook is targeted for late 2008.

## **Contents of the Sourcebook**

A draft table of contents for the Sourcebook follows. An asterisk (\*) indicates that the section is based on an already-published ILAC Brief.

Foreword<sup>2</sup>  
Preface  
Acknowledgements  
About the Sourcebook  
Acronyms

### **Part 1. Introduction and overview**

*Part 1 introduces concepts and conceptual frameworks for fostering learning and performance-enhancing change in research organizations.*

Introduction to Part 1

Chapter 1: ILAC and the ILAC Initiative\*  
Doug Horton et al.

Chapter 2: Developing and evolving participatory methods.  
Robert Chambers (IDS)

Chapter 3: The innovation systems framework and its implications for ILAC\*  
Andy Hall (UNU-Intech)

Chapter 4: The learning organization and its implications for ILAC  
Viviana Galleno & Ronald Mackay

Chapter 5: Managing institutional change in research organizations  
Doug Horton and Ronald Mackay

### **Part 2. Tools and approaches for fostering ILAC**

*Part 2 includes a set of "information digests," each of which outlines a tool or an approach that demonstrated its use to foster ILAC. The digests identify some of the real-world issues that have arisen in developing and applying these approaches, and indicate how they have been dealt with in practice. The list of topics presented below is likely to evolve over time as the work of preparing the Sourcebook progresses and as users provide feedback on the internet version of the Sourcebook.*

Chapter 6: Introduction to the approaches presented in Part 2  
Ronald Mackay

Chapter 7: Innovation histories  
Boru Douthwaite (CIAT)

Chapter 8: Audits for learning and change  
John Fitzsimon (CGIAR Audit Unit)

Chapter 9: Culture Study as a tool for change  
Fabiola Amariles, Gustavo Peralta and Nancy Johnson

Chapter 10: Building learning into external reviews  
Jamie Watts (IPGRI)

Chapter 11: Evaluating capacity development in research organizations

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<sup>2</sup> We will invite leaders in the fields of research and innovation to author the Foreword and Preface.

- Doug Horton (IPGRI)
- Chapter 12: Collaborative agreements  
Victoria Henson-Apollonio
- Chapter 13: Facilitation as a foundation skill for ILAC  
Lucie Lamoureux (Bellanet Secretariat)
- Chapter 14: Learning alliances  
Mark Lundy & Veronica Gottret (CIAT)
- Chapter 15: Institutional histories  
Shambu Prasad (Xavier Institute of Management, India)
- Chapter 16: Engaging Scientists through Institutional Histories  
C. Shambu Prasad, Andrew Hall, Laxmi Thummuru
- Chapter 17: Outcome mapping  
Terry Smutylo (Evaluation consultant, Canada)
- Chapter 18: Horizontal evaluation\*  
Graham Theile & Andre Devaux(CIP)
- Chapter 19: Appreciative inquiry\*  
Anne Acosta & Boru Douthwaite
- Chapter 20: Human resources management and ILAC\*  
Krista Baldini (Human resources consultant, Mexico)
- Chapter 21: Utilization-focused evaluation  
Doug Horton (IPGRI)

### **Part 3. Cases and experiences**

*This part will present a number of cases in which tools and approaches for ILAC have been put into practice in CGIAR centres or partner organizations*

- Chapter 22: CIAT's culture study  
Fabiola Amariles (CIAT)
- Chapter 23: Developing a new paradigm for impact assessment at CIMMYT  
Roberto La Rovere, Jonathan Hellin & John Dixon (CIMMYT)
- Chapter 24: Developing an ILAC Unit at IPGRI  
Arnold Love & Jamie Watts (IPGRI)
- Chapter 25: Complementing traditional economic impact assessment with institutional analysis: A case from INIBAP  
Charles Staver (INIBAP) & Jamie Watts (IPGRI)
- Chapter 26: Building knowledge sharing approaches into CGIAR annual meetings\*  
Simone Staiger & Nathan Russell (CIAT)
- Chapter 27: Development of the Sub-Saharan Challenge Programme\*  
Anne Acosta et al

### **Part 4. Challenges and strategies for mainstreaming ILAC**

*Based on the foregoing parts, Part 4 identifies some of the common challenges to introducing learning approaches into research organizations and it outlines some strategies that have been used in CGIAR centres to address these challenges.*

Ronald Mackay, Doug Horton & others

About the authors  
Glossary  
Reference