

18th Organic World Congress

Written inputs from panelists of the Main Track Session

8B: [Regional priorities](#): Regional strategy implementation, global collaboration
(Fish bowl)

Tuesday, 14 October 2014 (16:30-18:00)

Regional Priorities

Regional strategy implementation, global collaboration

Background

The Organic World develops with different emphases in different parts of the world. While regional and local adaptation is desired and part of the organic development strategy, there is a minimum of global collaboration and coordination needed. The principle of subsidiarity (a matter ought to be handled by the least centralized authority capable of addressing that matter effectively) is well implemented, but the optimal level of decentralization needs to be strategized for the future.

Session Objectives

With the overall objective of mapping regional priorities/needs and enhancing coordination, this session will look at development processes in different regions of the globe and set strategies to ensure coherence in the global Organic Movement. It will seek to identify the optimal balance between regional and global leadership for development and make recommendations for concrete measures to be taken up by the stakeholders of the Organic Movement.

Leading Questions

- What are the main issues of the Organic World in different parts of the world?
- What is needed from the global Organic Movement and from international Organic institutions on a local, regional and national level?
- Are there any ill-oriented regional organic developments departing from the global organic concept (i.e. the Principles, Definition, Family of Standards etc.)?
- What do international organic institutions need to improve and how can they be empowered to do so?
- Which functions should be decentralized and which functions should be centralized?
- How can the optimal balance between regional and global leadership be reached for most effective results?

Methodology: Fish Bowl with 4 panelists and 2 open chairs

Moderator/Rapporteur: Eva Torremocha/Konrad Hauptfleisch

Speakers

- Shaikh Tanveer Hossain, Friends in Village Development Bangladesh, Bangladesh
- Julia Lernoud, El Rincon Organico, Argentina
- Karen Mapusua, POETCom, Fiji
- Eva Torremocha, IFOAM WB & Sociedad Espanola de Agricultura Ecologica, Spain

Karen Mapusua¹

Short biography:

Karen Mapusua is Coordinator for the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom) based in the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Suva Fiji. For the past 8 years she has been engaged in the Pacific organic movement through her role with Women in Business Development in Samoa, this included managing WIBDIs organic programmes, developing Internal Control Systems, and provision of training in ICS in the region. She was extensively involved in developing the Pacific Organic Standard, Pacific regional strategic plans for organics and in implementing the Pacific Organic Guarantee Scheme. She has lobbied successfully for organic agriculture to be prioritised in the regional agricultural agenda of the Pacific Island states including the 2012 decision of the Heads of Agriculture to mainstream organic agriculture into regional agriculture strategy and planning. She serves on the Executive Committee of the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand (FTAANZ) and as a Board member of FairTrade Australia New Zealand (FANZ).

Karen's background includes teaching, NGO management and capacity building and peace keeping. She holds degrees in history/politics and management.

What are the main issues of the Organic World in different parts of the world?

In the Pacific islands the key issues are:

- Moving to the mainstream- Organic is still seen as 'niche' with a focus on possible premiums through certification rather than a holistic response to many of our key challenges as a region. Impacts of climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, food security, health and nutrition issues, food safety issues, water safety issues, livelihood issues.
- 'Passive certification'- grower groups being certified with little or no understanding of certification or what they are involved in. These farmers are most frequently defined as organic by what they don't do – i.e. use agro chemicals, rather than what they do do to actively implement organic management practices. This damages the reputation of organics in the minds of many; from the farmers who feel from confused to exploited by the companies who are arranging their certification; through to agriculturalists and scientists who see land that is organically certified but over time losing fertility and suffering from many of the same issues as conventional farms due to poor management practices and the realities that we are trying to feed more people of less and poorer land. World Bank 2012 study of coffee farmers in Papua New Guinea surveyed certified producers in 10 communities and on

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average 87% had no knowledge of certification – what it meant, why they were certified and if it had any impact on them with regard price paid etc.

- Related to this is lack of technical capacity. In many Pacific countries the majority of farmers are still largely following traditional practices - but we now have many introduced crops for which there are no supporting traditional systems and climate change impacts may also challenge the effectiveness of traditional systems. We need to build capacity to blend the best of scientific research and progress in organics with our traditional systems.
- The cost and complexity of certification relative to the possible production volume of small islands and the logistical issues of certifying small isolated islands. The logistics of annual audit in many parts of the Pacific are challenging. For example, the island of Cicia in Fiji. The entire island is 34km square. There is an unreliable flight once a week and a boat once every 2- 3 months. So an auditor – from Australia or New Zealand usually- would need to spend 7 days on Cicia to inspect the grower group of 20 small holders. A very costly exercise and one that for many organic producers on many Pacific islands isn't economically viable and so they are excluded from certified organic markets. We need solutions and alternatives.

What is needed from the global Organic Movement and from international Organic institutions on a local, regional and national level?

There won't be a one size fits all for this issue as regional institutions and movements are at different stages and have different needs. For example in the Pacific capacity building for regional institutions and services support is required but this may not apply to other regions. Support should be either backstopping, supplementing or in some cases direct provision where services aren't available or not viable to be delivered regionally or locally.

Generally however: Facilitation of information and knowledge exchange. Advocacy on trade, harmonization and equivalence issues and application of a dose of common sense to the regulation of the sector.

Are there any ill-oriented regional organic developments departing from the global organic concept (i.e. the Principles, Definition, Family of Standards etc.)?

In the Pacific developments remain well aligned with global organic concepts. We have 'added' a 5th Principle – that of Culture and Tradition. We don't see this as ill-oriented but essential and inseparable from organics in a part of the world where over 90 % of land is held under traditional or customary tenure – in some countries 97 or 98 %- and links to land and agricultural practices have strong cultural and community importance.

What do international organic institutions need to improve and how can they be empowered to do so?

Linkages with mainstream international agricultural forums need to be improved. Our goal is the worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems that are based on the principles of Organic Agriculture we need to do more work and be more visible in the 'mainstream'.

This is about 'mobilizing our forces' - many members of the movement are engaged in these fora and these members could be better utilized to raise the IFOAM agenda in these meetings/processes. Good communications, a register of who is engaged in what activities and access to 'key messages' materials.

Which functions should be decentralized and which functions should be centralized?

Global functions such as the IFOAM Guarantee System should remain centralized, 'international development' functions should be decentralized to the region and local level with support where required and linkages facilitated to partners support.

How can the optimal balance between regional and global leadership be reached for most effective results?

Ultimate challenge and one we also face at a regional level to get the balance between national and regional leadership right. There is no recipe, it's about clear guidelines and constant open communication and most importantly joint commitment to a clear vision.

Dr. Shaikh Tanveer Hossain²

Input on the lead questions:

In general the organic in different parts of the world are mostly challenging on coping with climate change, use of nitrogen, pest and disease management in tropical regions, food safety, marketing development, certification of small-scale farmers and its price ensure and science-based standards.

The situation is quite deviated from country to country, region to region, contingent to contingent despite the all other thematic, climatic and social factors. To make organic farming globally established social studies need to be conduct for prioritize the issues in context of local situation which take account the complexity of agricultural systems and their diverse social and ecological contexts. These studies will also identify the research vision and goals (considering the cross-cutting issues and challenges) with participation of the stakeholders. These activities would include research, dissemination and development, knowledge transfer.

To develop a master plan in the different levels in national, regional and global aspects a series of intensive consultation are required on various levels, with stakeholder and public participation. This consultation process can be arranged in different regions/contingent in view of their needs and existing resources. In the whole consultations would require involving the related researchers, advisors, different actors in the value chain, inspection and certification bodies, public and civil society organizations and off coursing the producers. Participation from small-scale farmers must be ensured as they are often neglected but they are providing the one-third of total food production in the world. This consultation process would be carried through workshop and in-house/web meeting with the related stakes. Engaging media, a possible key strategy to involve non-practitioners and consumers, may take the form of public forums in print and electronic media where relevant issues are discussed and debated. Policy makers, market actors, researchers and other stakeholders may be engaged together in such debates. These debates should talk to small farmers through research and direct participation.

The international organic institutions should be more strengthen and the activities are on the basis of the priority issues on the different regions and have to regular conduct the capacity building of the regional and national organic institutions. The approach should be on the basis of PPP (private-public partnership).

The centralized authority have to coordinate the whole issue for the success to the global organic movement, but at the optimal level of decentralization can be offer to the regional/national level where the issues may discussed and identified

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from the bottom line and in some cases can take the decision independently. But, the strong commitment of the regional bodies and their action plan is very important that should be discuss and review in the central level and have to carefully assess. The regional and global leaders have to work together on the basis of their local and regional experiences that will help them to taken future action plan to solve the problems.