

LEISA

Magazine on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture



Practice and policy

LEISA
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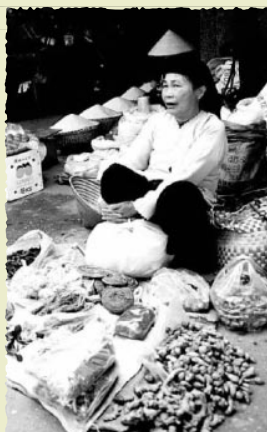
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Cover photo

Community groups, students, and health professionals, mobilized by the Centro Nordestino de Medicina Popular, lobbying the Legislative Assembly in Recife, Brazil, to come up with regulations required for enforcement of an existing law that makes plant-based remedies part of the popular health care system. The health commission of the Legislative Assembly sent its findings to the Pernambuco State governor to push for enforcement of the law. Photo: Igor Jatobá, CNMP, Pernambuco, Brazil. <http://www.cnmp.org.br>

The editors have taken every care to ensure that the contents of this magazine are as accurate as possible. The authors have ultimate responsibility, however, for the content of individual articles.

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6 Tools for influencing policy

Sonja Vermeulen, Judy Williams and Le Thi Phi

Although smallholder farmers are continuously involved in the use and management of natural resources they often have no voice or power in decision making processes on the same resources. Two examples, one from the tiny island of Grenada and one from Vietnam, highlight some tools that have been used successfully by farmers in influencing decision makers. In both cases there was some help from outsiders, but the strategies used were not expensive or complicated. Furthermore, an important observation from these experiences is that policy influence is not a simple bottom-up process, nor is policy formulation and implementation a simple top-down process.

9 Promoting organic agriculture in Uganda

Charles Walaga, Michael Hauser, Robert Delve and Florence Nagawa

Uganda has a large community of small farmers who are certified organic producers. Although there is substantial export of organic agricultural produce to many western countries, organic farmers receive little attention and protection from the government. Commercial companies practising conventional agriculture could, therefore, jeopardize the certificates of groups of organic farmers. A farmer-owned NGO in Lira managed to get the interest of a local member of parliament who was instrumental in creating more appreciation nation-wide for the organic agriculture sector. An umbrella organization, representing most stakeholders in this sector, works with decision makers towards a national policy on organic agriculture.



LEISA is about Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture. It is about the technical and social options open to farmers who seek to improve productivity and income in an ecologically sound way. LEISA is about the optimal use of local resources and natural processes and, if necessary, the safe and efficient use of external inputs. It is about the empowerment of male and female farmers and the communities who seek to build their future on the basis of their own knowledge, skills, values, culture and institutions. LEISA is also about participatory methodologies to strengthen the capacity of farmers and other actors to improve agriculture and adapt it to changing needs and conditions. LEISA seeks to combine indigenous and scientific knowledge, and to influence policy formulation in creating an environment conducive for its further development. LEISA is a concept, an approach and a political message.

ILEIA is the Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture. ILEIA seeks to promote the adoption of LEISA through the LEISA magazines and other publications. It also maintains a specialized information database and an informative and interactive website on LEISA (<http://www.ileia.info>). The website provides access to many other sources of information on the development of sustainable agriculture.

Readers are welcome to photocopy and circulate articles. Please acknowledge the LEISA Magazine and send us a copy of your publication.

20 Policy development in the organic movement

Roberto Ugás

Ifoam, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, is the world's leading body in organic agriculture, with more than 700 member organizations from over 100 countries. As seen for more than 30 years with its Basic Standards for Organic Agriculture and Processing, decisions made within Ifoam have a direct impact on the way organic agriculture is practised around the world and on how national and international policies are developed and implemented. Focusing on the General Assembly which takes place every three years, this article shows some of the difficulties in including the opinion of all members and some of the steps taken towards common agreements. It stresses the need for greater participation, for which better linkages and stronger commitment are needed at all levels.



22 Changing animal health policies

William Wolmer and Ian Scoones

In Africa livestock are vital for poor households, and predictions of future global demand for livestock products indicate considerable opportunities for African producers. However, many of the emerging challenges in livestock production are not technical, but in the complex area of policies and institutions. The challenge is to develop the capacity of African governments and stakeholders to meet the new policy and institutional challenges, from national to regional to international settings. This article highlights how one programme has prompted change to both national policies and international standards on veterinary services to recognise, for the first time, the role of privatised veterinary para-professionals as appropriate service providers in rural areas of Africa.



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DEAR READERS

The new editorial team is very pleased to bring this issue on the theme of policy to you. Through the process of putting this magazine together we have learned that influencing policy is a complex and often difficult process: there are many recommendations made, but success stories are harder to find. We hope the articles in this issue provide inspiration in the struggle towards improving the policy environment.

It is you, the readers, who provide the content for this magazine, and as new editors we would like to remind all our readers once again that we need to hear from you! Please contact us with articles, comments, suggestions or contributions for the Field Notes section. Share your learnings, frustrations and successes! We have enjoyed reading all the contributions for this issue, and hope that you will continue to send in articles for forthcoming themes – by post or email. For further details see the website: <http://www.leisa.info>.

In 2006, we look forward to continuing our fruitful partnership with five regional organizations, and intend to expand our network of partners. If your organization is interested in publishing an edition of the *LEISA Magazine* in your region and language, take a look at the notice on the back page and do get in touch with us to discuss possibilities.

The Editors

Practice and policy

Editorial

All over the world, many different initiatives towards more sustainable agricultural systems, a better use of local resources and better management of the environment are being implemented. These experiences build on local people's own knowledge and skills, their values, resources, culture and institutions and lead to the empowerment of male and female farmers and their communities. They show that sustainable agriculture can be developed successfully.

However, evidence also shows that most of the successful initiatives are rather small in size, and that their impact is relatively modest. Sustainable agriculture production practices that have proven their value, as well as successful strategies for its promotion, are generally site specific and have to be adapted to be suitable in new areas. Therefore, the majority of these practices and strategies remain localized.

An analysis of these successful experiences confirms that some special conditions are always necessary for such an initiative to thrive. These include motivated leaders or initiators of action, and sufficient resources. In most cases special institutional arrangements or rules and regulations are also necessary to enable the change. This is referred to as the policy environment: a set of laws or regulations which favour a particular action taking place or being replicated. As mentioned by Gomero (p. 16), successful development projects at a local level are very important, but they are not sufficient to generate wider changes towards a sustainable rural development. A regulatory policy framework proves to be essential in most cases for wide-scale action and for scaling up successful cases.

The importance of policies

Policies, whether they are laws, rules or regulations, are always present at all levels in society. Referred to as the "organized and established form of government or administration" or "the course of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, institution, or organization", policies can promote certain practices with the help of incentives, or they can discourage people from a certain action by penalising it through fines or heavier taxes. As part of different contexts and at many different levels (local, provincial or national governments, within private companies or NGOs, at a national or international level) policies shape how organizations, communities or societies function.

At national level, policies are statements of a governmental goal and are often supported by incentives or sanctions which will help achieve this goal. In agriculture, they attempt to regulate either the supply side – the quantity and quality of agricultural produce –, or the demand side, manipulating market prices and influencing the purchasing behaviour of consumers. The first type of policies includes the regulations through which agricultural inputs are made available, and often subsidized, to a larger number of producers. From the demand side there are often various regulations which ensure that agricultural products, and especially food products, are available to consumers at affordable prices. Policies are not only at work at local or national level, but also internationally. An example is the subsidies to farmers within the European Union and the tariffs placed on imported goods to protect the internal market.

In recent decades, countries in both the North and the South have been shifting from predominantly rural to predominantly

urban societies. Cities provide social and economic opportunities and are an attractive magnet to individuals in every country. But rapid urbanization has also caused inequitable power relations. As a result, governments are often more responsive to the needs of urban consumers, ensuring that enough, preferably cheap food and other agricultural products are available in the cities. At the same time, the production of agricultural produce for export is an important source of national income. The objective of many governments is therefore primarily to increase agricultural production, and policy measures in the agricultural sector have been geared towards raising agricultural production with support of external inputs. In this way an excessive use of external inputs has been encouraged, based on the persistent idea that a higher use of external inputs will lead to higher outputs.

But the picture is even more complicated, as "agriculture" refers to more than just producers and consumers. Many other stakeholders are involved: agribusinesses, traders, researchers, input suppliers, food processors, among others. In addition, agriculture is not only about production: it also has a major impact on the management of natural resources, on biodiversity, food security, ecosystem services and the different ways of supporting people living in the rural areas. This means that there always are a large number of actors involved, with many different interests. Any given policy will influence most of them, in different ways. And most times there is not only one, but many different, overlapping and sometimes conflicting rules and regulations.

Although the policy environment at large supports conventional agriculture, positive change is possible. For example, organic agriculture has expanded considerably during the last decade and has managed to capture an increasing market for its produce (see Ugás, p. 20) in spite of a non-supportive policy environment. But without policies that have the explicit aim of supporting sustainable agriculture, the existing policy environment as well as the specific interests of many different actors, can easily jeopardize further development of the sustainable agriculture initiatives currently taking place (Walaga *et al.*, p. 9). The development of supportive policies is therefore a crucial action that governments can take to support the work of institutions, organizations, and individuals, thereby creating an enabling environment. Similar efforts can be tried at other levels, aiming at policies which enable the use of locally available resources, and local skills and knowledge (Wolmer *et al.*, p. 22).

Policy development

Laws or regulations are updated often to accommodate or regulate our constantly changing societies. Policies are therefore far from static. Considering the number of actors and interests involved, it is therefore crucial to look at whose opinion is taken into account in the policy development process. Is this restricted to the authorities and decision-makers, or are other stakeholders considered? Regarding agriculture, it has been assumed that a strong link exists between research and policy. This link has been viewed as a linear process, whereby a set of research findings shifts from the "research field" over to the "policy field". However, a conference of the African Science Academy Development Initiative recently showed that in Africa, as apparently in many other parts of the world, agricultural research institutes have hardly any influence on national policymaking. If renowned research institutes, whose work is generally funded by government resources, have very little

influence on policy formulation, then what about poor rural communities? The policy gap between the powerful and marginalized does not just involve the lack of channels for dialogue. Even when such channels exist, communication may fail due to fundamental differences in perception, expression and power between groups. It is therefore necessary to find ways to establish dialogues and alliances between policy makers and farming communities so that these make their voice heard, and provide inputs for policy formulation.

In contrast, many different interest groups are actively engaged in following-up on new policy initiatives that might affect them and in trying to influence policy-makers at all levels. These groups often use the services of professional lobbyists with a special talent for seizing particular policy moments or windows of opportunity as they arise, and for getting policy messages on to the agenda of decision-makers. The increasing influence of transnational corporations in the agricultural sector is very visible everywhere. In a similar way, though on the opposite side, action groups such as Greenpeace or the Pesticide Action Network are active trying to influence international policies, and many other international NGOs have influential advocacy and campaigns departments. Results achieved by these groups are substantial, and complement the work of many individuals and organizations at grassroots levels.

Influencing policy

The development of policies is generally a lengthy process, but the development of mechanisms to enforce the regulations can be even more difficult. Several articles in this issue provide examples of the processes followed to come to agreements at a community level, especially in relation to changing land use practices (Hasnat, p. 14; Ajayi *et al.*, p. 18; Agustiyanto, p. 31). They all show how the emerging challenges for sustainable agricultural production are not just technical, but lie in the complex area of policy-making and successful implementation.

A very high percentage of the rural population is involved in the daily management of natural resources. Such intimate interaction creates awareness of the technical, social and political obstacles to good management. It is therefore important that these people have the opportunity to contribute to the definition of policies and institutions that govern their use of natural resources. Tools for influencing policies have been developed and successfully utilized by rural communities, as is shown in the articles which make up this issue of the LEISA Magazine. Vermeulen *et al.* (p. 6) present two of the many cases which form the basis for IIED's new publication 'Power tools: handbook to tools and resources for policy influence in natural resource management.' (see Sources, p. 33). One such potentially powerful tool for creating awareness about a situation that requires proper regulation, is through convening

stakeholders for joint discussions and proper analysis of the existing situation (Buján, p. 25). The experiences show that it is essential to consider the needs and aspirations of all involved and to discuss with all stakeholders in order to reach an agreement. Another tool is direct advocacy. For advocacy to be efficient, it is important to study and properly document the background and conditions of a given problem, good knowledge of the context and the problem as well as clearness about the changes that are required is the basis for an effective advocacy campaign (Gomero, p. 16).

An influential tool for changing mindsets, and thus enabling policy change in the direction of sustainable agriculture, is by exposing policy-makers to the real conditions of small-holder farmers and to successful LEISA technologies. The organization of demonstrations on the street in order to inform influential people about certain issues can be complemented with *in situ* demonstrations, where decision-makers can see how change can come about. Positive results come through exposure visits to farmers' fields (Wolmer *et al.*, p. 22) and to agricultural fairs (Walaga, p. 9), or through drama presentations which tell persuasive stories (Silva *et al.*, p. 12). This is related to another important tool: the proper documentation of the context, the problem and of what is being done towards a solution, in order to effectively present a case. Documentation is also strongly related to the use of the media, as useful partners in the dissemination of information, and therefore in campaigns and advocacy processes.

Future challenges

The need to act in favour of better policies has received increasing attention in recent years. All over the world, there is a growing recognition that context-specific field work is not enough in order to achieve massive changes in the way agriculture is practised. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that this is not an easy process. Because of the large number of actors involved, and because of the specific interest of each of the actors, influencing agricultural policies is particularly complicated.

The articles in this issue show that campaigning, advocacy work and lobbying can and must be directed at different levels, and not only at national governments. Just as important as having new and better national laws and regulations, it is essential to work towards better training and education institutions, towards better organizational structures at the local level, or towards international regulations with which countries have to comply. In any case, or whatever the level chosen, it is essential to reflect local needs and interests, for which we need to fully understand the problems which farmers face, and the possibilities for solutions which they may consider. ■

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Photo: Rik Thijsen

Villagers from hill tribes in northern Vietnam. The communities are often isolated and therefore lack market information.

Tools for influencing policy

Sonja Vermeulen, Judy Williams and Le Thi Phi

Natural resource management problems are power problems. Many people manage and use natural resources daily, but never get the chance to contribute to the definition of policies and institutions that govern this management. Farmers also face difficulties getting policy makers to listen. Persuading decision makers not just to listen but to change how things are done is even more of a challenge. This article describes the tactics used by farmers to influence government policy in two very different situations: vegetable growers in Grenada, and producers of timber, bamboo and cinnamon in Vietnam.

Linking farmers with policy processes

Grenada is a Caribbean island state with about 100 000 people. The small size of the country means there is plenty of scope for communication between citizens and policy makers. But it also means that the government is influenced strongly by outside investment and international policy. At present the country does not have a national land policy to determine the best spread of land uses and division between local and international ownership.

The 320-hectare Chambord estate in northern Grenada was divided up in the 1960s. The government sold about 170 hectares to a private development company owned by expatriates. This company failed to implement plans for high-cost residences and much of the land remained under small-scale tenancies (0.2 – 2.4 ha) with over 100 local farmers. These Chambord lands include around 50 hectares of ‘good’ and 20 hectares of ‘prime’

agricultural land; one of the few areas in Grenada where tractor ploughing is feasible. Farms here produce a wide range of crops (maize, peas, potato, cassava, sorrel (*Rumex* spp.), melon), which make a significant contribution to national agricultural production.

Arrangements worked well until 1993, when the owners sold the property to a new group of developers who planned to use the property for tourism and commercial development. This made farmers uncertain and reluctant to risk financial outlays. They saw threats to their land tenure and livelihoods and sought help from the government and from the Grenada Community Development Agency (GRENCODA), an NGO working in the community. Since then, this organization has worked with the Chambord farmers to secure their long-term rights to use the land. Their joint strategy is threefold: to build a strong basis of evidence for farmers’ continuing effective use of land; to widen both farmers’ and officials’ picture of how Chambord farming fits into the national food system; and to communicate effectively with a wide range of groups, from TV stations to members of parliament.

Building farmers’ evidence

“We want to plant many types of crops because as long as we are doing that, they can’t take the land” said a Chambord farmer at a women’s meeting in 2003. Demonstrating active land use is central to the Chambord strategy. With GRENCODA’s help, farmers quickly attracted national media (TV and radio, as newspapers are less popular in Grenada) into investigative

journalism. The government tractor, used just once a year for ploughing, became a resonant symbol of land use debates in Grenada. Behind this publicity is a strong and growing body of evidence. The NGO paid for cadastral mapping of individual farmers' plots at Chambord. Farmers used this formal map as a starting point to agree on field boundaries, to report oral histories of local land title for GRENCODA staff to record, and to keep records of farm practice. Farmers have used the cadastral map as a basis for working out local development preferences: which sites are best for agriculture and which could go to other development, where should irrigation and roads be, and how land ownership and tenancies affect these and other options.

Widening the picture

The arguments of the Chambord farmers to retain land in agriculture gain strength among policy makers when placed in the context of national policies and concerns. The crops produced at Chambord are by and large those promoted by the government's Food Security Programme. Several farmers in Chambord volunteered to participate in the Food Security Programme as a way to reinforce the point that they have good, nationally important, agricultural land for food production. Food sovereignty and self-sufficiency are key issues in Grenada, to avoid too much dependency on international imports and food dumping. So was there a food crisis in Grenada when shipping was curtailed after the September 2001 attacks in the United States, while for example cheap battery-farmed chickens from the same country are time and again dumped on the local market.

Communicating effectively

The media have proved an effective means of building a national profile. But Chambord farmers have also used other channels. They raised their land security as an election issue, inviting each candidate in their constituency to a public meeting to spell out their vision for Chambord. The incumbent Member of Parliament failed to attend and did not get re-elected. GRENCODA has supported farmers in their dealings with government and helped them prepare for potential future negotiations with developers through training in negotiation techniques, such as working out beforehand different possible outcomes of the negotiation and what kind of compromise would be acceptable for each of these.

To date, the Chambord farmers have not lost their land to the proposed tourism and commercial development. But their hard work and imaginative tactics have not yet made their land tenure more secure. In September 2004, hurricane Ivan, confirmed to be the sixth most destructive hurricane in recorded human history, devastated the island. National policy attention quickly turned from long-term land and agricultural issues to short-term reconstruction, and developers delayed investment decisions. Although the Chambord lands were relatively unharmed, Chambord farmers are not isolated from the wider Grenadan community, so they have also put their campaign on temporary hold. The future will tell if they are able to defend their land use for their own good and for the benefit of Grenada's food security.

Linking farmers, traders and policy makers

In contrast to Grenada, Vietnam is a vast country with more than 75 million people. Rural areas can be roughly divided into the lowlands, which mainly grow rice and are populated by the majority Kinh people, and the uplands, where crops are diverse and the inhabitants come from many different ethnic minorities. Farmers in the uplands are disadvantaged by poor access to markets and little market information. Unlike the Chambord

lands in Grenada, which are of national agricultural importance, most marketed products from the Vietnamese uplands are of high economic value to local households, but insignificant nationally. Farmers in these areas grow and collect a diverse mix of food crops (cassava, maize), cash crops (cinnamon, cloves, fruits), bamboo, timber and products like mushrooms and medicinal plants.

The Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) Research Centre, based in Hanoi, has been working for several years with farmers in upland areas to improve their marketing strategies. Farmers, helped by trained facilitators, use a locally adapted version of the Market Analysis and Development tool, to prioritize which crops to concentrate on and how to get the best prices and most reliable outlets. This usually involves a full investigation of the market chain in which farmers travel to meet and question processors, traders and retailers. Work with farmers in upland districts of Quang Ninh province showed that market opportunities and prices were constrained by poor flows of information along market chains, ineffective implementation of policies to support upland farmers (such as farmers and traders having to pay taxes from which they are officially exempt), and lack of feedback to policymakers regarding the impacts, use and misuse of policies. Farmers often lost market opportunities because of the dominance of large-scale State Forestry Enterprises, which have sole or preferential rights to produce, purchase and process certain products such as timber and pine resin. Space to develop options for market development was limited because farmers, traders and regulators did not have any forums for discussion.

Assembling all stakeholders

The NTFP Centre consequently organised a series of district-level and province-level workshops to bring together farmers, traders, state forestry enterprises, the tax department, police and government policy makers, to share information and raise policy concerns. The one-day workshops were organized around specific products: bamboo, timber and cinnamon. Small-scale farmers and traders operate at the margins of profitability – at stake was a unique chance to raise grievances and influence policy implementation. Police and government departments were keen to hear grassroots reports since corruption and performance of the public sector are vital matters in Vietnam. Each workshop gave time for farmers and traders to talk together, plus broader plenary sessions to raise policy issues with officials. These plenary sessions resulted in identification of market constraints and recommendations for addressing these. Experienced facilitators from the NTFP Centre were on hand to manage conflict and give everyone a chance to speak.

After a year the NTFP Centre assessed the effectiveness of the workshops by interviewing officials to find out how many of the nine recommendations arising from the workshops had since been implemented by the various agencies. The outcomes of these interviews were checked with producers and traders. The table overleaf shows how six out of the nine recommendations were acted upon by government agencies in Ba Che District.

A need for broad alliances

The experiences from Grenada and Vietnam share some of the clever tactics that farmers can use to influence the policies that matter to them. In both cases there was help from the outside, but the strategies used were not especially expensive or complicated. What is encouraging is that relatively localized efforts by determined farmers can make a difference. On the other hand, farmers and their allies are frustrated that their hard

Results of policy recommendations

Recommendation	Positive action after one year
No more monopoly of the State Forestry Enterprise on control of timber, bamboo and cinnamon market.	All traders have the right to buy products directly from producers. The function of Ba Che State Forestry Enterprise is restricted to its roles assigned by the national regulations.
Faster and simpler licensing procedure to buy and transport forest and agricultural products.	Licensing process reduced to one day for all products except timber. Better control on "informal fees".
Reform land ownership under the State Forestry Enterprise.	The district is reviewing the land ownership of forestry enterprises, plus its financing and management capacity. There is a new central government decision to change the function of State Forestry Enterprises to providing services to farmers, so land owned by the forestry enterprise will partly be reallocated to households that have no land. But the process is very complicated and will require a long time to put in place.
Control unsustainable and illegal harvesting of wild bamboo.	A meeting of all relevant government agencies in 2004 released the following detailed regulations: bamboo harvesting should follow the technique developed by District Agriculture and Rural Development Department; no harvesting young bamboo is to be permitted; the Forestry Inspection unit should be responsible for checking at the gate of the paper factory; if product is found to be immature, the factory should pay a fine.
Confiscated illegally harvested timber should be sold on a bidding basis, not just to the State Forestry Enterprise.	This has been fully implemented and confiscated timber is now sold by auction.
Better access to credit for small-scale producers and traders.	The Agricultural Bank now provides loans at national bank interest rates. The terms of the loan are negotiable, based on the loanee's needs.
Recommendation	No action after one year
Government departments should supply marketing information to local producers and traders.	This is too difficult as there are insufficient funds, skills and staff in the relevant departments.
Tax reform: the "buy-from-afar" tax should be scrapped because it reduces the district's ability to compete with other districts in agricultural products; households should not have to pay a "resource" tax on trees they plant themselves; multiple payments of value-added tax should be cut.	There has been no change in tax collection. Explanations from the head of the Tax Department include: the "buy-from-afar" tax is collected because traders do not have business licenses; "resource" tax cannot be exempted as no household can prove which trees they plant themselves; value-added tax is required because the traders buy products through middlemen, not directly from farmers.
Full implementation and publicity for the national policy on transport subsidies.	Many still do not know this policy, even powerful people such as the District Secretary of the Communist Party. Only the State Forestry Enterprise appears to be eligible, receiving 260 million dong (Euro 14 000) of subsidy in 2004. Small-scale traders have no access to the fund because it is "difficult to control their traded volumes".

work has not led to outcomes that are more widespread (Vietnam) or more sustainable (Grenada). Lasting and accountable policy change might need broader alliances with stronger lobbying power.

Importantly, these experiences have shown that policy influence is not a simple bottom-up process and nor is policy formulation and implementation a simple top-down process. In Grenada, farmers realise that relevant policy change needs to be achieved by negotiating with the private sector, specifically foreign developers, and not just with government agencies. For the farmers in upland Vietnam, where transport and communication are major problems, the market chain workshops turned out to be equally useful for exchanging information with neighbouring farmers and traders as for talking with policy makers. Change happens in many different ways, so it's a good idea to connect not just with formal "policy makers" but with all those others in the policy circle, including fellow farmers, processors, traders, investors and the media.

These two cases were part of an international initiative to develop policy tools for disadvantaged natural resource managers and their allies. Readers can find other experiences with tactics and techniques for engaging in policy processes at the website <http://www.policy-powertools.org>

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Promoting organic agriculture in Uganda

Charles Walaga, Michael Hauser, Robert Delve and Florence Nagawa

In Uganda, East Africa, agriculture involves more than 85 percent of the employed labour force and is the basis for the livelihood of more than 3 million smallholder families. In spite of generally favourable agriculture conditions, agricultural productivity remains low and poverty afflicts more than 40 percent of the national population. Since 2000, the government of Uganda has been implementing the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture as a main pillar of its comprehensive Poverty Eradication Plan. According to current government policies, modernization of agriculture should be based on increasing the use of inorganic inputs. This has been the policy of all post independence governments, though the level of use and impact of inorganic inputs among smallholder farming systems remains negligible and is likely to remain so under the current socio-economic and agro-ecological conditions.

Since the late 1980s, Ugandan civil society organizations have been working with poor small scale farmers to reverse declining farm productivity by developing sustainable farming systems, based on organic agriculture principles. Organic farming systems have been found to be particularly suitable for small scale farmers since they rely on local resources and build on indigenous knowledge. This allows for the development of highly productive farming systems that yield a variety of products and services that sustain the livelihood of smallholders. It increases the food security of farmer families while the international market for organic agricultural produce offers good value for their products.

Organic agriculture in Uganda

Organic certification in Uganda started in 1993 and this sub-sector has now grown to more than 33 000 certified organic farmers. Exports of organic products are estimated to have totalled US\$ 7.5 million in the 2003/2004 financial year. Since 1994, export of certified organic products has expanded rapidly from pineapples and sweet bananas to include coffee, cotton, cocoa, sesame, vanilla, mangoes, ginger and papaya. More organic export projects are being developed for essential oils, spices, honey and hibiscus tea (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*). In addition to the certified farmers, there are another estimated 120 000 smallholder farmers practicing organic agriculture, who are also looking for marketing opportunities.

Organic certification and access to the international organic market means the farmers need to be well organized. It also requires continuous provision of information and development of technical skills to enable smallholders to meet the rigid requirements for participation in the specialized organic product chain.

Role of local organizations

In northern Uganda, in the region of Lira, about 12 000 farmers are organized under the umbrella of a farmer owned membership NGO, the Lango Organic Farming Promotion (LOFP). LOFP is facilitating the production of organic crops with farmers, and is responsible for quality control through an Internal Control System, while it also monitors the marketing of organic cotton and sesame. When a multinational company for cotton processing and exporting was established in the same region,

LOFP also became involved in lobby and advocacy work on behalf of its members. As this multinational company started distributing inorganic cotton inputs to farmers, the organic certification approach of LOFP and its farmers was jeopardized, as the organic certification was based on a group approach that prohibits the introduction or use of agro-chemicals in the area of the participating farmers. In 2003, LOFP launched a campaign aimed to protect its organic area from infiltration by inorganic crop inputs. This campaign involved lobbying the chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture to help protect the organic cotton farmers in the area.

The lobby was successful and resulted in the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) being asked to study the organic cotton sector. The resulting report concluded that organic cotton production should be promoted as it was making a significant contribution to reducing poverty and was generating significant amounts of foreign currency for the country. It pointed out that there is a need to mobilize research support in the development of organic technologies and practices as well as to organize the provision of loans to farmers. Moreover, it was established that there are effective indigenous biological methods of controlling cotton pests based on predatory black ants (*Lepisiota* sp.) that the local cotton farmers were actively employing. The introduction of inorganic pesticides in the organic area would threaten the populations of these black ants and their role in controlling cotton pests in the fields of organic farmers. In June 2004, the President of Uganda wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, directing the protection of the organic cotton project by dividing the area into organic and conventional production zones, ensuring the continuation of the organic production activities.

As in the example above, grassroots efforts to influence policies tend to take place in reaction to immediate threats. However, once the threats are eliminated, the policy action of the group ends. In this case, there was no follow-up of the many recommendations given by the National Environment Management Authority. This is basically because grassroots organizations lack technical capacity and financial resources to pursue sustained advocacy and lobbying efforts. Hence there was need for action at a different level.

Role of an umbrella organization

LOFP is an active member of NOGAMU, the National Organic Movement of Uganda. NOGAMU works to advance the adoption of organic agriculture, by bringing together all stakeholders such as farmers, farmer organisations, NGOs, extensionists, traders, processors and researchers. NOGAMU finds that an explicit government policy is necessary to address the numerous constraints to organic agriculture development in Uganda. Therefore, an advocacy and lobbying sub-committee was established as one of its standing committees to specifically pursue the policy advocacy agenda. Participation of members in this committee is voluntary. Other allies that bring technical competency in policy analysis, policy advocacy and policy development into the alliance include the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) and the Organisation for Rural Research and Development (ORREDE). This alliance has pursued a broad objective aimed at developing a comprehensive policy that covers all aspects of organic agriculture, including production, education, research, extension, processing and marketing.

In the absence of a national organic policy, the full potential of organic agriculture for the rural smallholders cannot be realised. Policies matter, because:

- policies have goals, objectives and strategies. Allocation of government resources is directed towards the realisation of policy objectives and goals. Without a government policy for organic agriculture, government resources cannot be invested in education, research and extension in support of organic agriculture development;
- policies inform other policies. Without an explicit government policy, other policies can easily have provisions that contradict the basic principles of organic agriculture. Such a situation could have serious implications on the practitioners of organic agriculture. For example, Uganda is currently in the process of developing policies for the introduction of questionable agricultural inputs such as the pesticide DDT and genetically modified organisms in the country. Without guiding principles to inform such policy development processes of what already exists and what needs to be protected, such new policies could work against organic farming;
- without such a policy the country would not be able to actively contribute to multilateral trade negotiations around organic agriculture. Yet organic agriculture is considered the most regulated segment of agricultural trade in the world and Ugandan operators already face many barriers and constraints in accessing the organic markets in Europe, the United States and Japan. These trade negotiations are closed to NGOs, farmer organisations and companies. Only governments can take part.

One of the consequences of not having an explicit government policy on organic agriculture is that the organic sector cannot develop beyond the resources made available by the private sector and civil society, or beyond the non-tariff barriers that the sector can overcome on their own. Recognizing these limitations, Ugandan civil society organizations and partner organizations have been at the forefront of lobbying and advocating for a government organic agriculture policy and in spearheading its formulation. The aim is a government policy that formally recognizes the sector and will allow mobilization of technical and financial government resources, including bilateral resources, for the development of this sector. However, it is not the intention of the civil society organizations to replace the current agriculture policy with an organic policy. It is about recognizing that there are several approaches to achieving agricultural development and that the organic approach is a viable alternative that has proved its potential among resource poor farmers. This recognition should result in the incorporation of organic agriculture in the Government's Plan for Modernization of Agriculture.

In advocating for policy development, NOGAMU and its partner organizations have been confronted with the following challenges:

- lack of unity among the major stakeholders to network effectively and mobilise resources towards a sustained policy advocacy effort;
- a lack of adequate empirical data on the performance of organic agriculture, information that the government always considers to be a prerequisite to bring forth policy response.



Organic agriculture tries to make good use of all available biomass: a farmer in Uganda incorporates weeds into the soil.

Most of the information on the performance of organic agriculture in Uganda is only based on field experiences of farmers and field-based organizations, mostly described in a qualitative manner and not published. Documenting the impacts of organic agriculture is a difficult undertaking because of its holistic nature. It requires multidisciplinary research teams to cover agronomic, ecological, economic and social dimensions of the system. The organic sector in Uganda has not yet acquired resources to mobilize such research teams;

- a lack of knowledge and information about organic agriculture among government bureaucrats and other influential actors in educational and research institutions, leading to poor appreciation of its potential in poverty eradication;
- an active opposition to organic agriculture from some influential circles who claim that it is technically incapable of meeting the food needs of a rapidly expanding population.

The formation of NOGAMU and its work during the first two years in developing an activity profile and building its membership base addressed the first constraint mentioned above. Short term consultants assisted in the collection of basic, "quick-to-obtain" data such as tonnages of organic products exported, export values, number of farmers involved and premium prices obtained. A second strategy to increase the availability of data on the organic agriculture sector consisted of organizing farm visits for influential persons, including policy makers and researchers, and inviting such people to participate in exhibitions, such as fairs associated with World Food Day or World Environmental Day. This approach has proved to be very effective and NOGAMU now organises annual Organic Days throughout the country, during which organic farming technologies and products are exhibited and information on organic agriculture is disseminated. These events capture the attention of policy makers and enable them to understand organic agriculture better. Increasingly, other influential stakeholders are also being won over. NOGAMU and its partners encourage research, and host specialized researchers who are interested in Uganda's organic agriculture. For example, the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the Austrian University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU) have initiated strategic research on organic agriculture to generate information needed to inform the development and implementation of the policy. Makerere University, the premier agriculture education institution in the country, has started a collaborative training programme with the Institute of Organic Farming of BOKU while the Uganda Martyrs University has initiated a full degree programme on organic agriculture. This is in addition to its short courses on organic agriculture.

The lack of adequate technical knowledge and information about organic agriculture among government bureaucrats, as mentioned above, implied that in the beginning the civil society organizations (CSOs) played a leading role in generating the background concept papers needed as a basis for forming the policy. This has probably only been possible because the Government of Uganda decided some time ago to always pursue participatory processes, involving civil society, in developing and implementing policies. In this case, the government formed an organic policy development committee which co-opted members from the CSOs. The participatory approach implies that all stakeholders contribute to the process, not only ideas but also other resources necessary to move the process forward. CSOs have been instrumental in the mobilisation of both technical and financial resources to enable

the policy committee to do its work. Several stakeholder consultative meetings have been held to assess the development of the organic sub-sector to date and to identify the key issues which require policy support. Consequently, a concept note for an organic agriculture policy was produced. This concept note contains the issue papers produced by technical staff from both the government and CSOs and is now being used as a basis for formulating the organic policy.

Conclusions

The LOFP experiences demonstrate that a farmer organisation can successfully be involved in lobbying and advocacy at the local level. But such successes require often the winning over of dedicated supporters. In this case, the chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture represents a constituency in the organic cotton zone in northern Uganda and was knowledgeable about the importance of the sector on the livelihoods of local people. He was therefore willing to pursue the issue.

In spite of the obvious limitations, grassroots' lobbying and advocacy activities do matter because under Uganda's decentralised service delivery system, local governments are responsible for the delivery of agricultural extension services. Experiences in other organic areas like western Uganda indicate that the grassroots-organized lobbying and advocacy policy process have been effective in changing the perception of local government technical staff and policy makers. Increasingly, local government technical staff are cooperating with development NGOs promoting organic agriculture when planning agricultural interventions and in delivering extension services.

The field visits by politicians and other decision makers have enabled these bureaucrats to appreciate the potential of organic agriculture and its impacts. Even though the organic policy is not yet in place, the decision taken by the government to initiate the process of policy formulation is crucial. Decisions have already been taken to protect the organic cotton production in northern Uganda. Organic agriculture is now increasingly being considered as a viable approach to achieving sustainability in agriculture and meeting the livelihood needs for resource poor smallholders and many influential actors in the organic sector are beginning to pay attention. In the absence of empirical data on the performance of organic agriculture farming systems, visual approaches to demonstrating impact can be very effective in getting people to notice and in garnering support, especially at the start when research resources to conduct scientific studies are lacking. ■

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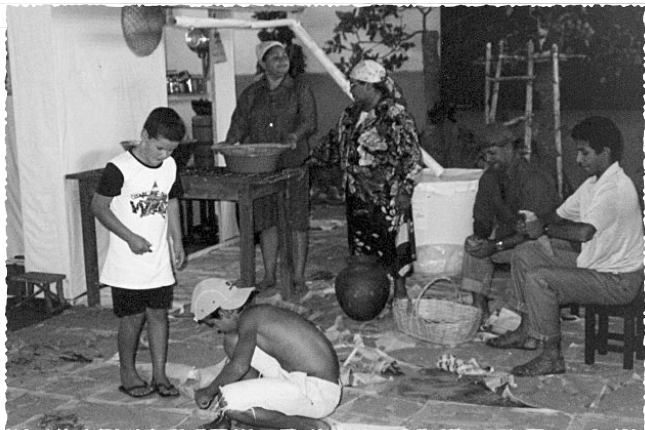
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Small-scale agriculture and food security policies

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The Pólo Union of Borborema (Pólo) is a network of farmer organizations, including trade unions, associations, and informal groups from 16 municipalities in the interior of the state of Paraíba, in the north-east of Brazil. Pólo's objectives include increasing food and nutritional security, income generation, and improving the quality of life of its members. The network has been working together with grass-roots organisations since 2000, supported by the Brazilian NGO AS-PTA (*Assessoria e Serviços a Projetos em Agricultura Alternativa*).



"The maize festival at Dona Nene's house" being performed.

Currently, Pólo is working with around four thousand farm families, who are improving their agricultural practices through an intensive process of experimentation and exchange. Small farmers have been rediscovering traditional methods: returning to the use of traditional seed varieties; growing a mixture of crops together; organising community seedbanks; going back to and improving the keeping of chicken; developing vegetable and medicinal plant gardens; planting fruit trees and living fences; producing fodder from indigenous plants so that livestock can produce milk and meat even in the existing adverse conditions; as well as testing and using a range of natural fertilizers and pesticides. In addition, families are developing new ways of harvesting and storing rainwater for drinking and using in the gardens. They appreciate the rich local biodiversity and knowledge which transforms soils and water into an explosion of foods, medicinal plants, fodder and fertilisers. To guarantee that

they do not suffer food shortages during the dry season, they store water in their tanks, as well as storing maize, beans and flour, and making jams and sweets out of fruit. Together, these practices improve food security for the families involved. The long term results are that the families become more independent and place a greater value on their natural resources and local knowledge.

Theatre for awareness-raising

One method used to highlight the issues faced is a play, entitled "The maize festival at Dona Nene's house" (see Box 1). This was written and acted out on various occasions by the small farmers and religious leaders who make up Pólo's Theatre Group. The objective in using the play was to increase awareness of the concept of food security, and establish the connection between food security and the local reality as experienced by small farmers. Although imaginary, the two stories which make up the play reflect the situation of two very different realities. One represents those families who are managing to improve their own food supply with very few resources, by actively participating in agroecological innovation programmes, while the other shows the reality of those who still live in a situation of extreme food insecurity. Reality is understood, and actions can be planned, by letting the facts of daily life of the farm families speak for themselves. As Paulo Freire, the famous Brazilian educationalist, said, "The real theoretical discussion, necessary for critical reflection, has to be had in such a concrete manner as to almost confuse itself with the practical". This process of farmer experimentation and innovation needs a specific learning and teaching method. The theory and practice of new techniques are linked, based on farmers' involvement, experimentation and exchange during the innovation process.

Towards food security policies

To increase the impact of these activities, Pólo joined the *Articulação do Semi-árido Paraibano* (Semi-arid Network of Paraíba State), a network of civil society groups who work to develop supportive policies for the semi-arid region based on local realities and knowledge, related to the promotion of agroecology and food security. By participating in various networks, meetings and activities, Pólo is able to contribute on a wider scale. For example, they organised a meeting in which 70 union and community leaders participated, where policy orientation papers were written in relation to the existing policy environment, which at present is not seen as supportive for increased food security. At a later state-wide meeting, this document was finalised as "Contributions of the civil society of

Box 1. The maize festival at Dona Nene's house

Everyone in Dona Nene's house wakes up early, because today is the maize festival, known as the pamonha. Mr. Chico goes to the garden to harvest some cobs of the pontinha variety of maize, which is very good for making the pamonha, the maize cake after which the festival is named. He inherited this variety of seeds from his grandfather. Dona Nene and her children prepare themselves to receive their neighbours: they collect water from the tank which was constructed near the house with money from a community micro-credit scheme, they harvest vegetables grown with organic fertilisers, and prepare and cook the local chicken. The neighbours arrive exactly at the time when Dona Nene's daughters are watering the medicinal plant garden, re-using water from the kitchen. They learnt this on an exchange visit with other farmers and now they teach it to their own community. One of the neighbours compliments them on the diversity of plants they have in their garden, and the amount of trees they have around their land. For lunch, they can also choose to eat butter beans (*Phaseolus lunatus*) or common beans (*P. vulgaris*), and for dessert they will have sweets made from cashew fruit. Dona Nene is proud to say that "everything on our table is natural and comes from the garden".

At the same time, Mr. José Cosme who lives nearby, decides it is a good day for planting, but he does not have any seeds. On waking up, he asks his eldest son, Zeca, to go and buy some seeds. Dona Corrinha goes to look for water at the water lorry. Before this, she asked her daughter to go to the store to buy couscous for breakfast. The family only has a small property, and they have to rent land from a large farmer, land which becomes less fertile every year. To be able to pay the shop for the seeds, the family had to sell their cow, and now they are waiting for their pension money in order to buy a new calf.

Box 2. Experiences transformed into policies

Water: everyone's right

Today, Pólo supports a system of more than 280 community-based revolving loan funds which have already enabled the construction of 3200 domestic tanks, guaranteeing easy access to good quality water. The construction of the tanks was incorporated as a public policy in the government's Programme of a Million Tanks. This programme, which is managed by the Brazilian Semi-arid Network with federal government funds, demonstrates the capacity of civil society to formulate, negotiate and implement wide-reaching policies. Successful water harvesting, using simple, cheap and technically proven methods, demonstrates the importance of the decentralisation of water supply, for food and water security of the population of the rural areas of Paraíba.

Cultivating life: a garden planted with the seeds of passion

Pólo is part of the State Network of Seedbanks of the Semi-Arid Network of Paraíba State. Since 1998, they have been establishing agreements with the state government of Paraíba for supplying the seedbanks with indigenous varieties, and in 2004, thanks to a partnership with the National Supply Company, 161 tonnes of seeds of indigenous varieties were supplied. Today there are 80 community seedbanks which directly benefit 3000 families. This is another example of the capacity of civil society organizations to develop and implement technical solutions to meet the needs of farming families in the semi-arid region. Through these banks, families are guaranteed quality seeds at the right time for planting, liberating them of the risks of food insecurity by missing the best planting dates and losing the agricultural year. The banks and stocks held by families also function as strategic guardians of adapted varieties, known as 'seeds of passion'. Conserving them is an important service that the small farmer provides towards the food security of the society in general.

Paraíba to the Zero Hunger Programme". The Zero Hunger programme is a government initiative aimed at combating hunger, misery and the roots of social exclusion. It was conceived in order to guarantee food security for all Brazilians. It operates at the three levels of government (municipal, state and federal) and civil society. The contributions made to the Zero Hunger Programme were based on the valuing of local initiatives, farmer-experimenter exchanges, fairs to exchange products and agricultural practices, and the documentation and publication of practices and techniques. These ideas and debates were successful in reaching wider audiences; from the interior of Borborema, they reached the whole of the state of Paraíba, to finally be heard by the entire semi-arid region of Brazil.

In November 2003, Paraíba hosted the Fourth Meeting of the Brazilian Semi-arid Network, which was attended by approximately 600 people, the majority being farmer-experimenters from eleven states which make up the semi-arid areas of Brazil. The theme was 'Family agriculture developing food security in the semi-arid regions', and many experiences of life and livelihoods in the semi-arid region were presented. This gave evidence to a rich collection of practices and acted as a source of inspiration to many debates. The event resulted in the writing of the Political Letter of the Brazilian Semi-arid Network, which highlighted the importance of valuing alternatives being developed by civil society, and the formulation of policies related to the promotion of food sovereignty. This was an open letter addressed to the President, and all levels of government.

With its many experiences within the theme of food security, the Semi-arid Network of Paraíba State was invited to assist in constructing policy proposals for the State Conference on Food and Nutritional Security. Here they performed their play. This, and the publications of Pólo and the Semi-Arid Network of Paraíba State, shows the maturity and growth of the innovations of the small farmers of Paraíba, and the clarity with which these

people express their issues. The play was even performed during the National Food and Nutritional Security Conference in Olinda, Pernambuco, in March 2004. Although there was little opportunity for the voice of civil society to be heard at this conference, the message was delivered, showing the strength of community mobilization and organization, and the intelligence and creativity of farmers and farm families.

These incremental steps of reaching wider audiences and having the opportunity to influence policy formulation have meant that Pólo has seen its work used in some of the literature produced by the government explaining what the Zero Hunger and related programmes are (see illustration).



A cartoon strip telling the story of "Seeds of Passion: A community strategy to conserve local varieties in the semi-arid regions" from Paraíba.

Food security: not just a technical issue

By actively participating in the Semi-arid Network of Paraíba and the Semi-arid Network of Brazil, and engaging in dialogue with governmental policy-making at the state and federal level, Pólo has been successful in influencing the public policies related to food and nutritional security. This can be seen in particular in the Zero Hunger Programme, and the Programme of One Million Tanks. Some of Pólo's member organizations participated actively in the state and national conferences on food and nutritional security, where various directives were defined. This whole process has shown that issues surrounding increased food security are not just technical, and that the policy environment can be influenced using the skill and creativity of individuals, groups and networks to contribute to the improvement of their own lives.

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Arvari Sansad: the farmers' parliament

Syed Miftahul Hasnat

The success of a rainwater harvesting programme in the Alwar district of Rajasthan, India, supported by the NGO *Tarun Bharat Sangh* (as reported on in LEISA Magazine Vol.19, No.3, September 2003 and Vol. 16, No.1, March 2000) brought about increased water availability and related benefits. With these benefits also came new challenges, such as managing the equitable use of this water. There have been various attempts to take advantage of the improved water availability, and policies and mechanisms were needed to counter the threat which was looming over the sustainability of the community's efforts to secure their livelihoods. We now return to the story of the *Arvari Sansad* to take a more detailed look at how this locally initiated institution achieves its aims.

Farmers' parliament

The *Arvari Sansad*, or parliament, was formed by villagers in 1999 with the primary objective of safeguarding community efforts for the conservation and use of their scarce natural resources. It follows a Gandhian notion of eco-friendly village-level self reliance (*Gram Sauraj*), where decisions are made at the grass-roots level instead of by centralized institutions.

The role of the *Arvari Sansad* is to develop policies and rules to govern the use of natural resources like water, soils and the forest, resources which are directly related to the wellbeing of the villagers. The parliament represents 72 villages and meets four times a year to discuss problems and decide on the best strategies for land and water use. It has 142 members who are nominated by their respective village institutions (*Gram Sabhas*). Policies and rules decided upon during meetings of the *Arvari Sansad* are noted down by volunteers from institutions or NGOs

Ensuring that policies are followed

The village institution, in this case the Gram Sabha, will hold a public hearing in which both the alleged violator and petitioners are given a fair chance to represent their case in public. Based on the local community rules, after pleading and reasoning of the parties involved, the Gram Sabha takes decisions which are then binding on both parties and also on the communities involved. If the accused is found guilty and does not comply with the ruling, the Gram Sabha can order a community boycott. This means that all the villagers are told to shun the violator. They are forbidden to socialize with him, which involves no talking, no interaction, and neither inviting nor attending any of the violator's social functions. In this way, the violator becomes isolated, and after some time will generally give up his or her actions and comply with the ruling.

In extreme cases where the violator still does not comply with rulings of the Gram Sabha, social coercion is resorted to (*Huka Pani Bandh*). This is a method of societal pressure or collective community forcing. This system is stronger than the community boycott, in that it bans the carrying out of all daily chores with the violator. He is not allowed to trade with anybody, nor attend village institutions and social events. Establishing and carrying out any kind of relations with him are banned. The violator is not even allowed to take drinking water from the common well. No person is allowed to work at his farm or rent out bullocks or labour to him. Leading a normal social life within the village community becomes impossible for the violator.

like *Tarun Bharat Sangh*. The *Arvari Sansad* parliament members also elect a coordination committee among themselves, including some external facilitators like volunteers and social workers. This coordination committee is responsible for ensuring that policies and rules are followed. Any *Arvari Sansad* member can suggest items for the agenda. In situations where village-level violations are reported, solutions can be arrived at amicably through discussion and mutual consent within the village communities. If this does not prove effective, community boycott or social coercion is resorted to. In India, this is a system which involves shunning the violators within the society or village (see Box).

Participatory policy development

One policy recently decided upon by the *Arvari Sansad*, was to support a cropping pattern in favour of local indigenous crops, which use less water. They also discouraged the growing of water intensive crops (e.g. sugar cane) for commercial purposes, since this might disrupt the improved water availability. During community discussions, however, this met with stiff opposition from members as it became clear that some farmers wanted to grow sugar cane for domestic use, not commercial purposes. The farmers' argument was that they need sugar cane for use at home and for making sweets, for special occasions like marriages and festivities such as *Diwali* or *Holi*. It was established by the *Arvari Sansad* that these farmers did not have sufficient money to buy such products from the market. In addition, the efforts of these farmers in the conservation of water, soil and forests was also taken into consideration. It was realised that if farmers are able to conserve natural resources in an effective way, then they also have a right to the sustainable use of these resources. Through a long process of debate and discussions in various public meetings and workshops with the farmers, regional communities, village institutions, *Arvari Sansad* members, social workers and volunteers, the *Arvari Sansad* arrived at an innovative and sustainable solution to this issue which they call the "compensatory agricultural crop pattern". Under this system, if a farmer wants to grow a water intensive crop like sugar cane for domestic use on 25 percent of his agricultural land, then he has to grow less water-consuming crops like mung bean (*gram*) on the remaining land. This was unanimously agreed upon in the parliament and is being successfully implemented. Though outside advice from volunteers, social workers and others is welcomed, the decision to accept or reject any suggestions rests with the *Arvari Sansad*.

Many intelligent and insightful suggestions emerge from the village communities themselves. For example, the basic idea of compensatory agricultural crop pattern came from local farmers. Water was declared to be a common property resource of the community which had worked for its conservation. Such an innovative solution is a unique example, not found in other parts of India. Since most of the farmers in the area only have land holdings of approximately 2 hectares, there is little chance of misuse by farmers with large land holdings.

Another successful policy of the *Arvari Sansad* was to rule against the sale of agricultural land to industries or big private companies who wanted to establish water consuming enterprises, such as a proposed brewery. The sale of agricultural land to the beverage company did not materialize, as a result of opposition by local communities and the *Arvari Sansad*. The company realized the strong level of resistance by local people and withdrew their plans while still in the initial stages.



Policies and rules are agreed upon in an open discussion in the Arvari Sansad.

Using the present legal system

If violators are external companies or industries, or there are conflicting government policies, it is possible to resort to litigation. For example, the *Arvari Sansad* was successful in getting a fishing licence cancelled, which had originally been granted to a private external contractor by the government fisheries department. This had allowed the external contractor to take fish from the village of Hamirpur in the Arvari catchment area. Under the present government policy, natural resources like water and fish are the property of the government. But the *Arvari Sansad's* argument was that, since it was the people and not the government whose initiative to construct hundreds of traditional water harvesting structures (*johads*) had resulted in improved water availability, which then led to the re-emergence of fish in the stream, then they, the people, and not the government, should have the right to decide what to do with the fish and water. Money required for litigation in this case was raised through donations and legal help from various social organisations like *Tarun Bharati Sangh*. Though common or ordinary litigation requires money, in India there is an alternate system of justice called Public Interest Litigation. Under this system, any person or group of persons can send a public interest application to the state High Court or the Supreme Court of India. If the court feels that the issue is of significant public interest, it appoints lawyers who take up the case for litigation. Applicants do not have to pay for litigation in such cases.

In order to discourage the sale of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes, the *Arvari Sansad* has made rules against the sale of agricultural land to outsiders for non-agricultural purposes without prior permission of the regional communities concerned. The *Arvari Sansad* is also taking advantage of a present law under which special permission is required from the government to convert fertile agricultural land for other uses. The *Arvari Sansad* is currently planning to take up legal action against the sale of fertile agricultural land to a big hotelier group for the construction of a five star hotel, which they consider a threat to the agriculture and ecology of the area.

Initially, government institutions did not take much notice of the farmers' parliament until the *Arvari Sansad* stood up against various decisions, like challenging the granting of fishing rights to an external contractor. It was during this time that the government ordered the dismantling of the office of the *Arvari Sansad* near Hamirpur. This step was taken out of political

frustration in an attempt to discourage the farmers' parliament movement. But this did not prevent the *Arvari Sansad* from fighting for their cause, and ultimately they were successful in getting the fishing licence cancelled. After achieving this success, the village parliamentarians gained considerable self-confidence in community-based interventions.

The future

In spite of the many successes, the *Arvari Sansad* faces many challenges, including new leadership, religious and caste based differences, as well as large scale illiteracy. The situation has improved since the initial days, as there is now greater participation of landless people and women, and the caste based groupings are less prevalent. This is due to a better common understanding and frequent interaction between numerous people of different social backgrounds. *Arvari Sansad* is also generating awareness through public meetings and awareness campaigns about future threats to natural resources and livelihoods. Other social issues like rights, education for disadvantaged community members, gender issues, deforestation, biodiversity conservation and ways of reviving sustainable traditional farming systems are also being taken up in the *Arvari Sansad* meetings now. Local politicians have assured the villagers that the sustainable practical initiatives taken by the *Arvari Sansad* will be supported by friendly policies. Policy development in India is a lengthy and time-consuming process and takes many years to bear fruit. Despite the complexities of the political scene, some of the efforts of the *Arvari Sansad* have borne fruit and many of its demands, like stopping the privatisation of water and ensuring equitable sharing of water, have been accepted by the present state government.

Despite previous anti-farmer actions and policies of the government, which have tended to be supportive of large scale commercial farming and industrialisation, efforts like these give out a ray of hope. Such initiatives by villagers, farmers and local institutions are an example for policy makers, governments and other communities in India and around the world to follow. The *Arvari Sansad* is determined to carry forward the torch of rural self reliance and sustainable development. ■

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Influencing policy: the experience of RAAA in Peru

Luis Gomero Osorio

Many rural development NGOs provide support to community organizations to improve their managerial capacities in agriculture and in the conservation of agro-biodiversity. In most cases, these efforts have been localized, validating production systems which are based on specific local conditions. Most of these have strengthened local development, but they have generally not extended to larger areas, and they are seldom used as inputs for the development of regional and national policies.

Development projects which achieve a local impact are very important, but not sufficient to generate wider changes in policies for sustainable rural development. Many project evaluators have reported that rural development projects have difficulties in contributing to national processes, or in having their results taken into account within the political agenda. This is one of the reasons why the *Red de Acción en Alternativas al Uso de Agroquímicos*, Peru's Action Network for Alternatives to the Use of Agrochemicals (RAAA), in collaboration with its 35 member organizations, created a campaign unit right from its start in 1990. This unit, known as the Unit for Political Pressure (UIP), makes every effort to put the problems dealing with the development of sustainable agriculture and the use of agrochemicals on the political debate agenda. The main challenge of the unit has been to initiate participatory change processes in the three levels of politics: local, regional and national.

The use of pesticides and agro-chemicals is one of Peru's key environmental problems. Excessive use affects the soil and water resources, and also causes contamination of food. In addition, the most traded and used pesticides in Peru belong to the "extremely dangerous chemicals" category (such as Taron or Furadan), and the use of many forbidden products (DDT, Aldrin) is frequently reported. Over the years, RAAA has therefore focused on the development of national policies that will regulate the use of these products and the promotion of ecological agriculture. Some results have been achieved.

Intervention strategy

RAAA's strategy has focused on influencing public opinion, the authorities, opinion leaders and government officials, on the environmental problems which result from the use of agrochemicals. High-priority issues for the political agenda were identified with the participation of different stakeholders, being chosen according to their degree of environmental importance. Taking advantage of its organizational structure and

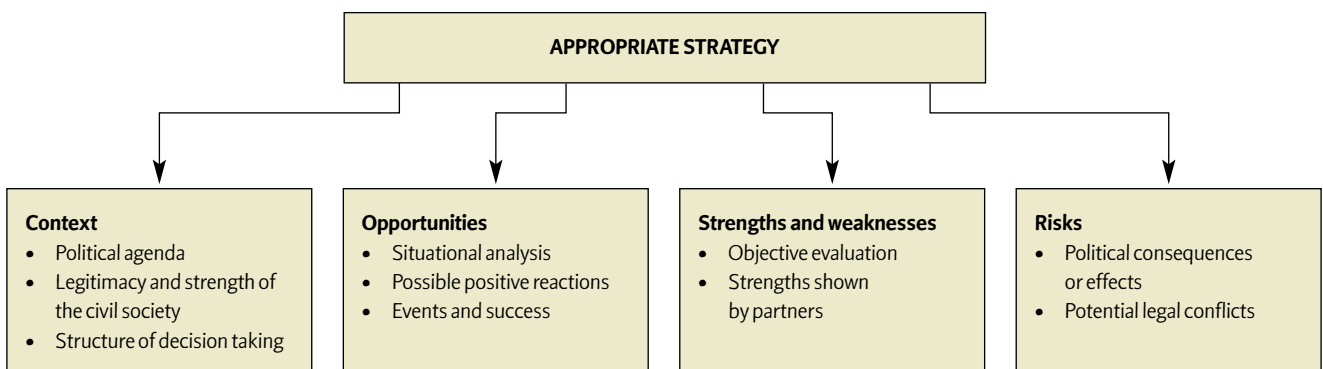
of its relation to members and many other organizations, RAAA plays the role of facilitator, promoting interactions between all those involved in the development of sustainable agriculture and, together, defining the strategies and priorities for political lobbying activities.



Photo: RAAA
Demonstrators demanding justice in the Taucamarca pesticide poisoning case.

One of the basic tasks of RAAA is to establish methods for permanent dialogue between the authorities and the civil society. One of the challenges when working in political pressure is to get the issue onto the agenda of the political debate. This is not easy: it requires the organization of conferences and the constant provision of press releases to the media. Furthermore, awareness campaigns and mobilization are also needed to get the attention of the mass media and the general public. The constant dissemination of information through the media, coupled with constant institutional lobbying, is how RAAA gets to political leaders or decision makers, and through them sustains the policy proposals for their approval and implementation in the country.

To successfully influence politics, it is essential to understand the context of the problem in detail and to recognize all actors involved. Similarly, it is important to look for the most appropriate moment to start a campaign, and to make an objective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and of those participating in the campaign. It helps



to establish strong links and to work together with other organizations, in particular with the media and with persons in key positions. Potential risks should also be considered at all times (see Figure).

Main results

Through its Unit for Political Pressure, RAAA has run long-lasting campaigns which have resulted in the discussion and approval of rulings that favour sustainable agriculture and a reduction in the use of pesticides. Very interesting synergies between the development organizations that work in the field have been generated during this process. This is seen as a positive and necessary development for the construction of policies aimed at a healthy and sustainable agriculture.

Lobbying actions aimed at congressmen have also been successful, resulting in regular meetings with politicians from different parties, the organization of forums and seminars, and further dissemination of information through the media. Over the years, RAAA's member organizations have similarly intensified their involvement in various campaigns, be it by sending open letters or giving declarations to the media, or by carrying out public demonstrations demanding an end to the marketing of extremely toxic pesticides. The selection of the 3rd of December as "International Day of No Pesticides", established worldwide to commemorate the Bhopal disaster, facilitated the organization of a synchronized campaign in many different cities, demanding immediate action against the widespread use of pesticides. It also helped to focus on the accidents that have occurred in Peru (see Box).

Solidarity campaign for Taucamarca

In one of Peru's worst cases, 24 children died after drinking a milk substitute contaminated with an organophosphate pesticide known as ethyl parathion. This took place in the small peasant community of Taucamarca, Cusco, on October 22nd, 1999, and has until now not been resolved. Since then, RAAA has been actively trying to get those responsible sanctioned, expressing solidarity with the families of the victims.

Thanks to the support of several organizations, it was possible to file lawsuits demanding that justice be done. Sadly, no ruling has been issued until today, and it has not been easy to keep this case on the national political agenda. One of the results of the work of RAAA and its partners has been the formation of a sub-commission in Congress, with the responsibility to investigate the case. Although its report was approved by all members, the case has not been discussed in Congress yet.

The aim of RAAA's work in this case, in addition to working towards an acceptable solution, is to come to jurisprudence so that cases of mass intoxication, in the future, will be considered as a serious violation of human and environmental rights.

These efforts have led to the approval of several national laws and many local regulations:

Law No. 26744, on the promotion of Integrated Pest Management

This law was one of the first political achievements in the fight for the reduction in the use of pesticides. Different politicians became interested in the demands presented by the various campaigns, and a political framework was approved so that non chemical alternatives could be promoted, developed and adopted. As a direct consequence of this law, the Ministry of Agriculture now runs the National Programme for Biological

Control, which produces and makes available natural enemies of agricultural pests.

Law No. 28217, on the use of extremely and highly hazardous pesticides

Since 2000, one of the most successful actions has been the complete banning of all pesticides in categories Ia and Ib (those defined as extremely or highly hazardous to human health). The national campaign also aimed at control mechanisms regarding environmental contamination and public health. Approved in May 2004, this law deals with the management of residues and containers, food contamination control and epidemiological surveillance if intoxication cases occur. Although not forceful in its prohibition of imports or use, this law provides participatory mechanisms that enable stakeholders to request the prohibition of a certain product.

Law for the Promotion of Organic Agriculture

Another result of the campaigns against pesticide use are the different legislative initiatives recently brought up, promoting alternative agriculture models, biological control of pests and weeds, the use of *guano*, or organic farming in general, among others. The most complete was the one presented by congresswoman Paulina Arpasi in September 2004, drafted with the cooperation of RAAA and many of its members. Because of some of its technical and economic implications, this law has not yet been approved by the government, and is still being discussed by stakeholders and politicians alike.

RAAA aims to continue campaigning, while at the same time monitoring the implementation of new regulations by the authorities and by companies that deal with agro-chemicals. This involves developing and validating mechanisms for public participation, so that all those interested not only participate, but are also heard.

Lessons learnt

Experience has shown that it is only possible to achieve the broader objectives of development organizations with good interaction between activities at the local level and policy initiatives. This is facilitated by working in networks, action groups, consortiums, or similar organizations. Coordination and concerted actions contribute to the inclusion of a given theme in the political agenda. The main difficulty lies in maintaining the level of active participation of all those involved. It is thus necessary to be very creative as far as the implementation of activities is concerned. A good dose of motivation is required to mobilize grassroots organizations.

High standards of leadership at the institutional level as well as sufficient human resources are also required in order to achieve change processes in (public) policies regarding sustainable agriculture. These actions need to be constant and ongoing. Furthermore, political lobbying should go step-by-step, be easily understood and taken on by those involved, and be able to show concrete results. Because it was possible to show positive results with the approval of a series of initiatives, RAAA's activities have received recognition, making the other necessary actions easier.

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Improved fallows and local institutions

Olu Ajayi and Roza Katanga

Low soil fertility is one of the greatest biophysical constraints to increasing agricultural productivity and food security in many Sub-Saharan African countries. The use of supplementary inorganic fertilizers has become less affordable for many farmers in countries such as Zambia, following the removal of subsidies on these inputs. In response, the use of improved fallows, also known as fertilizer tree fallows, has been developed by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) in eastern Zambia over the last ten years, as a sustainable way for small scale farmers to restore soil fertility (see also LEISA Magazine Vol.17, No. 3, October 2001). This technology involves planting nitrogen-fixing, fast-growing trees that produce easily decomposable biomass, and improve soil physical conditions.



Zambian Members of Parliament discuss agroforestry with farmers.

Given the profitability of fertilizer tree fallows and the positive impact of the technology on households and the environment, efforts are being made to scale up the adoption of the technology. These efforts have been hindered by existing practices such as the regular use of bush fires and free-grazing by livestock during the dry season, among other reasons. The absence of private property rights over land means that livestock are allowed to graze freely in the fields during the dry season. Often, these animals are owned by wealthier farmers. The livestock usually deposit their dung in the *kraals* of their respective owners rather than in the fields where they have grazed, so poorer farmers do not gain from the grazing. The livestock destroy trees by browsing the leaves or physically trampling over the plants. This has been a major discouragement to tree-planting and the widespread adoption of fertilizer tree fallows. These problems are not restricted to fertilizer tree fallows alone but also affect other sustainable practices for soil fertility management like conservation farming, because the maize stover is often grazed by free-ranging animals or destroyed by fire.

Respecting customary institutions

ICRAF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, World Vision International and other NGOs

promoting agroforestry technologies in Zambia, joined forces to form the Consultative Workshop on Agroforestry. In 1996, two meetings were held to share information on the state of improved fallows among partners and discuss approaches through which local communities could be involved in enabling the adoption of the technology. During these meetings, the threats posed by fires and uncontrolled grazing practices were highlighted and discussions focused on what could be done to reduce the threats. One suggestion made was to involve the customary chiefs who have traditionally used their authority to ensure social conformity in the area. Although the powers of the traditional authorities have changed compared to the pre-independence era, chiefs are still much respected and do hold sufficient powers to enact by-laws and appropriate sanctions through the traditional hierarchy of leadership. Two major traditional authorities were identified in eastern Zambia, being the matrilineal system for the *Chewa* ethnic group and patrilineal system practiced by the *Angonis*. In each of the two systems, the highest level of authority is the paramount chief. Below him – this function is always held by a man – are the senior chiefs, each of whom is in charge of a group of chiefs. Next in rank to the chiefs are the headmen, who are individually responsible for the welfare and administration of a single village. Chiefs, senior chiefs and paramount chiefs hold and preside over court sessions related to issues concerning the traditional affairs and people within their respective domains. They are assisted by a council called *indunas*, made up of selected representatives of the various communities under the jurisdiction of a chief. The *indunas* serve as advisers to the chief on administrative matters and are the spokespersons of the chiefs in their respective communities.

This local administrative setup was considered to be a good entry point for policy interventions regarding fire and uncontrolled grazing. The two paramount chiefs and their senior chiefs were approached, with the aim of showing them the existing and potential benefits of agroforestry. Such efforts included open forums for exchange of ideas as well as field tours during which the chiefs could observe the performance of maize, the staple food in the region, under improved fallow, and discuss with local farmers about their experiences with this technology. The result of the series of meetings, coupled with what the chiefs saw and heard regarding the performance of fertilizer tree fallows, was that in 1997 new rules were created by the chiefs for their respective ethnic groups. This was done in consultation with the *indunas* who were also responsible for informing their communities, chiefs and village headmen about the provision of the new rules. The by-law on grazing requires livestock owners to herd their animals during the dry season to minimize damage to other farmers' fields. The by-law on the use of fire prohibits indiscriminate setting of bush on fire during the dry season to avoid accidental or deliberate burning of trees and maize stover in fellow farmers' fields.

Impact of by-laws

An evaluation carried out in 2001/2002 showed that five years after the introduction of the new by-laws, there is a reduction in the two constraints mentioned above, particularly in problems associated with free grazing. The evaluation highlighted three issues: the need for increased awareness about the by-laws; taking the economic interests of a broader range of stakeholders, particularly livestock owners, into consideration in the implementation of the by-laws; and continued policy dialogue with the chiefs to provide feedback on how the by-laws are working. Farmers who practice improved fallows are very

pleased with the by-laws, but livestock owners regard the by-law on grazing to be unfavourable because it restricts the animals and requires extra labour for herding the animals during the dry season. An immediate reaction to the findings has been to increase the range of fodder producing tree species in the improved fallows, so that the competition for feed by livestock during the dry season is reduced. These trees could also ensure that economic interests of livestock owners are well taken care of; this is very important because they often influence the implementation and effectiveness of the by-laws on the ground through their wealth and social status.

In addition to the evaluation, policy dialogues were held in the communities, to achieve a consensus on the implementation of the by-laws and to enhance adoption of improved fallows. Various stakeholders participated, including traditional chiefs, village headmen, research and development organizations, farmers who practice improved fallow and those who do not, teachers and area councillors. Highlights of the evaluation were shared during four village policy dialogues and a provincial level policy dialogue in the years 2002 and 2003, and ways to deal with the problem of livestock browsing and fire were agreed upon (see Box). Some of the actions suggested by village communities have been carried out, as well as some actions requiring external assistance. Formal documentation of the by-laws is still a challenge because the high level of

Initiatives identified during policy dialogues to minimize fire and grazing

Actions that should be carried out by the village communities themselves

- Regular meetings to be convened by the headmen for group discussions
- Convene regular group discussions involving local community, tree-planting farmers and non-planters through the headmen to monitor agreements reached during the policy dialogues
- Embark on farmer-to-farmer visits in each village to share ideas
- Agroforestry farmers to make fire breaks in their fields
- All farmers to educate their children about the dangers of fires
- Livestock farmers to start animal herding for those who have not yet been doing so
- Initiate committees comprising agroforestry and livestock farmers to monitor progress on the implementation of the bylaws

Actions requiring assistance from outside the farm communities

- Government backing of the by-laws through a formal enactment
- Government should work closely with schools so that the pupils learn about the dangers of fire and the importance of agroforestry to the community
- Government and local leaders should sensitize and teach the people through mass media about the bylaws
- By-laws should be formally documented, issued by the chiefs and distributed to village headmen
- Agricultural institutions to provide appropriate fodder plants to livestock farmers
- Encourage farmer study tours to see how livestock and trees co-habit in other areas
- Publicize the by-laws through radio and other mass media

illiteracy among farmers may make it difficult for many of them to read the documents themselves.

Lessons learnt

Several lessons have been learnt during the development and implementation of by-laws, including that:

- an existing traditional structure can serve as an entry point for policy intervention;
- collaborative efforts of several partners, such as technology developers, NGOs interested in promoting sustainable agriculture practices and government agricultural organizations, ensured that issues on agroforestry came from multiple voices and helped to strengthen the case for the by-laws;
- continuous review of how the new by-laws function is important, as is the willingness to modify them when required;
- there should be a readiness to build consensus (as far as possible) among different stakeholders within the community that is affected by the by-laws.

These experiences show that existing local policy and institutional arrangements will affect the adoption rate of a technology. The distribution of the benefits (or costs) associated with the technology will vary amongst the various social groups within communities. The evaluation study and related experiences demonstrate the importance of policy dialogues among stakeholders and how the development of appropriate local institutions has the potential to be combined with formal national policies to enhance the adoption of improved fallows and other soil fertility management options in Zambia.

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Policy development in the organic movement

Roberto Ugás

IFOAM, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, is the world's leading body in organic agriculture, with more than 700 member organizations from over 100 countries. Almost half of its members come from the so-called developing world, including many NGOs, farmers groups, local certification bodies or small businesses. The General Assembly is the highest body of the federation, but, due to its international nature, most decisions, policies and procedures are decided by the World Board, which is elected every three years during the General Assembly.

Decisions made within IFOAM have a direct impact on the way organic agriculture is practised around the world and on how national and international policies are developed and implemented. A clear example comes from its Basic Standards for Organic Agriculture and Processing, which for more than 30 years have been the basis for the development of organic regulations worldwide, or from its Criteria for Organic Certification Bodies, which regulate the way accredited certification bodies operate and are a reference for all competent authorities worldwide. IFOAM's Accreditation Programme is implemented by the International Organic Accreditation Service: of particular importance for small farmers was IFOAM's pioneering acceptance and regulation of the certification of smallholder groups, in order to improve their access to national and international markets of certified organic products. Among other IFOAM activities with direct impact worldwide are the joint FAO-UNCTAD-IFOAM task force on harmonisation and equivalence in organic agriculture; the initiative to build closer links between certified organic agriculture, fair trade and social accountability; the organization of an international meeting on organic seed in July 2004; and the long but successful fight, together with organizations from India and Europe, against a case of flagrant biopiracy involving the neem tree (see Box 1).

IFOAM is a democratic organisation and several key decisions are taken in the General Assembly, where the World Board and IFOAM staff are subject to direct scrutiny from the membership. Several months before the General Assembly, the head office in Bonn, Germany, prepares and compiles documentation relevant to decisions to be taken there, in coordination with several committees and groups that rely on members' voluntary work. These may deal with modifications of the norms (standards and criteria), changes in the statutes or policies, motions and recommendations from the members, election of a new World Board or totally new work items. The most recent General Assembly took place in Adelaide, Australia, in September 2005 and the following are some of the author's impressions on a few issues that generated considerable debate before and during the General Assembly. These issues illustrate the dynamics within a large international organisation, as well as the difficult task of ensuring democratic decision-making and efficiency while at the same time, bringing practice into policy.

Principles of organic agriculture

An essential point on the agenda of the General Assembly, and the one that brought most intense discussion, was the revision

and approval of the Principles of Organic Agriculture, which should be the basis of all IFOAM's work. An intense, participatory two-year process was followed, involving the establishment of a task force and close consultation with the membership via internet and email. At the end of the day, the IFOAM General Assembly approved the revised Principles of Organic Agriculture. These principles are to inspire the organic movement in its full diversity, and to articulate the meaning of organic agriculture to the world at large. They are "the roots from which organic agriculture grows and develops", and according to IFOAM's president, they should also be recognized as a foundation for public regulations.

Box 1. EU Patent Office revokes "biopiracy" patent on fungicide derived from neem tree seeds

The neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) is indigenous to the Indian subcontinent. It is mentioned in Indian texts written over 2000 years ago and has been used for centuries in agriculture as an insect and pest repellent, in human and veterinary medicine, toiletries and cosmetics. India has always freely shared its tree and knowledge of its many uses with the world community. Still there have been many attempts, of which some successful, to patent this resource. The neem patents are generating large sums of money for their 'owners' while the communities which first understood neem's uses will not be compensated at all.

In March 2005 however, a landmark victory was won in the world's first case against biopiracy, when the European Patent Office upheld a decision to revoke in its entirety a patent on a fungicidal product derived from neem seeds. The legal challenge lasted over ten years and was led by Dr. Vandana Shiva (on behalf of the Research Foundation for Science Technology and Natural Resource Policy, India), Magda Aelvoet (then President of the Greens in the European Parliament) and Linda Bullard (then Vice-President of IFOAM). The neem patent challenge was initiated in solidarity with the Neem Campaign of India, launched in 1993 by farmers in India who feared that their genetic resources and traditional knowledge were increasingly under foreign control through the legal mechanism of patents. Just after the ruling, Magda Aelvoet said "...it is a victory for traditional knowledge and practices....it is a victory for solidarity with the people of developing countries who definitively earned the sovereign rights to their natural resources and with our colleagues in the NGOs who fought with us against this patent for the last ten years. It can also inspire and help people from developing countries who suffer the same kind of theft but did not think it was possible to combat it."

Summarized from IFOAM's website.

Guarantee systems

Another hot issue during the General Assembly was the revision of IFOAM's Organic Guarantee System. While it is clear that this Organic Guarantee System is the world's leading system for organic standard-setting and accreditation, a lot of certified organic trade worldwide still occurs out of its influence. The discussion here dealt with fundamental issues, since IFOAM's mission statement mentions that its role is to lead and

unite. In the end, the majority of those present at the Assembly decided that although “to lead and unite” are highly relevant goals, all efforts need to guarantee the integrity of organic production and markets. The work of a special taskforce on participatory guarantee systems was also discussed. Such systems involve farmers and consumers, in order to guarantee the credibility of organic produce, which is crucial to local and alternative marketing approaches.

Regional groups

As a large and diverse organisation, IFOAM cannot rely solely on a centralised structure and so it was recommended to develop improved mechanisms of coordination and support with its regional groups and initiatives. This does not mean that a federal structure for decision-making is desired but rather that working through regional groups may be a better way to bring the federation more in touch with the remote regions. It is obvious, however, that regional groups can only be useful if the regional members participate in its activities and discussions.

Social justice

Before the General Assembly, several worldwide organisations organised a meeting to discuss issues related to social justice in organic agriculture. While some within IFOAM still consider that organic agriculture and social justice (at least from the normative point of view) are unrelated notions, to many others, organic agriculture needs to strive for social justice in order to be sustainable. The Assembly approved a recommendation urging all certification bodies that are members of IFOAM to implement Chapter 8 of its Basic Standards (which deals with social justice) and to ask IFOAM to better integrate all its work related to social justice in organic agriculture.



Photo: IFOAM

Delegates at IFOAM's General Assembly cast their votes.

Box 2. The approved Principles of Organic Agriculture

- Principle of Health - Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible.
- Principle of Ecology - Organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them.
- Principle of Fairness - Organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.
- Principle of Care - Organic agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

Is it worth all the energy?

Many stakeholders in the South might still think that IFOAM is a “white man’s club” or that it is dominated by traders and certifiers from the North, rendering its decisions and discussions not relevant for small farmers in the South. However, if we want to shape the world in a different way we need to participate actively, expressing disapproval of the current globalisation that pushes for a homogeneous world that is easy to manipulate, and fighting for an ecological globalisation, which requires minds free from prejudice and which celebrates diversity. IFOAM still has a long way to go in order to be more relevant for the countries of the South, but many steps have already been taken. Still, it cannot solve the immoral imbalances between rich and poor alone. IFOAM needs to become a more and more powerful tool for change and this can only be done if all those involved commit themselves. There is no democracy and no development without participation.

The challenge is enormous and with many difficulties, but this in no way should prevent everybody from shaping IFOAM and the organic world at large into a system that not only can provide wealthy consumers with quality products, but which also helps small farmers to survive and contribute to eradicate rural poverty. For that, better linkages and stronger commitment are needed at all levels.

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For more information on IFOAM: <http://www.ifoam.org>. The final version of the Principles of Organic Agriculture can be found here under “Organic Facts” and the work of IFOAM's Task Force on Participatory Guarantee Systems as Standards and Certification under “About IFOAM”.



Photo: A. Cartley

Villagers gain professional experience by working together with vets and NGO personnel.

Changing animal health policies

William Wolmer and Ian Scoones

Globally, livestock contribute to the livelihoods of approximately 70 percent of the world's poor. In Africa livestock are vital for poor households, and predictions of future global demand for livestock products indicate considerable opportunities for African producers, particularly through exports to parts of Asia. This presents a major opportunity for livestock-driven poverty reduction activities in Africa. Increased demand for livestock commodities in growing urban and peri-urban areas could provide markets for small-scale producers, and consequently increase their incomes.

Many of the emerging challenges in livestock production are not technical, but are found in the complex area of policies and institutions. Many past investments in livestock and animal health, dominated by a "technical-fix" approach, have not worked out. The challenge now is to develop the capacity of African governments and stakeholders to meet the new policy and institutional challenges across a range of scales, from national to regional to international settings. A strategic player in this effort will be the African Union.

The Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR) is a technical branch of the African Union's Directorate of Rural Economy and Agriculture, and has been operational for over 50 years. Building on the extensive field level experiences of others, particularly in the non-government sector from the 1980s and 1990s, IBAR's Community-based Animal Health and Participatory Epidemiology (CAPE) programme has been working in the Horn of Africa and East Africa regions to improve policy and institutional arrangements with government and global partners. One of the successes of this programme has been to create an enabling environment for understanding and changing policies and institutions in ways that benefit poorer livestock producers. The two following examples highlight how the programme has prompted and provided technical direction to

change both national policies and the international standards on veterinary services to recognise, for the first time, the role of privatised veterinary para-professionals as appropriate service providers in rural areas.

Community-based animal health workers

In countries such as Ethiopia, conventional animal health care services were often lacking for many reasons, including lack of infrastructure and funding. This had negative impacts on livestock production and pastoral livelihoods and contributed to the emergence of an illicit trade in veterinary drugs. In the late 1980s, new ideas for the delivery of animal health services in remote pastoral areas of Africa started to emerge. These built on the extensive experiences in a range of countries of field-based projects, often run by NGOs.

Community-based animal health workers are trained to recognize and treat (or prevent) common and predictable local animal diseases on a fee-for-service basis. This practical approach to delivering animal health services has a history of strong resistance from the veterinary profession. Another area of controversy has been the notion that for community-based animal health workers to be financially sustainable they must be "privatised". This has been perceived by some NGOs as contrary to the charitable nature of their work. But community-based animal health workers have been successful: in 1994, twenty community-based animal health workers achieved 84 percent vaccination efficiency of cattle, compared with 72 percent vaccination efficiency of Ethiopian government teams. This contribution played a major role in Ethiopia being able to declare provisional freedom from rinderpest. Following this experience, many people in Ethiopia were trained as community-based animal health workers by a wide range of bodies, and increasing numbers of vets working with NGOs gained professional field experience working alongside these animal health workers: a critical mass began to form.

The CAPE programme has had a very high level of influence within the Ethiopian government in promoting these ideas, helped by the support of key individuals such as Dr. Berhanu Admassu, former government veterinarian, and president of the Ethiopian Veterinary Association. Other important lobbying techniques included making presentations to the Ministry of Agriculture, demonstrating the effectiveness of community-based animal health workers, taking policy makers to the field and holding conferences and workshops. For example, a workshop on animal health and pastoralist livelihoods organised for Federal Members of Parliament resulted in these MPs regularly following up community animal health issues in Parliament. Similarly, in 2003, sceptical Ethiopian policy makers from three regional states were taken on a study tour to Zambia to see privatised livestock services in action. They all agreed that the tour had provided “enormous lessons” and a commitment to formulate a comprehensive veterinary privatisation strategy for Ethiopia.

This mainstreaming of community animal health has been aided by CAPE’s parallel strategy of targeting influential veterinary journals to publish research on community-based animal health care. This was complemented by the production of a widely distributed book on the subject, and extensive popular materials such as policy briefing notes and how-to-do-it videos.

Towards institutionalisation

With large numbers of people being trained as community-based animal health workers, it became apparent that better coordination was needed to address the very varied curricula and lengths of training, inadequate supervision and other difficulties arising. This was often a donor-driven rather than a community-based process. To share experiences and harmonise policies, the CAPE programme supported the 2003 workshop on “Integrating Community-Based Animal Health Services into the existing animal health delivery in Ethiopia”. This brought together a wide range of community animal health practitioners from NGOs, the federal Ethiopian parliamentary Pastoral Standing Committee, the professional veterinary association and many others. An action plan was produced that led to the endorsement of community-based animal health workers as fourth layer of service provider in Ethiopia. This recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture, IBAR and FAO together draft national minimum guidelines for community animal health services.

Central to the process of policy-making has been to enable linkages between field experiences and policy-makers, through impact assessments and training events. The CAPE programme has been involved in establishing a national impact assessment team with representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, the veterinary faculty, the national animal health research institute, NGOs and the private sector. This team, which reports directly to policy-makers, has proved to be a useful way of linking communities with influential professionals, for example bringing veterinary professionals in the NGO, state, research and education sectors together to share experiences. It has also allowed for senior officials to have more contact with the realities in remote and often harsh environments in the field. One of the first participatory impact assessments of the programme was reported back to the Ethiopian Veterinary Association conference and was influential in changing the minds of many sceptics.

A Community Animal Health Coordination Unit has now been established in the federal Ministry of Agriculture, paid for by the federal government. This is an important achievement as

it marks the handing over of ownership of the community animal health agenda to the ministry. For the first time there is a unit in the central government for the quality control and harmonisation of community-based animal health workers. In collaboration with the CAPE programme, the unit has now agreed on national minimum standards for community-based animal health workers. The Veterinary Services Team, in the newly established Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, was upgraded to departmental level in early 2004. IBAR was approached by the new ministry to assist them to review and define the core functions of government veterinary services. Furthermore, they were asked to develop a structure at federal, regional and district levels that better supports national-level disease control, international trade and privatised services. With this formal recognition of the centrality of community animal health systems in the new restructuring of veterinary services in the country, a decade of experience had come to fruition in an institutionalised new policy, owned by the government.

There are now around 1500 government- and NGO-trained community-based animal health workers in Ethiopia. Despite improved communication and collaboration, significant policy and institutional challenges remain. And, as Ethiopia’s privatised system of community-based animal healthcare becomes more established, there will also be questions of affordability for poorer users, the need to identify who is excluded, and how to reach them.

Changing global standards

Under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement of the World Trade Organisation, the World Animal Health Organisation (*Office International des Epizooties*, OIE) is responsible for setting global standards on animal health. The OIE, established in 1926 and based in Paris, sets the benchmark against which the quality and effectiveness of a veterinary service is judged internationally. This has important implications for trade, as importing countries require OIE standards to be met.

The move towards accepting community animal health approaches by a growing number of African countries raised the question as to whether such para-professionals would be acceptable under the OIE Code. The OIE represents a global focal point of the mainstream veterinary profession, so discussions about changing standards for acceptable veterinary practice made for a challenging engagement. Until recently, the OIE Code was assumed to rule out the recognition of para-professionals. At an OIE meeting, a paper was presented to Chief Veterinary Officers, scientists and policy-makers, showing how community-based animal health workers “can complement public sector veterinary activities and also help to develop private sector veterinary services under professional supervision”, and thus help to achieve the OIE standards: the promotion of trade in a safe and transparent manner. These arguments were well received and opened peoples’ eyes to the fact that community-based animal health workers are not the threat they were often made out to be; indeed, they even may be an opportunity. This proved to be an effective means by which an agenda emerged, with a view to convincing the OIE. CAPE programme staff reasoned that veterinary policy-makers were more likely to be influenced by each other and the international standard setting body than by researchers and NGOs, and therefore brought together the OIE, FAO and senior veterinary policy-makers from around the world to discuss policy and institutional constraints to primary animal healthcare. The Primary Animal Healthcare conference, held in Mombasa, Kenya in 2002, was attended by 120 delegates, a

What has worked and why in influencing policy and changing institutions?

Telling persuasive stories

Some policy “stories” are rooted in particular institutional structures. These are difficult to change and can drastically limit thinking. In the Ethiopian example, the assumption that the only legitimate form of expertise is a qualified veterinarian, was challenged. But it is not enough to criticize the conventional wisdoms: alternative storylines must be presented, for example that community-based animal health workers can offer the opportunity for improved disease surveillance and control. A simple personalised story, with clear implications for how things need to change, is ideal material for briefings with officials or presentations in key forums.

Building networks and encouraging champions of change

It is one thing to come up with a convincing story, but convincing others that this is the right idea is more challenging. Being effective in policy change means understanding where power lies at the global, national and local levels, and tracing the connections between them. With this knowledge it is much easier to target the right people, in the right places and at the right time. For example, in pushing for the acceptance of community-based animal health workers in Ethiopia, the trip to Zambia by Ethiopian policy-makers was an important turning point. Building and linking networks is a key part of policy change. New ideas gain ground when there is strong backing. Without support and advocacy, even brilliant new ideas may sink without a trace.

Coordination, facilitation and networking

Bringing diverse groups together – as part of workshops, conferences, impact assessments or field visits – and sharing ideas among them has been a key activity. But this has not been networking for networking’s sake. There have been strategic objectives and outcomes in mind. They are specific enough to generate enthusiasm, commitment and possibilities for change.

Learning by seeing

Getting senior professionals out to the field to interact with remote pastoralist communities - sometimes for the first time - gave them direct experience of the isolation, limited facilities and, in some areas, insecurity

of these regions. According to one staff member “of the various methods used by the project, simply putting policy makers face-to-face with livestock keepers was probably the most influential in changing mindsets and thus influencing policy change”. Having access to a range of field experiences, which demonstrated that alternative ideas actually worked in practice, was vital.

Convening key events – workshops and conferences

Well planned workshops have been successful, where policy makers could consider the issues for themselves, but in a directed way to find out for themselves what needed to be done. By learning from each other, resolutions had more force, through being generated and owned by the participants. The event was not just to share information, but centrally part of building networks around new ideas. Follow-up is often as important as the event itself. A key requirement is making sure that people are kept in touch and feel involved afterwards. As a result, they feel part of the success of the workshop and so have a shared responsibility for conveying its message.

Well-targeted communications strategy

A sophisticated communications strategy is vital to support policy change work. Different audiences require different outputs in different formats. The programme team has produced a range of outputs in a range of different media, from strategic publication in key academic and professional journals, to short briefing papers, consultancy reports and books.

Opportunism and serendipity

Sometimes all the best laid plans go wrong; sometimes new, wholly unexpected, opportunities arise; sometimes spontaneous, seemingly unconnected, actions or groups come together. Opportunism and serendipity are thus key aspects of any strategy. They are difficult to fit into fixed, formal plans or log-frames, while administrators are often fearful of such apparent randomness and donors are often reluctant to play along. It is useful to have a talent for seizing particular policy moments or windows of opportunity as they arise, to get policy messages on the agenda and argue for policy reform.

gathering which had the authority to come out with a statement that would really carry weight. Crucially, the conference recommendations included a call to the OIE to define the functions and responsibilities of private veterinarians and para-professionals (including community-based animal health workers), and clarify the roles, links and regulations required to incorporate them into the structure of national veterinary services.

The OIE acted quickly on the recommendation, and in February 2003 a working group was set up. This OIE *ad hoc* committee officially accepted, for the first time, community-based animal health workers as one type of veterinary para-professional. The committee recommended changes to the OIE Code so that, within each member country, a veterinary statutory body should be responsible for the licensing and registration of veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals. In May 2004, member states at the OIE General Assembly endorsed the changes to the OIE Code to recognise veterinary para-professionals, thereby creating new global standards to support community-based animal health workers.

The Mombasa conference was a critical moment in scaling-up these issues to the global policy arena and getting acceptance from an international organisation historically suspicious of community-based approaches. By extension, this is and will be a powerful means of influencing national Chief Veterinary Officers from above. Within two years of the Mombasa conference, global standards had changed to recognise community-based approaches – a significant success.

Policy issues are increasingly important

Many talk about the need for policy change in the livestock sector, but few actually know how to do it. A technically-driven approach, with specialist veterinary or livestock production expertise, is no longer enough. Issues as far ranging as international trade, marketing, service delivery, private sector involvement, standards and certification, all affect the day-to-day issues which occupy veterinary department officials in Africa. No longer is the life of a vet only concerned with technical issues: policy and institutional issues are increasingly central. There has been a general recognition that policy change is both technical and political, that it requires processes of change that bring ideas and people together around positions, and that there needs to be a link between field experience and wider change. Substantial investments in capacity building will be needed, as being confident in how to influence policy, at national and international levels, is not straightforward, and needs to be a hands-on, experience-led, practical approach. The opportunity to engage with policy processes is often limited, and the challenges are great, but the potential impacts can be significant. ■

William Wolmer and **Ian Scoones** are members of the Environment Group at the Institute of Development Studies based at the University of Sussex in the U.K.

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For more information, contact the Institutional and Policy Support Team (IPST). African Union / Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, P.O. Box 30786, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya. <http://www.cape-ibar.org/>

Working together for pesticide control

Silvana Buján

The province of Buenos Aires, especially the coastal areas in the south east, is generally considered to be Argentina's most productive agricultural region. Soils are particularly fertile, and fruits and vegetables grown for external markets produce very high yields, making this one of the country's top sources of income. But these yields are also the result of high doses of pesticides and other external inputs, a situation recognized by many as extremely risky. As a local study revealed, environmental and health dangers are very high, because:

- practically all pesticides, including those of restricted use, are easily available;
- farmers have little knowledge regarding their use, or what to do in case of severe intoxication;
- there is virtually no control of the residues left or of the impact these products have, either in the soil or in the fruits and vegetables which are sold.

Passed many years ago, Law 10.699 was intended to regulate the use of pesticides in the province, but it is rarely followed by traders or farmers. As local governments lack the resources and personnel to enforce it, it is commonly known as "the impossible law", and the general situation has only worsened since it was passed.

BIOS, a non-governmental organization working on ecological issues, has been working in the region since 1990. Its main objective is to improve the policies which relate to the general well-being of the population. During the last few years it has organized many events, seminars and courses for the general public, and currently it also gives advice to research institutes and to public and non-governmental organizations. For more than eight years it has run a local radio programme, presenting local and also national and global issues. Working together with other organizations, it regularly campaigns for specific issues, with press releases which highlight a given situation. Through journalists and the media, it tries to reach those living in the urban as well as in the rural areas of the province.

Joint discussion and analysis

Recognizing the many problems which result from the excessive use of pesticides, BIOS organized an open workshop in the municipality of General Pueyrredón and invited all stakeholders to attend. The participants included the local authorities and also representatives of the provincial government, together with lecturers at the local university, local businessmen, farmers and leaders of farmer cooperatives. In a five-hour meeting, BIOS showed and analysed the difficulties and risks resulting from intensive conventional agriculture, and the problems which the excessive use of pesticides causes to soils and plants. In an open discussion, all participants considered the need for greater control and the importance of doing something with "the impossible law".

This meeting, and the information presented thereafter in the media, was very successful in generating awareness. Three months later, at the end of August 2005, BIOS organized a second meeting, inviting the same people and this time also the director of the local hospital. With a full house again, the discussion centred on the risks and dangers which pesticides present for human health, and on the problems arising from the use of restricted and forbidden substances. Both meetings generated a lot of interest from the local press, reflecting the interest of farmers and

consumers, and also a growing interest from the authorities. It was clear that this was not just any topic, but one of such importance that "when it comes into your house, it settles there".

All stakeholders met again only two weeks later, when the local council presented a common action plan resulting from a proposal drafted earlier by BIOS. Through concerted initiatives, this plan expects the local authorities and the ministry of agriculture of the province of Buenos Aires to join efforts in monitoring the distribution, sales and use of pesticides, together with a thorough control of the residues. No new legislation has been approved, but this agreement will help enforce Law 10.699, providing the necessary personnel and resources to ensure that the use of pesticides follows the provisions established in it. The agreement includes the training of local officials, and allows the imposition of fines.



Photo: BIOS

Stakeholders listen to the opinions of the participants during the meeting organized by BIOS.

Positive results

The commitment expressed by the main stakeholders still needs to turn into specific action. Nevertheless, some positive results can already be seen in the organization of the meetings themselves and in the facts that all relevant stakeholders attended, that different perspectives were heard and that an action plan was agreed upon by all. Equally positive and effective has been the role of the media, highlighting an issue of direct concern to the whole province, getting the attention of individuals and institutions, and contributing to an awareness campaign that effectively reached the authorities.

At the moment, there is a shared interest in controlling the use of pesticides, and all actors expect specific actions to be taken. For BIOS, work has just begun, as its chief objective is to reduce the use of pesticides throughout the province. Thus its main interest is in working with farmers and representatives of farmer cooperatives, analysing the problem from their perspective and discussing better alternatives for farming. BIOS hopes that farmers will reduce their use of pesticides, not only as they may otherwise be fined, but rather because they see that it is possible to achieve high yields in a sustainable way without the use of large doses of external inputs. It is therefore planning to monitor the enforcement of Law 10.699 and to continue generating awareness on the importance of its enforcement, but at the same time work with farmers in the promotion and development of an alternative agriculture.

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The emergence of a faculty of organic agricultural sciences

Holger Mittelstrass

The city of Witzenhausen, in the central German state of Hessen, has a long tradition in agricultural education. A school for tropical and subtropical agriculture was founded there back in 1898, oriented at training agricultural experts for the German colonies. Since 1971, the city has hosted the Faculty of Agronomy, International Rural Development and Environmental Protection, which is part of the University of Kassel. Since 1995, the whole faculty has shifted from conventional to organic agriculture, renaming itself the Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences. Today it includes 20 professorships dealing with research and education in organic farming, with no more conventional agriculture activities: a unique situation in the whole world.

A changing situation

During the last 50 years, German agriculture has seen drastic changes. Nationally, the amount spent on food decreased from 50 to 15 percent of the average family income between 1950 and 1995, while the EU budget for agriculture increased from 20 to 40 thousand million euros between 1975 and 1995. At the same time, approximately 60 percent of German farms closed their doors between 1950 and 1995. Agricultural land use, especially in less favourable regions, declined sharply, and only a very small percentage of the population remains employed in agriculture. Furthermore, as a result of intensive agricultural production methods, the country is currently witnessing serious environmental problems: increasing soil erosion, decreasing biodiversity, and water pollution with nitrates or pesticides. This development is not restricted to Germany or Europe, but represents a worldwide phenomenon. It is therefore no wonder that in the international debate the demand for a more sustainable development has gained more and more importance, at least since the Brundtland Commission and the UNCED-Conference 1992 in Rio, Brazil, where 178 head of states signed Agenda 21.

All over the world, as well as in Germany, there are many scientists who demand a shift in agricultural land use to a completely organic agriculture because of its environmental benefits or because of the possibilities it brings for creating rural employment. It is certainly a fact that in recent years organic farming, and with it the job market for organic agriculture specialists, has grown rapidly, stimulated by strong consumer demands and also by national and international policy initiatives. At the moment, the European Union agricultural policy offers member countries the possibility to support organic farming and marketing. Some countries like Denmark, Italy and Germany have therefore developed special action plans to support organic farming. For example, farmers get special subsidies for converting their farms to organic production. As a result, Germany has now almost 17 000 certified organic farms, cultivating 770 000 hectares or 4.5 percent of the country's agricultural land.

Changing the curricula

Witzenhausen is a unique example of a bottom-up process of curriculum development. During the 1970s, after the international oil crisis and different environmental scandals, a strong anti-nuclear and back-to-nature movement developed in Germany.

Although there were only about 400 organic farms in Germany at that time, agricultural students demanded lectures in organic agriculture. They held demonstrations within the faculty, the university's main offices and also before the Hessen Ministry of Higher Education. They wrote letters to many agricultural organizations asking for support, and organized meetings with faculty members and with the president of the university. Having sufficient resources available at the time, the University of Kassel reacted positively, giving the agricultural faculty an additional professorship in "Methods of Alternative Agriculture". This unique professorship started in 1981, providing optional subjects to students while there was also a research farm for organic farming. Soon afterwards, another professor specialized on organic animal husbandry was appointed.



Photo: Author

Analyzing the possibilities for organic farming on a field trip outside the university.

Because students still had to follow many compulsory subjects in conventional farming approaches, they called for a special course in organic farming to be included in the curricula. This led to many discussions within the faculty, until it was approved in 1993. Apart from its focus on organic agriculture, a new holistic learning and teaching concept was developed and tested for this course, and it became so popular that by 1996 the faculty introduced a whole study-course in organic agriculture, leading to a Bachelor of Science degree as well as a Master of Science degree. Agricultural education at the university became organic agricultural education, with a curriculum that included other teaching methods to be integrated with the lectures, such as multidisciplinary courses, compulsory practicals and work in project groups. In 2002, the faculty introduced a second Masters course, taught in English (International Ecological Agriculture) to meet the international demand for scientific based courses in organic agriculture, focusing on organic farming under tropical and subtropical conditions. As from 2006, the faculty will offer a third Masters course (International Food Business and Consumer Studies), also in English, thus covering the whole organic food chain.

General structure

A practical period of at least three months on a farm is one of the prerequisites for admission to the faculty. The Bachelors degree requires two years of basic natural sciences and

agricultural subjects. These are all structured as modules of 180 hours each, to be completed within one semester, something that allows students to follow one semester at another university. In total there are sixteen compulsory modules, all of them considering agroecological principles in different ways. Besides a specific module on ecology and agroecosystems, for example, modules which look at crop production focus on crop rotation or the use of organic manure, disregarding the use of pesticides or chemical fertilisers. Similarly, animal production modules emphasize appropriate animal housing, feeding and welfare over mass animal production. The course is structured in such a way that all students cover five thematic fields (ecology, plant, animal, economics, and social aspects) to promote an interdisciplinary perspective which truly reflects organic agriculture.

Following this period of basic studies, students have several options for further specialisation with seven optional modules. Their Bachelors examination consists of a two-month thesis, with specific research on a self-chosen theme, and an oral exam. Further on, after this first degree they can continue with either a Masters course taught in German, focusing on German and European agriculture, or a Masters course in English, focusing on international agriculture and rural development. Students need then to follow 12 modules in three semesters. The final examination requires a five-month thesis and an oral examination.

Learning objectives and methods

The main objective of the faculty is the development of site-specific solutions with minimal use of non-renewable resources, with special emphasis on the maintenance of nutrient cycles, a balanced relationship between productive and "non-productive" areas (natural landscape), and on the link between agricultural practice, the regional markets and rural development. Learning objectives for all courses include increasing scientific knowledge and practical skills, getting to know and use cycles in nature, and to think in an interdisciplinary way, to act responsibly, to exercise communicational, pedagogical and organisational skills, and to work scientifically.

New teaching and learning methods were introduced in order to meet all these objectives. For example, students have to present lectures and write scientific reports about special themes. They also have to organize and chair tutorial seminars with the support of a lecturer, write comprehensive minutes of seminars, or organize excursions or conferences dealing with special issues. It is expected that with these learning and teaching reforms the students not only achieve knowledge, but also other skills useful for their future working lives. Students are to work in a case-related, methodologically clear and discipline-specific manner, being marked for their teamwork abilities, their interdisciplinary thinking and their initiative in problem-solving.

During the last two semesters of the Bachelors course many students take part in a farm-conversion project. In this project, conventional farms of the region who are interested in organic farming agree to work together with a group of students for one year. They analyze their farms together and plan a realistic concept for the transition of the farm to organic farming.

Additionally, two special events take place in the middle of each semester: in summer there is a one-week excursion to another country to see how organic farming is practised there. The choice of the country to visit, the destination and the specific themes or topics to study are decided by the students them-

selves at the beginning of the winter semester. The whole excursion is organized and led by students. The same happens with a conference in the middle of the winter semester. At the beginning of the summer semester the students decide which theme they want to deal with. A group of about ten students prepare everything for the conference, including the funding. As with their participation elsewhere, the contribution of the students in these different projects also leads to marks.

Quality assessment

During the pilot project, from 1995 to 1999, the course was intensively evaluated. Surveys of incoming students showed that there was an increasing number of students with little agricultural or farming background (around 75 percent), which meant that more attention was needed for the practical aspects of agriculture. Discussions with the students and with different experts showed the need to focus on the development of competences for self-employment in organic agriculture. Different discussions on the labour market for organic agriculture identified the need for further technical skills and abilities besides knowledge. Later evaluations have shown that students appreciate the new learning methods and the skills they develop. Tracer studies showed that about one third of graduates continue a career in farming, while another third becomes active in various services like consulting, agricultural associations or control bodies. In total, more than 30 percent of all graduates are working directly in organic agriculture, as farmers, consultants or in marketing.

With its focus on organic agriculture, the University of Kassel and its Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences is unique. It is also unique in the way it develops this focus, involving students actively in all lectures and also in lecturing, in the organization of conferences and excursions, or by actively working together with organic farmers and with farmers who want to become organic. A regular exchange with representatives of the labour market for organic agriculture takes place, and many different training courses and field days on special issues are organized, thus strengthening the links between theory and practice. Following many requests from abroad, the faculty has also increased its international activities with partner universities all over the world, with common research and student exchange programs. This all leads to students acquiring a solid knowledge and a holistic view of agriculture, together with key social qualifications such as communication, organization and pedagogic skills. It also facilitates a continuous evolution in the university's perspectives and approaches towards agriculture. ■

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Towards a district policy for sustainable agriculture

Ambarwati D. Rahayu

Beginning around the middle of the nineteenth century, shifting cultivation in Java, Indonesia, was gradually replaced by intensive dryland farming. In 1865, a law was introduced by the Dutch Colonial Government, which declared all unclaimed land, including forest, as the domain of the state. In the 1920s, the government decided that at least one-fifth of the surface of Java had to remain under forest to preserve the natural hydrological system. In 1927, a new forestry law expanded the state domain to include many thousands of hectares of private lands, paddy fields and crop-estate land. By 1940, the Dutch Colonial Forestry Service had brought more than 3 million hectares of Java's land under its control. The legacy of this period and subsequent efforts to expand forest zone control, especially at the beginning of the Suharto regime (Basic Forestry Act, 1967), is that today nearly one quarter of the whole island of Java is designated as state forest area and under the control and management of the parastatal forestry corporation *Perum Perhutani*.



Sayuti Aniva, one of the members of KTM, has been a lead-trainer of district extension workers on sustainable agriculture.

As a result, rural communities everywhere on Java face serious land shortages for agricultural production. The population of this vast island has more than doubled, and if immigrants from other parts of the country are included, even trebled since the 1960s. This has increased the pressure on available land, not only for producing food but also for housing and business use. As often happens when the population passes a certain threshold, land for agriculture started to run short, and soil restoration mechanisms broke down. Decreasing soil productivity required farmers to use more fertilizer for their crops each year. The intensification of agricultural production also meant increased use of chemicals to curb problems with crop pests and diseases. Agriculture on Java became *sakit* (sick); food crop yields were declining, more

and more people fled the rural areas to look for economic opportunities in towns or abroad, while many local health problems were also attributed to rising poverty and the massive use of chemicals in crop production.

Towards more sustainable production

After the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, many activist NGOs were founded, including local development NGOs dealing with issues like the misuse of land and other natural resources on Java. One such NGO was *Peduli Indonesia* (meaning Care for Indonesia), which became actively involved in the struggle for a more healthy form of agriculture together with small local farmers in Mojokerto District on East Java. Staff of *Peduli Indonesia* worked together with farmer groups mostly on alternative, organic technologies for soil fertility improvement and maintenance, as well as on the development of substitutes for commercial pesticides. One of the farmer groups in the programme of *Peduli Indonesia* is *Kelompok Tani Muda* (KTM). As expressed in its name, this group consists of young male and female farmers who have been particularly active in the development of organic alternatives for pesticides and fertilizers. For this, the group utilizes their own simple field laboratory, a self-developed botanical garden, and also several experimental fields where different plants are tested for their suitability as organic pesticides or manures.

Lobbying the local administration

The founder and current director of *Peduli Indonesia*, Syafruddin Ngulma, turned out to be a skilful lobbyist. He has managed to approach and befriend the highest local government authority, the District Administrator (*Bupati*) of Mojokerto, and to inspire him to declare that "Mojokerto District will become the first sustainable agriculture district of Indonesia". The *Bupati*, Mr. H. Achmady, is now convinced that integrated organic agriculture will present a viable alternative to existing cropping practices and a promising answer for the ailing crop production in Mojokerto. This is not only because of the obvious ecological reasons: with the huge metropolis of Surabaya nearby, marketing of organic produce will not be a problem. In addition, other aspects of the livelihoods of local people, such as health and food sovereignty, are improved when organic production techniques are used. An ecological approach in Mojokerto District will also hopefully provide for some kind of a barrier against another emerging issue, namely the environmental pollution from industries in and around Surabaya.

In the mean time, the *Bupati* has also learned how current national and regional policies are favouring conventional agriculture and disadvantaging the further development of organic agriculture. Existing policies do not reflect the long-term social and environmental costs of resource use. These include serious soil erosion, landslides, pollution of ecosystems, and human health problems. Farmers and other land users are not penalized for this, nor are resource-conserving practices rewarded. Although certain economic instruments that were inappropriately used for a long time, such as subsidies on commercial fertilizers and other agricultural inputs, have already been abolished to a great extent, formal research and extension is still focused on conventional, high-input agriculture, while little or no information on sustainable agriculture is available to farmers.



Young farmer-experimenter monitors his rice crop.

Policy development

Convinced that a more conducive policy framework was required for the further development of more sustainable agricultural practices in Mojokerto District, the *Bupati* steered his staff towards developing a general policy on sustainable agricultural development. This policy is expected to establish the necessary framework for specific action while it also values the alternative aspirations of the population within the district.

Such a transition to a policy on sustainable agriculture is, however, a significant process involving many change actions and stakeholders. The executive authorities in Mojokerto District, headed by the *Bupati*, had to cross swords with the

legislative powers in the district parliament. It was clear from the beginning that a substantial portion of the members of parliament were not enthusiastic about the suggested changes in the agricultural outlook for the district. Common arguments brought forward were that without the use of fertilizers and pesticides, farming would not be economically profitable; low input would only mean low output. Another obvious reason was that suppliers of agricultural inputs would lose business.

Another factor that makes this process of policy formulation rather slow is the participatory manner in which it was done, involving community organizations as well as farmers during certain steps. Furthermore, district elections for *Bupati* were held earlier this year. After agreeing on a joint work budget, several workshops were organized by *Peduli Indonesia* and the district local authorities during 2005, which involved farmer representatives of all 18 sub-counties, academic experts on agriculture, politics, social and cultural issues, economics, law, human rights, health, environment and land use planning, and district officials from Mojokerto as well as NGO activists from three different organizations (*Peduli Indonesia*, WALHI and HUMA). These workshops yielded a plan of action for a committee that was formed and asked to investigate what regulations the farmers really needed. The findings of this committee were published and will be used in 2006 to draft a district policy, which will be discussed with farming communities. This process will be repeated, also providing chances for other stakeholders to give their suggestions and comments, until the final draft can be agreed upon. The resulting policy is expected to be approved that same year.

This process, which began in 2003, experienced some anxious moments when the elections for local administrative positions, including the post of *Bupati*, came nearer. It had been clear that the most crucial driving factor behind the whole legislative process to come to a general policy for sustainable agriculture

Good regulation but bad policing

The existing legislation that governs the use and approval of pesticides in Indonesia can be considered to be very good. It is based on a model employed by most western countries. The basis of this legislation is that prospective pesticides must be tested employing several environmental toxicity tests by the company submitting them for approval by the governments' Pesticides Committee. The Pesticides Committee then scrutinizes the results and decides whether to recommend that the product be approved for use.

Such an approvals system seems to be flawless. However, it has a major drawback. There is no monitoring programme to control the use of pesticides and, therefore, no way of checking that the government pesticides legislation is followed. Anyone can use anything with little fear of being caught and punished. The Indonesian government banned the use of DDT (except for the control of the malaria mosquito by government services) in the early 1980s, but it is still used by farmers, unaware that there is anything wrong with the use of this highly effective and cheap pesticide.

in Mojokerto District had been the persistent personal commitment of the incumbent *Bupati*. With another person in that seat after the elections, the whole process could have come to an end. However, Mr. Achmady was re-elected as *Bupati* with 88 percent of the votes in this district. This is rightfully seen as a huge support to the agricultural aspirations of the *Bupati* and his staff from all adult people in the district, including farmers.

Action continues

The formulation of a district policy for sustainable agriculture takes a lot of time because it involves many different stakeholders. The ongoing process of developing sustainable agriculture together with local farmers, however, deserves to proceed. The *Bupati* therefore also instructed the district extension services to reform their services while their staff would be trained to work with all agricultural options, to operate in a more multi-disciplinary fashion and to work more closely with farmers. After this directive by the *Bupati*, all field staff of the district extension services were trained by *Peduli Indonesia* and other organizations. Where *Peduli Indonesia* had been active with their programme in three sub-districts (*Kecamatan*), they increased their action now to all 18 *Kecamatan*. The training of field extension staff included workshops and field visits to farmers and groups of farmers who were already implementing alternative technologies. In particular, the young farmer group KTM was very helpful in providing many field examples of LEISA and its development.

Claiming community land

With the general outlook in Mojokerto District changing in favour of small farmers, the community of Sendi village, united as Forum Perjuangan Rakyat (FPR), had the courage to claim back and occupy government land that traditionally was considered property of this community. Many farmers from this village had been involved in the programme with *Peduli Indonesia* from its start. The positive experiences of these farmers with LEISA techniques encouraged them in their crop production activities, making them even more aware of the earlier mentioned problem of scarcity of agricultural land.

The villagers claimed the land under Indonesia's Agrarian Land Reform law, which says that landless people can claim unused land for farming. According to the local organizer of the land reclamation process, a strategic decision by the FPR was to insist that the main land use system for these 200 hectares should be integrated agriculture with strong agroforestry characteristics. All 50 farm families who started cropping on this land were required to use proper sustainable agriculture principles. According to the FPR and *Peduli Indonesia*, proper use of the land claimed by the community would be a strong method to convince the district parliament of the rightfulness of the claim of the farmers and come to legal recognition of their ownership. ■

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Call for articles

Issue 22.2 June 2006: Agriculture in transition

Many of the different agricultural systems practised today have one thing in common – they are under severe stress and are increasingly failing to meet the needs of the producers. The agricultural practices used no longer allow the soil and the natural resources to regenerate and the ecological processes which help provide sustainability have been disrupted. As a result, production is falling and the long term productivity is under threat – as are the livelihoods of the producers and the future food supply at large. Many farmers realize this and know that change is necessary.

Regaining ecological balance on the farm in most cases requires diversification and integration of crops and animals. However, to implement such a change, knowledge, labour as well as other resources may be required. To change from complete dependence on a single cash crop into a more diversified farming system or to change from conventional agriculture to organic production are examples of processes which can be lengthy and which often require intensive guidance as well as new knowledge. In this issue of the LEISA Magazine we would like to examine how farmers manage the transition process towards more sustainable farming systems and how they can be supported by

fellow farmers, outside organisations, or external incentives. We would also welcome examples of how institutions have changed in order to be able to support these processes better.

Deadline for submission of articles: 1 March 2006.

Issue 22.3 September 2006: Participatory Research and Development.

Participatory research and development theories and practices related to sustainable agriculture and natural resource management are constantly being updated and improved. A vast array of methods with changing focuses, objectives and names, have been promoted and used in the last twenty years, including participatory rural appraisal, participatory technology development, participatory learning and action and sustainable livelihoods approaches. The involvement of farmers in the research process is vital but not always straightforward. For this issue, we will review recent examples of innovation, adaptation and positive results. We also intend to look at how these methods and results can be integrated into the wider context. Please send us your experiences related to using participatory approaches in sustainable agricultural research and development.

Deadline for submission of articles: 1 June 2006.

Next issue: Documentation for change



Photo: Rik Thijsen

Presenting the case for new regulations in Sumbawa.

Village regulations support agroforestry

Peni Agustiyanto

One day in May 2002, Haji Adrus went to his fields near his house, in the Indonesian village Parado Wane, on Sumbawa Island, where he had planted hundreds of young fruit trees at the onset of the rains about five months earlier. To his shock, the 54 year-old farmer learned that more than 60 percent of his young fruit trees had been completely destroyed overnight by goats that had entered his field. All efforts by his family to intensify and develop a more permanent agricultural system, by introducing fruit trees on the farm land, had been in vain.

Goats are an important asset for people on Sumbawa. They contribute to local livelihoods in the form of food, especially at the time of religious festivities, and also in the form of cash savings. In Sumbawa's dryland areas, goats are the most suitable livestock species for the landless and small farmers who cannot maintain larger ruminants like cows. When Haji Adrus was a young man, goats were already important and kept by most families. In those days, goats were allowed to browse freely in the still plentiful bushland surrounding the village. But these days, due to a rapid increase in the local population, such feeding grounds for goats have become scarce. And the remaining bushland has suffered under the enormous increase in the number of goats. Now, most goats roam around during daylight while looking for something edible in and immediately around the village. Goats also attempt to break through the fences around farmer's fields, causing havoc when feed sources are in short supply in the dry season.

Discussing the new situation

Haji Adrus is the chairman of one of the farmer groups in his village. Since 2001, this group has been working on developing sustainable agricultural practices in their fields. Planting fruit trees was one of the project activities which Haji Adrus had started. He and his fellow group members wanted to increase the sources of cash income from their farms. By planting a considerable amount of different fruit trees, an extra income could be expected after 3-4 years, while fruit trees do not

demand a lot of extra care or costs after the first investment of obtaining seedlings and planting. This investment by Haji Adrus' family was now almost completely lost by free roaming goats. And the members of the farmer group all agreed that any of them could be the next victim of greedy goats, if nothing was done now. Within the group the issue of goat keeping was discussed and some alternative approaches for goat husbandry were suggested. During one of the next village meetings the conflict between goat keeping and crop production was brought up and suggestions were made to the village chief and other villagers about how the system could be improved.

Designing village by-laws

According to customary rules in Parado Wane, people can be held responsible for damage caused to others. It is, however, a tricky issue when the damage is caused by goats. How do you prove which goat or goats caused the damage, and therefore which goat owner should be held responsible? Everyone present in the village meeting agreed that goat keeping could not be banned since goats are a very important resource to families in the village. Therefore, it was felt that it was not just a matter of discussing a proper control system and how to carry out punishments in case of damage caused by goats. The villagers realized that it was more about changing the old practice in such a way that both crop production and goat rearing could be possible in the village, and in a harmonious way. It was suggested that both goat owners as well as owners of agricultural fields should make it more difficult for goats to enter other people's property. If that could be achieved, proper agreements could be made on how to deal with cases of serious damage caused by goats.

New situation

Today, almost all goats in Parado Wane carry a triangle made from wood or bamboo around their neck. This simple device stops the animals from getting through fences, while it also provides an opportunity for labelling the animals. At the same time, more and better fencing with different shrub species, including *gamal* (*Gliricidia sepium*) which is planted densely from long woody cuttings, is practised by farmers. Similarly, young trees of very palatable species get extra protection during the first years with a cordon of stakes around them.

This is the result of a village by-law on free roaming goats, established in 2003 in Parado Wane as well as in neighbouring Parado Rato. It states that goat owners are held responsible for damage caused by their animals in all cases where proper fencing is present; in such cases, damages have to be fully compensated or the animals in question – which can all be identified by their tags – becomes the property of the farmer who suffered the damage. This tough regulation is one of the reasons why all members of Haji Adrus' farmer group now keep their goats in a proper enclosure on their compounds during the cropping season, and feed their small livestock with *gamal*, *banut* grass (*Saccharum* sp.), maize or coconut flour. This practice also allows them to collect goat droppings and make good use of them as manure in their fields. ■

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Advocacy toolkit: Practical action in advocacy by G. Gordon, 2002, 80 pp. ISBN 1904364004, ROOTS resources 2. Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE, U.K. <http://www.tearfund.org>
Email: roots@tearfund.org

The advocacy toolkit consists of two parts. Part 1, "Understanding advocacy", answers the questions what is advocacy and why is advocacy important. Part 2, "Practical action in advocacy", is a manual for planning advocacy activity, whether large or small. It is a guide that can be worked through step by step to plan an advocacy strategy. The introduction gives an overview of the planning process; the following sections tackle each of five parts of the planning cycle in detail. This paper consists mainly of tools to help with planning, but there are also some exercises to help think through some of the issues. The toolkit is a publication of Tearfund, an evangelical Christian relief and development agency. More information and updates are to be found on the website.

People, policy, participation: making watershed management work in India

by F. Vania and B. Taneja, 2004, 143 pp. ISBN 1843695391. IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, U.K.
Email: info@iied.org

This publication examines the evolution of policy-making in natural resource management and the emphasis on community control over planning, implementation and management of projects in the specific context of watersheds. It traces the major trends in policy over the last decade in India.

The report indicates that policy alone is not enough to achieve a complex set of objectives on the ground. Local people have to be directly involved, trusted and enabled, their knowledge appreciated and their skills used, which is often an ability better demonstrated by NGOs than government. Based on a case study of five districts in the state of Andhra Pradesh and drawing on the wider experience of a number of government agencies, NGOs, researchers and donors the report adds to the growing understanding of the importance of policymaking that is inclusive, democratic, transparent and people centered.

Decentralisation in practice: power, livelihoods and cultural meaning in West Africa: workshop highlights 2004

2005 CD Rom, ISBN 1643695456. IIED, Dryland programme, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, U.K. Email: drylands@iied.org
Decentralisation offers opportunities for local people to have a say in the decisions that affect their everyday lives. But will this be realized? The international workshop on decentralisation in practice took place in Uppsala, Sweden in 2004. People from universities, policy research institutes and development organizations both in the Sahel and in Europe participated. The workshop demonstrated how the decentralisation processes in West Africa are essentially political, requiring major shifts in power relations between different actors at different levels. In addition, to understand these processes both a livelihoods and a cultural perspective are essential. The booklet presents the highlights of the event and the CD Rom contains the full text of the papers presented.

Sharing power: learning by doing in co-management of natural resources throughout the world

by G. Borrini-Feyerabend et. al., 2004, 456 pp ISBN 1843694441. IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, U.K. Email: info@iied.org
Co-managing natural resources is a process of collective understanding and action by local communities and other social actors. The process brings about negotiated agreements

on management roles, rights and responsibilities, making explicit the conditions of sound decentralized governance. Co-management is about sharing power. This book is designed to support professionals and others attempting to understand collaborative management processes and who are interested in supporting them in policy and practice. The relevant understanding and lessons learned are evolving, and the book is only a stepping stone.

It draws from a large variety of examples of co-management partnerships throughout the world. The book attempts to overview relevant experiences and concerns and, from those, it synthesizes some key co-management features, important steps in developing them and lessons learned regarding management institutions and the evolution of a favorable policy context. The volume aims to promote action and offers a practical menu of examples, considerations to learn from, tools and reminder checklists.

Towards a new map of Africa

by B. Wisner, C. Toulmin and R. Chitiga (eds.), 2005, 341 pp. ISBN 184407093X. Earthscan, London, U.K.

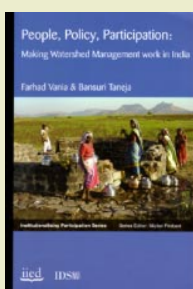
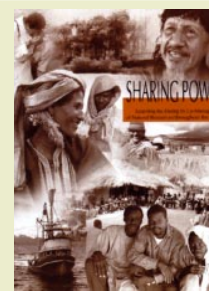
"Towards a new map of Africa" is the result of a project built on a partnership between Western and African writers and researchers, with an advisory group of distinguished Africans to help ground-truth the chapters and interpretation. This partnership should be a metaphor for the kind of solidarity possible within a vision of globalization from below, a vision within which African nations take their rightful place among the community of nations and African people control their own resources and fate. The book moves from human ecological realities of land, water, food and health through institutional questions that span economics and governance at several scales. Each of the contributions in these sections is critical but also highlights some progress and elements that, when combined, constitute an agenda for action. To encourage development of a new Africa, the book ends with putting together a short, schematic "agenda for action". This action will create a new map of Africa.

Seedling: biodiversity, rights and livelihood

ISSN 1002 5154, periodical from GRAIN, Genetic Resources Action International, Girona 25, pral, E-08010, Barcelona, Spain.
<http://www.grain.org/seedling> Email: seedling@grain.org

Seedling is GRAIN's quarterly magazine. It provides background articles, news, interviews and much more on the issues GRAIN is working on. This interesting periodical contributes to popular action against one of the most pervasive threats to world food security: genetic erosion. Genetic erosion means more than just the loss of genetic diversity. In essence it is an erosion of options for development. The loss of biological diversity destroys options for the future and robs people of a key resource base for survival. GRAIN is an

international NGO which promotes the sustainable management and use of agricultural biodiversity based on people's control over genetic resources and local knowledge. Seedling is available free of charge, both in paper format and on the website. To receive Seedling in paper format contact GRAIN at the above address.

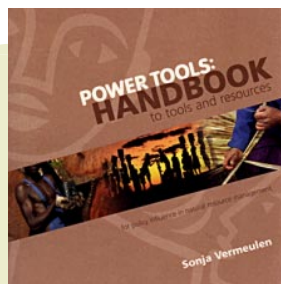
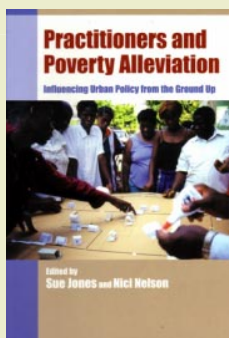


Practitioners and poverty alleviation: influencing urban policy from the ground up

by S. Jones and N. Nelson (eds.), 2005, 217 pp. ISBN 1853395706. ITDG Publishing, Bourton Hall, Bourton-on-Dunsmore, Rugby CV23 9QZ, U.K. Email: marketing@itpubs.org

The aim of this book is to give a voice to those working with urban poverty. Practitioners from Asia, Africa and Latin America have contributed their particular experiences of trying to influence or to be involved in policy making. The book is divided in two parts. The first part deals with the "bigger picture", especially with the issues of linkages within international bilateral agencies and creating and supporting networks of Southern NGOs. This is followed by a section of eight country case studies that look in detail at specific instances where practitioners in various types of organizations

and at various levels of the development process have dealt with the issue of influencing policy. A final section draws out some guidelines from this experience, giving pointers on how to capitalize on past successful linkages and to deal successfully with constraints and gaps. This book is meant for practitioners and policy makers in all poverty alleviation work, for donor agencies, NGOs, service providers, community groups, academics and students of development.



Power tools: handbook to tools and resources for policy influence in natural resource management

by S. Vermeulen, 2005, ISBN 1843695413. IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, U.K.

Website: <http://www.policy-powertools.org> Email: info@iied.org; iied@earthprint.com

Lots of people's lives involve day-to-day management of natural resources, yet many do not have the opportunity to contribute to the policies and institutions that govern their use of those same natural resources. This handbook shares a range of techniques, tactics and tips for understanding, organizing, engaging in and ensuring policy influence of practical value to marginalised communities in order to have a greater positive influence on policy. The 26 tool write-ups, available both as two-page summary cards and as full-length reports in the handbook, are based on experience from around the world. The handbook also recommends a series of websites and books that contain further useful tools for policy change. Tools are available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish from <http://www.earthprint.com>.

CTA - building capacity for information management

Policy makers, NGOs and smallholder communities need information for effective planning and decision making. For those involved in advocacy and lobby activities access to affordable, well prepared information is a first step to influencing policy successfully.

Weak documentation skills and the inability to systematically manage information – including digital material – deprive the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) community of much needed access to information and knowledge. It has been estimated that of all field data collected during monitoring and evaluation activities in Africa, for example, less than 50 percent is analyzed and made available to other users. CTA, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation, is concerned with improving the capacity of ACP countries to collect, analyse and deliver well-packaged and targeted information.

CTA training activities are designed for those working in agricultural and rural development. It organizes courses, prepares manuals and guides and supports internships for ACP nationals active in

government, research, farmers associations and civil society organizations.

Communication skills are just as important as access to the right sort of information. CTA's training activities aim to provide stakeholders in the agricultural sector with the skills and techniques they will need to increase public awareness, write reports, prepare scientific articles and presentations as well as develop project proposals, produce agricultural extension material and design websites appropriate for the needs of target users. It also supports courses in rural radio production.

In addition to its training course programme, CTA also helps to provide distance learning materials such as their IMARK modules. Produced in collaboration with FAO and other institutions, the IMARK series is a partnership-based learning initiative aimed at training individuals in the effective management of agricultural information. IMARK learning materials are being developed as a series of modules on CD-ROM, supplemented by an internet-based online com-

munity. This way a virtual discussion forum is provided for contributors and learners to exchange views, share information and request help from each other.

There is an overwhelming demand for capacity building services and CTA tries to ensure that those who participate in its activities commit themselves to sharing the skills they have learned with others when they return to their organizations or communities through follow-up action plans.

CTA works through many channels and media to meet the needs of rural stakeholders in ACP countries. Its web site in particular is the portal to extensive, well-documented and up to date information on agricultural and rural development issues.

Visit CTA's website (<http://www.cta.int>) and explore more about its capacity building activities.

RAPID Programme, Overseas Development Institute

<http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Index.html>

111 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JD, U.K.

ODI's Research and Policy in Development programme (RAPID) aims to improve the use of research and evidence in development policy and practice through research, advice and debate. The programme works on four main themes: the role of evidence in policy processes; improved communication and information systems for policy and practice; better knowledge management and learning for development agencies; and approaches to institutional development for evidence-based policy. Its website presents information on many different projects, meetings and events, publications, bibliographies and links. It also includes a section on "lessons so far".

International Institute for Environment and Development, IIED

<http://www.iied.org/>

3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, U.K. Email: info@iied.org

The International Institute for Environment and Development, IIED, is an international policy research institute working for more sustainable and equitable global development. Together with its partners, it works aiming to have a real impact on policy and practice at local, national and global levels, combining a range of tools, skills and actions throughout a wide variety of activities. IIED's work is divided into five main groups, one of which is Governance. Research here looks into the Millennium Development Goals, strategic planning and assessments, or global governance issues. Each section presents valuable information, including many documents and publications.

Institutions and Governance Programme, World Resources Institute

<http://governance.wri.org>

10 G Street, NE (Suite 800), Washington DC 20002, U.S.

The Institutions and Governance Programme of the WRI, aims to identify ways to collaborate in the promotion of an environmental agenda. It works with governments, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to align the rights, responsibilities, costs and benefits of ecosystem management. It focuses on the opportunities which arise to promote both social equity and environmental sustainability.

id21, Communicating Development Research

<http://www.id21.org>

Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, U.K. Email: id21@ids.ac.uk

id21 is a free information delivery service, presenting international development research to policymakers and practitioners worldwide. Research featured on id21 focuses on policy solutions relating to education, urban development, rural development, natural resources and global issues policy in developing countries. It offers an online database with over 2 500 research highlights, all linked to research reports and related information.

Natural Resources Institute, NRI

<http://www.nri.org>

University of Greenwich at Medway, Central Avenue, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TB, U.K. Email: nri@greenwich.ac.uk

NRI is a specialized institute and school of the University of Greenwich at Medway, in the county of Kent, England. NRI works in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders in

natural-resource development and management, from major international and national development agencies to community-based organizations and small-to-medium enterprises. NRI defines itself as a leader in natural resources research, promoting efficient management and use of renewable natural resources in support of sustainable livelihoods. Research is primarily focused on developing and emerging economies. However, much of the work involves interaction with the developed world where it is equally applicable.

International Institute for Sustainable Development

<http://www.iisd.org>

161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 0Y4

Email: info@iisd.ca

The International Institute for Sustainable Development contributes to sustainable development by advancing policy recommendations on international trade and investment, economic policy, climate change, measurement and assessment, and natural resources management. By using internet communications, it reports on international negotiations and broker knowledge gained through collaborative projects with global partners, resulting in more rigorous research, capacity building in developing countries and better dialogue between North and South. Its site includes many links and updated information.

LogoLink

http://www.ids.ac.uk/logolink/website_new/index.htm

LogoLink, the Learning Initiative on Citizen Participation and Local Governance, defines itself as a global network of practitioners from civil society organizations, research institutions and governments working to deepen democracy through greater citizen participation in local governance. The website provides information and resources. It also provides access to the network's newsletter, which includes brief updates on activities within the network and other related initiatives on citizen participation in local governance. LogoLink has partners in Latin America, Asia and Africa, some of whom have launched regional websites with local governance resources.

International Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI

<http://www.ifpri.org/>

2033 K Street NW, Washington DC 20006, U.S. Email: ifpri@cgiar.org

IFPRI is one of the 15 food and environmental research organizations known as the Future Harvest centers, funded through the foundations and organizations that make up the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). IFPRI's mission is to provide policy solutions that cut hunger and malnutrition, considering that sound and appropriate local, national, and international public policies are essential to achieving sustainable food security and nutritional improvement. Similarly, it points at formulating sound and appropriate food policies, for which research and the dissemination of its results are critical inputs.

The Eldis Agriculture Resource Guide

<http://www.eldis.org/agriculture/index.htm>

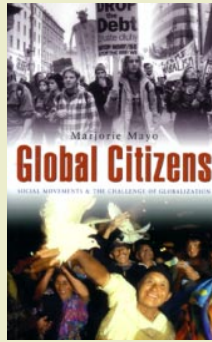
Eldis programme, IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, U.K.

The Eldis Gateway to Development Information site, one of the knowledge services of the Institute of Development Studies from the University of Sussex, aims to support the documentation, exchange and use of evidence-based development knowledge. Its Agriculture Resource Guide offers quick access to key documents, organizations, research themes, discussions and other key resources.

Global citizens: social movements and the challenge of globalization

by Marjorie Mayo, 2005. ISBN 1842771396. Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, U.K. Website: <http://zedbooks.co.uk>

Email: enquiries@zedbooks.demon.co.uk
In this book, Marjorie Mayo outlines key theoretical debates about globalization, democracy and social movements, and links these issues to concrete case studies of civil action. She explores the lessons that can be drawn from initiatives by social movements, such as how NGOs can develop effective campaigns and networks without becoming institutionalized. The book addresses how to build progressive movements for human rights and social justice in the twenty-first century.



HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition security: from evidence to action

by S. Gillespie and S. Kadiyala, 2005. 174 pp. ISBN 0896295060, Food Policy Review 7. International Food Policy Research Institute IFPRI, 2033 K Street, NW, Washington DC 20006-1002, USA.

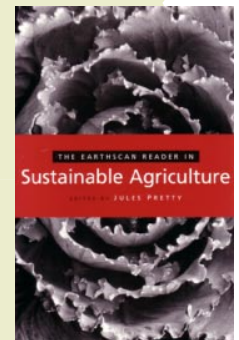
Website: <http://www.ifpri.org> Email: ifpri@cgiar.org
The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a global crisis with impacts that will be felt for decades to come. With more than 25 million people from Sub-Saharan Africa infected with the virus, the ability of households and communities to ensure their own food and nutrition security is increasingly being threatened. This research review focuses on possible interactions between the HIV/AIDS dilemma and food security, and on what action can be taken to ensure that future policies will influence such interactions positively. In the first part of this document, existing evidence of interactions between HIV/AIDS incidence and food and nutritional security are comprehensively reviewed. It starts by looking at food and nutrition conditions that increase people's vulnerability to HIV infection. After that, academic literature is presented, dealing with the impacts of HIV/AIDS cases on individuals, households, and communities at large. The second part of the book moves from understanding possible interactions to taking action. Here the authors look at examples of existing initiatives, ranging from community action to appropriate policy alterations and even complete new government interventions. The challenges of mainstreaming, scaling up, and capacity building are discussed. Summaries of all studies are provided in annexes for easy reference. This review is a valuable resource for institutions struggling to confront the implications of HIV/AIDS for food and nutrition-relevant policies and programs. The full text can be downloaded at no cost, from the IFPRI website.

climatic changes are a huge challenge, particularly for Africa, where many of the world's poorest countries are located. The Working Group consists of a number of well-known development organizations which have on-the-ground experience of working with communities whose fragile livelihoods, and the ecosystems in which they live, are further threatened by global warming. The report presents examples of initiatives which respond to the threat of changing climatic conditions. More information about the Working Group on Climate Change and Development, or a free copy of the report is found at: <http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdf/full/9560IIED.pdf>

The Earthscan reader in sustainable agriculture

by Jules Pretty (ed.), 2005. 405 pp. ISBN 1844072363. Earthscan, 8-12 Camden High Street, London NW1 0JH, U.K.

Website: <http://www.earthscan.co.uk> Email: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk
This interesting reader describes sustainable agriculture as an alternative form of agriculture: one founded on ecological principles and which is more harmonious for people, their societies and cultures. As editor of this book, Jules Pretty, the renowned expert on sustainable agriculture, maps out the complex subject and introduces and explains key literature. This volume brings together the most influential scholarship in the field, containing both theoretical developments and critical appraisals of evidence. It addresses what is not sustainable about current or past agricultural and food systems, as well as studying transitions towards agricultural and rural sustainability at farm, community, regional, national and international levels. It provides different perspectives for the development of sustainable agriculture in industrialized countries and in developing countries. With contributions from several well-known experts, this collection of reference texts on sustainable agriculture is essential reading for students and anyone who wants to promote sustainable development.



Ideas for Development

by Robert Chambers, 2005. 259 pp. ISBN 1844070883. Earthscan, 8-12 Camden High Street, London, NW1 0JH, U.K. Website:

<http://www.earthscan.co.uk> Email: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk
In Ideas for Development Robert Chambers highlights the range of ideas that all development actors have, to find positive things to do. He argues that practical potentials can be found in ideas and aspects of development that have previously been overlooked, undervalued or misunderstood. Each chapter presents and reviews one of his earlier writings, examines subsequent and contemporary experience, and then derives a wealth of conclusions and implications for the future. The many ideas and opportunities include: narrowing the gaps between words and actions; reducing demands on administrative capacity; using minimum rules to transform power relations; finding new potentials for participation; improving scaling up; critical reflection and experiential learning, and responsible well-being. The book is for all who are concerned with development, including practitioners, academics, teachers, policy-makers and students in all professions and disciplines. Readers are invited to use and improve on the ideas in the book, and to take forward the conclusions that more can be done than many development actors realize, and that in the end it is action that counts.

Africa - Up in smoke? The second report from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development

by A. Simms, H. Reid, and M. Murphy, 2005. ISBN 1904882005. IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, U.K. Website: <http://www.iied.org/pubs> Email: info@iied.org



Effects of global warming are already prevalent in Africa. More severe and more frequent droughts, but also sudden, violent and unpredictable rainfalls, have all increased the vulnerability of poor communities, especially farmers. "Africa - Up in Smoke?" draws attention to the fact that drastic



Photo: Rik Thijssen

Representatives of ILEIA and partner organizations taking part in the latest International Editors Meeting, Bangalore, India. From left to right: (back row) N. Sudhamani, T.M. Radha, K.V.S. Prasad (all from India), Anita Ingevall (ILEIA), Teresa Gianella, Jorge Chavez-Tafur (both from Peru), Awa Faly Ba (Senegal), Juniati (Indonesia), Paulo Petersen (Brazil); (front row) Wilma Roem (ILEIA), Karen Hampson (ILEIA) and Iwan Syahwanto (Indonesia).

Invitation for new partners

The global edition of the LEISA Magazine forms the basis of a network dedicated to sharing information and experiences on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture. Through the LEISA Magazine and its regional editions, ILEIA and its five partner organizations - AME (India), Asociación ETC Andes (Peru), VECO Indonesia, IED Afrique (Senegal) and AS-PTA (Brazil) - provide field-based information in English, Spanish, Indonesian, French and Portuguese that reaches more than 30 000 subscribers and an estimated five times as many readers. In this way, field practitioners around the world are able to benefit from each other's experiences.

To further expand the LEISA network, ILEIA is now looking for a new partner organization that is willing and capable to produce a new regional edition of the LEISA Magazine. As a member of the LEISA network, this new partner organization will communicate closely with ILEIA and partners, including taking part in International Editors Meetings twice a year as well as other capacity building activities. ILEIA is particularly interested in new partners who can help the LEISA network expand into new languages and areas.

A new regional edition usually begins as a direct translation of articles published in the global edition of LEISA Magazine. It then develops over time into a distinctly regional magazine, successively including more original regional articles and other information and thereby contributing fully to enriching the flow of information within the LEISA network.

Just like ILEIA, the new partner organization must have a mandate that includes working towards the alleviation of poverty, enhancing ecological sustainability, and safeguarding the social and cultural integrity of small-scale farming communities. The new regional edition of the magazine should complement the regular activities of the partner organization, which should include direct involvement with farming communities.

To be a valuable partner in the LEISA network, the organization should have a broad knowledge of farming within its region, including a wide network of contacts with local and regional organizations and institutions. In order to become a functional partner, the organization must also be well established and have the capacity to undertake the work. This means that the organization must:

- be an officially recognized NGO or other institution;
- be able and permitted to receive external funding;
- be able to communicate effectively in English;
- have experience in working with external donors, including submitting timely narrative and financial reports;
- be able to provide two references from collaborating or donor organizations.

Interested organizations should send a letter explaining why they want to become a partner of ILEIA, showing how they fulfil the criteria mentioned, to: the Director, ILEIA, P.O. Box 2067, 3800 CB Amersfoort, the Netherlands.