



**HELVETAS**  
Swiss Intercooperation



## Organic family farming and fair trade for rural development Report

At the occasion of the international year of family farming and the Organic World Congress, HELVETAS, Hivos, IFOAM, ICEA and FiBL organized a pre-conference on **organic family farming and fair trade for rural development**, which took place October 12, 2014 in Istanbul.

### Aim of the meeting was:

To reflect on development agendas in relation to organic agriculture<sup>1</sup> and fair trade<sup>2</sup> and to help improve future agendas for greater outreach and up-scaling of impact; foster collaboration between different stakeholders; inspiring, energizing, sharing and challenging.

### Expected results were:

- State of the art on what participants/practitioners currently see as the major challenges to work on;
- Shared understanding of strengths and weaknesses of current approaches;
- Approach for directions to take to ensure that organic family farms become a more important option when striving for more development (as described in the SDGs);
- Clear ways forward for scaling up.

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## 1. Opening

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Willy Douma, **HIVOS** opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

If we want to see change we need to do things differently. We jointly believe that organic agriculture, is a viable system to produce our food, nurture our soils and show its resilience against climate change. We dream of a world where organic agriculture is the norm. A meeting like this can stimulate innovation to increase outreach and scale. Sharing ideas certainly helps to find much needed allies.

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<sup>1</sup> Organic Agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic Agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved. Any system that is based on the Principles of Organic Agriculture and uses organic methods, is considered 'Organic Agriculture' and any farmer practicing such a system as an 'organic farmer'. This includes various forms of certified and non-certified Organic Agriculture. Guarantee Systems may be for instance third party certification, including group certification, as well as participatory guarantee systems.

<sup>2</sup> Likewise as with the definition and scope of organic agriculture, a fair trade relationship and a fair trade farmer does not need to be certified to be considered as such

## **2. Organic family farms and fair trade in the context of global challenges**

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**Musa Muwanga, NOGAMU shared issues from family farm perspective.** In Uganda the majority, 70%, of the population is engaged in agriculture, 95% of which are small holder households. Their biggest challenge is poverty and as such, discussions about improved farming should be about increased income. Both organic and fair trade hold this potential. Upscaling of the positive impacts is possible when local realities are being taken into account. Introduced techniques and social processes should be compatible with local realities. Organic farming in a development context should 1) focus on income generation, addressing livelihood challenges and give access to markets. 2) have farming systems that are adapted to local resources, taking into account how smallholders deal with risks and what they apply as insurance e.g. crop diversity. 3) be embedded in local realities and priorities.

**Roberto Longo, IFAD shared IFAD's activities in the international year of family farming.**  
From IFAD's perspective the top 5 global challenges for family farming are

1. Climate change
2. Land grabbing and land access
3. Access to financial resources
4. Access to markets
5. Uncertainty / volatility on input costs and market prices

Gradually there is a policy change from investing in agriculture (techniques) to investing in people.

The link between rural and urban communities is getting increasingly important.

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## **3. Examples of up-scaling; successes and challenges**

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**4 Case studies were presented after which a world café was held on the key challenges.**

1. Municipality of Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines, [Mayor Jun](#)
2. [Fondo Ecuatoriano de Cooperacion para el Desarrollo](#) - Williams Hernandez, General Director; presented by Juan Pablo Scuirano
3. Coop Switzerland, [organic and fair trade rice from India and Thailand](#), Ashish Shrivastava
4. [Organic Cotton in Burkina Faso](#), Abel Gouba

Presentation are available and attached in the email

Based on the case study presentations success factors and challenges for up-scaling were identified. They were used to identify the topics for in-depth group discussions in two "World Café" rounds summarized in the following section.

## 4. Scaling-up

Promising approaches and highlights from the world café were reported back; hereunder in no particular order



### A: Collaboration with / role of private sector

Private sector provides inputs and technical advice – risk of dependencies for farmers

Sharing investments and risks among private sector and farmers

Clear roles / interfaces between farmer organisations and companies / traders (win-win situation)

Smallholders increasingly excluded from main value chains

Getting increased co-investment of the private sector is a challenge

- Leadership, continuity and reliability of cooperatives necessary for real partnerships

- Risk and Cost taking and sharing among cooperatives and buyers

- Communication and awareness toward consumers; private sector as intermediate to tell stories

Uncertainty on prices and products is a challenge

- Consider fair trade pricing mechanisms

- Building mutual transparency and trust

- Minimum price guarantees

Security is needed: Strengthening links across value chains to build secure supply chains for mutual benefit

Limited access to financial resources is a challenge

- Development funds (CSR)

- Finance tools and systems have to be built from bottom-up and adapt to local contexts, some countries have rural banks; others do not.

Regional banks  
Share capital

#### **B: Efficient organisation / training and advice for farmers**

Challenge is to improve farm productivity more effectively and efficiently

Extension service should be tailor made to the need of individual or group of farmers – at the same time how can we work with/through existing organisations and structures

Analysis of situation of producer organisation, training in administrational issues, advocacy and organizational methods – take into account all types of producers

Focus on the human interaction with the environment

Recommendations should be based on available resources

‘Jaivik Mitra’ = organic friend: farmers trained exclusively on organic farming by extension staff

Farmer Family learning groups – advise from extension system on request

Support farmers’ schools

Include women – adapted extension to include women

Strengthen government services in extension of organic farming

Private extension services, available in some areas, should be efficient and affordable for farmers

Participatory research should include extension services as well as having a business model for the outcomes – appropriate technologies

Centre of production of organic seeds; inform farmers on GMOs

Move from ‘I’ to ‘we’

#### **C: Raising awareness and changing attitudes**

This item concerns farmers, facilitators, decision makers, consumers and media alike

Genuine people’s agenda – integrated development strategy

Encourage collective leadership – servant leadership

Empowerment of people as a starting point – strengthen personalities

Holistic education – at the same time simplify

Insisting on patience – pause and reflect

Pausing opens spaces – facilitates new views and changes

Creation of insights, reflection on perception and values

System change can only happen by good listening, understanding people’s realities

Include and educate women

‘We know the price of everything, but not the value’

#### **D: Policy and institutional environment**

Donors and international agreements influence national policies (neoliberal environment); national budgets follow the money and power relations

Strengthen the link of organic family farming with national development agenda – consumer pressure /Civil society organisations influence on policies needed – convince with successful cases, evidence and impact and mobilize voices

Development actors facilitate value chains – business / market systems approach

Future vision of organic in relation to rural development: AgroEcology, Nutrition, Food Systems, Productivity Paradigm

Incentives for organic family farmers

National and regional regulations in relation to organic; how does the market work, what are the regulations, where to influence – come to regional agreements

Level playing field in extension, taxes, education and awareness on organic, in events like fairs

Convene different stakeholders, connect networks, and address existing issues

#### **E: Diversified farming systems and market linkages**



No mono-cropping - diversity necessary for nutrition and for risk mitigation – prices, socially, climate, bio/ecological

Family farms are located in varying agro-ecological zones - need to match a diversity of crops/species according to the agro-ecological zones - promote well adapted species and varieties. Care should be taken to not compromise on quality when diversifying

Mixed farming and species diversity including agroforestry and livestock need to be promoted

Prioritize local varieties instead of external varieties, but be flexible enough to innovate and accommodate suitable new varieties - orientation on tradition does not need to conflict with embracing new ideas

Organize diversity at group level for creating volumes and uniform access to local and other markets

Support seed saving initiatives by family farmers

Main challenge is not production, but income - focus on income generation and livelihoods

Build the local markets and defend them – support systems such as transport, infrastructure and postharvest management/control need to be facilitated and developed to enhance marketing

Understand who the market is, what is wanted by the market, where it is wanted, – how and/or in what form

Priority on market crops and those crops which provide good nutrition to the family

Local markets supplied with products which address nutritional deficiencies e.g. Fe, Zn, vitamins

Proactive awareness creation for consumers, including traceability and knowing who is producing their food

Information and evidence generation are important – need to facilitate transparent research, as well as supporting extension, demonstration plots, exchange/learning events

### Fish bowl discussion

**The following discussion focused on what is needed to scale up and roll out the promising approaches.**



Main conclusions of the discussion were:

- Participatory innovation development to design diversified and productive farming systems – family farming as a multi-functional sector
- Address farmers' agenda first – household nutrition security, food security, income security in a changing climate
- Be aware of the possible trade-off between diversification and quality!
- Planning diversified production as per market demand and consumption patterns
- Invest in capacity building of local actors (extension, management)
- Developing local markets needs greater support
- Create local demand by organizing supply or by institutional demand (like in Brasil)
- Markets are not neutral and not only an economic place – they also represent social, political, ecological and cultural values;
- Markets are a socially constructed common good, based on trust

- Look at agro-food systems as social building
- Family farming is multi-functional; it includes culture which is under threat of being destroyed when focusing only on productivity.
- Building trust between private sector and producers
- Applying business approaches to facilitate market linkages
- Transparent cost and price structures that relate to product quality
- Who plays which role in the value chain?; what is the role of retailers and how can they get linked-up?
- A paradigm shift is needed and happening, from productivity to income and holistic impact
- Promote a vision for organic agriculture (beyond certification!) for rural development, in line with local development agendas
- Convene stakeholders to jointly address challenging issues (e.g. extension, research, awareness raising, policies)
- Facilitate win-win situations between producers and private sector
- Attention not to create dependencies by providing advice, inputs and credits
- Embracing new ideas while observing local values
- Do not pretend we know it all
- Need for long-term perspective from all players
- How to prevent fair trade and organic markets becoming only a middle class phenomenon?



## **5. Action, collaboration and outlook**

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### **Participants noted their insights and action points**

Bring forward a recommendation to IFOAM to make a mechanisms that could deal with local government involvement

To establish and IFOAM platform for supporting organic smallholders to access the markets and develop marketing models based on IFOAM principles

Ensure we listen to farmers and work in right way for them (tailor made programmes)

Put farmers' benefit as first consideration

Take into consideration all aspects, focus on local situation for finding one or more adapted solutions

Reiterative reality check with farmers

Farmers need support not only from the production but should receive support from the government or private sector for technical and marketing assistance

Need to diversify crops

Agro-diversity must become defined better in future

Improve extension

Try to support small scale farms (in Denmark), as they can bring more innovation to our movement

New ideas for extension work to train lead farmers

Study experiences on how to support linking farmers to markets

The farmers should be educated to grow quality products to have better price

Diversity in relation to markets

Develop local markets and use of information technology, including awareness about fair trade

Diversification of a market oriented production system increases food security – identify and plan the products for markets and home consumption

Multi-stakeholder based local market development – local institutions purchase from farmers – engaging with the local private sector processors and traders – support systems / infrastructure

The farmers may learn not only managing the crop production but some thought on processing and direct sale to the local consumers whenever possible.

A group of consumers is making contract with organic farms about delivering of produce and the consumer groups distribute the produce – social market

Include consumers / women groups on project design

Organic certification is an important part to assure the consumers and to trace back the producers, certifies in the production supply chain.

Living together through organic agriculture

Learning for me is to understand deeper the market world to achieve our goal in uplifting our poor farmers

Develop learning on best practice in multi-stakeholder dialogue so that forums are better at achieving practical outcomes

Dual strategies 1) grass-root empowerment of small-scale farmers 2) fighting global capitalist domination and parliamentary dictatorship

Better understand development potential of organic in different contexts.

Advice local and national governments on how to use organic agriculture as a tool for rural development (income, food security, environment, jobs, livelihoods, dignity)

(Local) Government is one of the important stakeholders in the development of the organic sector in the country and efforts to engage them should be made.

Creating a common vision with pressure from local governments (bottom – up) and pressure by international community (top down) leads to sustainability of vision

Intergovernmental sharing and replication of governance in organic agriculture and civil society

Platforms as change agents for development agendas

There is no one silver bullet but global problem can only be solved by the collection of many local, specific solutions

Build more crazy people like us

### **Participants expressed interest to continue the conversation on a couple of points**

How to efficiently organize large numbers of smallholders? – this discussion has meanwhile started on the [sustainabilityXchange](#) platform

How to mobilize voices? – this discussion will start early 2015 by the agricultural biodiversity community ([abc@dgroups.org](mailto:abc@dgroups.org))

Multi-stakeholder platforms – what are experiences with their use for change (several people indicated interest – no clear action plan yet).

The email addresses of participants are disclosed in the email

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## **6. Closure**

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### **Flash round with participants – some highlights:**

Well prepared and facilitated workshop

World Café was good

There is no magic bullet

New frontiers of challenges

Listen to the farmers' agenda

Local market development

Plan diversity

More confusion, however meaningful confusion

Focus on local realities

Bring the private sector into the discussion



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