

Young Farmers, Young Consumers, Great Future

The future is here, and we need to work for it. We all wish an organic and sustainable world and is in our hands to build it.

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Key words: youth, future, farmers, consumers, global, change

Author's background

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Since 2006, I have been actively involved in the organic movement and promoting the engagement of young people. Worked in different sectors of the organic world like the business, the NGO, and the research sector. Since 2011, I'm member of Young Organic a non-governmental organization working to unite young people active in the sustainable sector around the world.

Summary

The world is changing; it is always changing. That's one of the fundamental rules of organic farming: adapt to change. We need to adapt to the rain, to the wind, to the dry seasons, to the cultures. But now we have new challenges. Climate change is now here, obesity, diabetes, allergies, stress, are all around us. Economic crisis, new structures blooming, cultures mixing, globalization. Everywhere youth leads adaptation to change. Questions appear: how to, should we, what we need to change, are we the ones.

Young people from all around the globe are getting together, discussing, exchanging, trying to reach a common goal, trying to build a path to take. Groups, associations, all kinds of organizations of young people developing organic farms, organic farmers markets, developing/inventing/discovering renewal energies, building sustainable communities.

Background

In my experience in the organic domestic market in Argentina, I saw how the profile of the organic consumers has changed. In the beginning it was mainly adult people that were looking for what they used to eat when they were kids, or ill people to whom their doctors recommended that they should start to eat organic food. But now that had changed. Now most of the consumers are young people that started to get interested on what they eat, what they wear, how they live. Young people that have been raised with McDonald's and frozen food, and had never tried a tomato with taste and smell of a tomato. But that youth is looking for something new, or maybe it would better to say that they are trying to go back to the roots. They are our best consumers. They are teaching their kids to enjoy fruits and veggies, to enjoy going camping instead of watching the TV or playing video games, a lifestyle in harmony with nature.

Main chapter

These young farmers, these young consumers, these young entrepreneurs, are our future. We need to support them, to guide them and at the same time let them be. Teach them from the mistakes made in the past and the successes, but let them make their mistakes and celebrate their successes.

The organic movement should start to work on unite and stimulate young organic people around the world by creating a network where they can exchange information and knowledge regarding organic agriculture in its full diversity. Strengthen the movement, generating activities and ideas from a young perspective. Generate ideas for projects that involve schools, communities, culture and art centres, etc., and start to promote and spread the organic lifestyle from the base of society.

Young people usually have another way to communicate their ideas and messages, like cultures channels. Participation in events like, alternative conferences, music festivals, eco meetings, cultural and regional celebrations, area great way to promote the organic opportunities. Using this cultural platforms you reach people that maybe are not informed about the subject, and you bring them the opportunity to participate and learn. By integrating agriculture to cultural events, the organic movement can show all aspect of this diverse system. Is well known that consumers have the last decision, and this is a powerful tool that we forget to use. We as consumer normally forget that with every choice we make we are writing the path this world is taking and that we can change it every day. That's why the presence in this cultural and massive events is so important; we need to make people remember the power they have and show them why organic lifestyle is the best choice.

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Another important aspect in organic farming is the knowledge exchange. Usually, when we talk about exchange of experiences, lessons learned, we mean between farmers, researchers, companies, organizations, but we should also start to work on an exchange between generations, no matter the sector. We need to transfer the wisdom and the experience from the founders to the new generations, building future organic leaders, as societies have done for centuries to preserve their culture, but at the same time to let it evolve.

Core message and conclusions

The future and further development of the organic movement depend on many things, and one is the coming generations. It is something that needs our focus. Work with schools, universities, kindergartens. Bring organic lifestyle to the beginning of our life, to the root of a person. Make it the normal lifestyle, not a taboo, not a fashion that will pass. Position organic, health, fair, sustainable as a normal thing.