



DIALOGUE ON TRANSFORMATION

Conference Report

1st – 3rd November 2012 in Bonn, Germany

Introduction

After the backlash of Copenhagen NGOs worldwide have started strategy processes to overcome the deadlock, to start new alliances and to regain the urgently needed motivation to work to a broader and more effective global change. Seeing that only talks about climate can not address multiple crises, Germanwatch together with IATP and supported by Stiftung Mercator has started in April 2012 a NGO Dialogue on Transformation. This report shows the process and results of the core event of the Dialogue: The NGO Dialogue on Transformation Conference.

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The Dialogue on Transformation

Given the impacts of global climate change and the aggravating crisis in the fields of energy-/resource- and food security, we perceive that the global society is on track to exceed planetary boundaries. Nevertheless, the efforts being made in political and economic realms often only address the symptoms of these crises and/or remain on less unsustainable paths. What does this mean for the international civil society? What kind of challenges are arising for the (inter)national non-governmental organizations (NGO's) in the context of these crises and the necessary shift towards a more sustainable way of living? The process of the Great Transformation, introduced by the socio-economist Karl Polanyi, seems to be an answer to these challenges, as it urges the re-embedding of our current economic and socio-cultural system within the natural environment.

But how can the civil society and NGO's strategically act together in order to push forward this Great Transformation? It seems inevitable that the NGO's would coordinate their work across states and continents in order to identify new areas of work, foster collaborations, and transcend the borders of their thematic fields like energy, food or climate and identify synergies among the core topics agriculture and climate change. Germanwatch supports this change via a national and international dialogue- and strategy process. Therefore this conference can be seen as a starting point to overcome geographical and thematic borders in order to discuss an essential shift of the global society - the great transformation.

RIO+20

During the first meeting of the steering group in Rio de Janeiro, the framing of the international conference about a Dialogue on Transformation was shaped. The outline of which provided a strategic dialogue between NGO's about central fields of transformation (such as energy and climate, land use, urbanization and urban development as seen by the WBGU) with the goal of a Great Transformation was narrowed down to the important fields and their synergies of climate change/energy and agriculture/right to food.

The basic principles of which linkages are needed to push the transformation forward are demonstrated by Figure 1 and 2.

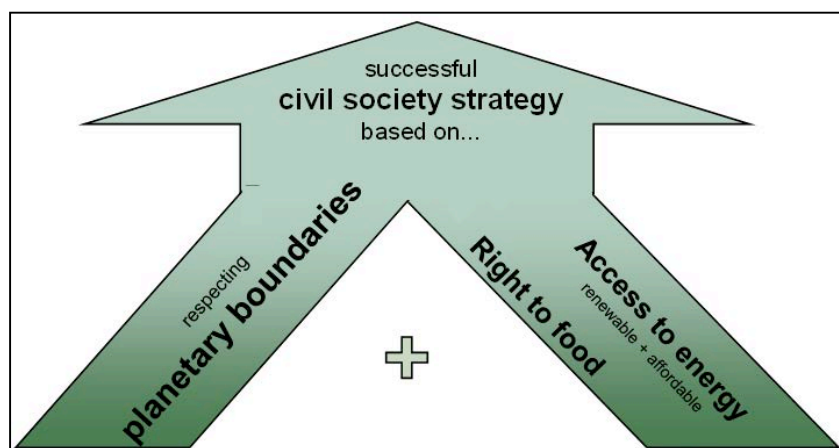


Figure 1:
The cooperation between different thematic areas with respect to the planetary boundaries provides the possibility of a successful corporation towards the great Transformation.



Tilman Santarius in front of the audience during his welcome speech

Conference on the Dialogue on Transformation

Framework

The conference „Dialogue on Transformation“ took place from 1-3 November in 2012 in Bonn, Germany. On the first and second day the conference was located in the Wissenschaftszentrum Bonn and on the third day all southern participants with some northern NGOs were given the opportunity to participate in a more in-depth discussion in the Gustav Stresemann Institute in Bonn (GSI). Furthermore, to briefly introduce the hosting city, a reception in the old town hall of Bonn took place on the first evening, where the Mayor of Bonn, Jürgen Nimptsch warmly welcomed the international guests (see below).

Organization

In close cooperation with the national and international partners of Germanwatch, the planning of this conference started in Mai 2012. From the very beginning all contributors of this event emphasized the discussion format of the conference and the need to overcome geographical, cultural as well as thematically borders.

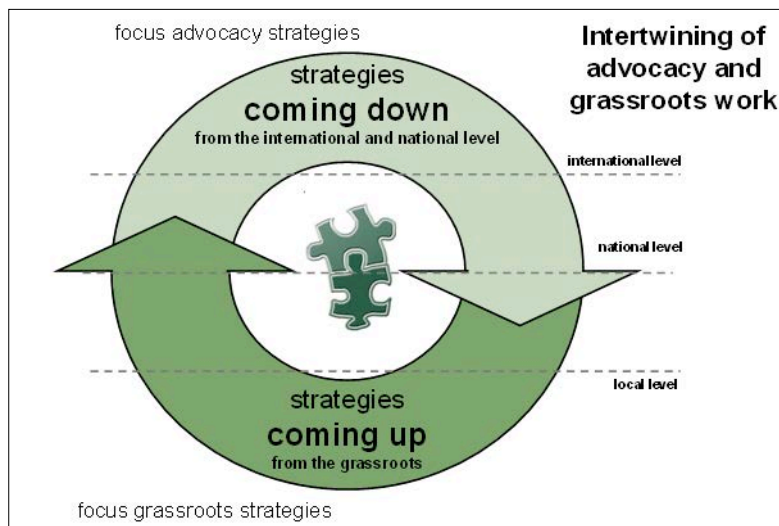


Figure 2: Only by connecting different levels of engagement and analyzing existing links and strategies the transformative work can be done.

Therefore the central challenge was to bring people from climate and agriculture, from advocacy and grassroot NGOs, from different social, cultural and work fields together in order to discover strategies that foster a great transformation. For this reason the cross-thematic working groups were key in the agenda of this event. Furthermore, by presenting best practice examples and their political circumstances which have helped to realize them on the first day, ideas and strategies have been spread to give an impression of how transformative work could actually look like in different parts of the world. In addition, the participants were given a time frame to discuss their ideas and strategies, for example during the world café or the plenary sessions.

Steering Group

The Steering Group for the NGO Strategy Dialogue on Transformation is an international, interdisciplinary working group of experts in the fields of climate/energy, food security/agriculture, transition and strategic agenda setting. The group helps to prepare the dialogue process by providing inspirational support, by fostering discussion about the Great Transformation. In addition the steering group will work on follow-up processes. This will be done in close cooperation with national and international partners such as Germanwatch, IATP (Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy) and the Stiftung Mercator.

Members of the international steering group are:

Jennifer Morgan (WRI, USA), Lina Li (Greenovation Hub, China), Sunita Dubey (Groundwork Friends of the Earth, South Africa), Marie Brill (ActionAid, USA), Orion Kriegman (Tellus Institute, GTI, USA), Dr. Candido Grzybowski (IBASE, Brasil), Prof. Dr. Hans Herren (Biovision, Switzerland), Srinivas Krishnaswamy (Vasudha India Foundation, India); Michael Narberhaus (Smart CSOs Lab, Germany), Wael Hmaidan (CAN International, Lebanon), Emmanuel Ndione (ENDA Tiers Monde, Senegal), Prof. Dr. Jun Borrás (TNI, Philippines), Shefali Sharma (IATP, USA).

The steering group has met in Rio+20 and before, during and after the conference.

Participants of the conference

In order to foster a rich dialogue about possible strategies and action plans, key organizations from different thematic fields were identified prior to the conference by the international steering group. Special attention was given to the participants from the global south to ensure a representative participation of their organizations and interests.

All participants were selected with special regard to their expertise and working field to ensure a diverse and cross-thematic discussion during the conference. This strategy also included the invitation and connection of organizations that work on different engagement levels i.e. grassroot as well as international organizations.

The list of participants can be found here: www.dialogue-on-transformation.org/download/6612.pdf

Program of the first conference day

Welcome Notes

After a warm welcome to the participants, and the expression of gratitude towards conference staff, **Tilman Santarius, Germanwatch board member** talked about Hurricane Sandy, which had been threatening North America at the time of the conference and delayed the arrival of conference participants. He saw this new extreme weather event as a sign of a warmer planet that looms on the horizon. He connected this introduction with an urgent request of action on all thematic fields.

These thematic fields, such as energy, food and climate, which are often treated separately, are in his point of view, actually highly connected. For example, extreme weather events are damaging the harvest, which has been the key reason for a historically unprecedented number of hungry and malnourished

people. At the same time, the increasing energy demand is also threatening the people's access to food. To illustrate this, *Santarius* talked about a big Indian mining company which is also polluting the fields of local farmers. He pointed out that the time for a solo-mentality is definitely over, since neither climate nor energy nor agricultural strategies can be developed in a nimbus. In fact, a more systemic approach is needed. Civil society actors therefore have to think about their work and create strategies that take into account this interconnectedness and are more holistic and efficient - otherwise new "Copenhagens" will occur. He encouraged the audience to form strong alliances and create efficient strategies and campaigns to build up a strong resistance against the tremendous financial and political power of corporations¹.



First interaction of conference participants

After a short introduction, in which *Jim Harkness, President IATP* also referred to the threats of Hurricane Sandy, he told a short story about a CNN report he viewed in his hotel room. CNN claimed that although there had been severe damage caused by Hurricane Sandy, everything was running smoothly on Wallstreet. *Jim Harkness* used this as an example to demonstrate where the priorities of the current system lie and why this meeting is so important. "This is why we are here", he said.

Harkness continued with an explanation that today energy, agriculture and finance are following very similar paths around the world. Although seemingly separate, these paths are in fact tightly connected systems that are highly vulnerable to catastrophic failure.

He explained that IATP got involved in climate and agriculture issues sometime before Copenhagen. He thought that one of the problems the conference could address was the so-called solo-thinking of different thematic communities. This has complicated the formation of a strong unified resistance, especially when northern governments and the agribusiness developed their proposals. For this reason he sees this conference as an exciting opportunity to overcome these thematic borders and talk about the lack of engagement within civil-society between energy and agriculture and between North and South. He also mentioned the problem of landgrabbing as an existential threat to the world's peasants. For him it is not only about farmland but also about the access to coal, oil and gas. He sees this issue as a natural bridge between the struggles of "climate people" and rural people. In his point of view, the creation of coherent politics with respect to ecological limits and human rights is one of the biggest challenges. Bridging with what *Tilman Santarius* said before, he pointed out that without challenging current policy and market models, the great transition will never take place. He encouraged the audience to join hands and talk about new strategies in the next two days and expressed his hope that at the end of this conference, some key points would have been identified where all organizations could take collective action. Seeing that many best practices are currently at the local level, *Harkness* saw the process of increasing their scale as a big challenge. How can we work on such different scales and successfully connect them?

In her welcome address, *Vera Lehmann, Stiftung Mercator* pointed out the need for all people to live on a non-fossil basis and to regain confidence and strength in the movement, especially after events like the Copenhagen climate summit in 2009. Referring to her home country, she highlighted that Germany needs to live up to the responsibility of an industrialized country. Mobilizing the audience, *Vera Lehmann* says "Let us unite that we create the spirit we need".

¹ see: <http://www.dialogue-on-transformation.org/4766>



From left to right: Harjeet Singh, Daniel Mittler, Mamadou Goita, Christoph Bals

Views on Transformation visions and Narratives on Access to Sustainable Energy and the Right to Food

Following the introductions by *Tilman Santarius, Jim Harkness and Vera Lehman*, an interactive debate and exchange of perspectives on transformation visions and narratives concerning the access to sustainable energy and the right to food was held with different panelists: *Jennifer Morgan*, World Resources Institute (WRI); *Harjeet Singh*, ActionAid International; *Daniel Mittler*, Greenpeace International and *Mamadou Goita*, Institut de Recherche et de Promotion des Alternatives en Développement (ROPPA) and *Christoph Bals*, Germanwatch, as moderator.

Jennifer Morgan, WRI (via skype) opened the discussion by talking about the growing pressure on a variety of fields such as energy, food security etc. caused by a global increase in the middle class. At the same time, she highlighted that there is increasing investment in the renewable energy sector. Nevertheless, she took a more negative stance on subsidies in the various energy sectors. She added: "stop subsidizing the wrong thing". Her concluding comments resembled the words of other speakers of this day: We must "find a symphony to put both voices (voices from climate and agriculture CSOs [note from the author]) together".²

Mamadou Goita, from Roppa, a West African Farmers Network representing a grassroots perspective, stressed the importance of bringing the struggles of civil society around the world together, especially the ones from the energy and food sector. One of his biggest questions was how to change the trends of political debates with regard to investment in the agricultural sector. He stressed that we need to define the type of market we are talking about.

Harjeet Singh ActionAid New Delhi, India, explained the human rights approach that ActionAid is using as a working tool. Three pillars are needed for systemic change: Empowerment (e.g. grassroots movement from the ground), Solidarity, and Campaigning (e.g. influencing institutions at different levels). He also stressed the need to share best practice examples from the local level in order to figure out ways to multiply and expand these approaches at the national, regional and international level.

Daniel Mittler, Greenpeace International explained that the energy transformation has to be pushed forward globally. While agricultural revolution is already on its way, energy revolution still must be brought on the global level. It is important to develop a strategy on "how to move from the battlegrounds to winning grounds", how to develop alternatives, and one common vision, especially with grassroots actors in the different regions. He emphasized that he is well aware of the interlinkages between food and energy issues and that he truly sees a need to develop new strategies. Within this context, in continuation of Singhs' thought, he highlighted the importance of the rights approach.

² Presentations can be found at: www.dialogue-on-transformation.org

These introductory words were followed by a panel discussion. *Jennifer Morgan* emphasized the broad topic of access not only to food, but also to energy as a possible thematic issue to reunite food/agriculture and energy/climate communities. In her point of view the issue of human rights plays a crucial role as a possible link between these thematic areas. Jennifer Morgan subsequently raised several questions that seemed to have an important meaning within this context. The questions were for example: How would it be possible to ensure engagement and mobilize resources? How is it possible to mobilize grassroots organizations on the global level?

A key point of the subsequent discussion was that although big steps had been taken in the past ten years concerning the participation of grassroots-actors, the sharing of information is nevertheless still very critical - although this is crucial when bringing grassroots projects to the global level. New and different channels must be used to supply everyone with the necessary information.

Pablo Solón, Focus on the Global South challenged the group to think about how it would be possible to link social struggles with environmental demands. This was taken on by several speakers. Ont thought given by *Daniel Mittler*, indicated that the south-south learning/exchange is an important component, in addition to both the provision of land rights through grassroots movements and securing a safe environment with small scale agriculture - i.e. to link up indigenous people with environmental concerns. In the end, it is again the rights approach that keeps the alliances together.



Word Cloud NGO-Dialogue

According to him, “the right” can be defined as the right to access and the fulfilment of basic needs. An upper limit of consumption must be set; a good example of this is the approach of the climate movement. A collective effort must be made to send transformation messages, done so by challenging corporate media and other power blockers. Another question from the plenary (*Kathrin Ulmer*) was how to link agriculture with the right to food movement; she saw the need to define food as its own right. *Christoph Bals* as moderator of the discussion added that climate change can become one of the major threats to food security; that is why great attention must be paid to these linkages by discussing and taking action. Bals summarized the discussion by pointing out several issues. How is it possible to combine the right to food with climate protection and access to affordable and renewable energy? While the rights debate is crucial in his point of view, it is important to keep the difference between food security and sovereignty in mind. He highlighted the importance of empowerment, solidarity and campaigning.

He asked the plenary to think about where we can put our focus, what key issues might we address and how we can bring people who are actually affected as central players into these campaigns. Positive examples of how this is being done already exist around the world, though not nearly enough. *He* then returned to one of the central themes of the conference: how can struggles be defined and organised in different places around the world to form a political movement that combines the issues of food security and climate change. Another question is how big hurdles such as the World Bank, corporate power and investors can be addressed. He ended with the thought that though each of these issues are important in its own right, we can only succeed in either, if we address them together.

Best Practice

A best practice session was organized on the first day of the conference to demonstrate successful projects that can be used as models for scaling up and replication. It was therefore that in the run-up of this event, several participants from different thematic backgrounds were invited to present their projects. Above all, the selection was made in order to highlight innovative projects and to help other NGOs doing their work. In order to give every participant the chance to gain insight in more than one best practice example, the time for the presentation was limited to 20 minutes. To provide an overview, the best practice examples will be briefly presented here³.

- A Challenging corporate power: lessons learnt from the Pioneer/Panaar seed merger challenge in South Africa**
By: Mariam Mayet, African Centre for Biosafety, South Africa
- B Climate Communities**
By: Thomas Brose, Climate Alliance - Klimabündnis der Städte, Germany
- C Community-based agricultural resilience - woman seed initiatives**
By: Dr. Suman Sahai, Gene Campaign, India
- D Community Resilience - Linking Food and Energy Sustainability to Equity and Social Justice**
By: Orion Kriegman, Tellus Institute, USA
- E Feed-in Tariffs: What can we learn from countries with Feed-in-Tariffs? What worked, what was pushed by NGO campaigns?**
By: Srinivas Krishnaswamy, Vasudha Foundation, India
- F Integrated Vector Management in Kenya – from pilot projects to national policies and what we can learn for food security, climate change and energy-related projects**
By: Benjamin Gräub, Biovision, Switzerland
- G Lighting a Billion Lives**
By: Ibrahim H. Rehman, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), India
- H Millet Initiative**
By: PV Satheesh, Deccan Development Society, India
- I Movements: Transition Town and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Example from social movements engaged in changing their cities.**
By: Gesa Maschkowski & Nikolaus Lange, Network Transition Initiative D/A/CH & Transition Initiative "Bonn im Wandel", Germany
- J Reclaiming cooperatives: Food Security in the hands of women: Kudumbashree/Sangha Krishi example from Kerala**
By: Biraj Swain, UN University & South-Asia Capacity Building Network, India
- K Strategies for Taking Agricultural Successes to Scale in Sub-Saharan Africa**
By: Faustin Vuningoma, PELUM East Africa, Zambia

³ For descriptions of all best practice examples please visit the conferences' website at <http://www.dialogue-on-transformation.org/download/6805.pdf>.

World café on the first conference day

The world café, after the first meeting of the working groups (see below), served as an opportunity for the participants to join and discuss the respective outcome of their group with members of other groups. In addition the knowledge café provided a space for an open and creative conversation about the state of the discussion and as a possibility to recap the first conference day. During the café, everyone was asked to write down their personal view or feedback on the course of the first day. These notes were collected and evaluated afterwards by the conference staff.



Mayor Jürgen Nimptsch at the Reception in the Old Town Hall, Bonn

Reception in the old town hall

After the world café, everyone met in front of the Wissenschaftszentrum and the GSI, to collectively use public transportation to the Reception of the City of Bonn. The Mayor of Bonn, Jürgen Nimptsch held an impressive speech in the Gobel-Hall of the old town hall in front of the conference members, where he warmly welcomed everyone and discussed the sustainable strategies and future action plans for the city of Bonn. This was followed by the presentation of a short film "Who Am I?". Subsequently Mr. Kartikeya V. Sarabhai, the Director of the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) India and the policy director of Germanwatch, Christoph Bals held a speech about transformative strategies, the achievements of the first conference day and their hopes and wishes for the things still to come.



The Short Film: "What am I?" <http://youtu.be/nmfODo0Q7Ho>

Germanwatch Script Competition

At the beginning and during the reception at the old town hall the two winners of the script competition were presented. The script competition was part of the NGO Dialogue on Transformation project. Germanwatch helped to bring the scripts into reality.

The Short Film: "Human Earthbeat" by Michael Hennemann, Ecosign was the Special Award Winner of the Germanwatch script competition. The animated video clip "Human Earthbeat" depicts the impacts of technological innovations and advancement on the socio-ecological systems. By referring to the concept of planetary boundaries, the video shows how society and environment are connected to each other and gives a clear signal for change and the need for a great transformation.

The video clip "What Am I" by Benjamin Toussaint, Lost Sense Media Academy depicts two befriended couples as they sit together playing the game "What Am I" with pressing issues of our time. Eager for change, they collectively argue for a reshaping of the social and economic framework towards a sustainable global society. Both films can be seen at: www.dialogue-on-transformation.org

Program of the second Day (Plenary 9-10 h)

After a short introduction by Tilman Santarius, a discussion between a small round of panelists was held in front of the conference participants. The subsequent discussion focused first on how a possible transformation could look like. *Candido Grzybowski*, from IBASE, Brasil, pointed out that the actual foundation of the system is not working and needs to be transformed. This process is heavily dependent on the collaboration of the NGO's. This also includes the way of production where the focus is laid on sustainability. Only by linking different issues such as food, energy and climate, it is possible to develop a common vision. In his point of view Bio-civilization might be a good approach towards a society that is more sustainable.

Lina Li, GreenovationHub, China, explained that for her the idea of a transformation does not only involve a change in lifestyle - referring to Candido's "Bio-civilization". For Li it is important that the NGO's associate with real local struggles and link them together, aiming at the creation of momentum for civil movements. NGO's should focus on local level - this is also true for the climate matters, where the civil society tends to focus only on the big international events.

In the course of the discussion it became clear that there are different opinions, beliefs and ideals of how drastic the change has to be. Nevertheless the focus should lie on finding a common ground, where can NGOs start together? Only from a safe common ground will people be willing to leave their comfort zones. Grzybowski finished the discussion and emphasised that "we are part of the problem instead of being part of the solution!"



Sunita Dubey

Working Groups from November 1-2: Key Action and Follow up Points

During the first and second conference day, several working groups were held. By giving the participants of this conference the chance to discuss their work and ideas in smaller groups, the conference could provide a forum for a broad dialogue without losing a connection to the discussion of special issues.

In order to remain in the thematic framework of the great transformation and to support the creation of concrete outcomes, the topic of the discussions varied between both days. Moreover, several key questions were prepared for both days as a guide for the members of the workgroups:

Day 1: Conflicts between strategies for climate protection, access to energy and the Right to food

What are key collective strategies for climate protection, sustainable energy and the right to food?

What common ground already exists and how do we constructively deal with on-going conflicts?

Day 2: Strategies how to overcome these conflicts and gain access

How can civil society actors from the food, climate and energy sector better collaborate on common challenges?

What is an intelligent mix of grassroots and international/ regional policy strategies for access to sustainable energy and realizing the right to food in the context of planetary boundaries?

Some key points of the discussion in the **working groups** and the consecutive discussion panel on the second day will be presented briefly here:

Climate and Food Crisis

- Political problems with new terminology being used to describe agriculture practices that are also climate-friendly, for example: “Climate smart agriculture” (CSA) and “sustainable intensification”
- There is a need to focus on key countries that are influential in the climate and agriculture debate at the UNFCCC, but also the international institutions that are pushing false solutions. The following strategic targets seemed important: the FAO, the World Bank and the EU.
- We need to find a common platform b/w social movements and NGOs on these issues.



Small groups of participants in the discussion of interim results during the conference.

Role of Biomass

- Need to develop a common vision between CSOs engaged on food, energy and climate on the role of biomass
- CSOs working on climate and energy and those working on food and agriculture must improve communication amongst each other - do internal reflection about why collaboration is so difficult.
- They should coordinate on engaging with special interest groups in key areas i.e. the automobile industry; petrol companies, but ensures their independence is not compromised.
- Establish closer links to institutionalized research on food and energy systems

Unsustainable Subsidies

- There is a need for a common new narrative on corporate control over the energy sector that leads to unsustainable fossil fuel subsidies
- Improve North- South knowledge sharing
- Establish a forum for monitoring the phase-out of unsustainable subsidies
- Establish South/South analysis on this issue
- Campaign focused on German elections to phase out compensation of high energy intensive companies

Climate Policy Transformation – Can there be a China-India-EU-Alliance?

- Development and unification of different 2030/ 50 visions at the national level with a national narrative about quality of life in the context of climate change
- Working areas could include urban transformation with focus on the middle class, the access to energy and the right to food with a focus on renewable energy and farming practices that are agroecological
- Creating a platform for exchange and interaction among different actors including best practice examples and technology cooperation

Agriculture at the Crossroads

- Development of a strong and coherent narrative, based on practical evidence, that agro-ecology and its distributional ways is the only opportunity to feed all people.
- Creating a stronger and institutional cooperation between local food producers and researchers.
- Broaden the support base by reaching out to groups who have an interest in food: consumers, public health, eco-retailers etc.

“Energiewende”/ Energy transition

- Serious lack of knowledge and exchange about best practices related to the energy transition. What is an affordable, appropriate and sustainable energy supply system for those without energy access? Each country has to decide what would be an appropriate form of the “energy transition”.
- Platform for data sharing and exchange about different nation-wide initiatives such as Germany’s “Energiewende” or Japan etc.
- Analysis of the financial sector driving unsustainable energy production is needed.

Democratize Production

- Build global “collaboratives” and solidarity around successful “collectives”. This can be done through documenting and sharing existing best practice examples or processes in the making. Highlight the knock-on multiplier effects of these practices by energy saving and efficiency, women’s leadership
- Documentation of best practice examples should include the type of policy needed (or that which hinders) to enable these collectives to thrive. These examples follow non-negotiable standards such as coherence with agro-ecology etc.
- Support the transfer of knowledge between farmers.

Power Politics

- Map existing campaigns and join and create campaigns on corporate control on land/grabbing and resources, corporate capture of politics; rights-based approaches
- There is a need to understand investment flows towards destructive energy and agriculture production and to make them transparent; highlight who gains from the food crisis

Planetary Boundaries and Over-Consumption (Changing Consumption Patterns)

- Need to balance personal choice and freedom with equity and solidarity
- Community building: rediscovering ourselves as citizens and not consumers and celebrating the sacred
- Community festivals to bring back ceremony, ritual and celebrate life outside of consumption and to introduce social action plans people can do together.
- Creation of a “New Narrative of the Great Transition”- storytelling to communicate an alternative vision for society, for wellbeing, for a transformed global civilization.
- Campaigns for Regulations



Fishbowl Discussion

Second day of the conference: Fishbowl 14-16h

In the afternoon program the participants were invited to make an active statement in a moderated fishbowl. The fishbowl took place after the last workshop, and was characterised by creating free space for personal statements. Although the participants could speak about their personal beliefs, it was delightful to see how well everybody was getting along. In fact, at the end of the discussion, a common ground was shaped, despite the many different points of views and statements.

The subjects of discussion had a large range (science, politics, advocacy and practical examples of work) and were characterised by the criticism on politics as well as on the work of NGOs and offered constructive suggestions and/or raised questions within the working groups. The possibilities and necessities of change and cooperation within the NGO scene seemed to motivate the participants.

One key point of criticism was both the lack of trust and networking between the NGOs and grassroots actors of civil society. If the NGO and CSO scene lost the connection to social movements, one would ask whose interests they represent. NGOs must not forget civil society or to engage in trust building, and this means to connect the spitted fields of food, energy and climate, a separation that evolved from decades of solo thinking. More over *P.V. Satheesh* from the Deccan Development Society, India, argued that for local farmers and rural people, the academic fields of science, mitigation and adaptation are actually linked together. It is an illusion to hold on to the belief that it is possible to create working solutions for people on the ground, by disconnecting processes into scientific fields of research and stuck in the solo perspective. The term "bridge building" was used to emphasise the need to come together and share visions but also to increase trust again. Nongovernmental organizations should see themselves as flexible organizations and not as established actors with stiff organizational structures. An internal competence centre (Greenpeace has already one) could play a crucial role in preventing NGOs from become immovable establishments and could encourage self-criticism.

Since funding plays a large role in the work of NGOs, most of the innovations happen in the realm of technical solutions/progress. This trend leads to the development of a high tech standard within the process of fighting climate change, but also causes a strong technical imbalance between NGO's and actors on the grassroots level - especially when they are located in the global south.

Summary and Conclusions:

Finally, Jim Harkness, President of IATP, USA emphasised the role of social justice and stated: “Social justice without sustainability is not justice. And, sustainability without human rights is not sustainable. “It’s clear that the separation is happening on the advocacy level - the meta level, and not on the ground. Advocacy must integrate grassroots perspectives, including the international level.

Christoph Bals, Policy Director Germanwatch also argued that a better connection between grassroots actors, i.e. in the fields of food sovereignty, to the fields of advocacy is needed. Concrete steps towards a deeper cooperation must follow. He saw the difficulties of wording and language, and reminded the audience of the urgency to clarify different understandings and connotations of words. Mistrust and misunderstandings must be resolved, and language is indeed essential to the process. The successful development of a common ground depends on a common language that is accepted by everybody and accepts everybody.

Outcomes of the working groups on the third conference day (Regional Meeting)

The third day’s objective was to transform the results of the conference into concrete project planning with actors from South and North. The day was restructured to a more open exchange in plenary and working groups after consulting meeting participants.

Group 1

- Identified a need for an over-arching narrative that links existing narratives and struggles together. Food might serve as a driving and unifying theme. This narrative has to be evolved both on the national as well as the international level.
- What kind of international or national platform could serve as a portal for discussions and working plans in the fields of food sovereignty, climate change and financial crisis etc? Meeting with officials (during) and after the international climate talks. There is a need to build solidarity campaigns based on key struggles in different regions, e.g. “stop landgrabs”, “leave the oil in the soil”.

Group 2

- Identified the need to discuss and debate market-based mechanisms that are being proposed for climate and agriculture solutions. Where is the common ground in that discussion? The Tellus Institute, USA, offered to provide digital space for this discussion.
- Landgrabbing is a key issue and several groups are already working on it (e.g. ActionAid). APRODEV is going to launch a campaign against finance that leads to landgrabbing, thereby linking agriculture, finance and climate. They will connect to existing campaigns and welcome others.
- More information is needed on the climate and agriculture issues- The group identified the need to compile key readings and circulate in order to increase the level of knowledge.

Group 3:

- “Science Justice”: The scientific community does not consider social justice and human rights enough. Science is not “neutral” when it comes to policy. The scientific community must not remain a solo “elite” which neglects traditional and local knowledge and the interlinkages between e.g. food and climate. This can lead to proposals which are contradictory to the latest scientific work regarding their environmental integrity. Those interested should contact Kelly Rigg (contact info: kelly@vardagroup.org).
- IAASTD was deliberately ignored, but now the Committee on World Food Security has agreed to support national assessments and the Millennium Institute is interested in working with a broad cross-section of civil society organizations to do national assessments that put food security at the center and include all sectors of the economy. Those interested should follow up with Hans Herren (contact via his personal assistant Benjamin Gräub; b.graeb@biovision.ch).
- It was felt that some common fundamental baselines between those working on agriculture and those working on climate must be agreed upon. I.e. how do we engage on the green economy and other private sector-led initiatives?
- There needs to be a strategy for overall systemic change that keeps justice at its heart: How do we get to peak emissions now?

Group 4:

- Brazil deconstructing myths about companies doing something more efficiently and showing how agroecology doing it much better (pesticides and GMOs). We need make the debate concrete with real-life examples. The anti-pesticide campaign helped inadvertently promote GMOs. So we need to think through medium to long-term impacts of campaigning positions. “Agroecology can feed the world.” Can we say, “agroecology can feed and heal the world.”?
- One way to deal with corporate power is to strengthen “naming and shaming” campaigns and bring in more legal cases, particularly on highly destructive issues such as resource grabbing. Another suggestion was to expose corporate funding; lead divestment campaigns, brand attacks, and learn from social media campaigns that have been successful.
- The GCCA is undergoing a review process. They made the review available to the conference and though they are 370 organizations now, they are looking for input into the review to devise their new campaign strategy. For more information please contact Kelly Rigg (kelly@vardagroup.org)



Impressions from the discussions on Nov 3rd

Outcomes and Results

One of the key goals of this conference, respectively the project, was to promote a dialogue and kick off new strategies towards a great transformation. According to the main report of the WBGU (German Advisory Council on Global Change), “World in Transition- A Social Contract for Sustainability (2011), the central fields of transformation are energy, land use (agriculture and forestry) and urbanization and urban development. Although these thematic fields are often treated separately, they are actually tightly connected in complex interdependent systems.

It was therefore that organizations and stakeholders from different parts of the world and with a diverse but corresponding thematic background were invited to start a dialogue across the borders of their working fields. Besides, a large space has been given to everyone during this conference to connect on different levels of engagement as well.

During the working groups and the plenary sessions, strategies have been discussed, how NGO's and other civil society actors can influence policy frameworks, business models and public awareness. One example, how to possibly increase the political influence of civil society, could be the formation of a close EU-China-India Alliance. This idea was actually formed during the conference and is now close to its starting point. The goal of this upcoming project is to link up the actors of civil society of these regions, to promote the sharing of knowledge (e.g. via best practice examples) and to prepare e.g. policies with regard to the "big" international conferences on climate change. This idea has been formed under the influence of the climate talks in Doha, where NGO's seemed to be rather unprepared and therefore unable to form a unified resistance against some of the proposals from northern governments.

Equity among North and South and more and more inside countries will be discussed in an informal group organised by GCCA and Vasudha Foundation Indie. Out of the working group on corporate power and unsustainable subsidies in energy and food came the common wish to continue the work on subsidies and form it into common action. First meetings have been held. An informal exchange among southern and northern activists starting after the conference is following the idea of a corporate campaign to address questions like misuse of corporate power, work conditions and the problem of cartels in different sectors.

Another process which has been promoted by the discussions during this conference was the strategy to raise attention regarding the outcomes and conclusions of the IAASTD report (2008) and transfer them from the international to the national level. Together with an exchange program with Bangladesh, to promote the transfer of knowledge regarding adaptive strategies for climate change, these ideas and projects are good examples for the successful dialogue that has taken place during this conference.

The main result of the day was a new trust building among south - north actors from various fields of work and with different approaches. The dialogue and the conference were seen as a starting point in future exchanges. High motivation and expectation for future cooperation and thanks to the organizers and funders were key at the last feedback session.



DIALOGUE ON TRANSFORMATION

Imprint

Conference report

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