Towards Organic Asia (TOA)
Delegation and Contribution to
International Forum for Wellbeing
Wealth, Happiness: What Indicators to Build Tomorrow?
6-8 June 2018, Grenoble, France

In Collaboration with
College of Natural Resources (CNR), Bhutan
Metta Development Foundation, Myanmar
Rural Development Agency (RDA), Lao PDR

Supported by
CCFD Terre Solidaire, France and TOA partners
Agro-ecology: A Radical Middle Path to Wellbeing Society

Hans van Willenswaard: Gives an overview of the networks and the representatives of School for Wellbeing, a platform for academia – civil society collaboration. The major activities are the Chulalongkorn University Right Livelihood Summerschool (CURLS) and Towards Organic Asia (TOA); more recently the Earth Trusteeship Platform is emerging.

TOA network and Partners are from Mekong Countries and Bhutan (the natural partner for Himalaya region and Tibetan Plateau, the origin of Mekong river). We think that agro-ecology is a very important factor to change the whole economic system. Agro-ecology is a platform for all kinds of organic and natural farming, perma-culture and traditional farming, neither industry based nor chemical based. FAO defines agro-ecology by diversity, synergy, efficiency, resilience, recycling, comprehension and sharing of knowledge, human and social values, culture and food tradition, circular and solidarity economy, and responsible governance.

It’s a holistic approach to agriculture and food systems. If we are able to practice agro-ecology as the mainstream it would be a new model not only for food systems but for the economic system as a whole. This is what we are exploring in this session.

The contrasting values of French revolution are equality and freedom, and our challenge is to find the middle way, not by compromise but by co-creation of an alternative economy. We can see that the contradictions between Socialism (equality) and Liberalism (freedom) become toxic as extreme manifestations Communism and Neo-liberal Capitalism: resulting in State Farming and Corporate Farming. There is no place for small-scale independent farmers who unite in networks with consumers.

Attempts to compromise lead to “state capitalism” or “capitalism supported by the state”. Therefore, we need to co-create a radical middle path. The pivot value is community (sister- and brotherhood, the third value of the French revolution). The “wellbeing society” is based on agro-ecology: care for the Earth and Humanity driven by community spirit. Within the threefold dynamics of Government, Civil Society, and Business, the business sector will have to fully adopt the principle of “community” like in social entrepreneurship; and leave “freedom” to civil society. The state has to guarantee equal justice. This aligns with the concept of Earth Trusteeship: as world citizens, we all are trustees of the Earth. Like the constitution of Bhutan (2008) states that all citizens of Bhutan are trustees of the natural resources of Bhutan in the benefit of present and future generations.

Sai Sam Kham: Executive Director of Metta Development Foundation in Myanmar. Metta is very active as a humanitarian organization as well as an organization that promote agro-ecology. We are working with farmers and one of the ideas that we have learnt from Buddhist Philosophy is “Samma Ajiva or Right Livelihood.” So, talking about Livelihood that is good for you, good for other, and good for nature. In Buddhism, the others are not only human beings; it could also be animals, trees, river, and the earth itself.
And, Engaged Buddhist’s philosophy, regarding the five-precepts, the first precept is *Do no harm to others;* this is not only killing others, but also looking on the modern day institution, infrastructure, and system. By that, we do not only avoid the killing, we also avoid the agency or institution that engaging the suffering and killing of others, for example the agro-chemical industry, or business sector, or the state that committing and creating suffering to other beings; this is the philosophy that inspired our organization.

We are working with farmers; there are many problems on the political issues and economic issues; and the farmers are suffering so much in term of lacking of information & knowledge, land grabbing, the project on one belt on road so-called new silk-road project. Therefore, the responsible of civil society become safeguarding the wellbeing of the citizen and country.

Between the European Union and Myanmar government, there is a contract ready to be signed which is called Investor Protection Agreement (IPA), the is a modern day structural violence that ordinary people would found very difficult to understand, the overarching policy and international agreement that will effect to the wellbeing of the society, so we need to challenge to the European Union, is it fair or how can we do this kind of agreement better? This is the work we are doing base on the philosophy that we have.

**Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh:** I’m working for Rural Development Agency; when we are talking about rural in Laos, the capital city is Vientiane and it is not a modern city as the whole town, it can be considered as a rural also. So the vision of RDA, we want to be an agency to inspire and empower rural communities in Laos. This vision came from our mother organization called PADETC, the founder is Mr. Sombath Somphone who was abducted on 15 December 2012, PADETC promote sustainable model and it has a metaphor as a house, where we call the happiness’s house. To build this house we need a strong foundation of good governance and quality of education. Above that this house has four pillars that we have to balance all those. The four pillars included Environment, Culture, Economic and well-being. The roof of this house is the goal that everyone wants to achieve that was Happiness roof.

From the vision we are working on a holistic self-sustaining, community service, provision of community education, environment, and livelihood, in a broader sense. Then, in our action, in the last 5 years, we were established a community forest or Community Demonstration Learning Centre. We have learned from the project cycle is going to be end. Therefore, we need to make a concrete sample of what we believe. We have got a piece of land for 15 hectares, located at the 40-km northeast from Vientiane Capital. RDA and I are developing this as agro-ecology demonstration centre to share the knowledge, local wisdoms, and technique with others.

**Sonam Tashi:** It is a pleasure to be here and share something on agro-ecology and in return also learn from your experiences.

Agriculture is a necessary evil, but agro-ecology may said to be lesser of the evil. It strives to be a sustainable system of food and fibre production through the integration of diverse knowledge on the relationships between plant-soil-water-animal-human and bigger encompassing ecosystem. This trans-disciplinary and
multidisciplinary knowledge is critical because crop growth and production does not happen in isolation. As we know, it is dependent on several elements in the ecosystem. Given that it goes without saying that to obtain healthy crops we need a healthy ecosystem.

So growing crops helps us to reflect on the health of the ecosystem. This means it requires us to take good care of our ecosystem. That is if we aspire to obtain good crop consistently.

In this regard, agro-ecology system fits well in Bhutan’s own development philosophies.

Protection and conservation of environment and ecosystems is one of the four pillars of Gross National Happiness concept. Bhutan is blessed that the Constitution requires us to maintain at least 60% of the land under forest cover at all times to come. And so Bhutan today has 72% of the land under forest cover and more than 50% of the land is dedicated and conserved as wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and nature reserve. Of course we do have critics who feel that Bhutan is prioritizing animals’ welfare and wellbeing over the needs of humans.

Like organic agriculture that Bhutan has embraced agro-ecology is also holistic. Some people argue that agro-ecology and OA are not the same. Perhaps, it depends on how we define a system. So long as a system is sustainable and is not just inclusive and holistic but is also socially and environmentally less damaging then I think we need to be receptive to its practice.

As we move along overly destructive path to agriculture development based on conventional way of farming and as we begin to internalize the lessons from the green revolution, agro-ecology and organic farming will be more relevant. Increasing I feel agro-ecology and organic farming need to be and should be our future. Agro-ecology and OA will give us food without compromising the quality and health of our environment.

It is comforting to note that agro-ecology is getting recognized and adopted in many countries around the world from Africa to Brazil to countries in the global north.

Narumon Paiboonsittikun: I hope to share some experiences with the others, regarding other panels and workshops I see that we want to take action or to do something together.

Within the network of Towards Organic Asia, we see that knowledge can be transferred, but how to change the attitude and take it in to practice, so our works meant to shift the paradigm of people in the society, particularly the young people / young farmers who would like to work together towards the organic agriculture in the regions.

For the paradigm shift, from the compartmentalization to holistic approach to work in the community, community is a very keyword for our work, we work with young farmer and we work with the community by bringing people together from one
generation to an younger generation, therefore, we can learn from each other. It’s very effective if we can encourage the young people to be respected and understood from the older generation.

TOA works and partners with others to encourage the young people on farming, to see that farming could be our future, agro-ecology could be a model or a solution for our current issues, and to build a young organic farmer network is to build hope for our society.

---

**Question and Answer**

**Question 1**: Some people criticise that Bhutan has devoted too much of resources for other species than human species. I think, its very important lessons that Bhutan can give the message about the unity of life, human being seems to be on top of other creations, putting the others below or to be used. I think, we have to get away from this idea or concept.

**Sonam Tashi**: I will elaborate more on harmony with animal what it should be and the exiting situation. Actually, more than 50% of land has been preserved, as wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, of course, there are communities and people living nearby these nature reserves. We respect nature, and worship is very common for forest, animal, and also associate with god and goddess, the strong link and connection, there is no separation, there is interdependent between animals, human, and nature. So, this concept is still there in all the people, and that really help people to refrain ourselves from doing no harm to others and other things surrounding us.
**Question 2** (a friend from Germany): I see the situation on the growing population, the corporate and neo-liberalism is taking over the land more and more. The question is what you are doing in the country regarding the issues. And another question is in Germany has the policy to become 20% of organic agriculture, right now is about 12 %, so in your country what is happening in reality?

**Sai Sam Kham:** I would like to link with the previous question and talk about natural capital, the word “resources and capital”, historically and comparatively, are quite new to Myanmar. Before that, we have very similar value like in Bhutan to respect the nature; we believe the trees, rivers, and mountains have other beings or spirits there. When the modern education came with colonialism and churches that kind of relationship and respecting nature has dramatically change. When the science come in and say these are the resources that we can manage, and it’s affecting our economics, farming, and everything.

Regarding the government policy, there is nothing concern with smallholder farmers. And when I said safeguarding the wellbeing of the society and the farmers, they will say they consult with the agro-economist expert from Oxford University who may (or may not) visited Myanmar for a week, and then told us that the policies which prioritized smallholders in other countries especially in Africa all has failed.

This means we encourage corporate farming and industrial farming in the name of modernisation in Myanmar, but we are not learning form the experience of other countries and still looking on western industrial farming model as something we should copy from. This is where we are. And for the land grabbing, for the time being, there is only civil society organisations and farming communities are trying to fight against.

The last point about churches and pope Francis, his instruction to respect nature and to think about climate change, so, somehow the society has responsibility, church and religion communities also has responsibility to talk about social justice in our society.

**Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh:** I would like to mention about land grabbing in term of policy, we have the policy on turn the land into the capital. Then the government rent the land to the investor, and most of the land, farm, and forest turning to rubber, banana, and watermelon plantation, a huge area and a lot of chemical used.

And the role of our civil society, to take action, we make a small video about the labour in banana plantation, the impact on the illness. The labour will be hire for farming more than 2 years because the health issues. The films we made lunch out to ministry of agriculture, the national assembly, and report to prime minister. The prime minister orders to stop the banana plantation Laos, however, the investors are not stop, they change from banana to sugar cane.

**Question 3:** Can organic farming / Agro-ecology feed the world?

**Onam Tashi:** There are so many debates on this. In reality, if we look at how the food distribution system is and how production system is, enough food is produced but
most of it is wasted; to reach the food we produce to those who need, we need to streamline efficient distribution system. There is enough empirical evidence to show that organic farming is as good as conventional farming and so the question of organic agriculture not being able to feed the world does not arise.

**Narumon Paiboonsittikun:** The policy and promotion of organic agriculture in Thailand, of course there is a policy from the result of organic movements in Thailand. There is a policy to 150,000 units of organic agriculture and it has been changed to 500,000 units, this is not event 1% of the land in total.

This is very affirmation that we are working on advocacy at policy level, but the most important part is us, the civil society and community to community, and we do not exclude the academic and government sectors.

**Question 4** (a friend from South Africa): The issues you mentioned are happening worldwide, we also try with the government that agro-ecology should be implemented, and there, young people see farming is outdated for uneducated people. This is something wrong because we will not be able to produce our food. And the government also promoting industrial agriculture, which is chemical intensive, kill the soil and everything. We are working in Cape Town, we teach young kid how to grow food, to understand ecology and to connect with nature. So, how we mobilize people to grow their own food?

**Sonam Tashi:** It’s very encouraging to see two farmers here in the forum, in Bhutan we have strong political support for organic agriculture, to achieve the goal of converting to a fully organic country, the agriculture extension agents and farmers have been trained on organic agriculture, as well as the awareness on organic agriculture is being created. I think these are 2 most important tools to promote organic agriculture. And from next year our college will be launching a formal bachelor’s degree on organic agriculture. There are very few universities in the world that offer bachelor’s degree on organic agriculture.

**Question 5** (Francis, Grenoble): How is the situation about land grabbing and farmers in Myanmar?

**Sai Sam Kham:** What we are doing in Myanmar through the civil society movements and through the farmer movements, we start working on food sovereignty but it’s still in the early stage.

We have been working with farmers for more than 20 years and one thing that we try to do is the land law awareness. The laws have weaknesses but there are also some provisions that protect the farmers. Most of the farmers don’t understand the law, event farmers know about the law they don’t know how to fight against the land grabbing in the court, this is where the civil society organization come in.

There are also lawyers who are providing pro bono services, providing free service to the farmers who want to fight in the court case. It’s not easy to fight because it’s the states that commit the crime against the farmers. However, there are many techniques and resistance that people are using.
Land grabbing causes by Chinese investment can be seen in banana plantation in northern Myanmar. This is illegal because there is no contract farming law in Myanmar. So, corruption definitely is there and it’s difficult to challenge to the states that corrupted. This is why international solidarity is important for us. We are trying to do a research. Where does these banana produced by Chinese company goes? And then we can work with our international friends from other countries where the Chinese companies are exporting their banana to. And then we may be able to do getting consumer pressure to the corporate. This is what we are trying to work in the land grabbing issues.

Reflection on the International Forum for Wellbeing
Wealth, Happiness: What Indicators to Build Tomorrow?

Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh: What I learned, the lessons learned on wellbeing, in the forum there was combination of many topics, I can see that when we talk about wellbeing its not only one thing we can do to make wellbeing happened. I was interested in the Health, a key agent in social transformation; I learned it included education, environment, sport, and food safety. Back home what I’m doing is about Health and Nutrition backgrounds, so I’m going to bring back home is a new approach, before I only talked about health regarding environmental aspect which is not enough. I also learn about the convincing- to convince people to understand about health, it is difficult. So, what we can try to do is the research (scientific research) to make people aware of their practice and the results of what they are going to be such as diabetes and cancer are the result from our behaviours on eating. I will go back and discuss with the team about Health and Nutrition in a broad concept, this will help us to develop our program.

I did not only learn from the forum, I learned from the group as well, learning from Sam speech, there is a question from a friend in France asking about what people here could do to make ourselves happy? And then the response is being here in a
very short time should not tell anyone what to do; I think, this is the right answer and I learned not to give answer. Thank you TOA and CCFD

Sonam Tashi: I also would like to thank TOA and CCFD for this opportunity. This morning I was reflecting on the conference. At some point it seems really well organized, if you look at how different groups we been made, the young press who bring out very fresh stories to the outside audiences, as well as all participants who participated in the forum. On the other hand, it also felt a bit chaotic. I have this mix feeling.

Looking back on the first day, we have been talking about the indicators; perhaps at the end of 3-day forum we might have declaration or come up with some kind of understanding from each of the plenary and round table as take home messages. It could have been any concrete next steps to be undertaken together; or it could have been left on the individual to pick up the best based on the personal perceptions and interests.

So, What I take back from the forum is the need to organize press people to cover event and bring out right way the happenings in the forum. That way even if you don’t have opportunity to attend all the events or workshops because of this press people we can update ourselves on the happening in all the events.

Overall, it was very educational, for example yesterday during the discussion on Wellbeing in a risky society: Resilience strategies, it had all the characteristics, elements and definition was based on the ability to bound back, that was insightful. And in the closing, the Spanish argument about the expert having no feelings and the lady who responded to that made good point. She said that such views can skew people’s opinion about experts. Experts do have feelings and emotions They are also humans.
For the wrap up, I was in 4 different workshops and one of that was Radio broadcasting on the theme of Wellbeing in Education and education for Wellbeing. I participated in that and had a short talk although I’m not an expert on education. Another one was about GNH indicator in Bhutan: principles and inspiration for our actions to share about capitalism and faith. Isabella (facilitator) has been in Bhutan 4 times and wanted to clarify that there is certain discrepancies between what have been promote and what is being done. So what are the contradictions or difficulties in implementing GNH? I tried to provoke the audiences that there are difficulties and Bhutan is not a paradise for GNH; there are hungry people and there people who are unhappy. Otherwise, people will think that everyone is happy in Bhutan. This point was also presented by Dasho Karma Ura. Dasho said that we need not just good policies but also resources to implement these policies. Again, thank you so much.

Hans van Willenswaard: For me it’s very good to see the spirit and enthusiasm by French and also Latin America because for us GNH became little bit routine. I’m very happy that it has been rejuvenated as a group and it’s very good to see so many people together discussing the issues, something new, inspiring, and even revolutionary. This was very good and it woke up my own interest again and I would like to explore this path more.

I also learned how to organize a conference in a creative way; it very good to see how to build in so many dimensions (maybe too many), for example, I would like to hear more from the academic stream but that seems to be different track. The way they build in all kind of elements to make it lively, reflect again, small group discuss and so on. They are really mastering in organizing the conference in a very lively and participatory way. This is learning for me.

One more thing, apparently there is Earth Right from Latin America side; this is something that really coming up now at the global level. This is link to GNH and Bienvivre (Wellbeing). If we also include that in agriculture movement and in agro-ecology movement that will be a big help to bring it back to the forefront. I’m very happy to be part of it and thank you very much.
Sai Sam Kham: For me, I’m very much impressed with the volunteers. Our host, they are very well prepare and also very flexible to accommodate the changing situation. They don’t really know our need or our plan but they accommodate all the changes. This is what I really like to acknowledge that people with their good will and good intention who are giving their time and resources to support this to happen. This itself it’s a kind of spirit of wellbeing, not everything is made through money. People are donating their time and also their resources to make this happen this I would like to acknowledge.

I would also like to acknowledge the very complex and divers way of organizing the forum. Somehow, I can see the different in Europe and in Asia. In Asia, it’s a kind of imposing on people, I don’t think it’s a correct word but I cannot consider another word, the way we organize session that would be more on the interest of the organizer side but here they have flexible space for participants side that is very interesting. And of course, as Sonam mentioned it’s a bit chaotic because sometimes we don’t know the room number in the first day and we don’t have the translation but this is something that we can also expect from this kind of the very big and complex conferences. Although, you try to prepare perfectly, any conference might have this kind of difficulties or challenges.

What I really like is bringing Bienvivre from Latin America and the GNH together, and also try to analyse in a lot of contexts in Europe so that’s interesting. Especially, try to find a way to integrate academia, practitioners, and the ordinary citizens this is what I really like about the forum. Also the different partners in the society like the elderly people are participating and youth are also participating. I think, this is summer holiday, so the students are not here if they are here it will be even better.

My other comment, I was also participating in different workshops and we can give our messages across in different panels; so this is good. But the TOA session, somehow, the last day the last session is a little bit challenging because everyday
people energy is going dawn. I think, next time if we are going to organize, as a guess we could also request the earlier session for our workshop that would be good.

The other think I like is Dasho Karma Ura input. He was giving a massage about policy, national budget, and planning to reflect the policy. To look at the practical aspect when it comes to the national level of implementing this kind of value and principle. One very strong message from him is to transform the financing and banking sector. This is very important message I took it away as it's something for us to see when we talk at the national level. In the same panel, I also very much like the president of CCFD give a very passionate response, I really would like to see it's documented and come up. She's directly challenging the government because the government people are saying like it's good but it will be very difficult through the administrative system and bureaucracy. I think, this is the excuse we often hear with any government; so her challenged the government is responsible and must look for a way to make it doable because the civil society has already come up with and where is the government's role now? This is a powerful response.

The final point is the policies and transformations also have it own life. The first GNH conference started in 2004, and then again to talk about this idea in France it takes time. To me, it looks like gardening to sow the seeds and it's sprouting, and to flower and fruit it might takes some other time.

Narumon Paiboonsittikun: Lessons learned from the forum, I agree with all of us about the topics and combination that have been built together in this forum. I felt the staff and the team has shown us what the wellbeing is. I didn't see (maybe there is) the team expressed any frustrating, but they were really calm and well prepare. Even thought there were juggling with some kind of technological issue but they hardly show the tiredness or anger to others. I really appreciated the atmosphere of the conference very much, as well as the diversity, activity (workshop and round table), including the representatives of Ministry of Happiness from a small world.
In term of theme and contents, I felt the team has been working hard, and they got to the points. But personally, I felt some part is too academic and philosophical. It’s good to have this part and I also think it would be good to see some practical more, probably the time is too short, as usual in many other forums and conferences. However, in general, I felt good and appreciated this forum.

In term of coming and attending the forum, what I have got is I get to know more about different organizations that partner with CCFD, we have met friend from South Africa and East Timor. It’s really good to get to know each other, have good connection, and understand more of their works. In a very positive way, it’s affirmed that we are seeing and understanding the same thing and we can do more together. For long term, to build the collaboration with other countries in Asia that would help strengthening TOA network.

It’s very useful to see and experience the collaboration for organizing an international forum and the involvement of local authority and other sectors, the international GNH conference in Nong Kai, Thailand and the international forum for wellbeing in Grenoble.

**Wallapa van Willenswaard**: For myself this forum it’s a kind of journey, which started in 2010 when we came here as a partner during the KAREM, and I see it as a process. Yesterday, I have a chance to greet with CCFD president; she made it clear that there will be continuity of this forum and CCFD is committed for this.

I felt this forum is a very diverse in term of concepts, philosophy, movement, and works. One thing I like is there are many entry points, either entries from indicator or social movement or academia. I felt it a diverse entry point.

It looks chaotic but in a way it looks organic at the same times because it’s a mixture. Unexpectedly, you might feel uncertainty but at the end they really make it and they show the passionate.
I also think, for the people in Grenoble it’s a kind of alternative movement, be strengthened by this movement because the way they have to prepare for this they have talked over the year; it’s a process that they strengthen themselves; and we come here we have been strengthened and help strengthen.

I also talked to Olivier. He also said that a lot of cities want to do the same thing and he said let’s see because the soil of Grenoble is a fertile soil when you plant the moment like this it will be furnishing when other city has no rich network. Again, I learned that if we want to have a platform we should a divers entry for different elements for composing.

Our gratitude to host families

The Political Economy & Agro-ecology Action Research:
A Collective Action of TOA Network

Background:

Presentations at the Wellbeing Forum, Grenoble, often addressed socio-political challenges. It was good to discover that “Wellbeing, Happiness, Buen vivir, Ubuntu” are not, as often perceived, “soft” issues but in many ways have strong messages about real problems and challenges, and sources to overcome these. Our TOA presentations equally pointed at socio-political aspects of agro-ecology. The situations we reported in our countries are often deeply concerning us, and the target groups we are working with, in particular farmers, rural communities and consumers. TOA has undertaken a range of activities towards action research and
advocacy at policy level (see below). The Wellbeing Forum experience urges us to lift that to a “next level”.

Discussion:

In Bhutan, in terms of agriculture and production we have the request for technology or packages to make the production happen and a relatively good production. So, we are not lacking on that side but we have seen support and service are missing. Giving one example from Bhutan, every year more than 50% of the land remains empty and not being cultivated. On the other hand, we import food from India every year. How can that happen? We actually know how to produce food but the land remains vacant.

From the perspective of Political Economy Research, there is a strong link to Indian politics. During the last election in Bhutan, they are openly interfering the trade, the price of oil is increasing, and that is really happening and influencing opinions. The Indian government is meddling with the election by raising the oil price. This is one specific case in Bhutan.

Mekong region:

Similar cases are happening in Lao PDR and Myanmar where we perceive a strong interference from China, including land grabbing. And it is not only foreign interference but also national governments like in Thailand that have strong policies favouring industrial farming and urbanization over agro-ecology. Ultimately, big multi-national and local corporations with financial interests are behind keeping food systems in the grip of hard commerce. This wipes out traditional farming and food sovereignty.

We need to “link the dots” and that is a huge effort in the field of Political Economy Research in the Mekong region, South East Asia and the Himalayas. This includes assessment of how the ADB, World Bank, FAO and etc. have positive or negative impacts on the farming sector, food systems, food safety and food security. And what policy trends there are; who are the actors in promoting change? How to conceptualize and communicate alternative policies that convince the non-believers?

Working groups:

To strengthen advocacy for agro-ecology in the region we need more collaboration and academic support towards evidence that can change the mindset of policy makers and citizens. We probably need a person or an organization that could support our network to really pattern and help organize our action research efforts and advocacy in a systematic way.

This research/ comprehensive study could be a combination between the action research-working group, technical support working group (“Seed Freedom”) and Mindful Markets (MM forum as platform for policy debate) of TOA partners; and the interaction between supporting experts and TOA partners.
TOA Collaboration and Roles of the External Experts:

- To identify the expert / the body
- To discuss and plan for the scope and focus of each country

Among us, only Sonam Tashi (CNR) has a PhD degree while others have Master degrees and professional experience, not enough for academic research. Also we don’t have time. We often talk about this study, like now, and it is a real concern because it’s influencing our reality, but we don’t have time to tackle it. Especially a participatory approach needs long-term time investment.

There are some possibilities to discuss for further collaboration and outreach for support; we can link with them to work together with TOA network.
- In Bhutan and other countries there are retired foreign experts e.g. from Europe
- The university of Grenoble (follow up from the Wellbeing Forum) and other universities in France, Germany and other countries
- Building the collaboration with universities in Thailand (e.g. Maejo University, Chiang Mai) and other universities in the region
- Right Livelihood College network / School for Wellbeing

Next steps and Timeframe:

- A draft proposal to be discussed in the partners meeting, December 2018, and the new EC
- The research on political economy came out from Grenoble, if TOA partners agree on this we will make a plan together for:
  o Expectations from TOA partners
  o TOR for the core group
  o Timing
- The research tentatively starts after the partners meeting in December

Advisory Group:

- Khampoui, PADETC
- Vitou Sam, CEDAC
- Bao, AAN
- Hans, School for Wellbeing

Core Group:

- Sonam Tashi, CNR
- Sai Sam Kham, Metta
- Chanthalangsy Sisouvanh, RDA
- Wallapa van Willenswaard, School for Wellbeing, TOA/Mindful Markets
- Narumon Paiboonsittikun, TOA Coordinator
- External expert
Past activities:

- IFOAM conference in Korea (TOA delegation)
- YOF in PDR Lao and presentation of manifesto
- Partner meeting in Bago, Myanmar
- TOA country assessment workshop conducted by Hans R. Herren
- IFOAM PGS committee and URGENCI (CSA) in Bangkok facilitated by TOA
- La Via Campesina conference, Bangkok (contribution TOA)
- Mekong region literature research Pauline Renoir (CCFD intern)
- TOA Wellbeing indicators workshop
- Land-issue research; comparing wellbeing impact organic and industrial agriculture
- TOA Multi-stakeholder platform with NESDB in Thailand; start seeds project and follow-up in Bhutan
- PGS and CSA, rural regeneration, conference in China (presentations TOA)
- Participation in FAO agro-ecology conference, Bangkok
- PGS and CSA workshops in Myanmar and Vietnam (+ multi-stakeholder meeting)
- GMO protest in Thailand
- TOA Mindful Markets fora with consumer-producer cooperatives in Japan and Korea (and workshops) (publication of book); La Via Campesina; Prof. Wen, China; Colin Gonsalves, India (September 2018)
- Country assessment report, Myanmar
- IFOAM conference in India (TOA delegation)
- TOA presentations ASEAN/UNESCO conference in Bangkok
- Multi-stakeholder meeting on GMO in Vietnam
- TOA delegation to Wellbeing Forum, Grenoble, France