

Field notes meetings, casual discussions, encounters

Occasion	
MCE-06/03/2013	<p>L. and me meet 3 staff members and [the urban garden pioneer] at his house. Coordinators do the job full time. The project is in the 3rd year now. We both present our studies and receive curiosity about our motivations. When mentioning about a mapping that we aim at doing, they are rather critical about the relevance of a mapping at all! Don't see the point.</p> <p>TCF project: fund from Sososo and income from workshops new members acquisition via Facebook</p> <p>>not much interest from MoA or universities whose research is not holistically structured. Funds for projects are 1 year term, but some don't continue, limiting factor mostly landownership</p> <p>Observation concerning the network: there does not seem to exist an complete database about the participants in TCF (because of active and passive / virtual members)</p> <p>Staff girls look alternative, maybe the first Thai that I saw being like this</p> <p>UF as instrument for learning for people</p> <p>>it is a mega trend but departing from civil society</p>
MCE-07/05/2013	<p>Urban farm, urban barn site visit and meeting with Architect for the site project is there, too, from some practice in Ekkamai family and architect team was present!!</p> <p>plot: textile factory for shirts, family enterprise for garments. Garden in the back, like ancient properties, typical local garden with canal and dykes, trees, banana plants. Another plot dry for leafy vegetables. Surrounding area former farming area, now residential. Their father arranged the plot, today the owners take care as well as the factory workers</p> <p>>canal system used to span the entire neighbourhood formerly but there is no legal protection for the canals, so their canal was cut off >>the owners pumps water from Chao Phraya now</p> <p>project: plan to build an organic farming and vending hotspot in this area by including some parts of factory building. co-working with farmers from Bangkachao and show case, cultural thing, factory workers shall be included after work</p> <p>green supermarket with GM included, though it will have conventional food, too. Reason is that the owener asked around if people would come if there was only organic food, they said no.</p> <p>Bicylce renting, composting, waste recycling etc</p> <p>funding still needed, until now, planning was funded through Holcim award, Toyota CSR</p>
MCE-08/11/2014	<p>Conversation while on farm visit to [an organic farmer's] father's fish farm (Pla salit) in Samut Prakan. On the way, we stop somewhere on Sukhumvit, in a small neighbourhood. 1 Lady cooks there at her house on charcoal fire pot regularly for the Raktai community, for a monthly salary of 25000THB. The idea is to include cooking in the community business by selling ready-to-eat dishes at the FM and the permanent stall in Gateway Ekamai, also delivery to holistic health Centre (Sukhumvit 31) where he sells every Saturday since 3 years. He would like to open a shop there, too.</p> <p>About [the organic farmer]: He is doing his business for 10 years now. I didn't know this but he doesn't do much farming himself. He has a pond and fish himself, grows some veggies like lotus stem the veggie list is from him.</p> <p>He knows his farmers groups and gets new recommendations to include them in his business of vegetable distribution.</p> <p>Some products come from CNX such as avocado, asparagus etc. Products come in ice</p>

	<p>trucks once a week; also from other provinces like Nakorn Ratchasima, Nakorn Pathum, as indicated on the veggie order list.</p> <p>„organic does not come from a label, it comes from inside, the farmer's mind“</p> <p>He seems very sophisticated and intelligent. BA in animal science and currently studying in Masters programme. He is simple and humble and has a good touch with nature.</p>
MCE-12/12/2014	<p>CSA and urban learning centre</p> <p>[The owner] CSA manager, vegetables and fruit, eggs from different farms, even from CNX region. 95 member. Label see picture. Everything packed nicely and ecologically in a woven basket, veg in banana or paper bags. Cool house for veg. Cool container for dairy and fresh soy products. She distributes for Dairy home, even to supermarket („modern trade“) like Tops, Villa, Big C.</p> <p>[another urban gardener] delivers some vegetables from his „farm“ when he has enough. She also adds some stuff, especially her mung bean sprouts.</p> <p>CSA as one business apart from the workshops and renting out part of the land for parking lot, car park for office workers nearby. Brings 9000Baht / month. The rent for shop / restaurant / garden is about 60000 /year.</p> <p>Restaurant is not very busy at the moment because her sister usually manages it but she got a brain cancer and cannot work. There are 3 chefs I think. Compared to last year, the restaurant is less busy and there is less stuff to buy. Last year more products like dried fruit, egg, etc.</p> <p>Workshops with children, school classes, or groups that kind of gather through a platform and books her. She charges usually 600 baht per person. In the weekend, she has a group from a charan sanitwong poor community. She charges only 200baht per person as they cannot afford more. It's only for food for the day.</p> <p>These business cover the rent, so it seems to be a good business. She has 12 I think staff in total.</p> <p>For the garden, [The owner] has one gardener, for the delivery, one driver. Otherwise some volunteers. Today, two young man, volunteers, were there to prepare the place for tomorrow workshops. Nice, he explained a lot in the garden, e.g. the compost. [The owner] says, she doesn't need to take care for herself for the garden, because they do everything and very good.</p> <p>Garden looks nice and similar to last year. Just the mushroom project failed. Sprout good business.</p>
MCE-20/06/2015	<p>N., accident meeting at Siam Green Sky when waiting for interview</p> <p>we go to TH FM on 3rd floor and for lunch with some members of HCO. We engage in a conversation about nutritional values of food and alternative medicine, and he starts to talk about HCO's activity on Vitaforce in foods: foods have vitaforce assets / values according to how they are digested especially by liver and thyroid.</p> <p>>>“That is what organic is about, organice has better value, better vitaforce, and also tastes better”</p> <p>his wife does healing workshops with 20 participants each time (not sure if each time new people)</p> <p>They are the first Thai people I met who sincerely feel bad about the spaghetti lunch from the food chain we eat at. The technique is a blend of Thai style and Japanese called “ring-o-sth” HCO adapted their version.</p> <p>Such an interesting and deep group</p> <p>Other information: O now working on his rice fields outside of town in the weekends now. He has ~2 hectar / 13 rai.</p>
MCE-14/07-15/07/2015	<p>Regional consultation at AIT on <i>Strengthening Food and Nutrition Security of the Urban People through Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture</i></p>

	<p>location: AITCC, B108, campus AIT, Pathum Thani organiser: FAO-RAP & AIT, Bangkok AIT invited speakers from several Asian countries, mostly 2 representatives respectively. Most of them give a 20minutes report of their activities in the field of urban agriculture and related topics. Representatives work in the fields of research, consulting, agriculture economics / implementation, governmental institutions (planning, environmental engineering, policies etc), technical assistance, climate change adaptation, nutrition. Countries represented: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan (no speaker), Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam.</p> <p>Themes: Nonthaburi Municipality talked about waste water recycling, a plant that has been promoted through the King (Bio fertilizer plant) Office of Agricultural Economics talked about Green Agriculture City Programme that has been included since the 10th Agricultural Development Plan(2005-2011), and aims apparently on food security and safety. The background here is the King's SE. Working group sessions on the second day, 4 groups, one on planning and implementation of peri-urban agriculture. There was one Indian participant who was first arguing against UA in general by the argument that UA steals jobs from rural farmers. in the Indian context it seems that UA is really understood as a profit making activity.</p>
MCE 01/09/2015	<p>At that time, [X] was still working in his job, marketing I think, but already thinking about an alternative as farmer. I remember that I didn't take him so serious as he just didn't look like a very practical man. A dreamer though. Anyhow, now he is just about to get his own farm started, in Pathum Thani, I think. As he is urbanite, he doesn't have land, and is using a government grant: Government allots him a piece of land under the condition that he proofs within 6 months if he can start a farm or not. He is stressed now as he still is working a bit in Bkk, I think, but has to start planting at the same time, to show some results. He says, he can't wait to be back on his farm. He maintains a little room in Bkk in the meanwhile.</p> <p>Khun [Y]'s information: the project / foundation started only this year! In January and has over 780 members so far, with 680 among them who already started their farm. Their advertising is rather defensive, on purpose, because they want to see how the first year evolves before starting to promote it, as government allotments are involved as well. Kae says, she wants to proof first that it works, and then encourage people to follow. Also, it can be quite sensitive and personal sometimes as newcomer farmers have to face their families who are sometimes not delighted about their idea to come back to the village and be farmer.</p> <p>The project then is about helping city people who once came to Bangkok in order to study and find work to go back to their home in the countryside to do farming. These people are mostly educated, studied people. Their motivations are many: First, they would like to go back and live with their families, their parents, take care directly and not only via financial support from the city, Second, they are tired from city life in Bkk, third, they are facing health problems and think they can live more healthy in their home town, fourth, they miss farming and really want to do it, and fifth, they want to give sth back to their home town. As all action spins around health somehow, they internalize organic growing principles. This goes along with the SE principles that are seen as model. Apart from health, this involves also the idea of poverty reduction in rural areas: Because of fewer input costs through the natural farming, farmers will stop getting more indebted. [Y] emphasizes here that the farmers are really not aware of how much they are spending. As they pay with credit card or anyhow get credit from the agricultural bank, they don't figure the amount of</p>

virtual money that they loose. They are thinking in tangible money through income only. This is a trap. The only way for them to get out of the vicious circle is to become self-sufficient.

Members that I saw seem rather young, which makes sense, in their 30s, 40s.

The personal story behind the project is that parents in rural areas invest a lot so that their children can go to the city to study and to earn some money, so they have a life easier than theirs who are farmers mostly. Most of the families have and but do cash cropping and are indebted. As a consequence, they don't want their children to come back to continue farming with them. Even though, they probably miss their children, they prefer them to have a secure job in Bkk or other cities. [Not all but most of the member are from Bkk.]

Those who want to go back face a hard situation: their parents are reserved, don't talk to them. Also, the villagers look down on them. They feel excluded because the villagers will think they are not good enough to find a decent job in the city. So, the members feel that they failed, and this is what family and villagers project onto them. Also, when trying to do the organic farming, villagers will look down at them first, just because they are not used to natural farming anymore and think this is crazy endeavour. In the first time, organic yields are low on top of this. [Y] confirms that there is a lot of pressure from the community in Thailand, it is very significant and a big problem for the children who come back.

What the foundation does in this case work at the root of the problem which is the parent's understanding of the concept of SE with OF. They gather a number of members to go to the family of one member and demonstrate together the concept and why it is good. They try to include other villagers as well. The aim is to build up trust, backup the member, try to 'soften the parent's heart' how she says because they feel anger and disappointment with the children. [family pressure is so high here!!!] [Y] says that even though the King's SE was a great thing, it didn't really work out in most of the cases. Reason is that the concept has been imposed, demonstrated to people but they have been left alone afterwards and didn't continue if and when they were facing problems. The same for the government workshop and trainings that have been received by farmers. The concept didn't touch the people's mind / heart, so they didn't internalize it or recognise it as sth aspirable. With the group, the do intensive and very personal work together with the farmers, so that in the end, all can live 'happily' and with less debts with their families. That's the concept roughly. Their concept has been inspired by Adam Kahane's book 'Power and Love', aiming on social change.

Most of the members have land available when they go back to hometown. Some of the members, like [X] or also [Y] and her partner or Bangkokians and have no land. They try to get land attributed by the government.

The Thai Army is somehow involved as well as they gave initital support. [Y] stresses though that despite this, the group sees itself as and wants to be apolitical. No matter which party people belong to as this is not essential for the aims of the group.

[Y] confirms seeing a movement in this.