

Farm and site visits (except rural farms)

Farm visit urban farm [O] 04.03.13

visit together with khun [N]

'neighbour [O]', producer & „vendor“

organic experimental, 1st year of farming on this land > former football pitch

organic chicken (approximately 20?), 1 rooster+1 fighting rooster+ another vietnamese rooster

>> 10 eggs per day

sale via announcement on FB, people come and pick it up!

Plan to have more chicken

fruit trees: 5 types of banana, 3 different coconuts, papaya, some local trees

garden in process > has to convert soil to beds. Sandy soil, so not easy to grow. Nakorn says, raised beds are good with bricks along the edge

[N]: „We are crazy people. Land prices are high so we could sell our land for much money“

Farm and site visit urban garden and learning centre, 28/03/2013

with [L] and [N]

Vegetarian restaurant at front house corner, behind parking space and garden on concrete. Former bus parking, 1 part of space still parking which she rents out for source of income

restaurant caters Indian food as well > a lot of Indian office workers from building opposite coming for lunch (buffet). It's also a green shop (eggs, rice, dried fruit, crafts)

She is renting the place from her neighbour for 35000THB/month

The owner's income: parking lot, waste recycling (sells to recyclers), learning centre, workshops, CSA

business: learning centre – mostly children for garden participative tours (soil, worms, insects)

>garden has educational purpose as well as production purpose

mostly kindergarten and elementary schools

workshops – Thai cooking class, pottery / ceramic for children & adults

teachers come here to learn

CSA – she sells her own veggies, also delivery (I think she buys stuff from other farms from different provinces) + egg and milk, arranges a box and delivers to 25 costumers

[compare to situation end 2014!! where she extended to 100costumers!!]

Garden: bamboo porch (for demonstration and workshops), garage, little cottage for gardening tools

idea – 2 years ago after workshop with Nakorn

cement > raised beds fill up with soil, some arches with pending crops and climbing stuff, lots of pots;

waste recycling using old fans and baskets, bags, rice bags

own compost (open air one + 3 in tons for further fermentation)

home made insecticides from lime, chilli and lemon grass

bean sprout station, mushroom house, pumpkin sprouts underneath and others in bags

fertilizer: minerals from Philippines volcano rock, vermiculture in drawers

Laksi district office rooftop garden

Laksi District Office, Amphoe Laksi, rooftop size 70-80m²

Laksi was built as a model for city gardens and is commercial

They call the place sustainable living land and / soil gardening + vertical gardening

confusion about fertilizer and hormone

1 kg earthworm is 1000THB!

Gvt funded the establishment of garden, the director had the idea of garden but her idea to do organic.

Her own motivation: she went to learning centre, wanted to do it and found other people. She used to work at factory before, then farm worker outside of Bkk. In 2545, D.O opened proposal to build up gardens, she applied and got the job (11years ago)

Prince Philipp from Belgium came to see

learning centre: e.g. Students, once a week 30-50 people from all over Bkk and TH

who buys veggies? People from the building, and some outsiders

challenges: weight of construct, problems with wind and light

their statements: "actually, organic produce is cheaper"

Khlong Toei district office balcony garden, 03/04

view on Bkk port& Bang Kachao

similar size to Laksi (60m²) but different arrangement

storyline: balcony before used by officers but too hot (exercise area) >idea of greening, gardening, ornamental and vegetables. Funding from fertilizer sale!!

Responsible person from cleaning department, started bio-fertilizer as extra source of income, as she needed to apply it somewhere, she had idea of garden.

Plot: recycling election boards, and bins from the streets, no chemical compost, coconut husk from market

vegetables are not really sold regularly, just to office members sometimes, (rather randomly)

Khlong Toei community garden 03/04/2013, first visit

supposed to be a model at former tollway authority with plan to be community garden for the neighbourhood

13 rai, formerly habited by homeless people, abandoned,

storyline: sanitary department needed space to store stuff collected from the streets, KT district bought it.

Observation: lady seems ambitious about community garden idea but rather passive. [compare with my later observations]

Laksi / Don Mueang district community gardens, 24/04/2013

1) Electricity Company 13°52.562'N / 100°33.372'E, responsibility: Laksi district office (Papasorn+Laksi staff), since 8 years

Location: in a small neighbourhood within Laksi district, on property of electricity company, run by local community. They rent from the company but are not sure if they can stay long-term on this property > no guarantee. If company needs it back, they have 3 months to leave. No right to build, only little shelter and shade area. Garden established 8 years ago >>ladies are rather positive that they can stay.

Storyline: residents wanted "to make the land useful in a way, also for their own produce and food security". It is not enough for all though as the actual grown surface is rather small. Second motivation to increase green area in the neighbourhood. They have been encouraged by Laksi D.O. No funding at the first place, so money collection within neighbourhood. Responsibility now on Laksi staff who gave them workshop at the site for how to grow organically. Villagers would like to expand but limited workers available, even though abandoned land in the village could be used.

Garden site: organic, own compost made on-site (villagers bring their kitchen wastes, and people

can take from it, too), chilli, banana, basil, lemongrass, mimosa. Otherwise much empty beds due to lack of time thus far. Seeds not collected but bought from outside > no space to grow plants just for seeds. Villagers can come and buy the produce at low price > money goes for seeds. They don't want to sell it at high price. 10 persons per day take care

Vision: grow more and cater the city. Healthy, organic food. new trend organic, growing number of UF, backyard gardens

>why organic? Because caretakers had headache from the sprays they were using before

2) private garden, dentist 13°54.37'N / 100°33.625'E

belongs to dentist who lives nearby but run by Laksi staff

before abandoned and neighbours came to dump waste on the site >owner wanted to change and sought Laksi staff to plant on the plot. He gets produce from there regularly

plot: 200m², concrete bands or bricks around beds, plants in plastic boxes and containers, trees, banana plants, papaya lemon grass, leafy vegetables, squash, herbs; compost on site

flood problem : inundation during flood at least one meter >[compare with sai mai]

money from vegetable sale goes to Laksi d.o but anyway little benefit

intention: neighbourhood greening and side benefit food for workers, staff happy to bring happiness to others and have healthy food

residents not involved in gardening only come for buying, ~20 per day; vegetables also sold at D.O staff seem motivated and happy

3) Soldiers site, barracks for soldiers and their families

name "from rooftop to the ground" with reference to laksi rooftop

permission to grow on the site which is huge >Laksi D.O grows here

Plot: very big and consists of several parts, including beds and trees and a pond, canal, little shed mostly leafy vegetables but also one diverse plot with mix of tree , banana, plants and beds.

Started only 1 year ago, but already looks lush, own compost production

soldier's wives help > their initiative to have sth to do and use unused land, advice from Laksi

produce: sold to soldiers or at d.o. , in case of surplus, also to local markets,

4) private garden khun F

nearby house and plot owner, does the garden with support from family and 2 occasional workers as she does it no full time, other job

property is near the village, house, garage next to it. Size about 800m²

plot: similar plants to others, compost bio-fertilizer; coconut husk mulching and crop rotation she seems quite serious about the fact that is organic

produce: sale at market or d.o where she also got her training

>Laksi initiative is like a brand already among the neighbourhoods

her profile: studied agri and comes from countryside, started 3-4 years ago. She took several courses as gardening passion for her, and was sent to China to give a workshop

first support from Laksi help: "helpful , especially in the first initial phase"

setting up the garden took 3-4 weeks in the beginning

she saves half and buys other half of the seeds

motivation: food safety, healthier, own food production, food to give away >>better living situation, happiness, extra money, better health, better relationships with family members

vision: make people interested in growing food, and it's more and more young people

challenges: heat is increasing and rain unpredictable

Urban farming site Khlong Tan, Phra Kanong, 08/06/2013

Site: Pattanakan Road, parallel to Sukhumvit, leads to Suvarnabhumi, 20000m²; belongs to relatives of the people who farm it right now, they farm in community, and rent out one part to another farmer which looks not so well maintained right now. Big road in the background, land surrounded by buildings, it is a residential area

>land could be sold at high price, a part of the adjacent land has already been sold by relatives, now residential, too.

Farmers: 2 main farmer families, live on-site. 1 farmer I talked to said, his grandfather came as Chinese immigrant and bought the land, he grew up there and started farming it 30-40years ago they sell their produce at the local Phra Kanong market and to wholesale, at higher price than monoculture vegetables from outer provinces. Also some other markets in the area. He has considered growing organically but sale is more difficult. He also heard that some farmers at GM sometimes cheat when they lack vegetables to sell. Though, he spends much income on chemicals. Middle men cut the prices a lot, so not much income but enough to sustain his household. Before, he grew more but as some workers have left to work in the city, now, he grows less but with more variety.

Diversity is very important to him and he keeps his own seeds. Diversity makes that he needs not much pesticides or insecticides! Chemical fertilizer from outside, uses little he says, no own compost, hay for mulching

typical vegetables, in parts water vegetables like krached (Mimosa).

Canal irrigation system that dates from his grandparents!! some fish and shrimp in it for home consumption, some ducks. For trees, herbs, anchan, he doesn't use chemicals because family comes to pick it!!

challenges: for growing in the city, he is not competitive as markets over cheaper vegetables from monoculture. He needs to sell more expensive as higher production costs
second farmer is old lady (78yrs) on other side of plot: worried about younger generation who doesn't want to continue farming, elderly remain at the farm, plot used to be rice farm
each raised bed / dyke can produce 1000kg vegetables per month, depending on species, she also sells to middle men, Talat Thai sets the prices
her father also immigrant from China.

Observations: slight smell > fertilizer? Quite swampy after rain. Farmer has amazing knowledge and experience. Said that he grows conventionally as he has more costs for diversity farming but doesn't get much premium at the market. Water quality good for organic, he should have more attention on his project.

Impression confirmed that Bkk lacks market to sell organic produce

Farm visit and interview at low income community, Sai Mai, 09/09/2014

Garden site is rather small as space is limited and needed for residency. At present, not so much planting as area flooded in 2011. After flood, problem with garbage on soil, soil damage >plants don't grow well. Plan to build community food distribution centre on the plot and a mushroom cultivation.

Fishpond with about 200 fish for eating

plants: banana, egg plant, chilli, herbs, otherwise not much identified

Anyone can come and pick for free

growing organically using nam mak

24.05.2015 Rooftop activity at Rooftop gardening learning centre in Siam area:

Design made by Landscape Architecture students at Chula, project run by Chula and I think advertised by Chula as well.

The garden is divided into two halves. Some stylish elements like graffiti on tubes. Terraces beds seem styled but apparently have some function. Look a bit spacy, might be due to the exposition to sun, surrounding high-rise buildings, and the lack of shade. It was really hot up there. Some 30 people came for the guided tour by two of the Chula students.

Shade seems to be one problem. I don't know how they will face it. Plant trees perhaps or just put sun protection.

Solar panels on each bed to make the pump run. The pump pumps water from downstairs. However, they are aiming on collecting rainwater soon, and also reuse the wastewater from the toilets.

> Inclusive project, more learning centre and show case for this landscape design.

I talked to one student. Apparently, they will organise eventually events for interested people like workshops on urban farming (inviting e.g. khun [N] as next expert) and maybe other topics. The girl mentioned the name of the Ajarn who manages this course.

>interview them. I left my name card, hopefully, the Ajarn will respond. If not ask Mam as she has been the student's Ajarn for some time.

+ Siam Green Sky rooftop garden and learning centre 22/07/2015

today, several school classes having excursion in the frame of a class on SE; number: about 120 plus teachers; BBC Bangkok business college

1 staff member and manager Kotchakorn coming

observations: garden looks greener than at first visit, plants seem to grow well

Phone, internship student from Landscape architecture at Thammasat explains willingly to me:

concept – belongs to chula, charitable, fundraising to make the rooftop useful

green roof for roof garden (greening and activity) and green garden

Siam as core of urban >urban heat island as problem to city >>green roof will decrease temperature;

urban ecology that should inspire other buildings

garden is organic, no chemicals but pollution from outside >constraint for the garden

rooftop garden **construction**: concern about weight; make ground waterproof, membrane

„Geotextile“, soil 20cm; get engineers involved

the slope parts are a concept of the mall, adapting rice terrace, water drainage; water collection system underneath stairs

Future: recycling of rain water

23.07.2015

Organic Expo 2015

July 23-26th, 10-20h at Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (Plenary Hall 1-3)

Observations from the first day

I arrived around noon, 2 hours after opening. Some business matchmaking going on, otherwise not crowded. Fair only in the plenary hall, no other part of the building like 2 years ago. No Greenfair either. In front of the hall, in the hallway food booths and rest area. Opposite of it some information stands, among others by Earthnet Foundation, also representing Gre[redacted] and A.C.T. Talking to the Ea[redacted] Fo[redacted] reveals that this booth serves for informing farmers who want to convert, or need any kind of advice on organic farming. Some posters and brochures, friendly lady (staff) and

one French internship student, helpful as well. Apparently, Gr [redacted] included some more initiatives in their programme: The sustainable fishing initiative (by some one else, but promoted through GN??) and some other certification stuff. A poster with the 6 organic initiatives perceived as best in Thailand by Gr [redacted] (see picture)

Inside area quite well organised and divided into various zones, with a stage in the middle where some farmer, or at least, he was dressed like a traditional farmer, was speaking while a film clip was running on the screen in the background. Some 20 to 30 people in the audience.
National certified organic zone, international certified organic zone, Green Shop zone, with subsections PGS organic [eventually find more]

Popiang farmer couple from Kalasin, Isan with American volunteer (girl with Thai roots). Very farmer style, very friendly. Picture of King in the background, which lets assume about SE. Reasonable prices.

Sections are divided into fresh produce, rice, cosmetics, textile, supermarket, tea, coffee
Ch [redacted] from P [redacted] Th [redacted] says that the division is kind of random and she doesn't understand why e.g. Di with Urbantree is another section at the other side of the hall with almost the same of the stuff. She says, the exhibitours cannot choose, it's the government who arranges the order and above all chooses who can come in and who not.

Some workshops, Z [redacted] Organics has quite a big workshop area with many people around. Not sure exactly what they make but it seems like soap making.
Some space is provided by the organiser for children, painting on textile or some similar thing.

Observations: Not so many information, compared to last year. For example presentation of project like e.g. last years young urban innovators (Urbie etc) or other information.
Possible that focus is more on the stage this time which takes more space than before.
I personally find the zoning quite positive. Negative point is that the centre part with stage appears to dominant.

Last day, Sunday 26/07/2015
26.07.2015

Went back on Sunday 26th around 2pm with [N]. Quite busy. The girl at the farmer's booth from Kalasin said that today was ok, Friday very little people, and Saturday so so. They, and some other booths were almost sold out. Visitors seem to go for shopping and trying new products. On top of that, products, especially in the national organics section are not very expensive, compared to supermarket organic.

Furniture and electronic fair in hall next to it. Some people do both.
Parking is free.
No entry fee.

The Ministry of Commerce is apparently just the sponsor but not the organising body. The latter (maybe the Ministry of Agriculture) is apparently, from what Apple from Thlos says the one who decides who to let in, and who does the design and setting up.
Urbantree very very busy, always so many people around his booth.
Some products are new to me: rice cereal

some products really fancy and made glamorous: Riceberry which seems to be hype. Also according to Nope. The black, riceberry noodle by noodle foodle (padthai pasta) are sold out. ;)

We saw a workshop at 3pm about sprouting. Sunflower sprouts and mungbean sprouts with special watering tool kit. Presentatours were two of the Laksi ladies, one of them khun [check name] who did the Laksi tour for us 2 years ago, the manager of the rooftop garden. Approximately 50 people around the booth.

In total, I would say it was calmer than 2 years ago. It should expand the surface though as many more vendors are on waiting list / applied to get in.

A friend's comment: “I think this exhibition is good to make middle class or higher people knows more about organic food, give the awareness about eating, and to protect the nature. Also support the organic suppliers“

27.08.2015

Laksi rooftop learning center II, 8th floor

with Chula Sasin events, 9-12am

nothing new in the introduction part

except maybe for that the initiators were a group of ladies who already grew organic vegetables in the district on abandoned lands. At some point, the land owner claimed the land back, so the gorup had to find a new place. District office offered them the rooftop. This happened 13 years ago.

Plant hormones, two different kinds, one white one from yoghurt and coconut water and soybean, one dark one, the one from egg and molasse that they showed 2 years ago.

Observations: garden better organised and greener, some more signs and posts. Also the lecture seems to be advanced, like routine. Khun [K] has an assistant, lady with ponytail. Every step is practiced > professional in giving workshops.

Mushroom house with approximately 20 bottles.

Sprouting demonstration, planting demonstration

Visitors half farang, half Thai. Same faces, two girls from PATT – plant a tree today foundation who come for real interest in planting at home. Cannot tell the others' motivation, I guess because it sounded interesting to them and they are looking for sustainable projects.

In front of the building is a lady selling some vegetables from rooftop garden and the organic gardens in the district. Some passengers buy, and also some people who work in the building. I buy as well. Seems to be good quality so far and very cheap (1 bag 10baht!!, mushroom only 20baht)

The arrangement of the beds hasn't changed significantly, maybe more pots in general, around the raised beds.

Strawberry plants, grapes and cabbage seem to grow well as well, even though usually highland plants.

good impression, real long lasting experience now. Plants look healthy. However, for my taste, there is too much of focus on the EM story. Growing process is optimized by the hormones, even the taste and crunchyness. Good thing about the workshop is that they transmit the impression that everyone can grow and that is quite easy, everything. Khemgled emphasizes this as well a couple of times.

motivations: 1) garden set up for garbage management of the neighbourhood, 2) for produce of food

message: Everyone can do it, if he / she has the dedication, like the Laksi ladies

Everyone can grow his own food

question: how to manage garbage and increase space / surface for processing it >>rooftop>>rooftop garden

only women in the team [not specified, why]

history: garden started 13 years ago from a group called „bplug gab raksa“ (plant and preserve). The group used to plant organically in the area before, had to give up their land and moved on suggestion of the district office.

They became famous, mainly through word-to-mouth. Per year, they receive roughly 2000 visitors to the rooftop. Since the learning centre on the rooftop was opened 6 years ago, they trained 3000 people on regular classes on Saturdays. The group is also famous because it is very active and really cares about its work and mission.

The group is on TV programmes and shows, and other media which helps its popularity. Moveable beds and containers make them be more flexible in case of flood (this is especially message to people)

planting: strawberries, mulberry grow here as well as grape.

In total, 130 varieties of veggies and herbs

In winter, there are yellow cherry tomatoes which are hard to grow and apparently unique in Bangkok >“only place in Bkk“

other species like cabbage that usually grow in the North

they sell all produce

[after that, the vice district officer comes to address some words about the project to the participants]

then, khun [K], the lecturer starts her session about plant hormones and seedind / planting

EM „hormones“ („hormone Tua“) „secret ingredient for nice and green and crunchy vegetables“

„hormone kai“ for plants that don't fruit

>contain microbe (EM)

compost from banana tree

ladies wear „uniform“ T-Shirts with 3R print – reuse, reduce, recycle