

## Alternatives that Make a Difference

*“Best Practice” policy strategies, campaigns and projects from the food/agriculture and energy/climate sector from around the world:*

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By: Faustin Vuningoma, PELUM East Africa, Zambia

*\* currently not available*

## 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

In May 2012 the Competition Appeals Court (CAC) approved the acquisition of Pannar, South Africa's largest seed company, by Pioneer Hi-Bred, a fully-owned subsidiary of DuPont, a global seed and chemicals company. The ACB was an intervening party, opposing the merger in the public interest. The merger was twice rejected: once by the Competition Commission and then by the Competition Tribunal. Mariam Mayet talked during the best practice session about the lessons learnt from this challenge to corporate power and the need to continue to look for ways to expose the unsustainability of the path being followed by these corporations, as well as to look for practical solutions based on farmer-controlled seed breeding, sharing of germplasm and agro-ecological production methods that do not rely on synthetic, fuel-based fertilisers and seeds manufactured in laboratories.



## B) Climate Communities

By: Thomas Brose, Climate Alliance - Klimabündnis der Städte, Germany

Local governments play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of climate change and contribute to the great transformation, all the more so when considering that 80% of energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is associated with urban activity. Many municipalities in Europe are already developing pioneering projects and programmes in different fields of action (e.g. Land use planning, Transport, Procurement, Waste management, Agriculture & forestry, North-South cooperation) for more than 20 years. Important framework conditions for the local authorities are: political willingness to define climate protection as a local authority task (this needs also the influence of the CSOs), set of targets, develop an action plan and implement pilot projects, GHG inventories and monitoring instruments, communicate successes, participation of CSOs. NGOs should recognize local authorities as important partners in their strategies for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction and transformation activities and complement their efforts.

For more information: [www.climatealliance.org](http://www.climatealliance.org)



### **C) Community-based agricultural resilience - woman seed initiatives**

By: Dr. Suman Sahai, Gene Campaign, India

Recognizing the importance of agro biodiversity to food security, Gene Campaign has been collecting, characterizing and conserving the agro biodiversity of local crops like rice, millets, legumes, vegetables and oilseeds in diversity rich regions in India. The traditional seeds are conserved in community managed, field level Gene-Seed Banks which are moisture and light proof and well aired. Unlike the international Gene Banks which are cooled Banks and energy intensive, the model promoted by Gene Campaign, is a labor-intensive, Zero Energy bank with no energy costs. The Zero Energy Gene-Seed Banks do not have a carbon footprint and they are located within the community, which administers and uses the seed. Seed viability is maintained by growing out every year. The seed material that is returned to the bank after every grow-out season is adapted to the environment, which includes the climate as well as pests and disease. The material frozen in the cold Gene Bank does not get a chance to adapt to the changing climate. For further information please visit: [www.genecampaign.org](http://www.genecampaign.org)



### **D) Community Resilience - Linking Food and Energy Sustainability to Equity and Social Justice**

By: Orion Kriegman, Tellus Institute, USA

Egleston Community Orchard strengthens community resilience by engaging the diverse neighbours of Egleston Square through the practice of sustainable agriculture. Egleston Community Orchard (ECO) is a neighbour-led effort for sustainable urban agriculture and community green space, promoting environmental justice and community ownership of land in Egleston Square. Starting with the parcel on 195 Boylston, ECO will work with neighbours and community based organizations to identify other nearby parcels suitable for food production, livestock, and bee keeping. ECO hopes to engage the full diversity of Egleston Square, including youth, and seeks to host cultural events and workshops open to the general public. During the summer of 2010 community members living in the Egleston Square neighbourhood came together to begin the process of converting a vacant city-owned lot at 195 Boylston Street into a garden space called the Egleston Community Orchard (ECO). With collaboration between members of neighbourhood associations and passersby as well as local non-profits and businesses, the formerly trash-ridden lot became home to several apple trees, fruiting shrubs and perennials and was the host site for several sustainable agriculture workshops. ECO is now the seed of a pilot initiative led by a coalition of community based organizations to create a Community Land Trust for supporting open space, urban agriculture, affordable housing and local business development



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**F) 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\*

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**G) 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

Malaria is still the most deadly infectious disease worldwide with at least 655'000 deaths each year attributable to the disease. The development goal of Biovision's Malaria projects in Kenya is to achieve "Sustainable health improvement of local population through environmentally-friendly control of the anopheles-mosquito". Therefore fight the disease in a holistic and sustainable manner means to involve all the relevant stakeholders, especially the local population and authorities and to educate the local population about the disease and how to best protect itself against it. This is done through four strategic interventions:



- Environmentally-friendly malaria control - working with Malaria scouts, each one responsible to find and eradicate (potential) breeding grounds for the anopheles mosquitoes in his/her area.
- Information, awareness-raising, and education of the local population, through e.g. interactive theatres
- Scientific guidance and systematic monitoring working with local institutions as well as para-statal scientific Institutions

These have led to a reduction of Malaria cases of over 50% in Biovision Projects and to the adoption of a national Malaria policy taking-up many aspects of Biovision's own approach.



## H) Lighting a Billion Lives

By: Ibrahim H. Rehman, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), India,

In India, 61 million households lack basic electricity access. These families, usually in remote and rural parts of the country, still use kerosene lamps. Besides the health endangering pollution, billions of liters of kerosene are burned and millions of tons of CO<sub>2</sub> are emitted in the atmosphere. Renewable energy sources need to be effectively tapped to manage the rapid economic growth and to fulfill the growing demand for electricity within the population. Solar energy could be a possible solution for these problems, but due to lacks of financial support and technological infrastructure an implementation is not easy. In 2007 the TERI Institute launched "Lighting a Billion Lives", a campaign to bring clean energy into poor rural villages. Supported by sponsorships, funds and credits and in collaboration with local energy enterprises, high quality products were brought to the villages. Moreover, it has been ensured that the end users are supported by repair and maintenance service. Recently the "Lighting a Billion Lives" project has lit up over 350,000 homes in India and has expanded globally to e.g. Ethiopia, Ghana and Afghanistan.



Picture is taken from:  
[http://www.teriin.org/about/cv\\_rehman.htm](http://www.teriin.org/about/cv_rehman.htm)

## I) Millet Initiative

By: PV Satheesh, Deccan Development Society, India

The Millet network of INDIA (MINI) is a self empowered rural initiative, mainly governed by female farmers, which propagates and promotes the intensive use of millet to face some of the main problems of India's growing society. The increased cultivation of millet entails multiple securities for the rural villages. Since millet farming has the capacity to flourish even under rather arid conditions and on harsh soils but nevertheless has the potential to deliver high quality food without the extensive use of fertilisers, the millet farming initiative stands for ecological as well as health and nutritional security. Moreover, the water-saving and carbon-sequestering capacity of millet farming makes this project to one best practice when it comes to food security, climate change and fighting poverty.



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## **J) 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

Current techno-economic and communicative policy responses have achieved only marginal advancements towards sustainability within the past decades. The vast majority of people still do not engage sufficiently into pro environmental behavior. Social movements like Ecovillages and Transition Town Initiatives have made more progress than the mainstream towards the realisation of sustainable and low carbon lifestyles. In distinction from transmissive one-way communication falling to allow for civic engagement, these movements are developing self-learning networks. They provide tools, skills and space supporting processes of social learning. Social innovations however do not just occur. Comparable to technical innovations, they require visions and creativity, courage, skills, resources and the opportunity to conduct experiments. Transition Town movements and Community Supported Agriculture are examples of sustainable societal innovations, but the "Great Transformation" is more than a leisure time job for some activists. It needs supportive governance and enabling environments providing power and space for communities to explore, learn and conduct the transition towards sustainable and low carbon lifestyles.



## **K) 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

Coupling poverty alleviation programs with farmers' collectivization has led to interesting results with knock-on impact on empowerment, food security and better access to markets. Close to a quarter million women who are farming nearly 10 million acres of land. The experiment, "Sangha Krishi," or collective farming, is part of Kerala's anti-poverty program "Kudumbashree." Initiated in 2007, it was seen as a means to enhance local food production. Kerala's women embraced this vision enthusiastically. As many as 44.225 collectives of women farmers have sprung up across the State. These collectives lease fallow land, rejuvenate it, farm it and then either sell the produce or use it for consumption, depending on the needs of members. On an average, Kudumbashree farmers earn Rs. 15.000 -25.000 per year (sometimes higher, depending on the crops and the number of yields annually). Kudumbashree is a network of 4 million women, mostly below the poverty line. It is a social space where marginalized women can collectively pursue their needs and aspirations. Community level food security, devolved procurement and effective market linkage (with information and power) are the positive collateral benefits.



## L) Strategies for Taking Agricultural Successes to Scale in Sub-Saharan Africa

By: Faustin Vuningoma, PELUM East Africa, Zambia

The Vision of PELUM is to support Smallholder farming communities in order to make way for improved life standards that are socially, economically and ecologically sustainable. Within this context, PELUM sees agro-ecology as a very good form of agriculture that integrates natural and regenerative processes, minimizes non renewable inputs, relies on indigenous knowledge of farmers and involves locally adapted practices and encourages biodiversity. In order to scale up agro-ecology, farmer field schools are organized where lead farmers, in a capacity building multiplier approach, are responsible for 10-30 farmers. During these field schools, the lead farmers try to mobilize and train the other farmers, as well as raising their awareness regarding the benefits of agro-ecology. Current challenges of this project are, for example the lack of support from the African governments as well as the expensive certification of organic products.



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