

INSIDE
PGS

PGS4CHANGE

A case study conducted by
Anna-Lena Ahlf about
Perceptions,
opportunities and
needs in Participatory
Guarantee Systems in
Kenya

Published in November 2022

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Contributors	2
Introduction.....	3
Methodology	4
Part 1: Background	5
Part 2: Performances in the different dimensions	7
ECONOMIC dimension.....	8
POLITICAL dimension.....	10
SOCIAL dimension	11
ENVIRONMENTAL dimension	14
Chapter summary	15
Part 3: Perceptions on PGS.....	18
PGS4Change: Perceptions of different actor groups on PGS	18
Understanding of the different elements	19
Chapter Summary.....	22
Conclusion & Discussion.....	23
Recommendations	25
Reflections.....	26
About the author.....	26
Sources	27
Annex.....	27

Acknowledgements

ASANTE SANA

I congratulate all the people who have chosen to be an active part of Participatory Guarantee Systems and thank them for their contributions to the organic sector development!

I am deeply grateful to the PGS farmers for the warm welcome, for honestly and openly sharing their opinions with me, the great laughter and serious discussions we had. Thanks for your time, your passion and for being a great source of inspiration for me and for others to come.

I thank the traders for their belief in organic agriculture and for driving the sector forward by offering markets and striving to provide people with healthy food. The same is true for the Organic Consumers Alliance, which gives a valuable contribution to the development of the sector by raising awareness.

The KOAN team deserves special thanks: For the trust, the coordination, the organization and the good talks. Thank you for the work you are doing in the organic sector and in the transformation of food systems, especially for believing in the farmers. Particularly to the field coordinators: Sylvia, Jacky, Bernard and to the project manager Martin.

Thanks for the valuable information of the organizations on the ground: G-Biack, OACK, CShep It helped me a lot to understand the approaches and get a better picture how the work on the ground is done: Collins, David, Lorenz, Ann & Team.

I thank FiBL for giving me this opportunity and the financial support to make the field trip happen. In particular I want to thank Thomas and Benjamin for trusting in me and for the organizational support.

Thanks to my lovely hosts for opening their homes, making me feel part of the families and spoiling me with delicious food: Teresia & Joseph, Rebecca & John, Mary & Lista

Contributors

PGS Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Machakos Organic Farmers Cooperative➤ Muranga Organic Farmers Cooperative➤ Kiserian Organic Farmers – NOOYA group➤ Kikuyu Organic Farmers➤ INOGOF (Innovative group of organic farmers)
Traders / Retailers/ Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Sylvia's Basket➤ The Cornershop➤ Fine Aromas➤ Amazing Harvest Kenya➤ Greenspoon➤ Bridges Organic Restaurant
Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ KOAN (Kenya Organic Agriculture Network)➤ C-Shep (Community Sustainable Agriculture and Healthy Environment Program)➤ G-Biack (Grow Biointensive Agriculture Center of Kenya)➤ OACK (Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya)➤ Organic Consumer Alliance

Introduction

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), as the name suggests, follow a "system approach". From this point of view, PGSs represent an alternative certification system to third-party certification (TPC) or internal control System (ICS). At the same time they not only relate "system" to certification, but also to a system of participation of different stakeholders. With this study "PGS4change", different PGS groups were studied to see and understand their performance, underlying perceptions and expectations associated with the affiliation to a PGS group. The findings are not limited to the farmer group, the PGS members themselves, but also to associated actors working with PGS groups, such as NGOs and traders. This was done in an attempt to gain a better understanding of what farmers need to be successful both as organic farmers and as PGS members. Along with the needs, the shortcomings and problems of farmers and traders have been identified. This study was conducted on behalf of KOAN (Kenyan Organic Agriculture Network), the national umbrella organization for the organic sector and key player in the certification of PGS groups in Kenya, in order to improve the work in the PGS domain.

The research and field work was carried out by Anna-Lena Ahlf, a German student in the program "Global Change Management" (Master of Science) of the Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development. She is familiar with the concept of PGS and has done practical work with PGS groups in before. The study forms part of a running project by KOAN and at the same time forms a basis for her upcoming Master thesis. In collaboration with the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL (Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau) and KOAN this study has been realized in the period of 10th September 2022 to 28th October 2022. During this period individual interviews have been held with farmers associated in five different PGS groups, traders that get supply from PGS groups as well as organizations on the ground working with PGS members. Another complementary element consisted in focus group discussions with the different PGS groups and with the group of traders. The study ended with a final online event held on 28th October 2022.

The aim of this study is not to compare the performance of the different groups in order to point out strengths and weaknesses, but to shed light on the different PGS groups and to draw conclusions: for the individual work with and within a particular group, but also for the superordinate work with different groups of actors as well as guidance for the formation of new groups. Besides it seeks to provide an insight into the dynamics in particular between farmers, traders and organizations.

This report is structured as follows: After the explanation of the methodology used, three main thematic parts follow. The first part gives a brief background on the development of the organic sector in Kenya and on the concept of Participatory Guarantee Systems. The second part focuses on the performance of PGS groups in four different dimensions (environmental, economic, political, social). The third part highlights the perceptions, understanding, and opinions of different groups of actors on PGS. The report concludes with a conclusion and recommendations. The appendix contains a snapshot which gives a short overview with key points, a reflection on change and further detailed group-specific information in the form of the protocols of the focus group discussions of the different PGS groups and a summary report of the traders.

Methodology

Individual Interviews with farmers & farm visits

- in numbers: 50 interviews, 39 farm visits, 5 different PGS groups represented
- purpose: gain knowledge about the performance of individual farmers in different dimensions (social, environmental, economic, political), get an impression of agricultural practices and conditions on the ground (chamber size/soil/vegetation etc.), understand perceptions and motivations of farmers on different topics, identify successes and challenges
- topics: Interviews did not follow a questionnaire but were openly conducted in a semi-structured interviews. Topics were pre-selected and evolved during conversations. Mostly they have been carried out on an individual basis.
- remarks: The majority of the individual interviews have been carried out at the farmers place and combined with a farm visit. The INOGOF group was only visited during market days, farm visits have not been feasible due to the scattered geographical locations of the members.

Individual interviews with traders and traders visits

- in numbers: 6 interviews at the locations of the respective trader
- purpose: understand the role and motivation of the actor in the organic sector, understand the linkages towards PGS and get ideas about the organic market development, get an insight about different sales models
- remarks: some of the traders did not have knowledge on PGS

Focus Group Discussions with farmers

- in numbers: 54 participants, 5 discussions with 5 different PGS groups
- purpose: make use of group dynamics, capture different opinions, get a deeper understanding on certain aspects, validate findings of individual interviews, stimulate exchange and discussion
- topics: perceptions on the elements of PGS, challenges & needs, changes & visions, approaches & solutions
- remarks: It was intended to have other participants in the FGD than in the individual interviews, which was not feasible in all cases. In some occasions translations were needed into the local spoken language. Translation could have influenced the results and the dynamics of the discussions.

Focus Group Discussion with traders

- in numbers: 6 participants from 5 different affiliations
- purpose: identify the trader's perception of their role and responsibilities and those of others, get an insight on their understanding and perceptions on PGS, strengthen networking amongst actors

General remarks:

- the participation has been on a voluntary basis without compensation
- consent forms have been filled out by each participant for the use of data and photos
- Participants were selected in collaboration with the KOAN team, considering a random sampling, representative of leaders, and participant availability

Part 1: Background

Development in the organic sector in Kenya

The development of the organic sector in Kenya, especially in and around Nairobi, is reflected in the fact that there are more and more traders offering organic products for the national or export market. Besides a greater number of players are active in the organic sector and more customers are demanding organic products. People's increased awareness of the relationship between health and nutrition is frequently related to cancer diseases as well as the increasing number of lifestyle diseases. Therefore, consumers see the need not only to consume but also, if they are also producers, to provide the community with healthy organic fruits and vegetables. This shows in the (officially registered) organic farmers that are becoming more numerous. Nevertheless, it is difficult to make statements about numbers, as there is few statistical evidence. While organic farming by default was the usual way of farming a few generations ago without people knowing it or calling it organic. Conventional fertilizers and insecticides were introduced at one point and become the new trend, supported, encouraged and subsidized by governments and touted as the only means to increase production and control pests and diseases. The increasing interest in organic certification nowadays may also reflect a need for formal recognition and also helps with official reporting, showcasing, that farmers are capable to farm organically. Besides it offers organic farmers access to additional markets and higher revenues for their products by being recognized with a certification and label. So far the organic market situation seems not to be satisfied as traders, KOAN and farmers report that demand for organic products exceeds supply.



Fig. 1: Kilimohai label (Source: KOAN)

The certification by the means of "Participatory Guarantee Systems" (PGS) has been introduced in Kenya in 2012. To date there are 14 PGS groups in Kenya throughout the country. The initiatives differ in the number of members and organizational structures. They all have trainings and official guidance in formation, certification and inspection process by KOAN in common. So far KOAN serve as the national certification body of PGS. PGS in Kenya are certified under the trademark "Kilimohai Organic". This label bases on the East African Product Standard and serves in several East African countries. It is used for PGS certified products as well as for other organic certification schemes such as third party.

PGS offers farmers an alternative certification system to other systems such as ICS or individual certification by external third-party certification bodies, which are mostly designed for the export market and come at higher costs. PGS, on the other hand, is designed for small holder farmers and the local market and functions as a group certification. The main element is trust through a peer review system and a continuous mutual learning process.

Participatory Guarantee Systems

The idea of alternative certification systems similar to PGS dates back to the 70s and 80s. The now known concept of PGS was born in an international workshop on alternative certification that was held in Brazil in 2004. The concept got formalized by the International Federation of Organic Movements (IFOAM) in 2008 and defines PGS ever since as:

"Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are locally focused quality assurance systems. They certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange." Official Definition

PGS groups exist globally in different parts of the world for example in Asia, Latin America, Europe and Africa. They follow certain principles which are displayed in the below infographic (Figure 1) by IFOAM.



Fig. 2: Features and elements of Participatory Guarantee Systems (Source: IFOAM)

These principles function as guidance but there is no mandatory official process that applies globally to formally register as a PGS. PGS claim to function context- related. This means that they are adapted to the local conditions and the members can decide on own standards and decision making structures. In some countries such as Bolivia or Mexico are incorporated in the law and officially recognized by the government. Usually non-governmental organizations (NGO) play a crucial role in the formation process of PGS as well as in the role of accompanying the process, linking different actors and facilitating with trainings.

Part 2: Performances in the different dimensions

PGS groups from a holistic perspective

Since PGS seeks to provide a structure or foundation to help groups survive as a group and make their organic farming activities long-lasting and sustainable, this chapter highlights the various dimensions of sustainability. It is assumed that a sustainable system will ultimately help improve farmers' livelihoods and transform the food sector toward a more equitable and just system that provides healthy and safe food for all. In this sense, the different PGS groups were studied from economic, environmental, social and political perspectives. It is important to mention that most of the groups are still in their beginning stages and that this is only an impetus and an ongoing process that will, over time, help to further develop skills and understanding and improve the outcomes of each dimension. These findings only relate to the view of the producers and reflect the different findings from individual farmers interviews as well as some group interviews with PGS members. Each different PGS group performs differently in the different aspects of the four dimensions, this is a compiled report on the findings. It is also important to note that performance in various dimensions may not necessarily be related directly to the organic farmer's affiliation with the PGS. Nevertheless, there are indications that the underlying PGS structure might influence the behavior, opinions and actions of farmers and thus have an effect on the performance of the group. Besides it must be considered that not all groups could have been interviewed in the same in depth way due to availability and accessibility.

The overall picture in short is as follows:

<p>ECONOMIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + income increase with traders + strengthened market access and linkages + networks and diversification of sales channels + savings due to reduced input costs + value addition is taking up + supply and demand cannot be met + the Kilimohai brand does not play a role on the local market, only for traders 	<p>POLITICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + disappointment on political support + strong need for funding + partly integration of political bodies + partly recognition and appreciation + counterproductive policies + GMO debate as high concern + strong will for more political involvement and lobbying by the groups with help of NGOs
<p>SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + encouragement amongst members + mutual support and learning + sense of belonging & bondage + sense of care for feeding the community + strong will for expansion of the group + healthy competition amongst members + increased awareness amongst consumers and farmers + commitment of new members is problematic 	<p>ENVIRONMENTAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + deep knowledge on organic agricultural practices + (re-) appreciation of soil + challenges with water availability and accessibility + self-production of organic inputs + challenges with climate change issues + smaller space = higher diversity + perception of insects = enemies + diversity of crops is rather seen from a sales perspective than biodiversity perspective

Figure 3 Summarized findings per dimensions. Own elaboration

In the following, each dimension is presented in detail. This includes information from interviews with farmers and observations during farm visits. It should be noted that the data is highly influenced by the time of year and current climatic conditions. Other aspects might occur more relevant or obvious in different situations. The period of interviews was marked by ongoing droughts.

ECONOMIC dimension

Demand & Supply situation

Depending on different factors the demand is more or less stimulated. The groups who have already access to traders report a high demand but not always the quantities can be matched (either the farmers could supply more than the demanded quantity or vice versa.) The majority of the group except one group who counts with big chamber sizes, say that the demand exceed the supply. The supply situation depends on seasonality, chamber size, climatic conditions. Another factor that is linked to the consistency and variety of products on the market is the coordination between PGS members of a group or even between different PGS groups. Different participants explain of the necessity of the introduction of planting calendars and at the same time of difficulties to implement them. Planning the production seems a major challenge that in the end also leads to overproduction at times. Market information is usually provided through KOAN by the field coordinators. Two of the groups do not have field coordinators provided by KOAN. In some groups single participants also report of doing market research on their own behalf. Apparently there is uncertainty if the market penetration needs to come with the supply of the farmers which attracts more demand or if the demand needs to push the supply. With the PGS affiliation some farmers also relate growing in terms of members, production and knowledge that in the end will help to satisfy market needs.

Market access & Marketing

Through the PGS affiliation new market opportunities have come up in particular towards markets in Nairobi. Often networks and facilitation for market linkages from KOAN are used. Farmers consider the market of Nairobi as high-end market, that needs the certification. Whereas in the local market there is only to some extent the differentiation of the organic products. The groups have distinctive market places which also explains the customers via banners that it is about organic products. This in the end does not necessary mean that customers are in particular looking for this products or would pay a distinctive price. In each PGS group exists different committees. The marketing committee usually works closely with the production committee. During the interviews, it was not clear to what extent the different committees pursue goals and a strategy, how agreements take place, how success is measured. Pricing seems to be done in democratic and communal manner and satisfaction about it was formulated. The idea of the exploration of other markets such as schools, hotels, supermarkets is growing but not that actively pursued yet as the concern has been raised not to be ready for it yet. The urgency of the exploration and penetration of new markets highly depends on the quantities that can be offered and the enthusiasm and action of some few individual members. Marketing of the products by now seems to be in form of banners in markets indicating that organic products are sold or labels that are used for or by the traders showing the Kilimohai brand. Other sales channels used are online marketing, which takes place on a group level via WhatsApp groups or in some cases on an individual farmers level via different social media channels. The latter is quite limited. The motivations of using diverse sales channels and exploring different markets than the local market differ from group to group. In some cases the satisfaction on the local market and the community is the highest priority whereas other PGS groups would clearly like to get more products sold via traders.

Competitiveness & Certification

The majority of the farmers would not mention the Kilimohai brand the distinctive mark they have now with the group certification through PGS. Kilimohai seems to be important when it comes to the trade with traders, but on the local market it has no relevance. Customers would not ask for it or be aware on this trade mark. The mark is more associated with “the elite class”. The visibility of the brand is very low. The group certification is not yet to all participants clear. They see the benefits for the certification in the easier acceptance of external traders as normally the acceptance on their products in the local

communities or farm-gate-buyers is rather based on trust and personal relationships than on the certification or a label. At the local market the organic certified products are not competitive yet. In general, prices in the local market are based on the usual prices for conventional products, while prices offered by traders are higher, although transport costs must also be taken into account. In farm-gate sales, there is usually no differentiation and buyers buy at the low price, some not caring about the organic quality as they can simply buy their products from other farmers.

Product innovation, diversification & Value addition

Value-adding activities are observed in all groups in a more or less intensive form and are also related to equipment such as dryers, mills, machinery, etc., which are either group or privately owned. Product innovation appears to be stimulated by external actors such as non-governmental organizations that provide training on value addition and may also facilitate or finance the purchase of equipment or packaging materials. Value-adding activities are mostly seen in the processing of flours, oils, or dried herbs. Very few of the farmers interviewed would come up with a simple activity that does not require much equipment (such as drying in the sun or making jam). The exploitation of the potential for innovation seems to be relatively low. In some groups there are members who specialize in certain products such as cosmetics, jams, sauces or frozen products, etc., but this is not related to PGS affiliation but to their own previous businesses. In one group, the collaboration with an external company for the production of purees and juices is also developing, so the group affiliation may have had an influence to attract the attention of other actors. Product diversification increases with PGS affiliation, due to increased knowledge and access or provision of (indigenous) seeds. At this stage, enthusiasm for value addition appears to be very high and widespread, and it remains uncertain whether these activities are truly meeting market needs or just the expectations and hopes of farmers. In this context, it is important to note that some individuals indicate that they have done their own market research and found a specific niche for products that are different from the mainstream (e.g., parsley instead of rosemary, which is now most common among farmers, or Chinese cabbage instead of white cabbage).

Income & Input prices

Especially farmers working with traders report a significant increase in income. Farmers who supply local markets report a slight price difference, but also see the potential for higher margins as customer awareness grows. At the same time, there are many farmers who primarily provide organic products to the local community (either because they explicitly want it that way or due to lack of opportunities) and therefore understand affordability requirements. All farmers report savings from lower input costs as they produce their own organic fertilizers and pesticides. In addition, some farmers report higher production levels due to new production methods and agricultural practices learned during training. Records are not consistently kept as this is not yet a habit for most farmers. Some report positive impacts of record keeping through planning and tracking production. Ultimately, more coordinated crop planning and tracking can help farmers to prepare cost-benefit analyses and thus make better-informed decisions. Commonly, farmers have sideline businesses in addition to their farming activities to support their income. There are farmers who want farming to become their only business, and some farmers link the level of their income to the level or organization of the farm.

POLITICAL dimension

Political recognition & awareness

The registration of the groups is done with the knowledge of the respective governments. Members report that while they should know about PGS groups, they often do not have a deeper understanding or knowledge of organic agriculture. Most often, disappointment is expressed about the political interest in organic farmers and recognition is low. In this context, it is also mentioned that the extension officers of the Ministry of Agriculture do not know or do not believe in organic farming. Only in one county of the PGS groups interviewed, Muranga, political recognition is shown through an agroecology bill that is waiting to be signed and will also include a budget for organic farmers. In this county, chiefs and officials also seem active and interested in forums and farm visits. With the recent change of government in August 2022, organic agriculture is in danger of losing recognition as contradictory measures and policies are implemented, such as lifting the ban on GMO imports and subsidizing conventional fertilizers. Farmers see a strong component in the "good will" of the authorities to support, which is described as an uphill task. On the other hand, there is hope for more political recognition since the new president also has an agricultural background. The PGS certification is also seen as beneficial, as the county governments would help farmers to get a market place or to open new markets. In addition, political support is given to groups rather than individual farmers.

Financial support

Financial support from the county government is highly requested, but hardly granted. This is especially important for funds for machinery that could help with value addition, as well as funds for employment of additional labor. So far, PGS farmers have not been aware of special funds for organic farmers, but in one case for women and youth. According to the field coordinator, a district government in Machakos has also subsidized insect traps and contributed to the collection center. Financial support is also seen in the provision of seeds or organic fertilizers, which has been done in the past, especially in Muranga county.

Involvement & awareness raising of political bodies

Active involvement of political bodies, officials, etc. is desired and planned, but not practiced too often. Officials are invited on various occasions and even to trainings, but participation and interest seem to be low. A desire was expressed for KOAN to organize formalized dialogues or forums to engage governments, officials, etc., as farmers feel ignored or not recognized without institutional support. In one of the groups, officials and health workers are actively invited and involved in further planning. Again, the idea of further engagement and active teaching is expressed. Additionally active integration of political actors is being pushed by other organizations on the ground.

Advocacy & lobbying

The use of social media is undertaken by various groups to actively promote organic farming. Campaigns are also conducted by NGOs such as KOAN and others. The content does not relate specifically to PGS, but promotes organic farming and methods in general. The researcher had little insight into this topic, so no further conclusions can be made. There are also individual farmers who have YouTube channels, Facebook pages, or Instagram channels that are also actively used to raise awareness about GMOs, etc. These activities may not be directly related to PGS affiliation, but rather based on high personal engagement and interest of individual farmers to spread their knowledge on other channels as well. Non-governmental organization projects help farmers with storytelling and showcasing what they are capable of. In general, farmers believe that advocacy efforts need to be strengthened, but often point to the limited opportunities and informal nature of engaging political

actors so far. Local governors' engagement at field days and forums needs to be more focused on organic farmers, they say, but so far it has been directed mainly at conventional farmers.

Supportive infrastructure

In the more supportive Muranga district, the farmer group has been assisted with registration and efforts have also been made to raise awareness of organic farming. In general, farmers feel that extension workers need more training to change their attitudes about farming and to help them advise on organic farming methods. This seems to be of key importance to most farmers. In addition to the desire for more recognition and financial support, there was also a desire for more protection from pollution (e.g., sewage, contaminated water). There is also a request for guidelines and regulations for food operators that could be helpful. The need for support is also seen in assistance with water supply and trainings for farmers on agricultural practices. It is also seen critically that there seem to be no incentives for organic farmers and no subsidies for organic inputs. Other farmers indicate that a structure is needed, as officials are not yet aligned and are not even aware of the group's activities. Officials are also asked for assistance in helping to create marketplaces.

SOCIAL dimension

Community development and member recruitment

In general, organic farmers see a positive impact in their community as more and more people show interest and join the group. However, there are still many neighboring farms that could not be convinced and pose the risk of contamination and would consider organic farming as a kind of "wild gardening". Usually, Kenyans are members of different social groups. To join another group, they need to see a strong argument and understand the ideology of organic farming. Almost all groups report the challenge of commitment and relate this in particular to impatience, as money is not easy to earn and expectations can be disappointed, especially because organic production is slow. Another factor that could have an influence is the tradition factor, as people would follow what they know from habits and traditions. It is not difficult to attract attention for new people to participate in trainings, but the PGS farmer report that there are many people who do not take organic farming seriously and quickly drop out because they do not comply with the regulations. On the other hand, all farmers are interested in having as many farmers as possible "organified" and would like to welcome them as fellow farmers in their group. Membership recruitment does not follow a systematic procedure, but is done constantly on neighbors' farms, in forums, social groups, in the market, etc. Most often the "healthy and safe food" argument is used, which often ends up convincing people to buy and consume, but practicing organic farming is a higher hurdle. Recruitment activities are also carried out by KOAN field coordinators who receive referrals from NGOs in the field and actively approach organic producers or even are contacted by interested people who have heard about KOAN activities. Attracting young farmers is a particular challenge because they do not have land or have negative attitudes about farming, which they associate with low income and dirty hands. Two PGS groups have active youth members who actively promote agriculture to young farmers. It is emphasized that most of the farmers still practice conventional farming but the conversion is seen possible and as a gradual slow process by the PGS farmers and is also attributed to ignorance or awareness gaps.

Capacity building and knowledge management

Farmers like teaching, they like to give advice and show their farms for learning. All the farmers enjoy the peer-review and do not see this primarily as a control mechanism but overall as way to learn from and with each other and as a supporting mechanism. One farmer also entitled this as "healthy competition" meaning that farmers challenge each other in positive way of inspiring and encouraging. Farmers more and more pursue the approach to establish their farms as demonstration farms. As such

each farmer has this element inherent as with the open-gate policy each and every person is allowed to visit the farm. Nonetheless farmers that seek to establish a demo-farm usually follow certain concepts such as permaculture or circular farming ways or innovative methods to maximize space. There is an immense eagerness to learn more. All of the farmers are happy about the trainings, in particular related agricultural practices, and want to keep on learning as their need for knowledge is not satisfied yet. One of the PGS features by nature is the constant learning experience, this is definitely one element which is very obvious in the groups. Building and growing together is the idea that is followed. For some trainings the limitation of participants forces the PGS members to select the participants among the group members. This process has been described as fair and problematic. The trained members are asked to do de-briefings after the trainings. Knowledge acquisition is done in various ways: collectively in official trainings, at (informal) farm visits and exchange visits and also on a individual level by reading books or internet research. Some of the groups combine regular group meetings with training contents and pursue an agenda. Note taking and official protocolling are the norm. Some trainings for “trainer of the trainers” (ToT) have been conducted so far and farmers feel happy and comfortable to teach others but also see the need in further in depth trainings to feel more confident and knowledgeable on certain topics. Farmers would mostly follow the “seeing-is-believing” approach which is very helpful on the one hand, but on the other hand it means to rely on the exposure and rely on seeing and meeting. If farmers face particular issues they do not only reach out to their fellow farmers via actual meetings or digital communications (WhatsApp) but also make use of the advisory service by NGO on the ground. Exchange between different PGS groups is mostly done at formalized trainings that bring members of different PGS groups together. But there are also independent attempts to exchange between goods either knowledge or goods. In general farmers would love to get more opportunities.

Participation & Inclusion / group functioning

This aspect was studied from the perspective of farmer participation, as the participation of other stakeholders was not mentioned very often in the interviews. To keep people motivated and engaged, one group's approach is to set a low threshold for farmer membership and gradually transition it. An inclusive environment and the opportunity for anyone to become a member are prevalent in the groups. Everyone is invited to participate, but not all members participate in the same active way. Decision-making processes are made democratically within the group. In PGS groups that follow a cooperative structure, a representative from each cluster usually passes on the decisions of that group to the cooperative's board of directors.

In general, participation in trainings and meetings is seen as beneficial and an opportunity to have fun while learning and getting to know each other. In some cases, it was noted that costs and benefits must be weighed, as time and transportation costs must be invested. Farmers are diverse in terms of languages spoken, education level, and age. There does not seem to be any special measures to give all participants the same easy access to trainings by always considering local languages, simple language or educational level. However, most trainings have a high proportion of practical learning, so that all participants can participate and benefit from the trainings. Nevertheless, age poses some challenges, as many members are older and may not have the same energy to put the knowledge they have acquired into practice on the farm. In addition, memory and learning speed vary. Communication via WhatsApp groups is widespread. People without access to smartphones receive messages via SMS.

Committee structures and a board of directors are common in the groups. Each committee and the boards follow the same structure with positions such as chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, etc. Leadership was described by some members as crucial. Members who hold positions feel they are honored to serve their community, yet some leaders also encounter challenges. For example, strategic development of the group seems to be the responsibility of a few members. In most groups, each

member must serve on a committee. In addition to committees (e.g., compliance, peer review, marketing, production...), group dynamics are described as evolving. This means, among other things, that some people take on certain roles depending on their skills and interests.

Collectiveness

The groups are characterized by a high degree of collectivity and a strong mentality of sharing. Social cohesion is strong and the group seems to provide members with a foundation of motivation and support. Members report a sense of being friends. A shared vision of as many farmers as possible going organic is consistently present. Some groups see their vision in enlarging their market and also in political outreach. The group gives farmers the opportunity to share knowledge, seeds, products and the social aspect of the meeting, especially on market days, is an important factor for motivation and commitment. The sense of belonging is described as being stronger in the group, growing better and having a voice. In addition, the aspect of better market opportunities is mentioned as one of the benefits. Satisfaction with the work in the group as a team as well as mutual care and support are highlighted. Another aspect mentioned is the shared responsibility that comes through the group to get value for money and have a guarantee for the market. This also results in mutual trust, the feeling of doing something meaningful, and the possibility of having a better bargaining position or receiving outside support. There are no reports of disputes, discussions are held in the group and different opinions seem to be welcome. Problem solving is also seen as one of the advantages of a group constellation. In some groups collective saving schemes such as table banking or contributions on market days exists. As much as farmers welcome the idea of collectiveness, there are individual interests that might be stronger than the idea of collectivity in the long run, when the need for it is no longer seen. Some individual farmers see their future in the export market, which is not directly related to the PGS, since this certification is intended for the national market. Some farmers also want to build their own customer base and prefer direct logistics to the farm rather than the hassle of consolidated transportation.

Consumer + customer (trader) behavior

Farmers value personal relationships with their customers that are established at the market or through farm-gate sales. Those who have trading relationships with traders also value visits to the farm and say they would like to have them more often. In some cases, farmers have never met the traders, but only take their goods to a collection point or to the place of transport. In these cases, the farmer has no direct relationship with either the trader or the end consumer. Although increasing customer/consumer behavior has been recognized, there is still great potential for more awareness. Farmers even stress the importance of conducting campaigns. Farm-gate sales are dominated by customers who do not care about organic quality because they have many other options. Market sales, above all, offer an opportunity to educate consumers about the benefits and build a customer base with clients who come from referrals and appreciate organic products. Especially in one PGS group that also uses a basket model, the relationship between farmers and customers is very close and customer feedback is considered very important. In this case, a free consultation service is also offered via WhatsApp and at the market itself, which also helps with a diet tailored to specific health needs. The process of educating customers is described as a longer and time-consuming process. Farmers also see the benefits of the PGS group in the exchange of goods and prioritize being the first customers. Some of the customers in the local market appreciate the organic quality as healthier and tastier and even with longer shelf life, but they would not know about the certification and would not ask for it.

ENVIRONMENTAL dimension

Adaptation to climate change

The effects of climate change are seen as a real threat by all farmers, and most farmers have already experienced them. This is especially true of prolonged droughts and disrupted rainfall patterns. Most farms are adopting practices to retain and conserve water. Mulching is very common, as are side pits, water catchments and harvesting techniques. In addition, tree nurseries seem to be becoming more common. Planting trees and combining them with crops such as agroforestry were hardly observed during the farm visits. Apart from the fact that trees are considered beneficial for the climate, they are also seen as an additional source of income. Moreover efforts are being made to use indigenous, more resilient seeds. Knowledge about indigenous seeds and vegetables is abundant, but it sometimes interferes with people's dietary habits (e.g., preference for certain varieties of corn or certain vegetables) and also seed availability can be challenging. A small number of farmers are looking into holistic systems such as permaculture or circular farming and are implementing them on their farms to complement organic farming as the farming method best adapted to the climate.

Biodiversity management

Biodiversity as such does not appear to be an issue of high attention to the interviewed farmers. Crop rotation and intercropping are practices used by the majority of farmers, and the knowledge and in some parts the practice of growing high varieties of different vegetables is also present. It could be observed that the smaller the chambers are, the more diverse they are. The benefits of diversity are seen in the fact that more food is available for consumption or sale. Measures to promote biodiversity might be underlying in the concepts of the different farms, but it seems difficult to say whether farmers are also intentionally promoting biodiversity. Flowers that attract bees and other insects were rarely seen on farms. Few farmers would actively integrate them into the farm and see bee pollination as an essential aspect of bee attraction, while the majority of farmers associate bees primarily with honey production. In very few cases, flowers are also used for natural insect control. In general, plants such as trees or flowers are valued by farmers whenever they have multiple uses, such as food production or as a source of financial income. When it comes to insects, the vast majority of farmers think directly about insect eradication. Only in two cases do farmers also see the need and benefit of insects.

Soil management & use/production of organic fertilizers

The appreciation of soil is high. The respondents also relate this to the in-depth knowledge they have acquired in training courses, which has helped them to better understand the soil and its importance. Soil regeneration is seen as essential for healthy production. Farmers see the difference in using organic fertilizers as feeding the soil and not the plants. Soil fertility, soil health, and soil protection are of great importance to farmers. Improved soil management is also associated with higher production levels. Some farmers report that they have already observed changes in the soil, which is softer and crops grow better. Farmers also report improved microorganism activity. Although farmers are convinced of the importance of active soil management and apply fertilizer or soil conditioners, some of them do not know how to monitor or measure soil quality. Some farmers benefit from free soil tests conducted by universities. There is a lot of interest in this. Follow-up on soil testing is not done, although members would like to know more about their soils but cannot take steps to afford soil testing in laboratories. Training on organic input production is seen as very important and helpful. All farmers report that they produce their own organic fertilizer. Usually this is done collectively in larger quantities and then distributed among members. There is also the possibility to buy organic inputs.

Use of organic standards and pest control

The PGS groups follow the East African standards for organic products (EAOPS). These standards are not named by the farmers, but they know the standards they must follow through the trainings. Compliance with the standards is monitored through the regular peer reviews and inspections. This includes pest control with organic measures, which include a checklist. Some members report that pest control is challenging, while others report that they no longer have problems after learning how to practice it. Mostly, it is observed and found that pest control is a reactive measure rather than a proactive one. Some farmers report a decrease in pests and diseases on their farms. Farmers refer to the standards not in terms of theoretical framework, but to the actual practical implementation they undertake on their farms. Thus, they report that they have internalized the standards while gaining a deeper understanding and knowledge during trainings. Maintaining the standards is the declared goal of all farmers. They also report record keeping as required when applying pesticides.

Protection against contamination

This area was not thoroughly inspected. In general, the farms look clean and not contaminated with waste. Contamination from neighboring farms and from pollution of shared water bodies is difficult to control. Protection from contamination during transport and sale is a concern for farmers and is also a content of the trainings.

Chapter summary

Overall, farmers report changes or potential changes as a result of PGS membership in all dimensions. The points that were particularly highlighted by PGS members relate to the social dimension, which includes aspects of social cohesion, sense of belonging, and the ongoing learning experience. PGS affiliation has a positive impact on group formation processes, underlying structures, and features such as peer reviews and training. The effects on the environmental dimension include changes in appreciation and understanding of the natural system and adapted agricultural practices leading to better production. These effects are related to trainings conducted by NGOs on the ground. These NGOs do not distinguish between PGS farmers and non-PGS farmers when selecting participants. Thus, PGS farmers can still strengthen their knowledge by engaging in the group with the PGS affiliation. However these practical trainings and the theoretical knowledge based on agroecological principles are a pre-condition for the PGS membership. The marketing aspect linked to certification and the Kilimohai brand is a distinct feature of PGS membership. The economic benefits are seen across the groups, while the active and intentional use of the label varies by group. The usage is most pronounced among groups where KOAN supports actively with networks, establishes connections with traders, and coordinates processes and deliveries between farmers and traders. In the political arena, being part of an organized group combined with a reputable institution such as KOAN and others is seen as beneficial for lobbying, pushing policies and gaining recognition. Nevertheless, the membership to a PGS does not seem to be the decisive criterion here, but rather the general affiliation with an organized group. Thus, PGSs support in all dimensions, but are not exclusively responsible for successes in the various dimensions. All in all, the PGS can be seen as a tool to accelerate the conversion to organic at different levels, both at the producer and consumer level and at the political level. The visibility of certification, the Kilimohai label, or affiliation with PGS is still limited to some extent and is mainly associated with traders and the Nairobi markets. It remains to be seen whether farmers will actively nurture and advance their affiliation with a PGS or whether, they see it mainly as a means to an end rather than a tool they can take into their own hands to drive meaningful transformation.

This chapter summary concludes with some key notes on each dimension and keywords that might be crucial for the development of the performances of the respective dimensions.

ECONOMIC dimension

- market information mostly comes from KOAN, most farmers depend and rely on market linkages and information from KOAN through the field coordinators
- the trade with traders help farmers to achieve higher incomes but also causes issues in logistics and compliance towards quality requirements of traders
- the supply and demand situation is not yet satisfactory for the farmers, solutions are seen in contract farming to achieve a better income stability and make a better planning on production
- so far the market situation seems to be supply driven rather than demand-driven
- local market vs Nairobi market: the local market is easier accessible and complies with the wish to serve the local community, but the prices that can be achieved are a lot lower and the competition with conventional products is very high
- the Kilimohai brand has not a high impact yet, it is required by traders but farmers do not identify with the brand and the brand is hardly visible at local markets, besides the branding has not been a topic of relevance in the conversations that came up naturally
- Organic production is considered to be less expensive, as no expensive fertilizers have to be bought, but organic fertilizers are produced in self-production, the savings have been mentioned but there seems no record keeping or clear idea how much have been
- The dependence on climate conditions, seasonality and rainfed agriculture are highly influencing the supply
- In two groups that interact already with traders the advantage of certification is also seen in quicker and easier sales
- Awareness raising is connected with better sales but seen as an ongoing process that eventually could also raise the prices on the local market
- Different groups, respectively individual farmers, have different priorities: the motivations do not always lie in the economic aspect but also in a value based aspect that sees the provision of organic products for the local community at first place independent from the profit margin

Key words: visibility of the Kilimohai label, empowerment of the farmer for price negotiations, competitiveness, market information, record keeping, planting calendars, underlying values & motivations

POLITICAL dimension

- Groups see the integration of political actors associated with time efforts, patience and at the same time the need for formalized meetings organized by institutions such as KOAN who apparently have a higher weight and recognition
- Levels of awareness, knowledge and interest in organic farming from political sides are different in the different groups and areas
- There is only one county (Muranga) who reported of positive attitudes and better levels of political support which is also connected with an upcoming agroecology bill
- All in all the groups see the need for a stronger lobbying
- Agricultural extension officers seem to be a key stakeholder group that is seen as important to integrate, to be trained on organic and then be able to also support farmers with trainings
- Political recognition and supportive policies are associated with financial support which is needed for water infrastructure, trainings and subsidies for organic inputs
- Overall there is disappointment expressed by the farmers on the political support which also comes with the attitude and the strong affiliation of them towards conventional farming
- The involvement and integration of political actors is done by inviting these in several occasions, not yet this reaches levels of satisfaction

- Knowledge on the PGS concept from political side has not been mentioned by the farmers, mostly it is more about knowledge on organic farming in general

Keywords: knowledgeable agricultural extension officers, supportive bills, financial support

SOCIAL dimension

- most dominant dimension as people appreciate the strong social cohesion
- peer-learning is one of the most important aspects of the PGS groups
- so far there seems not to be a clear strategy for member recruitment and members report from higher rates of drop outs due to non-compliance with the standards or high expectations that are not met in particular related to impatience
- the groups follow similar structures with committees, official positions and management with more or less regular meetings
- market days are considered days of social interactions with the group as well as with the costumers, normally these days are also used for the common discussions or update from committees as well as the purchase of food between the members
- Personal relationships have a high value to the farmers, they miss out these in case of some traders relationships that do not take the chance to visit the farm or to get to know the farmer
- Customers usually come with referrals and PGS members try to educate customers on various occasion such at the market or in some cases via social media
- Capacity building and farm visits are linked to the eagerness to learn and the opportunity to learn with and from each other
- Mostly trainings are associated with experts as trainers. Trainings by other PGS members are seen as an opportunity and some ToT trainings have been carried out but this seems not yet a formalized process of offering organized trainings by trainers that are PGS members
- Trust between members is established through peer review and the open gate policy, which allows random visits. This element is also seen as a factor that helps build trust with customers

Key words: sense of belonging, peer-learning, appreciation of personal relationships, trust and transparency, enhanced training of the trainer (ToT) and trainings by members

ENVIRONMENTAL dimension

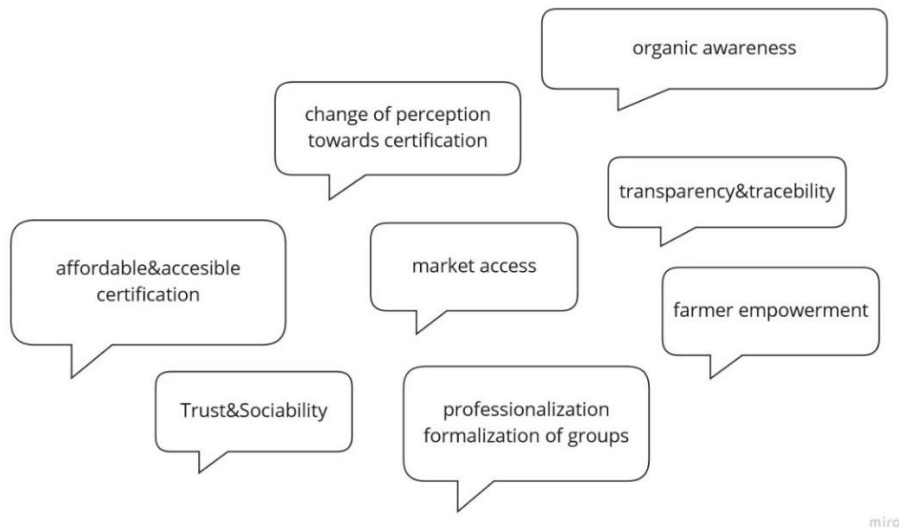
- Farmers claimed to have gained deeper knowledge during trainings on organic farming practices which also lead to an intensified appreciation and understanding of soils
- Through practical trainings farmers know how to produce and apply organic inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides
- Contamination still poses a threat and seems to be challenging to be controlled
- Through the PGS affiliation the farmers are guided to guarantee certain standard and rules for production which is controlled during inspections and peer-review
- Smaller farms show are higher diversity of different crops and more innovative designs and measures in order to make best use of limited space
- Climate change is seen as a major issue and practices for adaption are in place but are not sufficient to encounter the impacts and to secure production
- Environmental protection or the promotion of biodiversity do not seem to be a priority issue for the farmers interviewed, but the knowledge and implementation is apparently present
- In a few cases farming systems are related to energy production systems such as biogas or solar which seems to an option to maximize resource use

Key words: East African Organic Product standards, soil appreciation, production of inputs, pest control, climate change adaptation

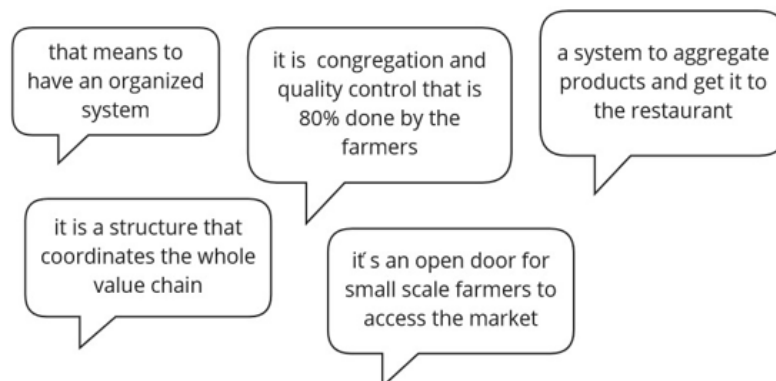
Part 3: Perceptions on PGS

PGS4Change: Perceptions of different actor groups on PGS

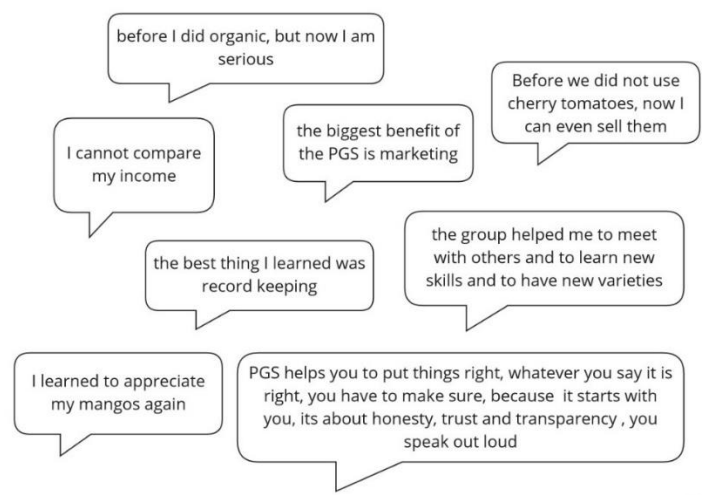
The view of the **KOAN** Team (Quotes from different KOAN colleagues during the briefing meeting)



The perspective of change by the **traders** (Quotes from the trader's focus group discussion)



Farmers experiences with PGS (Quotes from individual farmers interviews)



Why PGS matters: farmer's perspective (Quotes from different individual farmers interviews)

With the PGS the element of quality control came in, the peer review and the governance of the group, this added value

The PGS training formed a group to market and to give quality vegetables for the market

It offers me the chance to give away my knowledge and to learn with peer- learning

PGS helps to explain what the problem is, we learned the way how to plant

It means relationship and to have structures to enable, to track issues

PGS is about selling, that is why the G (Guarantee) is so important

PGS means streamlining , leadership and value chain

I see PGS as a support group

PGS means accountability

Understanding of the different elements

Instructions: Each participant holds 3 cards with each one letter representing the different elements P (Participation), G (Guarantee) and S (System). After the question by the facilitator each participant is requested to raise a card according to his own opinion/perception/experience.

Questions to farmers:

Answers of the farmers:

Question	P	G	S
1. Which element is most important to you?	18	17	11
2. Which element works best in your group?	38	2	7
3. On which element you want to focus more?	5,5	25,5	16
4. Which element is most challenging?	3	19	24

Summary:



- There is not much difference in the element that is most important to the participants, it is nearly equally distributed

- There is a very clear perception that participation, especially in connection with the fellow farmers, works best. Hence it is not seen as very challenging and therefore is not seen to be the focus in the future
- The system(s) and guarantee elements are seen as issues that need more attention and focus in the future, which is also consistent with these two elements being seen as challenging

Questions to **traders**:

Answers of the traders:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In which of the element do you see yourself most? 2. Which element is most important to you? 3. On which element you want to focus more? 	Question	P	G	S
	Q1	0	2	3
	Q2	1	3	0
	Q3	1	1	3

Summary:

- The element of participation is mostly connected with the farmers and the traders do not see their take in it
- The guarantee is most important as the customer has the highest priority and needs to be assured of the quality
- The system provoked most of the discussion and was not considered to be satisfying at this moment

Discussions of the different elements

Participation

Farmer's view:

- Participation mostly associated and reduced to the PGS members
- Some participants see the necessity to include other stakeholder groups. The contributions of other actors is seen in education, research, trainings, funds and awareness raising even through preaching in churches
- The majority of the PGS members is happy about participation, those who are in doubt mention the commitment of (new) members being a problem
- Participation is also seen in external help in registration and volunteers helping during the market

Trader's view:

- Participation is associated with the farmers
- Participation means participating in the market
- if more farmer participate more resilience is established, more supply is possible
- it's important for farmers to get organized – the perfect market would not have competition

Guarantee

Farmer's view:

- Guarantee is not necessarily associated with the Kilimohai label or the certification
- Guarantee is related to organic integrity and with it difficulties linked to the organic growing of certain crops and the need for financial means to buy organic inputs, as knowledge on production of organic inputs is not sufficient
- A need of knowledge to understand the standard that is required on the market was raised
- The wish to serve also the international market is related to the Guarantee and the necessity to have this standard to achieve equity
- Guarantee is seen as important to maintain a certain standard
- Farmers see the importance for guarantee and are eager to do the "right" thing

Trader's view:

- traders see as highest priority to give their costumers the guarantee
- costumers need to be confident, they are most important
- you cannot measure residue levels in the products, so you need to trust in the farmers
- trust is most important: each PGS group has one inspector that is assisted with PGS members

Systems

Farmer's view:

- There is uncertainty about the term, participants want to understand what it is about
- Some relate System to organic farming and see challenges in implementing organic practices
- Some relate System to the chain of actors and see the challenge and importance in bringing the different parties together, make them understand, reaching everybody
- Consumers are also mentioned as a challenging part in the system as awareness is low
- The system is difficult to maintain as there are only few certifiers and inspections
- System is also seen as the basis for the other elements: with a proper system participation and guarantee can be assured
- System is also associated with a maximization of resource use
- Debates on the system coming from „within“ or need for „imposed structure“ for guidance

Trader's view:

- the system is seen as fragmented as everybody is doing their own thing in their corner
- there are breaks in the value chain
- traders claim that they should not see each other as competition
- there should be a coordination between traders working together to make it transport more easier, to combine products and get them to the city at the same time

- traders say that they need to wake up to create a network without KOANs support, business should be made more directly in forums
- a trader wants to have an efficient system on the ground that finds out what the market needs are and assures consistency

Chapter Summary

All different groups: KOAN, traders and farmers have benefited from the PGS so far and see a positive change. KOAN sees the change mainly in farmers having a better perspective on sales and being more empowered. Farmers appreciate the social factor of peer learning. The valorization of organic farming and more income and sales opportunities are among the positive aspects. The element of structure is mentioned not only by farmers, but especially by traders. The traders see the advantage of the PGS association of farmers in the coordination and organization of the farmers' group, which makes their lives easier.

Participation is the crucial element most demanded and filled by the PGS members, the farmers themselves. The idea of active stakeholder participation is echoed in the official definition of PGS, but also by the farmer community. They have an idea of which stakeholder groups could participate and what the participation could look like. This involves promotion, lobbying, funds, awareness raising and research. Participation currently relies heavily on the sole participation of PGS members and also on NGOs to assist with facilitation of processes, training and networking. The impression was that participation of other actors is only reflected in a deeper way by participants when it is really addressed. Naturally, from both a farmer and a traders perspective, participation stays with the farmer. If farmers want more involvement from different stakeholders, it seems to be their responsibility to actively engage them and approach them. Otherwise, it remains purely the NGOs, whose participation may already be taken for granted.

Trust, transparency and accountability are very important to traders. They associate this primarily with the "guarantee," and there is some level of mistrust expressed because they are unsure of the integrity of organic products throughout the whole value chain. For traders, the guarantee is most important because it meets the needs of customers for a guarantee of organic quality. Farmers also see the need to fully comply with the standards and report to make every effort to do so. While for retailers the guarantee is directly linked to the label and certification, as a visible sign that is also marketable, for farmers the whole process behind the guarantee is of utmost importance. For them, it's about understanding the standards and knowing the right farming practices to meet the standards. The element of the guarantee seems to be the one where the trader group and the farmer group are most likely to converge. However, the critical aspect of getting farmers and traders on the same page is trust. This could be fostered through mutual exchange and regular site visits as well as with the explanation of how PGS operate, such as the elements of peer-review or the committee structure that has a compliance committee.

There is a lot of discussion about "the system". On both sides, there seems to be no clear idea of what the system is, and even the aspect of shaping one's own system seems quite distant. Rather, farmers and traders feel that the system is something that is a predetermined structure that comes from the outside. In this way, they surrender to themselves the agency to design their system. The traders in particular seem to see the system as something that is not of them or with them but attribute it to the farmers. Some of the farmers have the "systems thinking" approach in mind and see the bigger picture. At the moment, this idea is something that lingers in the mind, but still needs some time before being put into action. The system element is obviously the least tangible, but one of the greatest levers for stabilizing relationships among the various actors and fostering collaboration and synergies.

Conclusion & Discussion

This study has shown that there is a high potential to use Participatory Guarantee Systems for change. This starts with the notion of a certification system to work alternatively without third-party-inspectors. The element of trust is the main game changer that already is inherited by PGS members. Besides of the fundament of trust there is an underlying value based assumption of organic agriculture to be the most sustainable way of farming, not reduced to environmental or economic aspects. Consequently PGS can be seen as one tool in the transformation of food systems to be more equitable, fair and sustainable. Food systems are concerned with activities involving the production, processing, transport, and consumption. This also implies the impacts it has on the natural environment and the health of people as well as governance and politics related to it. This research focused mainly on the farmer's perspective and therefore looks primarily at the beginning of the value chain.

The change for farmers that has occurred with the PGS affiliation is evident in numerous aspects. Overall, the PGS groups studied benefit from PGS, particularly in the social dimension, as PGS has taken group dynamics to another level through formalization. PGS members highly value training, meetings, exchange visits, and peer reviews. In fact, the underlying PGS structure has fostered collaboration and a willingness to learn more, creating a sense of belonging and a strong social bond. The collective aspect of moving forward together, growing and developing as a group is valued by members. The fact that Participatory Guarantee Systems are used to certify groups in an affordable way is not only considered from a financial point of view, but also in the collective way of compiling products to meet the required quantities. The economic benefits come through especially when it comes to using the Kilimohai label for traders, which is associated with higher incomes for farmers and new market opportunities. From an ecological perspective, PGS has helped create a better understanding of and connection to the soil as well as a renewed appreciation for working with the natural system. This includes the acquisition of knowledge about different organic farming methods and the production of organic inputs. This knowledge cannot be attributed to the PGS itself, but the more systematic exchange of knowledge can. Farmers are now taking organic farming more seriously than ever before. From a political perspective, PGS groups feel that by working with NGOs in an organized group, they can better seek political recognition and attract funds and favorable policies in the long run. However, activating political bodies is usually delegated to local NGOs and KOAN rather than to the members themselves. The importance of this is widely understood, and efforts are being made to increase the involvement and awareness of political actors. Traders also see the farmer's affiliation to PGS as helpful as they connect this in particular to coordination efforts that are made by KOAN for deliveries and being the intermediary between traders and farmers, which is not a PGS feature. Some traders are not aware of the underlying PGS system but see only the certified organic end product.

With an open gate policy, PGSs offer the opportunity to build personal relationships and a high level of transparency that could increase trust in organic integrity among various stakeholders. This opportunity is only partially realized by traders and consumers, because it requires awareness of this element, interest, and time. PGS members are aware that active participation, whether by other farmers or by other stakeholders, cannot be forced, but that an enabling environment for participation can be created to foster interest in integration and engagement. Raising awareness seems to be the first step in this direction taken by farmers and supporting organizations. Members are ultimately not overly critical of a lack of full participation or awareness, seeing this as a gradual process that develops over time. In the case of the PGS groups studied, the idea to participate in a PGS did not come from the farmers themselves, but was a possibility introduced by KOAN. So the idea of change is more something that is looked at from the outside to help farmers improve their livelihoods and the organic sector development. Farmers take this opportunity, perhaps without feeling the urge for change or the need for certification. Thus, change through the PGS is seen as an opportunity for further (personal

or community) development and growth, but not primarily as a tool to address specific challenges. On the one hand, this positive attitude has the potential to slowly build a system that will become stable over time. On the other hand, it also carries the risk of approaching change too slowly or not actively enough, thereby losing committed members or missing opportunities. Since PGS need active participation to trigger the intended effects, they do not just "happen" but need impetus and steering. Otherwise, change might be short-term and not occur on a larger scale. It is not just about improving the lives of a few farmers, but also about political weight. The whole idea of PGS also seems to hold the opportunity for a rethinking of food consumption and production, but also of the nature of interaction within the value chain. However, the incentive to actively participate in PGS must always be linked to a clear benefit for the respective actor.

There has been much discussion amongst the farmers and traders group about the three elements of PGS that derive from its name. Apparently there is consensus that participation is the basis for the functioning of the whole system. Nevertheless, participation is mostly done by the PGS members, the farmers themselves, and this is also attributed to them by the traders' group. Looking at active stakeholder participation, which is part of the official PGS definition, it becomes clear that there is a gap between theory and reality. It shows that not all stakeholders in the systems, especially in the value chain but also not reduced to it, acknowledge or (want to) feel part of the system. Awareness raising and active integration of the different stakeholder groups seems to be the key towards more collaboration and making the different pieces of the puzzle fit together. Thus, roles are easily attributed to others, but the exact roles and responsibilities are not clearly delineated and may not be openly discussed by the different stakeholders. As a result, it is easy to express a desire for an improved system but not associate one's own responsibilities with it, while relying on others. KOAN, in particular, is credited with the role of "making the system work." This can be explained by the fact that KOAN has the role of initiating PGS formation processes and facilitating the groups with trainings, assessments and market linkages. On the one hand, this role is seen as very positive, as it supports farmers and connects them with traders and markets, as well as ensures quality and accountability through inspection and certification. On the other hand, PGS are referred to by traders and farmers as "a KOAN thing," leading to underdeveloped ownership, reduced sense for a shared responsibility and high dependence on KOAN, which is seen as undesirable from all sides. KOAN raises the prospect of decentralizing PGS systems from KOAN as unique certification body and establishing a national PGS office to centralize efforts.

The element of guarantee is the connecting part and the reason why especially traders and farmers come together. For the traders, the guarantee is related to the label, while for the farmers, the guarantee is related to the whole system and process of training, production, peer reviews, inspections, etc.. Both farmers and traders have a strong interest in compliance with the standards and view them positively as an element of accountability. Traders express their willingness to trust in the organic integrity of the products and therefore of the farmers, but at the same time doubts are expressed. This may not be based on bad experiences, but on a lack of knowledge, awareness and interest about the whole system and its processes behind the label. Traders may put more emphasis on the business aspect than on social or production related aspects. The market situation on both the demand and supply side for certified organic products from PGS groups is not satisfactory for stakeholders due to difficulties with logistics, coordination, product consistency, and a lack of market orientation. Joint efforts to achieve an improved understanding of the situations on both sides and enter into joint solution processes are still limited and are mainly sustained by KOAN.

Ultimately, stakeholders should not want to "do" PGS, but to "be" PGS, not for the sake of a concept, but to extract the elements that are important to them to create their ideal system. Complementary to the goal of producing, selling, and consuming organic products, the goal of placing organic

agriculture on the political agenda and getting it on a broader scale to create an organic movement in the country was expressed. It is obvious that promoting PGS and its principles could be a useful way to have a voice and accomplish something politically. Ultimately, the critical questions for stakeholders involved in PGS should be about the food system they want to promote, their contribution to making the system work the way they want it to work, and the necessary actions to establish a system that feels like theirs. This does not mean that PGS have to become the purpose of life, but it could influence the way of thinking and thus be part of the way of living and working and with it a tool for a better quality of life: for families and communities including farmers, consumers, traders.... and a way for accelerating the organic sector growth.

Recommendations

These suggestions are not directed towards a certain stakeholder group but rather are formulated as general ideas by the author to improve the PGS based on the experience during the research period. In addition, the ideas have not been tested for feasibility and are thus left freely to the interpretation of the reader.

Stakeholder integration

- work out a clear mission towards the integration of more stakeholders and make them feel wanting to be part by seeing a clear benefit of being part of the system
- development of an onboarding process for new members apart from the official trainings by the members that include to certain criteria in order to better match mutual expectations

Visibility of Kilimohai brand and PGS

- making Kilimohai mark and PGS more visible could also foster political support and help to create a certain recognition factor and reputation within the country
- traders can also be asked to do further promotion of the mark and the PGS concept on their website, social media channels etc.

Systems thinking

- discuss mutual expectations, roles and responsibility of all stakeholders for actively shaping the system and not waiting for others to take over and then feel that the system is imposed
- find out the strength, skills and capacities of individual persons and actor groups in order to align activities accordingly and combine efforts and make best use of skills and resources
- get different actors together in roundtables on certain topics of concern

Strategy formulation

- formulation of goals could be useful to track success and identify action fields and priorities
- the use of the different committees could be further explored and distinctive to have people committed and motivated to actually be active and achieve goals

PGS trainings

- include representatives of other stakeholder groups to make them feel welcomed
- let PGS members be part of the training and explain about their experience to make it more real and less theoretic or less appear to be a “KOAN requirement”
- regular refresher trainings

Traceability & Transparency

- awareness raising through more visibility of the functioning of the PGS – more trust and understanding can be developed: eg. Committee structure can be useful, as the compliance committee or peer-review committee could actively engage other stakeholder and with it foster the trust and confidence of traders

Reflections

This study provided an overview of the performance in different dimensions and the perception of the PGS concept of a few individuals. Since the focus was not on one dimension in particular, the level of detail is not very high in each dimension. This study focused on farmers because they are the protagonists of the PGS as PGS members. However, to better understand the dynamics of the different stakeholder groups and to identify the gaps and leverage points within the different PGS systems, it would have been helpful to explore in more detail the perspectives and practices of the other stakeholder groups involved and highlight also different parts of the value chain. Due to time constraints and the scope of the study, however, this was not possible. The advantage that the researcher brings with her, being independent and bringing in an outside perspective, means at the same time that the results are influenced by the different cultural background and the personal life situation of the researcher. This report summarizes the findings of the different PGS groups and very few individuals, which may lead to reality bias and generalizations.

About the author



Fig. 4 Photo of Anna-Lena Ahlf taken on a KOAN event

Anna-Lena Ahlf is a German Citizen, born in 1989 in Hamburg. Her professional background in project management in international trade and development cooperation brought her to couple of countries, in particular with Asian and Latin American Countries. As a study background she focused on Social Geography, Latin America Studies (Bachelor of Science, Hamburg University) and is doing currently her Master's degree in "Global Change management". (Eberswalde University for Sustainable development). Sustainability plays a major role in her life which is

reflected also in her interest in organic agriculture. In particular the interest to work with PGS groups evolved during a research semester carried out in Bolivia in 2021/2022. This interest could be further developed and deepen during this study with PGS groups in Kenya with the support of KOAN and FiBL.

If you would like to have more information on the study please contact KOAN for further assistance.

Using this report:

This study forms part of a Master Thesis. Please attribute the recognition and respect when using data and information of this report in official use by citing the author or asking for permission. Thank you.

Data Protection Notice:

All published information and photos are underling a consent by the participants. Data is stored at the researcher side and will not be given to third parties.

Sources

Main source: Personal interviews, conversations and observation protocols

Photos: private property, author: Anna-Lena Ahlf or KOAN field coordinators with permission

Figures:

Figure 1: Kilimohai Label. Icon taken from: <https://www.koan.co.ke/where-to-get-your-organic-fix/>
Last assessed on 07.11.2022

Figure 2: Infographic with features and elements of PGS. <https://www.ifoam.bio/our-work/how/standards-certification/participatory-guarantee-systems/pgs-faqs>. Last assessed on 17.11.2022

Figure 3: Table with findings on the dimensions. Own elaboration by the researcher

Figure 4: Picture showing Anna-Lena Ahlf. Photo was taken from an official photographer (provided by Wowzi) during a social media event of KOAN on 21st of September. Rights were given by KOAN.

Background chapter:

Official definition of PGS by IFOAM: <https://www.ifoam.bio/our-work/how/standards-certification/participatory-guarantee-systems>. Last assessed on 08.11.2022

Summary Report traders:

T1: Interview with a representative of Silvia's Basket

T3: : Interview with a representative of The Cornershop

T4: Interview with a representative of Bridges Organic Restaurant

T5: Interview with a representative of Fine Aromas

T6: Interview with a representative of GreenSpoon

Snapshot:

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/change> . Last assessed on 11.11.2022

Annex

- Reflections on change
- Snapshot
- Focus group discussions protocols:

FDG1: NOOYA group

FDG2: Kikuyu

FDG3: Machakos

FDG4: Muranga

FDG5: INOGOF

- Summary Report traders

Reflections on change*

The considerations on the concept of change are very diverse: they concern the scope, the duration, the depth and the different spheres. It is about **alteration**, **substitution** or **transformation**. In terms of this study, it can be said that the PGS groups touch on different levels of change. Change is inherent in development, and of course there are many changes in the initial phase when the PGS is adapted as a new concept and the process begins. A distinction must be made between changes that are inevitable and those that are intentional. Change means something different for each person and affects their own life situation or also the operations within the group or the operations within the value chain. What can be said in relation to this study?

- PGS means **making a difference** by using an alternative certification system and using elements of trust and peer review primarily to ensure organic integrity.
- For some farmers, there has been a radical **conversion** from conventional farming to organic farming; others experience the shift less drastically, but see it in terms of seriousness and understanding to practice organic farming
- PGS has also helped farmers take a different **position** in the organic sector by being perceived as an organized group with certification. This also changes the **direction** and **course** of increasing formalization and is associated with a stronger voice at the policy level, and may also be associated with increased recognition and reputation among other actors along the value chain such as traders and consumers
- One of the most practiced aspects of PGS is **exchange**: especially between other farmers, but also with other PGS groups. Exchanges are seen as very rewarding and effective for transformation.
- PGS also brings about a **mind shift** and a deeper motivation not only to consume organically but also to provide other people with safe food that comes with a guarantee. It can also trigger a reflection on the meaning and importance of organic farming and one's role in it
- PGS affiliation could provide impetus for further changes in power positioning and contribute to the **transformation** of food systems and rethinking of current structures and perceptions of current food systems.
- The notion of change is seen by PGS members as very positive and encouraging, touching especially on the value base in combination with an economic motivation. For the retailer group, the focus is mostly on the practical aspect of PGS and the full understanding of PGS is not present or not emphasized. PGS is mainly a means to obtain certified products.
- PGS can also be a tool to **move from one phase to another**: e.g. to deepen the entrepreneurial aspect of agriculture.

Some changes cannot be attributed to the PGS concept, but may just be a parallel development to other change processes. Belonging to PGS seems to be something that farmers have not actively sought, as it has not developed from a grassroots idea, but rather is seen as an opportunity along the way. Nonetheless, PGS is seen as positive by all stakeholders and holds further potential to leverage and develop the change that has occurred. Managing change involves monitoring and tracking change and formulating goals and vision. A strategy can help monitor change and make it more visible and manageable. In this regard, a requirement in PGS is seemingly cooperation and collaboration. This could also involve identifying resources (including other stakeholders) and prioritizing activities. Ultimately, internal motivations for change have a more lasting impact than external motivations for change.

*some terms have been adapted from the official definition of "change" in the Merriam Webster Dictionary



What changes have occurred through PGS?

Income increase * new market linkages * personal fulfillment * enhanced sense of belonging * improved understanding on the natural system/soil etc * collective production of organic inputs* increase social cohesion* seriousness on organic farming* coordination* exposure on markets* element of quality control * governance* regular meetings* strong encouragement* reappréciation on organic farming/indigenous vegetables * increased confidence

What do farmers like about the PGS?

Peer-review * mutual learning experience * morals of doing the right things * trust * open-gate-policy* structure* accountability* pride to be chosen/ to be benchmarked* shared responsibility

What do farmers expect for the future?

Enlarged markets* better revenues* stronger voice * more positive challenging amongst members* more innovation* increased value addition activities* increased number of organic farmers*continuous supply on local market* export market

What needs are expressed by farmers?

Guidance on strategy development* funds for water infrastructure * support from NGOs on moving something political* refresher trainings*more specific knowledge on pest management and the growing of certain crops* diversified sales channels, different buyers and markets

What are farmers struggling with?

Commitment and compliance of members* recognition and support of political actors* seed availability* water access & availability, irrigation systems* participation of other actors* lack of other actors on awareness on organic farming* appropriate market places* reliable and affordable transportation * implementation of planting calendars and record keeping

What do farmers want to focus on?

Seed production/ seed banks* strategy development with goals* networking*more commitment

What are the dynamics between farmers and traders?

Both want to have more consistency, more products and good returns* traders see the PGS not as their system but as the farmers system* farmers want to have a stronger personal relationship and farm visits* seasonality is a big topic

What is the perceived role of KOAN by traders & farmers?

Field coordinators* intermediaries between farmers and market actors* guides for the system * advocator for organic farming * umbrella of actors * provider of technical expertise and networks* certification body* provider of labels and marketing equipment

What are the leverage points seen by the actors? (KOAN, Traders, Farmers)

Leadership* strategy formulation* sensitization on seasonality * ToT* creation of ownership of the system* visibility of the trade mark and the PGS structure * dialogues between different stakeholders * sharing values & visions* decentralization of PGS certification by KOAN* better coordination and planning of production* frequent trainings* market-oriented supply* farmer empowerment * diverse sales channels* delineation of roles & responsibilities* contract farming* increased awareness raising activities (eg social media campaigns)

[Type here]



Order of pictures: FGD Muranga , Machakos, Kikuyu, Kiserian.

Remark: There have been no photos taken on the FGD with the INOGOF group and the traders group

PROTOCOLLS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS



KISERIAN ORGANIC FARMERS – NOOYA GROUP

FGD 1 Kiserian : 12.10.2022
 Participants: 12 participants, (10 PGS members, 1 agricultural extension officer, 1 guest)
 Venue: Private property on a PGS members farm

1) Introduction

Reasons to be part in the NOOYA group:

- the reason I am here is the **market**
- the reason is to market and sell our organic products, so that we can also reach out to others and let people know, but also for farmers to have **money** in the pocket so to have at least something from the farm. Also to make sure that we **consume food that is good for us**, healthy food so to ensure whatever food I don't have I can get it from the market or from the homestays from the other organic farmers
- I enjoy the organic farming and the **meetings** as we share things when we come together, the good thing is you **learn** every day
- I am an urban farmer, I do mostly multi-story gardens, I am in the group I can sell and **share my products** if I have some products over
- I started organic farming two years ago, like post-covid as my work-place was in lock down, so I approached CShep and they trained by luckily on organic farming and later on PGS. One thing why I like working with the NOOYA group, let me start with the **social aspect**, if you are stressed or you live alone, many people cannot meet like us in the group. The second aspect is because they introduced me to organic farming. After that time I started to **take food consumption seriously** and I realized that most of our food is not safe
- I just love people, I also help in trainings to **learn more about food safety, food variety, food security**, NOOYA helps us, also to **access**
- its about **farmership** and about reaching out to others and provide safe food and also the **guarantee and the structure** of PGS helps
- I grew up with organic farming, my parents never used fertilizers as that is wrong, and I came to the group as I want to eat safe food as it is benefitting my body. So when I am at NOOYA I am happy because at least **I know what I am doing, I am doing the right thing** and when I meet other people doing the same, we **exchange ideas**, I feel happy and **confident**
- I am here to become a smart farmer, smart means you don't have to invent everything, so **there are brilliant minds** here, I am just happy to become smart

2) Exercise on PGS elements

Procedure: Questions are raised and participants raise the card with a letter. P= Participatory G= Guarantee S= System(s)

Topic	P	G	S
Most important element	6	3	0
Best working element in the group	9	0	0
Element I want to focus on	0,5	7,5	1
Most challenging element	1	1	7

Discussions

System element:

- finding a system can be a challenge, we start from scratch, we want something that is workable
- you have to be part of it
- I also think that we are system creatures, we like having systems, because every day, even as an individual there is a system you have, it is like a program, like a habit but now coming up with one that is effective, that is a challenge, it is easy when you are used to a certain system: this is how we grow food, that is how we ensure food safety and now it is about time and work: moving a system and building up a system is work
- what is system in the context? I need to understand.
- System as to my understanding is a combination of ways which are coming up to support
- maybe we can do the comparison between PGS and ICS to understand system or you can take the rules. Because each group has the own rules and regulations
- I think its maybe just how an institution functions to achieve its goals. For example our goal is sustainability, to make sure that every farmer has food , than we have the training aspect of it, then the peer-review, so before we did not find a way for meeting that goal but now we have, that it is a system for me

Guarantee

- This guarantee sometimes I don't understand really, I want to think more about it, just to be sure
- that's the main aspect, the PGS helped us to establish a market and for the market there has to be a good relationship between the seller and the buyer. And the most important thing for the buyer is the guarantee. If there is no difference between organic and conventional food how do you know that this is authentic. That's the major concern. That's the most important thing that we can guarantee, and even to us, as we are also buyers. We need to communicate the system and systems that anybody can understand so that everybody who produces actually does what they say
- we need to develop that guarantee system, it is very important for all the stakeholders, not just the producers but even consumers. But we have challenges, we only do inspections once in a year, we do need funds. The inspection is what helps us to guarantee . Ideally we should do it more often, because if you do it once and the farmer is expecting you so the one will try and put the house in order. And also we should be able to involve the consumers that is also key and gives that aspect of security of eating safe food. We need to be funded more and be able to do it regularly.
- we are talking about guarantee, are we only focusing on the food safety or are we also taking about availability? Because yes, we can guarantee on the safety but is it available? Because one of the challenges we've been having on the market is that clients are come in and they don't get what they are looking for. Inconsistency. So I don't know is it only covering the food safety aspect or is it also covering the availability with that guarantee.
- in the end we may not be able to guarantee the consistency because of weather patterns or farmers which like to do certain crop and not the other but one thing what we have to guarantee, is that that food is safe, because it will eventually come to the market and also to sensitize the clients to know what is in season. It is also important, because we cannot do everything, this has pushed more farmers to do crazy things because mango

you can get now all the year, but it had a season. Because of the demand that customers are pushing, so the farmer looks at it as an opportunity and will do anything to make sure, that that supply is there. It is also good to go back to the basics and learn that how god created things, that things are available in seasons.

- also on that to guaranteeing to have the product on the market, it brings now the aspect of value addition. Also the question of the nutrition value, does it have the same nutrition values when you add value as if it is in season and gives you a hundred percent. When you dry or when you add value, what percentage is reduced or gets lost? So the issue of value addition that we are able to sustain the market. Those are the gaps in the guarantee system, that we are not.. actually I was seeing the guarantee system as a vehicle that you guarantee that you are able to take them, they enter an organic vehicle, they will be guaranteed to reach the destination
- The G is also very important, we need to focus on the G we need to continue and guarantee that what ever product we are producing is at it's utmost best
- PGS is about selling, that is why the G (Guarantee) is so important

Participation

- P is for participatory, I need to participate a lot as an individual and also I or we as a group we need to call upon all these people who have been trained in organic to participate fully
- we need to call people on the P (Participation): PGS should be for more people, not only farmers

3) Exercise on Changes

Participants are asked to talk about their greatest change and the expectations

Changes

- sense of belonging
- increase in income and sales
- peer learning and sharing of information
- fulfilling: taking part in feeding the nation with the right kind of food – doing morally the right things that is personal fulfillment
- exposure
- proud to be chosen, to be benchmarked to make the difference

Expectations that have not been met:

- lack of commitment from members
- ignorance of the people of the importance of organic
- lack of innovation
- lack of positive challenging to change method of production

Discussion:

- Expectation was high, but a lot of people don't care about organic
- I expected more commitment , but a lot of people are leaving the group and not everybody wants to be an organic farming, they start in the market and along they way, the drop out
- we are lacking in challenging each other , we need more innovation
- Inspections have to be improved, we need to do more inspections. If we do it only once and we announce than people will prepare, we need more random inspections

- we can use mini-green houses for the tomatoes
- questions about value addition and seasonality , we need to have safe food and availability
- we need to integrate the customers, more visits and they also should be included in PGS training
- one of the unfilled dreams is ...many people are not aware on PGS, they are ignorant about PGS, about the importance of taking products that have undergone PGS, I would like so many people to come, but they don't come, they are ignorant
- when you are challenged you want to do a bit more, we are lacking this a bit, when there are challenges it brings out the best, but we are relaxed, I don't feel the challenges
- this challenge can be brought up with value addition, that's exposure

4) Challenges

Part 1: individual work: farmers had to note down on paper the challenges / Part 2: Rating: each farmer had 2 dots for the rating

A) as PGS member

Group

- challenging each other more (1 vote)
- commitment
- participation – inconsistency among members
- peer learning, seeing what others farmers are doing

Market

- not having produce in the market (1 vote)
- not being able to supply the market. I feel like have failed them. (2 votes)
- being available at the market on all the market days

Water/climate

- unsustainability in production due to water shortage, thus reduced or no income (2 votes)
- weather has been a big challenge like climatic conditions: pest control, low produce (2 votes)
- unreliable water supply
- climate change

Knowledge/Practices

- very complicated in terms of implementing
- little or no knowledge on value addition, then we have excess of goods

Others

- society ignorant about safety guarantee (2 votes)

B) as an organic farmer

Climatic conditions

- climate change- change of seasons effect people that rely on rainfed agriculture
- weather change (2 votes)

Water supply

- irregular supply of water
- lack of water on our farms
- water is the main challenge: if the water is there it is rationed (2 votes)

Funds

- lack of enough funding to put some systems in place, for buying a storage tank for water or buying shade net
- funds to provide shade to keep away monkey and pests
- funds to provide water tanks
- getting people to trust that you can produce good in a totally organic way

Others

- monkeys destroy some of my crops like the fruits, manure and some vegetables
- lack of organic seeds
- lack of good seeds (3 votes)
- lack of capital
- organic pest repellent is very expensive
- animal manure is not readily available (1 vote)
- producing more with limited resources (1 vote)

Agricultural practices

- growing certain crops such as tomatoes organic (2 votes)
- pest control – some methods do not really work

Part 3: The most rated cards have been listed and the farmers should take a decision what to prioritize

Choices:

A) as PGS member

- climatic conditions: pest control + low production (11 votes)
- societies ignorance about safety guarantee
- not being able to supply the market

B) as organic farmer

- lack of good seeds (4 votes)
- growing certain crops like tomatoes (2 votes)
- water being rationed (5 votes)

Part 4 : Group work on solutions: Groups discussions on solutions about the most rated challenges as PGS farmers / as organic farmer

Procedure: the group was split into subgroups by counting them A and B. Each group had to discuss on solution about the main selected challenges and present in front of the whole group afterwards

Each group took notes and took photographs of the list of solutions. The photos were shared amongst members in the respective WhatsApp Group.

Group A: climatic conditions

- afforestation, covercropping, mulching,
- diverse production,
- protection of water sources areas by fencing,

- dissemination of information in particular to the youth especially about climatic change, agroforestry,
- use of natural energy (solar)
- proper policies on disposal of industrial waste

Is afforestation for everybody even people with small areas?: Yes, for example the use of gravelia. In addition one farmer of the group has 0,25 acre and has more than 30 trees. Trees are also used as shade. Also passion can grow vertical to give shade.

What measures are easily doable?:

- proper disposal of your disposals at home, you use them at the farm, as biodegradable.
- Biogas should be used for those who have animals. Even plants can be used with plants and weeds. It will assist in regenerating the soil.
- Issue of afforestation: every farmer should have a small nursery, that is easy and doable. Trees to plant and sell. Solar: doable with planning. It is free energy. Helps the issue of water helping pumping.

Group B: Water being rationed

- Conservation of water by having side pits, water harvesting with tanks, rations comes with piped water so we should harvest when it is raining, using agricultural practices like mulching it reduces the evaporation rate of water, companion planting – like planting under trees that are providing shade to use less water with less exposure of sun and use the falling leaves as mulching.
- Use the shade to reduce heat exposure: Covercropping: combine maize and beans – covering the ground, the water in the ground can sustain longer, intercropping, shade nets to reduce the heat,
- greenhouses: we think that green houses are for the commercial farmers, but you can also use it organically, you use your organic inputs and the greenhouse controls the weather inside the greenhouse
- Recycling of water: washing utensils, cloths, using greywater, get rid of chemical detergents
- Aquaponics: combining fishfarming and vegetable farming, using the same water in a cycle
- Planting drought resistant crops that use less water
- No dig farming/ no tilling: only using composting, using less water, part of permaculture
- Sackfarming, container farming: takes a longer time until they need to be re-water
- Ensuring that there is less water wastage: avoid leakages

New introduced method by one member: OASIS



KIKUYU ORGANIC FARMERS COOPERATIVE

FGD 2 Kikuyu : 13.10.2022
 Participants: 8 participants
 Venue: Mugumo Park Hotel Restaurant, Kikuyu

1) Motivation in the group

- Chance to make a change in my area and my life, in my country
- I will change my community because whatever I learn I have to teach, I take myself as a trainer, ToT
- I am loving organic, I learned it from my father and I saw the sign for the group and wanted to join to learn more
- I have changed the past farming but know you can have a small piece of land but you can have more with organic, before I had huge land and no produce
- I did organic farming all the time and also producing organic fertilizer but know I know the reasons and I do it in a better way, the group is helping me to learn it in a deeper way
- I was doing organic just by avoiding fertilizers, pesticides but now I know more through the trainings by KOAN
- With the PGS I see it as an opportunity for certification, we have a market and a shop, we keep growing, sometimes we get questions from the customers "Are you sure?" So if you get the certificate, which I believe PGS is a process of getting certification from KOAN we will be able to show our certificate or to hang it there so that the customer can see we are not lying. I got a call from a husband from a customer, he was asking how can the spinach look that nice it is organic, we were chatting for a long time I was questioned and asked a lot of questions I hope I answered them right because I am not used to these questions. But I am a busy person and I want to learn more, I want to be confident and go to the next level I want to assure the customer, that this is organic

2) PGS exercise

Procedure: each participant has 3 cards with on letter P=Participation G= Guarantee, S= System. For each question the participants decides on one card.

Question	P	G	S	Topic
Q1	2	4	1	most important element
Q2	7	1	0	best working element
Q3	0	3	5	element to focus on
Q4	0	6	1	most challenging element

Guarantee as most challenging

+ because we have little experience, we have two groups that come to market here, I heard from the other group that they had challenges because some people came and brought products and then sell it on the market presenting it as organic when they are not sure where it comes from, how it was grown. So the guaranteeing really means visiting the farms and being neat that is a challenge

+ the aspect of health, so people buy it and think that it is organic, so too me it is challenging to give this guarantee, even from fellow farmers, so they bring and you know it is not organic, so also from a health perspective it is quite challenging

+ there are some people who think they farm organic, but to start with this, you have to be trained, so that you know what is good and what is bad, for example growing tomatoes is very difficult, some have good tomatoes but I tried, it didn't do well, because it need so much chemicals so that it can be good tomatoes. There is hardly anybody who is successful with tomatoes, but they did not look good. But

you know the ones on the market, they look so yummy. In fact a lot of people have stopped now using tomatoes. People start learning to use cherry tomatoes.

Higher focus on the systems part

+ participants do not know what to say on it, they don't have an idea about the system, facilitators explains a bit on the systems part

3) Needs exercise

Procedure: Picking cards with terms that seems to be challenging

Market

+ selling fresh produce that stays in the market without selling, we don't have refrigeration, that is way mostly we produce for our own consumption

Capital

+ capital for organic is a bit challenging, I need it for manure, for the right seeds and the work. The challenge we are going currently through, because of the drought, there is no water to keep the crops alive, so you find many people do not have the right water harvesting systems, so you need capital for tanks and even the irrigation

Supporting institutions

+ lobbying: for this one I think for the government to come with the policy for organic farmers so that we can be able to market and sell and guarantee. I think if there are very good policies we can farm for our own consumption and maybe there will be export

+ training: we have been very happy having KOAN supporting us

+ donations can help us for irrigation systms, what we need is water, we can do a lot with water

Trainings:

+ through trainings we can learn more, we need to learn more and more , especially on manure I did not know that I had to dry it in the sun

Adaptation to climate change:

+ you prepare the land, the manure and everything you have learned in the trainings and all of a sudden you don't have water, you experience that your crops dry out without the rains. Even scientists don't know what to do. But I saw a neighbour who has nets, green nets, because the birds were attacking but know the crops are put in bags, and irrigating them in there, now they are doing well, so nowadays you need to have the skills when to adapt. For example the greenhouse, you have the greenhouse but the climate is so much heating the crops, so you need to know when and how to cool down

+ its on trainings but we also train together as a ToT

Seeds

+ seeds are very challenging nowadays because, when you want to buy different variety and than you only get one variety to buy , it's very expensive and than you have many only from one variety

+ to exchange seeds etc. : this is the reason why we need a strategy, because also I heard about this group that is having a seed bank, I heard it on the radio so I thought this is interesting as you said, its networking, exchange and working together but they know how to do, we don't know to do it here I

really want to interact with these people, not as a person, but as group. There is a lot that has to be done but there is very little time because we are busy with many other things, so a strategy in place will help to move from one step to the other step

Strategy

“what do you need to start a strategy?”: we need to get together and somebody guide us to a strategic plan. We need other people, expert people like KOAN who have done this in different parts of the country so they have knowledge. We just need guidance, we need to have a strategy and then we start following it and then eventually we reach our goal. It sounds very complicated but with a strategy we can do.

The agronomist, they can actually lead the group.

There are member organizations, we have the contacts. But maybe KOAN can be able to compile all the contacts and give the information to every people about the other groups. You have the contacts but how do you know that the daia group has the seed bank, now you know only because you have heard it in the radio

Common vision

+ we as organic farmers we need to have a common vision, where we come from, where we are and where we want to go for the next two or three years and see whether we are growing or whether we are going down. Whether we are selling on the market and serving the community. So we must have a common vision, a common goal so that we can work together

Part 2 : Procedure: Picking cards with **Elements that work well** at the moment, how can you use these strength to help with the challenges

Leadership

+ with leadership any country, any farmer, any institution without proper leadership will not succeed or will not be able to hit the vision or the dream. So when you take care of the leadership we have a saying that if the leadership fails the goats and the cattle will not be able to have good pasture. So what's the leadership, it is actually streamlined than you will have a stair and you will be able to climb higher and higher and achieve your goal

Patience, passion and belief

+ you have to be patient in organic farming because in the other farmers they use a lot of fertilizers, they grow very fast and mature but for us even if it grows slowly you have to wait until it matures and then with the markets sometimes go and expect the market to be good and then you go back home with your products

+ you have to be passionate about it, because if not you go back one day and do whatever you have been practicing before. Because sometimes you fail, so you have to be very passionate about organic farming

+ I do believe that organic farming is the way to go

+ I think belief comes first, it starts with education and awareness, we have leaflets showing the dangers of what we are eating, you have to sell to the people, use all the opportunities

+ I think patience is the most important

Organic agricultural practices

- + once we have been introduced to organic farming we got the knowledge in the trainings and we want to go on and on, but we now have to keep on practicing
- + organic has taught us a lot, we did not know about multi-story garden, but it is good to have not only one

Awareness

- + this one will help my community or others to grow organically. In my area a lot of people don't know how to use organic, so I help them. Though we need to mobilize one another with skills.
- + it's about to make your neighbors aware in your area

Trainings

- + I believe in trainings because before we never had trainings, now we do and I believe I am strong in trainings, I can teach others and train them on organic

4) Exercise: Visions

- + my vision is to become an exporter of organic products
- + my vision is to let people know about the organic produce, because people are getting sick, they don't know about the organic. We make people tasting our products and they are coming back.
- + if more people know about organic they start practicing it and then we have higher quantities
- + the bottom line is income, we will have money in our pocket and show other people that we are not wasting our time
- + diseases will decrease, there will be more healthy people
- + the most challenging is to get our governance system to support us, before agriculture was on a country level, now it is on a county level and the government support decreased, the governors are politicians they don't care about agriculture. We need to reach a place where we have a voice, a strong voice to lobby, to have the parliament to pass laws that support this organic movement
- + the political will is which is lacking
- + vision for 2030: We have an supporting government, we are a strong movement than we go to the counties and they will pass laws



MACHAKOS ORGANIC FARMER COOPERATIVE

FGD 3 Machakos: 14.10.2022

Participants: 10 farmers (2female, 8male): different clusters, some leaders

Field coordinator: Sylvia

Venue: Community Center in Sofia

1. PGS exercise

Procedure: Questions are raised and participants raise the card with a letter. P= Participatory
G= Guarantee S= System(s)

Topic	P	G	S
Most important element	3	3	2
Best working element in the group	4	0	4
Element I want to focus on	3	0	5
Most challenging element	0	7	1

Observation/Discussion:

- + some of the participants did not undergo the PGS-training
- + the translator of the group started to explain PGS in comparison to ICS, which was not intended by the researcher and not topic
- + when entering about the discussion about the results, one of the leader took over and guided the discussion, he raised questions about: Do we understand fully what PGS means? What the concept is and how the concept works?
- + the researcher asked about: What do we understand as “Guarantee”? What do we know about it? Why is it difficult:
 - Answers: we need the knowledge about it, we need to understand the standard on the market, we need more trainings on organic inputs
 - We want to open for the international market so we need to have the same standard to achieve equity
 - It is difficult to guarantee as we need to have more financial stability as the organic inputs are very costly

2. Exercise on needs

Procedure: On the floor different cards with terms are laid out and explained by the facilitator and the translator. Afterwards each participant picks on card. After that one participant reads her/his card and all the participants either go on one side (one side: satisfactory situation / the other side: improvement needed) afterwards the participants discuss.

Results:

Seeds: 😊 0 😞 9

- It is hard to get certified seed, and even if you buy the origin is not clear
- You get disappointed with the seeds
- Even grafted seedlings are not secured
- There is cheating done by companies with the seeds

Strategy: 😊 7 😞 3



- KOAN has a plan, that's the strategy
- There is a market
- We are getting trainings, that's a good strategy
-



- We need a plan how to do the organic
- We need to learn more, we need the correct information
- We (members) are not participating in the strategy, they (KOAN) do it
- We have knowledge but not enough

Remark: there was a lively discussion about this topic in different languages, one of the leaders wanted to make clear what "strategy" means, he was not happy about the situation now and wanted to convince the other, that the strategy in place inappropriate/missing. For most participants strategy was related to knowledge and capacity building.

Participation: 😊 8 😞 1



- In the meetings there are a lot of people attending, even if we invite people that don't come they send apologies
- All the stakeholders are involved and make a contribution
- There are government regulations, but we ignore them



- we don't have a complete network, we only have the peer-review as participation amongst ourselves, we also want to see retailers to check our farms. We also want to see regulations coming up by the politics. We want everybody to move. The creation of organic farming is led by NGOs in this country.
- We invited government officials to a training, but nobody came, not even giving apologies

Remarks: Discussion got heated up. High controversial opinions and debates. Especially on the part with political participation and policies. Most of the participants feel disappointed by political participation. The participation that was valued high by the participants was in particular related to the own members that participate in meetings.

INCOME 😊 1 😞 9



- It's not on KOAN, it is on us to diversify and to look for other markets
- We all get an income. It's only about selling the products
- We should use our certification to sell and we need to market our products
- Marketing should not be a problem, we learned about this
- The entrepreneurship training was good, we learned all about value addition
- We have to stop being traditional farmers and start to think like entrepreneurs



- Volumes cannot sustain organic farming
- We need market expansion
- Organic prices can fetch high prices, but we need to sell
- Planting calendars died along the way
- The market keeps on asking us but we cannot supply
- We need more organic input suppliers and we need to know that the inputs are effective, so we want to know for which product they are good for, which pests do they help, sometimes it is disappointing
- The production costs are high
- Marketing is a problem

Field coordinator jumped into the discussion announcing a new trader that will take all the goods independent from quantity and quality. One comment to that by a farmer was: they traders should help us and come up with a farming plan to do calculations on the production prices.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE 😊 1 😞 9



- we started organic farming in 1988, since then we have converted a lot of people. There is happening a lot of exchange. Also us, we have all become organic farmers and joined the movement



- There is a lot of knowledge but not exchange
- Exchange and awareness need to be increased

Discussion if it is on knowledge or exchange of knowledge. Most of the participants opt for more knowledge and more trainings, there was not a lot discussion how to increase the exchange of knowledge.

Some more cards have been picked like: environmental protection, common vision, transport and trainings. Due to time limitations not all could be discussed, the participants voted for 2 topics they wanted to discuss. Now the discussion round was open, there was no taking sides.

TRANSPORT

- + transportation costs are too high
- + we need to do more collection of the goods in order to reduce costs and contamination
- + there is a lack of transport
- + transport is not reliable, you negotiate a price before than nobody is coming you need to take another transport and you cannot negotiate the price
- + no reliability, sometimes transport gets in late and customers reject the goods because they are expiring
- + lack of prior transport arrangements, so precious goods can get damaged
- + the best would be if we would have farm-gate-prices and the products get picked up directly from the farm or we find a place to meet somewhere in between

Additions from the field coordinator:

- + assurance of quality of the products is a problem, often the goods are transported through public means and get smashed
- + the low volumes demanded by the traders don't make it feasible to hire a private transport mean
- + suggestions is to aggregate the goods for all different traders in one day to have bulj goods
- + suggestions to do contract farming and let the traders pick up the goods directly from the farm
- + already discussions about arrangement of courier services are ongoing to share costs with farmers and traders

TRAININGS

- + we need more trainings in production and spraying
- + the venue of trainings need to be closer to the participants
- + exchange programmes are wished
- + trainings should be combined with different clusters
- + in the trainings sometimes there is no compensation for the transport costs
- + we need more trainings in general, but in particular on pest management
- + we need a higher frequency of trainings and refresher trainings: in particular for the elderly generation it is hard to memorize everything. It could be a refresher on the same topic with some more added contents and with some fun in between
- + we need continuous training to be competent and successful
- + we need to have constant trainings, as things are changing, we need to learn other methods and also about digital farming
- + exposure visits are good for encouragement
- + exchange visits between different PGS is a good idea

3. Feedback round

- + some participants raise the issue again that they want to have more trainings
- + this was a brain opener for me
- + some participants feel that this workshop was a good refresher on PGS



MURANGA ORGANIC FARMERS COOPERATIVE

FGD 4 Muranga: 14.10.2022

Participants: 18 farmers (female, male): different clusters, some leaders, 1 OACK trainer

Venue: Open space near to a farmers house with communal drier

1. PGS exercise

Procedure: Questions are raised and participants raise the correspondent card

Result:

- (1) Most important Element: P=5, G=4, S= 7
- (2) Best working element: P= 15, G=0, S=1
- (3) Element to focus on: P= 0, G=14, S=2
- (4) Most challenging element: P=1, G= 4, S=11

Discussion on participation:

+ most people related participation to the own group members

+ when asking about different actors/stakeholders to participate a lot of ideas came up

- schools + universities: for education on organic and research
- business people + traders
- Governments to finance equipment, to implement policies
- churches: use the organic knowledge/contents in their prayers and teach
- consumers
- transporters
- socio cooperatives
- institutions

+ With policies in forums it is easier to convince people and politicians

Discussion on systems

+ system = organic farming : this difficult because of manure production, pest control, seeds, soil and water

+ system as a chain of actors (farmers, certifiers, consumers): the challenge is bringing people together and make people understand each other, to partner with each other

+ the challenge with the system is, that you might be the only organic farmer between a lot of conventional farmers

+ the system need to be promoted through campaigns be institutions

+ consumers are a challenge in the system: the way of reaching the buyer + consumers have different ways to understand organic, so we need to adapt our methods to make them understand – consumers are not aware of the label, they don't know Kilimohai. Some consumers just take the farmer as the guarantee (they know the farmer), they don't need the label

+ there are only limited certifiers available, so not a lot of inspections are done

2. Exercise on needs

Procedure: all cards on the ground, people should pick one card mentally of what they feel happy to talk about. Cards got collected. Afterwards people should take sides either if they are happy or unhappy about this and enter into discussion

Results:

Strategy: 😊 10 😞 9



- + I believe in the group and like it how we deliver our customers and the market
- + we were taught about production methods and now I produce more effective, I produce more
- + we have a plan for each meeting with different agendas and topics like farming techniques
- + I do record keeping, that helped a lot calculating expenses and income, I also take photos



- + I have not reached where I want to reach, I need more trainings
- + we are not so organized and serious on the market
- + we learned about recordkeeping, but we don't implement it
- + we are not following our planting calendars
- + on the market there is a lot of fluctuation in demand and supply we have difficulties with consistency, logistics and prices
- + the local demand is too low (suggestion facilitator: diversification of sales channels)
- + weather is a problem, we cannot plan on it, sometimes we have a surprise in overproduction or we don't have anything

Seeds: 😊 8 😞 10



- + we use what we have on the ground to be sustainable
- + we are selecting the seeds from the best plant and always keep one plant
- + I keep for myself (not enough for sharing) and I share my knowledge
- + the most tricky seeds I cannot produce I buy
- + I buy hybrid seeds at the agrovet
- + I do source my seeds, I know a good seller with certified seeds, I have never been disappointed



- + lack of germination test
- + we need to save seeds, but I have not been trained
- + the source of the seeds we buy is not known, unless we get the traditional ones
- + we don't have enough seeds to share and we need variety
- + we don't have a guarantee on the purchased seeds that they will germinate and that they are good
- + we need a lot of research to do on seeds

Commitment

- + one of the leaders sees a lack of commitment of members attending trainings and implement the knowledge
- + participants relate this to knowledge. With more knowledge the commitment will grow and with more income the commitment will grow
- + passions to make the daily business is key to get committed persons

Adaptation to climate change :

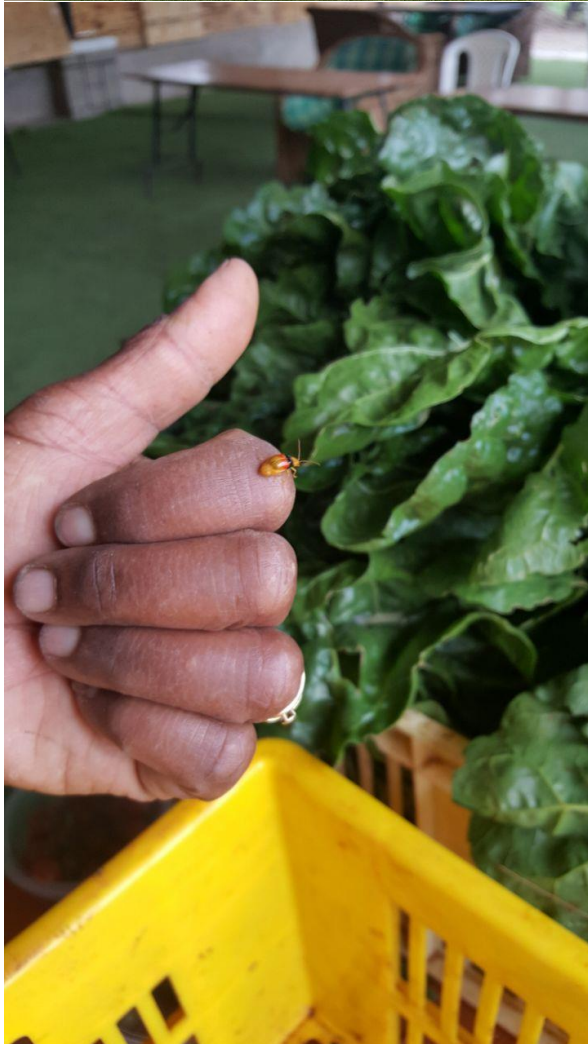
- + water issue was raised in particular to have any production to serve the market reliably
- + with the water discussion also the discussion on capital was raised that is needed for installing water systems
- + this discussion might not be on climate change in particular (?) but in general about the different seasons and in particular the dry season
- + discussion on mulching: some people do, some don't. All have the knowledge on mulching techniques but implementation is missing, some do claim that they don't have the material, others respond that everybody should have the material like the leaves of trees
- + other suggestions from the participants are not to leave the soil bare and to minimize the area of planting
- + another participants suggests digging small dams

Round up – closing round

- + with which thought / topic in mind you go home? Where do you want to invest more time in thinking and doing?

Answers:

- + several participants answered to be more committed in attending trainings
- + record keeping was mentioned several times
- + mulching and seeds were mentioned
- + some mentioned "farming"
- + one of the leaders mentioned "the system part" of PGS
- + one (youth) mentioned to concentrate more on recruitment of young members and more knowledge and practices about climate change adaptation
- + the member , who is also trainer of OACK mentioned that he understands now the gaps and the needs to concentrate more on record keeping and planting calendar
- + the colleague of KOAN (project manager) draws the conclusion to promote better the Kilimohai brand and focus on marketing



INOOGOF:
INNOVATIVE ORGANIC GROUP OF FARMERS

FGD 5 INOGOF: 22.10.2022
 Participants: 6 farmers (5female,1male)
 Venue: Market space, Garden Estate, Nairobi

1)PGS Exercise:

Procedure: Each participant hold three cards with the letter P (Participation), G (Guarantee), S (Systems). For each question the participant decides on one letter.

Topic	P	G	S
Most important element	2	3	1
Best working element in the group	3	1	2
Element I want to focus on	2	1	3
Most challenging element	1	1	4

Discussion:

Participation

- + Participation is related to strong bondage and commitment as the same values are shared and it feels like a family
- + participation is not limited to members being on the market, one women helped us with the registration and the constitutions, so we could also us expertise
- + we have volunteers participating we value them as our family members, they help with quality control
- + we value the customers for their feedback, we also do have a health + education group – most customers ask for advise but they also give advise
- + Customers might not know the name PGS but they know that we are in a group and that they can trace back the products, the can visit us at the farmers, they don't do it too often
- + the customers really are sensitive with the character of the farmer, they also send these messages in the group and it depends how you handle them

Guarantee

- + Gurarantee: is important to maintain the standards

System

- + System: incorporates the others (P and G) and serves as a guide: with a proper working system we guarantee and assure our values
- + we are from very different areas, so the system should help to make it easier for us with the time
- + system embraces the whole value chain,
- + system ensures using the standards, having the best soil, maximize on the environment , making the best possible according to the context and to the size of the farm, producing more
- + we need to contact other PGS groups in order to get products on our behalf to maintain the market, we don't want to disappoint the customers

- + we like our farmers to meet the demand of our customers, we want to build up and want our financing to be ok
- + we want to have our scope as wide to transform the country, I want us to be an authority and a trainer for others
- + I want us to become the overside of the system
- + we need to set up a system that is broader in scope, we need to have all behind us
- + we need to have a working system to winde out the non committed
- + a system should include the whole value chain but have an overarching external structure like an advisory Board at KOAN level, advise us to be under a safe zone, show us and every farmer where to plug in to have a good starting, addressed from the top national body, there should be a welcome process and this body should also know my location, the location and conditions of every farmer
- + we should have our own system and democratically decide on that
- + we need both: on a national level we need policies and promotion of the system, we need advisory service for the standards etc., we also need the umbrella as a platform also to have a voice as farmers. On a operational level the system should be PGS based: we should do our own marketing and our own innovations
- + we want to set a system where INOGOF has its own branches , work as one INOGOF as umbrella to maintain the stings but have brunches (such as clusters) that are empowered enough
- + our goal is to make impact in our country
- + at the moment it is difficult as we are not economically depending on the organic market
- + in the system we need external assistance for training of the trainers, especially on the certification, we also would like to have trainings in How to set up a market and advisory for recruitment
- + we are scattered and just go out to look for new members, we are growing gradually and connect with friends. We need something that is overlooking that there is a sustainable linkage between supply and demand

2) Open Disussion: WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT PGS Tool or/and Innovation?

Tool

- to embrace the value of the group
- embrace all through the value chain
- transform step by step
- to accomplish a dream in life time
- to use a standard
- for customers to have the guarantee through peer-review
- to professionalize organic farmers
- to learn from each other with the peer-review
- to influence our way of thinking
- re appreciate what our grandfathers did

Innovation

- understand the backgrounds, understand how the way how things work and this can be used to trickle down from farmer to customer
- thinking in a more practical way and find out what applies to me, my farm, my context
- innovation is coming from within, from the INOGOF group and PGS can add a little value on it
- to enable us to share knowledge and understand the chemistry , making sense of it and understanding the soil
- depends on the diverse groups, and how they use PGS

3) Satisfaction Exercise: HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT...

Options: Very unhappy / unhappy / not satisfied / happy / very happy (anonymous voting)

Discussion:

+ situation of supply and demand : not satisfied: 3 / happy: 3

+ innovation factor of this group: not satisfied: 1 / happy: 4 / very happy: 1

+ we are innovative because are from very different locations and we are still able to function

+ we will fill the gap in the market

+ we are able to work in a team although we are geographically dispersed

+ we are not market based, we are not sales centered, we serve as a hub for information

+ customers with special needs receive special attention

+ we are relational, we build relationships with the customers and our farmers

+ there is sincerity amongst us, you come to the market even if you cannot bring products

+ development of the group: not satisfied 4 / happy: 1

+ the group has taken a long time to come to this level

+ we are going against the grain, there is a lot of competition, it is not easy

+ it also took time to convince each other in the group

+ we are very far away from our vision to become the biggest organic market in Africa as Kenya is known to be a leader in a lot of things in Africa

+ we grow slow but steady

+ the comparison between our potential and status quo makes me unhappy, the potential is huge

+ the demand is to big but we cannot offer a lot, we only have a very small piece of the pie

+ we are good in being functional but in expansion we are stagnant

+ we had a lot of trainings for many farmers, but a lot of farmers failed, we don't find the fitting farmers

+ the problem is to have members that share the same values – we don't want to waste our time

+ sometimes the commitment is there but the environment does not allow to produce, harsh weather conditions

+ the expectations of new members are very high about the income and livelihood and they get disappointed

+ implementation of knowledge on organic practices: very unhappy 1 / unhappy: 1 /not satisfied: 3 / very happy: 1

+ support by other actors than fellow farmer: not satisfied: 2/ happy: 3 / very happy: 1

+ our contribution in the organic movement: very unhappy:1 / unhappy: 1 / not satisfied: 2 / happy: 2

+ we incorporate health teaching

+ we have not reached so many people

+ we need to connect more to relevant bodies

+ we have a lot of followers, even if they don't come to the market

+ we should engage more with other institutions like PELUM, KOAN, BiVat, , we also want to be acknowledged by them

+ we are careful as we don't want to be the guineapig for funding

+ we lacked behind with registration as we started as a hobby and to do a test, so we lost some time here as to be member eg. of PELUM you need to have a registration

+ some new groups are failing because they start directly with marketing but you first need to know who you are, what are your values. It's all about authenticity and having the control.

+ you don't have to be pushed to somebody elses decisions, you can also get a burn out with fundings

+ awareness appreciation of customers: not satisfied 1 / Happy: 5

Remark: only three topics (marked) have been discussed due to time reasons



In order of rows: Sylvia's Basket , Carrefour organic section (supplied by Fine Aromas), Bridges Organic Restaurant, Fine Aromas.

Remark: There are no photos of other participating traders.

THE TRADERS GROUP

Individual interviews:	12.-15.09.2022, 7 participants (3 male, 4 female)
Focus Group Discussion:	25.10.2022, 6 participants (2 male, 4 female), Bridges Organic Restaurant Nairobi
Participating actors:	Bridges Organic Restaurant, Greenspoon, Cornershop, Sylvia's Basket, Fine Aromas, Amazing Harvest Kenya

Executive summary:

The group of organic traders that were interviewed and are currently working with PGS groups through KOAN is very diverse. The diversity is reflected in the different sales models (e.g. shop, online ordering with home delivery, pre-order baskets with self-pickup, retail with supermarkets, restaurant). While some of the retailers follow a purely organic model, others combine organic with conventional products (e.g. Cornershop, Greenspoon). The products offered to customers range from fresh vegetable and fruit products to processed products such as dry goods and natural cosmetics (e.g. Amazing Harvest Kenya). Quantities as well as quality requirements and logistical organization differ. Traders interact with farmers indirectly through the coordination of KOAN field coordinators. In some cases, deliveries are even made directly from farmers to traders. Traders are invited to visit farmers' farms, which they do in some cases. In addition, in some cases, training sessions have been held in which the trader teaches the farmers about his standards and requirements. In two cases, the trader is also a farmer within the PGS groups (Sylvia's Basket, Amazing Harvest Kenya). The Kilimohai label is a requirement and is usually either placed directly on the products (e.g. Fine Aromas) or the label is displayed in the store or restaurant (e.g. Sylvia's Basket, Bridges Restaurant). The general mood of the retailers revealed in the interviews and the focus group discussion that the demand and supply situation as well as the delivery and logistics situation is not yet satisfactory. There is also a desire for a wider range of products, a year-round offering regardless of the season, and higher quantities. These traders deal with customers in the Nairobi area and report an increasing demand for certified organic products and greater awareness among customers. Some traders are actively raising awareness among customers (e.g. organized farm visits, cooking events, nutritionists, or online marketing for organic as well as the promotion on Social Media Channels). Generally, customers of said retailers are aware of the certification (with the Kilimohai brand), but are unaware of or do not associate this label with the PGS groups behind it. The prices offered to end consumers for organic products are higher than those for conventional products. All retailers express a desire to make organic products affordable and competitive. The prices offered to organic producers are also different from non-certified organic or conventional products.

Findings per topics / Outcomes of individual interviews

Consistency

The consistency of the supply is not yet given. According to the traders, the demand exceeds the supply. So far, the trading relationship is determined by the supply of organic products by the farmer. This supply follows a seasonal pattern and is not yet plannable or predictable. Besides a trader claims that the farmers do not act market-oriented and do not know about the market needs. The measure of planting calendar as one mean of planning production has been mentioned by some of the traders as one approach to resolve the issue of supply gaps or overproduction of certain products.

Logistics

Logistical hurdles have been reported by several traders. Different options have been tried as collecting the products at the area of the producers or delivering the goods to the point of sale of the retailer. In particular this causes issue in a timely delivery, the demanded quantities and a compromised quality

of the products during transportation. As such it was reported that farmers do not see the “business aspect of delivery” (T4). Logistics are also seen as “not profitable for the farmers” (T5).

Values

By selling organic products, a retailer also wants to send a signal that it is possible to "feed the world with organic products" and to advertise and make visible that "organic farming is climate-adapted". In doing so, he wants to show that this is "the only sustainable way of farming", with special reference to climate change (T1). The interviews did not address specifically the retailers' values or motivation to offer ecological products to customers. Only in one individual case the ethical and ecological advantages were accented by a retailer. Another trader also sees the motivation in “making a difference” when offering organic food in her restaurant (T4) and with it her mission to sensitize people.

Customers

Awareness of healthy nutrition has increased, particularly as a result of the current Corona Pandemic. The demand for organic products and the specific demand for certification to prove organic integrity have increased significantly. Some traders see that there is “a certain customer group” that pays (T6) and sees that the pricing is a problem by now. Transparency and traceability is starting to play a more important role and one traders actively tries to increase this by measures of “story telling” and giving the option for the customer to trace back the product to the farm (T6).

Quality

The quality of organic products is not only associated with the biological integrity of the product. Quality is also associated with the external appearance of the product and thus the justification of the higher price. This is especially true for a retailer whose main business is conventional products (T1). Other retailers try to make their customers aware that the quality of the product is not diminished by its external appearance. Customers' habits play a role in their choice of product and in their willingness to accept a less than perfect appearance. This depends largely on the retailer's customer base, i.e. whether it is the organic customer per se or a customer considering organic as an alternative.

The role of KOAN

KOAN's role is seen as an essential part for the intermediary role between farmers and traders. One retailer would even go so far as to say: “ If KOAN makes the transition, I would flood the market with organic products.”(T3). With this the trader also stressed that he is not waiting for the farmers, but for KOAN to assist. The efficiency of working with KOAN instead of directly with growers is highlighted, as this seems to channel farmers and products through a control channel and deliveries are better organized. KOAN as a network and platform not only offers the opportunity to bring traders together with farmers, but KOAN also enjoys a certain reputation as a trustworthy organization in the organic sector in Kenya.

Outcome of the focus group discussion

1. Statements on certain topics (topics were given to the participants by the facilitator of the FGD)

- Traceability: we use organic, organic in transition or GAP international standards so for us it is important to have this traceability
- Seeing is believing: we started with the motivation as we saw the need for affordable organic products. It's a ethic thing, it is a human right to access healthy food, not just for the rich. We did not have funding, because they wanted us to prove this. We can see that it works we supply a 100- 150 baskets per week

- Transparency: that's the most important, we need to be transparent. We open up our kitchen and let people see, we want people to challenge us
- Shaping the organic sector: We need to talk about it loud. I want not only to be a trader but also a farmer to prove along the chain. I want to be part and knowing and understanding it through communication. Affordability is important. So far the prices are a little higher, but we need to make sure to be competitive.
- Building relationships: that's what we are doing here.

2. Perceptions on PGS (participants were asked what they associate with PGS)

- + that means to have an organized system
- + a system to aggregate products and get it to the restaurant
- + it's an open door for small scale farmers to access the market
- + it is a structure that coordinates the whole value chain
- + its congregation and quality control that it 80% done by the farmers

3. PGS- Exercise (Participants were asked to decide on one of the element per questions according to their individual perception and experience, the options were P (participation), G (Guarantee), S (system))

1. in which element do you see yourself most: 2 S, 3 G
2. Which element is most important to you?: 1 P, 3 G
3. On which element do you want to focus more?: 1 P, 1 G, 3 S

4. Discussion on PGS elements

System

- + the system is fragmented, everybody is doing their own thing in their corner
- + there are breaks in the value chain
- + we should not see each other as competition
- + there should be a coordination between traders working together to make it transport more easier, to combine products and get them to the city at the same time
- + traders need to wake up to create a network without KOANs support, business should be made more directly in forums

Guarantee

- + we want to give our customers the guarantee
- + customers need to be confident, they are most important
- + you cannot measure residue levels in the products, so you need to trust
- + trust is the most important – each PGS group has one inspector that is assisted with a PGS members

Participation

- + we have overtrained the farmers – they know everything about agricultural practices, now they want to see money in their pockets
- + participation means participating in the market
- + farmers are the most important but in the end they are left at the end of the stick
- + if more farmer participate more resilience is established, more supply is possible
- + it's important for farmers to get organized – the perfect market would not have competition
- + the price should not be the problem, the supply needs to be there first

More focus should be given to:

- + on cohesion and coordination to fill the gaps if we are running out of products
- + we need an efficient system on the ground that finds out what the market needs are and assures consistency
- + farmers are on the bottom of the pyramid
- + KOANS coordination should make business profitable for farmers
- + integrity needs to be assured all the way from the farmer to the customer, including the delivery
- + people should be allowed to participate, it is also on cultural acceptance and attitude
- + the system now is not synchronized and the schedule is not coordinated
- + there is no market-based farming , sometimes there is production without having the market
- + farmers are growing the same thing, that should be better adapted according to their zone

5. The Ideal System (participants were asked to describe the ideal system)

- + the PGS need to be decentralized , it should not be about KOAN
- + not everything should be grown on the same place
- + we need well-managed PGS systems
- + the key-stakeholders are the coordinators – they need to be well trained and know their role
- + there should be participation by everybody
- + paid coordinators / funding dependent coordinators are not sustainable
- + it's the responsibility of the farmers to understand the market
- + at the moment PGS are coming from the donor-side , we have not accepted it , we are dependent
- + we want to make business, we don't need PGS , whatever works, works
- + there are also disadvantages of small scale farmers, if we find a large scale farmer, we also accept, PGS is not necessary