Permaculture Network In Malawi

Issue # 56: Organics — *July – December 2007*

In This Issue
6 month MEGA issue!

Organics

By Hattly Kelvin Nyasulu, Jenda, Mzuzu

An organ is a part of an animals' body or plant serving an essential purpose, often arranged in a system (i.e. digestive system). Organics are parts of animals and plants arranged as a system for a certain purpose.

Organics in farming systems are remains of animal or plant body. They are almost always regarded as useless and could be thrown away or burnt. "See the World through the eyes of Permaculture", such things when recycled could produce wonders to farming practices.

They are in the form of animal remains such as manure and urine in khola (animal pens), chicken droppings, pond mud, cow dung, goats droppings, – the list goes on and on. There are also crop or plant remains such as maize husks, groundnut leaves, soya bean leaves and roots, tephrosia leaves (Bwemba (Tamarind) and other areas mtetezga), pigeon peas, kalongonda (mucuna beans), khobwe (cowpeas), nzama (ground beans), Msangusangu (commonly found in Henga Valley), Luceana, and all those that bear seeds in pods (leguminous species). Crop remains, when added with animal remains, decompostion takes place faster. We need to choose shady areas of our composts for moisture to stay long and keep away scorching sun.

Now is the best time to start because our soils have lost a lot of helpful nutrients. Organics play a very important role in production of healthy crops with natural beauty. Therefore,

when we produce more healthy and beautiful crops

we also become healthy and beautiful

because we are what we eat.

Lastly, we have to make it simple that all plant refuse and animal reamains should be returned or buried in our soils and ants and other small creatures could help us to breakdown (decompose) for plant use. We have to provide nature with all resources that make systems work properly and pay less, therefore:

"Spend Less, Reap More"

Yours in Permaculture, Produce More and Eat Well!

FAO Report says organic farming fights hunger, tackles climate change, and is good for farmers, consumers and the environment

Note from Stacia: I received this article by e-mail from the Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group of the American Dietetic Association. The person who posted it to our group got it from: "GM WATCH" <info@gmwatch.org> This article comes from ISIS and can be found on the I-SIS website at: http://www.i-sis.org.uk/FAOPromotesOrganicAgriculture.php . ISIS is an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing critical public information on cutting edge science, and to promoting social accountability and ecological sustainability in science .If you like this original article from the Institute of Science in Society, and would like to continue receiving articles of this calibre, please consider making a donation or purchase on our website: http://www.i-sis.org.uk/ISISappeal.php

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UN body, Food & Agriculture Organisation, comes out in favour of organic farming

Sam Burcher, http://www.westender.com.au/stories.php?s_id=711

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has come out in favour of organic agriculture. Its report Organic Agriculture and Food Security explicitly states that organic agriculture can address local and global food security challenges. Organic farming is no longer to be considered a niche market within developed countries, but a vibrant commercial agricultural system practised in 120 countries, covering 31 million hectares (ha) of cultivated land plus 62 million ha of certified wild harvested areas. The organic market was worth US$40 billion in 2006, and expected to reach US$70 billion by 2012.

Nadia Scialabba, an FAO official, defined organic agriculture as:

'A holistic production management system that avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, and genetically modified organisms, minimizes pollution of air, soil and water, and optimises the health and productivity of plants, animals and people.'

The FAO Report strongly suggests that a worldwide shift to organic agriculture can fight world hunger and at the same time tackle climate change. According to FAO's previous World Food Summit report, conventional agriculture, together with deforestation and rangeland burning, are responsible for 30 percent of the CO2 and 90 percent of nitrous oxide emissions worldwide. Organic agriculture overcomes paradox of conventional food production systems. The new FAO Report frames a paradox within the conventional food production systems as follows:

- Global food supply is sufficient, but 850 million are undernourished and go hungry
- Use of chemical agricultural inputs is increasing; yet grain productivity is dwindling to seriously low levels
- Costs of agricultural inputs are rising, but commodity costs have been in steady decline over the past five decades.
- Knowledge is increasingly provided through fast information technologies, but nutritionally related diseases are rising
- Industrialised food systems cause deaths through pesticide poisonings and high numbers of farmer have committed suicide, while millions of jobs have been lost in rural areas.

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In contrast, organic agriculture offers a food system that improves agricultural performance to better provide access to food, nutritional adequacy, environmental quality, economic efficiency, and social equity. This is crucial if agricultural production in developing countries is to rise by 56 percent by 2030 to meet nutritional needs, as stated in the Report.

Researchers recommend a shift to organic agriculture

Evidence presented to the FAO by the Danish Research Centre for Food and Farming confirm the potential of a new organic farming paradigm to secure more than enough food to feed the world, and with reduced environmental impacts. The results, using a computer model developed by the Washington DC based Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), show that a fifty percent conversion to organic farming in sub-Saharan Africa would not harm food security. Instead, it would help feed the hungry by reducing the need to import subsidised food, and produce a diverse range of certified organic surpluses to be exported at premium profit.

The conversion of global agriculture to organic farming, without converting wild lands for agricultures and using N-fertilizers, would result in a global agricultural supply of 2,640 to 4,380 kcal/day/person. These conclusions came from a research team led by Catherine Badgley at the University of Michigan, based on extensive review of the evidence from both the developed and developing world.

The fact that sustainable intensification of organic agriculture could increase production by up to 56 percent is good news, as despite gains in food production and food security in some countries, sub-Saharan Africa produces less food per person than it did 30 years ago; and the number of chronically malnourished people in the region has doubled since 1970, from 96 million to over 200 million in 1996. This reflects the wider picture that developing countries have registered outright declines in yield increases under conventional agriculture between 1972-1992.

In contrast, the current FAO Report presents evidence that organic management systems have doubled yields in arid and degraded soils in Tigray, Ethiopia. (See The Tigray Project and Organic Production for Ethiopia, SiS 23). Alexander Mueller, the FAO assistant director-general praised the research, and noted that as the effects of climate change are expected to hurt the world's poorest, a shift to organic farming could be beneficial to cope with the rising number of global hungry.

Recommendations arising from the FAO report feed directly into the framework for the Right to Adequate Food and also into the Millennium Development Goal (MDG)1 for reducing hunger and poverty, MDG7 for environmental sustainability, and MDG 8 for global partnerships with emphasis on hidden, acute or chronic hunger.

Environmental and economic benefits of organic agriculture

The Danish researchers suggest that a 50 percent organic conversion by 2020 in the food exporting regions of North America and Europe would have little impact on the availability and prices of food. Converting from chemically intensive farming to organic farming can initially decrease yields, but the adjustment evens out over time and provides numerous non-material benefits such as land improvement. The FAO Report points to further benefits such as better animal welfare, wildlife protection, avoidance of GMO's and pesticides, more jobs and less energy used. Results from studies carried out by the US Department of Agriculture [8] support the FAO findings; showing that organic crops are worth more than conventional crops on the market, and on average, farmers could net $50-$60 more per acre by going organic, even with the highest transitional costs.

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The expansion and intensification of conventional farming is harmful not only to the environment, but also to the very resources essential to farming. Over the past two decades, some 15 million ha of tropical forests are lost each year to provide land for agriculture, and at a tremendous loss of genetic diversity. During the same period, soil erosion and other forms of land degradation cost the world between 5-7 million ha of farming land every year; a further 1.5 million ha are lost to waterlogging and salination, and an additional 30 million ha damaged.

Organic agriculture has the potential to reverse those trends, and reduce carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane, greenhouse gasses (GHG) that contribute to global warming. Organic agriculture could double soil carbon sequestration in livestock based systems and decrease GHG by 48-60 percent. For example, organic systems have decreased the use of fossil fuels by between 10-70 percent in Europe, and 29-37 percent in the USA.

On organic farms, increasing soil organic matter and microbial biomass is a fundamental principle to support agro-ecosystem stability. Mandatory crop rotation, the use of seeds and breeds that are adapted to local conditions, and the regeneration of functional biodiversity all contribute further to ecological balance.

Organic networks meet local food demands and benefits farmers

The FAO gives top priorities to agricultural production that targets local food needs in local markets, allowing imports only for items not grown locally, and exporting high value produce. In developing countries, food quantity, quality and availability in urban areas are enriched by organic market gardens where local produce is sold to international markets and domestic supermarkets. This reduces dependence on cheap subsidized imports, which are projected to rise to more than 160 million tonnes by the year 2010. For example, a food network in Argentina that covers 3.5 million people reports 70 percent self-sufficiency in vegetable production through organic urban garden networks.

A successful conversion to organic agriculture has occurred in parts of Egypt where scarce or polluted water supplies led to the development of thriving local markets. In China, the awareness of environmental pollution and the need for environmental and health protection resulted in organic-managed land rising from 342 000 ha in 2003 to 978 000 ha in 2005, and increasing local farmers incomes nine-fold. Cuba is an inspiring example of how food crises can be averted by drastically reducing chemical inputs and relinquishing dependency on fossil fuels. National food security was maintained with some help from food aid, by re-localizing organic food production, and ensuring food access through food rationing and social safety nets such as food and nutrition surveillance systems.

Furthermore, organic urban gardens create a healthy environment for the inhabitants and supply local restaurants, markets and shops with nutritious foods.

As organic produce enters the mainstream, consumers are willing to pay higher prices in exchange for truthful labelling and absorb some of the extra costs of organic agriculture. Demand for organic produce has encouraged countries like Brazil (fast becoming a world leader in organic farming) and India to reconcile their local food demands.

The main challenge to international markets is bringing producers together to create value chains of fair trade, informed choice and traceability. And, as Catherine Badgely argues, food security depends as much Government policies and market price as it does on yields.

Producing organic food has distinct benefits for farmers too. Farmers' rights to local seeds and varieties are strengthened, knowledge sharing is promoted, incomes are raised, production increased,

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environmental and health protection is improved, natural resources are conserved and outward rural migration is reversed. As organic farming is highly knowledge intensive, the FAO recognises that the organization of organic farmers and growers associations, co-operatives, enterprises, and community groups is crucial to research and development. Farmers converting to organic methods also increase incomes by minimizing chemical inputs and other industrial interventions and thereby break the cycle of indebtedness that has devastated hundreds of thousands of farmers livelihoods Ensuring farmers well-being and increasing national and regional self reliance in food production methods that meet key environmental and animal welfare standards will not only enhance food security, but will also reduce the use of fossil fuel use for food transportation and production.

Health benefits of organic agriculture

As the FAO Report points out, organic foods tend to have higher micronutrient content that contributes to better health, lower incidence of non-communicable diseases and boosts plant and animal immunity against disease. The UK Soil Association carried out a systematic review of the evidence comparing trace minerals in organic and non-organic food, and found that on average, organic food contains higher levels of vitamin C and essential minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron, and chromium. An independent study found higher levels of all 21 nutrients in organic crops, particularly potatoes, cabbage, spinach and lettuce.

Evidence suggests that organic crops contain up to fifty percent fewer mycotoxins (toxins produced by fungi) (See Increased Mycotoxins in Organic Produce?), and have a longer shelf life. Organic farmers produce good food from developing a balanced living soil and using only as a last resort four of the hundreds of pesticides on tap to conventional farmers. Non-organic fruits can be sprayed up to 16 times with 36 different pesticides. In 2003 the UK Food Standards Agency (FSA) conceded that: 'buying organic is a way to reduce the chances of your food containing these pesticides'. Pesticide residues used in conventional farming such as organophosphates are linked with cancers, foetal abnormalities, chronic fatigue syndrome, and Parkinsons, as well as allergies, especially in children, and breast cancer in women. The US Government linked pesticide residues to the top three environmental cancer risks. A study in Seattle found concentrations of pesticide residues 6 times higher in children eating conventionally farmed fruits and vegetables. The restriction on synthetic inputs by organic farmers prevent pesticide poisonings that cause around 20 000 deaths each year in conventional agricultural practices, (see Picking Cotton Carefully); and stop phosphates and nitrates leaching into drinking water. Organic agriculture provides long term solutions.

The FAO Report concludes that a broad scale shift to organic agriculture can produce enough food on a global per capita basis to feed the world's population over the next 50 years. Workable solutions to pressing problems such as the growth in population and consumption, oil peak, fossil fuel dependence, food transport, and agricultural sector employment are all built in holistically to the organic agriculture paradigm.

Therefore, as the myth of 'low yield organic agriculture' recedes, it is up to the agricultural researchers, officials and Governments to invest in long-term alternative agricultural systems such as green manures that can provide enough biologically fixed nitrogen to replace all the synthetic nitrogen currently used on the planet. Despite scepticism at the potential of organic agriculture to feed the world, if conventional farmers adopted only some of its principles such as soil health and ecology, the results would strongly benefit farmers, consumers and the environment.

Read other articles on sustainable and organic agriculture at http://www.i-sis.org.uk/susag.php

Permaculture Network News:

PNM Committee meeting: Sept 10th 2007

held at the end of the 1st convergence

(Editor's note: In the next issue you will read about the convergence in the next issue of the PNM Newsletter)

Attended by the newly elected committee:

- Patterson Majonanga, National Coor.
- Pastor Joseph Chawawa, Deputy National Coor.
- Jamester Langwani, National Secretary
- Richman Mwase, Deputy National Secretary
- Leo Y Kuwani, National Treasurer
- Mary Mningwa, Executive Member
- Matthew Mpofu, Executive Member
- Kennedy Mwakasungura, North Coor.
- Kapandile Mvula, Central Coor.
- Chrissy Chalemera, South Coor.

A few non-committee members joined in as well. All committee members assured their fees were paid to date. **Action**: Newsletter Editors to be informed as they are keeping the membership list. Donations were also collected. **Action**: Treasurer to maintain excellent, transparent records

Discussion points

- Joseph Chawawa to open library at his house for PNM
- Matthew Mpofu Board member help in secretarial work in collaboration with Jamester
- Members to contribute resources for the next meeting /other funding to be sourced.
- Input advice from June, Stacia and all, welcome.
- Action Plan created

ACTION PLAN:

By the end of six weeks the Permaculture Executive Committee has mandated to achieve the following:

1. Establishment of the Regional Committees
2. Training of the Regional Committees members
3. To increase the Permaculture membership fees.
4. Formulation of the Constitution of the organization.
5. Registration of the organization to the Registrar.
6. Designing of the organizational logo.
7. Promotional of the media coverage on Permaculture activities.
8. Prepare for the IPC 9

PNM Committee meeting: October 11-12, 2007

held at Mangochi Orphan Education Training centre

Committee Members Present:

- Patterson Majonanga, National Coordinator
- Leo Y Kuwani, National Treasurer
- Pastor Joseph Chawawa, Deputy National Coordinator
- Mary Mningwa, Executive Member
- Jamester Langwani, National Secretary
- Matthew Mpofu, Executive Member
- Richman Mwase, Deputy National Secretary
- (3 Regional Coordinators not invited)

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AGENDA:

Welcome remarks were done by the National Coordinator after a prayer said by Joseph Chawawa.

1. Review and amendments of concept paper: Only small formatting and grammar changes made, no changes to the overall concepts
2. Review of the Constitution
   - A few grammar and formatting changes, as well as concept changes:
   - Section 1 - Location – For now, the network head office will be in Mangochi, where the National Coordinator Resides at Mangochi Orphan Education Training centre
   - Section 3 - [E] no. v should read National Coordinator is required to hold a Permaculture Certificate or Diploma. Duties of National Coordinator no. 3 should be removed: Be grated the authority to dismiss any secretariat member not performing to expectation.
3. Design of the organization logo: logo should include some features eg bird and /or an animal
4. Registration of Permaculture Network in Malawi: The O P C to be contacted by a delegation comprising of not less than 3 executive members from the network to go the capital hill within 3 weeks from the day of the meeting.
5. Fundraising: Membership fees to be increased as for January 2008 to:

Individuals:	MK 400 to MK 500
Organizations:	MK 1000 to MK 1500
International:	the NC to inquire from Stacia

   - Writing proposals on various projects to organizations and wellwishers
   - Selling items depicting permaculture features: T Shirts, Caps, bulges, bags etc.
6. Promotion of the media on Permaculture activities: The National Coordinator should start inquiring and start press briefing on Permaculture, costs for these briefings and if there are free talks . Money at some point is necessary for to carry out these activities. Launching of the network to be done after registration , the OPC to give advice on this.
7. Preparation for IPC 9: The NC gave a brief talk about IPCs and IPC9 possibility and international preparation. The Executive Committee came up with various committees in preparation, with suggested committee members who will be contacted by the National Coor for acceptance and confirmations:
   - Fundraising Committee: June Walker, Walter Nyika, Patterson Majonanga, Stacia Nordin , Suzi High
   - Venue Committee: Joseph Chawawa, Lieza Dupreez, Mc Justice Betha, Chris Walker, Mary Ningwa, Gloria Makamu
   - Transport/ Logistics Committee: Leo Kuwani, Caroline Wilkins, Wisom Chauluka, Milika Manyati, Chrisse Chalemera, Richman Mwase
   - Publicity Committee: Matthew Mpofu, Kristof Nordin, JamesterLangwani and Isaac Kapalapata.
8. Site Visits
   - Tour of Mangochi Orphans Education and Training. Members appreciated and acknowledged the efforts being done by the NC at his centre and the extension of the programmes to 7 villages.
   - June Walker's Thathwe. A warm welcome of natural drinks was provided then members were taken around Thanthwe to see all the changes and developments that have so far taken place since the place was acquired 15 years ago changing the area from a bed rock to a productive environment.
     * Members appreciated and acknowledged June for the effort she made to transform Thanthwe and to crown it all for initiating Permaculture Activities to the present State. In this respect members requested June- founder of this said organization The Permaculture Network in Malawi to be their chief advisor and consultant [patron].

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* In her remarks she advised the new national executive to work hard and forge ahead in transforming Malawi to a food rich country. She indicated that she will help the network in its endeavors in terms of advice. An enjoyable Permaculture lunch climaxed the visit.

8. Certificates: PNM should remind the technical advisors/SCOPE programme about the pending certificates and recommend that they be given them *(note: Participants are already aware that Certificates will be given at the end of the pilot period, April 2008).* An inquiry be made to the international permaculture world about award of certificate so as to be a policy in the near future.
9. Regional Coordinators: The executive resorted that the three regional coordinators aren't directly part of the executive but subject to invitation to meetings when they are wanted. Suggested roles:
    1. Coordinating all permaculture activities in the region
    2. Monitor and evaluate all permaculture activities in the regions
    3. Mobilize permaculture members
    4. Organize trainings within the region
    5. Report to the National Coordinator on all activities and other related programmes.
10. Partner Organisations: The executive came up with the following organizations which could partner with Permaculture Network in Malawi by nature of they work and for the possibility of sharing knowledge and resources. A list of all organizations doing permaculture activities in Malawi need to be updated.

▪ FAO	▪ CU	▪ PELUM	▪ OXFAM	▪ ICEDA
▪ JICA	▪ WESM	▪ ReSCOPE	▪ CURE	▪ GOAL- Malawi/Malasyia

11. Closing Remarks: The National Coordinator thanked all the members for their effort and sacrifice to attend this two day meeting. The commitment made is quite commendable, the contributions and active participation to the meeting foretells the good future of a vibrant organization. The closing prayer was said by Joseph Chawawa.

Permaculture Network Committee Contacts

At the Permaculture Convergence, 2007, these are the 10 people that were voted (and accepted) to lead the Permaculture Network in Malawi. (see committee meeting minutes above, Convergence report will be in the next issue.)

Position	Name	Contact information
1. **National Coor.**	Patterson Majonanga	MOET, Box 328, Mangochi. 08-873-270. 01-580-063. moetmwcharity@yahoo.co.uk
2. **Vice Nat'l Coor.**	Pastor Joseph Chawawa	Chisomo Orphan, Widow & Educ. Care, Box 40630, Kanengo, LL4. 09-371-627
3. **Secretary**	Jamester Langwani	Box 49, Masenjere. 08-531-284
4. **Asst. Secretary**	Richman Mwase	Chipuzumbuba, Box 82, NB. 08-771-451
5. **Treasurer**	Leo Y Kuwani	Box 54, Migowi. 09-280-429
6. **Northern Coor.**	Kennedy Mwakasungura	Kasoba School, Box 55, KA. c/o 09-183-014
7. **Central Coor.**	Mvula, Kamchira Kampandira	Lobi EPA, Box 11, Lobi, Lobi Trading Centre. 01-223-971, 09-405-335, 08-141-071, 01-900-278
8. **Southern Coor.**	Chrissie K. Chalemera	Box 655, Zomba. ZA Boma at the GTZ office 08-553-203, 01-524-898 (office)
9. **Committee Member**	Mary M'ningwa	Songani School, Box 36 Domasi. 09-739-640, 09-755-040"
10. **Committee Member**	Matthews Mpofu	Box 1944, BT. The Glass house (next to Four Corners Church). 08-595-231
Newsletter Editor *	* Kristof & Stacia Nordin	Crossroads Post Dot Net X-124, LL. 01-707-213, 09-333-073, 09-926-153, nordin@eomw.net
Patron	June Walker	Thanthwe, Box 46, Monkey Bay. 01-587-656, 08-832-305, junewalker@Africa-Online.net

* PNM needs a new volunteer for the position of Editor – or a Newsletter Assistant.

From the Members:

Our membership numbers and activity are up! In the next issue we will include the membership list.

The Convergence and Request for Seeds:
PNM Member, Hattly Nyasulu, Mzimba

Thanks for making it easy for me to attend the get-together (convergence in Dedza). It wasn't easy to sponsor me because there were so many people out there who would have been taken in my place. The get-together has helped me a lot because I was exposed to different Permaculture Activities that has helped me to start afresh and find new ways of contacting communities in schools, individuals, clubs and the like. This will start from where I live and back to gardens. I hope the time will come when I will serve permaculture in the best way possible.

I would like to ask for some seeds if possible. I have already started collecting some as I move to the market and when I visit my dimba.

- Tephrosia seeds are on high demand because it is a very useful plant when integrated with crops.
- Pigeon Peas are also on demand because it's beans make good food for fish in ponds as wells as ndiwo for humans and is a drought resistant crop.

Promote Organic Home Gardening
PNM Member, JJ Kanjanga, Director LOMADEF

The debate on the relative importance of the farmer and the doctor has been studied over the years. The doctor provides a very essential service to the society and everybody may need him / her at one time or the other. But the farmer provides a necessity of life which nobody can forego and continue living.

The farmer, in view of the nature of their work, is usually associated with the rural community. They raise both crops and livestock to feed people as well as main industries. However, with the rapid shift of rural population into towns and cities in most countries, and persistent declines in agricultural productivity in many developing countries, a need to look for an improved farming system to ensure food security has been identified.

That is urban home gardening. Many development agencies, including the FAO and donor organizations appear to be interested in this programme.

The Lipangwe Organic Manure Demonstration Farm (LOMADEF) has been keenly following the new development, training and promoting this system of food production using organic farming principles. However, LOMADEF would like to caution any agency or organisation seeing sense in rural and urban Agricultural Development as a potential strategy for ensuring rural and urban food security and reducing rural and urban poverty, never to encourage the use of the dangerous synthetic agro-chemicals in this system.

The reason? Obvious! The damning health and environmental hazards associated with the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticide must be avoided.

We have a proverb in Malawi that "we do not eat with both hands even when we are famishing". The farmer does not only save life but also sustains it. Away therefore with destructive agro-chemical which make the farmer an innocent murderer.

Permaculture School Competition success in Nkhata-Bay!

In November of last year, Caroline Wilkins (PNM member and Technical Advisor for GTZ), launched a competition entitled **"Who will be the best prepared for the rains?"** for the 5 schools in Nkhata-Bay District, that are participating in the Sustainable School Food & Nutrition Programme.

The schools were to be judged on the following criteria:

- Establishment of Nurseries
- Compost Making
- Use of Local Resources
- Programme Management at School
- Effort carried out by schools
- Prepared Beds & Planting Stations
- Propagation Methods
- Water Harvesting & Other Designs
- Levels of Knowledge within schools and communities.
- Presentation of efforts to the judges.

The competition was very well received by the schools, and they all enthusiastically got started with plans, preparations and lots of hard work. Judging took place on the 7th December 2007 by visiting each and every school. The Panel of judges were:

- Mr. P. Simbeye & Mr Msowoya - Land Resource Conservation Officers
- Mr. Alvin Phiri - Food & Nutrition Officer
- Mr. Kristof Nordin - Permaculture Trainer
- Mrs. Caroline Wilkins - Technical Advisor for GTZ

Mrs Stacia Nordin (MoE School Health and Nutrition Technical Advisor) was present as an observer.

Once each school was visited, the panel of Judges returned to Chin'goma TDC to make their deliberations and announce the lucky winners. Prior to the contest the Judges had agreed on the rating system and they spent 15 minutes at the end of every school tour to rate the school on the criteria. The winners were:

1st Prize:	**Old Maula School**	**10,000 mk**
2nd Prize:	**Chipuzumumba School**	**5,000 mk**

The 10th of December was Prize Giving Day at Ching'oma TDC, and some important Personnel were invited to attend the ceremony. Among the invitees were the District Educational Manager for Nkhata-Bay, as well as the AEDC and AEDO's from the Ministry of Agriculture. Stacia Nordin represented Mrs Dorothy Khonje, the SHN Coordinator for the Ministry of Education as well as the Team Leader for GTZ Basic Education who co-sponsored the event. The parents of Caroline Wilkins were also present in their capacity as sponsors of the competition.

During the ceremony Caroline Wilkins said, "**It was a tough competition to judge, every school without exception made a fantastic effort**. However, Maula won the day because of their great vision for the future and very ambitious designs. They have a strong committee who are totally committed to this programme. Chipuzumumba came a very close 2nd. They have come up with very creative and attractive designs, and their propagation methods were very impressive, especially their experimentation with air layering." Caroline then announced that the 3 runners up (Ching'oma School, Chilala School & Sanga School) would also receive prizes of K1000 each, as they deserved recognition for their great efforts.

During the ceremony, the chairpersons of the 2 winning schools thanked the government for introducing the programme in the country, more especially to Ching'oma Zone.

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Mr Kameta Phiri, School Facilitator and Chairman of Maula Committee said, "**Most of our school grounds were bare and useless, but Permaculture is turning the same bare grounds into a Garden of Eden,** and shortly we'll be eating from them. Our pupils will learn very well since they will have food at school"

In his speech, The District Education Manager said that Nkhata-Bay is a model and should aim at being the best since pupils need nutritious food at school as well as at home. He also urged the community to work extra hard at their homes to boost Permaculture. "Our success is not only recognised in Nkhata-Bay District, but also in the whole nation of Malawi" He said.

Speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Simbeye said, "The Ministry supports this programme and that is why it is working hand in hand with Education so that both Ministries achieve their goals of having sustainable food in schools through Permaculture".

Stacia Nordin thanked the community and pupils of all pilot schools in Nkhata-Bay District for welcoming the Sustainable School Food & Nutrition programme and Permaculture wholeheartedly, and urged them to continue working hard so that pupils should not feel hungry at school. "We would like to introduce a competition like this on a national level to all pilot schools" she said.

The memorable day was concluded with a nutritious Permaculture Dinner, some songs of celebration, and many happy people!

From the Permaculture Broadcasting Service, this is reporter Isaac Siska (Mr Recycle).

Sustainable Practices

Sustainable Practices 2007 is a weekly information service compiled from publicly-available sources and provided by USA EPA Region 8's Sustainable Practices and State Partnerships Program.
For more information, contact David Schaller schaller.david@epa.gov

High Mowing Seeds Grows Its Near-Exclusive Organic Seeds Business.

High Mowing Seeds, located in Wolcott, Vermont, is an organic seed producer and seller, one of two companies in the country that sell exclusively organic seeds. It is the only company focused on commercial growers. The company both produces and sells organic seeds and is on a steep growth trajectory. In six years it has grown from $35,000 in annual sales to $800,000. It harvests its own 40-50 acres in Vermont and cleans and packages 350 different varieties of seeds. High Mowing Seeds supplies gardeners and farmers with open-pollinated, heirloom, and hybrid seed varieties in small packets or large bulk amounts. Over 750,000 packets were sold in 2006. (Honolulu Advertiser, August 18, 2007, http://highmowingseeds.com/ http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2007/Aug/18/bz/hawaii708180351.html)

Study Shows Organic Crops Less Harmful Than Chemical-Treated or GM Crops.

A recent Science magazine article reports on the first study to analyze environmental impact data from field experiments worldwide involving corn and cotton plants with a Bt gene inserted for its insecticidal properties. Researchers analyzed 42 field experiments for the effects of Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) gene modification, conventional chemical pesticides, and organic farming methods on beneficial organisms such as ladybird beetles, earthworms, bees, and other non-target insects. The study found that organically grown crops appeared to be better for the environment than either Bt crops or conventional crops treated with pesticides. Researchers said that compared with organically grown crops, Bt crops reduced the abundance of some types of beneficial, non-target insects, worms, and other species. The study is accompanied by a searchable global database for agricultural and environmental scientists studying the effects of genetically modified crops. (Science, June 8, 2007, http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/316/5830/1475)

Permaculture Broadcasting Service

This is Permaculture Broadcasting Service. The time is right for Organic Manure & Permaculture. Today's news is read by "Mr Recycle" (Mr Isaac Siska of Nkhata-Bay District)

HEADLINES

- The Permaculture virus continues to spread.
- The government is to receive aid from the Peoples Republic of Leguminous Plants and the ecological San Toilet Company.
- There is stiff competition in this year's Organic Manure Elections.

THE NEWS IN DETAIL

→ The Permaculture virus continues to spread at an alarming rate in the country. It has been reported that hundreds of people infected with the virus were recently admitted to Chongoni Permaculture Convergence Hospital in Dedza. Apparently they were treated with indigenous medicinal plants which only made them stronger, and were then able to share ideas on how to further spread the Permaculture virus! A National Committee was reportedly elected to co-ordinate the whole operation, and news is that people infected with this virus from all over the world will be converging in Malawi in 2009!!! All those present agreed to vomit Permaculture germs as often as possible, in the hope that it will infect everyone who comes into contact with it. Instead of trying to control this virus, Dr's Kristof and Stacia Nordin and their staff, are busy doing all they can to spread this virus throughout the country! (apparently their research headquarters are situated in Chitedze).

→ The government has announced that it will be receiving aid from the Peoples Republic of Leguminous Plants as well as from The Eco-san Toilet Company. Speaking on arrival from his recent visits to Beans City Garden and Sky-Loo Province, the Minister for Food & Plants (Mr Enriched Soil), said "The Peoples Republic of Leguminous Plants is ready to help this country with millions of tonnes of plant nutrients, like nitrogen, which it makes in abundance. They only ask that in return we share some of the seeds from our own produce, to others with poor soils, which we have agreed to do." He continued, "Our Government and it's people (the plants) will make great use of this aid". At the same time, Mr Enriched Soil announced - "The country will also be receiving Aid from the "Eco-San Toilet Company", which produces a huge amount of manure that can enrich our soils and costs next to nothing to make!" The company director, Mr Fossa-Aftena, who was unable to be present, confirmed such developments to the Permaculture Broadcasting Service, on a line from Sky-Loo Province.

→ Only a few days left in the polls, and it's still any ones game. This years Organic Manure Elections has been a stiff competition. Those contesting in the exercise are, Mr Bacteria, Mr Termites, Dr Earthworm and Prof. Water. The voters (inhabitants of the soil) have to decide who they believe is the quickest and the best decomposer of Organic Matter. It's an important decision, as it will directly affect their "Soil Nation". However, reports say that Prof Water has strong support, as a large portion of the Soil Nation prefers liquid manures, to other types.

SPORTS:

The New World Heavy-Weight Boxing Champion, Sir Compost Pile, yesterday knocked out the former holder of the title, Mr Synthetic Fertilizer, in the 2nd round of a 15 round bout. The sponsors of the fight "Which-is-best?" said they now had a clear answer, and it was a worthwhile event.

To end the news, we take a look at the Headlines again . . . Thank you, and continue to listen to 'PBS News' for all the latest news on Permaculture! Isaac Siska, Mr Resource Cycle.

SANE: South African New Economics Network

The following information came to me from the PermacultureSA@yahoogroups.com mailing list. "Sane" means normal, sound, sensible, wise and I felt the acronym fit in well with Permaculture thinking. ~ Stacia

The South African New Economics Network (SANE) is an autonomous Network for the creation of a more humane, just, sustainable and culturally appropriate economic system in South Africa. It challenges the way prevailing economic thinking (old economics) has tended to reduce people to economic agents, the environment to property, social institutions to markets, and progress to growth in production. SANE advocates alternative economic theories (new economics) which are more purposefully designed to promote social equity and justice, community self-reliance and ecological sustainability. Patrons: Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, James Robertson (UK), Sheena Duncan, Gordon Oliver

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SANE Views: ORGANIC FARMING

Land Heritage Newsletter Spring 2006, 28 June 2006, Volume 6 no.23

Organic farming is creating more jobs, revitalising rural economies and encouraging younger people into agriculture

If organic farming was adopted by all UK farmers, 93,000 extra on-farm jobs would be created. Results from a comprehensive survey comparing employment on organic farms to that on non-organic farms shows that organic farming is delivering 32% more jobs per farm on average across the UK.

If organic farming, currently practised on 4% of UK farmland, was adopted by all UK farmers, it would produce an additional 93,000 on-farm jobs -16 times more people than were employed by the Rover car company when it closed in April 2005.

The survey results were launched on 15 May in conjunction with the Transport & General Workers Union at the Transport and General Workers Union HQ, London. The independent research also reveals that organic farmers are:

- Younger -the average age of organic farmers surveyed was 49, seven years younger than their non-organic counterparts, who average 56 years old.
- More optimistic about the future of farming - 64% expect their family to take on the farm compared to 51 % for non-organic farming:
- More entrepreneurial - 3 times as many organic farms are involved in direct or local marketing schemes than non-organic farmers.

Peter Melchett, Soil Association Policy Director said: 'The implications of this research are not limited to the UK. In the developing world, some 2.5 billion people are still dependent for their livelihoods on agriculture. If they adopt the model of industrial farming, as has been the trend in the developed world, millions will be forced off the land. In contrast, organic farming offers a truly sustainable development path'.

A websearch revealed that the report was published by the Soil Association. The hard evidence came from a DEFRA-commissioned study by the University of Exeter, cited on pages 18 & 19

Centre for Holistic Studies (India) UK network, New Era Coalition

In Memory of 3 members and their Strong Support of Sustainability…

Arthur Schwarz

Arthur came to the country as a young man in 1942 and said he fell in love with Nyasaland on his first morning as he watched the sun rise over the falls at Thekerani on his train journey up from Beira. He worked as a tobacco assistant, then for most of his career in the tea plantations of Thyolo, although his interests always lay in organic farming and horticulture.

He joined the Permaculture Network in 1994 for our first Field Day at the then CURE offices in Limbe when we spent the day 'permaculturising' their garden to thank them for their help in setting up the first Permaculture trainings with Jeremy Burnham and Avice Hindmarch. He was a founder member of SHOGA - Shire Highlands Organic Growers Association - in an attempt to get Malawi's farmers into the lucrative international bio-certified market.

He never owned any land himself but his last venture was to work with his friend to set up a 7ha farm in Bvumbwe to be sustainable in bananas, fish, bees and as many different crops as he could find to grow well there. As theft could be such a problem so close to town, he had the local sing'anga *visit the land in public and also brought protective symbols from his own culture to protect the produce from theft. News of the developments from this farm may well be printed in future editions of this newsletter. We are grateful for his vast amount of local knowledge, common sense, charm and love for this country and its people until his death in January aged 85.*

Patsy Colvin

Patsy lived in this country for many years between the early 50's and 90's, working with Tom at the CCAP mission in Blantyre. She sponsored both individuals and groups of her friends to belong to the Permaculture Network and learn about the ideas and practices she had long known about herself. She died suddenly in April and we miss her.

Dr. Glyvvns Chinkhuntha

Dr. Chinkhuntha was a renowned for his creative farming style and given an honorary doctorate degree from the Malawi government. He transformed a piece of degraded dambo land into a productive, organic farm, showing Malawi what is possible when one works with nature and its bountiful resources.

For almost 20 years Dr. Chinkhuntha and his wife, Mrs. Chrissie Chinkhuntha, shared their life with countless visitors. Mrs. Chinkhuntha organized a group to prepare fabulous, diverse, healthy meals with local produce and many a visitor purchased amazing produce to take home with them – providing another opportunity to share the story with family at home about how the produce was grown and prepared.

Dr. Chinkhuntha passed away in August 2007.

Breathing Space

This piece of inspiration was submitted by June Walker

There is a relationship between stillness and creativity; between resting and being more alive. There is a pattern woven through all creation of night followed by day, of the stillness of the winter earth followed by the energy of spring; of long periods of infoldings followed by colourful unfoldings; of life's seed-force slowly generating in the dark before bursting forth for conception...

Are we thinking that we can ignore this pattern and still be creative? Are we thinking that we can be constantly busy, or that we can relentlessly push our own resources and the resources of the earth and still enjoy well-being in our lives and relationships? If we ignore nature's patterns of stillness our creativity will be either superficial or exhausted. Nature names our need for inner restfulness, as well as outer restfulness, if we are to be deeply and fully alive.

Philip Newell.

Theme for the next issue:

Changing Culture: What are YOU doing to make it better?

Send in YOUR contributions to the next newsletter to:
Amayi & Abambo Nordin, Permaculture Network in Malawi Newsletter Editors
Crossroads PDN x-124, Lilongwe. 01-707-213, 09-333-073, 09-926-153. nordin@eomw.net

PNM needs a Newsletter Editor or Assistant!

The Nordins have attempted to carry on the tradition *(from PNM Patron June Walker)* **of compiling the PNM Newsletter since July 2002 (yes, over 5 years!).**

Recently submissions from PNM are at an all time high and the work of putting together the newsletter has become much easier. But, the time has come where we need to hand over the duty to another team.

Are you interested? We are happy to assist the new person / team in getting started. Please let us know if you are up for this opportunity!

Your Editors, Amayi ndi Abambo a Khalidwe

Permaculture Network in Malawi
Newsletter Editors, Kristof & Stacia Nordin
Crossroads Post Dot Net X-124, Lilongwe, Malawi
"See the world through the eyes of Permaculture"

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PermaCulture is Permanent Culture
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Join the Permaculture Network in Malawi !

The Permaculture Network in Malawi began in 1994. The network strives to bring information to members through the newsletter and make connections between members in Malawi and around the world. Advocacy, promotion and information are our strengths.

Membership: Fees are **500 mk** for the calendar year, just to cover the newsletter costs.

Donations: Are welcome! Donations allow us to sponsor people who can't afford the fees, to copy additional materials, and to take on more extensive projects.

Sponsorship: If you can't afford the fees, or can only afford a little, write us to explain your situation and how you plan to use the information from the newsletters. You need to write to us at least once every year.

Payments: Send your Malawi Kwacha check or postal order from any country or Malawian postal stamps to: Permaculture Network in Malawi Chairperson, Patterson Majonanga, MOET, Box 585, Mangochi. 08-873-270. 01-580-063. moetmwcharity@yahoo.co.uk

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