

Grantee information

Name of Grantee: Michiko Sugawara

Michiko Sugawara is an independent researcher and translator. Her major research interests focus on sustainable agriculture, agricultural policy and trade, food security, and food sovereignty.

Collaborators:

1. Ekoningtyas Margu Wardani (Indonesia, API Fellow 2008) is a PhD researcher at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in Leiden University, the Netherlands.
2. Dwi Any Marsiyanti (Indonesia, API Fellow 2009) is a researcher of an Indonesian organization, Roromendoet Indonesia.
3. Kengo Yoda (Japan) is a journalist and a photographer at a Japanese publishing institute, Nosan Gyoson Bunka Kyokai.
4. Supa Yaimuang (Thailand, API Fellow 2006) is a director of the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation in Thailand.

Project title: Asian Small Farmers' Resilience in Times of Trade Liberalization: A Study of Rice Trade and Organic Farming in Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand

Abstract:

Trade has been linked to food security, but the world food crisis in 2008 revealed the vulnerability of “trade-based” food security. In recent years, the anticipation of a future food crisis, the ongoing development in regional trade, multilateral trade agreements such as Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the regional integration of economies like the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), prompted each government in the region to come up with policies which would build resilient local agriculture in times of a more liberalized economy. The project studies how trade liberalization in agriculture, especially rice, has shaped domestic agriculture policies and affected small farmers in Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand. It also investigates the challenges that may be anticipated in the future. It aims to shed light on the history and current development of the organic farming movement in the three countries, in the quest for Asian models of “food sovereignty” in practice. The research team attempts to learn from the history of trade and the experiences of farmers, to draw empirical evidences on what components of organic farming should be enhanced and may be scaled up to local and regional agricultural policies.

By combining academic research in studying the political landscape of rice in Indonesia, Japan and Thailand within a regional scope, and on-the-ground field research to learn the reality of organic farming, and also by visualizing the story of rice in the three countries through photo essays, the project attempts to share the research findings with a wider audience consisting not only of concerned academics, NGOs and farmers, but also policy makers and ordinary consumers.

Deliverables:

The research team is going to produce two major deliverables: an academic research paper and photographs. The paper will be utilized to write a policy brief to increase the awareness of policy makers on the research issues in the regional level.

Photographs will be shaped into a photo essay in the three locations: Bantul, Ogawa and Yasothorn. This will be exhibited on a website for photographers and in blogs to be viewed by wider audience, followed by a conventional photo exhibition in Yogyakarta.

Outputs:

In addition to the deliverables stated above, utilizing their network and creativity, the team members will be presenting the research findings and outcomes at different institutes with which they have an affiliation.