

# Biographies for Speakers: Cross-Country Tour on Biofuels April 28 - May 1 2008

Author: Lucy

Sharratt<info@cban.ca><p><b>Alberto Gomez</b>, of Mexico, Director of International Relations for the national Union of Regional Peasant Organizations (UNORCA) in Mexico. He is also a North American region representative to the International Committee of La Via Campesina, the international movement of peasants, small- and medium-

sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers. He has been active in the movement against NAFTA and its impact on agriculture in Mexico.</p><p><b>Devlin Kuyek</b> is the Canadian representative of GRAIN, an international non-governmental organization which promotes the sustainable management and use of agricultural biodiversity based on people's control over genetic resources and local knowledge. He is also a member of the research group, "Technoscience devivant et société" at UQAM, has worked with the Pesticide Action Network in the Philippines, and was coordinator of the Canadian Affinity Group on Intellectual Property Rights. Devlin is the author of *The Real Board of Directors: The Construction of Biotechnology Policy in Canada, 1980-*

*2002* and the most recently, *Good Crop/Bad Crop: Seed Politics and the Future of Food in Canada?*, which examines the economic and environmental background of the modern seed trade from a Canadian perspective.</p><p><b>Sharon Labchuk</b>, of Millvale, Prince Edward Island, works with Earth Action, a PEI-based environmental activist organization. Earth Action is a member of the PEI Coalition for a GMO-Free Province. For the past 13 years Sharon has worked primarily on agriculture and environment issues, including resisting the introduction of Monsanto's GM potato in Prince Edward Island, a local, national and international collaborative effort which forced Monsanto to withdraw the potatoes from the market. Now government has turned its attention to biofuels and plans to further industrialize the countryside with a gro fuel crops. Over the past year, Sharon has worked with the PEI Coalition for a GMO-

Free Province to oppose plan to grow GMO sugar beets and allow Atlantic Bioenergy Corp to build a ethanol plant in PEI. The proponents have given up and are trying to find another province to accept their ethanol plants scheme.</p><p><b>Helena Paul</b> has campaigned for the protection of indigenous peoples' rights and tropical forests in Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil, as well as on agricultural biodiversity, oil exploitation in the tropics, patent on life and genetic engineering. She is co-director of EcoNexus where she is lead researcher on corporations and their negative impacts on the environment and human development. Helena Paul has worked for more than a decade on GM crops, including GM soy in Argentina and also on the impacts of industrial farming and the production of commodities for export on agro-

ecosystems, small farmers and rural life. She worked with the Gaia Foundation from 1988 to 2000 and co-founded the Forest Network, GM Freeze UK and the Genetic Engineering Network, UK. She is co-author of *Hungry Corporations: Transnational biotech companies colonise the food chain*, published by Zed Books, 2003. In 2006, she began to work on agrofuels, as part of a small group of organisations that launched the first call for a moratorium on targets and incentives in the European Union because of the grave threat posed to small farmers, local food production, biodiversity and climate. She coordinated the publication of a report from the same group: *Agrofuels: A reality check in nine key areas*, July 2007.</p><p><b>Wilhelmina? Ditdit? Pelegrina</b>, from the Philippines, is trained as an agronomist and works to promote agricultural biodiversity conservation in communities across Southeast Asia. In her ten years with the Southeast Asia Regional Initiative for Community Empowerment (SEARICE), Ditdit has helped coordinate projects and lobby internationally and regionally to strengthen farmers' right to manage their own plant genetic resources. She has worked with civil society organizations, extension agencies and farmers groups in Bhutan, Lao PDF, In

donesia and Vietnam to promote sustainable agricultural practices, as well as processes such as farmers' fields school, participatory rural appraisals, and participatory plant breeding. Ditdit has spoken at events around the world about the grassroot experiences of farmers with plant genetic resources and the links between seeds and livelihoods. She has published numerous papers in scholarly and civil society journals, and continues to travel the world, promoting the rights of farmers and the importance of farm-level genetic diversity. Ditdit has also worked with the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction in the Philippines, Greenpeace-

Pacific, Action for World Development, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Migrante Australia, Action for World Development, and the University of the Philippines, in positions ranging from scientific rese

archassociate, to appropriate technology agriculturist, activist, and program officer.

**Pat Mooney** has worked for more than thirty years with civil society organisations (CSOs) on international trade and development issues related to agriculture and biodiversity. Mooney has lived most of his life on the Canadian prairies and now works in Ottawa as the Executive Director of ETC Group, a small international civil society organization dedicated to examining the impact of new technologies on rural communities. Pat Mooney began working on the "seeds" issue in 1977. In 1984, the three co-founded RAFI (Rural Advancement Foundation International), whose name was changed to ETC group (pronounced "etcetera" group) in 2001. The author or co-author of several books on the politics of biotechnology and biodiversity, Pat Mooney received The Right Livelihood Award (the "Alternative Nobel Prize") in the Swedish Parliament in 1985. In 1998 Mooney received the Pearson Peace Prize from Canada's Governor General. Pat Mooney has no university training, but is widely regarded as an authority on agricultural biodiversity and new technology issues.

**Marilyn Machado Mosquera** is an Afro-Colombian from the Pacific coastal region of Colombia. She has been working, for the past 16 years, as part of an organization called Process of the Black Communities (Proceso de Comunidades Negras) that acts as a voice for Afro-Colombian communities in defence of their traditional territory. She has worked as a community organizer, an investigator and as a spokesperson at a national and international level on issues facing the Afro-Colombian population. Currently, one of the major threats facing these communities is the forced displacement from their land by the actions of illegal and legal armed actors to make way for large-scale plantation of African palm for the production of palm oil. Ms. Machado is a graduate in sociology from the University of Valle.

**Peter Rosset** is based in Oaxaca, Mexico, where he is a researcher at the Centro de Estudios para el Cambio en el Campo Mexicano (Center of Studies for Rural Change in Mexico), and coordinator of the Land Research Action Network. He is also Global Alternatives Associate of the Center for the Study of the Americas and an affiliated scholar of the University of California, both in Berkeley, California, USA. He is the former co-director of Food First/The Institute for Food and Development Policy in Oakland, California. He previously served as executive director of the Stanford University Regional Center in Chiapas, Mexico. During the 1980s he spent eight years in Central America, where he led several sustainable agriculture projects. Peter has taught at Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Texas at Austin, the National Agrarian University of Nicaragua, the Havana Agricultural University (ISCAH) and the University of Las Villas, both in Cuba, and the Tropical Center for Agricultural Research & Education (CATIE) in Costa Rica. He is a food rights activist, agroecologist and rural development specialist with a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. His published books include *The Case for a GM-Free Sustainable World* (2003); *Sustainable Agriculture and Resistance: Transforming Food Production in Cuba* (Food First Books, 2002); *America Needs Human Rights* (Food First Books, 1999); *World Hunger: 12 Myths, Second Edition* (Grove Press, 1998); *The Nicaragua Reader* (Grove Press, 1983); *Nicaragua: Unfinished Revolution* (Grove Press, 1986); *The Greening of the Revolution: Cuba's Experiment with Organic Agriculture* (Ocean Press, 1994); *Agroecology* (McGraw-Hill, 1990); and *A Cautionary Tale: Failed US Development Policy in Central America* (Lynne Rienner, 1996).

**Javiera Rulli**, from Argentina, is a trained biologist and works directly with small farmer communities in Paraguay in the coordination of campaigns and resistance to agribusiness and monitoring of human rights abuses connected to the expansion of soy monoculture. Javier has been deeply involved in South American social movements dealing with peasant rights at the grassroots and international policy level. Ms Rulli currently works as a campaigner and researcher with *Basel Investigaciones Sociales*, a Paraguay-based organization that works for social development through critical sociological research. Previously she worked and lived in Argentina with the GRR, *Grupo de Reflexión Rural*, a main group in the resistance to the soy model in that country. Javier was a lead organizer of the 2007 *Chake Nuha: National Seminar on Agrofuels and Environmental Services in Paraguay*. Javiera Rulli is co-author of the 2006 report 'Paraguay Sojero' (Soy Producer Paraguay) which exposes the widespread human rights violations, including biodiversity destruction, related to soy expansion in Paraguay. She is also co-author of 'Refugees of the Agro-export model of soya?' report from extensive field research in 2006 with Paraguayan campesino communities surrounded by soy monocultures. Last year she also coordinated and was co-author to the compilation *United Republics of Soya* compilation of essays and investigations carried out by a network of Latin American activists and researchers. In 2006 she was a main organizer of the international Forum of Resistance to Agrib

business held in Buenos Aires.

**Darrin Qualman** is Director of Research for the National Farmers Union (NFU) in Canada and lives near Dundurn, Saskatchewan. He and his family farmed actively until 1994. They grew several grains, oilseeds, and spices. He then became involved with work on energy and environmental issues in the early 1990s, and became the Executive Secretary of the National Farmers Union in June of 1996. Darrin is the author of "The Farm Crisis and Corporate Power"; "The Farm Crisis, Bigger Farms, and the Myths of Competition and Efficiency?"; and, with Nettie Wiebe, "The Structural Adjustment of Canadian Agriculture". He has made presentations on agricultural and trade issues across Canada and in Europe. The NFU works to ensure that the family farm remains the principle unit of food production in Canada.

**Soledad Vogliano** of Argentina works for the Centro de Políticas Públicas para el Socialismo (CEPASS: Center of Public Policies for Socialism). Soledad's particular areas of expertise include land rights, biodiversity, and corporate control of the food system. She has spoken out about the impacts of biofuels in Argentina, and represented Argentinean civil society organizations at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity on behalf of the Network for a Latin America Free of Genetically Modified Foods.