TextileExchange
Organic Cotton Round Table

Platform for Collective Action & Incubator for Great Ideas

OCRT PROGRAM
HAMBURG 2016

Spiegelsaal, Grand Elysee Hotel
Thursday, 6th October, 9am - 7.30pm
Five years on, we can look back on the call to action at our inaugural meeting in Hong Kong as the beginning of something we can now properly call “a movement”.

The Organic Cotton Round Table (OCRT) is a Platform for Collective Action and Incubator of Great Ideas. It brings us together to be inspired, mobilized, and equipped to act. The OCRT also serves as the official in-person meeting place of the online Global Organic Cotton Community Platform.

Organic is a life choice; it’s not simply about a commodity and a market. We choose organic because we boldly want the best, not just "less bad". We want to use the market – and business – to build a healthier, kinder, safer world for now and for the generations to come.

Organic cotton tells a story. A story of health, ecology, fairness, and care. These are the principles of organic agriculture and they go way beyond cotton - to food, to farms, to families, to communities...

We know clean water, fertile soils, and a rich biodiversity are the natural capital from which life on earth is sustained and that doing “business as if people mattered” is fundamentally what sustains us as communities. Without equality, peace, diversity and justice there is no way we can achieve a prosperous and thriving economy.

We are not separate from nature - we are deeply embedded in it. Five years ago, some may have treated sustainability as an add-on to business - a “nice to have”. Nowadays, we more deeply understand that only by making sustainability central to business will we have a planet on which to do business.

This year’s OCRT is about “thinking globally and acting locally”, putting people at the heart of our business models, and doing business as if people mattered. This approach is needed throughout, right back to seed. Seed needs to thrive in local conditions both environmentally and culturally.

Can organic agriculture – with its principles of health, ecology, fairness and care – not only remind us of what really matters, but also shine a light on how to get there?

Liesl Truscott
European & Materials Strategy Director
Textile Exchange

“It’s a great privilege for the TE Europe Board to be able to steer the OCRT to achieve even greater impact. We’ve seen in South Africa how taking a holistic approach to the whole supply chain can benefit all, and the OCRT does a great job of spreading that message.”

- Heinrich Schultz, OrganiMark, Chair of the TE Europe Board

“As a thriving online platform, the Global Organic Cotton Community really comes to life when together in one room. The OCRT provides that annual meeting point and it’s a great opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved and what we still need to work on – and feed this into future online discussions.”

- Andrea Bischof, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, co-coordinators with TE of the GOCCP
AGENDA

08:30–09:00  REGISTRATION
09:00–09:15  WELCOME
Master of ceremonies: Simon Cooper, Partner, Change Agency

09:15–09:45  MORNING KEYNOTE
Keynote and discussion leader: Leo Johnson, Co-Founder, Sustainable Finance (now part of PwC), author and broadcaster.

09:45-10:35  MORNING PERSPECTIVE: BUSINESS AS IF PEOPLE MATTERED
Panelists:
- Helmy Abouleish, CEO, SEKEM
- Bob Bejan, GM Communication Strategy, Microsoft
- Christine Driscoll-Goulay, Sustainable Sourcing Specialist, Kering
- Jeffrey Hogue, Chief Sustainability Officer, C&A
- Roland Stelzer, CEO, Elmertex

10:35–10:50  REFRESHMENTS

10:50-11:40  MORNING PERSPECTIVE: SEED FUTURES - THE COEXISTENCE OF ORGANIC AND GM
Discussion leader: La Rhea Pepper, MD, Textile Exchange
Panelists:
- Prof. Dr. Jane Dever, Cotton Breeder, Texas A&M AgriLife Research
- Aly Kanoute, Project Manager, RECOLTE
- Arun Ambatipudi, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Chetna Organic, India
- Ashis Mondal, Director, ASA and Coordinator, OFCS MP
- Michael Sligh, Program Director, RAFI USA

11:40-13:00  OPEN SPACE
Topic 1: Africa Sourcing - Your Next Move?
How Africa could diversify your supply options.

Topic 2: Does Closer To Market mean Faster and More Effective?
Exploring the advantages of sourcing from Egypt, Turkey, and Central Asia.

Topic 3: Fair Finance
How can we innovate financing to improve lives?

Topic 4: Do we need an “Organic Plus”?
Organic farming naturally takes care of things like biodiversity, water, and social justice - but do we need a Standard to prove it?

Topic 5: Life Cycle (LCA) Thinking in the World of Textiles
How do new trends influence the way you and your supply chain do business?

13:00-14:00  LUNCH
Refuel, network and explore the exhibits, with an opportunity to join a lunch table discussion about the Global Organic Cotton Community Platform.

14:00-14:40  AFTERNOON PERSPECTIVE: IS TRANSFORMATIONAL INTEGRITY POSSIBLE?
Hear the perspectives of integrity expert Joy Saunders and Lord Peter Melchett, Policy Director at the Soil Association.

14:40-16:15  TASK FORCE BREAKTHROUGHS
Task Force 1: Seed & Soils
Task Force 2: Business Models
Task Force 3: Consumer Engagement

16:15–16:30  REFRESHMENTS

16:30-17:30  INNOVATION LAB & AWARDS 2016
Short-listed innovators pitch their ideas for projects that break through barriers to growth and address issues in the organic cotton supply chain.
Hear 3-minute pitches from each of our six finalists, as well as from representatives of two exciting innovations already developing out of the OCRT.
Who will our esteemed panel of judges select as the winner of the 2016 Innovation Award? Join us to find out!

17:30-18:00  CLOSING ADDRESS: 20 YEARS ORGANIC
Closing address from Rachel Cantu, VP Global Supply Chain, Patagonia, celebrating Patagonia’s 20 years of organic cotton!

18:00-19:30  WINE RECEPTION
In partnership with Tchibo. Relax and unwind after a busy day.

Join us at the SEED SUMMIT on 7th October 2016
“Seeding & Breeding the Future of Organic Cotton”
SESSION OUTLINES

WELCOME (09:00 – 09:15)

Liesl Truscott, Textile Exchange
Andrea Bischof, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
Simon Cooper, Change Agency (Master of Ceremonies)

MORNING KEYNOTE (09:15 – 09:45)

Leo Johnson, Co-Founder of Sustainable Finance, Author and Broadcaster, UK

Leo Johnson is a Partner in PwC’s Sustainability & Climate Change team, and the Co-Founder of the sustainability advisory firm Sustainable Finance, now part of the PwC group. He is the co-author of “Turnaround Challenge: Business and the City of the Future” (Oxford University Press, 2013) and the lead author of PwC’s “Low Carbon Economy Index”.

Leo is Co-Presenter for the Radio 4 series: “Future Proofing” and the Presenter of the BBC World News programme “One Square Mile”. Leo is a Visiting Business Fellow at the Smith School of Enterprise & Environment at Oxford University. Formerly with the Technical and Environment Department of the World Bank’s IFC, he is a Judge for the FT Boldness in Business Awards, and a Trustee of the New Economics Foundation and Green Alliance.

Alongside speeches ranging from Campus Party to TEDx, Leo has commented and written guest columns for the Wall Street Journal, Evening Standard, FT and Huffington Post. He is the Co-Founder of the Prix Pictet—a Prize for Photography on sustainability issues, for which Kofi Annan is the Patron.

In this keynote address, Leo explores progressive economics in an age of climate change and helps us answer the question: Can organic cotton change the course of Business?
MORNING PERSPECTIVE: BUSINESS AS IF PEOPLE MATTERED (09:45 - 10:35)

Discussion leader: Leo Johnson

Can organic cotton be a vehicle for delivering a resilient and equitable business – one in which everyone prospers and we do business as if people mattered? In this conversation, Leo Johnson, together with a group of business and thought leaders, exchange views and visions for business transformation in the organic cotton sector – and what’s stopping us from getting there.

Panelists:

Helmy Abouleish, CEO, SEKEM, Egypt

Born in Austria, Helmy Abouleish moved to Egypt with his family when he was 16 years old. He studied at the Faculty of Commerce at Cairo University of Business Administration and achieved a Marketing Diploma from the American University in Cairo. He was deeply involved in the development of SEKEM, an initiative founded in 1977 that promotes sustainable development and organic products in Egypt. Helmy is also engaged in the national and international political sphere fostering responsible competitiveness, social entrepreneurship and the abatement of the huge problems of the 21st century, such as climate change and food security. Helmy Abouleish is currently the CEO of the SEKEM Group of Companies.

Bob Bejan, GM Communication Strategy, Microsoft, USA

Bob Bejan is currently General Manager for Global Communications Strategy: SMSG at Microsoft, working directly for COO Kevin Turner. Prior to his current role, Bob was Global Executive Creative Director of AOL Advertising’s Partner Studio, focused on delivering the next generation of content and creative solutions for marketers. Partner Studio offers brands the opportunity to deliver emotive content experiences that connect with their audiences and are fueled by AOL’s flywheel of data, insights, and programmatic optimization.

Christine Driscoll-Goulay, Sustainable Sourcing Specialist, Kering, France

Christine Driscoll Goulay joined Kering in May 2015 as a Sustainable Sourcing Specialist. Previously, Christine served as the Associate Director of the INSEAD Social Entrepreneurship Initiative from 2009-2015. Christine also worked as the Business Development Manager of the socially conscious apparel brand, EDUN LIVE (founded by Ali Hewson and Bono) from 2006-2009, where her work was focused on cotton supply chains in sub-Saharan Africa. Christine attended Harvard University. She holds a law degree from Boston College Law School and an MBA from INSEAD.
Jeffrey Hogue, Chief Sustainability Officer, C&A, Belgium

Jeffrey has over 2 decades of international experience in Sustainability & Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) across food, consumer products, apparel and retail to support business growth, brand value and corporate reputation while building strong communities and engaging employees. He recently joined C&A – a global fashion retailer with over 170 years of industry leadership – to lead the development, execution and consumer connection with the first holistic sustainability strategy for the group. He leads a talented team of 20 global CSR & Sustainability professionals in promoting Sustainable Supply, Sustainable Product and Sustainable Lives.

Roland Stelzer, CEO, Elmertex, Germany

Roland Stelzer has been Managing Partner of Gebr. Elmer & Zweifel GmbH & Co KG, based in Bempflingen, Germany, since 1990. He launched Cotonea, a brand selling bedding, bath textiles, baby care textiles and clothing in 2003, and in 2005 began a partnership with HELVETAS and Biofarmer in Kyrgyzstan supporting the production of organic Fair Trade cotton. He has been on the steering committee of the IVGT (Industrial Association of Textile Manufacturers) since 2007 and is a founding member of the foundation board of KFRU (Knowledge Foundation of Reutlingen University). Since 2010, Roland has been a member of the panel for organic guidelines (GOTS and IVN BEST) and in the same year began a partnership with Gulu Agricultural Development Corporation in Uganda supporting the production of organic cotton.


Discussion leader: La Rhea Pepper

There has been a rapid adoption of GMOs in a number of the world’s biggest cotton-growing regions such as the USA, India, Pakistan, China, Brazil, South Africa, and Australia. Join us for this dynamic and progressive discussion – and help navigate the future of co-existence and seed equality for all.

Panelists:

Prof. Dr. Jane Dever, Professor and Cotton Breeder, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, USA

Jane Dever is Professor and cotton breeder at Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Lubbock. She has a B.S. in Textile Technology, M.S. in Crop Science, and Ph.D. in Agronomy from Texas Tech. Jane develops cultivars for organic cotton production and screens cotton germplasm collections for native traits useful for cotton germplasm development. She is active in Crop Science Society of America, American Society of Agronomy, and National Association of Plant Breeders; and is recipient of two Vice Chancellor’s Awards in Excellence, the Cotton Genetics Research Award, organic cotton Golden Hoe Award, and Blue Legacy Award in Agriculture.

Aly Kanoute, Project Manager, RECOLTE, Burkina Faso

For the past 12 years, Aly has dedicated his professional career to the development of the agriculture sector in West Africa. He began by successfully introducing Fairtrade standards in the private-sector cotton production system of Senegal, and launching the first ever Fairtrade cotton project in that country in 2004. He then worked on humanitarian response and development projects, with a focus on agriculture, livelihoods and value chain development in Liberia and Mali. Aly is currently based in Burkina Faso, where he manages an organic cotton project that supports 10,000 smallholder farmers, the majority of whom are women.
Arun Ambatipudi, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Chetna Organic, India

Arun Ambatipudi comes from the multi-cultural city of Hyderabad of India. He has almost 20 years of experience working in the rural development sector with local, international and inter-governmental organizations. Arun has worked on a wide range of development issues, including Disaster Management, Water & Sanitation, Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Agriculture & Rural Livelihoods and Value Chains involving smallholder farmers and landless workers from the rain-fed regions. He is passionate about rain-fed farming based livelihood issues and supporting the building of smallholder farmer centric supply chains and strongly believes in responsible and accountable innovations.

Ashis Mondal, Director, Action for Social Advancement (ASA) and Coordinator, Organic & Fair Cotton Secretariat (OFCS) Madhya Pradesh, India

Ashis Mondal is the founding Director of Action for Social Advancement (ASA), an Indian NGO that works in over 1,300 villages, primarily for the farm-based livelihood development of smallholders. He is a Post Graduate in development studies and completed higher studies on development management in the U.K. His major working experience of twenty-five years includes development of livelihoods for smallholders through natural resource management, including sustainable agriculture and promotion of smallholders’ organization for agribusiness. He was a member of the National Advisory Council during 2012-14, and has significant consulting experience with the World Bank, FAO, Asian Development Bank, State’s Planning Commission and International NGOs. Ashis has also co-authored several books and authored more than twenty technical papers.

Michael Sligh, Program Director, RAFI, USA

Michael Sligh is a program director for Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI). He manages policy, research and education regarding agricultural best practices, agro-biodiversity, organic, identity preserved and a range of food justice, fair trade and other value-added food labeling, and marketing issues. He has more than 30 years’ experience in best agricultural practices and policy analysis, including both domestic and international work. He is a part-time farmer, writer and a trained anthropologist. He also manages the Breeding for Organic Production Systems, (BOPS) project, which focuses on-farm participatory field crops variety trials and breeding improvements to meet the needs of organic grain and cotton farmers in the South East of the USA. He is also co-convener of the Seeds and Breeds for the 21st Coalition and most recently co-hosted a National Summit on Seeds and Breeds in 2014 and an Intellectual Property Rights and Public Plant Breeding Summit in 2016. Michael lives, farms and works from North Carolina, USA.
Open Space (11:40 – 13:00)

What is Open Space?

It is a self-organizing practice of inner discipline and collective activity, which releases the inherent creativity and leadership in people. By inviting people to take responsibility for what they care about, Open Space establishes a marketplace of inquiry, reflection and learning, bringing out the best in both individuals and the whole.

- Anne Stadler, OpenSpaceWorld

In this session, five discussions will take place simultaneously and you are invited to join and move between discussions based on your interests.

Discussion Topics:

1. Africa Sourcing - Your Next Move?
   How Africa could diversify your supply options
   
   Host: Prama Bhardwaj, CEO & Founder, Mantis World, UK
   Key thought starters:
   - Dr. Silvère Tovignan, Regional Ambassador, Textile Exchange, Benin
   - Prof. Simplice Davo Vodouhe, Coordinator, OBEPAB, Benin
   - Dr. Riyaz Haider, CEO, BioSustain, Tanzania

2. Does Closer To Market mean Faster and More Effective?
   Exploring the advantages of sourcing from Egypt, Turkey, and Central Asia
   
   Host: Atila Ertem, Regional Ambassador, Textile Exchange, Turkey
   Key thought starters:
   - Aydin Unsal, Owner, Egedeniz Tekstil A.S, Turkey
   - Claire Bergkamp, Head of Sustainability and Ethical Trade, Stella McCartney, UK

3. Fair Finance
   How can we innovate financing to improve lives?
   
   Host: Charlene Collison, Principal Sustainability Advisor, Futures at Forum for the Future, UK
   Key thought starters:
   - Rhett Godfrey, Co-founder and Coordinator of the Chetna Coalition (ChetCo), USA
   - Arun Ambatipudi, Co-Founder and CEO, Chetna Organic, India
   - Christine Driscoll-Goulay, Sustainable Sourcing Specialist, Kering, France

4. Do we need an “Organic Plus”?
   Organic farming naturally takes care of things like biodiversity, water, social justice, etc - but do we need a Standard to prove it?
   
   Host: Michael Sligh, Program Director, RAFI, USA
   Key thought starters:
   - Ben Ramsden, Global Resonance, UK
   - Subindu Garkhel, Cotton Product Manager, Fairtrade Foundation, UK

5. Life Cycle (LCA) Thinking in the World of Textiles
   How do new trends influence the way you and your supply chain do business?
   
   Host: Marc Binder, VP EMEA, thinkstep
   Key thought starters:
   - Sabine Deimling & Daniel Thylmann, thinkstep, Germany
   - Helen Crowley, Head of Sustainable Sourcing Innovation, Kering, France
   - Paolo Foglia, Non Food Certification Manager, ICEA, Italy
AFTERNOON PERSPECTIVE: IS TRANSFORMATIONAL INTEGRITY POSSIBLE?  
(14:00 - 14:40)

What do you do when you stumble across corruption? This interactive session, led by integrity expert Joy Saunders and Lord Peter Melchett of the Soil Association, seeks to explore the different reactions - everything from panic to implementing a clear action plan that deals with root causes.

By exploring this difficult question in a non-confrontational way and showcasing real-life examples, we will highlight and draw out the complexities and inter-connectivity of our supply chains and the integrity challenges they present. After identifying problems, the session will explore and offer practical solutions to build transformational integrity within the organic cotton sector.

Joy Saunders, Integrity Expert, UK

Joy Saunders is an award-winning Director (Winner of the Institute of Directors Public and Third Sector Director of the Year (London and South East) and Highly Commended in National Awards 2014) with more than 10 years' experience in Finance and International Development.

Joy ran Integrity Action, a UK based INGO focused on improving services for communities in developing and war-torn countries.

Joy advises the G20, UNECA, OECD and various donor agencies on the importance of and practicality of building integrity in Fragile States.

Lord Peter Melchett, Policy Director, Soil Association, UK

Peter has been Policy Director of the Soil Association, the UK’s main organic food and farming organisation, since 2001. He runs an 890-acre organic farm in Norfolk, is a member of the BBC's Rural Affairs Committee, and was a member of the Government’s Rural Climate Change Forum and Organic Action Plan Group, and the Department of Education’s School Lunches Review Panel. He received an honorary doctorate from Newcastle University in 2013.

As a former member of the House of Lords, he was a Labour Government Minister 1974-79, at the Departments of Environment, Industry, and Northern Ireland (covering education and health). He has been President or Chair of several conservation NGOs, including the Ramblers and Wildlife Link, and was Director of Greenpeace UK (1985-2000). Greenpeace launched their global campaign against GM crops in 1997, and Peter was one of 28 volunteers arrested for removing GM maize in 1999; all the volunteers were found not guilty in the subsequent court case.
The OCRT has dedicated, on-going Task Forces for Business Models, Seed & Soils, and Consumer Engagement. These Task Forces are an integral part of the OCRT and focus on the key challenges to sector stability and sustainable growth. Under these Task Forces, the OCRT has already identified needs for a number of initiatives and has either catalyzed, or been an incubator for, their development. Read introductions to each of this year’s Task Force meetings below and join the session that most interests you.

Task Force 1:
Seed & Soils - Think Globally, Act Locally

Host: Dr. Monika Messmer, Project Leader, Green Cotton Project | Department of Crop Sciences, FiBL, Switzerland
Chair: Prof. Dr. Jane Dever, Professor and Cotton Breeder, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, USA

Thought-starters: Binay Choudhury, General Manager, Control Union Inspections and Certifications, India
Amish Gosai, Country Program Manager, Textile Exchange, India
Sandra Marquardt, On The Mark PR | Textile Exchange Ambassador, USA
Ashis Mondal, Director, Action for Social Advancement (ASA) | Coordinator, OFCS MP, India
Ipshita Sinha, Programme Manager, C&A Foundation, India
Michael Sligh, Program Director, RAFI, USA
Jimmy Wedel, President, Texas Organic Cotton Marketing Cooperative, USA

Meeting Outline:

The remit of the Seed & Soils Task Force is to support the exchange of knowledge, experiences and innovations between countries and regions. The aims are to build awareness of the challenges faced by organic farmers and their supply networks (particularly in GMO dominated environments), and identify opportunities for collaboration and action that results in high quality, desirable seed and healthy soils from which to grow the supply base.

The title for this year’s meeting is “Think Globally, Act Locally”. Mega-trends such as climate change and soil degradation are global concerns that need to be incorporated into localized action plans. Organic practices hold many of the keys to resilient and regenerative agriculture. Previous meetings of the Task Force identified the need to work in networks and engage both global and local stakeholders, including government and policy makers, through to brands and retailers.

This year, we will explore the findings of TE’s recent white paper on GMOs and contamination challenges at the farm and in the supply chain. We will discuss risk management as we work to address contamination, integrity, and co-existence collaboratively. Specifically, we will focus the microscope on localized initiatives and learn more about their success factors; what works and what doesn’t, how they have prioritized action and funding, and how their innovations ultimately can be scaled and/or replicated elsewhere. How do they contribute to a better understanding of what needs to happen for healthy co-existence?

We will also discuss actions to take in the case of GMO presence – what should farmers and companies do? What actions can brands take to keep to their organic cotton commitment, while getting to the root of the problem?

Further reading:
- RAFI-TE A Call to Action: Addressing the “Bigger Picture” of GMO Contamination and Other Challenges in the Organic Cotton Supply Chain.
- OCRT Seed & Soils Task Force webpage
Task Force 2: Business Models - Pricing And Trading Models, From Concept To Creation

Co-Chairs: Alison Ward, CEO, CottonConnect, UK
          Heinrich Schultz, Managing Director, OrganiMark South Africa | Chair, TE Europe

Thought-starters: Marco Baenninger, Head Trader, Reinhart, Switzerland
                 Laure Heilbron, Executive Director, Organic Cotton Accelerator, Netherlands
                 Subindu Garkhel, Cotton Manager, Fairtrade Foundation, UK
                 Rhett Godfrey, Co-founder and Coordinator of the Chetna Coalition (ChetCo), USA
                 Keith Tyrell, Director, Pesticide Action Network, UK
                 Andrea Bischof, Senior Advisor Sustainable Agriculture/ Organic Farming, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Meeting Outline:

The demand for organic cotton is growing every year but, at the same time, organic cotton is ending up in conventional supply chains because market linkages and production cycles have not connected. This mismatch can be due to the challenge of aligning harvest cycles with manufacturing and/or ensuring that small-scale organic cotton farmers in “harder to reach” regions have access to markets and systems to support timely and effective uptake of their harvest.

While there has been significant progress in identifying the weaknesses in the system, the pricing and trading model is a hard nut to crack and approaches are divided. In addition, farmers are leaving the countryside - particularly the young – this is not only a drain on rural resources but adds more pressure to urban infrastructure.

Initiatives such as Fair Trade have pricing and trade as key components of their Standard, while others leave it to the market. Meanwhile, there is more and more talk of "true cost" in production and broadening the bottom line of a product to include environmental and social accounting.

How can we apply the principles of Buddhist Economics (which we will hear about from Leo Johnson in his Keynote address), to our business model? What are practical and tangible approaches we can develop to ensure trade is fair, ensure finance and business rewards get to farmers, and renew young peoples interest in choosing agriculture as a career?

Further reading:

- TE Workshop Diary, Izmir 2016
- OCRT Business Models Task Force webpage
- Capitalisation of Experiences in Organic Cotton Projects in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Kyrgyzstan; 2002-2016 (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, 2016)
Task Force 3:
Consumer Engagement – Forging Alliance For Strategic Communication

Co-Chairs: Marci Zaroff, ECOfashion Pioneer | Founder, Under the Canopy
Bruno Van Steenberghe, Sourcing & Sustainability Consultant, GreenLama SPRL, Belgium

Discussion Leader: Bob Bejan, GM Communication Strategy, Microsoft, USA

Thought-starters: Rachel Cantu, VP Global Supply Chain, Patagonia, USA
Sabrina Müller, Manager Sustainable Assortments & Products Non Food, Tchibo, Germany
Isaac Nichelson, Chief Sustainability Officer, Hilaturas Ferre/Recover | Founder, Sustainable Source Studios, USA
Johan Graffner, TSHIRT STORE/ DEDICATED, Sweden
Anjali Schiavina, Founder, Mandala Apparels, India

Meeting Outline:

Engaging the consumer is one of three key priorities for collective action at the Organic Cotton Round Table.

How do we tell stories that engage our consumer? And are they farmer stories, company stories, consumer stories, some other story or a combination? How does your story fit in? This year we are privileged to have Bob Bejan (GM Communication Strategy for Microsoft) with us, and he will guide our discussion, reflecting on his experience of purposeful storytelling in many different contexts.

To inspire us and help build “our collective story”, we have a number of thought-starters (story tellers) from different brands with different histories, audiences, and customer experiences.

We have made great progress since the launch of the Consumer Engagement Task Force and are now the proud collective owners of a beautiful and informative microsite (aboutorganiccotton.org) in six languages (English, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin and Spanish). The objectives of the microsite are to provide reliable, vetted yet easily digestible information on organic cotton that supports our members' story telling and that the “everyday person” can easily understand. Our task force members helped us every step of the way – from developing the look and feel, to testing the user experience, to providing translations. Evonne Tan, TE’s Creatives Specialist, will take us on a quick tour of the site and call us to action on next steps to do with the site/social media.

However, most of the session will be dedicated to working with Bob Bejan on understanding our story and building out our “next steps” in consumer engagement, awareness raising, and cause-related marketing.

Further reading:

- aboutorganiccotton.org
- OCRT Consumer Engagement Task Force webpage
Many theories of innovation cite the need for an informal association of people who trust each other and understand each other’s business arrangements, sometimes called a “liquid network”. It seems that the organic cotton value chain provides just such a network.

The Innovation Lab is a celebration of new ideas in organic cotton. It aims to seek out groups or individuals with innovative solutions to break through barriers to growth and discover new ways for the organic cotton community to flourish - from producer to consumer. Launched in Mumbai in 2015 to great reception, the Innovation Lab returns this year with six inspiring and, of course, innovative finalists, ready to pitch their great ideas to our distinguished panel of judges (or “dragons” for anyone familiar with the TV show “Dragon’s Den”!)

TE has been accepting proposals to the Innovation Lab over the past couple of months and the six shortlisted finalists will have just 3 minutes each to pitch their ideas in Hamburg in competition for the OCRT Innovation Award 2016, which includes a cash prize of $3,000 to put towards the project or to donate to a favorite cause.

**CLOSING ADDRESS: 20 YEARS ORGANIC (17:30 - 18:00)**

This year marks Patagonia’s 20th year in organic cotton. TE would like to thank Patagonia for their leadership, and congratulate everyone there for all that they have done to raise awareness and prove that there is a different way to run a company. To end our day on a high, Rachel Cantu tells us the story of Patagonia’s journey to 100% organic cotton.

**Rachel Cantu, VP Global Supply Chain, Patagonia, USA**

At Patagonia, Rachel is in charge of leading efforts to source and develop innovative and more sustainable materials, while delivering quality products on time to market. Additionally, Rachel focuses on implanting environmental and social responsibility more and more deeply throughout Patagonia’s supply chain.
In 2012, after many years of steady growth, production of organic cotton began to decline - yet demand for organic cotton fiber continued to grow. In response to this mis-match, Textile Exchange declared a Call to Action and initiated the Organic Cotton Round Table (OCRT). The inaugural meeting of the OCRT was held in Hong Kong in 2012. A diagnosis of the reasons behind the drop in production – and much stakeholder enquiry – resulted in the OCRT arriving at three main areas of focus. Task forces for “Business Models”, “Seed & Soils”, and “Consumer Engagement” were created with small advisory groups working to develop strategies for action.

The annual meeting of the OCRT quickly became the platform for stakeholders to get together to hear more about issues facing the organic cotton sector, to diagnose these issues and, most importantly, find ways to take action. In 2015 in Mumbai, we launched the Innovation Lab and Award in collaboration with Change Agency; a celebration of new ideas in organic cotton. Each year interest has grown and, in Hamburg this year, we welcome around 200 people to the table.

Today the OCRT is recognized as a global movement that supports and brings together the organic cotton community and beyond to be inspired, mobilized, and equipped to act. There is still much to do to get to the next stage of transforming organic cotton supply chains into organic cotton communities. Our energy and enthusiasm for transforming the cotton sector combines with society’s recognition of the need for new ways of doing business to provide the ideal breeding ground for this transformation!

Join us to celebrate what’s been achieved to date and to discuss next steps in improving the availability of non-GM cotton seed.

TE & FiBL are jointly organizing an organic cotton Seed Summit to take place in Hamburg on 7th October 2016, with support from the Mercator Foundation Switzerland. The Summit is a continuation of the work of the OCRT’s Seed Task Force and the focus will be on building a resilient future for organic cotton. The Summit is open to anyone with an interest in the future of seed in a time of climate change, concerns for biodiversity and inequality in seed access.

Seeding & Breeding the Future of Organic Cotton

8:30am-5pm, Friday 7th October 2016, Grand Elysee Hotel, Hamburg

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SEED SUMMIT 2016

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MEET THE TEAM

La Rhea Pepper Managing Director, Textile Exchange, USA

Liesl Truscott Creative & Data Specialist, Textile Exchange, Malaysia

Evonne Tan Director, Textile Exchange, UK

Lisa Emberson Materials Platform Coordinator, Textile Exchange, UK

Simon Cooper Partner, Change Agency, UK

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Textile Exchange inspires and equips people to accelerate sustainable practices in the textile value chain. We focus on minimizing the harmful impacts and maximizing the positive effects of the global textile industry. Our signature program focuses on organic cotton value chains; improving lives for farmers, stimulating markets, and supporting best practice.

Website: www.TextileExchange.org
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