

A+FS Network Newsletter 06/2013

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Dear Agriculture & Food Security Network members

This issue compiled by Michael Hirsbrunner sets a focus on Vocational Skills and Rural Advisory Services. These two topics have been discussed at the Face-to-Face of the SDC Employment and Income Network, in cooperation with SDC's A+FS and Education Networks.

By the end of May, Marylaure Crettaz will leave her position as A+FS Network Focal Point and will start a new position as regional advisor in Nicaragua. Also Michael Hirsbrunner will end his internship at SDC. Felix Fellmann, who is today the Country Director of SDC's Cooperation Office in Mongolia, will take over as Network Focal Point in September 2013. From June to September Séverine Erismann will be the contact person for the network. We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in the network!

Marylaure Crettaz & Michael Hirsbrunner

Feature



Vocational Skills, Basic Education, RAS

At the E+I Face-to-Face in Thun (13-17 May 2013), the three SDC Networks Education, Employment & Income and Agriculture & Food Security took the chance to discuss how education and vocational skills can contribute to capacity building of Rural Advisory Services (RAS).

The aim of the joint meeting was to exchange the different perspectives of the three networks and to find out overlaps and possibilities for further collaboration in order to enhance synergies on programme and policy levels.

The exchange during the seminar has shown some difficulties, such as finding a common language. However, discussions have revealed the potential of achieving synergies by increasing collaboration between the three networks.

The three networks pursue a common goal: the empowerment of smallholder farmers and their service providers in view of improving livelihoods, income and food security. The exchange has allowed to identify promising programmes in particular in Benin as well as in Georgia that clearly combine VET, Education and RAS.

In a further step, the focal points of the three networks will elaborate a proposal for joint learning in their continuous collaboration.

[Building bridges between Basic Education, VET and Rural Advisory Services >>](#)

[VSD Field Visit: The Vocational Education System of Switzerland >>](#)

[Benin: Programme d'appui à la formation professionnelle agricole et artisanale >>](#)

More Information

For other topics discussed at the E+I F2F (Fragility and Systems Change, Natural Disaster Insurance for the Agricultural Sector, Results Measurement, M4P and Women's Economic Empowerment, M4P and Financial Sector Development):

[Face-to-Face Blog >>](#)

For the links between RAS and VET have a look at the corresponding chapter of a new GFRAS position paper:

[The "New Extensionist" >>](#)

For further background information see the recent World Bank publication:

[Agricultural Innovation Systems: An Investment Sourcebook >>](#)

(of special interest is Module 2 - Thematic Note 3: "Education and Training for Technician Development")



SFRAS Meeting - April 2013

The aim of this meeting was to prepare the Swiss Forum on Rural Advisory Services (SFRAS) contribution to the Annual Meeting of the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services in Berlin on 24-26 September 2013.

The SFRAS is an informal group of experts from Swiss development, research, education and private sector organisations, who are all involved in Rural Advisory Services in developing countries. The SFRAS enables peer-exchange of information

and ideas, dissemination of studies and publications and interaction with GFRAS, the Global Forum on Rural Advisory Services.

[Minutes of the meeting and more information on SFRAS >>](#)

[GFRAS Annual Meeting 2013 >>](#)



GIZ Symposium on RAS

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the GIZ Sector Project Sustainable Agriculture organised this symposium on Rural Advisory Services to:

1) discuss the current state of the art of sustainable modes of delivery for smallholder farmers in developing countries; 2) reveal the challenges for stakeholders working in the development cooperation sector; 3) discuss new challenges; and 4) evaluate which

new options can be integrated into the process and how this can be done.

[Documentation of the Symposium on Rural Advisory Services >>](#)



Follow-up: E-Discussion on RAS & M4P

At the F2F Meeting in 2012 of the SDC Agriculture and Food Security Network a joint session with the Employment and Income Network was held on RAS and Making Markets work for the Poor (M4P). The session was followed by an e-discussion between both networks that ended with a synthesis paper including some "guiding questions to be answered when planning a M4P / RAS intervention".

In order to better track how network activities can bring changes in members' operational activities, SDC commissioned a follow-up study. The synthesis paper presents how the e-discussion on RAS and M4P has influenced the work of network members.

[Synthesis paper of the joint e-discussion of the A+FS and e+i networks >>](#)

Focus Area: Land Governance



Land Governance Blog: Until 31 May

The A+FS Network invites everyone with an interest in questions of gender, land and food security to participate and share their ideas, activities and questions in the Blog. During the open discussion from 18 April to 31 May 2013, the following topics are treated: Right to Food, Food Crisis, Land Rights, Land Grabs, Governance and Buzzwords/Fuzzwords.

The last round of discussion from 24 to 31 May touches the subject "Are we there yet? – Gender between political engagement, buzzwords and fatigue"

[Land Governance Blog >>](#)



Global Land Forum in Guatemala

Markus Bürli represented the Global Programme Food Security at the Global Land Forum 2013 held on 23-24 April in Antigua, Guatemala (announced in our March Newsletter). It was marked by a big diversity of presentations from experts of the International Land Coalition (ILC) but also from other stakeholders on land governance. A wealth of international, regional and national experiences and research on land governance linked to food security and the rights of indigenous peoples was presented and discussed.

The SDC Cooperation Office in Managua co-financed the Global Land Forum.

[More on the Global Land Forum >>](#)

[Online public database on land deals \(coproduced by ILC\) >>](#)



World Bank on Access to Land

The World Bank issued a statement in the context of this year's Land and Poverty Conference in Washington DC. It reiterates the World Bank's concerns regarding rising interest in farm land, and outlines how the World Bank Group is scaling up the efforts on land-related issues.

Switzerland was represented by Christina Blank, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Swiss UN delegation in Rome and Reto Grüniger, Executive Director Officer of Switzerland at the World Bank.

[World Bank Group: Access to Land is Critical for the Poor >>](#)



Voluntary Guidelines Newsletter

The latest edition of the Newsletter of the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure Governance Initiative provides some highlights from the past year as well as the work expected in the near future.

[Newsletter - May 2013 >>](#)

Focus Area: Climate Change



Drought & disaster: building resilience

Yves Guinand, responsible for drought and desertification and degradation at GPFS, represented SDC at the High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy last March in Geneva. For a side event, SDC together with the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) prepared a video trailer with the following key messages:

(1) If people around the globe manage land in a sustainable way and share their experiences, resilience to climate change, drought and disaster can be built; (2) National drought policies must promote Sustainable Land Management to create greener land on our planet.

[WOCAT-Video: Drought and disaster >>](#)

[SDC's commitments to combating desertification >>](#)

[WOCAT Homepage >>](#)



SDC Micro Insurance Projects

At the A+FS Network F2F 2012 in Switzerland, the Agriculture and Food Security and the Employment and Income Network presented micro insurance projects supported by SDC. The projects' factsheets, power point presentations and links to websites are now online.

[Overview SDC Micro-Insurance Projects >>](#)

Focus Area: Postharvest Losses



Post-harvest Management Subgroup

At SDC's West Africa Rural Development and Food Security F2F meeting (Accra, April 2013), the Postharvest Management (PHM) Subgroup was launched.

The strategy for the PHM Subgroup for 2013-14 is: 1) to prepare conditions for postharvest scaling-up in Sub Saharan Africa; 2) to enhance the international profile of post-harvest work; and 3) to achieve better Post-harvest-knowledge transfer.

[Work plan 2013 of PHM subgroup >>](#)

[PHM subgroup workshop at the F2F in Ghana >>](#)



Report on Food Losses and Waste

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) requested the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) to undertake a study on 'Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems' to be presented to the Plenary in 2014. This report has to be policy oriented, practical and operational.

As part of this report's elaboration process, the HLPE launched an e-consultation in April. This e-consultation seeks views, public feedback and comments on the pertinence and interconnections of some key questions that the report proposes to address.

The feedback received will be used to finalize the terms of reference of the study and to prepare the study and policy recommendations.

[E-discussion on food losses and waste >>](#)



GDPRD Post-harvest Losses Library

In its library section, the Global Donor Platform on Rural Development (GDPRD) highlights research publications on the subject of post-harvest losses, collated by GIZ and SDC.

[Key publications >>](#)

[Research library >>](#)

Global Programme Food Security



GPFS initiatives in India & South Asia

According to the [Global Hunger Index](#), India's food security rating remains low. Considering its large and diverse population the potential to engage on an India-wide or individual state level can make not only a difference on the national scale, but also on the sub-regional and probably even on the global level.

This is why the Global Programme Food Security (GPFS) continues to build on the long-term science partnership between Switzerland and India related to [biotechnology](#).

A recent launch of a new phase, with a renewed joint advisory committee composed of Swiss and Indian experts from Science, Development and Extension shows that research results are moving towards the end-users. A [biofertiliser](#) developed by the project is now licensed to two Indian private sector companies that are ready to consider the commercialization and further development. The ultimate goal is to reduce chemical fertilizer input by applying biofertiliser that increases the access of nutrients to crops, hence increasing yield potential and net gain for farmers.

Further, after SDC's support to develop IFPRI's global [Food Security Portal](#) GPFS is considering an India chapter in three Indian States (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Bihar) to enhance a multi-stakeholder dialogue on food security.

Finally, GPFS has also given small support to the [Agricultural Extension in South Asia \(AES\)](#), to better link its advocacy base to the [Global Forum on Rural Advisory Services \(GFRAS\)](#).

The three distinct initiatives supported by GPFS bear the potential to contribute substantially to enhanced food security and improve the agricultural innovation system in the sub-continent.



African Farmers' Organisations

For many decades, SDC has recognised the importance of Farmers' Organisations (FOs) for rural poverty alleviation and to enhance food security. These organisations fulfil several important functions by representing their members in an effective manner, giving them a voice and means to influence policies and powerful stakeholders as well as by providing them with economic services. During the past years, African FOs have followed path with ongoing regional and continent-wide integration processes through the consolidation of the regional farmers' networks and the eventual creation of the

Pan-African Farmers' Organisation (PAFO) in 2010.

In March 2013, GPFS (Alexandre Ghélew and Manuel Flury) took part in the Support to Farmers' Organization in Africa Programme (SFOAP) Steering Committee and its start-up workshop in Addis Ababa. SFOAP helps African FOs to evolve into more stable, performing and accountable organizations that effectively represent their members and advise them on farming enterprises. The programme aims to further strengthen and consolidate the

institutional capacities of FOs and give them a greater say in agricultural policies and programmes.

The added value of SFOAP lies in various features: the programme is owned and steered by African Farmers' Organisations themselves; it is guided by the principle of subsidiarity and it ensures peer-to-peer learning (at national and regional levels) from concrete experiences through knowledge generation and sharing. Finally, SFOAP has a declared focus on women and youth, and special interventions are developed to promote their participation in the governance of FOs as well as in value chains.

SFOAP mainly targets country-level FOs (68 members), but also their five African Regional Farmers' Organisations (EAFF, PROPAC, ROPPA, SACAU, UMAGRI) and Pan African Farmers' Organisation (PAFO).

In the five-year main phase (2013-2017), SDC's financial contribution to SFOAP is CHF 2,5 Mio. Other financial supporters of SFOAP are the EU Commission, IFAD and the Agence française de développement (Afd).

[SFOAP >>](#)

[SFOAP Main Phase \(2013-2017\) >>](#)

[Pan African Farmers' Organisation \(PAFO\) >>](#)

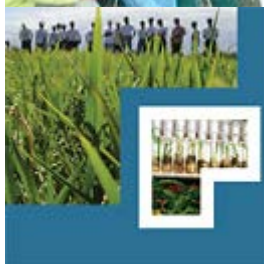
[Factsheet on Africa's five Regional Farmers' Organisations >>](#)



Agri-Info.net

The Agri-Info database created by Agricord, a network of agri-agencies, provides a worldwide overview over farmers' organisations (projects, programmes, institutions, people, countries involved).

[Agri-Info database >>](#)



SDC and Genetically Modified Crops

The GPFS recently reviewed the SDC's Guidelines on Green Biotechnology, prepared in 2007, in order to consolidate and refresh its position regarding genetically modified organisms (GMOs). As a result, GPFS elaborated a position paper which updates and complements the above-mentioned guidelines. An e-discussion was organised to help disseminate the briefing note and to generate feedback from network members.

[SDC Guidelines on Green Biotechnology >>](#)

[SDC and Genetically Modified Crops \(GPFS – At Work\) >>](#)

[Summary of E-Discussion on GMO >>](#)



EIARD Impact Studies

Please find below three impact studies related to sustainable agricultural methods. The studies have been produced by WRENmedia, funded by SDC and implemented by the European Initiative on Agriculture Research for Development (EIARD). These studies intend to share knowledge and promote more effective agricultural research for development policies.

[ICRAF EverGreen Agriculture](#)

EverGreen Agriculture - where trees are intercropped in annual food crop and livestock systems - is restoring exhausted soils with richer sources of organic nutrients, helping smallholders increase crop yields and incomes, and adapt to climate change.

Researchers from the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and national agricultural and forestry institutions in Africa have been evaluating and promoting the use of fertiliser trees and shrubs since the late 1980s. Results from Zambia and Malawi show now increased yields by using EverGreen agriculture. The success of EverGreen Agriculture has prompted national governments to deepen their support for the expansion of the practice.

[Video: Re-greening Africa's landscape >>](#)

[ICIPE - Linking insects to forest conservation](#)

Mwingi, in eastern Kenya, is an arid area, but for over 2,000 local people it is also a land of silk and honey. To stimulate forest communities to undertake management of forest buffer zones and reduce poverty, the insect research institute, icipe, introduced alternative sources of income generation through the development of silkmoth and honeybee technologies in Mwingi District, in Kenya.

[ICRISAT - Conservation agriculture and micro-dosing in Zimbabwe](#)

Over the last ten years, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) has been promoting conservation agriculture (CA). The number of smallholders practising some form of CA in Zimbabwe increased from 5,000 in 2005 to more than 150,000 in 2011, with cereal yields rising 15 to 100 per cent across different regions.

CA consists of three principles: minimum soil disturbance, legume-based cropping and use of organic mulch. This improves infiltration, reduces evaporation and soil erosion, and builds organic soil content. By adopting CA and micro-dosing practices, farmers in Zimbabwe have significantly improved household food security.

[All Impact Case Studies 2013 \(including multimedia versions\) >>](#)

Regional Issues



Social Reporting: F2F in Accra

Part of our Network-Team participated at SDC's West Africa Rural Development and Food Security F2F meeting in Accra. The presentations and discussions are summarised and uploaded on the blog.

The F2F addressed issues of pastoralism, post-harvest management, knowledge management, outcome reporting, and regional exchange of information.

[Blog of SDC's West Africa Rural Development and Food Security F2F meeting >>](#)



New SDC projects

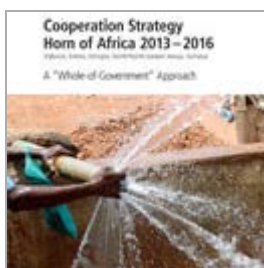
Katalyst

SDC co-finances the market development project Katalyst – an international flagship – since 2002 in order to contribute to increased income of poor people in Bangladesh through improved competitiveness of farmers and small businesses in key rural sectors. A final 4 year phase comprising CHF 32 million in collaboration with DFID and DANIDA is foreseen to ensure sustainability of systemic changes achieved so far and to firmly anchor the Katalyst experience within Bangladesh.

Food security in the Great Lakes Region - Nutrition

The program addresses malnutrition by piloting a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach of the four UN agencies UNICEF, WHO, WFP and FAO together with the two Governments of Rwanda and Burundi. The activities will take place in two districts of Rwanda (Nyamagabe and Rutsiro) and one province of Burundi (Ngozi) where food insecurity and poverty are at highest level. The focus is on the reduction of chronic malnutrition of children under five and pregnant and lactating mothers.

[Further SDC projects implemented after May 2012 >>](#)



New Swiss Cooperation Strategies

Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Mongolia 2013 - 2016

SDC in Mongolia has elaborated its new Cooperation Strategy to be implemented from 2013 to 2016. The development of the new strategy provided SDC with the opportunity to revise its main programme in the light of the nation's accelerated economic growth, which is largely fuelled by the mining boom and its rapidly evolving development context.

Swiss Cooperation Strategy for the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, North/North-Eastern Kenya and Somalia) 2013 - 2016

SDC (Regional Development in cooperation with Humanitarian Aid) runs a regional office for the Horn of Africa which is integrated into the Swiss Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. The SDC office is in charge of all development/humanitarian activities supported by the Swiss Government in the five countries that comprise the Horn: Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea. The main challenges the regional office is dealing with are the effects of recurrent extreme climatic events in the region, chronic poverty and the protracted conflict in Somalia.

Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Central America 2013 - 2017

SDC's Development Cooperation with Central America is focused on the following thematic priorities: promoting small enterprises; governance / public budget; and infrastructure / local public services. The SDC's Humanitarian Aid Department supports the countries in the area of risk reduction with respect to natural disasters. Furthermore, SECO is engaged in all of the above three priority thematic domains and, in addition, provides general budgetary assistance for Nicaragua's national finances (financial help and technical advice). SDC's average annual expenditure in Central America over the last few years comes to approximately CHF 23 million. Taking into

account SECO's contribution, some CHF 10 million can be added. SDC also provides programme contributions to Swiss relief agencies. Most of its support goes to Nicaragua and Honduras, the two main impoverished countries of the region, but it also backs up selected institutions and initiatives operating in several Central American countries.

Who is Who?

Some of the A+FS Network members are probably familiar to you, others are not.

In order to give a face to the names on the members list, every Newsletter shortly presents some of the A+FS Networkers:



Senait Regassa

is from Ethiopia and is based in the COOF in Addis Ababa. She has a PHD in Agricultural Economics and has worked as a researcher for more than 15 years. Part-timely, she has also taught courses on rural development in universities and has worked for Oxfam as a program coordinator before joining SDC.

She is responsible for the steering and supervision of a Post-harvest Losses project implemented by FAO in Ethiopia, as well as for an Agri-business and Regional Trade Integration project with East Africa Farmers' Federation.

Her expectation of the A+FS Network is to be a hub of knowledge and experiences gained in various parts of the world. Senait has benefited from the Rural Development workshop which was jointly organized by SDC Eastern and Southern African Division and the A+FS network from February 4-8, 2013 in Malawi. Senait also appreciates the learning from e-group discussions on specific themes such as M4P & RAS or on GMOs.



Robert Berlin

is a Swiss-educated agronomist and has more than 15 years of experience in supporting and advising partners on market development issues in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia. He has also experience in fostering links between the private sector and development organizations in various regions. He works as an "Agribusiness Manager" at the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, leading the Foundation's work in post-harvest agricultural value chains.

His expectations from the A+FS network is that it develops and leads the knowledge and learning management platform with the goal to link farmers to markets while pursuing the goals of food security, sustainability and income growth in agriculture. Additionally, he hopes that F2F meetings will offer excellent opportunities for networking.

[A+FS Network members list >>](#)

Further Information

SFIAR Award 2013 – Call for Applications

The Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research (SFIAR) offers an annual Award for scientists working for a Swiss institution in agricultural research for development. With this Award the SFIAR aims to: a) support relevant agricultural research for development (ARD), and b) promote knowledge on and visibility of Swiss ARD.

The SFIAR Award 2013 (prize sum: CHF 10'000.-) focuses on team projects. In addition the best Master thesis project will be awarded with CHF 1'000. The Deadline for applications will be July 5th, 2013. For details on scope, eligibility and application see the Award Guidelines on the SFIAR Website.

[SFIAR Award 2013 >>](#)

Outcome stories: CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food

Maximizing Rainwater and Nutrient Use in the Volta Basin

Using an integrated approach to water, nutrient and crop management, this research project optimized the use of inputs and improved crop production in semi-arid areas in the Volta basin. One of the major findings was the value of farmers' associations and community based organizations working as partners with researchers to bring about effective and lasting results.

Corralling: A Solution for Improving Livestock Productivity in Pasture Lands affected by Termites

Researchers from the Department of Animal Science in Makerere University were excited, and with good reason, as they surveyed pasture land that had been corralled off in Nakosongala in the cattle corridor of Uganda. The team had been looking at options to improve livestock water productivity in the Nile Basin. To their surprise, a carpet of solid vegetation now covered the expanse of land, affirming their Ethiopian colleague's suggestion that

corralling cattle every night over a two-week period would allow the desertified grassland to recover. This simple solution was a breakthrough on a problem that had eluded ecologists and put livestock keepers under scrutiny for their role in accelerating land degradation.

IFPRI 2012 Global Food Policy Report

In 2012 the world food system continued to be in a vulnerable position. As the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals approaches, progress on its first goal of having the proportion of people suffering from hunger is not on track. A number of countries made important and promising changes in food-related policies, and the global community made noteworthy commitments to strengthen aspects of food security, but these commitments must be translated into action.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) 2012 Global Food Policy Report reviews major food policy developments, looking at new sources of agricultural growth, the outcomes of Rio+20 and the progress towards sustainable food security, the move from attention to action on gender, the prospects for youth employment in agriculture in Africa, the evolution of the US and EU support for their farmers, and the drivers of future global food security. The Report assesses the key food policy developments that have contributed to or hindered progress in food and nutrition security.

[Overview of the Report >>](#)

[Full Report >>](#)

The Feminization of Farming

This article in The New York Times gives a summary of the recent report of Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, on the topic of "Feminization of Farming".

As millions, mostly men, are migrating from farms to cities in search of work, women are increasingly on the front lines of the fight to sustain family farms. However, pervasive discrimination, gender stereotypes and women's low social standing have hindered these women to rise out of poverty and hunger.

[The Feminization of Farming \(The New York Times\) >>](#)

Mastering PCM – tailor made learning platform now online

In this post SDC Quality Assurance and Aid Effectiveness presents the main features of the PCMi, an interactive platform for self-directed learning. This platform provides further informative reading and interactive materials. Find also first-user statements that will convince you to take the plunge.

[Project Cycle Management Interactive >>](#)

AFAAS Agricultural Extension Week 2013

The AFAAS Agricultural Extension Week (5-10 August 2013, Gaborone, Botswana) will feature the topic "Value Chain Approach in Agricultural Development: Coping with new demands for Agricultural Advisory Services". The objectives of the Agricultural Extension Week are: 1.) Raising the profile of agricultural extension at the national, regional and continental level and make a mark in Botswana; 2.) Coming together, networking, sharing, building consortia and capacitating extension participants; 3.) Taking stock and highlighting AFAAS achievements since the 2011 General Assembly and identification of future actions; 4.) Reflection and development of strategies on how to take forward extension differently; and 5.) Integrating different aspect of extension and identification of emerging as well as new issues.

[AFAAS Agricultural Extension Week 2013 \(concept note\) >>](#)

New Book on Pastoralism and Development in Africa

The book gives a view of 'development at the margins' in the pastoral areas of the Horn of Africa. Edited by Andy Catley, Jeremy Lind and Ian Scoones, "Pastoralism and Development In Africa" highlights innovation and entrepreneurialism, cooperation, networking and diverse approaches which are rarely in line with standard development prescriptions.

[Pastoralism and Development in Africa >>](#)