

Newsletter A+FS and e+i|EPS / September 2019

The A+FS Network publishes its Newsletter together with the Employment and Income Network and the Competence Center for the Engagement with the Private Sector (EPS). Please select your area of interest: [Agriculture and Food Security](#) | [Vocational Skills Development](#) / [Private Sector Development](#) / [Financial Sector Development](#) / [EPS](#)

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A+FS Network: More decentralized, more relevant!



A survey among members and further consultation within SDC shows two things: 1) The A+FS Network improves the individual work of its members. However, they currently learn mainly by reading Shareweb-posts or attending thematic webinars; 2) Interactive events will only produce tangible added-value to SDC interventions if they focus on regional or country specific challenges.

Based on this feedback the Network Focal Point team and Core Group have developed a decentralization strategy and have decided to offer the following elements on the Shareweb:

- **tailor-made support** to national program officers all along the PCM cycle
- **e-workshops** where participants are asked to make an online-exercise (first one planned on Climate Resilient Agriculture)
- **peer coaching** between NPOs of different countries
- **participatory content generation** for identified topics of interest (on Shareweb)
- **map of SDC A+FS projects to promote regional exchanges**

Also, the focal point team is thinking of organizing a global F2F Meeting in 2020. What topics shall be discussed there? Send your feedback to: melanie.surchat@eda.admin.ch

[Read more on the Network's new decentralization strategy](#)

Farmer managed seed systems in Latin America



[by Judith Reusser, SWISSAID]

While seed diversity is declining and the monopolization of the seed market is increasing worldwide, farmers in Colombia and Nicaragua are succeeding in preserving and promoting their indigenous seeds. The SWISSAID supported campaign "Semillas de Identidad" boosts agroecological farmer led seed production, sets up community seed banks and helps farmers to breed new varieties ... [\[read more\]](#)

How regeneration focused farming reduces migration



[by World Vision Australia]

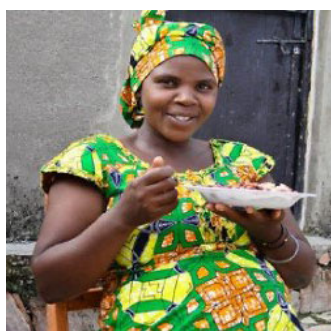
Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) contributes to reducing irregular migration. A beneficiary testifies: "As a young man, I went to Saudi Arabia for work as I saw no future here, today this is like Saudi Arabia to me ... my kids and I will not leave this valley again. We all do well here, so we can stay" ... [\[read more\]](#)

Key issues of global food systems



In order to face complex challenges like the growing world population, urbanization or climate change, many transitions need to occur, especially across production systems and food value-chains. Both incremental transitions at small scales and structural changes to institutions and norms need to take place in a coordinated way. Three recent expert reports by OECD and FAO address these issues from different perspectives ... [\[read more\]](#)

Biofortification against hidden hunger



As presented in a Brown Bag Lunch at SDC-Headquarters by HarvestPlus, one way hidden hunger displays itself is in the fact that one in four children are physically or cognitively stunted due to poor nutrition. Climate change poses an additional threat, as plants are likely to lose nutritional value. Biofortification has been identified as a cost-effective sustainable solution. The Copenhagen Consensus is estimating that \$1 of investment in biofortification yields \$17 of benefit... [\[read more\]](#)

Seed is Life – a call for action



For countless generations African farmers have been adapting seeds to the specific needs of their environment and culture. Recently farmer's rights to save, exchange and plant seeds are threatened by claims of intellectual property and harsh policy decisions. This 3 min film, that was launched at a UN FAO meeting on the International Seed Treaty, explains the issue and calls for action. As proven to be successful in the **Americas**, Farmer Managed Seed System are proposed as one of the key actions... [\[read more\]](#)

Events | [Your comments](#) 

A caravan for food security is touring Africa Une caravane pour la sécurité alimentaire traverse l'Afrique



ENGLISH: The Food System Caravan is a digital and media caravan which brings the main messages of r4d Food Security research projects to diverse institutions and the general public. The caravan will be travelling for 8 weeks (from 23 Sept to 6 Nov 2019) in five West African countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin and Nigeria). The trip will enable a collaborative learning journey for researchers and their partners... [\[read more\]](#)

FRANÇAIS : La caravane du système alimentaire est une caravane numérique et multimédia itinérante qui transmet les principaux messages concernant des projets de recherche (r4d) sur la sécurité alimentaire à diverses institutions et au grand public, pendant les 8 semaines que va durer son périple. Du 23 septembre au 6 novembre 2019, elle traversera cinq pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest (Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Bénin et Nigéria). Ce parcours permettra un apprentissage collaboratif entre les chercheurs et leurs partenaires... [\[en savoir plus\]](#)

Conference to mark World Food Day 2019 Tagung zum Welternährungstag 2019



ENGLISH: Loss of biodiversity, soil fertility and climate change have drastic consequences in the North and the South. There are some issues with the so-called «modern» farming systems. This day opens the opportunity to discuss how agroecology can offer solutions on a governmental, organizational and personal level. The conference will be hosted in German and French in Zollikofen, Switzerland on Wednesday 16.10.2019... [\[read more\]](#)

DEUTSCH: Artenschwund, Verlust von Bodenfruchtbarkeit und Klimawandel mit dramatischen Folgen im Norden und im Süden: Im sogenannt «modernem» Agrarsystem ist der Wurm drin. Der Welternährungstag bietet Gelegenheit, über Lösungsmodelle zu diskutieren, die die Agrarökologie bietet; für Regierungen, Organisationen und jeden einzelnen von uns. Die deutsch- und französischsprachige Tagung findet in Zollikofen in der Schweiz am Mittwoch 16.10.2019 statt... [\[weitere Infos\]](#)



Carmen Thönnissen
Deputy Head – Global Program Food Security, SDC

What do you love about your work, what is special about it?

I am fascinated by the creativity needed to move to sustainable and inclusive food systems. Among the many innovations proposed, it is essential to find those that will drive the transition to more sustainable systems. Joining forces to tackle these challenges without losing sight of the big picture is critical.

Who is your personal hero?

My personal hero is Nelson Mandela and his quote 'you're the master of your destiny' is a great inspiration for me.

What is the most important lesson you have learned from your work?

'The world is a complex, interconnected, finite, ecological-social-psychological-economic system. We treat it as if it were not, as if it were divisible, separable, simple and infinite. Our persistent, intractable global problems result directly from this mismatch.' (Meadows 2010)
The sooner we acknowledge what that means, and learn how to navigate and operate systemically in this messy system, the sooner we'll be able to find solutions that actually help us move forward.

Carmen studied agricultural sciences at ETH Zurich and worked at the World Vegetable Research Institute in Taiwan and at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines. At the SDC, Carmen has been involved in many programs in priority regions (Indonesia, Bhutan, Mongolia and South Africa) and priority themes in natural resource management, food security and agricultural research. She recently joined the Global Program Food Security (GPFS) as Deputy Head and will manage the Swiss contribution to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Your Comments

Leave your comments on specific articles or on this newsletter in general! 
(only for logged-in members)