
SFRAS Meeting – minutes

YOUTH AND RAS

October 26th, 2017, 09:15 – 12:15

Host: Berner Fachhochschule Hochschule für Agrar-, Forst- und
Lebensmittelwissenschaften HAFL
Länggasse 85, 3052 Zollikofen
[Map](#) and [plan of the building](#)

Time: 26. October 2017; 9.15am - 12.15am

Minutes and facilitation of the meeting: Stefanie Kaegi, Helvetas

a) Agenda

9.15	Opening & Welcome	Stefanie Kaegi and Johannes Brunner (HAFL)
9.20	Introduction of Ueli Mauderli, SDC, successor of Felix Fellmann	Ueli Mauderli, Policy Advisor Agriculture and Food Security, Network Focal Point, SDC
9.25	Youth and RAS – insights from the GFRAS annual meeting	Speaker: Natalie Ernst, GFRAS
9.40	Q&A	Moderation: Stefanie
9.45	Set up market place	
9.50	Market place on how to include youth in RAS, and how to address youth through RAS	Contribution of SFRAS members
10.50	Coffee break	
11.05	Experiences from HAFL on youth inclusion in RAS in Switzerland and Madagascar	Speakers: Dr. Bruno Häller, Lecturer for Extension Methods, Sebastian Mengel, Master student, HAFL
11.35	Discussion – synthesizing of key learning	Moderation: Stefanie
12.00	News from members / planning of next meeting <i>Please report about recent or forthcoming events, publications, projects, initiatives related to RAS</i>	All
12.15	Closing	Stefanie

b) Insights from GFRAS annual meeting

Natalie Ernst, Programme Officer, GFRAS shared the key messages regarding youth and RAS from the GFRAS annual meeting 2017 that was on the topic *Rural Advisory Services and empowered youth for balanced transformation in rural and urban communities*. Key messages include:

- Youth is not just youth, but a highly diversified group of people depending on agricultural, family, educational, urban/rural background
- In order to reach out to young people and raise their interest for agricultural processes Natalie E. proposed the following messages:
 - All actors (processors, RAS providers, research, policy makers) can link youth to agriculture, not only production
 - Addressing youth should be combined with analyzing and addressing family related processes
 - Don't think about youth based on a defined age. In particular start addressing youth already in early school.
 - Speak the right language by applying a "youth reaches youth" approach
 - Also think about how to include youth in policy making processes to create a more enabling environment for youth engagement, e.g. through mentorship programmes, policy awareness raising through ICT
 - Shift to Agricolture

Natalie closed the session with the key question for youth inclusion:
Are we really ready to include young people into all relevant processes?

Please download the presentation [here](#).

Q&A:

Q: Ernst Bolliger: What efforts have been made to define youth?

A: Natalie Ernst: Definitions have been discussed: Key question is whether the definition should base on attitudes of young people (creativity, openness, flexibility etc) or age.

Anna Crole-Rees: There is an important distinction between youth representation (e.g. in working groups) and mainstreaming of youth inclusion, which is the higher goal.

Ueli Ryser: It is not so much about young and old, but about the way of working. So a first step is change organizational structures to render an organization attractive.

Natalie Ernst: This discussion is currently going on in GFRAS, all around the question how to mainstream youth inclusion.

Angela Deppeler: The question we should focus on is how to create opportunities for youth to make use of the creativity (knowledge and experiences) that they have.

c) Market place – synthesised messages

The objective of the market place was to share views, experiences and learning of youth inclusion in RAS processes among organisations and institutions.

The following participants/institutions presented a poster:

- **GFRAS – Natalie Ernst**
- **Syngenta – Marnie Pannatier**
- **Bio Vision – Shruti Patel**
- **Agridea – Peter Bucher**
- **SDC – Ueli Mauderli**
- **Swisscontact – Christina Gruenefeld**
- **Helvetas – Stefanie Kaegi**

The comprehensive presentations of the posters and discussions around it were highly engaged. It goes too far to summarize the full discussion here, however, key discussion points include the following:

- How youth is understood / defined in the presented project
- How sustainability of the intervention is ensured?
- What are the level of interventions and the level of youth inclusion?
- How to go about the fact that agricultural production (not processing and further trading) has a bad image among an important share of the young rural populations.

See all posters in Annex 1.

d) Experiences from HAFL on youth inclusion in RAS

Bruno Häller comprehensively presented the role and contribution of HAFL in teaching and further education on extension and advisory methods. Key messages include: It's an important achievement that this has become a research topic at the university for applied science only few years ago. Tracer studies show that more and more people start doing advisory work without being formed as advisors, however, with growing experiences they realise that there is need for further education on advisor skills. Therefore, in particular for young people the combination of farming education and advisor education is attractive and leads to a successful dive into professional life: After four months, 100% of the HAFL students (in this subject) get a job. Getting a job, not only in Switzerland, is a key motivation to start working in one or the other area.

Q&A and comments

Comment: Anna Crole-Rees: It is very important that the Swiss RAS providers are represented strongly in the SFRAS that is their forum to advocate for RAS. (Referring to the presentation) why is the number of advisors decreasing?

A: Bruno Häller: The number of interested people is decreasing because the relevance of agriculture in general is decreasing. The answer from HAFL is to shorten the trainings, to render it best fitting to the needs.

A: Agridea experiences a similar decrease of interest in agriculture advisory and moderation training, possibly due to the general decreasing relevance of agriculture in Switzerland. Agridea' lessons include:

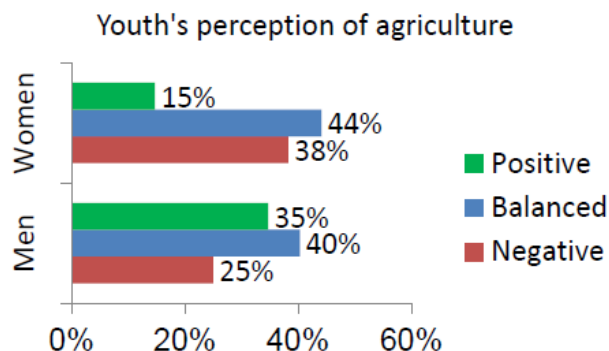
- Offer short sequences of trainings on one topic only
- Strengthen blended learning -> try to include moderation skills in other training modules
- Experience exchange is demanded and has potential for scaling up

Please download the presentation [here](#).

Sebastian Mengel presented his Master Thesis on "Agricultural livelihoods of rural youth in the drylands of Midelt, Morocco: An assessment of realities, viewpoints, challenges, opportunities and aspirations" that was awarded by SFIAR. The research target was to "Better understand the livelihoods, choices and decisions of farming youth in the study area "and to identify options and opportunities in the agricultural sector Based on the current situation.

Sebastian outlined the realities and viewpoints of youth in the covered area as follows:

- “Most youth and families own little land and livestock
- Working at the family farm (apple, fruit, vegetables, grain) is the most important livelihood priority, but livestock keeping and farm labor are important too
- Very little value addition in agriculture
- Low financial viability of agricultural work
- Youth (particularly female) have little decision making capacity at household and personal level
- Mixed views about agriculture under given conditions
- Migration is often not a first choice but remains an option for many youth
- The use of modern (information and communication) technology (not only by youth) is very limited
- Very few or dysfunctional associations and cooperatives (formal interest groups) in the villages “



Eventually, he offered an impressive summary of young men’s and women’s aspirations for their future:

Young Men



Young women



Sebastian Mengel’s conclusions and recommendations include:

- “While rural-urban migration was found to be controversial, many youth expressed strong ties to their villages and stated they would like to continue farming in their villages under better conditions
- Youth require better access to education, land, financing schemes, agricultural training and mentorship programs
- Sound, functional formal interest groups (associations, cooperatives) must be established in the communities, social action research is recommended to support youth in formally organizing themselves
- While many youths would like to continue farming, it needs to be taken into consideration that they wish for their children to achieve a high education and quit agriculture in search of better opportunities

- Further research is recommended to analyze the potential of farming and agricultural post-harvest value addition
- The use of modern (information and communication) technology (not only by youth) is very limited
- Very few or dysfunctional associations and cooperatives (formal interest groups) in the villages“
(See: https://sfiar.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/award_2017_mengel_poster.pdf)

Please download the presentation [here](#).

e) News from members

Sarah Mader, Swissaid:

- Swissaid revised its global strategy: Swissaid's focus on ecological farming and farmer-led RAS will continue. There is a potential to intensify the work on youth in agriculture.
- Topic suggestion: Continue and deepen the discussion on youth

Johannes Brunner, HAFL: HAFL will revise the advisory guide for Switzerland.

Peter Bucher, Agridea:

- Kenya starts introducing public extension for livestock into the national extension strategy
- Spain, Calizia, re-introduces public extension service provision
- Agridea supports the process with courses on how to analyse the RAS system in which a project/government/actor is embedded and provides services for those offering the services as well as for those coordinating it.

Ueli Mauderli, SDC:

- The SDC share web page will be revised, while keeping the SFRAS section. SFRAS members are invited to share relevant documents to be shared on the revised webpage.

Shruti Patel, Biovision: Topic suggestion: How to use RAS for impact assessments and monitoring

Monique Frey, Caritas: Topic suggestion: How to integrate FFS in RAS systems in connect them with new knowledge and innovation

Marnie Pannatier, Syngenta Foundation: Topic suggestion: PPP for RAS

Natalie Ernst, GFRAS:

- The new extensionists learning kit is now available online: <http://www.g-fras.org/en/knowledge/new-extensionist-learning-kit-nelk.html>
- Next GFRAS Annual Meeting in South Korea, date and topic will be published in 2018
- GFRAS is creating a youth working group: Anybody that is interested to join is welcome to address Natalie Ernst directly: natalie.ernst@g-fras.org
- GFRAS has established a new Eastern Asian GFRAS Network

Anna Crole-Rees: CRC4change

- At the GFRAS annual meeting EUFRAS has decided that in 2018 at least four persons from EUFRAS will/shall participate. It is up to SFRAS to coordinate the Swiss representation.
- Topic suggestion: Policy note of SFRAS for Swiss policy dialogue but also to position ourselves at GFRAS

Agridea Team (Angela Deppeler, Peter Bucher, Ueli Ryser):

- Negotiations with BFL: Stable contract for 2020/21
- Continuity of GFRAS collaboration: GFRAS will be hosted at Agridea until 2021
- Blended learning: Agridea initiated a webinar on postharvest management and adoption of postharvest practices
- Angela Deppeler will participate in the extension week of AFAAS in Durban
- Angela Deppeler has published an article on postharvest management on the A&FS Network. https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Agriculture-and-Food-Security/news/Documents/2017_09_20_article_pleines_deppeler.pdf

Stefanie Kägi, Helvetas


- Publication of the capitalisation study on organic cotton experiences of Helvetas, written by Stefanie Kägi, Andrea Bischof and Rudolf Lüthi. www.helvetas.org/organic-cotton-experiences_2017
- Article in Rural 21 on organic cotton experiences: http://www.rural21.com/english/keyword/c/rural_development/
- Strengthened efforts of Laos Upland Rural Advisory Services Project (LURAS) to reach out to young people via AGREE: <https://www.slideshare.net/APBartlett/agree-promoting-agricultural-entrepreneurship>

f) Participants

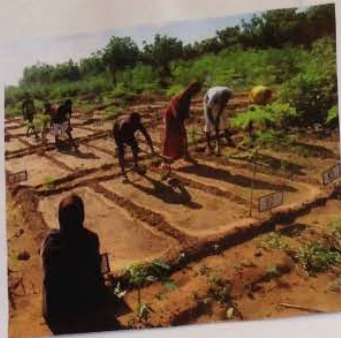


1	Ryser	Ueli	Agridea
2	Frey	Monique	Caritas Switzerland
3	Mader	Sarah	Swissaid
4	Patel	Shruti	BioVision
5	Kägi	Stefanie	HELVETAS
6	Mauderli	Ueli	SDC
7	Bucher	Peter	Agridea
8	Deppeler	Angela	Agridea
9	Brunner	Johannes	bfh
10	Jenner	Wade	Cabi
11	Pleines	Thierry	Agridea
12	Pannatier	Marnie	Syngenta Foundation
13	Ernst	Natalie	G-fras
14	Otto	Caroline	Syngenta Foundation
15	Filippo	Buzzini	Agridea
16	Häller	Bruno	HAFL
17	Mengel	Sebastian	HAFL
18	Crole-Rees	Anna	CRC4change
19	Grünwald	Christina	Swisscontact
20	Waldmeier	Erich	Indep. Consultant
21	Bolliger	Ernst	Indep. Consultant

ANNEX 1: POSTERS

Poster Swisscontact



SIFA
Site Intégré de
Formation Agricole

✓ **Background.**


- Seasonal agricultural production
- High (seasonal) food insecurity
- Low school enrolment rate and high drop-out rate,
- Underoccupation of youth and lack of perspectives
- Increasing (seasonal) migration

✓ **Goal.**

Enable young people for a rapid implementation of new and diversified agro-sylvo-pastoral activities on the family farm to achieve **sufficient production or income to ensure their families' food security** and to transform the production system from seasonal to annual production.

✓ **Target Group**

- Rural young people aged 14 to 30 years with no/limited school education
- with family farm or land available for own production



✓ **Relevance for Youth**

- High relevance of agriculture for food security and family livelihood
- Offers an alternative to (seasonal) migration and allows for year-round productive activity
- Young people are motivated by concrete examples of success
- Gain in social status and transformation of the «image» of a farmer
- A waiting list of about 150 young people at each SIFA attests to the popularity of this training.

✓ **SIFA – The Training and Production Site**

- A Integrated Agricultural Training Site (5-20ha), located directly in a cultivable or exploitable environment, on which initial training courses in the field of agro/sylvo/pastoralism are organized
- **Family Farming:** based on the image of a diversified, sustainable and environmentally friendly family business
- **Diversification:** the various agro-ecological potentials specific to the local context are highlighted and tested
- **Agroecology** is th basis for the theoretical and practical trainings
- Dynamic and constantly under construction
- Duration : 8 months, 4 months training in the SIFA and 4 months supervised practical application on the family farm

✓ **Organisation Model / Stakeholders**

- **Community :** The SIFA is led by the Community, which provides the land for the training site
- **Management Committee :** composed of a representative of the Community, parents of the trainees, the traditional chieftaincy and Farmer Organisations.
- **Trainers :** Main trainers are extension agents recruited by Swisscontact in consultation with Ministry of Vocational Training and local co-trainers are appointed by the Fos (Training of Trainers)
- **Curricula :** are developed by the RECA (Consular Chamber of Agriculture) and the Ministry of Public Administration with the support of Swisscontact.
- **Financing :** Training is paid for by FOPROR, from 2019 onwards will be provided by FAFPA (National Facility for Public Service Financing)
- **Innovations** are promoted by FOs and regional chambers of agriculture and research (INRAN, University). Market studies are conducted locally.

✓ **Results 2013-2016**

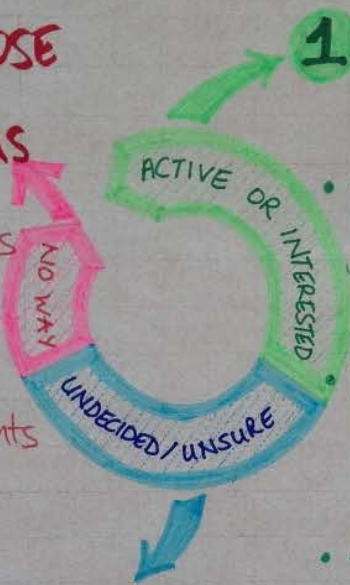
- 3234 young people trained (1642 young women) in 12 SIFAS
- up to 300% production increase (e.g. onion)
- introduction of off-season vegetables
- commercialisation of ognion and vegetables

Poster Biovision

HOW DOES BIOVISION ENGAGE KENYAN YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE?

3 ENGAGE THOSE WITH -VE PERCEPTIONS

- Provide platforms for debate and exchange
- Challenge parents and teachers



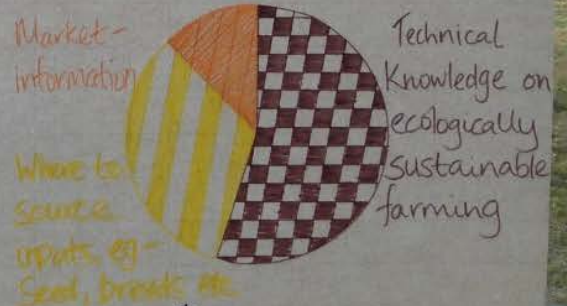
1 SUPPORT THOSE WITH A +VE ATTITUDE

- Training and facilitation of group registration for access to credit + markets
- Development + provision of educational material for universities + colleges
- Training on farm planning and management
- Organisation of exchange visits to agripreneurs and farms
- Dissemination of relevant information

2 INFLUENCE THOSE WHO ARE UNDECIDED

- Set up demonstrations in schools, sensitise teachers
- Promote use of 10f magazine as a practical teaching tool
- Seek out and publicise success stories

WHAT INFORMATION DO * YOUNG KENYANS NEED?



KEY CHALLENGES

- Access to land + inputs
- Unreliable infrastructure
- Short-sightedness / mismatch of expectations



Poster Syngenta





Agri-Entrepreneur Model in India



Solution for the Last Mile Delivery

- Selection and training of local rural youth to become Agri-Entrepreneurs (AE)
- AE acts as a "one stop solution" and works with 150-250 smallholders
- AE provides agricultural services:

Crop advisory



Farm inputs sales



Market linkages



Credit facilitation



Agri-Entrepreneur Technology Platform



Making of an Agri-Entrepreneur

Selection

Training

Launch

Mentoring & Farmer Engagement

Connecting to Agribusiness

Impact Assessment

Results so far

Paddy productivity for associated farmers increased by 27% over non-associated farmers in 2016.

Productivity for most vegetables was higher for associated farmers thanks to availability of irrigation and improved knowledge of good agricultural practices.



In 2016, net income per acre for paddy cultivation was 53% higher for smallholders associated with AE than for those who were not.



Key Lessons during the Pilot Phase

Scalability is key

- > 230 AEs serving > 32,000 farmers
- Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh
- SOPs developed for the entire AE model
- Technology is pivotal for scale

Screening & selection of AEs are critical

- Mobilization of right rural youth
- Identifying "DNA of entrepreneurship"
- Assessing their commitment

Credit is a game changer

- Simplified processes for credit facilitation
- Interest rate is not a differentiator
- Credit drives AE business and makes AE sustainable
- Need for multiple players

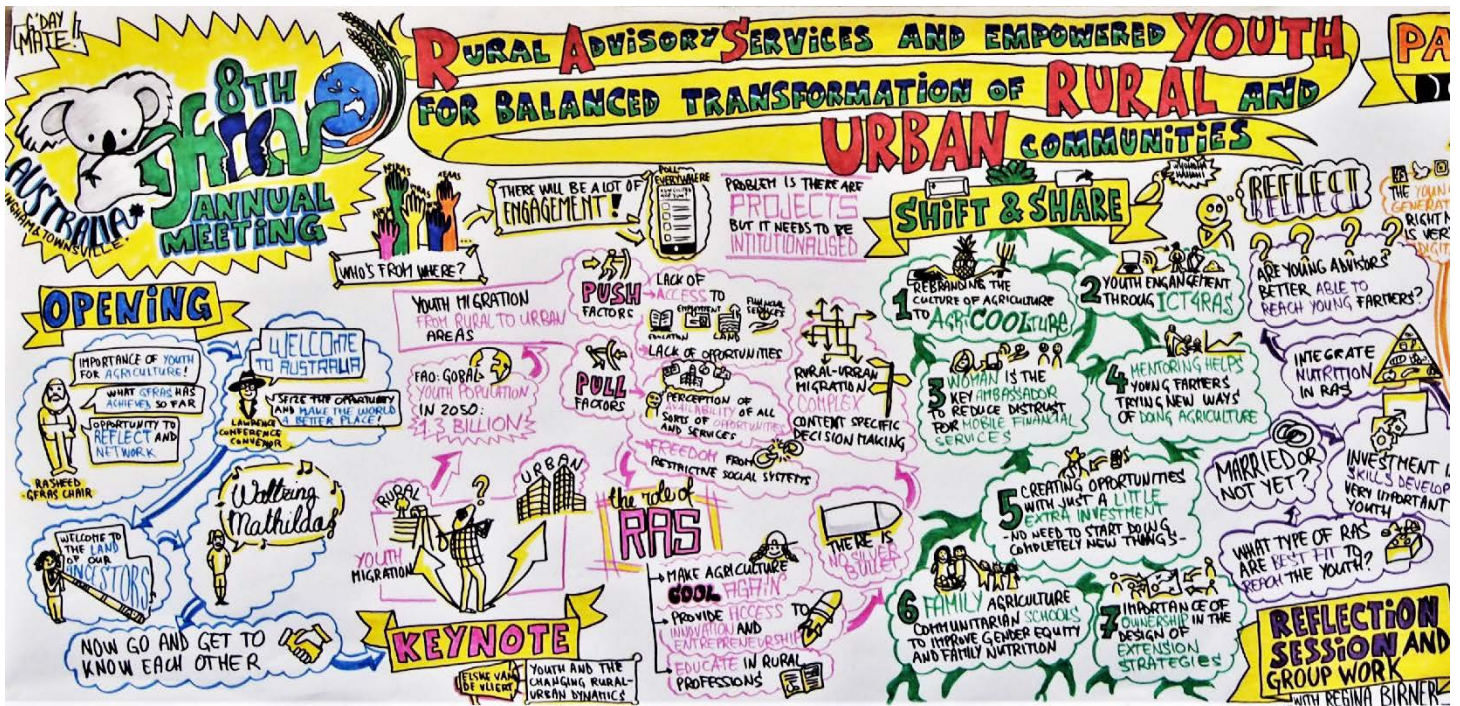
Market players are strong partners

- Develop partnerships with agribusinesses
- Need to align with procurement companies
- Build strong links with financial institution

SYNGENTA FOUNDATION INDIA

www.syngentafoundation.org

Poster GFRAS



Poster HELVETAS



The Next Generation of Farmers in Laos



Lao Upland Rural Advisory Service Project of HELVETAS supported by SDC

One million young people in Laos (15-24y) live in rural areas

- > What is the future for this important section of society?
- > And what advisory services do they need?

Three scenarios



Which scenario is most likely to happen?

Aspirations of rural parents*

- Parents do **not** want their children to continue in farming because
 - farming is considered hard and dirty work, with uncertain returns
 - Farmers have a low social status and few opportunities for advancement
- Parents want their children to get an education, leading to a **non-farm job**

*Results of focus group discussions and a study of students at Agricultural college

Aspirations of rural youth*

- Most of them want to work for the Government, rather than returning to their village
- Aspiration for a 'better life' leads to paid employment rather than unpaid labour on the family farm.
- The search for a cash income may involve migration to urban areas but equally important is paid labour in the agric. sector
- Often, one will stay with the parents while others leave.



Three ways to empower rural youth

If the sector has an image problem....

we need to identify new role models and success cases, and develop advocacy strategies that make farming more appealing.

If the problem is more practical and young people want to escape drudgery, earn cash and get access to the products of a modern life...

we need to pay more attention to rural job creation and enterprise development.

If rural youth also wants greater independence, self-respect and a chance to do something different...

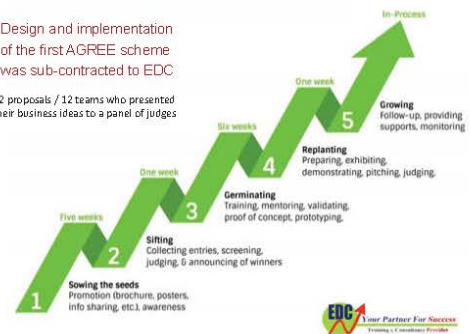
we need more initiatives that are planned and managed by rural youth themselves.

AGREE = Agripreneurs for Green Rural Enterprises and Economy

A collaboration of SURAFCO and LURAS a VET and RAS project

Design and implementation of the first AGREE scheme was sub-contracted to EDC

52 proposals / 12 teams who presented their business ideas to a panel of judges



Project examples



... out-of-season limes, frozen frogs legs, vermi-compost, ornamental plants, egg trays made from recycled paper...



... and further support for the new agripreneurs by LURAS

-> See also Study on Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education on Training (ATVET) in Developing Countries

Poster SDC

