



SOR4D conference 2026
Advancing Transdisciplinary
Research for Global Development

Bern, Switzerland

Conference booklet

31.08.2026 – 01.09.2026

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**Solution-oriented
Research for Development
Programme**



**Swiss National
Science Foundation**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**

Day 1 | Monday 31.08.2026

Keynote Speeches | 13:15–14:25

Are equitable partnerships enough?

Dr. Joanna Kane-Potaka, Executive Secretary of the Global Forum on Agricultural Innovation and Research (GFAiR)

Abstract: Equitable partnerships are increasingly recognised as essential to effective research for development (R4D), yet progress in translating principles into practice remains slow. This keynote explores whether equitable partnership principles alone are sufficient and examines what additional changes are needed to strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability and impact of R4D. Despite growing commitment to equity, fragmented efforts, unequal power dynamics, limited local leadership and insufficient alignment with national priorities continue to constrain research uptake and impact. Addressing these challenges requires more than producing new knowledge; it calls for rethinking how partnerships are formed, priorities are set and resources are allocated. The keynote highlights the importance of stronger advocacy, practical approaches that translate principles into action, robust evidence on the value of equitable partnerships, and meaningful indicators to track progress. It argues that researchers alone cannot drive systemic change. Governments, national institutions, research organisations, partners and funders must work together to create R4D systems that are more equitable, responsive and impactful.

Research in the Age of Polycrisis: Systems Thinking, Uncomfortable Allies, and the Right Politics

Chandra Bhushan, President & CEO, International Forum for Environment, Sustainability & Technology (iFOREST)

Abstract: Many failures of research and policy are not failures of knowledge but of framing. Too often, we address a single problem while leaving the wider system that created it unchanged. In an age of interconnected crises, including climate change, inequality, pandemics, conflict and technological disruption, such approaches are no longer sufficient. This keynote argues for a new standard for research that matters. First, solutions should be assessed against wholesystem impacts, including planetary boundaries, resource use, affordability, accessibility and human dignity. Second, foresight should be recognised as a research responsibility, requiring consideration of how discoveries and innovations may reshape societies and ecosystems. Third, meaningful transformation demands engagement beyond like-minded circles. Addressing complex challenges requires dialogue across differences and active involvement in shaping the rules, institutions and incentives that enable sustainable and dignified lives. Drawing on personal experience, global environmental agreements and emerging technologies, the keynote challenges the research community to move beyond producing correct answers towards redesigning the systems that generate persistent problems.

PS 1 **Paper Session | 14:30–16:00**

Digital Services for Rural and Urban Development

ID 75 What Works in Digital Agricultural Extension Services? Cross-Country Experimental Evidence on Delivery Models

Kibrom Sibhatu, icipe, Kenya

Co-Presenters:

- **Charles Maina Mbogo**, International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, Nairobi, Kenya
- **Sarita Mishra**, Grameen Foundation India and Sri Sri University, Cuttack Odisha, India
- **Nicole Harari**, University of Bern, Switzerland
- **Maurice Tschopp**, University of Bern, Switzerland
- **Menale Kassie**, International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract: Smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia face mounting challenges from climate change, low productivity, and limited access to tailored agricultural advice. Traditional extension systems are under-resourced and often exclude women and youth. Despite the proliferation of digital advisory services (DAS) to address these gaps, evidence on which delivery models drive sustainable practice adoption remains scarce. We address this through parallel cluster-randomized trials and using an DAS app in India (n=1,738) and Uganda (n=1,884), testing three DAS models from 2023 to 2025: Self-service (farmers use app independently; India=440, Uganda=481), Agent-based (agents relay app information to farmers; India=425, Uganda=463), and Hybrid (farmers and agents use app collaboratively; India=435, Uganda=475), against Controls (India=438, Uganda=465). Preliminary cross-country findings reveal consistent patterns. In India, the Hybrid model produced significantly stronger adoption effects for technically complex practices than digital-only or agent-only approaches, while Self-service improved awareness but failed to convert knowledge into behaviour change. Uganda's findings reinforced these results: farmers reported enhanced awareness of mulching, intercropping, and erosion control, alongside improved input efficiency and yield gains. The trials also documented extension system transformation, with agents reporting that DAS enabled demand-driven remote support, reduced routine field visits, and created peer networks for real-time knowledge exchange. The preliminary findings offer actionable evidence: effective DAS scaling requires combining digital tools with trusted interpersonal facilitation while ensuring inclusive design.

ID 85 Phygital Extension as Trust-Building Mechanism for Scaling Digital Advisory Services

Sarita Mishra, Grameen Foundation India, India

Co-Presenters:

- **Shradhha Parashari**, Grameen Foundation India, India
- **Maurice Tschopp**, University of Bern, Switzerland
- **Shatarupa Kashyap**, Grameen Foundation India, India
- **Kibrom Sibhatu**, icipe, Kenya

Abstract: Digital advisory tools are increasingly promoted as scalable mechanisms to strengthen climate resilience and promote sustainable land management among smallholders. Yet digital-only models often struggle due to uneven access, low digital literacy, and limited institutional trust. This contribution presents evidence from AgriPath, a cluster-randomised controlled trial (RCT) implemented in Eastern Uttar Pradesh (2023–2025), comparing three delivery models – Self-service (digital-only), Agent-based, and a Hybrid “phygital” model – against a Control arm. Baseline and endline surveys (n≈1,760) measured awareness and adoption of Sustainable Land Management Practices (SLMPs), with Difference-in-Differences (DiD) used to estimate causal effects. Across treatment groups, substantial increases in SLMP awareness and adoption were observed from baseline to endline, with particularly strong gains in the Hybrid model. DiD estimates indicate that the Hybrid model consistently outperformed both Self-service and Agent-based models, suggesting that combining digital tools with interpersonal facilitation accelerates behavioural change and practice uptake. These findings underscore that hybrid advisory approaches help bridge trust and capability gaps that constrain digital-only models, enhancing both adoption and learning. The results are relevant for governments, NGOs, and agri-tech actors seeking scalable pathways for climate resilience and sustainable land management in smallholder systems, demonstrating that phygital designs offer stronger institutional fit for real-world extension ecosystems.

ID 87 Transdisciplinary solutions to close the gap between researcher- and farmer know-how

Mirja Michalscheck, Agroscope, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Ibrahim Wanyama**, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Kampala, Uganda
- **Sonja Leitner**, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Nairobi, Kenya
- **Lutz Merbold**, Agroscope, Switzerland

Abstract: Smallholder farms feed 80% of the world’s population, yet many are unable to fully and sustainably harness their agricultural resources due to knowledge gaps. While farmers often lack access to relevant, timely, and context-specific information, researchers miss out on the rich knowledge held by farming communities. Bridging this gap remains a challenge in agricultural development. In low-and-middle-income countries, public extension services are intended to address knowledge constraints but are frequently undermined by limited staffing, budgets and language barriers. Digital extension tools are promoted as low-cost and scalable alternatives to reach large numbers of farmers. However, in practice, many digital solutions suffer from a poor social fit: they are often inaccessible due to low digital literacy, weak network coverage or are simply unaffordable. Other constraints include, that these tools are commercially driven and non-impartial, insufficiently inclusive, particularly for women, who are less likely to own smartphones. These limitations have resulted in modest uptake and limited impact. Within the CIRNA project (CIRcularity of Nutrients in Agroecosystems and co-benefits for animal and human health), we analysed patterns of phone ownership and use for agricultural extension in Kenya and Uganda. Our findings show that 99% of the surveyed households own a basic (feature) phone, while smartphone ownership varies substantially, reaching 82% in Kenya but only 28% in Uganda. Building on these insights, we present an inclusive approach to digital extension designed to align with farmers realities. Early demand testing in Uganda has already

engaged over 29,000 farmers, indicating strong interest in the proposed digital advisory service. We discuss the potential of such tools not only to “scale out” in terms of reach, but also to “scale deep” by influencing social norms and empowering women and youth through a transdisciplinary research-in-development approach.

ID 77 Understanding digital resilience: everyday challenges and adaptations for informal and platform workers in Kenya

Salome Bukachi, University of Nairobi, Kenya

Co-Presenters:

- **Ann Wambui**, University of Nairobi, Kenya
- **Bonnita Nyamire**, Pollicy, Kenya
- **Claire Somerville**, Geneva Graduate Institute, Switzerland

Abstract: This paper centers around the question: “What does resilience mean in contexts of precarious digital work and weak protection?”. Existing literature around digital resilience focuses primarily on the resilience of the digital environment and tools against shocks – such as economic shocks and the COVID-19 pandemic. Much less is known about how people and communities develop resilience against digital tools and their potentially harmful effects. Building on research conducted within the framework of the SOR4D-supported project “UPDATE – How digital spaces foster empowering, gender-transformative employment policies and women’s mobilization in Kenya”, the paper proposes a re-conceptualization of digital resilience as the resilience within digital spaces. Using evidence from empirical research in Kenya, including a series of interactive group interviews (Data Mtaani) and a survey conducted among inhabitants of the Kibera suburb near Nairobi, it provides insights into the everyday experiences of platform work among domestic workers in Kenya, and the everyday adaptations they have undertaken as part of improving their resilience to the challenges posed by platform working.

ID 90 Lessons from Scaling Up Property Taxation Innovations

Camille Barras, University of Toronto, Canada

Co-Presenter:

- **Mélodie Beaujeu**, Fund for Innovation in Development, France

Abstract: Property tax represents a substantial and stable source of revenue for subnational governments (Monkam & Moore 2015), which can contribute to strengthening public services delivery, subnational autonomy and the social contract (Slack & Bird 2015; Prichard 2025). However, in many low-income countries, property tax remains severely below its potential (Brockmeyer et al., 2021). A key underlying reason is overly complex and costly systems of property tax administration. Over the past years several initiatives have emerged in African countries to tackle these issues. We study four such initiatives, in Sierra Leone, Senegal, the Gambia and the DRC, that introduced a simplified method for property identification and valuation and began being scaled

up. The method entails i) affordable aerial imagery to identify buildings and trace their footprint, ii) a short field survey of easily observable, external building characteristics and iii) experts valuing a small sample of properties to then calibrate a point-based valuation model applicable to all properties. The core objective is to leverage locally appropriate technologies and simplify and shorten administrative procedures while ensuring high data quality and coverage, which in turn improves fiscal equity. This method has proven highly efficient across countries (Barras et al. forthcoming). The study seeks to elicit the various enabling and blocking factors of scale up of this simplified method. It explores in particular the role of policy design characteristics, pilot implementation including rigorous impact evaluations (RCTs), multi-level governance arrangements and politics, (subnational) state capacity and resources, policy and legal alignment, and political and popular support. Besides contributing to the literature on sustainability and scale up of policy innovations, the study generates lessons learned of high policy relevance in a context where domestic revenue mobilization has become increasingly important.

PS 2 **Paper Session | 14:30–16:00**

Health and Well-Being: Designing Interventions, Bridging Knowledge, Scaling Systems

ID 32 The Impact of Digital Mental Health Technology on Mental Health, Education, and Economic Outlook of Young Adults

Mauricio Avendano, Unisanté, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Armando N. Meier**, University of Basel, Switzerland
- **Clémence Kieny**, Unisanté, University of Lausanne, Switzerland
- **Andrea Carolina Bello-Tocancipá**, Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
- **Laura Torres-Cuellar**, Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
- **Naomi Koerner**, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, Canada
- **Juan Vargas-Nieto**, Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
- **Gustavo Perdomo-Patino**, Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
- **Ricardo Araya**, King's College London, UK
- **Omar Yesid Vargas Rodriguez**, Administrative Department of Social Prosperity, Colombia
- **Fabio Idrobo**, Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
- **Martha Escobar Lux**, Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Abstract: Poor mental health undermines the ability of young people to succeed in education. A rapidly growing literature suggests that digital mental health interventions can improve mental health, but their impacts on educational and economic outcomes remain largely unproven. We are conducting the first large-scale randomized controlled trial (RCT) to assess whether a digital

mental health intervention can significantly improve mental health, educational attainment, and labor market outlook among low- university and vocational skills-based training students. We also study mechanisms related to decision-making, including self-control and patience. The intervention consists of a co-designed transdiagnostic digital mental health platform lasting 10 weeks based on principles of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), combined with peer support. In collaboration with the Colombian government, we embed our study in a large-scale program that offers an educational subsidy for over 300,000 low-income youth aged 18 to 28 to attend college education. Participants will be first assessed for symptoms of depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and if they have symptoms, they will be randomized into three arms: a) a first treatment group with access to the digital platform only; b) a second group with access to the digital platform as well as peer support; and c) a control group, which will receive information about standard care through local services. Outcomes will be assessed through four surveys over 9 months and linkage with high-quality administrative government data. Our research will advance theoretical and empirical understanding of how mental health improvements impact economic outcomes. Findings will have substantial implications for policymakers considering the implementation of digital mental health platforms at scale, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

ID 45 Turning Toilets into Systems: Lessons from Tamil Nadu on Shaping and Scaling Urban Sanitation Solutions

Santhosh Ragavan Kolar Venkateshan, Indian Institute for Human Settlements

Abstract: Sanitation solutions that focus only on toilet superstructures overlook the need to safely contain, transport and treat human excreta, particularly where on-site sanitation systems (OSS) dominate. This gap is driving environmental and public health crisis, undermining progress towards SDG 6 and SDG 3. Field studies revealed widespread non-standard OSS with open discharges, missing soak-away and disinfection components, weak regulation, severe space constraints, and persistent perceptions that equate “having a toilet” with only the visible superstructure. Household apathy to maintenance and limited capacity among local authorities and masons further contributed to unsafe containment and its maintenance. Drawing on two implementation programmes, the paper showcases the co-design and demonstration of options such as converting non-standard systems to code-compliant designs; improving containment and digestion to reduce pathogen and solids outflows; introducing compact OSS; and testing chlorine-based effluent disinfection. Alongside these retrofitting options, the paper highlights the programmes’ promotion of standard-compliant OSS construction and maintenance through regulation and behaviour changes, and statewide expansion of treatment facilities so that collected sludge is safely treated. Key lessons from household and community/public toilets include the importance of construction timing for costs, the role of household finance mechanisms such as revolving funds, and the need to periodically revise OSS standards. Demonstrations in urban poor settlements produced mixed technical and social outcomes, highlighting both the potential and the limits of scaling through local markets, private operators and government systems. This paper exemplifies a transdisciplinary approach involving collaboration of engineers, social scientists, government, private actors and communities to generate scalable solutions that are technically sound and embedded in urban realities.

ID 46 Development of PEGISUS: An intervention to address the intersecting problems of substance use, gender inequity, and unemployment in young people in southern Africa

Jennifer Belus, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Beatrice Chiyokoma**, SolidarMed Zambia, Zambia
- **Kudakwashe Madzeke**, SolidarMed Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe
- **Tara Carney**, South African Medical Research Council, South Africa
- **Anitha J. Menon**, School of Public Health, University of Zambia, Zambia

Abstract: With approximately 70% of Africa's population under 30, the continent's future rests on the well-being of this generation. Unfortunately, there are large-scale and intersecting formidable challenges, including high unemployment, fragile health systems, entrenched gender inequity, and the global climate crisis. Up to 40% of young people use substances to cope with these challenging realities. Although structural changes are needed, we sought to develop a brief intervention to address the intersection of substance use, gender inequity, and unemployment for young people aged 16 to 24 and their peers, in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Our team, comprised of academics and development actors, partnered with vocational training programs to develop and embed an intervention on substance use and gender equity within existing vocational training curriculum. Key research and implementation decisions were guided by youth advisory boards in each country. Focus group discussions held with young people across the countries gave credence to the role of socioeconomic adversity in unhealthy substance use, the need to include peers in such interventions, and opportunities to build resilience for young people who use substances. This led to the development of PEGISUS, an 8-session peer group intervention based on existing evidence-based interventions for substance use and gender equity. The modification process was guided by academic knowledge (i.e., the ADAPT-ITT framework to guide adaptations) and local lived experience (e.g., feedback from youth advisory boards). We garnered initial implementation insights about PEGISUS during a pilot study phase. The intervention's efficacy to reduce substance use, gender inequity beliefs, and unemployment is being evaluated in a cluster randomized controlled trial. Overall, this presentation provides insights into the process of co-creating sustainable and scalable transdisciplinary interventions across cultural contexts and actors.

ID 68 Community-Based chronic Care Lesotho (ComBaCaL): Transformative evidence for scalable hypertension and diabetes care through lay Community Health Workers

Felix Gerber, University Hospital Basel, Switzerland

Abstract: Low- and middle-income countries face a rapidly growing burden of hypertension and diabetes, while professional health workforce shortages limit long-term care, especially in remote rural settings. We present evidence from the Community-Based Chronic Care Lesotho (ComBaCaL) collaboration on how chronic NCD care can be delivered and scaled through routine health systems. ComBaCaL is embedded in Lesotho's national Community Health Worker (CHW) programme and was co-designed by the Ministry of Health, local communities, an implementing NGO, and academic partners. In 103 rural villages, CHWs, lay community members without formal medical training, were enabled to provide hypertension and diabetes care at community level. They

used a tablet-based, open-source clinical decision support system aligned with national guidelines and medication supply systems to support safe, standardized home-based screening, diagnosis, and first-line medication prescription and treatment monitoring. Effectiveness, safety, and costs were assessed under real-world conditions through pragmatic trials and costing analyses. Within six months, screening coverage exceeded 85–95%, at moderate costs. CHW-led care significantly improved blood pressure control for people with uncontrolled hypertension and was non-inferior in maintaining control among those already treated compared to usual professional, facility-based care. For diabetes, CHW-led care showed improved glycaemic outcomes and higher engagement in care, without safety concerns. These findings show that shifting long-term NCD care to the community-level, supported by digital tools and integrated governance and supply systems, can improve access and outcomes of care at scale. ComBaCaL highlights enabling conditions for policy integration and scale-up, including task-sharing beyond screening and using digital tools as public health infrastructure rather than parallel project systems.

RT 1 Roundtable | 14:30–16:00

Embedding impact in the scale-up of education interventions: methodological, institutional, and operational challenges

Lead: **Luana Teychenne**, Fund for Innovation in Development (FID), France

Roundtable participants:

- **Mariachiara Ianuzzi**
- **Bernard Bahati**
- **Anne Thibault**
- **Patrick Premand**
- **Leodomir Mfura**

Abstract: Scaling up education interventions that show positive effects in small-scale evaluations remains a major challenge in development economics. While rigorous impact evaluations have improved our ability to identify what works, less is known about how impacts, cost-effectiveness, and implementation fidelity evolve as programs expand across populations, geographies, and institutional contexts. Evidence gaps remain particularly acute at the transition from pilot-scale success to large-scale deployment. This roundtable draws on the experience of FID, whose investment strategy explicitly integrates impact evidence into scale-up decisions. FID uses a tiered, evidence-based approach, increasing funding as causal evidence on impact and cost-effectiveness accumulates. Scale-up is treated not as an end in itself, but as a process requiring continuous learning, adaptation, and measurement across three phases: transition to scale, replication across contexts, and institutionalisation within public systems.

The discussion is moderated by Manuela Bärtschi and will center on three interconnected questions that are central in scaling education interventions. First, how can impact be measured or monitored reliably at scale, especially when interventions are delivered through new partners,

adapted to diverse local contexts, or simplified to reduce costs? Second, how can researchers and practitioners balance contextual adaptation with fidelity to the core mechanisms identified in earlier evaluations? Third, what institutional and operational conditions are required for sustained scale, particularly when innovations are integrated into government systems? By combining perspectives from research, implementation, and financing, the session aims to extract cross-cutting lessons on how impact evidence can be embedded throughout the scale-up pathway, and how learning agendas can be designed to inform both policy decisions and implementation choices at scale.

WS 1 **Workshop | 14:30–16:00**

Conducting Global Transdisciplinary Research Partnerships in Practice: From Principles and Tools to Practical Implementation

Lead: Fabian Käser, SCNAT Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnerships, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Elisabeth Schubiger**, SCNAT Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnerships, Switzerland
- **Stefan Müller**, Network for Transdisciplinary Research td-net, Switzerland

Abstract: This workshop is an opportunity for researchers to discuss equity in global research partnerships. Building on the Guide for Global Research Partnerships (grp-guide.ch) we provide a platform for researchers and practitioners to reflect and exchange how to practically strengthen their partnerships with regard to equity, efficiency and impact. The workshop will be hosted by the Swiss Alliance for Global Research which developed the Guide for Global Research Partnerships on the basis of previous Guidelines and in collaboration with more than 200 researchers from all over the world. In Switzerland and globally the Guide for Global Research Partnerships is a well recognized and recommended resource to strengthen equitable, effective and impactful research partnerships – amongst others in the running SOR4D call.

The workshop will include input presentations (very short), world-café style group exchanges, pinboards to share insights in the plenary and to promote casual exchanges amongst the participants. The workshop will focus on concrete and practical activities and steps for engaging in transdisciplinary research for Global Development. Participants are expected to learn from other participants' experiences, approaches and failures. They develop strategies to strengthen equity, effectivity and impact in their research collaborations. They know how to use the Guide for Global Research Partnerships and they frame some concrete steps towards more equitable collaboration that they can implement after the workshop.

PS 3 Paper Session | 16:30-18:00

Bridging Knowledge Systems: From Indigenous and Local Knowledge to Policy and Practice

ID 1 Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into Sustainable Public Procurement: Challenges, Opportunities, and Policy Perspectives in Selected African Contexts

Carol Cravero, Yale ASAP Fellow, Italy

Abstract: We encounter the outcomes of public procurement every day, and their efficiency can significantly impact our lives, for example, when we attend school or visit a hospital. For this reason, public procurement has traditionally been guided by core principles such as transparency, competition, non-discrimination, fairness, and value for money. More recently, sustainability considerations have been added as an additional – and increasingly strategic – dimension, although they remain subordinate to these primary objectives. When sustainable development goals are incorporated into procurement policies and practices, this approach is termed Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP), which encompasses three main pillars: economic, environmental, and social considerations. Despite these advances, the cultural dimension of SPP has not yet been adequately explored. Without proper safeguards, SPP risks unintentionally facilitating the misappropriation of cultural heritage, engaging with inappropriate or unrepresentative stakeholders, or endorsing products that lack sufficient protection. This research investigates how SPP can be employed to promote cultural values, with a particular emphasis on integrating and protecting Indigenous traditional knowledge in Africa. Recognizing Indigenous knowledge as a critical component of cultural identity and sustainable development, the study examines the legal and policy frameworks governing SPP across selected African countries, evaluating their capacity to incorporate cultural preservation as a core objective. Key issues addressed include mechanisms for community participation, safeguards against cultural appropriation, the recognition of Indigenous knowledge within procurement criteria, and the use of geographical indications (GIs) as a tool to protect Indigenous traditional knowledge in sectors such as food, as showcased by the African Union's Continental Strategy for GIs, all within the competitive framework of public procurement.

ID 31 Transforming Refugee Housing Research: Bridging Scales and Knowledge under Overlapping Crises

Z. Ezgi Halilioglu Kahraman, Cankaya University & Geneva Graduate Institute

Abstract: Refugee housing (RH) lies at the heart of the global housing crisis. Upper-scale research identifies its structural dimensions and disproportionate impacts: international studies reveal shared drivers and enable cross-context comparison, while national research clarifies how migration and housing regimes shape access and institutional constraints. Yet both fail to capture how housing insecurity is experienced and negotiated locally, especially under overlapping crises. This study bridges knowledge scales to develop a comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of RH under economic instability, acute affordable housing shortages, urban renewal pressures and

the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on Syrian refugees in Türkiye. In Türkiye, upper-scale analyses reveal barriers including temporary protection regimes, absence of housing and dispersal policies, and exclusion from social housing. The pandemic functioned as a stress test, intensifying existing vulnerabilities while exposing significant blind spots in upper-scale knowledge. Building on national and comparative city-level research, this study investigates neighborhood-scale dynamics in refugee-settled areas of Ankara. Qualitative, neighborhood-based research shows how housing becomes a prolonged condition of limbo through structural constraints and local dynamics – poor housing quality, informal rentals, displacement fears, and precarious landlord relations. Findings highlight refugee agency, collective navigation via informal networks, shared knowledge and practices, and intra-community power asymmetries in shaping outcomes. Using ethnography and participatory methods like photovoice, the research uncovers emotional and experiential dimensions invisible to upper-scale analyses. By foregrounding local, relational knowledge, the study demonstrates the limits of top-down approaches and argues for converging knowledge systems as essential for transformative, context-sensitive RH responses under overlapping crises.

ID 105 Bridging epistemologies in assessing the global environment and designing pathways towards sustainability: Lessons learnt from the inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge in UNEP GEO-7

Sarah-Lan Mathez-Stiefel, University of Bern, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Aibek Samakov**, University of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan

Abstract: The importance of drawing on Indigenous and local knowledge to design pathways toward more just and sustainable futures for people and nature is increasingly recognized in global science and policy arenas, including major scientific international assessments. Following the lead of IPBES, the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) – UNEP’s flagship report on the state of the global environment – has, for the first time, integrated Indigenous and local knowledge perspectives into its seventh edition (forthcoming in 2025). While this represents a significant step forward in acknowledging the value of diverse knowledge systems, key challenges and questions remain regarding how to meaningfully include them on an equal footing with dominant scientific paradigms. In this presentation, the convenors of the GEO-7 Task Force on Indigenous and Local Knowledge will share the findings of a reflexive analysis of the process of integrating these knowledge systems into the GEO-7 report and its Summary for Policymakers. They will discuss the challenges and opportunities encountered, and present recommendations for more effectively bridging diverse epistemologies in global environmental assessments.

ID 110 Erosion, Adaptation, and Revitalization: Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Changing Forest Landscapes of India

Dhanya Vijayan, Leibniz Center for Agricultural Landscape Research, Germany

Co-Presenters:

- **Liji Kareyapath**, Leibniz Center for Agricultural Landscape Research, Germany

Abstract: Indigenous communities have stewarded forest landscapes for millennia, cultivating deep ecological knowledge through place-based observation, lived experience, and cultural traditions. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) enrich scientific methodologies by enabling innovative, adaptive, and co-management practices, alongside culturally grounded conservation strategies. While debates on integrating IKS into sustainable forest management policies have intensified, the dynamic and rapidly evolving nature of IKS underscores the need to critically examine how these knowledge systems are changing. This study draws on case studies from the Western Ghats, India, to investigate transformations in IKS in relation to the changes in natural forests. Employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates geospatial analysis with ethnographic inquiry, the research explores patterns of differential erosion and retention of IKS. Findings reveal that Indigenous ecological knowledge is simultaneously eroding, adapting, and revitalizing, reflecting both vulnerability and resilience. Moreover, the study demonstrates how place-based ecological expertise of Indigenous Peoples complements scientific approaches, offering nuanced insights into environmental change. Further, this research underscores the importance of documenting IKS and integrating IKS into sustainable forest management frameworks, highlighting its potential to strengthen ecological resilience, foster inclusive governance, and advance culturally sensitive conservation strategies.

ID 101 Bridging Knowledge Systems: Integrating Traditional Medicine into Healthcare in Uganda

Yahaya Hills Kagali Sekagya, Prometra, Uganda

Co-Presenters:

- **Bernard Kato**, PROMETRA, Uganda
- **Emmanuel Kibubuka**, PROMETRA, Uganda
- **Imelda Nachwa**, PROMETRA, Uganda
- **Godwin Anywar**, Makerere University, Uganda
- **Mauda Kamatenesi**, Mamita Foundation and Training Centre, Uganda,
- **Nelson Abit**, Uganda National Museum, Uganda
- **Amon Mugume**, Uganda National Museum, Uganda
- **Jacqueline Grigo**, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- **Thomas Laely**, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- **Manuela Dahinden**, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- **Caroline S. Weckerle**, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract: This presentation explores the role of traditional medicine in Uganda and the opportunities and challenges of cooperation between different knowledge systems. Drawing on a mixed-methods study, it shows that traditional medical practices – rooted in cultural, spiritual, and empirical knowledge – remain central to healthcare provision, particularly in underserved communities. Our findings show that traditional medicine practitioners form a diverse group, including spiritual healers, herbalists, traditional birth attendants, bone setters, and mental health practitioners. Their knowledge is acquired through intergenerational transmission, apprenticeships, and spiritual calling, reflecting a holistic understanding of health that integrates physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Generational differences are evident: older practitioners emphasize spiritual and relational aspects, while younger practitioners

more strongly highlight empirical and practical knowledge. The study demonstrates that co-operation between traditional and biomedical systems is both necessary and complex. Major challenges include limited formal recognition, resource constraints, loss of land for medicinal plants, and mutual mistrust shaped by differing epistemologies and professional norms. Nevertheless, many practitioners expressed openness to collaboration when cultural values, respect, and autonomy are upheld. Based on these findings, the presentation recommends structured dialogue platforms between traditional and biomedical practitioners, systematic documentation of traditional knowledge, and support for intergenerational knowledge transfer. Policy frameworks should recognize traditional medicine as a complementary system and enable ethical, culturally sensitive collaboration. Strengthening mutual learning between knowledge systems can contribute to more inclusive and locally responsive healthcare in Uganda.

WS 2 **Workshop | 16:30–18:00**

Collaboration for Climate Leadership: An Impact Development Workshop

Lead: **Mumbi Wachira**, Strathmore University Business School, Kenya

Co-Presenters:

- **Sarita Sehgal**, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- **Simon Ndiritu**, Strathmore University Business School, Kenya
- **Nicole Saka**, Strathmore University Business School, Kenya

Abstract: The proposed impact-oriented workshop addresses the persistent gap between management research and real-world climate action. It is guided by four core questions:

- How can management scholars design research that is more responsive to real-world climate leadership challenges?
- What concrete pathways exist for translating academic evidence into policy, business practice, and systems change?
- What enables effective cross-sector collaboration (academia, business, policy, philanthropy, civil society) in climate action, particularly in African contexts?
- What role can business schools and universities play in strengthening the research-to-impact value chain for climate leadership?

Part 1 of the workshop will showcase a curated set of impactful research-to-action initiatives, drawing on illustrative cases such as Climate Fresk, the Embedding Project, cross-sector philanthropy initiatives on climate change, multi-stakeholder governance platforms, and evidence-to-policy mechanisms. We will then open up for interactive discussion with the audience in order to collectively identify cross cutting challenges and success factors – as well as areas where more research and understanding is required.

Part 2 of the workshop will orient itself around pathways to better disseminate management research and ensure it leads to real world impact. We will begin with a conversation around engaged scholarship and what that actually entails; from problem identification to dissemination of findings, and how to strengthen the uptake by practitioners. We will then break into small groups that are facilitated by the organizing team, and which will offer space for reflection and exchange based on their own work and experience. A core theme and question what business schools and universities more generally can do to support increased collaboration and strengthen the research to impact value chain, notably in relation to climate leadership and action.

RT 2 **Roundtable | 16:30-18:00**

Beyond Short Project Cycles: Rethinking Transformative Research Partnerships with Africa from Switzerland

Lead: **Patrick Bottazzi**, University of Bern, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Djouroukoro Diallo**, Initiative Afrique, University of Bern, Switzerland
- **Joan Bastide**, Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern, Switzerland

Abstract: In a geopolitical context marked by the retreat of the United States from international cooperation and major cuts in development assistance, research-for-development faces growing uncertainty worldwide, including in Switzerland. These shifts raise critical questions about the sustainability, relevance, and political orientation of transdisciplinary and transformative research, particularly in relations between Europe and Africa.

In Switzerland, these challenges are reinforced by structural features of the national research-for-development landscape. Compared to countries such as France, Swiss research co-operation with Africa often lacks historical depth and institutional continuity. Projects are frequently short-term, weakly anchored in local contexts, and insufficiently embedded in long-term partnerships. As a result, initiatives tend to disappear as quickly as they emerge, limiting their transformative potential and undermining trust, learning, and collective action. In addition, Swiss actors active in research-for-development in Africa often operate in parallel, with limited coordination across institutions.

This roundtable proposes to critically explore options for building more effective, durable, and equitable forms of transdisciplinary and transformative research from Switzerland. It is proposed by Initiative Afrique, a network of the University of Bern bringing together researchers engaged in long-term collaborations with Africa.

Drawing on concrete experiences from network members, including CREATES, an Africa-based research and action centre, the discussion will highlight alternative models grounded in long-term territorial engagement and stronger institutional anchoring. The roundtable will invite participants

to reflect on how Swiss research can move beyond short-term project logics and contribute to social and ecological transformation in times of shrinking resources.

WS 3 **Workshop | 16:30–18:00**

Experiencing Transdisciplinarity as a Game Changer for Innovation Scaling

Lead: **Mirja Michalscheck**, Agroscope, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Daphne Muchai**, Women Farmers Association of Kenya (WoFaAK), Kenya
- **Sonja Leitner**, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Nairobi, Kenya
- **Winnie Ntinyari**, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Nairobi, Kenya
- **Lutz Merbold**, Agroscope, Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract: Innovations in development are often conceived by scientists in response to clearly identified problems, yet they are typically designed and tested in controlled settings that differ markedly from the complex environments in which they are ultimately expected to function. This disconnect masks critical demand- and the supply-side challenges that determine whether an innovation can move beyond proof of concept. Even when an innovation addresses a genuine need, key questions frequently remain unanswered: who is providing, delivering, repairing it? Who is financing it and introducing its functions, who is listening and learning to improve the product and service bundle?

Addressing these questions requires rethinking how innovations are developed and scaled. Transdisciplinary innovation teams offer a powerful approach by integrating technical solutions with institutional, market, and end user perspectives from the outset. In this process researchers can act as “neutral brokers” – convening users, policymakers, private-sector actors, and scientists across disciplines to jointly diagnose constraints, align incentives, and co-design viable pathways for scaling innovations. Such collaborative approaches enhance the relevance and sustainability of innovations and increase the likelihood that research investment translate into lasting development impact.

In this 90-minute hands-on workshop,

- we provide a short introduction to innovation scaling concepts (10 mins)
- we share and ask for your real-life experiences with innovation bundling and scaling (25 mins)
- we practically engage into a joint and systematic evaluation of the scaling readiness of an innovation from the SOR4D CIRNA project and identify potential bundle components for greater inclusivity, uptake and impact (40 mins)
- lessons-learned: we will discuss the experience and added value of working on such tasks regularly and in diverse teams (15 mins).

Day 2 – Tuesday 01.09.2026

PS 4 Paper Session | 09:15-10:45

Territories, Local Knowledge and Agency in Agroecological Transitions

ID 81 Agroecology and Indigenous territories: lessons learned from bridging knowledge, actors and territories

Sébastien Boillat, Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Christine Jurt**, Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland
- **Elvira Serrano**, Universidad Mayor de San Simon, Cochabamba, Bolivia
- **Carmen Ledo**, Universidad Mayor de San Simon, Cochabamba, Bolivia
- **Sergio Vasquez**, Centro de Documentación y Desarrollo Andi, Bolivia

Abstract: This contribution focuses on the intersection of agroecology and Indigenous territories. It builds on a collaborative research project involving Bolivian and Swiss researchers, Indigenous communities and organization and NGOs, funded by the Swiss Network for International Studies. Agroecological principles and Indigenous territories and lands have potentially high synergies. Traditional knowledge and practices, collective land governance and traditional food systems that exist in Indigenous territories offer an opportunity to up-scale agroecology. Agroecology also offers tools that can make Indigenous food systems more sustainable and resilient. Nevertheless, harnessing these synergies entails challenges related to knowledge systems, actor networks and land and food governance systems. We examine critically how agroecology principles and Indigenous territorial governance, practices and food systems connect to each other in practice. We build on empirical research including a systematic review of literature on agroecology in Indigenous contexts and three case studies from Bolivia. We examine four critical points: (1) Knowledge systems have developed in different social-ecological contexts: agroecology often implicitly assumes sedentary settlements while Indigenous land use systems build on mobility. (2) Networks and power relations: Indigenous organizations and actors promoting agroecology are linked to different networks, with agroecology often relying on projects limited in time. (3) Agroecology beyond agriculture: Indigenous peoples' perspectives have high synergies with agroecological principles but are not restricted to agriculture and include hunting, gathering, fishing, handicrafts and other activities. (4) Land governance: existing land governance institutions in Indigenous territories are often in line with agroecological principles, but their enforcement tends to be eroded by rural-to-urban migration and competition for land by external actors.

ID 97 Territorialising Agroecology in Senegal: Creative Methods and Reflexivity for Transformative Transdisciplinary Research

Patrick Bottazzi, University of Bern, Switzerland

Co-Presenters

- **Joan Bastide**, University of Bern, Switzerland
- **Lise Landrin**, Université de Grenoble, France
- **Sidy Tounkara**, IPAR, Senegal
- **Anta Faye**, IPAR, Senegal
- **Jean-David Gerber**, University of Bern, Switzerland

Abstract: Approaches framed as the “territorialisation” of agroecology are gaining increasing attention in research and development, particularly in response to food system crises, climate change, and social inequalities. While research is now widely mobilised in these processes, its role often remains ambiguous, shaped by implicit assumptions, power asymmetries, and methodological contradictions. This contribution reflects on how transdisciplinary research can be repositioned as a genuinely transformative practice. The presentation draws on a research-action experience conducted in Senegal within the ARTS (Agroecology for Resilient Territories in Senegal) project and the work of CREATES. It combines conventional research tools with creative and arts-based methods such as forum theatre, participatory video, photography, and visual facilitation to support dialogue among diverse local actors, co-produce knowledge, and construct shared narratives around agroecological transitions. Rather than treating agroecology as a purely technical transition, the contribution conceptualises territorialisation as a contested socio-political process shaped by multiple knowledge systems, power relations, and governance arrangements. Particular attention is paid to reflexivity, positionality, and the role of researchers as embedded actors within transformation processes. The presentation discusses how creative methods can function as mediating tools between scientific, local, and experiential knowledge, while also acknowledging their limits and ethical challenges. Aligned with the conference sub-themes “Converging Knowledge Systems” and “Transformative Research: Solutions and Innovation in Crises”, this contribution offers concrete insights into how transdisciplinary research can support long-term territorial transformations through sustained engagement, institutional anchoring, and collective learning in complex real-world contexts.

ID 113 Co-producing Knowledge for Impact: A Participatory and Localised Research Process on Agroecological Pathways to Food Security and Nutrition

Thomas Gass and Melanie Brantschen, Alliance Sufosec, Switzerland

Abstract: Transdisciplinary research for development increasingly recognises that meaningful impact depends not only on results, but on how knowledge is produced in local practice. We present an ongoing multi-country impact study on agroecological interventions and their contributions to food security and nutrition. Rather than presenting study outcomes, our contribution concentrates on the research process, with final results expected in 2027. The Sufosec impact study applies a participatory mixed-methods approach across seven country cases in Africa, Asia and Latin America: solidarity-based agroecology in Kenya; women’s empowerment and nutrition in Guatemala;

agroecology and water availability in Tanzania; neglected crops in Tanzania and India; livestock integration and social cohesion in Chad; revitalisation of indigenous food traditions in Nepal. Together, these cases examine pathways linking agroecology with food and nutrition outcomes. The mixed-methods design combines standardised household surveys with in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participatory integration workshops, with local research institutions playing a central role. Quantitative data generate comparable evidence on food security, dietary diversity and livelihoods, while qualitative inquiry explores pathways of change, contextual influences, gender relations and knowledge practices. The presentation reflects on methodological choices and learning mechanisms that support co-production of knowledge across North-South partnerships. It discusses challenges of balancing scientific rigor with programmatic relevance, managing power asymmetries and maintaining cross-case comparability while allowing for local adaptation. By sharing an ongoing research process, this contribution offers transferable lessons for participatory impact evaluation and adaptive research design that strengthen local ownership and enhance the likelihood that emerging evidence informs practice, policy and scaling strategies.

ID 4 Bamboo agroforestry as a land use option for household energy needs and food security in Ghana

Michael Yaw Kwaku, International Bamboo and Rattan Organization, Ghana

Co-Presenters

Samuel Partey, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Ghana

Abstract: Available literature points to the fact that fuelwood consumption is one major cause of deforestation in Ghana. Similar to many parts of Africa, wood fuels currently provide 71% of the total annual energy demand in Ghana; hence with rising household energy demands, the rates of deforestation and the concomitant negative effects on beneficial ecosystem services would continue to increase. In Ghana, sustainable forest management has been made a priority, and government and scientists are now advocating the use of bamboo agroforestry to reduce pressure on the major commercial timber species sometimes sourced for household energy needs. Bamboo is currently underutilized in Ghana although there are more than 300,000 hectares per the results of recent surveys. Bamboo's characteristics of fast growth and high renewability make it an efficient and renewable substitute resource for charcoal and wood fuel production. In Asia, bamboo-based intercropping systems are confirmed as suitable land use approaches for increased productivity of food crops and non-food biomass. Meanwhile, there is limited available data to verify the suitability of the technology in Africa and elucidate the ecological principles by which the system works. The authors conducted a 4-year pilot study in Ghana to: (1) assess local knowledge, governance and economics of bamboo agroforestry; (2) evaluate the ecological interactions within bamboo-based intercropping systems and accentuate implications on soil and crop productivity; and (3) perform a life-cycle analysis of bamboo charcoal using environmental and social indicators. The premise of the study which did fits into Ghana's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy and has been relevant and influence policy changes at the District and National level recommendations for household energy needs and food security. Sharing this experience could influence Regional Policy direction in the Sub-Sahara Africa countries

ID 26 Innovation delivery for agroecological transitions in the Sahel: Experimental evidence from Senegal and Mali

Christian Grovermann, FiBL, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Harun Cicek**, FiBL, Switzerland
- **Assane Beye**, UCAD, Senegal
- **Tesfamichael Wossen**, IITA, Mali

Abstract: Under the Horizon 2020 project SustainSahel a multi-site cluster-randomized controlled trial was implemented to assess advisory delivery modalities for accelerating adoption of climate-smart agroecological practices in Mali and Senegal. Results show substantial impacts. The interventions used a lead-farmer model to promote agroecological practice bundles, including nitrogen-fixing shrubs, composting, mulching, manure application, and legume-based rotations. Two modalities were tested: an intensive approach with continuous coaching and demonstrations for lead farmers, and a lighter-touch approach relying mainly on digital and print materials with limited demonstrations. Across 180 villages and 1,423 households, both modalities significantly increased farmer awareness, exposure, and adoption. Each lead farmer reached an average of 19 farmers through field days, with informal sharing extending outreach to around 40 farmers, demonstrating strong multiplier effects. Adoption of key practices rose markedly in both countries. Shrub integration increased by 26 percentage points under both modalities, and manure use by around 40 points; mulching gains were higher under the intensive model than the lighter-touch model. Econometric analyses using measured plot-level data confirm that adoption led to significant productivity gains and improved yield stability. Instrumental variable estimates indicate gains of 250–500 kg/ha for key practices. Adoption also significantly reduced yield variability. Bundled adoption amplified impacts: households adopting two or more practices achieved the largest gains in both yields and stability. Overall, intensive advisory support produced stronger and more sustained outcomes, though lighter-touch approaches show promise for cost-effective scaling through hybrid delivery strategies.

PS 5 Paper Session | 09:15-10:45: Informal Work, and Everyday Strategies for Change

ID 59 Women at the Frontlines of Climate Change: An Ethnography of Adaptation in Coastal Bangladesh

Md Nurul Islam, Sajida Foundation, Bangladesh

Co-Presenters

Samiya Selim, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, Bangladesh

Abstract: Communities in coastal Bangladesh face overlapping hazards including cyclones, flooding, sea-level rise, and salinity intrusion, which are degrading ecosystems, undermining agriculture, and shrinking freshwater-based livelihoods. Rising salinity and the expansion of commercial shrimp farming are forcing many farmers to abandon subsistence agriculture, while disasters and declining economic opportunities drive large numbers of working-age men to migrate seasonally. As a result, women have become primary actors in subsistence agriculture, small-scale aquaculture, household water and resource management. Drawing on a yearlong collaborative ethnography in Pratapnagar, this research documents how women have emerged as key climate adaptation actors under worsening socio-economic and climatic conditions. While assuming expanded leadership in household and livelihood management, women's adaptive capacities remain constrained by socio-cultural norms that limit mobility, decision-making, and public visibility. Within these constraints, women devise situated strategies such as collective mobility, flexible working schedule, and collaboration within kin and social networks. From a feminist political ecology perspective, these practices constitute gendered forms of environmental management shaped by unequal access to land, water, and power. They also reflect everyday resistance: quiet, non-confrontational acts through which women negotiate resources, sustain livelihoods, and gradually expand their agency. Collectively, these practices subtly rework gendered boundaries amid rising environmental crisis. The findings underscore the importance of gender-responsive adaptation policies that recognize women as central climate actors, secure their access to resources, support women-led initiatives, and institutionalize women's participation in adaptation governance. Based on the findings local solutions have been codesigned and implemented.

ID 76 Mapping the platform care labour in Kenya

Bonaventure Saturday, Pollicy, Kenya

Co-Presenter:

Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos and Yuliia Soroka, Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Abstract: The paper presents findings of web scraping conducted in the context of the research project: "UPDATE – How digital spaces foster empowering, gender-transformative employment policies and women's mobilization in Kenya". During web-scraping, 88 accounts and forums across 5 social media platforms (Facebook, X/Twitter, TikTok, LinkedIn WhatsApp and Telegram), as well as 5 job-posting websites were analyzed. Their content was scraped to search for information around patterns of job seeking, job availability and conditions, as well as the use of platforms to demand better work conditions. Building on the web-scraping, the paper proposes a typology of the types of care labour provided or facilitated through the digital platforms in Kenya. Building on the taxonomy of platform care work developed by Rodriguez-Modroño et al. based on an analysis of the Spanish market, the paper provides a Global South perspective, bringing more nuance to the understanding of the different types of care labour facilitated or performed through digital platforms. The paper also discusses the specific challenges and risks associated with the different platforms and different types of platform care labour, and the ways in which platform workers have begun to resist those in the context of Kenya. The paper provides a valuable contribution to the burgeoning literature on platform

care labour. It contributes to the move away from viewing platform economy – and care platform economy in particular – as a homogenous and monolithic industry and brings to light the different modalities and dimensions of platform care work, which may feed into intersectional inequalities among platform workers. It also provides a foundation for a reflection on how platform work can be better organized and regulated to ensure that it provides conditions for dignified labour.

ID 71 Flowers in wartime: a reflection on the use of the photovoice as a means of capturing the everyday violence(s) of war

Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos, Graduate Institute, Switzerland

Co-Presenter:

Yuliia Soroka, Kharkiv Karazin National University, Ukraine

Abstract: Crises – and in particular wars – can make research more challenging: from questions of access and security, to concerns about burdening research participants who are facing violence everyday. At the same time, crises also provide an opportunity to adopt new perspectives and bring to the fore new voices. In the project “Caring to Survive, Surviving to Care”, we have encountered both the challenges and the promise of research in the context of an ongoing war. As a response, we adopted a participatory methodology, which integrates innovative methods that privilege uncovering of diverse perspectives on the Russian aggression and the other violences experienced by Ukrainians. One of such innovative methods is the PhotoVoice methodology. As part of the project, 15 Ukrainians from the Kharkiv and Lviv regions have participated in a PhotoVoice exercise. The exercise brought many surprises – both to the participants and the researchers. In this paper, we critically reflect on the PhotoVoice method, bringing to light the questions of agency of the researcher, and how it manifests in particular in the context of a war; of the positionality of the researchers, and how the use of images can subvert the researchers’ expectations; about the limitations and challenges of using the PhotoVoice method in the context of a war; and finally, about the Photovoice method’s potential to bring forth new perspective on violence, and indeed – suggest new solutions to it. The paper is primarily a methodological one; however, we do share some initial reflections on the content of the photographs taken by our research participants, and the way they have interpreted them – as well as how these interpretations have evolved as they engaged with each other, and with us. As such, the paper provides insights into the PhotoVoice methodology, as well as the lived experiences and narratives of war held by our Ukrainian research participants.

ID 95 Transformative Leadership for Responsible Mining

Kattia Diaz-Ydones, Wyss Academy for Nature, Switzerland

Abstract: Artisanal and small-scale gold mining is a critical livelihood activity across the Global South, but it remains enmeshed in environmental degradation, informality, and governance deficits. In Madre de Dios, Peru, government-led formalization efforts have so far failed to resolve

this complex issue, resulting in limited and short-lived environmental and social improvements. Drawing on qualitative interviews with ten leaders from mining collectives and ten key informants (e.g. former government officials), we apply a value-oriented leadership framework to explore how individual values, leadership types, transformative roles, and institutional strategies shape change within the region. Our findings reveal that these actors often hold ethical relationships with nature that diverge from dominant sectoral norms. Their values, which include integrity, collective progress, dialogue, peaceful coexistence, and inner well-being, shape five interrelated leadership types that drive transformative action. This includes co-creating vital regional spaces, building informal networks to promote cleaner practices, and fostering trust between mining communities and external stakeholders. Institutional strategies emerge as a crucial tool through which leaders engage with state actors and co-produce context-sensitive institutional arrangements, including a newly established regional federation advocating for more inclusive and environmentally responsible mining. Based on these findings, we discuss how the inner and outer dimensions of leadership among leaders of artisanal and small-scale gold mining collectives might enable transformations towards more responsible mining practices and highlight the significance of integrating inner motivations with external governance processes. The study contributes to ongoing debates on participatory governance and transformations in contexts of responsible artisanal extractive activities.

RT 3 **Roundtable | 09:15–10:45:** ***Hiding in plain sight: meaningful participation of families in the search for forcibly disappeared persons***

Lead: **Haris Lokvancic**, swisspeace, Switzerland

Roundtable participants:

- **Mina Rauschenbach**, Leuven Institute of Criminology, Belgium
- **Claudia Josi**, swisspeace, Switzerland
- Mr. **Haris Lokvancic** , swisspeace (Moderator).

Abstract: Hundreds of thousands of persons remain missing worldwide as a result of armed conflict and human rights violations, leaving families trapped in prolonged uncertainty, grief and unanswered questions. This reality directly affects human development, undermining mental health, social cohesion and access to rights and services. While states bear the primary obligation to search for the forcibly disappeared, families have long been at the heart of these efforts – often driving, sustaining and shaping search processes, despite their contributions being overlooked or undervalued.

This panel examines why the meaningful participation of families is not only a right, but a key element of effective, humane and credible search mechanisms. Drawing on comparative experiences from different countries (e.g. Colombia, Syria) and insights from recent research on victim participation and procedural justice, the discussion explores how families engage with state-led and non-state search processes, the obstacles they face, and the forms of participation that foster

trust, dignity and a sense of justice, even when outcomes remain uncertain. It also highlights how inclusive approaches strengthen governance, institutional legitimacy and accountability. Adopting a multidisciplinary perspective that brings together legal, psychosocial and political insights, panelists will reflect on the roles of family associations and state institutions, highlighting the importance of information-sharing, respectful treatment and sustained accompaniment throughout often long and painful search processes – key elements for social resilience and peacebuilding.

The discussion will also address the need to strike a balance between state ownership and genuine inclusion of families as key justice stakeholders, and how participatory approaches can contribute to healing, institutional trust and sustainable peace, while reinforcing broader conditions for sustainable development in fragile contexts.

RT 4 **Roundtable | 09:15–10:45**

Scaling Digital Advisory Services in LMICs: Opportunities, Challenges, and the Emerging Role of AI

Lead: Benjamin Gräub, farmbetter, Kenya & Panama

Roundtable participants:

- **Nicole Harari**, Center for Development & Environment (CDE), University of Berne & AgriPath project, Switzerland
- **Alain Amstutz**, alain.amstutz@usb.ch, University Hospital Basel & Project Manager ComBaCal project, Switzerland
- **Selina Ulmann**, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Switzerland
- Representative from a fintech startup with scale in the LMICs (tbc)

Abstract: Digital advisory services are becoming essential tools for improving decision-making in agriculture, health, and financial services across developing and emerging economies. Yet despite years of innovation, many smallholders, health workers, and micro-entrepreneurs still lack access to timely, context-specific guidance. This roundtable will review successful and on-going scaling efforts across sectors as well as posing the question if AI is a game-changer in one or several sectors when it comes to scaling digital advisory services. The session will bring together practitioners, solution providers, and researchers to reflect on experiences from the field, including insights from the SDC-funded AgriPath & ComBaCaL projects working in digital agriculture, health, and fintech. Speakers will discuss evidence of impact, technical and institutional challenges, lessons learned on user adoption, and the requirements for responsible scaling.

Key questions guiding the discussion include:

- What have been barriers to scaling digital advisory services in low- and middle income contexts?
- What approaches have been successful so far?
- How can AI improve the relevance and responsiveness of advisory services?
- What partnerships, design principles, and data ecosystems enable sustainable scale?
- What risks – bias, data protection, exclusion – must be addressed to ensure that AI-enabled advisory systems are equitable and effective?

The roundtable aims to generate cross-sector recommendations for practitioners, funders, and researchers working to unlock the full potential of digital advisory services in low-resource settings.

PS 6 **Paper Session | 11:15–12:45** **Making Nature-Based Interventions Work for People**

ID 88 **Conservation, development and markets: agricultural intensification and emerging land pressures in upland Laos**

Aye-Chan Maung, Wyss Academy for Nature, Switzerland

Abstract: Area-based conservation measures, particularly the establishment of protected areas, remain central to global conservation strategies. These initiatives are frequently accompanied by livelihood intervention programs designed to transform traditional practices, such as shifting cultivation and hunting, into more intensified, market-oriented agricultural systems. Promoted as “win-win” solutions, such interventions aim to modernize rural livelihoods, enhance sustainability and simultaneously safeguard forest ecosystems. In Lao PDR, agricultural intensification is framed as a key strategy to stimulate rural economic growth through increased income generation while reducing pressure on upland forests by decreasing communities’ reliance on natural resources. This paper applies a qualitative approach to examine how the processes of agricultural intensification unfolds in northern uplands of Lao PDR. Using the Nam Et-Phou Louey national park landscape in Huaphan province as a case study, we conducted focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with villagers, representatives from government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), traders and private companies. Qualitative data were analyzed in MAXQDA24 using a combination of deductive and inductive coding. Our findings show that agricultural intensification engenders new perceptions of land scarcity among rural communities, increasing demand for agricultural land and potentially driving further expansion into forested areas. These dynamics risk undermining conservation objectives and may accelerate forest loss in upland landscapes. By highlighting these contradictions, this paper seeks to contribute to academic debates and policy discussions on the sustainable transformation of mountainous landscapes in Laos and other tropical developing countries.

ID 49 **Beyond counting trees: considering actors’ demands for more inclusive and effective restoration**

Maria J. Santos, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract: Ecosystem restoration is crucial to address environmental degradation, reverse biodiversity loss, mitigate climate change, and support livelihoods. While recent restoration science increas-

ingly recognizes the importance of integrating social and ecological dimensions and involving local communities, a conceptual framework to guide inclusive practice and measurable success remains lacking. Here, we propose a demand-oriented framework in which the priorities and demands of diverse actors centrally inform both ecosystem restoration evaluation and future planning. For evaluation, actors' demands for nature's contributions to people (NCPs) drive the selection of social and ecological indicators, baseline references, and assessment of outcomes and beneficiaries, enabling cross-site and cross-actor comparisons of restoration effectiveness. For planning, explicit recognition of restoration demand, defined as 'who wants which kind of restoration, at which places, and for which reasons', can help to identify the overlaps in preferred locations, goals, practices, involvement, and tenure. Therefore, this new framework highlights that systematically integrating diverse actors' demands enables holistic assessment and locally supported project design, enhancing restoration sustainability and maximizing long-term benefits for biodiversity, climate resilience, and human well-being. By making demands visible and comparable across actors and sites, the framework supports negotiation of trade-offs, redesign of interventions, and adaptive management over time, strengthening legitimacy and uptake by implementing organisations and authorities.

ID 50 Co-producing restoration knowledge in practice: collaboration and capacity building lessons from Demand4Restoration project

Estelle Raveloaritiana, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract: Ecosystem restoration increasingly depends on transdisciplinary research that is legitimate to local actors and usable for implementation. Yet, effective collaboration across practitioners, researchers, and students remains challenging because knowledge is distributed across institutions and lived experiences, shaped by unequal resources, language barriers, and diverging timelines. In this presentation, I will share practices and lessons learned from the Demand4Restoration project in Madagascar, synthesising field-based insights from interdisciplinary data collection by integrating ecological measurements with social-ecological interviews across 30 villages in three regions in Madagascar. First, I will show how early and continuous co-design of research questions, indicators, and field protocols with implementing practitioners and Malagasy partners strengthened relevance, improved feasibility, reduced one-way 'data extraction', and strengthened shared ownership of research. Second, I will describe approaches to support equitable teamwork and data quality under real-world constraints, including transparent role definitions, bilingual field routines, iterative training, and collaborative problem-solving during fieldwork. Third, I will highlight capacity-building strategies that treat fieldwork as a learning platform: hands-on mentoring for students and early-career researchers, shared supervision across institutions, and feedback loops that enable partners to refine methods and co-interpret results. I will discuss challenges, including mismatched expectations about "research versus action", uneven access to equipment and time, and collaboration costs. I will propose mitigation strategies focused on adaptive project governance and negotiating roles, benefits, and timelines. Collaboration shapes indicator choice, field protocols, and evidence meaning. These practices support legitimate and equitable restoration research partnerships in crisis-prone contexts.

ID 70 **Fair Shares? Local Perceptions of Benefit Sharing in Nature-Based Carbon and PES Projects in Peru and Kenya**

Dominique Schmid, Wyss Academy for Nature at the University of Bern, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Marieke van der Zon**, International Potato Center, Peru
- **Catherine Machungo**, Wyss Academy, Kenya

Abstract: Nature-based carbon and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) projects are reshaping land-use practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), often in exchange for monetary or in-kind benefits. These interventions rely on benefit-sharing mechanisms (BSMs) that translate global conservation, climate, and market-based logics into local contexts. In practice, however, BSMs intersect with diverse indigenous, local, and practical knowledge systems, raising questions of fairness, legitimacy, and power in how benefits are defined and distributed. While scholars and practitioners emphasize the need for locally embedded and co-designed BSMs, little comparative research examines how IPLCs themselves perceive fairness and legitimacy in these arrangements. Local justice norms are shaped by histories, land tenure regimes, social relations, and lived experience, and may diverge from externally defined allocation logics. Tensions between these knowledge systems can undermine trust, participation, and long-term project outcomes. Drawing on nearly 450 qualitative interviews across 16 PES and carbon projects in Peru and Kenya, this study explores how local understandings of fair benefit sharing vary across communal and individual land tenure systems, and how these perceptions interact with governance structures and social differentiation. Preliminary findings suggest that many respondents favor hybrid approaches combining individual performance-based incentives with recognition of vulnerability or historical stewardship. At the same time, such arrangements can reproduce inequalities or enable elite capture when power imbalances in decision-making and knowledge translation remain unaddressed. The findings highlight the importance of dialogue between indigenous, scientific, and practice-based knowledge systems for designing legitimate and resilient benefit-sharing mechanisms in nature-based solutions implemented in contexts of social and environmental pressure.

PS 7 **Paper Session | 11:15-12:45**

Institutions and Innovation: Scaling Research, Absorbing Change

ID 33 **From Potential to Practice: Evaluating Engineering-Based Carbon Dioxide Removal Pathways for Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa**

David Mugendi, Nuvoni Centre for Research, Kenya

Co-Presenters:

- **Elsie Onsongo**, Nuvoni Centre for Research and Innovation, Kenya
- **Stella Khaoya**, Nuvoni Centre for Research and Innovation, Kenya

Abstract: Engineering-based carbon dioxide removal (CDR) is increasingly recognised as a necessary complement to emissions reduction in meeting long-term climate goals. Technologies such as direct air capture, biochar, enhanced rock weathering, mineral carbonation, and bio-energy with carbon capture offer durable and measurable carbon removal potential. However, most evidence guiding their development comes from high-income contexts, creating uncertainty about how these approaches perform in Sub-Saharan Africa, where institutional capacity, resource constraints, and development priorities strongly shape outcomes. This paper examines how engineering-based CDR can move from theoretical potential to practical, development-relevant implementation across Sub-Saharan Africa. Using a cross-project perspective, it analyses CDR initiatives implemented or piloted across multiple African contexts. An Africa-adapted evaluation framework integrates technical performance criteria with development-relevant dimensions such as institutional readiness, infrastructure and energy access, land and water constraints, social acceptance, equity, and carbon market access. Drawing on project documentation and surveys of carbon project developers, complemented by expert interviews, the study shows that institutional and market conditions are as critical as technical feasibility. The findings highlight pathways for aligning CDR with sustainable development through locally grounded, inclusive, and context-sensitive approaches

ID 41 When technology transfer goes both ways: realities of piloting circular water systems in South Africa and Switzerland

Devi Bühler, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland

Abstract: This contribution reflects on lessons learned from seven years of technology transfer between Switzerland and South Africa in the field of circular water systems. The experience includes not only North–South but also South–North learning and technology transfer, which emerged as a relevant success factor. Within the scope of several applied research projects in Switzerland and South Africa, funded by REPIC and BAFU, among others, a low-tech biofilter-based greywater and blackwater treatment and reuse technology was developed. In South Africa, this included the development of a water- and energy-self-sufficient laundromat, as well as containerised greywater and blackwater treatment units for the treatment and reuse of wastewater from water-flush toilets and showers in an informal settlement. These systems were designed as off-grid solutions based on local water reuse for non-potable applications. By reducing dependence on external water supply systems, the projects strengthen local resilience and increase community autonomy in water service provision. In Switzerland, similar pilots were tested in a living-lab context, including the KREIS-Haus, a lighthouse project for sustainable building practices. After a brief presentation of the projects, this contribution will focus on lessons learned from implementation and operation across both contexts. It provides an unmasked insight into the practical realities of piloting circular water systems, particularly in challenging environments such as informal settlements. For example, implementing security measures requires finding a balance between technical effectiveness and social acceptance. As such, community engagement is not an add-on but a core technical requirement. Challenges at the interface of academia

and practice are addressed, along with how minor technical faults often escalate into major operational problems.

ID 29 Mapping Global Value Capture in Carbon Crediting Projects

Niklas Stolz, ETH Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract: Carbon offsetting mechanisms promise to mitigate climate change and provide economic development opportunities, yet their actual economic impacts are poorly understood. Here, we leverage large language models to identify and analyze a global network of organizations involved in 600 carbon crediting projects worldwide, capturing 2,706 unique organizations, 4,350 network ties, and 1,527 interactions with local value chains. Large, well-connected organizations that control carbon rights and services capture the most value. However, value capture by local organizations varies significantly: in Africa, 70% of carbon service providers are located outside the continent (mainly in Europe and North America), compared to 39% in Latin America and 12% in Asia. Further, we show that carbon projects' land tenure arrangements strongly impact outcomes for local stakeholders. Projects maintaining unchanged land tenure improve existing local value chains in 62% of cases, while projects with changed land tenure restrict them in 67% of cases.

RT 5 Roundtable | 11:15–12:45

Debugging digital extension: managing knowledge, autonomy and data in transdisciplinary agroforestry scaling

Lead: Christian Andres, ETH Zurich, Switzerland and Felix Ofori Tetteh, OPC (Obrobibini Peace Complex), Ghana

Roundtable participants:

- **Research:** agroecology / digital agriculture (ETH Zurich, partners)
- **Practice:** extension or NGO representative (optimally from Ghana)
- **Policy or programme perspective** (e.g. SOR4D / development cooperation)
- **Farmer-facing intermediary** (cooperative or trainer perspective)
- **Early-career researcher or PhD/postdoc** (methodological reflection)

Abstract: Digital tools are widely promoted as scalable solutions for agricultural extension in low and middle income countries. Yet once advisory content becomes platformised, questions arise about how knowledge is shaped, whose expertise is prioritised, and how user data are governed. Rather than treating digitalisation as a neutral efficiency gain, this roundtable invites practice oriented reflection on how digital extension tools can be designed, governed and “debugged” within transdisciplinary research for development settings.

The discussion draws on early experiences from an ETH led cocoa agroforestry initiative in Ghana, where an offline first mobile extension app is being co developed to support uptake of Dynamic Agroforestry practices. The tool is embedded in demonstration hubs and a trans-disciplinary innovation platform involving researchers, extension officers, farmer organisations and NGOs. Although empirical evidence is still emerging, iterative design cycles have already surfaced tensions relevant far beyond this project.

The roundtable will explore three guiding questions:

- Knowledge and autonomy: How can digital advisory tools strengthen situated learning and farmer experimentation instead of narrowing ecological reasoning through standardised content?
- Data governance: What minimal, transparent and fair data practices are realistic in small-holder focused digital interventions, and how can extractive dynamics be anticipated or prevented?
- Scaling with care: How can digital tools help spread agroecological innovations while ensuring local ownership, inclusion and institutional anchoring, for example in training curricula or extension systems?

Short statements from researchers and practitioner partners will introduce the session, followed by open discussion. The aim is to distil practical design principles, governance considerations and open dilemmas for teams experimenting with digital tools under real world pressures.

WS 4 **Workshop | 11:15–12:45**

The Real-world lab workshop: Challenges of scaling-up agroecology

Lead: **Emilie Cremin**, University of Lausanne, Switzerland | **Jinat Hossain**, University of Bern, Christophe Gironde, IHEID | **Shirisha Junuthula**, CSA, and Lucile Mougeat, UNIGE

Co-Presenter:

- **Jinat Hossain**, University of Bern, Switzerland

Abstract: This workshop will involve participants in reflecting on the challenges small farmers face in many parts of the world when willing to implement agroecological solutions. Participants will review the laws and policies governing land access. They will experiment with the challenges posed by environmental situations, socio-economic conditions, and power relations underpinning the governance of land and water, access to bio-inputs, value addition to their products, and access to consumers and the market. The game is set within multiple disruptive risks (climate change as a ‘wicked problem’) in different spaces and places.

PS 8 **Paper Session | 13:45–15:15**

Building Climate Resilience: Bridging Local Knowledge and Science-Based Solutions

ID 16 Co-creating Climate Adaptation Strategies with Pastoralists in Northern Kenya: A Transdisciplinary Model

Babere Chacha, Laikipia University, Kenya

Abstract: Pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya inhabit some of Africa's most climate-vulnerable landscapes, where intensifying droughts, resource scarcity, and conflict undermine livelihoods and ecological stability. While extensive research has documented these challenges, conventional top-down adaptation interventions often fail because they overlook pastoralists' own knowledge systems, mobility patterns, governance structures, and risk-management strategies. This paper presents a transdisciplinary model for co-creating climate adaptation strategies with pastoralist groups in Marsabit, Isiolo, and Turkana counties, demonstrating how integrating local ecological knowledge with scientific climate insights can generate more legitimate, effective, and scalable solutions. Using collaborative fieldwork conducted with elders, women's groups, herders, local climate forecasters, and county administrators, the study employed participatory mapping, scenario modelling, and community-driven systems analysis to identify adaptive practices grounded in lived experience. The findings show that pastoralists possess sophisticated climate indicators such as star reading, animal behaviour, and landscape observation that align with and enrich meteorological projections. Co-produced strategies emerging from this process include negotiated grazing corridors, hybrid early-warning systems, drought-resilient fodder banks, and women-led rangeland restoration initiatives. By bridging scientific, indigenous, and policy knowledge, the model illustrates how adaptation planning can shift from extractive data-gathering to genuine partnership and shared governance. The approach offers a scalable template for other climate-stressed regions seeking equitable, co-designed solutions in contexts of high uncertainty

ID 20 Governing the commons: an ethnographic exploration of local adaptation response to complex global problems

Samiya Selim, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

Co-Presenter:

- **Nurul Islam**, Sajida Foundation, Bangladesh

Abstract: Coastal communities in the Sundarbans delta of Bangladesh face complex and intersecting challenges arising from climate change-induced sea-level rise, recurrent cyclones, saline intrusion, and development-driven transformations of land and water systems. These environmental stresses are further compounded by policy failures, the expansion of commercial shrimp aquaculture, and local power asymmetries that undermine subsistence livelihoods. Drawing on ethnographic research and pilot intervention solutions co-developed with community, this paper

examines how smallholding and subsistence farmers in coastal Bangladesh articulate and defend preferred adaptive livelihoods – particularly freshwater aquaculture and agroecological farming – through engagement with localized governance and market systems. The findings demonstrate that local communities interpret and respond to climate risks through plural “riskscapes” that often diverge from state-led, technocratic adaptation approaches. Rather than relying on relocation or large-scale infrastructural solutions, the findings underscore the effectiveness of participatory governance, and the integration of traditional ecological knowledge in fostering socio-ecological resilience. The paper further situates these findings within a broader transdisciplinary perspective on improving market linkages for agriproducts, the shared importance of restoring commons, repairing socio-ecological relationships, and re-centering community stewardship through bottom-up governance frameworks. By bridging ethnography, political ecology, climate science, and development policy, this study advances transdisciplinary global development research, demonstrating how place-based knowledge, participatory institutions, and cross-regional learning can generate equitable and sustainable adaptation pathways for climate-vulnerable communities.

ID 28 Rooted in Reality: Critical Contextualization of Nature-based Solutions in Coastal Areas of Bangladesh

Md Faisal Imran, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

Co-Presenter:

- **Samiya Selim**, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

Abstract: This study critically evaluates the effectiveness and adherence of integrated farming in coastal Bangladesh as a Nature-based Solutions (NbS) intervention using the IUCN’s Global Standard for NbS. The study also evaluates quality of evidence of the implementing organization (an NGO), motivation in adopting NbS as its core strategy, and issues considered to mainstream NbS. The research employed a series of qualitative methods combining content analysis, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs), complemented by validation sessions. Findings reveal that the NbS intervention effectively addressed societal challenges, but there remain opportunities to improve in certain key areas, such as ensuring net gain in biodiversity. The project also lacks knowledge mobilisation for wider impact, such as assisting others in designing NbS. However, the NGO’s motivation lies in contribution to global challenges, branding a new concept like NbS, taking a leadership role, and highlighting the tangible benefits. But, limited focus on biodiversity remains a critical aspect that underscores a need for place-based implementation and documentation. The study suggests that, if scientists want policymakers to choose the best evidence for a policy, they need to communicate more clearly, strategically, and frequently. Organizations also need to re-evaluate the nexus between ‘society and nature’ and shift in organizational commitments investing in appropriate staffing, capacity development, and adaptive management throughout the programming. Finally, we found a lack in proper guidelines adopting a new concept, like NbS, in policies and its utilization. This would enable policymakers for effective supervision, allow NGOs to implement intervention, and provide researchers to assess the effectiveness of emerging concepts.

ID 42 **A Toolbox for climate-resilient development of Armenian communities: Initial results and lessons learned**

Raphael Portmann, Planval Partners AG, Switzerland

Co-Presenters:

- **Sebastian Bellwald**, Planval Partners AG, Switzerland
- **Thomas Probst**, Planval Partners AG, Switzerland
- **Lusine Nalbandyan**, Shen NGO, Armenia
- **Anahit Navasardyan**, Shen NGO, Armenia
- **Ashot Sargsyan**, ARNAP, Armenia
- **Ara Barseghyan**, ARNAP, Armenia
- **Dominik Braunschweiger**, WSL, Switzerland
- **Marco Pütz**, WSL, Switzerland

Abstract: Within the framework of the Forest Restoration and Climate Change in Armenia (FORACCA) project we are developing a toolbox to support climate-resilient development in Armenian communities. The toolbox combines a series of participatory workshops with structured planning resources to assist local governments and institutions in designing effective responses to climate change risks. The pragmatic approach facilitates the identification of key climate-related risks and opportunities by integrating local knowledge with community-specific climate impact profiles, which are based on newly developed climate scenarios. Building on this foundation, the toolbox supports the co-development of concrete climate adaptation projects and helps communities identify appropriate funding opportunities. The toolbox is being developed and tested with eight Armenian communities between 2024 and 2028, after which it will be made available to communities across Armenia. In this presentation, we reflect on lessons learned from the first two pilot communities, Aparan and Larnavan, and discuss implications for scaling the approach more broadly. The Forest Restoration and Climate Change in Armenia (FORACCA) project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The project is implemented by the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow, and Landscape Research (WSL) in collaboration with Planval, the Armenian National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (ARNAP), Zoï Environment Network and Shen NGO as well as the Forest Alliance of Armenia.

ID 93 **Bridging Science and Practice for Local Climate Resilient Development in Armenia**

Marco Pütz, Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL, Switzerland

Co-Presenter:

- **Raphael Portmann**, Planval Partners AG, Bern, Switzerland

Abstract: This presentation highlights how local climate-resilient development thrives through science-practice dialogue, using the transdisciplinary “Forest Restoration and Climate Change in Armenia (FORACCA)” project, funded by Swiss Development and Cooperation, as a case study. FORACCA merges cutting-edge climate science with participatory approaches to bolster resilience at national and local levels. We operate through two complementary components: (i) enhancing climate services and knowledge for public institutions, NGOs, academia, and pri-

vate stakeholders to inform policy and practice; and (ii) empowering local communities to design and implement climate change adaptation measures. Central to the project's success is the development of high-resolution climate services, including regionally downscaled climate scenarios at 1 km² resolution using the CHELSA model in collaboration with the Armenian hydrological and meteorological office (Armhydromet) and MeteoSwiss. These scenarios inform local climate impact profiles for all Armenian communities, assessing risks to infrastructure, agriculture, health, and disaster management. Institutional capacity is further enhanced through MeteoSwiss's peer review of Armhydromet, aligned with WMO's Hydromet diagnostics framework. Practical implementation centers on a toolbox for climate-resilient local development, co-created and piloted in eight communities through three participatory workshops each. Stakeholders collaboratively define and implement adaptation measures that reduce vulnerability and poverty. To ensure scalability, we deliver training materials and online courses for community staff, alongside educational resources. These materials enable additional communities to independently adopt the toolbox, fostering long-term resilience. The project demonstrates how integrating scientific rigor with local expertise yields scalable, impactful climate adaptation solutions, serving as a global model for similar initiatives.

PS 9 *Paper Session | 13:45–15:15*

Creative & Participatory Methods for Knowledge Co-Production

ID 61 **Beyond consultation: gaming approaches for knowledge co-production and power-sensitive stakeholder engagement**

Matthew Weaver, Rhodes University, South Africa

Abstract: Water scarcity and competing demands characterise contested catchments globally. Traditional top-down management fails to address multi-stakeholder contexts where power dynamics, diverse knowledge systems, and competing interests shape allocation decisions. Meaningful participation requires deliberate facilitation that addresses power imbalances and enables knowledge co-production across scientific, local, and practitioner knowledge systems. We present lessons from applying simulation games as transdisciplinary planning tools across Europe and South Africa. Using the Wat-A-Game toolkit, we show how role-playing games facilitate co-learning, build shared understanding, and support inclusive decision-making. This approach creates a neutral space where traditional hierarchies can be temporarily suspended, enabling marginalised voices to contribute alongside experts and decision-makers. Engagement quality depends on facilitation practice that promotes social learning and epistemic justice (respect for knowledge and knower diversity). Interventions, including translation, deliberate grouping strategies, and creating equal participation opportunities, determine whether processes achieve equitable outcomes or reproduce inequalities. Intentional development of a common vocabulary strengthens engagement and outcome quality in contexts where wide stakeholder knowledge discrepancies and language diversity

exist. Applications in catchments in South Africa and France enabled conflicting stakeholders to identify shared visions balancing social, economic, and environmental needs. Time management, stakeholder diversity, translation issues, and entrenched hierarchies reveal ongoing constraints. This transdisciplinary work shows that skilled facilitation and appropriate tools enable conflicting water users to co-develop solutions, offering practical pathways for inclusive planning that legitimises diverse knowledge forms and supports adaptive management in contested contexts.

ID 84 Navigating barriers: Visual dialects as transformative solutions in a climate-vulnerable delta

Jenia Mukherjee, IIT Kharagpur, India

Co-Presenter:

- **Pratyasha Nath**, Global Center of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability, TU-Berlin, Germany

Abstract: Recent scholarship has established the importance of ethno-visual methods such as photo-elicitation exercises, photo voices, and participatory visual designs in transdisciplinary socio-ecological research. However, implemented by academic researchers, these methods fail to incorporate unmediated voices of local communities. In SOR4D ENGAGE4Sundarbans project on social resilience, visually illustrated knowledge products emerged as communication outputs, co-created by transdisciplinary stakeholders. Through equitable knowledge exchanges between islanders of Kumirmari (Indian Sundarbans), academia, and national-level fishery scientists, inland fishing experimentation has been pursued as an alternative disaster adaptive livelihood practice against risky forest fishing. The scientific content emerged in-situ through multi-stakeholder workshops, blending best practices of local pisciculture practices with mainstream limnology. Joint pond experiments showed a 6.6x growth in fish biomass, igniting the enthusiasm of islanders, who expressed their need for illustration-enriched training guides and jointly worked with artists, offering suggestions on place-based choice of colours, pigments, and other visual components. Moreover, the efficacy of appropriate visual dialect in scientific outreach material was established by women, who considered visual storytelling as an effective format over conventionally designed training manuals. Thus, ENGAGE established that adopting a coproduced visual dialect helps to overcome epistemic asymmetries such as literacy and language barriers, ensuring that communication tools are accessible and actionable. We argue that ethno-visual co-creation is an epistemological, praxis-oriented imperative for effective transdisciplinary research. By centering the importance of a gendered visual dialect, participatory initiatives made way for epistemic equity, overcoming literacy and power barriers to coproduce scalable, resilient solutions.

ID 63 Local Innovations for Sustainable Farming – The SCALAGRO Project Experience in India

Shirisha Junuthula, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, India

Co-Presenters:

- **G V, Ramanjaneyulu**, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, India
- **Divya Veluguri**, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA), India
- **Christophe Gironde**, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Switzerland

Abstract: Indian agriculture faces ecological degradation, rising input costs, and farmer distress. How can agroecological transitions be facilitated in semi-arid regions? What interventions address structural barriers constraining Natural Farming beyond awareness? SCALAGRO was implemented by CSA across six villages in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana using participatory methods including focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and participatory rural appraisal to understand farmer motivations and barriers while testing field-level interventions. Six pilots targeted documented constraints: Bio-Input Resource Centres localized input production overcoming livestock scarcity and labour burden; Indigenous Poultry Systems enhanced women's income and organic inputs while addressing gender inequities; Livestock Revolving Fund enabled collective cattle access for input production; Community water management built climate resilience; Market support through Sahaja Aharam provided price premiums addressing market failure; Policy advocacy contributed to regulatory reforms. Effective scaling requires local ownership over awareness campaigns, gender-inclusive approaches recognizing women's labour but limited authority, market engagement creating price differentiation, addressing structural constraints (livestock, labour, water) not just technical knowledge, risk-sharing during transitions, and visible demonstrations building trust. Plans include impact evaluation, scaling successful pilots, strengthening value chains with assured procurement, gender-responsive training expansion, policy advocacy for market restructuring, landscape-level transitions, and establishing revolving funds at scale, aligning with FAO's agroecology principles.

ID 106 Exploring new methods: Mobile museums as low-threshold spaces for knowledge transfer, exchange and participatory research

Amon Mugume, Uganda National Museum, Uganda

Co-Presenters:

- **Moses Kasure**, Igongo Cultural Center, Uganda
- **Yahaya Sekagya**, PROMETRA, Uganda
- **Godwin Anywar**, Makerere University, Uganda
- **Mauda Kamatenesi**, Mamita Foundation and Training Centre, Uganda
- **Nelson Abit**, Uganda Museums, Uganda
- **Jacqueline Grigo**, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- **Thomas Laely**, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- **Manuela Dahinden**, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- **Caroline S. Weckerle**, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract: As part of our collaborative research and exhibition project 'Traditional Medicine in Transition; The role of museums as agents of change for effective, safe, culturally embedded, and sustainable knowledge transfer in Uganda', we utilize mobile museums, among other things. This enables us to communicate our research findings (including those relating to effective and safe herbal medicine knowledge, sustainable plant use and the diversity of cultural practices) in an innovative and attractive format, even in remote regions of the country. The format thus overcomes both geographical and social boundaries, as the rural population in Uganda usually has little or no knowledge of or access to museums. However, the mobile exhibitions not only serve as places of knowledge transfer, but also as interactive platforms and contact zones for cultural negotiations (Chipangura, Mataga 2021) – as well as participatory research spaces. Through interactive teaching units, discussions

and the direct inclusion of local perspectives, it brings different knowledge systems into dialogue. Our partner museums in Uganda consider the transmission and vitality of cultural heritage to be an important prerequisite for the positive development of the country. The mobile museums bring a lot of chances. However, their realization and implementation in a country with difficult infrastructural conditions also poses numerous challenges. In a short video, we would like to share our practical experiences as well as our initial findings on the benefits of mobile museums as a research method.

RT 6 **Roundtable | 13:45–15:15**

Nutrition by Design: Making Health Outcomes Explicit in Agroecology

Lead: **Cornelia Speich**, SwissTPH, Switzerland

Roundtable participants:

- **Johan Six**, Sustainable Agroecosystems Group ETH Zurich, Switzerland
- **Alessandra Roversi**, SDC Health and Food, Switzerland
- **Elizabeth Imbo**, Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Africa / Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) Project, Kenya
- **Rita Wegmüller**, GroundWork, Switzerland
- **Céline Termote**, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, Kenya

Abstract: High dietary quality is essential to prevent all forms of malnutrition and supports health, growth, development, and well-being while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other detrimental food system externalities. Agroecology produces food in a way that restores ecosystems, strengthens farmers' livelihoods, and interlinks positively with animal welfare, WASH and One Health to build resilient communities – without sacrificing long-term productivity. While many agroecological and livelihood interventions contribute to better diets, nutrition quality and health benefits are often assumed rather than clearly defined, measured, or communicated in food systems projects. This session addresses the persistent disconnect between food production and nutrition and health outcomes, asking how agroecological initiatives can more explicitly integrate nutritional value into their advocacy, design and evaluation. Combining brief participant inputs with guided discussion among NICE project stakeholders and external experts from ETH, SDC and Biovision, we will explore solutions to mitigate power imbalances in food system knowledge production and projects to make agroecology advocacy more inclusive through nutrition quality and health benefits clearly defined, measured, and communicated, and not only assumed. Following the examples of superfoods such as traditional African Leafy Vegetables in Kenya, we open an interdisciplinary dialogue between agroecology and nutrition science, identifying how to mutually integrate each other into research in order to support inclusive food system policies with evidence.

WS 5 **Workshop | 13:45–15:15**

Living Labs and Data Ecosystems: Governance and Innovation in Artisanal Gold Mining in the Amazon Forest

Lead: **Fernando Fernandez**, Wyss Academy, Switzerland and Peru

Co-Presenters:

- **Carla Koch**, Wyss Academy for Nature, Switzerland
- **Tatjana Von Steiger**, Wyss Academy for Nature, Switzerland
-

Panelists:

- **Lucila Huanca**, Red de Mujeres MAPE
- **Sebastian Landazuri**, Innova Sports
- **Joel Lozano**, Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM)
- **Alexander Van Geen**, Columbia University
- **Bruno Regli**, GeoBlock
- **Elisabeth (Lisa) Bürgi**, Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)
- **Alessia Sironi**, Valcambi,
- **Vilma Contreras**, AMATAF

Live translation Spanish–English by Sandra Müller.

Abstract: The workshop addresses how transdisciplinary research can move from evidence generation to implementation in crisis-affected contexts, using artisanal and small-scale gold mining in Madre de Dios as a living-lab case.

The workshop objectives are:

- Illustrate how a living lab generates a shared data ecosystem in a crisis-affected development context
- Reflect on how scientific, local, institutional, and market knowledge can be integrated to support governance and innovation
- Identify enabling conditions and barriers for translating evidence into implementation and scale
- Extract transferable lessons for solution-oriented, transdisciplinary research beyond the artisanal gold mining sector

The workshop will use an interactive, co-creation format with the goal of showing how diverse streams of evidence can be organized into a data ecosystem that enables implementation and transformation. Short framing inputs will situate the living-lab approach and summarize key empirical insights. Participants will then work in small groups to examine how different forms of data are currently produced and used, where fragmentation or blind spots remain, and how scientific, local, institutional, and market knowledge can be connected to support governance and innovation. A plenary synthesis will translate these discussions into concrete design principles.

Expected results include a shared understanding of how data ecosystems can be generated through living labs, practical principles for linking evidence to action in crisis contexts, and lessons that are transferable to other sectors facing complex sustainability challenges.

Panel discussion | 15:45–17:15

From Reflection to Direction: What we require from transdisciplinary research for development in and for the Global South

Moderation: **Martina Schmidt**

Panelists:

- **Mumbi Maria Wachira**, Strathmore University Business School, Kenya
- **Jenia Mukherjee**, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Kharagpur
- **Miguel Saravia**, Regional Stewardship Hub South America, Wyss Academy for Nature
- **Devi Bühler**, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland

Abstract: This closing panel brings together representatives from research and practice to reflect on key lessons emerging from the SOR4D programme and conference. Moving beyond project-level experiences, the discussion will explore what different actors expect from transdisciplinary research for development, where its most important contributions lie, and where limitations and trade-offs need to be acknowledged. Panelists will share their aspirations for the future of research-for-development and engage in a dialogue on questions of collaboration, power-dynamics, knowledge co-production, and impact. Insights collected through the conference Reflection Wall will be introduced as a collective voice from participants, providing both evidence and challenge for the discussion. The session aims to synthesize learning, surface tensions and convergences across perspectives, and identify directions for strengthening transdisciplinary research in and for the Global South regarding its future orientation.

Conference Photo Exhibition

Curator: **Elena Subach**, independent visual artist, photographer and curator, Ukraine

Exhibition team:

- **Elena Subach**, independent visual artist, photographer and curator, Ukraine
- **Julia Vorotnyak**, Center for Social and Labour Research, Ukraine
- **Nina Potarska**, Center for Social and Labour Research, Ukraine
- **Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos**, Geneva Graduate Institute, Switzerland
- **Yuliia Soroka**, Kharkiv National Karazin University, Ukraine
- **Elisabeth Prugl**, Geneva Graduate Institute, Switzerland

Photograph authors:

- Women and men from Lviv and Kharkiv who took part in the Photovoice exercise as part of the SOR4D project “Caring to Survive, Surviving to Care”

Abstract: When wars destroy lives and communities, what does it take to rebuild them? This is the question that animates the “Caring to Survive, Surviving to Care” project, supported under

the SOR4D grant scheme, which examines (post-)war recovery in Ukraine through a feminist lens, paying particular attention to the place of care work in it. The answers – partially reflected in the photographs – are sometimes surprising: care, community, memory. Aspects of rebuilding are often forgotten by official policies.

The photographs presented in this exhibition are a small sample of photos taken by 14 participants-photographers who took part in a Photovoice exercise. The photographers are Ukrainians living in Lviv and Kharkiv and carrying out care responsibilities despite the war. The photographs reflect their everyday life, labour of care, and the feelings of pain, loss and hope. They provide glimpses of destruction and suffering caused by the Russian aggression, the constant and often invisible labour of caring that carries on despite the war but also hope and inspiration that caring and being cared for brings to Ukrainians. The captions were developed through a conversation that took place among the photographers and the researchers of the project.

Conference Reflection Walls

Lead: **Cornelia Hett**

Cartoonist:

- **Karl Herweg**, science communicator, cartoonist, and Associated Senior Research Scientist, University of Bern, Switzerland

The Conference Reflection Walls are four interactive spaces where participants can share key insights, questions, and reflections emerging from conference sessions. Guided by thematic prompts and complemented by cartoons, they encourage collective learning and critical reflection on 1) research and knowledge production, 2) linking research to practice and achieving societal impact, 3) research collaboration and partnerships, and 4) challenges and uncomfortable insights of a interdisciplinary research approach. Contributions gathered throughout the conference will inform the final panel discussion of the conference.