

SWISSAID 

No. 3/17

# SPIEGEL



**2016 ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**9 COUNTRIES, 138 PROJECTS:**

**THERE TO STAY**

What fates and changes are hidden  
behind the figures?



## Help on the ground – for people to help themselves



**“Many rely on their own efforts, provide for their own needs and market their produce locally.”**

Who is being left cold by the misery of refugees on the fringes of Europe? Despite the endless conflict in Syria and the bitter tragedies in Mediterranean, we should not lose sight of one thing, there are many poor people in the southern hemisphere who are helping themselves. They rely on their own efforts, provide for their own needs and market their produce locally. They draw upon their own

resources to develop their existence. They participate in the political life of their village and they battle for their future. SWISSAID is on hand – to help them help themselves on the ground.

Our partners use small, local initiatives. In Africa, Latin America and Asia, there are schools of agriculture and cooperatives, women's organisations and village self-help groups building a well or operating a grain bank. They try out new cultivation methods and seek to distance themselves from relying on the expensive industrial seeds produced by agricultural corporations by employing ecological farming techniques instead.

It costs less money to use fewer pesticides. A good mix of different produce provides safeguards against shortages of food and hunger. Diversity in farming offers protection against natural disasters triggered by drought, heavy rainfall and soil erosion.

Groups able to organise themselves at local level are also better placed to champion their own concerns politically. Better schools, a network of local roads, a functioning water supply and first-aid posts are vital for survival outside the major cities.

SWISSAID attaches particular importance to the involvement of women in running projects. They are an important target group for improvements in farming. Our objective is to adopt a very natural approach to growing produce and to enrich the fertility of soil with compost, natural fertiliser or kitchen waste. People do not have to flee their homeland in order to create a secure future for themselves.

Best wishes

Rudolf Rechsteiner, economist  
SWISSAID President

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“Our umbrella organisation did great work.”

2016 was an important year for international cooperation because Parliament considered the Federal Council Dispatch and announced the financial framework for 2017 to 2020. Unfortunately, we charities had to focus our attention primarily on the financial framework that had to be defended. Funding had already been cut sharply with the package of savings imposed by the Federal Council; they had originally envisaged making a quarter (!) of their savings in international cooperation. The target passed by Parliament of spending 0.5% of gross national income on tackling poverty was therefore no longer achieved.

### Blowing hot and cold

Paradoxically, those voices that are calling for “help on the ground” and who wish to reduce the number of

refugees or migrants coming to Switzerland are also calling for a reduction in long-term development cooperation. Alliance Sud has performed a huge amount of work, however: Our umbrella organisation, which also launched a petition entitled “Wake-up call in the fight against hunger and poverty”, attended



parliament, gave an objective and committed account of the huge importance of development aid and, working with others, ensured that the motions to reduce funding were not carried by the majority.

Some members of parliament have called for development cooperation to be linked to migration policy. This makes sense if the causes of migration – poverty and loss of prospects – are tackled sustainably. However, migration-policy demands to states that benefit from development aid are less promising. Switzerland plays too small a part in the political life of most countries to be able to assert any pressure. And above all else, this does not serve the interests of the group that aid is aimed at, the poorest people. They should be central to this and should benefit from the development work done in Switzerland.

## STRATEGY PROCESS LAUNCHED

Where will we be at the end of 2024? What direction do we want to be taking, what role will we be playing and what objectives will we achieve? In view of the rapid global changes, unforeseeable political, economic or social developments and major challenges in international cooperation, these questions are not easy. Therefore, seeking answers, we launched a strategy process which got under way in 2016 with environmental analyses and programme audits (turn to page 16 to read more).

We should have agreed upon our major objectives by the end of 2017, and they will be refined the following year in the national programmes. One thing that is clear is that we will build upon our strengths and continue to support courageous non-governmental organisations in seeking to plot their own way out of poverty and in campaigning for more equality. For lasting changes (CM)

**CAROLINE MOREL,**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
SWISSAID AND PRESIDENT  
OF ALLIANCE SUD

# SWISSAID at a glance

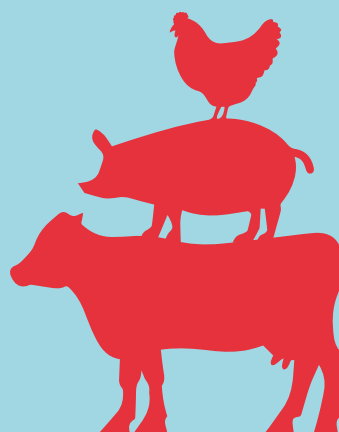
Figures speak volumes, and behind every figure there are countless fates, tears of joy and great effort which have all had a decisive impact thanks to the self-help projects. Every donation counts – a thousand thanks!



## 29,703

Adults and children are able to drink clean water or keep their fields and gardens watered.

Parents no longer have to worry about the health of their children; girls can have an education instead of having to fetch water; and women can hold down another job. And thanks to the economical use of irrigation in fields and gardens, the harvest lasts all year round.



## 61 livestock banks

have been founded, expanded or managed. Anyone who is a member of a livestock bank gives a proportion of the young livestock to needy families in the village every year so as to ensure that everyone ultimately benefits from the blessing of livestock.



## 1,382 women's groups

received special support, whether it be as farmers, local politicians or traders. Women have had greater success in taking that first step, as well as the second one, towards a better future.



## 8,627 men

actively attended a workshop aimed at preventing violence within the family and suppressing the rampant macho culture that exists in Latin America.

## Project sponsorships

Year	Sponsors
2016	503
2015	400

**503** sponsors for women's projects

Year	Sponsors
2016	436
2015	350

**436** sponsors for organic projects

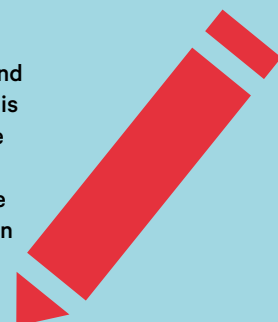
Year	Sponsors
2016	170
2015	150

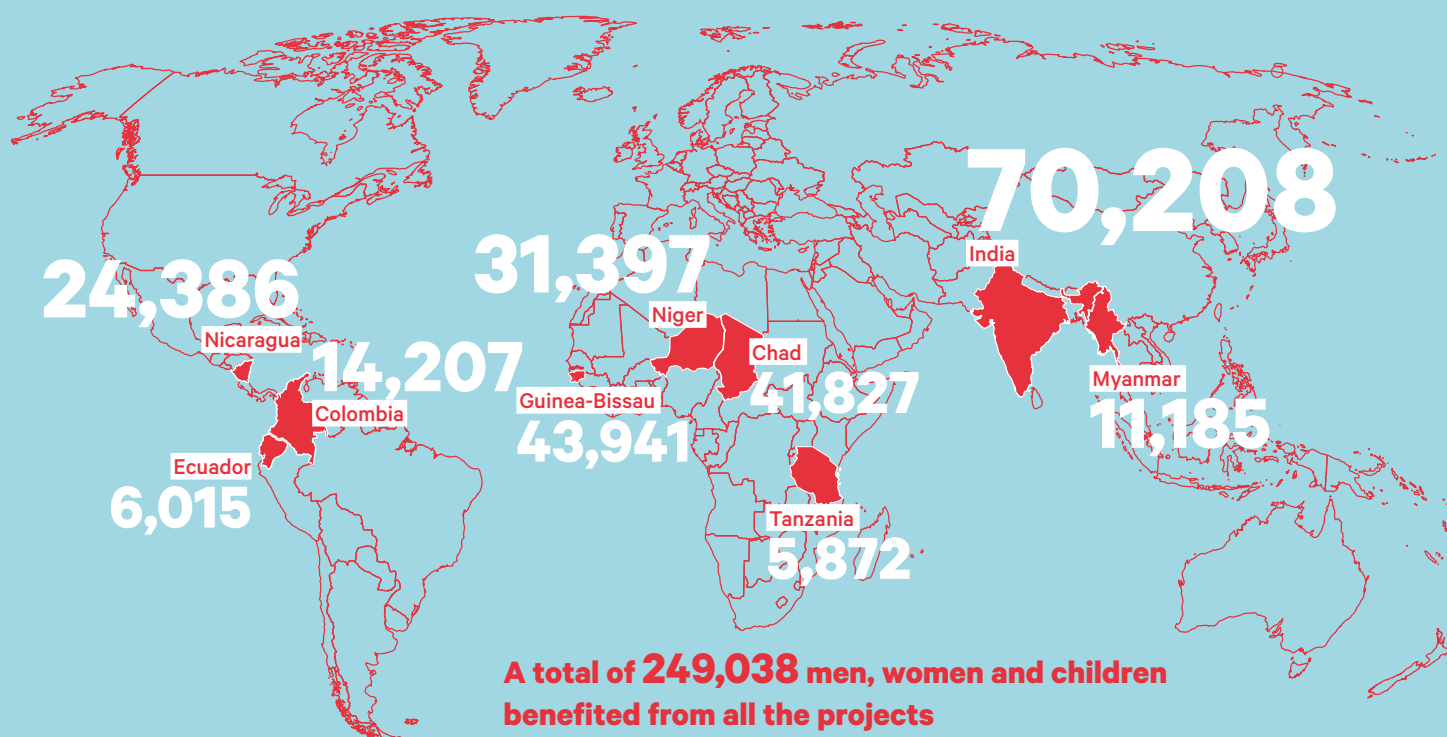
**170** sponsors for access to water

## 3,529 women

attended a literacy course

and are now able to read, write and count better. This new expertise is helping them to flourish; they are developing new confidence, learning to have their say and are better off because the women can no longer have the wool pulled over their eyes.

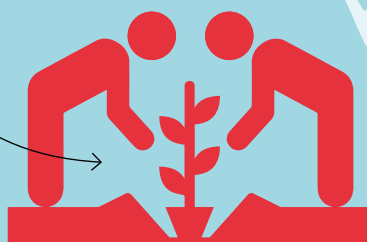




**559**

### seed and grain banks

ensure that farming families have access to local seeds for vegetables and grains which are perfectly adapted to suit the prevailing climatic conditions. They will be able to draw upon this in times of need and will not have to live in fear of starvation.



**36,967**

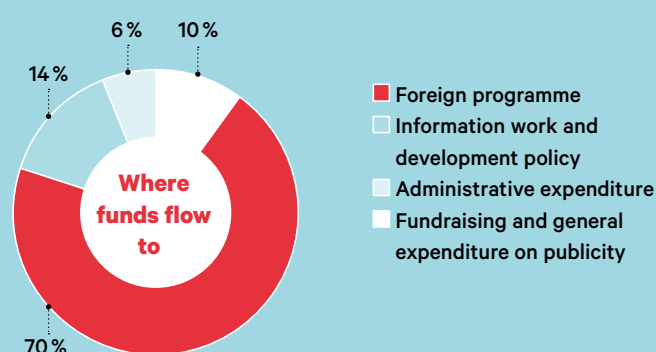
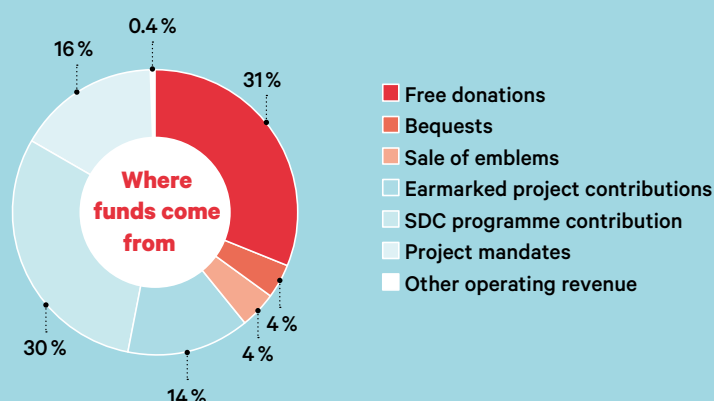
### farmers

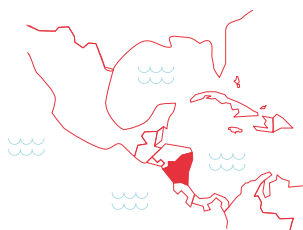
are familiar with techniques and tricks in agro-ecology thanks to many courses they have attended and are able to apply them in practice.



**77,511 people, largely women, tend huge gardens during the dry months, enabling them to provide for their families.**

## Finance and use of resources





**NICARAGUA**  
CENTRAL AMERICA  
[swissaid.ch/en/nicaragua](http://swissaid.ch/en/nicaragua)

# GMO: Speaking out against empty promises with hard facts

**Farmers are taking steps to defend against the introduction of genetically modified seeds and GMO plants. They have fears about the preservation of biodiversity and food security for families in rural areas.**

## AT A GLANCE

Current projects at the end of 2016	23
Approved projects in 2016	13
Funds disbursed (CHF)	1,451,483
People benefiting directly	24,386

"We reject the introduction of genetically modified seeds and GMO plants because they jeopardise the independence and food security of the families!" This was the message given by the Seeds Alliance at their press conference in opposition to the Association of Major Agricultural Enterprises, which had promoted the import of genetically modified seeds (GMO). At the press conference, men and women farmers also talked about the positive experiences that they had had with local varieties of seeds and drew attention to the risk of contamination and damage to biological diversity posed by GMO seeds.

The President of the National Association of Farmers and Cattle Breeders (UNAG) added: "GMO varieties place many requirements upon production that small farmers are unable to meet. And there is no evidence that GMO varieties produce more than local varieties," explained Alvaro Fiallos.

### Facts instead of belief

The Seeds Alliance has campaigned since 2006 for the recognition, preservation and further development of local seed varieties, and thus to safeguard biodiversity in Nicaragua. The alliance, which is supported by six networks and by SWISSAID, represents the interests of around 200,000

farmers and consumers. The Alliance, which was originally set up to campaign against the import of genetically modified plants, has grown into a renowned specialist in sustainable farming over the years.

Thanks to field trials financed by SWISSAID, the Alliance is able to prove with scientifically backed data that local varieties of corn and beans are able to yield harvests which are just as plentiful as the cultivated hybrids. In addition, they are more economical and respond with greater resistance to climate fluctuations, making production less expensive and more secure. Thanks to the diversity, those varieties can be selected which thrive best under different ecological and climatic conditions.

The peasant farmers of Nicaragua are clear about one thing; they do not require highly engineered, risky imported seeds – they need support in

the efficient and sustainable use of existing resources.

**DANIEL OTT FRÖHLICHER,**  
PROGRAMME MANAGER



Demonstrating against the import of GMO into Nicaragua.

Photo: SWISSAID Office, Nicaragua



## WHAT YOUR DONATION DOES

**32 francs** will enable a woman farmer in Nicaragua to attend a seed trade fair where local varieties are presented, exchanged and sold. 120 francs will pay for a meeting of one representative from each of the six national networks in the Seed Alliance.





**ECUADOR**  
**SOUTH AMERICA**  
[swissaid.ch/en/ecuador](http://swissaid.ch/en/ecuador)

## A hearty source of fertiliser and income

**Agro-ecology makes it possible: Farmers can fill their plates and their wallets thanks to the healthier quality of soil, using the right growing methods and with the assistance of cute guinea pigs.**

### AT A GLANCE

Current projects at the end of 2016	11
Approved projects in 2016	6
Funds disbursed (CHF)	1,313,741
People benefiting directly	6,015

The farms in the Andes are small, the weather is inclement, and rainfall levels are declining. People wishing to continue to find a way of eking out an existence here need clever strategies to make the most of the scarce resources available.

One such strategy is to switch over to agro-ecological production. This enables expenditure to be reduced, easing the pressure on the household finances. This is because it does away with the expensive synthetic fertilisers and costly pesticides which the farmers have had to buy up to now. In 2016, SWISSAID helped 3210 peasant farmers (60% of them women) to develop their expertise in growing healthy produce and in gathering experience in agro-ecological production techniques.

### Guinea pigs: more than cute

Soil fertility and structure are central to agro-ecological growing. The farmers influence this decisively through the addition of compost, stable dung or "Bokashi" (organic material is turned into high-grade biological dung through fermentation). Green fertilising with legumes (for instance, beans) as well as mixed cultures of vegetables and fruit make the soil healthier, looser and more absorbent, thereby enabling it to store water.



In Ecuador, rearing these beneficial rodents is not child's play; it is strictly a job for adults.

Guinea pigs have a special role to play in this, in particular; they supply the droppings that are used to fertilise the fields. Besides that, the rodents are an important source of meat in Andean cuisine. The sales market is stable and, depending on size, an animal sells for between six and twelve US dollars, which is the currency of Ecuador.

Last year, 796 families were each given one male and three female animals. This was done on the precondition that within a year the same number of guinea pigs would be given to another needy family. Guinea pigs are prolific breeders: A female can

generally have four or five litters a year, each with up to six pups. In addition, it only takes them ten weeks to reach sexual maturity.

Things are looking up for the peasant farmers high up in the Andes; they can use this starter kit to rear animals of their own, for their own consumption, sale and to fertilise the fields.

**PETRA ENGELHARD,**  
**PROGRAMME MANAGER**



### WHAT YOUR DONATION DOES

With **50 francs** you can buy a family in Ecuador a "guinea pig starter kit", which consists of one male and three females. This will enable the family to breed them, produce fertiliser from the animals' droppings, and ultimately increase the harvest yield.



**COLOMBIA**  
**SOUTH AMERICA**  
[swissaid.ch/en/colombia](http://swissaid.ch/en/colombia)

# Dad in Colombian

**After over fifty years of conflict, developing a culture of peace is now the most important thing. The project entitled “New Images of Men” plays a part in this.**

## AT A GLANCE

Current projects at the end of 2016	19
Approved projects in 2016	4
Funds disbursed (CHF)	1,160,854
People benefiting directly	14,207

The local population in parts of the Caribbean region of Colombia suffered dreadfully from armed conflict. This also served to exacerbate violence against women, which is deeply embedded in their culture. SWISSAID has been helping six grassroots organisations in this region for some years with projects on agro-ecology and geared towards promoting the right to express democratic opinions. The innovative project on “New Images of Men” builds on the trust that is developed here, looking at personal, indeed intimate, issues.

For instance, they would be: How do I resolve a dispute within the partnership without resorting to violence? How can I develop a loving relationship with my child as the father? How can I remain healthy?

These and similar questions were explored at numerous workshops by specialist psychologists and social workers. The techniques used were fun such as theatre, dancing, role-play and discussions. The participants, all members of the grassroots organisations mentioned above, saw for themselves that the stereotypical roles that they play as men or women are instilled in them, and that they are at liberty to change them. The campaign entitled “The macho man is worthless in the Caribbean!” was launched with



A good partnership has to be learned, particularly in an environment which is characterised by violence.

celebrations and processions to raise awareness among the general public.

## But being a father is very worthwhile

Did it prove useful? This was then analysed in depth afterwards in the workshops. According to information given by the participants, there was a drop in violence in the home, and men now trusted themselves more to take on their role as fathers. For instance, one of the participants Carlos Arrieta, said: “I am twenty years old and recently became a father. I was not prepared for this and was frightened about it in some respects. I will now do everything I can to be a loving father, even though I had no role model for this in my life.” Women have been able to boost their self-confidence, are taking on more leading roles within the grassroots organisations and are supported in this by the men.

To embed this socially, “Men’s Image Groups” and drop-in centres were established in the partner organisations as a first point of help in

resolving family disputes. Furthermore, the cooperation with state agencies was reinforced further to enable this approach to be incorporated into local policy-making.

**SABINA SCHMID,**  
**PROGRAMME MANAGER**  
[colectivohombresymasculinidades.com](http://colectivohombresymasculinidades.com)



## WHAT YOUR DONATION DOES

In Colombia, **40 francs** will buy ten shirts for the campaign “The macho man is worthless in the Caribbean”.  
60 francs will pay for the return journey as well as a snack for the people attending a “Violence-free workshop”, which is held by a grassroots organisation with state employees.





**SHAN STATE  
MYANMAR**

[swissaid.ch/en/myanmar](http://swissaid.ch/en/myanmar)

## When dreams come true

**It takes pioneers and “committed advocates” to help new growing techniques make the breakthrough; both are on hand in Myanmar. A programme getting under way.**

### AT A GLANCE

Current projects at the end of 2016	14
Approved projects in 2016	8
Funds disbursed (CHF)	1,569,796
People benefiting directly	11,185

2016 was an exceptionally busy year for the Myanmar programme. Central to it was the launch of a major, ambitious project in Shan State. Adopting a market-led approach and ecological farming methods, it sought to improve the lives of peasant farming families. In addition, substantial resources were invested in the training of partner organisations. For example, the team created further-training documentation which can also be used in other SWISSAID projects.

On the basis of a value chain study that we conducted last year, we were also able to identify the types of

crops which would offer farmers better prospects in terms of food security and income. They include the likes of Niger (oil seed), tea, ginger or peanuts. In order to support the partners in Shan State, SWISSAID also opened a branch in the city of Taunggyi where a small team started working.

In addition, SWISSAID in Myanmar has been pledged an extraordinary innovative contract worth 3.5 million francs. Together with two other organisations, we will be awarding small to medium-sized loans over the next two years to non-governmental organisations in six different regions of the country to aid their activities in tackling poverty.

In addition to these highlights, real success stories in the fields create courage and demonstrate that the route that has been taken is the right one. For example, a single farmer in

the north of the country managed to persuade professional colleagues in the village of the merits of an innovative and ecological growing technique, the system of rice intensification (SRI), using a trial field. Even the most stubborn of sceptics were impressed by the fact that he managed to double the rice yield in just one year.

Instead of using chemical fertiliser, the farmers are now using compost, a new water management system and other ecological growing techniques. However, in addition to the new techniques, the key factor in the success was the farmer Nga Oo's efforts and his dedication as an eco-pioneer.

**SARAH MADER,  
PROGRAMME MANAGER**



Everyone is lending a hand to protect the community woodland.



### WHAT YOUR DONATION DOES

With a 100 franc donation, for example, you will be contributing towards the reforestation of community woodland in Myanmar (Burma). The total cost for seedlings and direct reforestation in the woodlands is **1,536 francs**.



**MARATHWADA  
INDIA**

[swissaid.ch/en/india](http://swissaid.ch/en/india)

# Forgotten by the whole world: poor, alone, old and ill

**In the event of a disaster, the poorest people need special protection. Therefore, SWISSAID gave particular support during the drought to single mothers, single women and old people. It will continue to pursue this approach.**

## AT A GLANCE

Current projects at the end of 2016	18
Approved projects in 2016	13
Funds disbursed (CHF)	1,510,162
People benefiting directly	70,208

In the Indian state of Maharashtra, farmers could only look on as their crops withered in the fields, and cattle died of thirst. Landless people did not have any work, and farmers were compelled to take on higher debts. The agricultural economy virtually ground to a halt. And for over 1,500 people, the uncertainty proved too great; they took their own lives. The drought was one of the worst in decades.

In a disaster, quick and efficient support is of paramount importance. However, the needs of the particularly vulnerable members of a community may not be forgotten. Single mothers, the elderly and the infirm are particularly affected.

Even under normal conditions, it is a struggle for day labourers on their own to provide their families with the bare essentials. They often lack the documentation to qualify for access to state nutrition and employment programmes. They ensure that people who are particularly needy receive food rations and 100 days of employment. They are meant to be paid for any work they do within fifteen days. However, the people are frequently left to wait in vain for the money, and they have to demand it. Our partners help out here.

Attention has been paid to this population group in the planning of



The most important place in the village: a queue forms in front of the water tank.

the emergency aid project. For example, over 750 single parents managed to get through the most difficult six months with the aid of food rations. Many women suffered from anaemia and were given iron supplements. Nevertheless, they needed an income to help them meet expenditure, such as the cost of their children's education or medication. "Cash for work" proved to be central: 1,198 people (614 women) worked in soil and erosion protection and were paid 200 rupees or three francs a day.

The cash-for-work approach had a side effect in terms of the pressure on the state employment programme. It refuted the claim made by the government that people were not prepared to do hard work. Wages were also paid on time.

The positive impact of the project on people on their own fine-tuned our perception of what should be integrated into future projects.

**PETRA ENGELHARD,  
PROGRAMME MANAGER**



## WHAT YOUR DONATION DOES

**90 francs** will secure an income for thirty days for a single mother in India, for example.

Photo: SWISSAID Office, India


**TANZANIA  
AFRICA**
[swissaid.ch/en/tanzania](http://swissaid.ch/en/tanzania)

# Organic farming with a solar panel

**Farming has a future – in particular, if the farmers find out about the wealth of tricks that nature has at its disposal and links them to modern technology.**

**AT A GLANCE**

Current projects at the end of 2016	6
Approved projects in 2016	5
Funds disbursed (CHF)	858,236
People benefiting directly	5,872

Thanks to his solar system, vegetable grower Ally Athuman is one of the 7.5% of the population of the region of Mtwara in southern Tanzania with access to light in the evening. This spacious house which is made from bricks and corrugated metal roofing is also testament to a certain level of prosperity. Things haven't always been like that. Only three years previously he used to live together with his two children in impoverished circumstances in a mud hut.

At that time, SWISSAID launched a course in organic farming for peasant farmers, and Ally Athuman attended it. Thanks to the new skills he acquired, better seeds and hard work, the farmer managed to make the leap ahead to a profitable future. He diversified his crops, reducing the risk of his harvest failing. Nowadays, he supplies the local market with amaranth, chilli peppers, aubergines, carrots, okra, onions and tomatoes.

**Know-how**

To enable more peasant farmers to acquire sustainable organic farming skills and to reap financial benefits, SWISSAID embarked upon a nation-wide programme of education from 2016 to 2021. They use various tools:

- Training for teachers who share their skills with groups of farmers in a field school;
- Farmer-to-farmer exchange visits;
- Visits to the SAT eco centre which is 435 miles away, where the training staff are familiarised with the wide-ranging methods of organic farming;
- A smartphone-based Internet platform for the straightforward exchange of information between farmers and for remote advice by experts;
- Two research and demonstration fields where visitors are advised by experts.

Over the next two years, 6,000 families of peasant farmers will benefit from the training programme which has been specially developed by SWISSAID and two farming organisations. This will entail training 400 training staff, who will then guide groups of farmers in pairs (a man and a woman). Over 200 future teachers have already attended an induction course and have returned to their villages with a detailed implementation plan. They now receive a visit from a colleague every three months, and they offer advice and show new tricks. Or, they bring farmers' practical experiences back to the training centre with them in order to try them out there and to share them.

**FRANK HAUPT,  
PROGRAMME MANAGER**



Successful vegetable grower: Ally Athuman.


**WHAT YOUR  
DONATION DOES**

With a donation of **114 francs** you will be able to finance a one-week induction course in agro-ecology (at the SAT training centre) in Tanzania for a future teacher, including board and lodgings.

A smartphone costs fifty francs, and 50 kg of seeds for green fertilising costs 100 francs.





**NIGER**  
**WEST AFRICA**  
swissaid.ch/en/niger

# If women have their own money

**With an income of their own, women will be afforded greater respect and influence within the community. And this will bring them one step closer towards gender equality.**

## AT A GLANCE

Current projects at the end of 2016	21
Approved projects in 2016	9
Funds disbursed (CHF)	2,357,498
People benefiting directly	31,397

In the regions of Niger where SWISSAID is active, there have been improvements in the situation of women and, thus, in their position in the family and in society. This was confirmed at a workshop in July 2016 where the current situation was assessed in consultation with the local SWISSAID team. New attainable objectives were then defined with due regard for the cultural context.

Women have a supporting role to play in society.



Nowadays, the women receive support in rearing animals or in growing vegetables, enabling them to make a living for themselves. This is one of the key aspects of the programme in Niger and has proved to be an effective strategy for improving gender equality. As the women contribute towards household costs with their income, this has boosted their influence within society. The precondition for this is that they have to spend less time on their daily chores. Therefore, SWISSAID will continue to campaign for easy access to water and trial the introduction of mechanical grain mills.

## Revolutionary: a female president

If groups are supported directly, the specific needs of women can be addressed. As a member of this type of association, the women learn to pursue their own projects and to commit themselves publicly to the issues affecting them.

Consequently, they are better represented now in the different village groups which manage the community's goods, such as grain banks. Thanks to their good work, some of them have even been promoted to being the presidents of these types of banks; this is a small revolution.

The women have barely been able to take on any responsibility as far as water

management is concerned, however. Traditional powers have always applied here. There is still much to do.

In addition, SWISSAID wishes to pursue the following key objectives in the coming years:

- Tackling illiteracy which holds women, in particular, back in their everyday lives;
- Information about laws of succession and land law so that the women can acquire property and land for themselves in future and, unlike the current situation, secure access to farmland all year round.
- The men, for their part, are to be involved more closely in the development of a more equitable society.

**CARINE PIN,**  
**PROGRAMME MANAGER**



## WHAT YOUR DONATION DOES

**45 francs** will pay for one person to attend a gender workshop in Niger, for example. The workload in the home is divided unequally between men and women, as a typical daily routine shows.



**CHAD**  
**CENTRAL AFRICA**  
[swissaid.ch/en/chad](http://swissaid.ch/en/chad)

# Shea nuts make everything go well

**Real treasures in the form of shea trees and peanut bushes are growing on the fields belonging to many peasant farmers, that will improve the families' lot in life; that's know-how. A joint project between Caritas and SWISSAID is taking off here.**

## AT A GLANCE

Current projects at the end of 2016	13
Approved projects in 2016	8
Funds disbursed (CHF)	1,248,440
People benefiting directly	41,827

Many families in southern Chad possess shea trees, whose nuts are processed to make butter. Shea butter, as the product is known, is used in local cuisine, although it is also an ingredient in many cosmetics. There is also great demand for peanuts which are grown on many farms.

The project which is being funded as a mandate by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and which is being carried out jointly by SWISSAID und Caritas is geared not only at improving the production of shea butter and peanuts, but also at their storage, processing and marketing. Optimum added value should be created, and everyone should be involved in this value chain. It will not only benefit the producers, but also the manufacturers of the end products, the traders and the customers, who will be able to purchase a high-quality product at a fair price.

The farming families will be supported coming together to create cooperatives for storage, processing and marketing in order to generate as big a portion of the added value for themselves as possible.

Around 3,500 producers and processors will receive training and advice in the project. In order to make investments to boost their efficiency, such as buying a cart or seed, they require

small loans, however. Therefore, regional savings and lending systems are instructed to offer suitable finance arrangements.

To ensure that the interests of everyone concerned are factored into the framework conditions for the production of shea nuts and peanuts, the state must define a set of rules and ensure that they are complied with. For example, the national and local authorities have already been involved in the development of the project and are now cooperating on its implementation.

After all, if the production, processing and marketing of the nuts run smoothly, the farming families will benefit from better prices and increased earnings. This, in turn, improves their access to food, healthcare and school education for their children.



More fun at work: The women are involved in processing the shea nuts.

**DANIEL OTT FRÖHLICHER,**  
**PROGRAMME MANAGER**

## WHAT YOUR DONATION DOES

**140 francs** will buy a cart in Chad, for example, that a farming family can use to take compost onto the field or to transport the harvest to market. A mill for processing shea nuts costs 330 francs.



## “I can even save money now”

If the local population no longer has to buy rice but can grow it itself, the money can be used for other important expenditure, such as for fireproof sheet metal roofs.

### AT A GLANCE

Current projects at the end of 2016	13
Approved projects in 2016	9
Funds disbursed (CHF)	902,902
People benefiting directly	43,941

The successes in cultivating highly saleable vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, cassava or onions, were encouraging. The precarious food situation, however, meant that the farming families often had to scratch their plans. A large portion of the income achieved went into the purchase of rice. SWISSAID and its partner organisations established that this was the case in Guinea-Bissau.

Therefore, they decided to start growing rice again in significant volumes and to increase their own production. This reduced the financial burden on the farming families, and the local population was no longer powerlessly exposed to rising rice prices, which is imported at over 60%.

However, there is another advantage to rice growing in this West African country. The use of low-lying fallow land reduces nomadic cropping which is based on slash and burn, as well as deforestation.

### Stocks went up in flames

An external evaluation in 2016 confirmed the effectiveness of this new strategy in the community of Contuboel, where SWISSAID supports the Alpacof organisation. The living conditions of 2063 people in 16 villages were improved considerably by growing both rice and onions. The

president of the women's group voiced her enthusiasm: “I no longer have to spend money on rice and I can even save some. In our village, the houses used to be covered with straw. Fires used to keep happening, and the fire destroyed our foodstocks. We have now been able to afford sheet metal roofs, all thanks to rice and onions!”

The evaluation shows that all the villages visited have now started to supply themselves with rice. This was made possible thanks to better ecological growing methods and the production of adapted seeds; both lead to more bountiful harvests.

The women make a considerable income from growing onions; this not only covers their immediate needs, they also use the proceeds to facilitate further employment in rearing sheep and goats. This success, which was made possible thanks to selective support, is a decisive step towards diversifying growing cultures and towards food sovereignty. They are changes that are set to last.

**CARINE PIN,**  
PROGRAMME MANAGER



Photo: Fernando Lobo

### WHAT YOUR DONATION DOES

**203 francs** can be used to finance the construction of dams in Guinea-Bissau which are required for regulating the water level on a rice field. A 5-day course in vegetable growing costs 65 francs per farmer, whereby the external audit showed that onion growing alone generates income of between 150 and 800 francs per head thanks to an average of 50 francs per beneficiary.



# REVIEW – SWITZERLAND

## WOULD THE COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE BENEFIT FROM GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS?

SWISSAID organised a series of public events about genetic engineering in Geneva, Bern and Lausanne in November. They explored the following question: Have highly acclaimed genetically modified seeds (GMO) fulfilled their promises twenty years after their introduction in the countries of the southern hemisphere? The speakers also included Aline Zongo, a representative of SWISSAID's partner organisation COPAGEN (Coalition for the Protection of African Genetic Heritage). She reported on her first-hand experience of Monsanto's GM cotton in Burkina Faso – a nightmare for the farmers who could no longer find any buyers for their inferior quality GM harvest. The Burkinian cotton companies drove the US corporation out and started growing conventional cotton again. As it is adapted to suit local conditions, revenue and quality are better.

### Together, not alone

SWISSAID staged the events in collaboration with the Department of Agronomics of

the Hepia University in Geneva, the Forum for Foreign Policy of the University of Lausanne and the SAG/STOPOGM in Bern. SWISSAID ensures that all sides get to speak at the events although it has proved to be very difficult to persuade advocates of GM to accept invitations to attend the discussions. After numerous declined invitations, we were fortunately able to convince professors Klaus Ammann and Beat Keller to attend the events to defend the use of genetic engineering in agriculture, which made for an interesting round of discussions. (CMO)



Aline Zongo in discussion with the presenter of the event.

## TRANSPARENCY IN COMMODITIES: BACK-TRACK BY THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

In November, the Federal Council passed the draft revision of the Companies Act on to parliament. It focused, among other things, on the gap in Swiss transparency in the global commodities business. This had to be bridged in order to put an end to the widespread corruption in that sector.

However, commodities trading was one area where the Federal Council excluded the obligation to disclose payments to governments and to state-controlled companies, even though Switzerland is the world's most important centre for the trade in commodities. The draft consultation paper

included the possibility of applying legislative controls to this trade as soon as other countries make similar commitments, but this was also dropped. The bill will come before the National Council in the autumn or winter session of this year. (LK)



## FACELIFT FOR THE MAGAZINE

With SWISSAID's corporate design having been renewed the year before, this change was implemented last year. The colours South Sea blue and red were added to the website, and several brochures were published anew. "Der Spiegel", the magazine for benefactors, not only received a facelift, it underwent a comprehensive renovation. From August, it appeared with new sections and a wider focus on the issues affecting SWISSAID. The responses were encouraging and strengthened our resolve to continue down this route. (PW)



Jeremias Blaser,  
Head of Development  
Cooperation

## External evaluation: good results with potential for improvement

Last year, external specialists examined all nine of SWISSAID's national programmes, looking at the fundamental aspects of our work on the ground in the context of the new overall strategy: Are our topics of relevance in tackling poverty? Do the right groups within the population benefit from the projects? Is the approach taken by SWISSAID effective? Together with local advisers, two external experts explored these and other questions.

### Relevance: Getting to the root of the problem

Both experts came to the conclusion that the topics covered, peasant farming, water, gender equality, strengthening civilian society and the extractive industries, are still very relevant. The associated problems are the main cause of poverty in rural areas. The auditors made reference to the very good poverty focus in SWISSAID projects, to use our jargon. This means: Help is delivered where it is most urgently needed.

The experts pointed out, however, that the variety of issues also brings with it challenges. The more issues we cover, the more expertise we have to have within the organisation. Sometimes this can be difficult for a medium-size charity organisation like SWISSAID in view of the scarcity of available resources.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that other issues are becoming increasingly relevant and, therefore, have to be incorporated increasingly into projects, such as work with young

people or global warming. The adaptation strategies available to peasant farming families in the area of agro-ecology should be incorporated into project work on a more systematic basis. In order to make optimum use of the scarce resources available, it will therefore be important in future to select the most important issues affecting each country carefully.

### The results generally bear out what we say

The results in the field are decisive. If you were to ask beneficiaries and partner organisations, they are excellent. Many indicate that they have been able to generate more income by

selling their produce or have been able to produce goods more favourably by using new cultivation methods. These successes can also be put down to the fact that many women are able to generate additional income thanks to SWISSAID.

Thanks to the water systems in Ecuador, Niger and Chad, a considerable number of beneficiaries have access to drinking water and sanitary facilities or are able to irrigate their fields. Seed banks in Nicaragua or grain banks in Niger and in Guinea-Bissau help the local populations if their reserves are empty.

If the partners are in a stronger position, they are also more likely to



The production of peanut oil is hard work; simple aids make a great difference.

participate in political processes and programmes. In Nicaragua, for example, many youth groups have managed to voice their concerns at local level. And in India, many disadvantaged people have been able to take part in state employment programmes and earn a living.

### **Sustainable, but not everywhere**

SWISSAID's approach is sustainable, as the auditors established. Firstly, because the cooperation is set up to be long-term; secondly, because local expertise is being strengthened to reflect local context and requirements; and thirdly, because this has prompted changes in behaviour. The experts found that this was particularly the case in Nicaragua where peasant farmers had undergone a change in mindset thanks to the many years of development work, such as in the use of pesticides or in favouring healthy food. Once projects had finished, the peasant farmers had continued to produce food which was healthier and to have a more balanced diet.

There was less evidence of these changes in behaviour in Africa; for example, in relation to the use of latrines. Even though the maintenance and operation of this sort of infrastructure may already form an integral part of the projects, the auditors stressed the fact that the sustainability still has to be factored into the work on the project more systematically. The strategy must be in place before the project gets under way in order to ensure that the results are achieved after the end of the project. This applies, in particular, to projects where there is an infrastructure component, whether it be wells, latrines or grain banks.

### **Influence on policy-making**

SWISSAID is not only seeking to alleviate poverty directly, it also wants to create framework conditions to enable the problems to be tackled at policy-making level. Interestingly, this works best if the work in the villages is linked to specific political demands, as the auditors discovered. People are



Sorghum is part of the staple diet in many parts of Africa.

most likely to listen to demands if they are rooted in specific project work. The Seed Alliance in Nicaragua managed to influence seed legislation significantly because their arguments and experiences were drawn from work with peasant farmers. This lent credibility and political weight to their case.

**The farmers continue to produce healthier food and eat a more balanced diet after the end of the project.**

Therefore, the auditors recommend that this link be pursued more systematically and that increasing influence be exerted over the framework conditions governing agricultural policy.

### **Partnerships and alliances**

Development problems are so complex that they cannot be covered by a single organisation. SWISSAID does not have

the resources at its disposal, in addition to the water supply, to deal with all the associated health problems or to raise the issue of formal training opportunities for prospective peasant farmers in the agricultural sector. Therefore, partnerships with other development agencies are important. This enables development issues to be tackled on a more comprehensive basis. The auditors recommend increased cooperation with the public sector, the private sector and other charitable organisations in order to make use of synergies, to learn from one another and thus to have a greater impact.

### **How to proceed**

The SWISSAID team at home and abroad has focused closely on the various recommendations made by the auditors. In the new strategy we will formulate specific responses in order to implement the recommendations. However, certain points have already been taken on board in the countries and have been incorporated into projects.



**Monika Uhlmann**  
Head of the Finance and Logistics



## COMMENTS

In 2016, the operating revenue and volumes for foreign projects was well up on the previous year. This increase is largely due to a project engagement of 3.5 million francs which was secured in Myanmar (Burma). There has also been a slight increase in the fund-raising result of 11.2 million francs. This is due to our many generous private donors, substantial bequests, as well as institutional donors who give our projects great support. Thank you!

In addition to the engagement in Myanmar, we also approved self-help projects worth 12.7 million francs in our nine national programs. These projects to improve the lives of the poorest sections of society were carried out together with our coordination offices and partner organisations on the ground. In order to optimise the effectiveness and quality of our work, we invested in the further development of our monitoring and auditing tools. Based on operating expenditure, 70% of resources went into the foreign programme.

We invested 14% of our resources, 3.1 million francs, in an information and awareness programme about development policy at home, as well as in campaigns and events on development policy-related issues. 16% of the resources went into administration and fund-raising (3.7 million francs).

In 2016, we reported a negative result of 841,148 francs prior to changes in funds. However, we are able to absorb this thanks to a solid capital base.

These annual accounts for 2016 were compiled in accordance with SWISS GAAP FER, ZEWO and SWISS NPO Code principles. The auditors Von Graffenried AG have audited the accounts in accordance with the statutory guidelines and found them to be correct. The audit report and complete annual financial statements are available to download from our website, [www.swissaid.ch](http://www.swissaid.ch).

## Balance sheet

<b>ASSETS</b> (in CHF)	Appendix	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	9,206,987	12,378,043
Securities	5.2	20,139,674	18,536,068
Accounts receivable and finance pledges	5.3	3,702,543	1,302,463
Stocks of merchandise		282,840	226,858
Deferred assets		458,602	443,455
<b>Operating assets</b>		<b>33,790,646</b>	<b>32,886,888</b>
Loans	5.4	250,100	250,100
Participations	5.5	4	4
Tangible assets	5.6	1,242,955	1,180,247
<b>Fixed assets</b>		<b>1,493,059</b>	<b>1,430,351</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>35,283,705</b>	<b>34,317,239</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b> (in CHF)			
Creditors		368,410	291,950
Project-related commitments to programmes in the Southern Hemisphere	5.7	18,144,959	16,696,607
Deferred liabilities		96,159	50,787
Reserves	5.8	464,516	203,343
<b>Short-term liabilities</b>		<b>19,074,044</b>	<b>17,242,686</b>
Fund for the Third World	11	–	15,705
<b>Long-term liabilities</b>		<b>–</b>	<b>15,705</b>
Fund for donations ring-fenced for the Southern Hemisphere programme		867,724	1,354,822
Fund for the future		170,163	233,799
Fund for sponsoring the organic farming project		300	209
Fund for sponsoring a water project		500	100
Fund for sponsoring a women's project		813	101
SDC fund	12	–	–
<b>Earmarked funds</b>		<b>1,039,500</b>	<b>1,589,031</b>
SWISSAID programme fund		6,212,488	6,872,068
SWISSAID infrastructure fund		658,598	658,598
Fluctuation reserve for securities and foreign currencies	5.9	2,674,475	2,331,050
Revaluation reserve		–	–
Free capital		5,605,000	5,605,000
Free capital – SWISSAID Geneva	2	19,600	3,100
<b>Organisation capital</b>		<b>15,170,161</b>	<b>15,469,816</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>35,283,705</b>	<b>34,317,239</b>

## Operating accounts

<b>REVENUE</b> (in CHF)	Appendix	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Free donations		6,577,215	6,708,162
Legacies		796,190	147,029
Sale of emblems		937,649	901,510
Earmarked donations & contributions to projects	7.1	2,547,916	2,661,259
Contributions to projects from FEDEVACO		156,280	159,213
Contributions to projects from FGC		227,019	134,042
<b>Proceeds from collections</b>		<b>11,242,268</b>	<b>10,711,214</b>
SDC programme contribution		6,500,000	6,500,000
Project mandates		3,499,929	882,000
Other operating revenue	7.2	82,280	109,960
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE</b>		<b>21,324,477</b>	<b>18,203,173</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b> (in CHF)			
Projects overseas		16,230,059	11,991,190
Funds freed from project settlements	7.7	-2,146,282	-1,786,359
Expenditure for programme support		2,066,887	1,722,760
Personnel-related expenditure		1,752,648	1,445,846
Expenditure on materials		314,239	276,914
<b>Expenditure for the overseas programme</b>	7.3	<b>16,150,665</b>	<b>11,927,591</b>
Information and public-awareness programme in Switzerland		1,840,761	2,020,267
Expenditure for programme support		1,295,178	1,297,545
Personnel-related expenditure for the domestic programme		1,109,382	1,101,939
Expenditure on materials for the domestic programme		185,795	195,606
<b>Expenditure for the domestic programme</b>	7.3	<b>3,135,938</b>	<b>3,317,812</b>
<b>Fundraising and general expenditure on publicity</b>	7.3	<b>2,404,226</b>	<b>2,319,682</b>
<b>Administrative expenditure</b>		<b>1,306,620</b>	<b>1,257,517</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>	7.3	<b>22,997,449</b>	<b>18,822,602</b>
<b>OPERATING RESULT</b>		<b>-1,672,972</b>	<b>-619,429</b>
Financial earnings (realised)		281,118	331,780
Financial earnings (not realised)		640,489	299,886
Financial expenditure		-169,670	-160,540
<b>Financial result</b>	7.4	<b>751,937</b>	<b>471,126</b>
Expenditure on real estate		-7,983	-8,195
Revenue from real estate		75,948	77,418
<b>Non-operating result</b>		<b>67,965</b>	<b>69,223</b>
Other profits carried over from previous periods		11,921	35,870
<b>Result carried over from previous periods</b>	7.5	<b>11,921</b>	<b>35,870</b>
<b>RESULT PRIOR TO THE CHANGE IN FUND</b>		<b>-841,148</b>	<b>-43,210</b>
Use of ring-fenced funds		11,766,928	10,235,702
Allocation of ring-fenced funds		-11,217,397	-10,187,838
Change in free funds	8	291,617	-4,654
<b>INCOME CARRIED OVER IN FAVOUR OF PROCESSED FUNDS</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

# Our special thanks to you!



“Asante” says the girl in Tanzania too. Which means thank you!

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all our donors for their generous support over the past year. Thanks to their commitment and their solidarity, we can help people to help themselves in the countries of the southern hemisphere. In addition to many individuals, we also receive support from numerous companies and suppliers who have provided their services at particularly favourable rates or free of charge, as well as from institutions, cantons, local authorities, parish councils and Third World

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Bremgarten nr. Bern, Belp, Chur, Cressier (Fribourg), Elgg, Frauenfeld, Freiburg, Hombrechtikon, Maur, Neuenburg, Rüschlikon, Solothurn, Sursee and Zurich.

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