



Bern University
of Applied Sciences



30 Years of International Agriculture and HAFL Hugo P. Cecchini Institute Annual Event

Building bridges and joining forces: engaging youth in shaping
sustainable food systems and landscapes

Tuesday 11 June 2024, 2 – 5pm, followed by a networking apéro

► School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences HAFL

Welcome to the 30 Years of International Agriculture and HAFL Hugo P. Cecchini Institute Annual Event

About the event

The primary objective of the 30 Years of International Agriculture and HAFL Hugo P. Cecchini Institute Annual Event is to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange and dialogue between young and established food systems and landscape management professionals. Former and current BSc and MSc students and staff and colleagues from partner organisations will be involved as a keynote speaker and debate leaders.

Keynote speaker

Genna Tesdall is Director of the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) network. Her keynote speech, titled “On the search for ‘elusive’ youth in agriculture: perspectives on the generational divide and dialogue” focuses on the fact that youth are noticeably missing from agriculture. Only [11.9% of EU farm managers](#) were under the age of 40 years old in 2020, and the [average age of farmers](#) in the Global South is highly contested.

How do we not only encourage, but empower, youth to move into agrifood systems, while acknowledging the complexity of reasons why youth are staying out of (or exiting) agrifood systems? This keynote presentation explores these topics from a youth perspective, setting the scene for an afternoon of discussions and calling to action for change in our daily work.

Interactive group debates

Three interactive group debates will be run simultaneously, involving participants and moderated by young and established professionals from the sector. You can decide which debate you would like to be involved in/attend when collecting your name badge from the registration desk on the day. The debate topics are:

- Voices unbound: how can localisation move beyond the persisting Global North-South narrative?
- In education for sustainable development, is the adoption of artificial intelligence sacrificing critical thinking and creativity for efficiency?
- Farmers, protests and broken food systems: how do we address the disconnect between society, policy and producers?

Debate wrap-up

Group debate leaders will present key findings to all attendees in a short, facilitated session.

Apéro

Network with guests and colleagues from 5pm.

Programme

Time	Session	Presenters
1 – 1.50pm	Registration desk open	
2 – 2.02pm	Welcome from the HAFL Hugo P. Cecchini Institute	Zenebe Uraguchi Head of the Institute
2.02 – 2.05pm	Opening remarks	Sebastian Wörwag BFH Director
2.05 – 2.10pm	Navigating changes across time: a multigenerational journey and partnership in International Agriculture	Nancy Bourgeois Lüthi BFH-HAFL Head of International Agriculture
2.10 – 2.30pm	On the search for “elusive” youth in agriculture: perspectives on the generational divide and dialogue	Genna Tesdall YPARD Director
2.30 – 2.40pm	Break into groups	
2.40 – 3.45pm	Interactive group debates	
3.45 – 4.05pm	Coffee break	
4.05 – 4.35pm	Debate wrap-up, presented by group leaders	Zenebe Uraguchi (facilitator)
4.35 – 4.40pm	Closing remarks and future plans for BFH-HAFL International Agriculture	Nancy Bourgeois Lüthi
4.40 – 4.45pm	Closing remarks and future plans for the Institute	Zenebe Uraguchi
4.45 – 4.50pm	Conclusion and apéro invitation	Peter Spring BFH-HAFL Head of Agriculture
4.50 – 5pm	Hand out presents, group photos	
5 – 8pm	Apéro	

Group debates

Themes	Facilitator
Debate 1 – Voices unbound: how can localisation move beyond the persisting Global North-South narrative?	Loredana Sorg (Biovision) and Wycliffe Odera Magowa (BFH-HAFL)
Debate 2 – In education for sustainable development is the adoption of artificial intelligence sacrificing critical thinking and creativity for efficiency?	Célia Bühler and Dominic Blaettler (BFH-HAFL)
Debate 3 – Farmers, protests and broken food systems: how do we address the disconnect between society, policy and producers?	Gurbir Singh Bhullar and Katharina Ineichen (BFH-HAFL)

Key participants



Genna Tesdall is Director of the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) network. She is an agriculture-systems thinker – taking on projects to sustain the environment and people – to foster equality between generations and all delimiters of privilege. Before joining YPARD, she was the federal agricultural policy officer at the German Rural Youth Association (Bund der Deutschen Landjugend) (2020). As a Fulbright Researcher at the Humboldt University of Berlin (2018–19), she focused on youth involvement in agricultural policy, and was the former president (2013–14) of the International Association

of Agriculture and Related Sciences Students (IAAS). She also worked as a consultant at the CGIAR International Potato Center (CIP) in Lima, Peru. She is a graduate of Iowa State (2015) and Penn State universities (2018) with a MSc in Plant Pathology and International Agriculture and Development.



Nancy Bourgeois Lüthi is Head of the BFH-HAFL International Agriculture group. She has held this position since July 2023, and was Co-Head for three years prior. Nancy holds a BSc in Agricultural Engineering from BFH-HAFL, with a specialisation in livestock sciences, and an MSc in Agribusiness for Development from the University of London. After working as a researcher's assistant in ruminant nutrition at Agroscope for one year, she lived in several countries in South and Southeast Asia for 20 years. There, she worked on livestock issues for various research and development organisations. In 2013, she joined BFH-HAFL as a lecturer

and researcher in international livestock systems and in 2015 took over coordination of the BSc international internships. She conducts research in Asia, MENA, and Africa.



Dr. Zenebe Uraguchi is Head of the HAFL Hugo P. Cecchini Institute as well as a lecturer in international agriculture. In this capacity, he teaches, manages, conducts research and evaluations, and provides strategic advice/support on inclusive, sustainable, and scalable development. Before joining BFH-HAFL in May 2023, he held senior roles in international development organisations and private-sector businesses. He has worked in over 20 countries in various roles and for different lengths of time. Some of his main areas of expertise are in institutional economics (the impact of institutions on the economy, how institutions evolve, and how they

could be improved); economic and financial analysis (EFA) focusing on value for money and efficiency of public and private investments; and systems thinking in development (going beyond symptoms and exploring inclusive, sustainable, and scalable solutions to complex problems). Zenebe holds MA degrees in International Relations and Political Economy, as well as a PhD in Development Economics.

Key participants



Loredana Sorg is Co-Head of Development Projects at Biovision Foundation and a member of its Executive Committee. She specialises in working at the interface of applied research and on the implementation of agroecological farming methods and inclusive market approaches in East Africa. She studied agricultural science at ETH Zurich and was employed in agricultural economics and regional development consulting in Switzerland. She has been working at FAO in Rome for the project “Incentives for Ecosystem Services in Agriculture” and for several short-term assignments with FiBL and national research institutions in Ukraine and Georgia on the further development of organic value chains. On a mandate basis she conducts evaluations for international projects of the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture. She is chairing the International Label Commission for the Swiss organic association BioSuisse.



Wycliffe Odera Magowa holds a BSc in Agronomy from Maseno University Kenya. He completed his MSc in Life Sciences – Agricultural Sciences at BFH-HAFL in 2021. Previously, he worked with coffee farmers in a project funded by Biovision where small scale village farmers were trained on sustainable crop production systems implemented by Permaculture Research Institute Kenya. He carried out research on calculating the living income gap of small-scale coffee farmers in Kaffa, Ethiopia in collaboration with GIZ. Currently, Wycliffe is a research assistant in crop protection at BFH-HAFL and involved in two international projects (stem rust and barberry as a driver for genetic diversity of the pathogen in Europe and introduction of soybean meals in school canteens in Ivory Coast).



Dr. Dominic Blaettler is a lecturer in rural development and innovation and has worked in International Agriculture at BFH-HAFL for 15 years. He holds an MSc degree in Development and Environment from the University of Bern, complemented by a PhD in Social Sciences from Oxford University. Dominic teaches mostly in the master's programme and engages in applied research and consultancy, particularly focusing on Asia. His expertise is in policy analysis, transition processes, state-society relations and sustainable natural resource management with a strong emphasis on addressing challenges within fragile contexts.

Key participants



Célia Bühler is currently a student in the MSc in Life Sciences – Agricultural Science programme at BFH-HAFL, as well as an International Agriculture research assistant. She completed her BSc in Agriculture, specialising in International Agriculture, at BFH-HAFL in 2022. Her focus is on tropical plant production and more specifically on soil health. She has just returned from conducting research on composting of coffee co-products in Nicaragua. In 2023, she was part of a youth delegation representing BFH-HAFL at the World Food Forum in Rome and was also appointed the Swiss representative of the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD).



Prof. Dr. Gurbir Singh Bhullar is Professor of Sustainable Agroecosystems at BFH-HAFL, specialising in farming systems in developing and transition economies, organic agriculture, sustainable ecosystem management and climate change mitigation. Before joining BFH-HAFL in 2021, he was a senior scientist and programme leader at the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and a scientist and researcher at ETH Zurich. He has a BSc in Agricultural Sciences from Khalsa College Amritsar, India, an MSc in Agronomy from Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), India, and a PhD in Plant Ecology from ETH Zurich. His award-winning

game ‘Snakes and Ladders on the Way to Agroecology’, for smallholder farmers in India and Tanzania, was a highlight at last year’s annual event.



Katharina Ineichen holds a BSc in Agriculture with a specialisation in International Agriculture. For her BSc thesis, she completed a professional internship in Togo, working on assessing the market potential of pineapple, passionfruit and oil palm for the village of Donomadé. Currently, she is an assistant in BFH-HAFL’s International Agriculture group while pursuing her MSc in Life Sciences – Agricultural Sciences, focusing on value chains and rural development. For her master’s thesis, Katharina is working on a joint study on Cocoa Farmers’ Household Income in Ghana, a collaboration between COCOBOD (Ghana Cocoa Board) and SWISSCO (Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa), with a focus on female cocoa farmers.