

CONTEXT

The exchange of knowledge today is indispensable to further development processes. Worldwide there is a wealth of expertise and experience in development practices, which is relevant to development practitioners who, albeit working in different contexts or countries, often struggle with similar challenges. The exchange of best practices, technologies, enhanced and new policies as well as know-how may help find adaptable and sustainable solutions to development challenges, generate new approaches and even trigger policy changes. SDC has more than 45 years experience of development cooperation in India. This provides the agency with a wealth of knowledge, consisting of know-how, best practices, lessons learnt, as well as of a network of solid partners and development actors. Documented and made accessible, this knowledge can foster existing as well as new partnerships in India and can be used to exchange practices and ideas internationally. New actors, such as private enterprises or foundations who enter the development scene would also gain from the experiences of SDC.

Simultaneously, there is a need to develop and share new knowledge and learning from previous experiences as it is critical to the quality and effectiveness of development work globally. It is a key factor to achieve change within organizations and in societies. For change to take place, knowledge should not only be shared amongst a small circle of actors, but on a larger scale too, ranging from the labourer in a small village in Gujarat to the senior official in a ministry in Delhi. It is also crucial that organizations working in the same sector, dialogue with each other and share their experiences. India has the potential and scope to demonstrate how to manage and reduce the information and knowledge gap between scattered communities, in particular the poor and vulnerable groups, and the decisions makers. The approaches can be shared at the international level and thus contribute to knowledge sharing between India and other South Asian as well as African countries.

In this context SDC is looking at promoting and facilitating knowledge exchange not only within all its programmes, but also at the national and international levels to foster development processes and contribute to change.



“Members of Solution Exchange, an internet knowledge exchange platform, work with international and local NGOs (37%), the United Nations and other multilateral organizations (23%), with government and public service agencies (11%), with foundations, research, academic or policy institutes (7%), in the private sector or as independent consultants (7%), with multi or bilateral agencies (2%). The rest of the members work in other domains.”¹

“The brick manufacturing industry in South Africa is coming under increasing pressure to clean up its act from both industry and regulatory bodies. While investigating alternative firing methods that would **reduce emissions and energy consumption**, we came across the Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln, (VSBK). SDC India enabled us to gather extensive knowledge about the technology in South Africa and India. This has allowed us to really learn about the technology.”²

FACTS AND FIGURES



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Knowledge for Change

¹ Solution Exchange 2009.
² Mr. Kevin Fruin, brick entrepreneur from South Africa who participated in India South Africa knowledge exchange.



OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the programme is to promote and facilitate the generation, access, and exchange of knowledge in all the programmes and projects supported by SDC.

RESPONSE

Since 2006, SDC has started a new collaboration programme with India. A key feature of this programme is to promote the exchange and generation of knowledge as well as exploit new ways to encourage critical debate on development relevant issues at local, national and international level. SDC in all the projects and programmes seeks to facilitate and manage knowledge, share experiences and learn from them through different platforms. These can be conferences, direct dialogues, websites and the facilitation of interactions between stakeholders, which can be decision makers at the policy level, civil societies, concerned communities, academia and research institutions in India, in other developing countries as well as in Switzerland. Promoting field expertise at various decision levels as well as promoting the understanding of policy at the field level is crucial. In addition SDC, through all its programmes and partners, encourages reciprocal knowledge sharing and seeks the dialogue between developing countries.

ACHIEVED AND EXPECTED RESULTS

- To leverage knowledge and experience of development practitioners towards the common objective of problem solving, the internet knowledge exchange platform 'Solution Exchange' supported by SDC has achieved high recognition at the national and international level. The initiative has also made a significant contribution to programme implementation at the field level. Additionally, it has had an impact on policy formulation, especially in the areas of HIV/AIDS, the national school-feeding programme, as well as in addressing gender issues in vocational training. At the United Nations, Solution Exchange has demonstrated its value as a new modality for UN agencies to work together.
- SDC supported innovative actions that contribute to policy development processes at the national level.
- Development practitioners and partners of SDC are expected to benefit and advance their efforts, more effectively when knowledge is widely generated and shared.
- The exchange of information and knowledge among the developing countries will be promoted and thus enable finding as well as sharing of solutions. This will not only help better development process in India but also in countries in South Asia and Africa.
- Knowledge, lessons learnt, best practices and technologies will be documented and made accessible to stakeholders working in the field of development.
- SDC programmes in India and beyond will have a greater impact due to improved knowledge management.

PROJECTS

SDC is supporting knowledge management in all its programmes but also has one specific project on knowledge management with the UN country team in India.

Solution Exchange

Duration of project: January 2008 to July 2011 (2nd phase).

Partner: United Nations Country Team, India.

Budget: 900,000 Swiss Francs.



Photo © Richard Gerstel

Success Story: Travelling solutions

The brick industry in the Republic of South Africa adopts one of the most advanced techniques of soil mining, preparation and brick making. The industry in general, however, uses a traditional firing technology, which consumes a lot of coal. This results in significant air pollution. The proposed environmental regulation will not allow this firing practice to continue. The industry also faces stiff competition from cement block manufacturers. For two years now, entrepreneurs have been individually looking for possible cost effective alternatives. They found some information on the internet about the Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln (VSBK), the most energy efficient brick production technology. It had been developed in China in the 80s and with support from SDC, was transferred to India in 1996. In South Africa the information available was not sufficient for interested entrepreneurs to be able to construct and operate such a kiln.

A brick producer, Mr. Kevin Fruin, from the Western Cape Province was looking for solutions. He had some information on the technology but needed exposure and some hands-on experience. SDC, as it had been working in India on the technology of VSBK, organized visits to the VSBK Service Centre and a commercial kiln in Datia in Madhya Pradesh, and a meeting in the SDC office in New Delhi. The visit convinced the entrepreneur that the technology could be useful for South Africa. A team from India then travelled to South Africa, consisting of one representative from SDC, one from the Indian organization 'Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA)', and one from the organisation Development Alternatives. Thanks to their experience of the Indian brick industry and the successful management of the technology transfer from China, they were ideal to advise brick kiln makers in South Africa as well as representatives of SDC Pretoria on the potential and opportunity of a VSBK technology transfer. The technology will now be demonstrated in two pilot areas in South Africa. SDC has used its knowledge and network in a clean technology to

spread it in other countries as well. This South-South cooperation will also benefit India, which will adapt some of the brick making processes from South Africa.

Success Story: Conference for policy dialogue.

In November 2008, a conference on National Policy Dialogue co-organized by SDC and M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), took place in New Delhi. There, experiences gained and lessons learnt from the Vulnerability and Adaptation Programme supported by SDC in collaboration with MSSRF were shared among stakeholders. The goal was to use the results of the conference to provide inputs to the Government for developing a National Adaptation Framework under the National Action Plan on Climate Change. The conference served as an effective and highly useful knowledge exchange forum. Key actors and stakeholders from different organizations and communities working at policy, planning and field level could share their feedback, views, perspectives, experiences and lessons learnt. They could also formulate and share ideas on taking forward the climate action agenda more concretely at national and international levels.

The discussions concluded with important key messages for the Government at national and at state level on planning and implementing targeted and specific climate change adaptation measures. The participants confirmed the need to develop dynamic scenarios to evolve climate change adaptation measures, and to examine the economic viability of adaptation measures. Furthermore, it was recommended that the Government and other key development actors focus in their planning and action in adaptation on water, food and energy security. The proceedings of the conference were consolidated and shared with different Ministries of the Government. This should eventually help fine-tune the adaptation policy framework in the National Action Plan on Climate Change.

