

Knowledge2Action



Knowledge 2Action

What if communities develop and adopt lifestyles and choices that utilise water and secure food supply chains to their maximum potential? What if we implemented better ways to treat sewage water locally and reduce dependency on rainfall and local watersheds by reusing water more efficiently? Or found ways to build local and resilient food supply chains that are adopted by markets and communities? What if we were to grow more drought-resistant crop varieties and promote these varieties to the market at greater scale? What if we can build stronger communities that adopt choices and lifestyles backed by research that will eventually lead to a more resilient future for Switzerland and South Asia?

Five years ago, we initiated Knowledge2Action (K2A), a network that connects researchers and practitioners in sustainability across South Asia and Switzerland to translate research findings presented in conferences and journals to action on the ground. The core members of the network represent Swiss and South Asian research institutions and universities. We focus on ideas that can be owned by people, who can directly benefit from scientific research and lead to knowledge and practice exchange, while being mindful of contextual knowledge. Many of these ideas have translated into action and our aim is to continue on what we started in order to implement meaningful change in the longer term and on a larger scale.

This is where you could play an important part. Your support would be crucial in continuing to strengthen existing bonds, while building new, robust connections. Our goal is to create local and transnational communities of individuals who are working to advance solutions that address challenges including water scarcity, erratic rainfall, crop failure and changing social structures. The first leg of K2A was funded by swissuniversities as a Cluster of Collaboration (CLOC) under the swissuniversities development and cooperation (SUDAC) programme. As the SUDAC programme ceases to exist by the end of 2024, we aim to raise 200'000CHF per annum over the course of five years.

We know that our collective knowledge and experience of researchers, development practitioners and grassroots organizations in South Asia and Switzerland can be brought into action. We propose a mechanism that is rooted in the common desire to learn from different disciplinary and actor perspectives to improve living standards for all, environmental health and our capacity to respond to climate challenges. Think of this initiative as a ground for experimenting with local prototyping for sustainability and a knowledge co-production system that continues to grow and adapt while providing constant impact on the ground.

Imagine a forest representing diverse species of trees, fungi and animals. Diverse forests are proven to be more resilient to climate change and are also beneficial for small and big ecosystems such as local communities and the planet at large. With the Knowledge-2Action network, we strive to build a similar diverse forest of diverse knowledge, research, practice and intervention processes and experience of various stakeholders that is rooted in common values, growing through information sharing and turning this knowledge into action on the ground.

Proof of Translating Knowledge into Action

Over the past five years, 24 ideas grounded in research results were converted into action through the K2A small grants programme. For example, Sandeep Hanchale, a researcher from India tested the usability of Lantana, an invasive shrub in Indian forests, as a base material for building blocks for affordable housing. Jenny Bentley, a researcher from Switzerland worked with a community in North East India to produce a manual on supporting and benefiting from tourism in their region in an ecologically sensitive way based on her anthropological study in the region.

K2A also facilitates environments for knowledge exchange. More than 80 people including climatologists, social scientists, journalists, people from affected regions and government representatives connected in regional networking meetings in Nepal, Bangladesh and Switzerland, to discuss the pressures on traditional livelihoods

in the Sundarbans due to increased salinisation and cyclones, and the increased risk of massive landslides in mountainous regions of the Himalayas due to rising temperatures. 120 young people, academics and working professionals actively interacted with each other over the course of four online SDG academies focusing on understanding the complexity of sustainability challenges and applying design thinking to scope for solutions within their regional context. They exchanged ideas with experts who are walking the talk and have startups that, for example, work on novel carbon sequestration mechanisms and others that enable local farmer communities to gain direct market access. Participants of the academy experienced the harsh realities of remote communities through live conversations during virtual field trips and were challenged to solve a hypothetical city's garbage problem by putting on the hats of various stakeholders such as corporators, citizens, garbage collectors and accountants.

About the K2A Network

Swetha Dhananka Rao, Professor at the School of Social Work Fribourg, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO), René Véron, Professor of Social Geography at the University of Lausanne, and Lena Robra, PhD, Swissnex in India, lead the conceptualisation and realisation of the K2A network's activities.

We are supported by Manon Mariller for coordination tasks and Sahana Sitaraman for our website content, communication outreach and documentation.

We meet twice a year with the working board to seek further inputs from the participating countries and institutions for the overall steering of the network. We regularly interact with the larger K2A community to facilitate connections and knowledge sharing and bring attention to the opportunities the network provides.

For more information visit <https://k2asouthasia.com/>

200+ People Connected Through the K2A Network

120 Participants from 7 Countries in the K2A Academy

18 Mobility Subsidies

24 Projects Executed Through Small Grants

15 Member Institutions



We have held

**Five Regional
Network Meetings**

in Nepal, Bangladesh and
Switzerland

Lead Partners



UNIL | Université de Lausanne



Network Members

Office of Sustainability, National University of Science and Technology, **Pakistan**, Department of Mathematics, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, **Nepal**, College of Natural Resources, Royal University of Bhutan, **Bhutan**, Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre, Colombo University, **Sri Lanka**, Suri Sehgal Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bangalore, **India**, Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai, **India**, Centre for International Trade & Development School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, **India**, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, **India**, Center for Sustainable Development, University of Liberal Arts, **Bangladesh**, Head Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) India office, **India**, Swissnex in India, Bangalore, **India**, Global Education and Strategic Programs (GESP), Ashoka University, Sonapat, **India**, UNIL, **Switzerland**, HETS-FR, **Switzerland**, PH ZH International Projects in Education, Zurich University of Teacher Education, **Switzerland**