

CROSSROADS



lan, 37 years, starts to seed his family's black rice farm. Bula, Camarines Sur, in the Philippines. © Isabel Corthier/AgriCord

From our New CEO

BY ALESSIA MUSUMARRA

I would like to use the opportunity of Crossroads' second issue to introduce myself!

My name is Alessia Musumarra. At the beginning of April 2022, I joined the AgriCord team in Brussels as CEO.

I have more than 10 years of experience working for farmers organizations.

Starting in 2009, I worked at the Italian Confederation of Farmers.

From 2016, I continued with the European Council of Young Farmers as Secretary General.

Having a positive impact, strengthening farmers organizations and empowering farmers at different levels are the key elements, which have driven my career so far and pushed me to apply at AgriCord.

I believe the Alliance provides a unique opportunity, where different actors can work together in order to reach meaningful changes for viable family farm holdings and towards supporting autonomous, resilient farmers' organizations.

I'm looking forward to work with you and for you!

IN THIS ISSUE

From our new CEO
p. 1

A Word on our General
Assembly
p. 2

Presenting the
Building Climate
Resilience Tool
p. 3

Access to Finance:
What can farmer
organizations do?
p. 4

Savoir-Faire & Links
p. 4

A Word or Two on our General Assembly

BY ALESSIA MUSUMARRA

It has been a long time coming, but at long last, after two years of online sessions, AgriCord's General Assembly finally met again in person!

On June 20th and 21st 2022, AgriCord members gathered together in Helsinki for this next session to discuss the past year and future steps for the alliance.



Hard at work for AgriCord! - © Katja Vuori/AgriCord

On the second day, a panel discussion was organized around the topics of food systems and the need to adjust them to become more sustainable and resilient. A first session focused on the global level: how do we balance the short-term requirement to ensure global food security with longer-term transition. The following second session then discussed how the various challenges can be tackled at the level of individual supply chains and what roles and responsibilities of different actors engaged in supply chains are.

In this regard, I'd like to extend a warm thanks to our colleagues at the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest (MTK) and the Finnish Agri-agency for Food and Forest Development (FFD) for hosting this event.

On the first day, members discussed internal topics related to the Alliance and approved the financial results for 2021 and the provisional budget for 2022. This was followed by a visit to MTK's forest farm estate in Kettula, where the Finnish Agri ministry and MTK presented on current challenges and policies to meet those challenges in the agricultural and forestry sectors in Finland.

The debates on these topics underlined the need for urgent actions and especially the need of accessibility of the funds for climate change and adaptation. In addition, the strategic roles played by the AAs at local and regional level was underlined during the exchange with the audience.

The next General Assembly is already planned for December 12th and 13th in Belgium. We look forward to seeing you there!

BACKGROUND

The General Assembly is one of the main constituent bodies, governing AgriCord. Among others, it approves budgets and financial statements; admits new members and appoints or recalls presidents.

Each member agri-agency proposes two delegates: one staff member and one representative of a partner FO.

The Assembly meets at least once per year.

A Strategic Dialogue Platform may also be organized. This acts as a link for political dialogue between FOs and AgriCord.

WITNESS TESTIMONIALS

"No other training or tool have brought such clarity to the concept of exposure to climate hazards, and what it means to farmers"

GEOFREY BAKANGA, FAO FACILITATOR FOR FFF PROGRAM IN TANZANIA

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE TOOL.](#)

QUESTIONS?

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR COLLEAGUE NOORA!

NOORA SIMOLA - CLIMATE AND FORESTRY EXPERT

NOORA.SIMOLA@FFD.FI



Presenting the Building Climate Resilience Tool

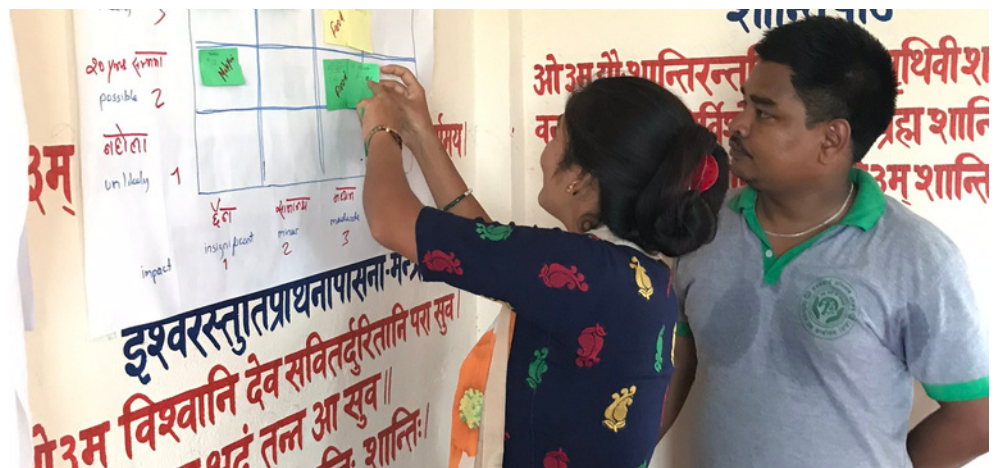
BY NOORA SIMOLA

Farmers around the world have been coping with variable weather, pests and other risks through the times. They are real experts in creating strategies for securing production but, due to climate change, the challenges are now greater than ever.

Since 2020 AgriCord Building Resilience Toolkit and trainings have provided a systematic framework for stepping up the farmers organizations' (FOs') adaptation efforts.

By timely and planned actions farmers can avoid severe livelihood impacts, caused by actual or expected climate hazards. Already 120 agri-agency and FO facilitators in 27 countries have been trained in virtual and face-to-face events to support FOs in their adaptation planning using the Building Resilience toolkit. It has been also piloted by FAO in Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) program in Tanzania where 3 apex level FOs have used it in formulation of adaptation plans of local associations.

Adaptation planning is often considered technocratic and the process externalized to consultants, leaving behind very little adaptation know-how in the local organizations.



Still of a workshop on the Building Climate Resilience tool in Nepal - © FFD

The AgriCord Building Resilience approach is different: It puts FOs in the center of climate action and acknowledges the farmers as experts in assessing climate risks and adaptation action relevant to their own production, value-chains and assets. The Building Resilience workshops provide farmers with a list of adaptation actions that are feasible to implement and address all their main climate concerns. That creates hope amongst FO members and gives direction to collective and concrete climate action in FOs.

FOs also contribute to constant improvement of the toolkit. Training evaluation forms and other feedback tell that the toolkit is considered very useful especially in primary and secondary FOs, but in some cases the trainings have been too short to master all the toolkit components, and more materials and trainings are still needed to support apex organisations in their climate strategies. In 2022 AgriCord continues to improve the toolkit and expand the Building Resilience trainings together with agri-agencies and FOs in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Access to Finance: What can farmer organizations do?

BY KATJA VUORI

A core feature in most of AgriCord's programming is the strengthening of farmer organizations (FOs) as service providers and economic agents with stable sources of financing.

As part of our efforts to strengthen knowledge sharing on access to finance, AgriCord organized a virtual learning moment together with a group of agri-agencies from Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.

During the learning session, Ousmane Ndiaye, director of Asprodeb, shared his analysis of some of the challenges FOs face in accessing finance. He emphasized the need for a committed, long-term political engagement between government actors and FOs, as conducive and inclusive public policies are essential to ensure sufficient public programming and financing for agricultural sector, including the smallholders. This is why including a lobby component is needed, even if the program would be mainly focusing on strengthening the economic service capacities of subnational and local level FOs.

To access private or blended financing, strong and bankable business plans of FOs is of course key. However, to ensure favorable interest rates and de-risk the loans, a more collective approach can be efficient.

Ousmane also gave an example from Senegal, where FO platforms have succeeded in negotiating interest rates and other loan conditions for their members.

Finally, an active role of the FOs in the interprofessions or other multi-stakeholder platforms bringing together value chain actors, is crucial. These provide a forum for the FOs to push for a more equal sharing of the profits within value chains.

AgriCord has also been invited by IFAD to reflect together on how to improve FOs access to investment funds. Asprodeb and Afdi have supported IFAD to carry out surveys on this topic at country level.

Savoir-Faire & Links

Some more interesting resources to share with you all!

The [FO-led Research & Innovation Programme \(FORI\)](#) is looking for a logo! Feeling creative and motivated? Send your idea to: aleksandra.parcinska@agricord.org

Our member Fert, in cooperation with local partners Ceffel and Fifata in Madagascar, produced an [excellent clip on good agroecological practices](#) (in French).

Be sure to read Afdi's [Activity Report for 2021](#) (in French). It provides a good overview and has much interesting information on project activities.

AHA published a comprehensive guide on [how to manage and support generation exchange and farm succession, called GenX Guideline](#) (in English).



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the EU, IFAD and DGD. The views expressed in the document do not reflect the official opinion of the EU, IFAD and DGD.

QUESTIONS? WANT TO SHARE YOUR STORY? A FRIENDLY CHAT?

CONTACT US!

DANIEL SZCZEPANSKI
- KNOWLEDGE AND RESULTS MANAGER
(DANIEL.SZCZEPANSKI@AGRICORD.ORG)

LUKAS HADASCH - PROJECT MANAGER
(LUKAS.HADASCH@AGRICORD.ORG)

Follow us on Twitter:
[@FFP_AgriCord](https://twitter.com/FFP_AgriCord) #weareagricord



AgriCord is a global alliance of agri-agencies mandated by farmers' organizations. The mission of the AgriCord Alliance is to promote and help to build strong, democratic, inclusive and professional farmers' organisations and cooperatives and in that way to spur development.