



ACCESS to LAND

Annual Report 2016

Report on Swiss church aid's activities, impact and perspectives related to access to land

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1 Summary

Access to land for rural communities means food security, a basis for additional income, but also cultural identity. Valorisation of land is key to ensure long-term access, but also to make land 'profitable' for smallholders or local communities. Therefore, access to land means also to foster agro-ecological production, inclusive market systems and transformation or prevention of land conflicts.

Between 2009 and 2016, HEKS/EPER land projects led to improved access to land for about half a million individuals. In 2016, HEKS/EPER facilitated enabled access to land for nearly 80'000 individuals securing 15'791 ha of land. In 12 countries worldwide, 40 HEKS/EPER projects were dealing to various degrees and different approaches with access to land. Analysis through a self-assessment by HHQ staff showed that in 8 out of 12 countries the set objectives were reached 'well' or 'very well'. Only partly reached or not reached were the objectives in countries with armed conflicts and/or with shrinking space for civil society.

During 2016, activities related to link-up globally with key processes relevant for HEKS/EPER activities promoting access to land have been:

- Active membership at the global network for the Right to Food and Nutrition.
- Co-organisation of the International Colloquium on Traditional Peoples and Communities in Brazil.
- Contribution to the preparation process of a new UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people living in rural areas.
- Contribution to the Global Convergence on Land and Water Struggles: support for a caravan in West Africa.
- Contribution and participation at a SDC Learning Journey on Land Governance.

2 Context of international cooperation related to HEKS/EPER's activities on access to land

2.1 Global context on access to land

In order to play an appropriate and relevant role promoting human security, equal rights, prosperity and its key topic 'access to land' in a world that is increasingly complex and multi-polar, HEKS/EPER continuously reflects on the international context and adapts its strategy and implementation.

UNDP estimates, that 'around 800 million people suffer from hunger, and malnutrition affects almost one in three people on the planet.'¹ With overall 1.6 billion people living in multidimensional **poverty**, it remains a major challenge for the global community. Of the people living in poverty, 70% are female and are hit harder by social, economic and political inequalities, often facing discrimination and violence.

About 80% of the rural population engages, at least to some extent, in the primary sector. Of the 570 million farms worldwide, 90% are family farms and 72% **smallholders**. They produce most of the world's food, but also house the majority of its poor and hungry.² Typically, the poorest are most dependent on the agriculture-based economy. At the same time, 75% of the world's population suffering from hunger live in **rural areas**³. HEKS/EPER therefore works in rural areas to fight poverty and hunger as well as to enhance food sovereignty and self-determination by supporting small-scale farmers in access to land, sustainable agriculture practices and access to markets.

Inequalities with respect to the fulfilment of fundamental rights, discrimination and disenfranchisement – often combined with a lack of good governance – weaken social cohesion and security, encourage inequitable access to land, services and resources, and hamper sustainable development, sustainable livelihood opportunities and peaceful societies.

Among others, a 2015 World Bank report⁴ shows that **climate change** is an acute **threat to poorer people** across the world, with the potential to push more than 100 million people back into poverty over the next fifteen years. The poorest regions of the world – sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia – have been hit already in 2016 with one of the strongest El Niño effects ever recorded. The World Bank states that climate impacts will affect agriculture the most, a key sector in the poorest countries and a major source of income, food security, nutrition, jobs, livelihoods and export earnings.

Access to land and resources is likely to become increasingly disputed due to environmental stresses, degradation, demographic pressure, land grabbing, etc. With natural resources diminishing and a third of the soil worldwide degraded and affected strongly by flood and drought⁵, good land governance, intact ecosystems, deeper knowledge on the efficiency and sustainability of land and water usage and peaceful solutions to land and water disputes are vital. Widespread, continued contestation over who owns the world's land is a major constraint to progress on a wide range of development goals espoused by local peoples, national governments, and the international community such as the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030).

Since 2009, the '*Land Matrix*' – a joint independent land-monitoring initiative of civil society, intergovernmental organizations and research institutes – has collected key information regarding land grabbing (see figure 1, next page). For example, it shows that almost nine percent of Africa's total area of arable land has changed owners since 2000. The largest land acquisitions are concentrated in countries with weak governance structures. In these countries, the proportion of hunger and malnutrition in the population is also very high, for example the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Mozambique, Ethiopia and West Africa. Large areas are in the start-up phase and become more targeted such as Ethiopia and Cambodia.

Food crops continue to play the major role, both in terms of number of deals (553) and area (9.2 million hectares), followed by unspecified agricultural intentions – mostly involving oil palm (263 deals on 5.6

¹ UNDP (2017). Human Development Report 2016.

² FAO (April, 2017). FAO and the SDGs: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6919e.pdf>

³ WFP (March, 2016). Website: <https://www.wfp.org/hunger/who-are>

⁴ World Bank Group (2015). Shock Waves. Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty.

⁵ FAO (April, 2017). FAO and the SDGs: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6919e.pdf>

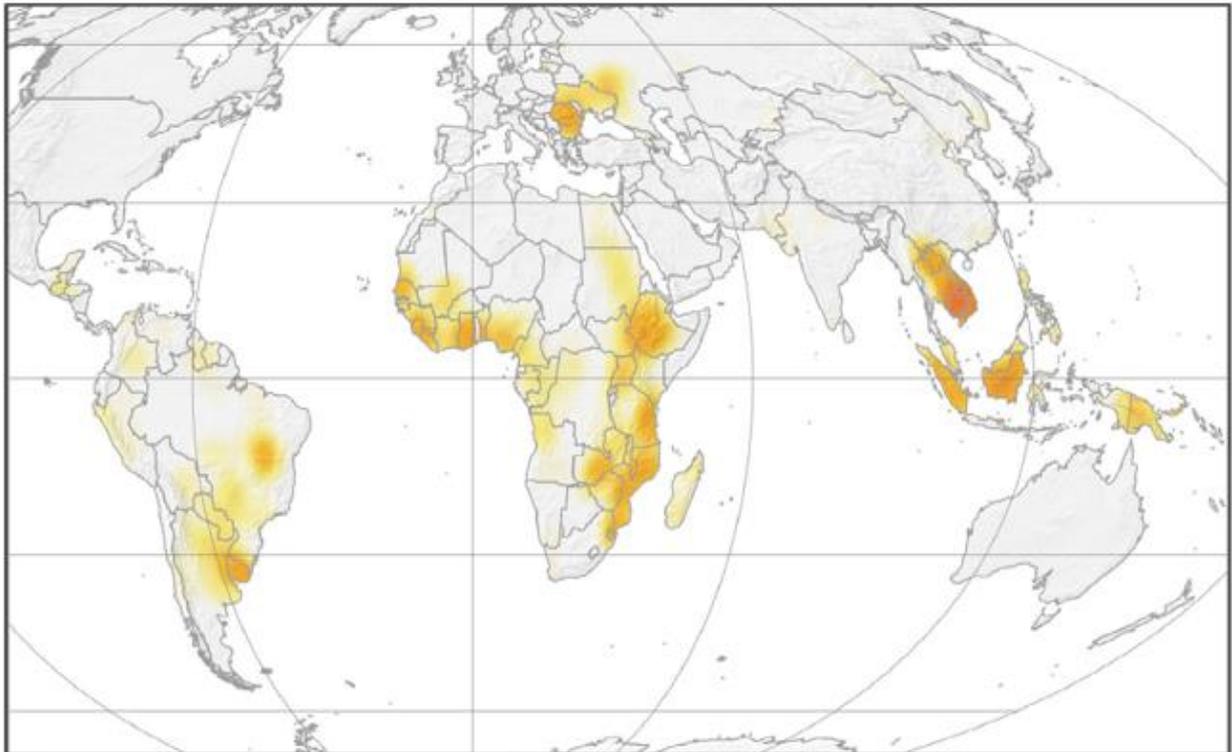


Figure 1: Global heat map on land deals – the darker the more land changed owners. Mostly from small-scale farmers or local communities to agro-companies. The Mekong are, Indonesia, South America, Eastern Europe and East as well as West Africa are the ‘hot spots’ of the land market. (Source: ‘land matrix’, 2016)

million hectares) and agrofuels (221 deals on 5.1 million hectares). The crops planted most often are oil seeds, including oil palm and jatropha, cereals such as corn and wheat, and sugar crops.

Figure 2 shows that indigenous peoples and local communities practising various forms of common territorial land use have globally access to 18% of arable land – with a declining tendency. Future progress

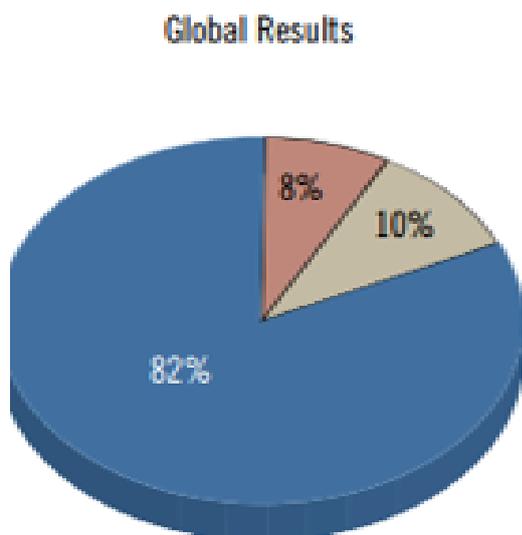


Figure 2: Globally, 10% of the land is owned by indigenous peoples and local communities, while 8% is designated for them. 82% of the land belongs to Governments or private individuals. (Source: ‘land matrix’, 2015)

on access to land depends on the concerted action and support of a range of national and international constituencies. It is up to national governments, communities, policy advocates, bilateral and multilateral development partners, iNGOs, private sector investors and other stakeholders to advance community-based land tenure. Measures that can achieve this advancement include lobbying, legislation, regulation, administrative and institutional capacity building, and on-the-ground implementation.

The stakes are high, because ultimately, community-based tenure security will determine whether Indigenous Peoples and local communities have the legal right to manage their lands as they choose – a question that strikes at the heart of rural peoples’ daily lives and has major implications for controlling climate change, ensuring food security, reducing political conflict, and protecting the world’s remaining natural resources.

2.2 HEKS/EPER activities and achievements on access to land and resources 2009-2016

In terms of **secured access to land**, between 2013 and 2016 the trend of HEKS/EPER projects taking up the issue of 'access to land' is more systematically included in their strategies – a trend which had set in phase between 2008 and 2012 – has been further pursued in the majority of HEKS/EPER's focal countries (12 out of 16). This is indicated for instance by the average yearly increase in the numbers of people with improved access to land (Figure 3). Accordingly, the number of projects focusing on access to land has increased over the past to 40 projects in 12 countries in 2016. From 2009 till 2016, land projects led to improved access to land for half a million individuals.

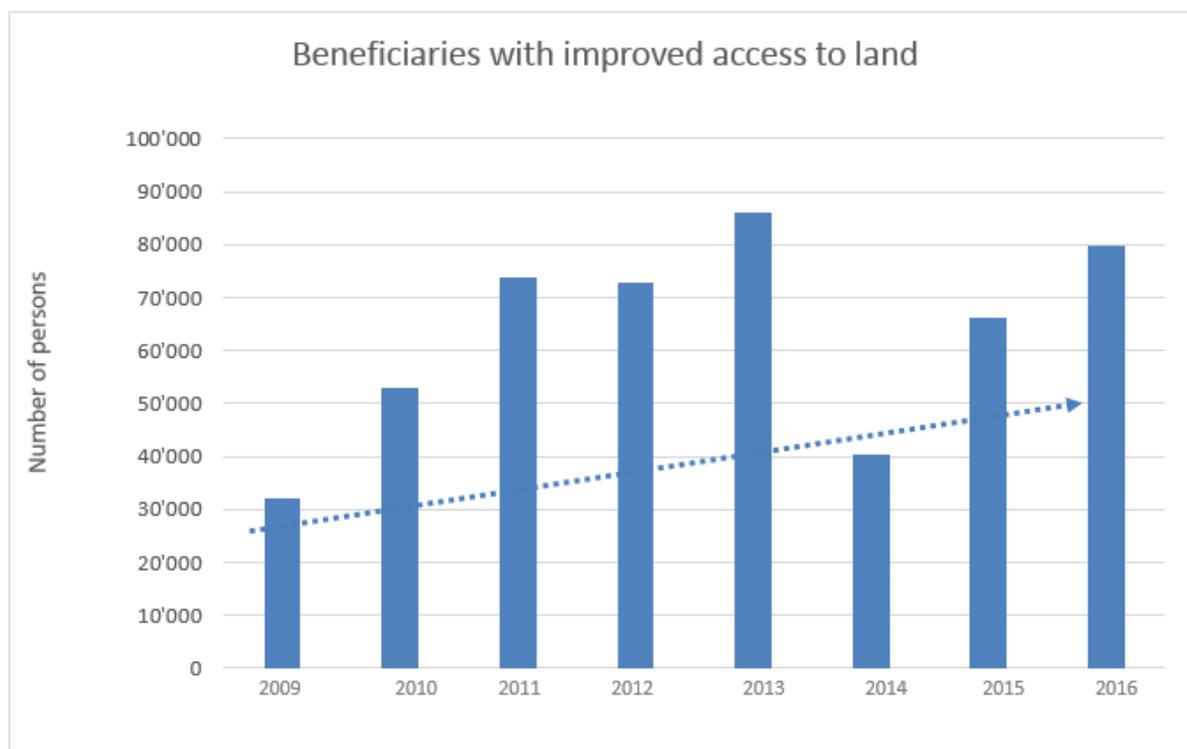


Figure 3: From 2009 until 2016 HEKS/EPER facilitated the access to land for ½ million people.

Through HEKS/EPER's developed analytical framework to systematically assess and enhance land tenure security, it has been revealed that the greatest success is possible in the more stable hybrid governments (e.g. Brazil, Senegal, Philippines and India) in which a rights-based approach with reference to national law has proven an adequate strategy. However, circumstances are different in fragile countries (Cambodia, DRC and South Sudan) and are subject to change; accordingly progress has been slower.

HEKS/EPER campaigns holistically for access to land

Valorisation of land is key to ensure long-term access, but also to make land 'profitable' for farmers or communities. Therefore, access to land means also to foster agro-ecological production, inclusive market systems, transformation of land conflicts or their prevention and promoting good (land) governance through a duty-bearers–rights-holders dialogue.

In order to be able to continue effectively promoting people's access to **basic and public services, and water and seeds**, a growing number of country programmes and projects had started to replicate and upscale promising practices based on experience gained with the HRBA, indicating a strong positive link between applying the HRBA and rights-holders' negotiation power and duty-bearers' fulfilment of their obligations. Since 2013, this trend has been further pursued in the majority of HEKS/EPER country programmes (11 out of 16). This is also indicated for instance by the yearly increase in the number of the most vulnerable people, including women, accessing basic/public services. Within three years the numbers have nearly doubled from 44'434 to 79'583 individuals.

Despite feeding the world and providing resilience to natural disasters, peasant seed systems face severe threats due to the appropriation of nature by corporations and the accelerated destruction of agricultural biodiversity. Increasingly, seed and agrochemical businesses seek to privatise, monopolise and control seeds by patenting and commodifying these very sources of life. Meanwhile, peasant and indigenous

communities, who have been the developers and guardians of seeds for millennia, are finding their rights to save, use, exchange and sell seeds overshadowed by a corporate agenda that prioritises profit over human rights and the sustainable maintenance of nature.⁶ Since 2013 the number of countries has increased in which emphasis is placed on programme/project activities targeting **access to seeds** through the promotion of 'seed keepers' and local varieties, in countries such as Brazil, Honduras, Guatemala (phased out 2014), Colombia, the Philippines, Niger, Senegal, India and Cambodia. The registration of new local seed varieties at the municipal level in Honduras and cooperation with research institutes like the Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária (EMBRAPA) in supporting local seed banks and in-situ seed conservation in Brazil are important results aiming in the right direction. Meanwhile, systematic exchanges on access to seeds at Headquarters level has increased, and the same holds true for south-south exchange among HEKS/EPER partners and other like-minded organisations.

Most HEKS/EPER water projects focus on the issue of **drinking water**. In this regard, the SDC-funded Water Consortium (launched in 2013 and still ongoing) has made a considerable contribution. In Africa alone, in 2014 more than 90'000 people benefited from improved access to water through 13 WASH projects. The long-term effects of HEKS/EPER's water projects were evaluated in Ethiopia for the first time through a participatory 'beneficiary assessment' (in collaboration with Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation). In addition, in 2015 the project on defluoridation in Ethiopia won a national best practice award. Also during 2016, progress in achieving results in access to water are obvious, reaching 66'475 individuals. The number is lower than in 2015, with some projects in Ethiopia and Niger being consolidated or ending, and with difficulties in implementation in South Sudan with the civil war hampering the projects.



Harvesting vegetables.

⁶ Right to food and nutrition watch (2016): Keeping seeds in people's hands.

3 Access to land in HEKS/EPER’s international programme

Theory of change

With its new ‘HEKS/EPER international programme 2017-2020’ HEKS/EPER’s operates in three sections, **development cooperation (DevCo), humanitarian aid (HA)** and **church cooperation (CC)**.

‘Secured access to land and resources’ is one of nine overarching objectives in the theory of change for HEKS/EPER’s development cooperation section. HEKS/EPER’s vision of a world where people and communities enjoying equal rights and prosperity despite shocks⁷ and stresses⁸ is to be achieved with a holistic perspective and interconnectedness of all nine objectives. Therefore access to land is not a ‘lone standing objective’ and many ‘access-to-land-projects’ do include additional objectives/outcomes or a country programme seeks for complementary partners and projects to support the access to land endeavours.

Figure 4: The 3 sections of HEKS/EPER’s International Programme tackling jointly in a holistic manner challenges of the global development context.



ToC DevCo: HEKS/EPER strengthens civil society and inclusive governance structures, living together in peace, the pursuit of access to land and resources as well as sustainable production and inclusive market systems. Thus, HEKS/EPER contributes so that all people and communities enjoy equal rights and prosperity despite shocks and stresses.

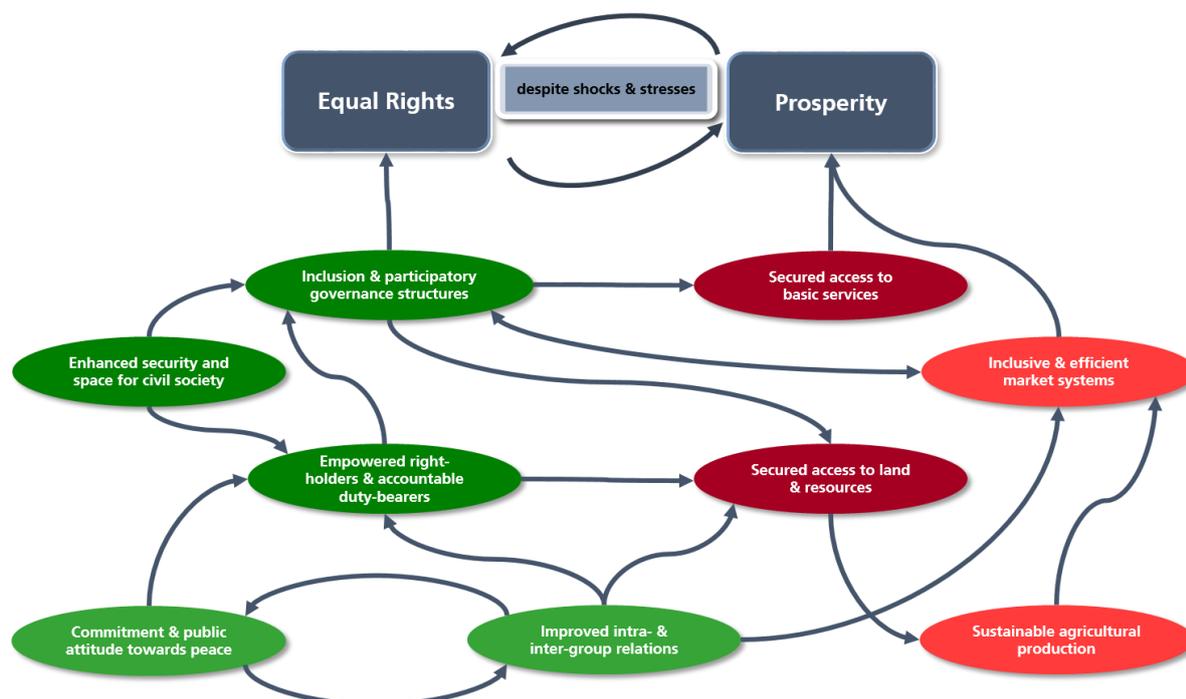


Figure 5: Theory of change for HEKS/EPER’s development cooperation.

⁷ **Shocks** come in the form of rapid onset or slow onset shocks that impact on the vulnerability of the system and its components. There are many different types of disaster-related shocks that can strike at different levels. These include disease outbreaks, weather-related and geophysical events including floods, high winds, landslides, droughts or earthquakes. There can also be conflict-related shocks such as outbreaks of fighting or violence, or shocks related to economic volatility.

⁸ **Stresses** are long-term trends that undermine the potential of a given system or process and increase the vulnerability of stakeholders within it. These can include natural resource degradation, loss of agricultural production, urbanisation, demographic changes, climate change, political instability and economic decline.

Restricted and endangered access to land and resources has proven to be one of the major obstacles to the development of rural communities, which are in the centre of HEKS/EPER's work. As a consequence of the urgent needs to secure access to land and HEKS/EPER's longstanding experience in development work, a substantial number of HEKS/EPER projects have focused and are focussing on enhancing access to land and resources for rural communities.

The reasons why access to land is crucial for the development of rural communities is manifold: For rural communities agriculture is their predominant source of income and a secured access to land and resources is the basis for any agricultural production. Beyond the classical crop cultivation a secured access to land is required for other basic livelihood strategies, for example access to pasture land, possibilities for collecting fruit and firewood, the fulfilment of housing requirements. Furthermore, secured access to land is important for the spiritual attachment of a group and thus the maintenance of a feeling of belonging and cultural identity as well.

Access to land and resources means, in the view of HEKS/EPER, that people have guaranteed rights to land ownership and/or land use, and that they can manage and use the resources of the land (territory) in the long term. Depending on the context, HEKS/EPER's work focuses on three aspects:

- Supporting people and communities in their legitimate endeavours to have secured access to land and resources.
- Enhancement of processes and institutions resolving land conflicts and harmonisation of rules and laws.
- Assisting populations that have access to land and that use its resources in safeguarding it against outside interests on the basis of the laws in force.
- Supporting people and communities in investing in land and in managing land productively and sustainably.

Human rights-based approach and systemic perspective

When working with a **rights-based approach**, the links of HEKS/EPER programmes and projects to human rights mechanisms are crucial. This includes promoting the access to justice in our partner countries and in some cases (if the local and national justice is not functional, if national remedies are exhausted and/or not in line with human right standards) also the access to international human rights mechanism.

To progress in long-term with access to land HEKS/EPER works as well with its vision of a **systemic perspective**. HEKS/EPER aims to achieve more sustainable and systemic access to land by analysing and addressing violations of rights, inequalities and unjust power relations. In 2016 HEKS/EPER, for example, together with our partner organisation FIAN International supported for example the indigenous Guarani Kaiowà people in Brazil to file a lawsuit with the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights to claim the right to access their territories in Mato Grosso do Sul.



Small-scale farming in India.

4 Progress with regards to access to land

This chapter details the progress and changes observed on access to land and how HEKS/EPER contributed, primarily based on country/project/field visit reports and evaluations identifying promising examples.

Access to land for rural communities means food security, a basis for additional income but also cultural identity. HEKS/EPER is more and more regarded as a competent and active actor in the development community when it comes



Production of onion seeds in Niger.

to supporting people to secure their traditional and legal rights to access land and the important resources such as water, seeds, forests, pasture, and farmland. Widespread, continued disputes over who owns the world's land is a major constraint to progress on a wide range of development goals espoused by local peoples, national governments and the international community. The largest land acquisitions (e.g. by agro-business) are concentrated in countries with weak governance structures or poor governance. In these countries, the proportion of hunger and malnutrition in the population is also very high, for example in HEKS/EPER priority countries such as DR Congo or Ethiopia⁹. This is an observation confirmed by HEKS/EPER's analytical framework to systematically assess and enhance land tenure security. It has been revealed that the greatest success is possible with more stable governments (e.g. Brazil, Senegal or India) in which a rights-based approach with reference to national law has proven an adequate strategy.

In Switzerland, but also amongst experts in various global networks, HEKS/EPER is more and more regarded as a competent and active actor in the development community when it comes to supporting people and communities in securing their traditional and legal rights to access land and important resources such as water, seeds, forests, pasture or farmland. In **12 countries** worldwide, **40 projects** (see map next page) are dealing to various degrees and with different approaches with the topic of access to land with the aim of:

- Supporting people and communities in their legitimate endeavours to have secured access to land and resources.
- The enhancement of processes and institutions resolving land conflicts and the corresponding harmonisation of rules and laws.
- Assisting populations that have access to land and that use its resources in safeguarding it against outside interests on the basis of the laws in force.
- Supporting people and communities in investing in land and in managing land productively and sustainably (see also [Objectives 2.1 to 2.3](#)).

⁹ Rights and resource initiative (2015): Who owns the world's land?

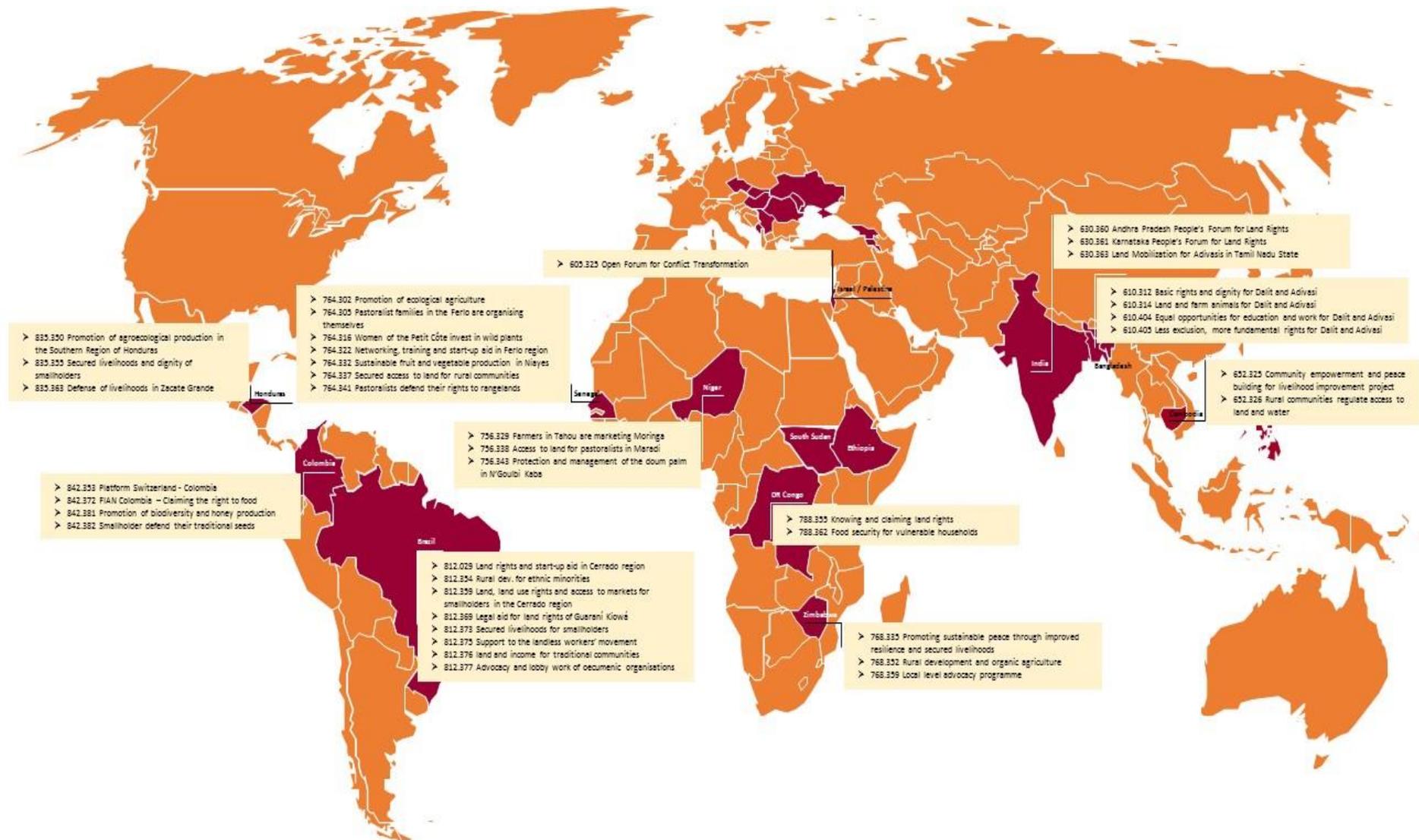


Figure 4: 40 project on access to land in 12 countries. The Americas: Brasil, Colombia, Honduras. Africa: DR Congo, Ethiopia, Niger, Senegal, South Sudan, Zimbabwe. Asia: Cambodia, India, Palestine/Israel.

4.1 Achievements 2016 in access to land

In 2016, HEKS/EPER facilitated improved access to land for nearly 80'000 individuals securing 15'791 ha of land. Access to land has been secured in various manners – individual land titles (e.g. India, DR Congo), agreed rights on shared land use by communities (e.g. Brazil, DR Congo) and regulations on land use (e.g. cattle corridors in Niger), mitigating land conflicts (DR Congo, Palestine/Israel, Cambodia). Elaborating, documenting and submitting land claims does not necessarily result in the short-term in individuals accessing land or hectares of secured land, but was an important part of HEKS/EPER activities in countries like Senegal to engage in the ongoing land policy reform process (see below), India or in the framework of new access to land activities in Cambodia.

Analysis through a self-assessment by HHQ staff showed that in eight out of twelve countries, the achievement of the set objectives was 'good' or 'very good'. Objectives that were barely achieved or not achieved at all were the access to land objectives in countries with conflicts or shrinking space for civil society: in South Sudan, Palestine/Israel, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia.

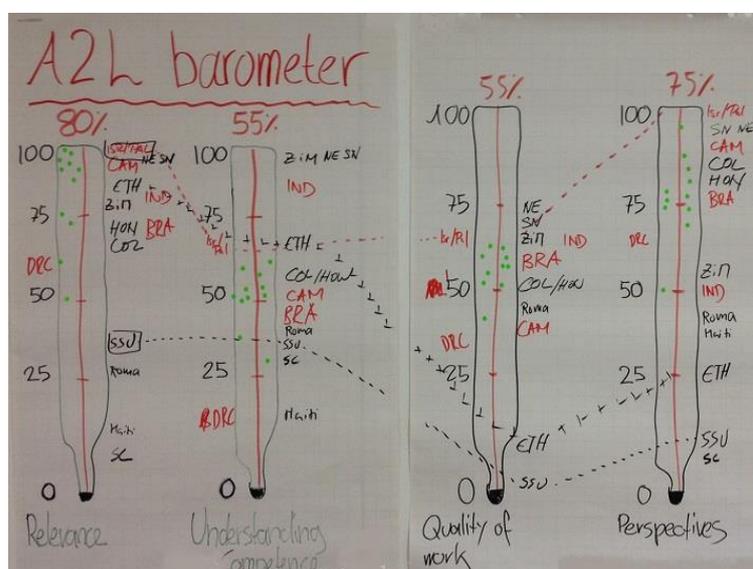
HEKS/EPER rated the focus countries in relation to access to land on relevance, competence, quality of work and perspectives. Overall on HIP level, the topic was rated like this: Relevance: 80% / Competence: 55% / Quality of work: 55% / perspectives: 75%

Three types of countries emerged ...

- Type A): Access to land has a high relevance, the competence and quality of work of HEKS/EPER are good and the perspectives are rated medium till positive. Countries such as Honduras, Brazil or India, where HEKS/EPER is working since a longer period building up competences and being effective.
- Type B): Access to land has a high relevance and the competence is satisfying. But the quality of work is insufficient or there weren't any activities. Furthermore, the perspectives are medium or rather negative. Countries such as Ethiopia or DR Congo with a difficult fragile context.
- Type C): Access to land is somehow relevant, the competence is low and the quality of work insufficient, the perspectives to implement access to land projects negative. Countries like South Sudan, Haiti or the South Caucasus. Either there, HEKS/EPER has other priorities identified or civil war (South Sudan) made activities impossible and hampers perspectives.

Countries with HEKS/EPER DevCo activities in 2016	Access to land facilitated	
	No. of individuals	No. of hectares
DR Congo	416	286
Ethiopia	0	0
Niger	41'386	1'401
Senegal	636	597
South Sudan	0	0
Zimbabwe	111	208
Bangladesh	533	6
Cambodia	0	0
India	6'037	4'574
Palestine/Israel	25'000	0
Brazil	3'959	8'719
Columbia	0	0
Haiti	n/a	n/a
Honduras	1'500	0
Moldova	n/a	n/a
South Caucasus	n/a	n/a
Kosovo	n/a	n/a
Romania	n/a	n/a
Serbia	n/a	n/a
Total	79'578	15'791

Figure 5: Access to land facilitated by HEKS/EPER projects in 2016.



Analysis on relevance, competence, quality and perspective of HEKS/EPER related to access to land in focus countries.

4.1.1 Evaluations and knowledge sharing

HEKS/EPER's 'learning for steering' is promoted through a functioning monitoring and evaluation process including a constant learning cycle. Reporting and reflecting on HEKS/EPER impact will definitely be changed through the revised M&E process, including sound PCM logic. Overall in 2016, HEKS/EPER commissioned 33 external project evaluations (including 2 impact evaluations and one experience capitalization). During 2016, HEKS/EPER commissioned four evaluations of country programmes Bangladesh 2013–2016, South-Caucasus 2013–2016, Haiti 2013–2016 and Hungary 2014–2016 with no evidence on progresses A2L. Evaluations and analysis 2016 related to access to land were ...

- HIP annual report 2015 and HIP 2017-2020 with analysis on progress of objective A2L.
- External evaluation of project 812.354 CAA, Brazil (2015/2016)
- External evaluation of project 756.338 Zamtapo, Niger
- External evaluation of project 835.363 Adepsa, Honduras
- External evaluation of project 764.302 Enda Pronat, Senegal
- External evaluation of project 764.337 Plaidoyer-Foncier, Senegal
- Internal fact finding mission / scoping study in Cambodia.
- Start of **contribution analysis** for Senegal project '764.337 Plaidoyer foncier'.
- Initiating the process for an impact assessment for the Open Forum project in Palestine/Israel covering partly questions related to access to land.

4.1.2 Adding value to land

Access to land is not a 'lone standing objective' and many 'access-to-land-projects' do include additional objectives/outcomes or a country programme seeks for complementary partners and projects to support the access to land endeavours.

Valorisation of land is key to ensuring long-term access, but also to making land 'profitable' for farmers or communities. Therefore, access to land also means also fostering agro-ecological production, inclusive market systems and transformation of land conflicts or their prevention. In addition, HEKS/EPER wants to have a closer look to the unintended outcomes of access to land activities. Land titles often lead to increased value for the legally secured plots. Individual landowners or fragmented communities may tend to sell land for short-term gains, especially if they are in precarious economic situations and do not have prospects for adding value to their land from which they benefit immediately and in the long-term. Screening its projects, HEKS/EPER has more and more interventions in the field of shared access to and use of land. This is a promising approach to secure land and to foster food security and prosperity in a sustainable manner.

Amongst others the measures taken are, the use of **seeds** and varieties which are adapted to changing climatic conditions (e.g. Cambodia, Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Niger), **sustainable land/water management** and eco-DRR (e.g. Niger, Senegal, Ethiopia, Honduras, Haiti, Cambodia), **promotion of conservation agriculture** (e.g. Zimbabwe), **risk transfer** through grain/seed/livestock banks (e.g. Cambodia, India, Honduras). For details see the full HIP annual report 2016 of HEKS/EPER.

4.2 Institutional achievements 2016 in access to land

To strengthen the core competences, network capacities and public visibility of HEKS/EPER in the field of access to land and land conflicts, in April 2016 HEKS/EPER launched a new institutional project related to the topic of access to land, which focuses on two aspects:

- Activities related to a better qualification of HEKS/EPER work with regards to access to land: case studies, cooperation with institutions and experts, colloquiums, publications, flagship projects and capacity building will accompany this process.
- Activities related to the accompaniment of relevant global processes with regards to access to land and participation in relevant networks. Processes like the Global Convergence on Land and Water Struggles, the elaboration of the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people in rural areas or the implementation/monitoring of the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.

Furthermore, the project aims:

- To link HEKS/EPER's country programs to these global processes.
- To further develop a common institutional understanding and vision on the topic of access to land and resources.

4.2.1 Global networks and key processes HEKS/EPER is part of

HEKS/EPER strived for better linkages with relevant national, regional and international processes and networking related to access to land. The main outcomes and findings of **six key processes** HEKS/EPER took part in have been:

1) Global network for the Right to Food and Nutrition

In 2015, HEKS/EPER became member of the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition (GNRtFN). The network is an initiative of public interest CSOs and social movements to act jointly for the right to adequate food and nutrition by creating spaces for dialogue, supporting CSOs in accessing their rights, defending human rights activists, and promoting human rights. The topic of access to land and other natural resources is one of the core fields of intervention of the network. This includes: demands of social movements to access food production resources, territories and the commons; the struggle against land grabbing and the implementation of the Tenure Guidelines, etc. HEKS/EPER's also enables its partner organizations and their networks to 'harmonize' their agendas with the GNRtFN working agenda.

Being an active member, HEKS/EPER participated in the annual meeting in Dakar in March 2016. The GNRtFN supported as well the caravan process in West Africa in cooperation with the Global Convergence on Land and Water Struggles.

There the increasing threats land rights activists face was a key topic with countries like Honduras identified as one of the most dangerous to for those active in human rights. Together with other members HEKS/EPER explored possibilities for cooperation regarding the implementation of alert systems for the protection of human rights defenders engaged in cases of violation of the right to food and other related human rights.

In addition, HEKS/EPER contributed to the 2016 edition of the Right to Food and Nutrition Watch on seeds and biodiversity, with practical examples from Honduras, Colombia and Brazil.¹⁰ Exploring possibilities for cooperation regarding the organization of fact finding missions in selected focus countries. Also the network contributed to the FAO's voluntary guidelines assessing possibilities monitoring its implementation on the tenure of land, forests and fisheries and selected focus countries.

Important for the international standing of HEKS/EPER was its contribution to the 2016 food watch document on seeds and biodiversity with examples of Brazil, Columbia and Honduras.



2) International Colloquium on Traditional Peoples and Communities in Brazil

At the end of August 2016, HEKS/EPER co-organised the fourth International Colloquium on Traditional Peoples and Communities in Montes Claros, Brazil with about 350 participants from academia, the NGO sector, members of social movements and public authorities from five countries. The major focus of the IV Colloquium have been the analyses of different kinds of conflicts on the traditional territories of the

¹⁰ Right to food and nutrition watch (2016): Keeping seeds in people's hands.

communities, including the increasing criminalization which these groups are suffering, particularly in the context of land grabbing activities and increasing exploitation of natural resources of forest and savannah regions. Besides the organisation of two side-events – one related to the UN Declaration on Peasant's Rights and a second related to the Voluntary Guidelines on Secured Land Tenure – the event led to:

- The strengthening of political dialogue between different social movements in Latin America.
- To a broadening of working contacts with networks, alliances, research institutions and civil society organisations at the international and national level (e.g. with the Geneva Academy for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights or the Institute of Development Studies, national research institutes in Brazil, the University of Kassel or pastoralist and Adivasi community representatives).
- The deepening of good practices related to land governance and secured access to land.

HEKS/EPER took the Colloquium as an opportunity to:

- present the findings of the Brazilian case study on land governance, conducted by IDS in cooperation with HEKS/EPER's programme partner, CAA and the state University of Minas Gerais (UNIMONTES), in North of Minas Gerais.
- organize two thematic side-events during the Colloquium, one related the UN Declaration on Peasant Rights and a second related to the Voluntary Guidelines on Secured Land Tenure, in order to link the traditional peoples and communities' debate on land, territory and related governance topics to these important international processes.
- promote the exchange of good practices on different governance instruments of territories and their resources, particularly between HEKS/EPER's two partner organizations ACVC (Columbia) and CAA (Brazil).
- broaden HEKS/EPER's working contacts and dialogue with national and research institutions, civil society organizations and their networks in different countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America (e.g. Geneva Academy for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, Institute of Development Studies, University of Kassel and national research institutes in Brazil).

3) UN Declaration on peasants' rights

Together with various social movements from farmers and other civil society organisations working on the issues of food and agriculture, human rights and development, HEKS/EPER is supporting the elaboration process of a new UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people living in rural areas. After the development of a draft version and three consecutive rounds of negotiations, there will be a further round of negotiations in May 2017. As such, HEKS/EPER was involved in the preparation of a large international conference on this topic which will be held in March 2017 in Schwäbisch Hall, Germany.

In addition, HEKS/EPER organised a capacity building and networking event linked to the Peasant Rights Declaration in April 2016 during the International Civil Society Week in Bogota, Colombia. Capacity building accompanying this process were ...

- Capacity building and networking with Latin American partners of HEKS/APER at a CIVICUS workshop in April 2016.
- Preparation of International Congress on Peasant's Rights of March 2017.
- Approaching and sensitization of project partners for active engagement in the elaboration process of the declaration in Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe.

4) Global Convergence on Land and Water Struggles: support for caravan in West Africa

In March 2016, a so-called 'land caravan', launched and organised by a social movement of grassroots organisations and hundreds of direct stakeholders working for their right to food and land, traversed seven West African countries advocating for access to land and water. HEKS/EPER partners were actively involved when the demands of the movement were handed over to Macky Sall, the President of Senegal and current President of the West African Economic Community ECOWAS in Dakar, Senegal.



The land caravan campaigning in seven West African countries small-scale farmers having access to land and water culminated in a big rally in Dakar.

In Senegal, women were consequently trained in leadership and management, and thus effectively reported significant changes in their participation in decision-making within local councils and community-based organisations. They have a say in mixed organisations and hold responsible positions in local organisations, and thus can shape communal development. Additionally, production techniques and commercialization of dairy products were improved and successfully raised women's income. During the caravan of the Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles in West Africa HEKS/EPER supported its partners to mobilise 750 people (80% women), who participated in activities for land rights, access to water and seeds.

Following this caravan, the leading organisations of the Convergence have organized a subregional meeting together with the members in December 2016 in order to develop strategies for consolidation and strengthening of national platforms as well as improving the communication for a better visibility of its actions.

In addition, an exchange between La Via Campesina and the caravan process has been organised at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform in Marabá, Brazil, in April 2016.

5) FAO's voluntary guidelines

There have been very little concrete activities related to FAO's Voluntary Guidelines in 2016. This was mainly due to insufficient human resources and prioritization of other working agendas in the reporting period. In 2017, HEKS/EPER's access to land activities, certainly, will have a stronger focus on this important framework. The most important activities in 2016 have been:

- Conduction of a thematic workshop on VGGLT and their relevance for the access, protection and governance of land and territories at the IV International Colloquium of Traditional Peoples and Communities, Brazil
- Introduction of the People's Manual on the VGGLT to programme partners in Brazil and India, in cooperation with the FIAN network
- Workshop FIAN and HEKS/EPER to reflect on possibilities to cooperate in initiatives and experiences that aim the monitoring of the implementation of the VG in selected countries and cases, 2017 onwards.

6) SDC Learning Journey on Land Governance

The SDC network for Agriculture and Food Security together with the network for Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance have organised a learning journey on land governance, directly including around 100 professionals.

As a first step, case studies were conducted in three countries (Brazil, Mozambique and Cambodia) to give in-depth insight into the situation and recent developments regarding land rights, whereas the Brazilian case study was based on the extensive experience HEKS/EPER and its partners gathered during recent years on land governance. Subsequent to the studies, validation workshops were conducted in each of the countries with professionals from the public, private and civil sectors.

In September 2016, a face-to-face meeting with the participation of various HEKS/EPER staff members was held in Switzerland. The three-day meeting included excursions to different regions of Switzerland, allowing the participants to learn how conflicting interests in land use are balanced here.

The **case study** conducted in **Brazil** by the Institute of Development Studies stated the following: 'The Norte de Minas shows what can be achieved by strategies such as those used by HEKS/EPER and its partners in helping isolated groups to come together and form larger movements with national and international visibility, especially when these movements are linked up with academic networks that can help to produce an evidence base to support their demands for more inclusive land governance. Other regions of Brazil, and other countries around the world, can undoubtedly learn from this model, even where some of the enabling conditions are lacking.'

A summary of insights of the **case study Brazil** ...

Traditional peoples and the Struggle for Inclusive Land Governance in Brazil

From: Alex Shankland, Zoe Sullivan, Carlos Alberto Dayrell, Anna Crystina Alvarenga and Deyvisson Felipe Batista Rocha.

In recent decades, Brazil has attracted international interest both for the intensity of its land conflicts and for the extent of its land governance innovations. In this report we argue that these innovations have derived from a land governance model shaped by the country's decentralised political structures and by the nature of the interactions taking place across the boundary between state and civil society actors, including rural social movements. In recent years, particularly under the Workers' Party (PT) governments of Presidents Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, this has led to significant gains in recognition of and redistribution to some of the most marginalised of Brazil's rural communities. However, we conclude that the model's potential to deliver genuinely inclusive land governance has run up against certain limits. These relate to the underlying conceptualisation of land rights embedded in the country's legal framework, and to the political economy of law-making and policy implementation in Brazil.

In this study we examine these issues in relation to a particular subset of the rural population, known in Brazil as Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais (PCTs) or 'Traditional Peoples and Communities'. This term covers a wide range of population groups who practise natural resource management strategies on a collective basis using 'traditional' territorial governance mechanisms. The study focuses on land governance in the Norte de Minas or North of Minas Gerais State, a region where SDC's partner organisation HEKS/EPER (Swiss Church Aid) has supported a wide range of initiatives seeking to strengthen the livelihoods and territorial rights of PCTs. The North of Minas is a frontier region between the savannah zone of central Brazil (the Cerrado) and the country's semi-arid interior that has been the focus of a number of large-scale investments by national and international mining, forestry and agribusiness interests, as well as government initiatives to create protected areas and resettle landless farmers. We examine the ways in which interactions between social movements, their civil society allies and state actors have led to policy and institutional changes that have made it possible to protect and support some communities' territorial rights in the face of an intensifying process of encroachment by local elites and by national and international corporate interests.

We argue that political mobilisation was an extremely successful strategy for PCTs during the period in which the PT held power at the federal level. It helped to secure favourable government policies that have brought recognition for previously invisible communities, and redistributive measures that have reduced the poverty of the most marginalised. When their territories have been threatened with encroachment by local elites allied with national and transnational corporations, PCT movements have been able to resist by mobilising their own multi-level networks and invoking national and international rights frameworks. HEKS/EPER has helped to support these networks both by connecting them internationally and by encouraging links between social movement organisations, NGOs and academic institutions that can generate evidence to



Agro business in Brazil is putting pressure on small-scale farmers and also on traditional people and their jointly used territories.

inform inclusive land governance policies. However, the gains of the last few years have not included any substantive change in the legal framework to support community ownership of land. As a result, PCTs are still forced to choose between accepting state control of their territories via the creation of protected areas or pursuing private land titling mechanisms that may lead to the fragmentation of communities. There has also been little change in the underlying political economy of law-making and policy implementation in Brazil, and the national Congress is increasingly dominated by forces hostile to PCT rights. In the current much less favourable political context, these factors mean that some of the gains achieved in recent years may be reversed.

We conclude with a preliminary assessment of the future viability of these strategies in the radically altered national political context that has emerged since the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in May 2016. We posit that making inclusive land governance a reality for all PCTs in Brazil in the longer term will require stronger alignment between the legal, institutional and policy frameworks. Despite several setbacks, and the growing strength of the political and economic interests opposed to any expansion of PCT territorial rights, some of the factors that enabled Brazil's recent progress towards inclusive land governance do remain in place. Overall, it is likely that in future Brazil's environment for efforts to promote inclusive land governance will contain fewer elements that make it exceptional and more that are shared with other countries where PCTs and other groups of the rural poor are struggling to preserve their territories in the face of an encroaching commodity frontier that increasingly brings together local elites and international capital. The Norte de Minas shows what can be achieved by strategies such as those used by HEKS/EPER and its partners in helping isolated PCT groups to come together and form larger movements with national and international visibility, especially when these movements are linked up with academic networks that can help to produce an evidence base to support their demands for more inclusive land governance. Other regions of Brazil, and other countries around the world, can undoubtedly learn from this model, even where some of the enabling conditions are lacking.

Source: SDC & IDS (2016). https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Agriculture-and-Food-Security/focusareas/Documents/land_f2f_2016_country_study_brazil_2p.pdf

4.2.2 Defining access to land flagships processes

A major concern of HEKS/EPER is to sharpen its profile and competences in the field of access to land and resources. An important strategy to reach this objective is the development of 'flagship processes' which will contribute to strengthen its institutional branding on this topic. In its A2L project HEKS/EPER defines specific criteria which "flagship processes" shall fulfil, i.e. clear link between access to land and the rights based approach, potential of innovation, perspectives for networking in the country and internationally, perspectives to also work with land use approaches and "valuing" access to land (agricultural production and development of market systems), inclusion of the social and cultural dimension of land.

An addition to these general criteria HEKS/EPER also defined some other relevant aspects which will be used to sharpen the specific profile of its access to land interventions:

- HEKS/EPER flagships should make a difference and create an added value in the programme work.
- HEKS/EPER flagships should contribute to more and better evidence.
- HEKS/EPER flagships should contribute to sharpen its political position related to access to land.
- HEKS/EPER flagships should foster opportunities for national and international advocacy.

On the basis of these principles, HEKS/EPER made a couple of efforts in selected countries in order to identify and prioritize thematic aspects and concrete working fields for the flagship processes.

- In **Latin America** (Brazil), HEKS/EPER contributed to SDC's learning journey process on inclusive land governance, through a case study on territorial land use approaches of traditional peoples and communities.
- In **Asia** (Cambodia), HEKS/EPER carried out a first fact finding mission in order to better understand causes and drivers of land conflicts and identify and prioritize possible fields of intervention.
- In **Africa** (Niger, Senegal, Ethiopia), where HEKS/EPER in its country programmes is already engaged in the work with pastoralist communities, reflections have started in order to check the relevance and the conditions to further develop HEKS/EPER's access to land interventions with a specific focus on pastoralists.
- In **Europe**, in cooperation with HEKS/EPER's communication department, first activities have started to identify entry points that could link the access to land discourse of the global south and its challenges with land governance structures and experiences in Switzerland, particularly with regard to the debate on the governance of commons.

These activities and reflections provided valuable information to HEKS/EPER and helped to select a number of focus countries and prioritize fields of intervention as well as observation topics of the flagship processes. Furthermore, this working approach will also allow to better monitor, compare and foster outcomes and learnings from the different processes. Besides the above mentioned criteria and principles for flagship processes, the following aspects to develop HEKS/EPER's A2L profile and competences in the flagship context have been agreed upon:

- Indigenous and other local and traditional peoples and communities and their rights to land and resources.
- Communal land use, territory and land governance practices.
- Social, political and ethnic conflicts (i.e. mining, water, biodiversity, traditional knowledge).

Based on all of these inputs, findings and definitions during 2016, some important questions came up which certainly will guide the process to further develop HEKS/EPER's A2L flagships in 2017, i.e.:

- Common land use practices based on traditional and customary land rights systems, private land titling and land title formalization, which are the most adequate strategies or instruments to deal with pressures over land and resources?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of communal land use practices on the way to a more sustainable, equitable and efficient governance of land and resources?
- Are territorial governance instruments adequate to deal with pressures over land resources?
- How can local and traditional communities be strengthened in their efforts to claim and secure their rights to have access to land and natural resources?

5 Achievements 2016 on access to land per country

This Chapter documents in brief the progress on access to land in HEKS/EPER focus countries of development cooperation.

5.1 Brazil



With the cooperation of HEKS/EPER partner FIAN, in November 2016 the Guarani Kaiowá submitted their complaint regarding access to their land to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

6 partner organizations work on access to land in Brazil. In 2016, access to 8'719 hectares of land for 6'000 people was secured. With the change of government, the achievements of the HEKS/EPER partner organisations are threatened. After a great deal of effort in recent years, the authorities have finally realised their responsibilities in the field of land rights. It was therefore all the more important to expand the HEKS/EPER portfolio with new organisations, including PAD (Processo de Articulação e Diálogo), which supports the coordination of civil society to maintain its rights and democracy. For the promotion of biological diversity and food security, HEKS/EPER set up a new cooperation with the organisation Terra de Direitos in 2016. From 2017, the organisation will foster advocacy work on access to economic, social

and environmental rights, for traditional communities as well as the Guarani Kaiowá at the national level. Since the legal remedies to secure access to land for the Guarani Kaiowá have been largely exhausted at the national level, HEKS/EPER, together with its partner organisation FIAN International, supported the submission of a complaint to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights at the end of 2016. A positive judgement could have a signalling effect on access to collectively used land.

5.2 Cambodia

In Cambodia, HEKS/EPER added the land conflicts and access to land components to its intervention lines in agro-production, seeds and access to market, working intensely on the topic, building up competences and linking with partners and networks in Cambodia.

The already difficult political and economic situation of smallholders was made worse in 2016 by a drought with large losses to harvests and livestock. HEKS/EPER further expanded its programme in Cambodia with more partners, projects and a larger annual budget of USD 1.4 million. HEKS/EPER supplemented its activities in the field of agricultural production and market access based on an analysis with conflict transformation components. This primarily aims to enable access to land or mediate land conflicts and enable rights to be claimed from the authorities. This legal-based work, which primarily benefits the rural population, is extremely important in view of the increasingly restricted room for manoeuvre of the civil population. The partners are also being given special training.

5.3 Columbia

In Columbia, HEKS/EPER is screening the opportunities and risks of the peace agreement with land under the control of the FARC that is now accessible, but vulnerable to land acquisitions without respecting the needs of the local communities. In the coming months and year, HEKS/EPER will focus on this post-conflict process. With its new country programme 2016-2019 HEKS/EPER does focus on improved livelihood and income of small-scale farming families through access to land and diversified sustainable agriculture. This was already targeted with activities in the area of Reserva Campesina Cimiterra to secure land in the long-term – a promising start has been expecting secured access to 40 ha for 40 farmers in 2017.

5.4 DR Kongo

Despite continual recurrence of violence, an unstable political situation and poor economic circumstances, HEKS/EPER – together with its seven partners – was able to help around 8'300 people in the rural eastern Congolese regions of Rutshuru, Masisi and southern Lubero. A key element of this was the psychosocial support and reintegration of almost 1'000 people who had experienced violence in the armed conflicts or women who had suffered sexual abuse. HEKS/EPER also mediated in 250 cases of land disputes at various meetings. For more than 400 farmers access to 286 ha land has been enabled – half of it with formal legislation, the other half with informal land use based on communal or traditional rights. Forms of access were ...

- Individual land owner rights: 150 ha for 75 male and 13 ha for 26 female individuals.
- Collective access to land: 92 ha for five communities with 82 male and 84 female individuals.
- Rental contracts for small plots: 44 ha for 150 individuals

HEKS/EPER launched peacebuilding activities with two new partners in 2016. This is a key requirement for greater security, access to land and economic development.

5.5 Ethiopia

With its new country programme, HEKS/EPER is seeking to work in new areas and focus more intensively on the protection of natural resources (land, forests, water and seeds) as well as on pastoralism. Access to land and to have the right and means to manage it in a sustainable way therefore becomes more important. The respective partners and projects are being evaluated.

5.6 Honduras

The programme focus lies on food sovereignty, access to land as well as human rights and conflict transformation. With the escalation of violence in 2016, activists campaigning for rights – also the right for small-scale farmers to access land – face discrimination, criminalization and physical harassment.

A key intervention area remained the Peninsula of Zacate Grande. With the Government policy to create zones for 'special use' (ZEDE) in the South to attract investors the situation is deteriorating. 300 families are concerned. HEKS/EPER reacted with increased activities on protection of human rights defenders and conflict transformation.

But in 2016, no progress was made in legalizing land in favour of families that have been driven away. Meanwhile, employees of the so-called entrepreneurs, have maintained constant pressure on families with pending court cases to give up their right to land and to have them sign agreements whereby they recognize that entrepreneurs are the legitimate owners. 31 people in the project area accused for usurpation of land with a proposed sentence of eight years imprisonment were acquitted. HEKS/EPER partners supported the farmers in the legal proceedings.



Access to land means access to nutrition, opportunities for increased income, but also to cultural identity – therefore defending land is vital. In Honduras activists are under threat.

5.7 India

Sustained access to productive land as well as the ability of smallholder families to operate profitably in agriculture, are essential to strengthen the South Indian minorities of Dalits and Adivasi. Weather extremes



The land forums in Southern India help small-scale farmer to organize themselves and to advocate for land rights.

with drought and flooding, political and social tensions draw the economic development in the south back. Therefore, the continuous support to the three South Indian land fora is central, where the responsibility of leadership and the successful battle for access to land the landless and small farming families will be handed over to Dalit and Adivasi. It is important for a long-term land tenure security that the value can be added - without income from the land, the communities or individual land owners can sell the land out of financial distress. As a result, profitable value chains such as the HEKS-supported cashew nut production were able to significantly improve the income for project participants in 2016 - and thus also the

recognition within the society. In 2016, a total of 6'037 Dalit and Adivasi got secured access to 4'574 hectares of land due to the active lobby and advocacy work by the land fora.

5.8 Niger

During 2016, it was particularly important for HEKS/EPER to allow the various groups of sedentary peasants and pastoralist communities to guarantee a fair access to scarce land, water and other natural resources. In 2016, cattle corridors of 126 km in length were able to be negotiated, secured and marked by contracts, which benefitted around 41'000 people. In addition, 630 hectares of cattle grazing grounds were secured and 770 hectares of unproductive land could again be cultivated. With all these measures, the living conditions of sedentary farmers and pastoralist communities as well as their peaceful coexistence could be further improved.

5.9 Palestine / Israel

The pressure of the Israeli government on freedom of movement and expression increased. This is a challenge for the implementation of projects for more access to land and dialogue on resettlements and the right to return.

In 2016, Palestinian and Israeli civil society organizations have jointly developed and are advocating for human rights based alternatives and strategies for access to land, housing and public space. Sensitization and advocacy activities reached 25'000 people. In the 2 project of ADEL and in Wadi Fuqim the local communities got in 2016 increased access to land.

In this context land has a big social and cultural component. Emek Shaveh, an Israeli partner is challenging the of Israeli authorities in the West Bank in archeological sites. By engaging in field monitoring, data generation, legal action and public advocacy, the project promotes the understanding among local and foreign policy makers, NGOs and the general public that Palestinian communities have heritage rights and may access these historic sites.

5.10 Philippines

In 2016, HEKS/EPER remained active in Mindanao and Panay as part of its humanitarian projects after the destructive typhoon in 2013 (Haiyan) and its aftermath. HEKS/EPER focused last year on helping around 18'000 people to earn a living again independently on a long-term basis.

Access to land has been an immanent issue while reconstructing dwelling-houses, ensuring reforestation, protecting mangroves and enabling agricultural production. Where is it de facto and de jure possible to build, cultivate or afforest? Who owns the land, who can use it in the future and do the families have long-term access to the new dwellings or the country to which it stands. The sustainable precautionary measures were only successfully carried out thanks to cooperation with local partners and the authorities.

5.11 Senegal



Access to land and resources gets scarcer – like in Ferlo, Senegal, where pastoralist struggle to maintain their access to land.

Within the framework of the national land reform, HEKS/EPER partner organizations are committed to their design and elaboration for the benefit of small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises as well as small farms and transhumant cattle breeders. In 2016, specific concrete inputs were made to the national Land Reform Commission, with the aim of providing these people secured access to and use of land and resources. 70 percent of the proposals were received after a process supported by HEKS/EPER for many years. Besides that, HEKS/EPER partners could deposit with the authorities in Thiès 590 documented claims on about 500 ha of land for 530 people. 201 files are already approved by the commune of Keur Moussa for about 200 ha – the next step will be the validation of the files by the Prefect of Pout, together with another 13 files already approved with ACCES.

For pastoral land in the Ferlo area, 85'000 ha of pastoral land (Dolly ranch), threatened with decommissioning for agricultural purposes, are being secured by the installation of the fence wall to delimit the area of the ranch and to stop the encroachment of the agricultural areas on the ranch and the continuation of the plea for obtaining an administrative act.

Measures to conserve natural resources such as water, soils, forests, etc. were also important by measures against salinization, mangrove protection, and reforestation.

In addition, an international 'land caravan' through West African countries with a much-respected final event in Dakar, drew the attention of governments and the general public to the importance of access to land by small-scale producers for food security. HEKS/EPER together with its partners mobilized 750 people from local communities, 80% of whom were women.

5.12 South Sudan

With an escalating civil war, in 2016 the set goals in access to land have not been achieved, as no partner was able to work in the foreseen project areas.

5.13 Zimbabwe

To defend land rights and prevent distractions to the advantage of large agricultural companies is very difficult in Zimbabwe with its restrictive regime and the current land policy. Nevertheless, HEKS/EPER and its partners managed to secure more than 200 hectares of land for more than 100 people. In addition, in the Moriti Oa Sechaba region, over 11'300 people were given access to clean drinking water and sanitation in 2016. Four partner organisations are adopting a coordinated approach to providing people with information about their civil rights and empowering communities to present their concerns to the competent authorities – also on behalf of access to land. In 2016, 10,000 people were reached with trainings and targeted campaigns.

One of the greatest achievements in 2016 is that we have begun to see people of our concern (PooC) standing up for their rights and fighting political injustice as well as forceful eviction without compensation, a sign that the project which seeks to build resilience is making an impact.

The partners MPT and Habakkuk have formulated a joint advocacy plan to engage the Department of National Parks and Parliament on the contentious issue of the Matobo National Park and how local communities can benefit from the park.

The rural community in Dewe assisted resisted intimidation by a war veteran who wanted to take over their garden and took up the issue with the district Administrator. And people in Matobo have been threatened by land displacements to pave way for a big company to take over the land for agriculture – but partner CLS represented 29 farmers from Ward 6 to defend their right to their land. The case is before the courts and the company expansion was halted.



Villagers around Maleme Ranch celebrating that they can continue working on their land.

In September locals from Maphisa and Kezi area mobilized themselves and demonstrated against a local company TREK and the Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (ARDA) which sought to evict 68 families from their homesteads, where they had been residing since 1946. Despite being arrested for demonstrating, the locals remained strict in their decision not to be evicted from their land and the land where their forefathers were buried. HEKS/EPER partners Masakhaneni and Christian Legal Society and Habakkuk Trust were visible in the were active on ground, providing advice, food as well as engaging lawyers on the matter and because of that intervention the

locals were acquitted as their arrest was illegal and a violation of their right to demonstrate.

Another success is that the local community working on the privately owned Maleme Ranch can continue doing so. Government authorities stopped the take-over by Zimbabwean businessmen. Habakkuk Trust and Masakhaneni supported them to defend their right to access the land. The year passed without further disturbance to the work of the farmers. However, farmers have access rights only and are working on a Constitution and a Community Trust which will enable them to gain ownership rights.

6 HEKS/EPER institutional project on access to land

To strengthen the core competences, network capacities and public visibility of HEKS/EPER in the field of access to land / land conflicts HEKS/EPER launched in 2016 a new institutional project related to the topic access to land, which focuses on two aspects:

- Activities related to a better qualification of HEKS/EPER work with regards to access to land: case studies, cooperation with institutions and experts, colloquiums, publications, flagship projects and capacity building will accompany this process.
- Activities related to the accompaniment of relevant global processes with regards to access to land and participation in relevant networks. Processes like the Global Convergence on Land and Water Struggles, the elaboration of the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people in rural areas or the implementation/monitoring of the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.



Small-scale farmers working on their plot in Brazil.

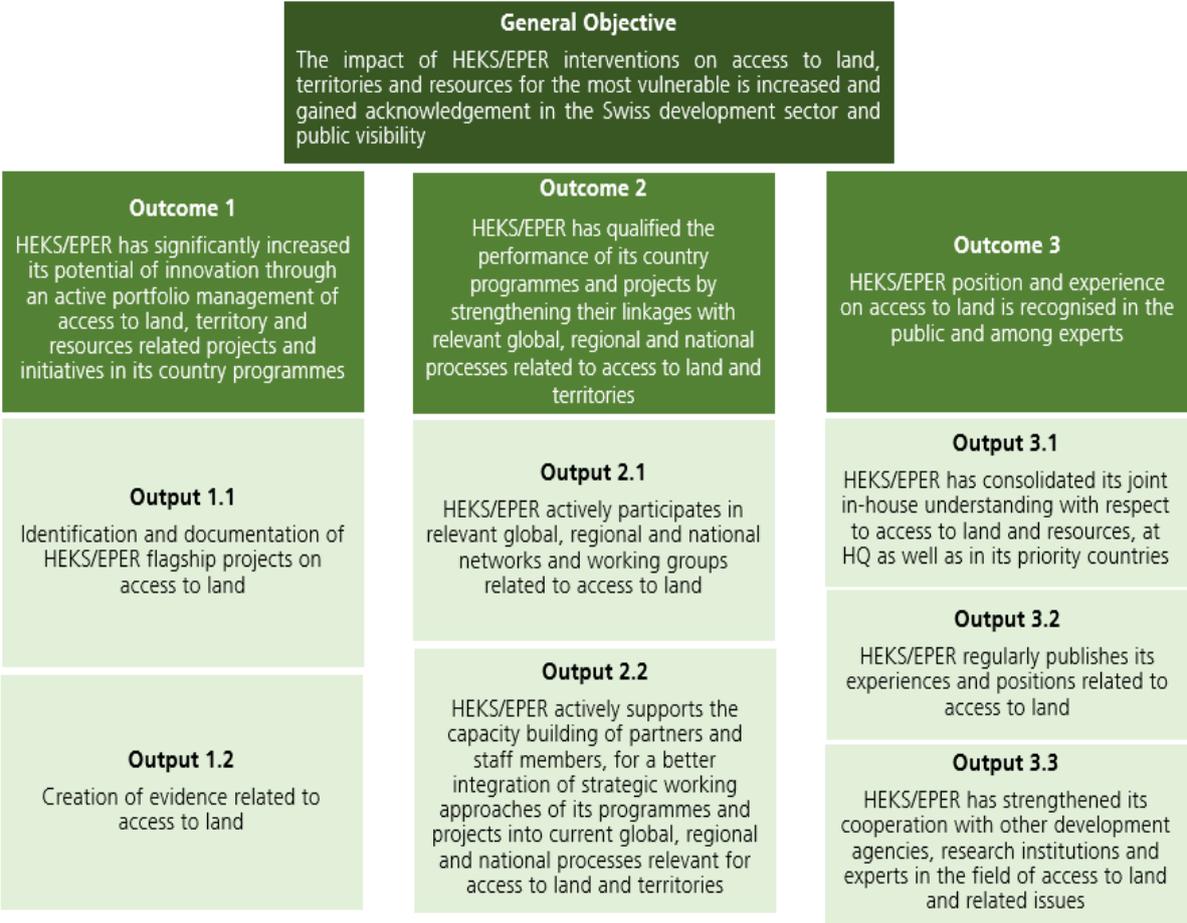


Figure 6: The results framework of HEKS/EPER’s global project to promote access to land.

7 Communication on access to land

HEKS/EPER's communication department supports the activities of the International Division with fundraising, public events, media coverage, thematic campaigns and advocacy work. Below is a selection of the most relevant activities and publications:

- Launch of new website of HEKS/EPER with access to land as a key topic of international cooperation.
- In 2016, HEKS/EPER informed the public about the 'land caravan' against the violent expulsions of small-scale farming families in Africa in press releases and the monthly newsletter.
- Article in the HEKS/EPER magazine *,handeln'* about the Guaraní-Kaiowá struggling for their land rights (edition 3, 2016) and about the situation in Senegal and the land caravan (edition 2, 2016).
- [Photo feature on website](#) on Senegal's small-scale farmers campaigning for land and adding value to land with agro-ecological production and accessing the market.
- HIP annual report 2015 (April, 2016) with emphasis on access to land.
- HIP international programme 2017–2020 (September, 2016) a.o. with analysis on A2L progress and context.
- Contribution to Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 'Keeping Seeds in Peoples' Hands': Case studies Brazil, Honduras, Colombia, Guatemala.
- Contribution to the publication of the IV Colloquium (ongoing).



Photo features on HEKS/EPER's website cover also the topic access to land.

8 Perspectives on access to land in the HEKS/EPER international programme

Based on the extensive experiences gained in recent years related to the topic access to land, HEKS/EPER will further expand its existing project portfolio of interventions facilitating access to land and resources for the most vulnerable. The support of projects and initiatives which target the development of sustainable land governance systems for peasants and rural communities based on equitable access to the natural resources of the land and the territories will receive specific attention also in 2017. HEKS/EPER wants to be an active player at national/international events and processes, participates in tenders; being contacted by other stakeholder seeking for competence and cooperation as HEKS/EPER is recognized as a competent NGO in the field of access to land. The flagship process shall support the thematic expertise in the countries and at HHQ, but also make access to land activities visible in the public.

Thus, in 2017 besides the ongoing project and programme work in the countries and regions, HEKS/EPER continuously supports the ongoing initiatives and furthers deepens networking contacts on national and international level. It will be key to include Swiss research in HEKS/EPER's access to land processes and to strengthen linkages to networks and experts such as IDS, SDC, Geneva Academy. Also HEKS/EPER will continue the coordination with Brot für alle, e.g. on the Convergence, the UN Peasants' Rights and in the Global Network on the Right to Food and Nutrition.

In 2017, the following key networking and knowledge sharing activities are foreseen:

- March 2017: Co-organisation and participation at the **International Congress 'Global Peasants' Rights'** in Schwäbisch Hall and follow-up workshop in South Africa (April 2017), which will shed light on the situation of small-scale farmers and the rural population around the world, shall draw public attention to the importance of peasants for sustainable local and regional production of food in agro ecological quality and shall emphasize the need to protect their rights and their indigenous knowledge. Finally the aim is, that UN peasants' rights declaration is approved within UN. And Governments and other duty-bearers in different countries promote the implementation of the declaration.
- June 2017: Co-organisation of the **V. International Colloquium of traditional peoples and communities** in Kassel, Germany. The primary aim of the colloquium is to further strengthen international communication related to traditional peoples and communities addressing actors of science, development cooperation, non-governmental organisations, representatives of traditional communities, as well as other interested parties. The main discussions will be around the three topics 'Identity and Tradition', 'Territory and Rights, Threats and Sustainability' and 'Migration and Economics'.
- **HEKS/EPER Land Forum**, June 2017: on the 20th of June HEKS/EPER will organise a HEKS/EPER Land Forum in Switzerland inviting interested development actors who want to further discuss the topic of access to land / land governance. HEKS/EPER will take the opportunity of the international colloquium of traditional peoples and communities, to invite key speakers / experts from this colloquium presenting their insights and experiences also in Switzerland.

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