## The GIZ Magazine

#### akzente SPECIAL



This way, please

## Keeping the dialogue going

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A visit to the GIZ country office in Ethiopia

## Twists, turns and transformation

An essay by author and publicist Ilija Trojanow

#### Tradition meets technology

Apps for agriculture in Senegal

## 'We need to conserve resources. Nothing can live without water.'

Ana Rodas Cuéllar, smallholder and beekeeper

Visit the virtual exhibition at:



multimedia-for-development.org/en/invisible-water

In southern Bolivia, lots of people like Ana Rodas Cuéllar live in symbiosis with the natural environment and water. But droughts are destroying their harvests and endangering the country's rich biodiversity. The Invisible Water exhibition showcases the pivotal role that water plays for our future.

#### Editorial

## When the world is changing rapidly

Change - the only constant

AN ISSUE DEDICATED TO CHANGE was chosen to mark a specific event: akzente magazine's complete switch from print to digital. Most of our readers now predominantly get their information online. So that's where we will meet you in future to provide our magazine's content. You will find reports, interviews and background information about international cooperation and GIZ's priority areas both on our website and on GIZ's social media channels.

THE SHEER SCALE OF GLOBAL CHANGE was something that we could not have predicted when selecting the topic. However, the war in Ukraine has demonstrated just how swiftly and dramatically things can change. A war of aggression in Europe. Refugee movements on a scale we have not seen since the Second World War. Sanctions that are unprecedented in their scope and severity. Arms exports and steps to strengthen armies. Economic downturns in several countries.

YET EVEN BEFORE the war in Ukraine, a lot was changing. The number of fragile states is on the rise. Two thirds of our partner countries are already marked by conflicts, violence or crises. The world's poorest countries are also finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the consequences of climate change. In an interview with akzente, the new Federal Development Minister Svenja Schulze explains how she is addressing the changing situation in the world, and what priorities she is setting. An article by Tanja Gönner, Chair of the Management Board, looks at where GIZ stands today, ten years after it was founded, how it responds to global change, and why change is a never-ending process. And finally, publicist Ilija Trojanow considers why the forces of

inertia are often almost insurmountable, even when change would be advisable. It doesn't matter how many people are desperate for change, a genuine transformation is always difficult to achieve.

THE SAME PATTERN can clearly be seen with digitalisation and sustainability. However, no matter how difficult it might sometimes be to embrace digitalisation, it offers us countless opportunities in almost every aspect of our lives. This is also the case in developing countries. At GIZ, we aim to help shape the digital world so that it benefits everybody, offering educational opportunities, providing independent information, enabling people to form their own opinions, and fostering democratic participation. We still have our work cut out for us. The shift towards greater sustainability is another major change that we are experiencing. No matter how hard the transition, this is the only way to ensure our long-term survival. GIZ's commitment in this area is particularly strong; we are a constant source for new impetus.

In this, our last printed issue of akzente, you can learn about all the things that are changing – at GIZ, in international cooperation, and beyond. Now and in future, you will find us online at akzente.giz.de. Pay us a visit and take a look! We hope you enjoy reading this fascinating issue.

Jahle Tonthe



SABINE TONSCHEIDT, Director of Corporate Communications sabine.tonscheidt@giz.de

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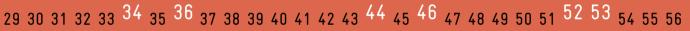
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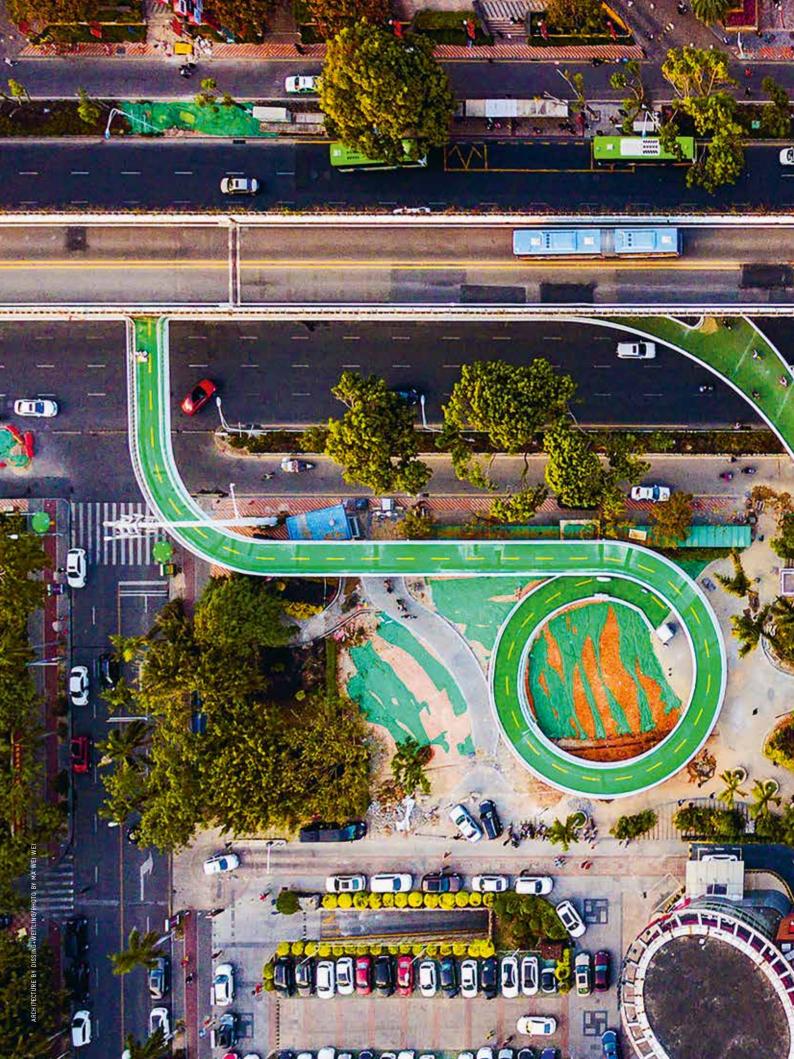
GITAL PICKS, AKZENI



DIGITAL AKZENTE Our magazine is also available online, with content optimised for mobile devices. akzente.giz.de/en

# PATHWAYS TO **CHANGE**

A piece of green mobility can be seen snaking its way through the Chinese port city of Xiamen. Under the city's rapid bus system, a cycle path stretches for almost eight kilometres. The colourful access ramps are hard to miss. The 'skyway' is designed to encourage more of the city's several million inhabitants to take to their bikes. In this issue of akzente, we showcase the diversity of change.





'The high quality of akzente journalism must be translated convincingly for the digital world, so we can better reach our readers.'

UTE SCHAEFFER, HEAD OF MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

## HELLO FUTURE

kzente

**Democracy** 

akzente

Clean energy

In future, akzente magazine will only be available online, allowing us to report our stories with even greater versatility. Text, videos, audio and infographics will be combined to paint a vivid picture. This changes nothing in terms of the high standards of journalism we set ourselves. Our aim is to provide fascinating insights into GIZ's work, introduce you to interesting people, and put topical international cooperation issues in context.

akzente



akzente Green Recovery akzente akzente Education Women akzente Refugees – Unwavering desire for a new life ips create jobs in Tajikistan hin akzente Digitalisation akzente<sup>\*</sup> Was

Responsibility

vzente

GIZ @giz\_gmbh - 10. Mai

#DYK? Indigenous peoples protect 80% of the Earth's #biodiversity. But their habitats are in great danger due to #climatechange. Activist and influencer Helena Gualinga fights for the rights and future of indigenous peoples. Find out more at #GIZakzente:

akzente.giz.de/en/article/hel.



elping to strengthen Lebanor's public education system so that

Digital chalk for a



The interview at akzente.giz.de explains why we feel at home in the digital world, and where we go from here.

about how they are supposed to think and feel and what is morally right.

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MERY RODRÍGUEZ Sozialwissenschaftlerin

#### #GIZakzente

GIZ







return to school'

1 PROUD OF WHERE MY ING OPERATION IS GOING. SALOMO KAUARI

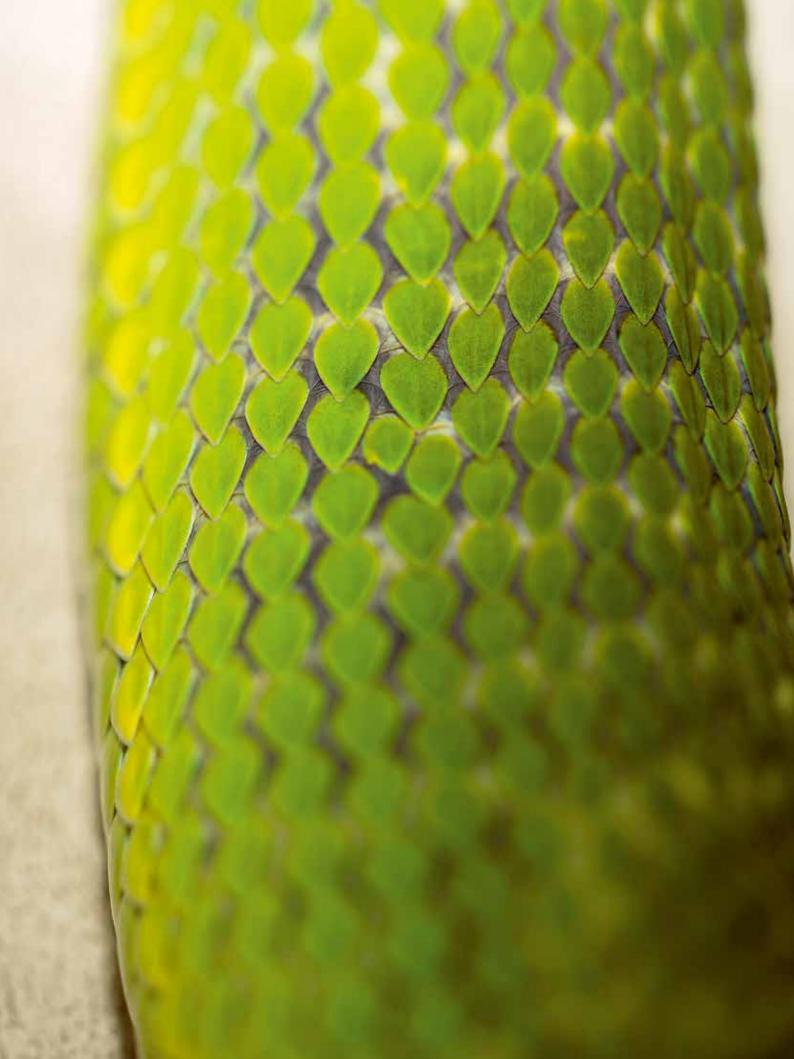
TEXT: AMINA NEYAMAT PHOTOS: TAPASH PAUL

 Scientists at Chittagong Medical College Hospital on the Bay of Bengal and Frankfurt University Hospital share a fascination for snakes. Under a hospital partnership, they are working and learning together, so that more snakebite victims can be saved. A contribution to global health.

The project contributes to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



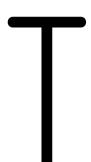






The red-tailed bamboo pitviper is one of 300 snakes kept at the Venom Research Centre at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) in the south-east of Bangladesh. **Right:** The venom of Russell's viper causes internal bleeding, kidney failure and can result in amputations. The antivenoms currently available do too little to neutralise it.

Find out more about the Bangladesh-German hospital partnership in a video available on the akzente website: **akzente.giz.de/en** 



The invaluable treasure housed at Chittagong Medical College (CMC) is closely guarded. Anyone who wants access must navigate their way through a sophisticated security system, don a lab coat, disinfect their hands, pass through an automatic door and then enter via a specially reinforced glass door. Visitors who make it through the last sliding door will be greeted with threatening hisses from the dangerous yet precious treasure that lies within. Three hundred venomous snakes live here in shelves screened with black fabric. Anyone entering the dimly lit, air-conditioned room for the first time could be forgiven for feeling more than a little apprehensive.

Of course the team that works at the CMC Venom Research Centre in Chattogram in south-eastern Bangladesh is in no way put off by this welcome. The research assistants who work with Professor Aniruddha Ghose are on familiar territory. 'Some snakes get stressed when they sense movement around them. They hiss loudly to signal that people should stay away,' explains Mizanur Rahman who, like his colleagues, is responsible for looking after and breeding the animals. They use an impressive technique to extract venom, so that they can learn more about the development of the antivenoms that can save human lives.

The research scientists clearly feel at home in the company of the reptiles. Today, the team has a visitor, and he feels no different. Dr Ulrich Kuch is one of the world's most renowned snakebite experts. The biologist heads the Department of Tropical Medicine and Global Health at the Goethe University's Institute of Occupational, Social and Environmental Medicine in Frankfurt am Main. He is actively involved in a hospital partnership between the hospital on the Bay of Bengal and the Frankfurt University Hospital. Since 2020, both institutions have been part of a global hospital partnership funding programme implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Kuch had already established links to CMCH and other hospitals in Bangladesh. For many years, German and Bangladeshi research scientists have been working together in the field of poisoning and snakebites. This is an urgent problem, especially in rural areas. Experts estimate that some 700,000 people are bitten by snakes every year in Bangladesh. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that an average of 16 people die here every day from snakebites. Most victims

#### Dangerous yet precious

are young. Kuch knows all too well from the time he has spent in Asia the anguish this can cause, as well as tipping families into poverty if the breadwinner dies or becomes permanently unfit for work as a result of amputations or other disabilities. For a long time, the devastating health and economic problems that snakebites pose for people living in rural parts of the Global South were not fully recognised. Today, the World Health Organization has classed snakebite envenoming as a highest priority neglected tropical disease.

After a morning spent at the Venom Research Centre, Kuch and Ghose walk across to the adjacent hospital. Every day, the hospital admits victims of snakebites or poisoning – around 5,000 admissions a year in total. Chittagong Medical College Hospital serves a vast catchment area. The densely populated region is home to forty million people, almost a quarter of the country's entire population. But snakebites are not the only cause of poisoning. The hospital also treats people who have tried to take their own lives using pesticides, often in despair at their poverty and family debts. Despite recording moderate economic growth, Bangladesh remains one of Asia's poorest countries.

CMCH treats everyone who seeks help. It now benefits from equipment procured under the hospital partnership, including mobile ultrasound equipment that can be used right at the patient's bedside. During a visit to the unit, Professor Ghose highlights the pivotal



#### HOSPITAL PARTNERSHIPS AROUND THE GLOBE

The Hospital Partnership programme of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH encourages medical experts to take part in continuing professional development, supports them with innovative activities and promotes mutual learning and networking in 65 countries with a total of 2,900 actors. The aim is to strengthen health experts worldwide. The funding programme was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is cofinanced by the Else Kröner-Fresenius-Stiftung. The partnerships cover the entire spectrum of health care including anaesthesia, mental health, dental care, and everything in between. The programme responds to current crises like the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine with emergency measures and special calls for proposals. This made it possible, for instance, to stem transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and to provide targeted care for people who contracted the disease. The programme has already supported partnerships between five hospitals in Bangladesh and German hospitals and organisations.

Contact: klinikpartnerschaften@giz.de

#### BANGLADESH

Capital: Dhaka / Population: 164.7 million / GDP per capita: USD 1,969 / Economic growth: 2.4 per cent / Human Development Index ranking: 133 out of 189

Source: World Bank







The Frankfurt-based biologist Dr Ulrich Kuch and Professor Aniruddha Ghose are in contact regularly. **Below:** Visiting a victim of poisoning who had just been examined using mobile ultrasound equipment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital.





#### Dangerous yet precious

importance of this equipment and stresses how valuable it has been to receive support from Germany throughout the coronavirus pandemic. For patients with acute poisoning, in particular, transporting them anywhere for examination purposes is far too demanding. In these cases, the mobile ultrasound equipment works 'like a magic wand', say the doctors. Without having to move patients, the equipment delivers precise data about their internal organs and helps identify effective treatment. 'The hospital partnership programme made this urgently needed modernisation possible and enabled us to train our health specialists to use the equipment,' Aniruddha Ghose tells Kuch as they walk through the bustling unit to check on a patient who has just been examined in bed using the ultrasound equipment.

CMCH has created space for a laboratory and a training centre to ensure that all doctors can work with the new equipment and use it in training. 'This skill lab not only improves patient care. Medical specialists are also being trained in the use of modern methods,' Ghose explains. 'In future, this will help disseminate expertise throughout the country,' Kuch adds. Both men are wholly dedicated to the partnership, under which each side learns from the other on an interdisciplinary basis. Experts share their knowledge and ideas. 'CMC has established the first Venom Research Centre of its kind on the South Asian subcontinent, thanks in part to the financial support provided by Bangladesh's Government, the assistance of brilliant zoology graduates from the University of Chittagong, and successful cooperation with its German partners,' stresses Ulrich Kuch. Discussions with colleagues from Bangladesh regularly give him food for thought – he learns more about the local snake population, for instance.

The Bangladesh-German tandem already have their eyes set on the next goal. To manufacture affordable antivenom tailored specifically to the local requirements, the country needs a larger facility than the modest centre at CMC. This is the only way to ensure that enough high-quality snake venom can be harvested in a controlled research laboratory using modern scientific methods. At the moment, the only antivenom available in Bangladesh is produced in India. The imported products are not very effective. 'Our joint research has shown that venom from snakes like Russell's vipers and cobras in Bangladesh contain quite different toxins to those in India,' says Kuch. However, the Indian antidote is unable to neutralise these toxins.

Meanwhile, back at the Venom Research Centre, an impressive Russell's viper is being milked. The experts at Chittagong Medical College Hospital continue to work with their invaluable animals – which are both dangerous and precious. —





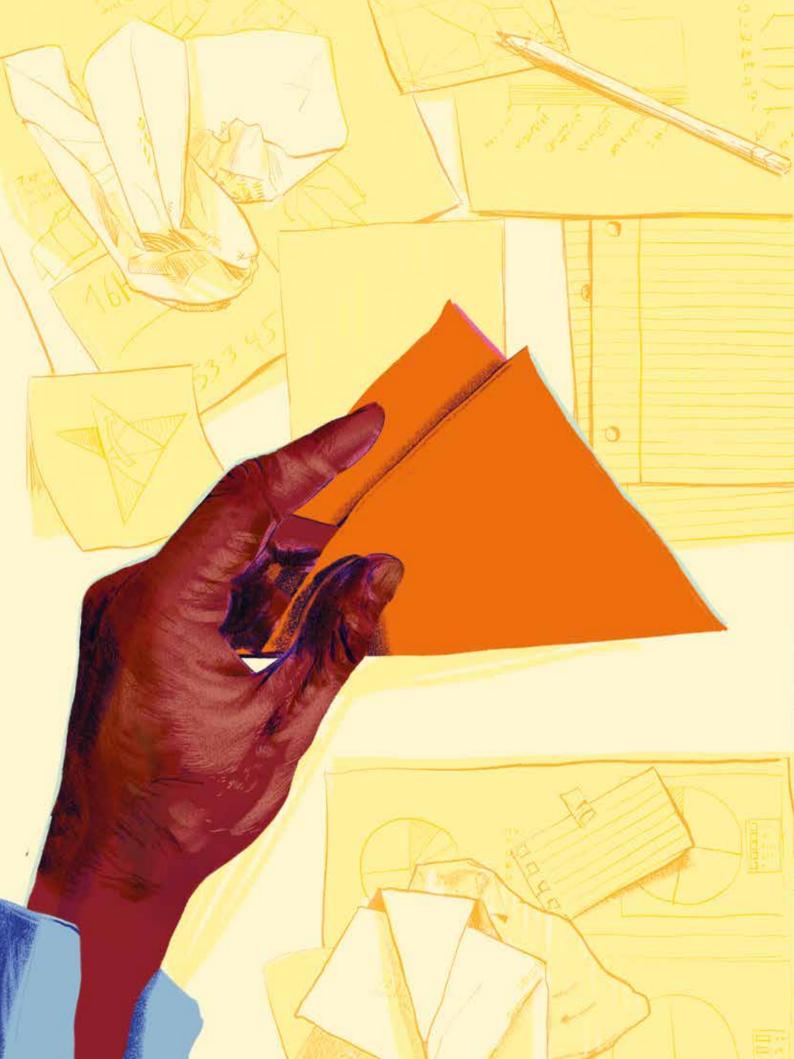
Young scientists at the CMCH Venom Research Centre milk a spectacled cobra, one of the world's most dangerous venomous snakes. Antivenom is still imported, but the team is aiming to produce regionally appropriate, specific and more effective antivenoms in Bangladesh.



#### Author AMINA NEYAMAT and photographer TAPASH PAUL work

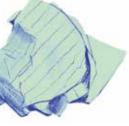
for the renowned agency Drik Images in Bangladesh's capital city Dhaka. They had never got so close to snakes as they did when researching this article. TEXT: ILIJA TROJANOW ILLUSTRATIONS: FLORIAN BAYER

Things appear necessary by virtue of their very existence – why change is so difficult. Author and publicist Ilija Trojanow examines inertia and lack of imagination.









I had only just begun to think about change when I had a dream:

A seesaw with a funny little man sat on the left and lots and lots of funny little men on the right (I really did call them funny little men in my dream). The left-hand side represented a long-standing, tried and tested idea. Those on the other side represented new, fresh and original ideas. Much to my amazement, the seesaw tipped to the left. Again and again.

Some people might think it was a nightmare. Others might shrug and say that this is just the way of the world. And others would try to explain why, practically throughout history and almost everywhere in the world, people have always been doggedly resistant to change, and still are. Could it be that the status quo offers an inherent advantage over what might be? Does it have some sort of competitive advantage over ideas, plans and dreams that would require us to set out bravely on a new path? Regardless of how bad the current situation actually is, or more precisely how negatively it is perceived by some (and often by many)? Things appear necessary by virtue of their very existence. Regardless of whether they really work as well as their supports claim. We now know, for instance, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that the destruction of natural resources to fuel constant growth will result in environmental disasters in the long term. Countless studies have done the calculations and presented the results. Scarcely a day goes by without the publication of a report delivering clear evidence of this. On one day in February 2022, for instance, reports showed that our oceans and the creatures that live in them are crammed full of plastic; three quarters of marine waste consists of plastic - up to 12.7 million tonnes a year. 'That is too much for any ocean to swallow,' was the headline from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). We are patiently watching the plight of the oceans, absorbing a daily quota of wonderfully comforting illusions about our world system, which, like dietary supplements, only work through the power of suggestion.

In contrast, things that don't yet exist are generally considered suspicious. First, there is doubt as to whether the alternative even exists. 'There is no alternative,' is the pious litany of the status quo. The conversation that follows, more often than not, is one of the best-known dialogues from Monty Python's 'Life of Brian'. 'What have the Romans ever done for us?' And nothing that any visionary could offer up as a retort seems able to make any impact on the apodictic denial that there could even be an alternative. Alternatives are quite simply invisible. This is a specific form of selective blindness that helps individuals and societies navigate their way through life without being inconvenienced by the truth.

It is because of this selective blindness that we often miss the historical watershed when a radical transformation would be possible. What the ancient Greeks called kairos – the right, critical or opportune moment. For the very good reason that opportunities fly by, traditional wisdom advises us to seize our chances while we can, grabbing hold of them before they slip from our grasp. The window to act is therefore small, and once it closes, all we can do is stand and stare as the opportunity disappears over the horizon.

#### Twists, turns and transformation

A lot has been said about reform and revolution, about 'revolutionary reform' and 'refolution'. About the right degree of change. But regardless of which strategy is preferred by the individual (which is often a question of character, of patience or greed, of optimism or despair, rather than the outcome of any serious analysis), opportunity is a crucial component. To be progressive also means seizing the historic opportunity of our time with both hands. Because once change has happened, everything that has been achieved seems self-evident, and the preceding political inertia becomes hard to comprehend, as global experience with women's rights in the 20th century demonstrated. Last year, this was illustrated impressively by the Women.Rights exhibition held by the Swiss National Museum in Zurich that explored the utopian vision of votes for women. Retrospectively, men can only be mortally ashamed for the massive protests and warnings of our fellow men as to where general suffrage for women would end. It took almost a century to achieve a change that today appears self-evident.

What we also acutely lack is imagination. That can be seen today most clearly when it comes to the mobility debate, and more precisely to private cars, especially in Germany with its reputation as the country of philosophers and car drivers. Cars are taken for granted, and all other arguments are derived from this axiom. Life without a car is inconceivable, even when we close our eyes. And if anyone has the temerity to insist on discussing a fantasy world that does not revolve around cars, the debate quickly becomes emotive, tempers rise, fuelled by the fear that something radical could change in the parameters of our own life, because a different life - perhaps even a better life - is simply inconceivable. Where there is no imagination, change appears to be something that will tip us into the void, and thus an attack on our very existence.

We can see other competitive disadvantages of change in the language that has logically been developed to describe the status quo, making it ideally suited to reflect its strengths and weaknesses. Dreams and possibilities, by contrast, are difficult to encapsulate in the language we have 'walked in' 'It doesn't matter how many people are desperate for change, genuine transformation is always difficult to achieve.'

caused the problems in the first place, and for us homo sapiens, thoughts are generally expressed through language. As brutal as it may sound, the language we love and cherish also undermines the plausibility of alternatives, if we fail to question and change it. It doesn't matter how many people are desperate for change, or how many people recognise the need for change, genuine transformation is always difficult to achieve. Unfortunately, it is easier to preserve the status quo, even if it is broken and even where ILIJA TROJANOW Author, publicist, translator and publisher. His latest novel 'Twin Track' was published in 2020.

and are comfortable with. They are stiff and

unvielding, leaving us with the impression

that they are not made for us - they don't fit

or sit right. Who knows, they might even be

dangerous. By its very nature, the language

we are used to denounces radical alterna-

tives. We all know that we cannot solve our

problems by thinking in the same way that

In focus: Change

## 'Climate is at the heart of development policy'

Svenja Schulze is new to the German Development Ministry but not to Government. Her priorities are climate, poverty, gender, health and crisis prevention. In an interview, she discusses German development policy in flux.

Interview: Friederike Bauer

#### Minister, what are your priorities as the new head of the German Development Ministry?

We are committed to respect-based policies that treat our partner countries in the Global South as equals. And we are addressing the key challenges we face globally – the climate crisis, overcoming poverty, achieving gender equality, global health care and crisis prevention. If we can make a difference in these areas, we will have achieved a lot – not only for developing countries, but also for Germany. In our interconnected world, crises in far-off countries have a real impact on us, too.

#### So in your new role, the climate continues to be a focus?

I have always maintained that every ministry needs to be a climate ministry. This is particularly true for development cooperation, because climate change hits the poorest countries hardest. They suffer most from the consequences of climate change and have fewer opportunities to adapt. That is why we put global climate policy, which comprises climate change mitigation and adaptation, at the heart of our development policy.

#### There is also an emphasis on gender equality. Why? And how can it be realised in developing countries?

I want to see a feminist development policy, because gender equality is a key human right. We want to achieve gender equality worldwide. That alone would be reason enough, but it is also clear that gender equality benefits societies as a

#### SVENJA SCHULZE

Originally from the Rhineland, Svenja Schulze was German Environment Minister from 2018 to 2021. She was appointed Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development at the end of 2021. whole. Feminist development policy means that we must always take care to specifically advance women's interests in our projects, or at least to involve them on an equal basis. Countless studies indicate that there is less hunger and poverty, and greater stability, when women and men share responsibility equally.

The COVID-19 pandemic is posing major new challenges for poorer countries in particular: increased poverty and lower economic growth, to name just 'Sustainable economic development is a key prerequisite for vital social and environmental change.'

#### two elements of this. Can the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) still be achieved?

We're working on it. We still need to pull together much more at international level though, in Europe, within the United Nations and in other international contexts. Multilateral cooperation, wherever possible, leads to better outcomes – in preventing pandemics, for instance, or meeting global challenges like climate change. Cooperation can generate trust, even when we are dealing with difficult partners. Take



#### Interview

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. We can only achieve the objectives set out in these agreements by working together rather than everyone doing their own thing.

#### So what does that mean for the transition to sustainable economies?

Sustainable economic development is a key prerequisite for vital social and environmental change. That is why we encourage private sector development. Private businesses are also essential partners when it comes to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. We need them to provide impetus and generate jobs in our partner countries.

In particular, we are working to strengthen the economic position of women in their capacity as entrepreneurs, employees, managers and consumers. To make our partner countries more resilient to future shocks, we are also supporting digital development and green economic development. I'm thinking here, for instance, about support for a socially acceptable transition to a more sustainable energy mix and establishing vaccine production in Africa. The pandemic has also clearly highlighted to us the fact that social safety nets are practically non-existent in poorer countries - that's another challenge that we need to address together.

#### Today, more than half of the world's population live in countries that are not democracies. What does that mean for German development cooperation?

When democratic rules are breached, there is a threat of war and destruction. This is what we are currently witnessing with shocking clarity. That is why democratisation and a commitment to good governance are more important than ever. They are also among the pillars that support values-based development policy. I am convinced that democratic structures foster sustainable economic development, a more equitable distribution of the fruits of economic growth, and the effective reduction of poverty. This is clearly evidenced by international studies. Even in countries that have recently developed along more autocratic lines, the promotion of democracy has had a clear and positive impact. Populations are demanding their rights more loudly than they used to.

#### Some people see Afghanistan, or more precisely the end of international engagement in Afghanistan, as the 'fall from grace' of development policy. Where do you stand on this?

We cannot describe it as the end of international engagement. Our decision to engage militarily in Afghanistan always

#### 'I want to see a feminist development policy, because gender equality is a key human right.'

went hand in hand with a responsibility at the civilian level, which the German Government will continue to uphold following the end of the military assignment, particularly in these difficult times for the country. More than half the population face hunger, including 13 million children. The education and health systems are close to collapse. The economy is in free fall. We have responded as an international community. Germany alone provided support worth EUR 600 million at the end of last year for humanitarian assistance, structural transitional aid and basic needs. Our engagement will continue to support people in future. But we will be working with non-government bodies, because we do not want to legitimise the Taliban regime. We will thus translate into practice the commitment set out in the Coalition Agreement: 'Germany will continue its engagement for the people of Afghanistan.'

#### We are increasingly hearing the term 'international structural policy' rather than development policy. What's the difference?

International structural policy is a policy that fosters global justice for sustainable development. The changed context makes this absolutely essential. Globalisation has brought the world ever closer together. The challenges of our time, like climate change, can only be addressed if we work together at international level. For this, we need a binding framework, structures that we need to put in place to enable our partners to act independently as equals. After all, they are the real drivers of the required social and environmental transformation on the ground. The primary features of this policy are a global, democratic framework, a fair system of world trade and global finance, and, wherever possible, efforts to step up multilateralism. All of these also boost our resilience to deal with crises.

#### What role do you see for GIZ in this change?

Many other states envy us because we have GIZ, and I am delighted that we have such an effective implementing organisation. GIZ provides partners with very concrete support on the ground on our behalf. Over the last two years with the pandemic, GIZ has demonstrated impressively how swiftly and flexibly it can respond to new challenges, developing new approaches and instruments. The exceptional dedication and the high number of GIZ staff in our partner countries make a huge contribution towards shaping a modern development policy to deliver global justice. I am certain that GIZ will continue to work closely with BMZ to address the new development challenges with its usual drive. ---

Change



### Much achieved, but still a lot to do

Where GIZ stands after ten years, and why the company must continue to evolve

By Tanja Gönner, Chair of the Management Board

There exciting years are now behind us. Three institutions, namely DED, InWEnt and GTZ, have become one: the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, or GIZ for short. That was a major shake-up of the German development cooperation landscape and it brought massive changes to our organisation. In retrospect, we managed this merger well. It was not easy, it took its toll, and it was a painful experience at times – but today we are a unified organisation with global operations.

Looking back, we can say today that the reorganisation came at just the right time. It prepared us for the many changes that have since influenced us from the outside, the most obvious being the increase in the number of fragile contexts. The world has become significantly more unsettled over the last ten years. Today, two thirds of our partner countries are marked by crises, violence and conflicts. This is currently true of Afghanistan, but also of Syria, Yemen and Mali, and in an especially harrowing way, it is true of Ukraine.

No two cases are the same. There are always new factors involved: sometimes a civil war, sometimes weak governments, sometimes both, while other regions are hit by natural disasters or struck by famine. Because of this, every situation has its own particular challenges and tasks for an

#### Much achieved, but still a lot to do

organisation like GIZ. Yet we always try to achieve results and make a difference in a positive way, even if the impact is not always immediately visible. Take the example of promoting agriculture in Mali, and thus helping to enhance food and nutrition security in a country shaken by fighting. Or training farmers in Nigeria to increase their harvests. Or improving health care in Yemen and organising schooling in refugee camps.

Worsening instability frequently forces people to flee their homes and seek safety elsewhere. We can see this all too clearly at the moment with the war in Ukraine. Syria, Afghanistan and many other conflicts have also triggered huge refugee flows, which has made the issue increasingly important for GIZ. Since 2015, we have been focusing on forced displacement and migration very closely – and repeatedly due to new waves.

The situation has been further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has kept us in its grip for over two years now, exacerbating poverty and inequality, and posing an acute risk to development progress. Above all, vaccination rates in many developing countries are still alarmingly low, in contrast to the industrialised world. In Niger, for instance, just under nine per cent of the population have been vaccinated at least once – the figure in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is only two per cent.

We are trying to address this by combining short-term support with the general strengthening of health systems. In the wake of the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, for instance, GIZ established the German Epidemic Preparedness Team (SEEG), which has also provided a valuable service during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SEEG is made up of mobile teams. These provide test kits, protective equipment and laboratory apparatus among other things, and also train health staff.

As a general rule, the following applies: driving the worldwide vaccination campaign forward is still a major challenge, and German development cooperation is very actively involved. We must not lose sight of this, given that the alternative is the risk of mass poverty and hunger. Vicious circles like this must be broken at an early stage. It is important to ensure that developing countries have sufficient vaccine supplies.

And in spite of all the major security issues we are currently dealing with, we must

#### 'We must not lose sight of the global vaccination campaign, given that the alternative is the risk of mass poverty and hunger.'

not lose sight of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). GIZ sees itself as an advocate of the SDGs, which were adopted by the international community as a shared roadmap for the period up to 2030. Along with the Paris Agreement on climate change, they form the backbone of the international agenda for the coming years. It is already clear that the 2020s will have to be the decade of realising the SDGs.

With the goals and standards in place, it is now a case of forging ahead with the transformation to bring about a more equitable and a greener future. As has been the case over the last few years, GIZ is doing all it can to support change in this spirit. One third of our entire portfolio is now related to climate issues. In Indonesia, for instance, we are promoting renewable energies and establishing and developing the recycling sector. But we don't only pursue ambitious goals in our projects. They also apply to GIZ itself. And here too we are making considerable progress: since 2021, our operations inside and outside Germany have been climate neutral. That is an important milestone!

The last few years have therefore brought many changes. Some were welcome, others less so. But as an organisation with worldwide operations, we need to be able to handle both. And that means that we must continue to evolve to ensure that we are able to cope with the constantly changing context. This is all the more relevant since the scope and volume of our work have increased significantly. Today we address more issues, have a higher turnover and more GIZ staff than we did ten years ago. Our workforce has grown by almost 7,000 since 2011. In total, around 60 per cent of staff are women.

To allow us to adjust to this more turbulent world, we adopted a new Corporate Strategy three years ago. It has made us faster, more flexible and more efficient. It provides for new ways of working and helps us move capacities quickly from A to B - all of these things are vital in volatile times. It also includes a new digitalisation boost, not only in our dealings with partner countries and in our projects, but also within GIZ itself.

It has often been said, but that doesn't make it any less true – if we fail to make greater use of digitalisation, we won't come anywhere near achieving the SDGs. And without digitalisation, we would find it very difficult to operate at all, especially in fragile contexts. Remote management is the key in this regard. Here too, we are in the middle of a significant upheaval which we cannot avoid in either our private lives or professionally.

When I look back today at GIZ over the years, it is true to say that the only constant has been change. There has hardly been a year – hardly even a month – in which some unforeseen event or another has not kept us on our toes. We look back with satisfaction at what we have achieved, but above all we see this as an incentive to equip ourselves well for the next ten years of international cooperation. There is more than enough to do – the world remains a turbulent place. —



## FAR AWAY – AND YET SO NEAR

Diversity is more than just a buzzword at GIZ: almost 24,000 staff members of 155 different nationalities are working hard to achieve results in 120 countries. Here we introduce three 'GIZ couples' who hold very different posts, but all ensure that our work bears fruit.

RECORDED BY: BRIGITTE SPITZ PHOTOS: TIM WEGNER, SAIYNA BASHIR AND NICHOLAS SEUN ADATSI



#### 'The children's joy is a huge motivation for me in my work.'

**STEPHANIE DEHNZ** (30), traveller working for the Sustainable Facility Management in Public Schools in Lebanon (SUFA) project

'I started at GIZ more than ten years ago when I was doing a dual study programme in international business. This makes me an original home-grown member of GIZ. Until the middle of last year, I had only ever worked at Head Office in Eschborn, in the Human Relations Department and in Procurement. Since July 2021, I've been supporting the education project in Lebanon. Under the traveller scheme I am mainly based in Germany, but every two months or so I spend a couple of weeks in Lebanon. GIZ has offered this flexible type of assignment for four years now. It's perfect for me. At the moment I can't move to Lebanon completely, but this still allows me to bring my skills to an excellent project on the ground.

When I applied for the job, I was already familiar with the project from my work as an IT procurement officer. I procured

all the IT equipment for this project myself, including 60,000 tablet computers, and coordinated the rest of the procurements. My work for the HR Department and for Procurement brought me into contact with many projects around the globe. It was an exciting time, and I wouldn't have wanted to miss out on it, but I still wanted to see for myself what project work really is and how we achieve results on the ground. Since education is an issue close to my heart, I was really keen to be able to work on a project like this. My very first visit to Lebanon, where I was able to see first-hand the difference our work makes, once again confirmed to me that changing job had been the right decision. The joy of the schoolchildren and the excellent team spirit with my national team colleagues are a huge motivation for me in my work.' —



## 'Our traveller is the trump card in our project.'

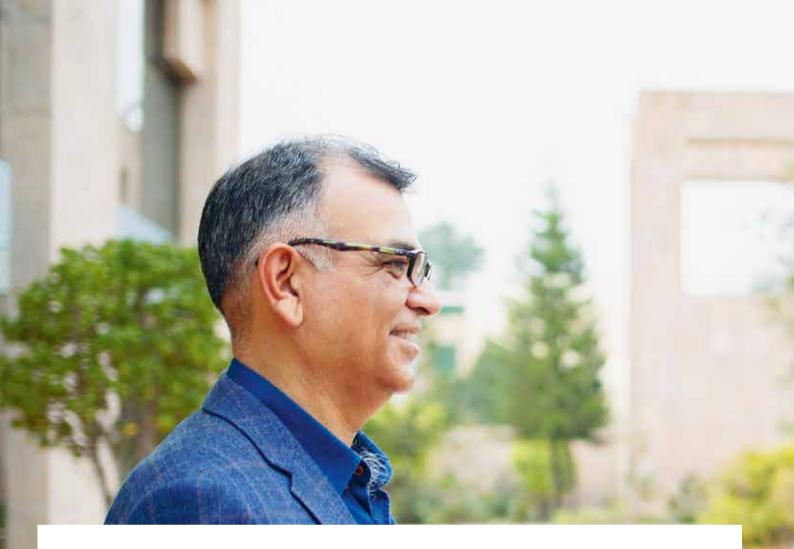
ISMAEL NOUNS (40), field staff member and manager of the SUFA Project in Lebanon

'I've been working for GIZ in the Middle East for ten years – first in the water sector and then in education in Jordan and Lebanon.

It is a blessing to have Stephanie Dehnz on board, because what was originally a small-scale school project mushroomed within a very short space of time, and we had to react quickly. The pressure on Lebanon's education system is extreme. Since war broke out in Syria, Lebanon has taken in around 1.5 million Syrian refugees. Over 400,000 of them are school-age children. Since 2020, the situation has been further exacerbated by a severe economic crisis, political instability, the COVID-19 pandemic, and most recently the disastrous explosion in Beirut.

To strengthen the school infrastructure and give both refugee children and Lebanese schoolchildren a good learning environment, BMZ is supporting Lebanon as part of its Special Initiative on Displacement. This includes online learning services, solar equipment and rainwater collection plants, barrier-free school buildings and newly designed and greened playgrounds. In spite of all the difficulties, we drove this forward even during the pandemic. Because the situation here is so difficult, most of the procurement was handled by Germany. Prices are rocketing in Lebanon, fuelled by hyperinflation and supply shortages.

Stephanie Dehnz is completely at home in this complex field, and she has an excellent network of contacts at GIZ Head Office. She is able to resolve logistical problems swiftly, such as if we have no electric power or the internet is down but we need to contact the logistics centre in Hamburg by 18:00 because that's where the pallets of tablet computers are. She has exactly the expertise that we would otherwise have really missed. She's the trump card in our project.' —

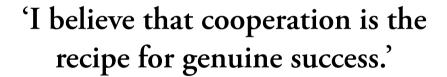


## 'No matter who you are, GIZ offers the opportunity to take on a senior position.'

ZUBAIR KAMAL (52), senior administration and finance officer in the FATA development programme and elected Chairperson of the National Staff Council, GIZ Pakistan

'I've been working for GIZ in Pakistan since 2006, dealing with people from different countries. My direct team consists of five national staff members, two women and three men. For me, the only thing that counted in their selection was their skill set. And yet, we need to acknowledge that the preconditions are not the same for all staff members. In some parts of Pakistan, it's difficult for women to work outside their homes. Our project supports the tribal areas formerly known as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on the border with Afghanistan. Here in particular, as team leader, I do everything I can to create a protected workplace. I had, for instance, already introduced flexible working hours before the coronavirus pandemic, so that women don't have to travel in the dark in winter. Cultural sensitivities are taken into consideration, because here it is often families

who decide whether women are allowed to work. But slowly, things are starting to change for women in Pakistan. More and more want to take up a profession, and GIZ offers a good working environment for this. As Chairman of the National Staff Council, I know that the management of GIZ Pakistan is working hard to increase the share of women in the workforce. The goal is to fill half of all posts with women. To make progress in this area, for example, we introduced an internship programme in 2020, geared specifically towards women. We have also introduced a mentorship programme in which females can work in tandem with a manager, thus enabling them to grow into a leadership role. No matter who you are – man or woman, national staff or field staff – GIZ offers the opportunity to take on a senior position. This is not the case in every company.' —



STOYANKA STICH, cluster coordinator Energy and Climate Change in GIZ's Pakistan country office

'I took over as coordinator of the Energy and Climate Change cluster in August 2021. Here I head a number of different teams that consist of national staff, field staff like myself and counterparts at GIZ Head Office in Germany. The national colleagues are key for the overall implementation of projects. They bridge the gap between us and our partner organisations and open the door for us to Pakistani culture and society. We work hand in hand, with an appreciation of the skills and perspectives that the other side brings. Furthermore, we are each convinced of the value that the other brings to development cooperation. I have worked for GIZ for more than twelve years now, and have held different posts in various regions, including South-East Asia, Mongolia and China. I believe that cooperation is the recipe for genuine success. To breathe life into this cooperation, a safe psychological environment is needed that fosters open discussion and a culture of learning from our mistakes. It's not enough simply to employ talented individuals. They also need to be able to work together to achieve common goals. In lots of companies, people hold back, reluctant to speak out or do anything for fear of seeming stupid. That is why we, like our colleague Zubair Kamal, need to put in place safe spaces. Hard work and teamwork are effective where people feel that they are really well looked after. GIZ Pakistan is working on solutions that will help to create a working atmosphere that minimises fears and maximises collective learning. In this way, everyone can contribute and feel appreciated, irrespective of their gender, age or nationality.' —



# 'Without gender equality, you lose half of the community.'

NANA KING, development worker at GovID and gender focal point at national level in Ghana

'I've worked for GIZ for four years. Before that I worked as a lawyer in London, initially in the investment sector and then in human rights. That was how I came to Ghana. There's a family connection too – my father comes from Ghana. What I like about GIZ is that I work with lots of like-minded people, such as Alf Bremer, and being a development worker I can work directly with people to make a tangible difference. As gender focal point, my second priority is gender equality. The perspective of women is important in everything, whether it's new bridges that might need a screen at ground level, or separate toilets for boys and girls in schools. Then girls can attend class even when they have their period. When it comes to taxes, we have noticed that in many municipalities women pay 60 per cent of taxes on average. Why? Female market traders have to pay a daily fee for their stall. If these fees are added up for the year, they come to far more than the women would pay for fixed premises. Most shops belong to men – they pay less. Alf Bremer studied the fee schedules and got the auditors to take gender equity into account. We also ensure that women's voices are heard at meetings. The municipalities do have equal opportunities officers, but they often have no training for the job and no clear responsibilities. We help the regions to change this state of affairs. Because: without gender equality, you lose half of the community.' —

# 'For me it's important to be passionate about what you do and to have fun.'

ALF BREMER (52), component manager in the Governance for Inclusive Development programme (GovID) in Ghana

'I worked for many years as a city planner in Berlin in the field of urban renewal. I ended up in Ghana for personal reasons as my wife is from here. I've been working for GIZ for almost eight years now and feel very much at home. For me it's important to be passionate about what you do and to have fun. And it's important to work with people who feel the same way. People like Nana King. Our project works at three levels: national, regional and municipal. As a development worker, Nana King works on the ground in tandem with a Ghanaian staff member. I provide advice and support at national level and am responsible for the domestic revenue component at municipal level. This focuses on taxes and fees that municipalities use as the basis for development. Here's an example to illustrate what I mean: we advised the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development on guidelines about naming streets and numbering buildings. There are still lots of municipalities in Ghana without street names or house numbers, which poses an obstacle to planning and raising taxes. The guidelines are now in effect throughout the country, and we advise 100 municipalities on how to produce the relevant land registers. A software programme has been developed specifically for this purpose and allows the authorities to zoom into the various districts and see, for instance, who still owes real estate tax and how much. With our partners we are introducing an app that can be used to collect taxes with full transparency. But the increased revenue is also coveted. It's an interesting topic.' —

#### Protecting the climate

Sustainability plays a huge and increasingly important role at GIZ. This is true of our projects and programmes but also of GIZ itself. Since 2013 and 2021 respectively, we have achieved climate neutrality in operations not only in Germany but also worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

#### Single largest project

The NAMA Facility, with a commission value of EUR 565 million, is GIZ's single largest project. It supports projects in developing countries and emerging economies that show an ambition to play a leading role in the field of climate protection. One example is growing climatefriendly coffee in Costa Rica.

#### Perpetual motion

Over a ten-year period, GIZ reported some 16,000 job changes. That clearly illustrates the dynamic nature of our work and underlines the mobility of GIZ staff.

#### More clients

The German Government is still our main commissioning party, but other bodies also appreciate the services we provide. Commissions from the EU, for instance, have increased steadily, to a value of EUR 430 million in 2020, compared with EUR 92.8 million in 2012.

# GIZ in transition

GIZ has undergone massive changes and evolved beyond recognition since the merger of GTZ, InWEnt and DED in 2011. It has grown in size and become more diverse.

#### Living diversity

Two thirds of GIZ staff are national staff members. That means they come from Bolivia, Benin or Bangladesh, from Mexico, Mali or Myanmar. GIZ may be a German company but is, by its very nature, extremely international.

<sup>1</sup> In the sense that it generates net zero greenhouse gas emissions: the emissions that GIZ cannot avoid are offset by retiring high-quality climate certificates from projects where greenhouse gas emissions were successfully reduced.

#### Rising turnover

The range of GIZ's work has increased enormously over the last ten years. This is evidenced not least by our turnover, which has risen by 80 per cent since 2011 in the public-benefit business area – from EUR 1.75 billion to EUR 3.2 billion in 2020.



#### Robust growth

In 2020, GIZ had a global workforce of almost 24,000 people. In 2011, we had only 17,000 staff members. This growth is an expression of the appreciation of the services we provide but also of the increased requirements placed on international cooperation.

#### Focus on Africa

More and more national staff members are working on our neighbouring continent. In 2011, local staff totalled just 2,750, but ten years later had risen to 6,400. This increase by a factor of 2.5 reflects our expanding commitment to Africa.

#### Women in the majority

Nor

More women than men work for GIZ, making up almost 60 per cent of our workforce. Contrast this with a decade ago when the corresponding figure was 54 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> with German employment contracts, without national employees

TEXT: BETTINA RÜHL PHOTOS: MULUGETA GEBREKIDAN



Ethiopia, a large landlocked country in the Horn of Africa, is a key partner country in German development cooperation. The GIZ country office in the capital, Addis Ababa, is headed by Peter Palesch. akzente spent a day with the experienced country director, who manages to keep calm even when the going gets tough.





Peter Palesch gazes into the distance, at the fields and trees that line the banks of a small river. Some farmers are already hard at work, birds of prey are circling. Every morning, the GIZ country director spends a moment on the balcony of his flat in central Addis Ababa. He has an unusual view in this generally bustling metropolis that is home to four million people. Palesch enjoys these few moments of peace before the start of yet another busy working day. Shortly afterwards, he meets his driver, Yoseph Kassahun, in the basement garage. Kassahun drives him and a colleague to the office. The traffic is still relatively light, and the journey through the city centre, where high-rise office blocks alternate with small businesses, is fairly smooth.

On their arrival at the GIZ office, a modern redbrick building with lots of glass, a porter first takes their temperature – COVID regulations. All clear! They walk up to the third floor. No mean feat given that Addis Ababa is the highest capital in Africa at an altitude of some 2,200 metres above sea level. Peter Palesch has been pushing for a lift for some time. He is optimistic that progress can be made on the project this year. His main concern are staff members with physical disabilities. Some of them only manage the daily ascent with the help of colleagues. As soon as he makes it to the office, Palesch makes a beeline for his computer. He always dedicates the first hour of his working day to dealing with emails.





# 9:00

Peter Palesch meets briefly with the office management team, as he does every morning. His deputy would normally attend, but she is currently on leave. The head of HR, the security advisor and the head of the administrative and financial division complete the management team. Today they discuss reports of criminal attacks in Addis Ababa and what precautions should be taken. The short meeting also looks at how to get a larger delivery of goods through customs clearance. The long delays in issuing visas and residence permits for GIZ staff are another topic on the agenda.

Now it's time for the managers of projects in the region of Tigray in the north of Ethiopia, scene of armed hostilities. Since civil war broke out in the region, the group has met once a week to discuss the current situation. Soon it will be time for the next flight to Mekelle, the capital of Tigray. Because the conflict has made bank transfers impossible, a 'courier' has to be appointed every month to take the salaries to the office there in cash. As soon as it has been decided who is to travel, this must be reported to the United Nations, which operates regular flights to the north of the country. Money is also an issue for the team with respect to the rent for the office and vehicle leasing charges in Mekelle, which also need to be paid.

# 11:30

Peter Palesch works at his computer, but the office door stays open – a conscious sign that he is always available if staff have a problem. The door is only closed if a meeting is in progress. The pandemic means that staff are less frequently able to discuss things directly, much to Palesch's regret. Today, however, Constanze Gütz comes in to discuss a problem with her visa. Gütz works in Addis Ababa on a traveller arrangement. Most of the time she works at Head Office in Eschborn, but she is currently on assignment in Ethiopia for several months. She is supporting the procurement division. GIZ's work in Ethiopia focuses on training and sustainable growth for decent jobs as well as BMZ's One World – No Hunger special initiative, and peaceful and inclusive societies.



# 10:00

Dagmawi Feleke arrives in Peter Palesch's office for the annual staff assessment and development talk. Feleke is head of the HR division and has worked for GIZ for many years. The country office in Ethiopia has over 800 staff members. That's a lot of responsibility for Dagmawi Feleke, but also for Peter Palesch. After the actual staff assessment and development talk, Feleke raises the issue of recent sharp price rises in Ethiopia. He proposes that GIZ rethinks its salary structure, because people can afford less and less with their salaries. He warns that other companies have already enticed valuable staff members away. The two of them also discuss the options for retaining staff working on projects that will end soon. Palesch will continue to work on both issues with his team and endeavour to resolve the matters.







Peter Palesch and representatives of the Ethiopian Football Federation (EFF) meet in the conference room of the GIZ building for the official signing of a joint project. GIZ is to support the planned football academy in Addis Ababa. The support will target children, young people and local community to establish sport for development in the academy, the Center of Football Excellence. GIZ undertakes to renovate the existing football pitch and also create training areas as well as a new pitch.

# 13:00

In an Italian restaurant near the German Embassy, Peter Palesch meets Benjamin Hecker, one of three economic cooperation officers at the Embassy. Palesch doesn't usually stop work for lunch, but he makes an exception for working lunches like this one. With Hecker he discusses a GIZ regional project aimed at better managing migration in the Horn of Africa. The project was first launched in 2016 and is scheduled for completion this year, but an additional phase is planned. A GIZ delegation is currently in Addis Ababa to make the necessary preparations. Ideas on this are to be shared, including with the German Embassy. Peter Palesch and Benjamin Hecker begin this process and plan out the next meetings.



Back in the office, a staff member from Head Office in Eschborn appears on Palesch's monitor. She supports managers in HR matters. They discuss how the country office can improve its planning capacities in the long term: how can vacancies be filled sooner, and managers offered better professional development? They also discuss the current COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia and the impacts of the GIZ COVID measures on the country office.

# 15:30

Time for an online meeting with Markus Koerner, one of whose responsibilities is to find new ways of using land sustainably, particularly in view of climate change. Every two weeks, Palesch meets individually with each of the 15 staff members who report directly to him. Koerner is one of them and would like to discuss a request received from the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture. The ministry has received about 35,000 tablet computers from a non-GIZ project and is now looking for ideas on how to use them effectively. Koerner suggests using them to deliver further training to agricultural extension agents deployed nationwide. All training materials are currently printed; digitalisation could make disseminating knowledge easier.



# 17:00

Yoseph Kassahun is waiting for Peter Palesch in the car in front of the GIZ building. The driver seeks eye contact with Palesch. A brief pause, a nod, and the drive home begins. In the morning, the journey took only ten minutes. Now, in the afternoon rush hour, it can easily take three quarters of an hour.



#### **ETHIOPIA**

Capital: Addis Ababa / Population: 115 million / GDP per capita: USD 890 / Economic growth: 6.1 per cent / Human Development Index ranking: 173 out of 189

Source: World Bank



GIZ has been working in Ethiopia since 1964. The country office, with a staff of over 800, is one of the company's largest. Contact: giz-aethiopien@giz.de

# 'We're ready to go as soon as we can work again.'

Following the outbreak of armed conflict between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in the northern Ethiopian region of Tigray at the end of 2020, BMZ suspended all projects in the region. GIZ's focus in the area was on agriculture, food and nutrition security, and sustainable land use. The following interview with GIZ country director Peter Palesch looks at work under difficult circumstances.

#### Mr Palesch, what do the hostilities in Tigray mean for GIZ staff in the area? Have they left the region?

The projects have been temporarily suspended, but some 30 national staff remain on the ground. We are in constant contact with them to discuss the latest situation.

#### How close is your contact?

The Tigray team calls the project managers in Addis Ababa once a week, usually by satellite phone. It used to be possible to use a normal telephone on occasion, but that hasn't worked for some time now. Once a week I am also updated on the situation.

#### Is there no longer any direct contact?

Oh yes, we fly to Tigray from time to time, so that we can pay salaries – banks are no longer operating in the area. We are able to travel on the United Nations flights. But for that we need the authorisation of at least two ministries. On one occasion it took us four attempts to get the paperwork we needed. There are also restrictions on the amount of cash we can withdraw. We need an authorisation before we are able to withdraw any larger sums at all from the bank – to pay salaries for instance. It takes considerable time and effort, but is nevertheless very worthwhile. When we are in Tigray, we can also share project documents and such like.

#### Why don't you just close the office in Tigray completely?

Our staff on the ground are still in contact with their partners in Mekelle, Tigray's capital, and in the villages. They keep an eye on what is happening. And that is important. They can tell us about everyday life in Mekelle, for instance, and whether the people there need new support. Sometimes other bodies, such as the Embassy, approach us with these questions. And of course, we want to ensure that we're ready to go as soon as it becomes possible again. So we have a pretty good idea what is happening and could modify the projects accordingly.

#### What is the situation in other parts of the country?

Fighting has also been reported along the borders to the neighbouring regions – Afar and Amhara. And there are, of course, a whole series of other conflict zones: in the south along the Kenyan border and the border with Somalia, and in other parts of the country too. We have a map that clearly marks all conflict-affected areas as well as the areas where we are working. There are overlaps. We obviously can't work in areas suffering acute violence, that's clear. Our top priority is the safety of our staff. But we can work in fragile zones. In these cases, we observe the situation closely and decide at short notice when we can travel to the areas.

#### Projects were halted in Tigray, but they are still ongoing in other critical regions. How do you keep an eye on project progress there?

We use photos and video footage from mobile phone for instance. Sometimes we ask other aid organisations that we know well and that we consider trustworthy to visit our projects on the ground for us. In Ethiopia we have developed procedures like these, not just because of the security situation. Sometimes it's just more cost-effective if we don't need to send somebody to the region every time. And because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have all had a steep learning curve as far as remote management and discussions are concerned. —

# PARTNERS POOL POTENTIAL

To scale up outcomes, GIZ works with a number of different donors – with international organisations and institutions from industrialised countries, and with development agencies of emerging economies from the Global South. They are joined by non-governmental organisations, foundations and private businesses. Here we present five bilateral partners from the state sector, by way of example. You can find information on all our diverse partnerships, including those with multilateral bodies, online.



#### INFLUENTIAL

USA The United States of America is the world's largest donor by some distance. Responsibility for development cooperation lies with USAID, an independent authority that is linked to the U.S. Department of State. It has been operating since the early 1960s and pursues the declared goal of improving living conditions around the globe and safeguarding American interests. The main thrusts of its work can be seen in promoting democracy, education, health and gender, in humanitarian aid and in cooperation with the private sector. GIZ has been working together successfully with USAID for over 60 years in different projects.

#### EXPERIENCED

FRANCE The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) is an important partner organisation of GIZ. Unlike the set-up in Germany, the AFD combines both a development agency and development bank within a single public institution. It was founded 80 years ago and has a wealth of experience in bilateral cooperation, but it also works closely with the European Commission. The AFD focuses in particular on the fields of climate, biodiversity, urban development, peace, governance, education and health. The donor world in transition

#### DEDICATED

NORWAY For almost 50 years, Norway has earmarked a minimum of one per cent of gross national income for official development assistance. This figure exceeds the internationally agreed 0.7%, making it a major player among smaller donors. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) is attached to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and offers support primarily in the areas of education, health, private sector development, agriculture, humanitarian aid, climate action and environmental protection. Germany and Norway look back on a long history of cooperation based on mutual trust.

#### SIMPLY SWISS

SWITZERLAND Switzerland's development cooperation is the responsibility of two ministries: the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) within the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research. The fields of cooperation and partner countries are divided up between the two bodies. Switzerland is not one of the world's largest donors (it is officially ranked 11th by the OECD), but its priorities in the fields of climate, migration, the rule of law and employment make for much common ground with GIZ.

#### SUCCESSFUL

SOUTH KOREA This South-East Asian country has made the transition from a recipient to a donor country over the last forty years and is now ranked 16th on the OECD's international donor ranking list. KOICA, the government agency, is responsible for implementing development cooperation projects. Today, it runs its own offices in 44 countries with a regional focus on Asia and Africa. In terms of content matter, KOICA concentrates on education, health, rural development, technology, the environment, energy and governance.

TEXT: KATRIN GÄNSLER PHOTOS: MOMAR TALLA CISSÉ

# TRADITION

# **FCHNOLOGY** N N N N N

In the fertile valley of the Senegal River farmers grow rice on vast swathes of land. The foodstuff is part of every meal in the West African country of Senegal. While farmers use traditional methods and tools, they also rely on digital tools to compete in the market.

The project contributes to the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):









Rice farmer Assane Diop hard at work in his field in northern Senegal, close to the border with Mauritania. Here, in the catchment area of the Senegal River, rice is grown as a staple food on a vast area.

> Find out more about changes in Senegal's agriculture sector in a video on the akzente website: **akzente.giz.de/en**

# Д

Assane Diop stands thigh-deep in water. He moves forwards slowly, grasping large clumps of grass, ripping them out and throwing them on to the water's edge. This is how the 48-year-old ensures that the channel around his rice field doesn't get clogged with weeds and that his seed always has the water it needs. Rice growing is labour-intensive work in the north of Senegal, just a few kilometres away from the Mauritanian border.

But the father of six, who lives in Diama, cannot imagine any other life. His father was a rice farmer too and passed on all he knew to his son. 'Rice is hugely important. The harvest gives us the money we need to be able to send our children to school and offer them a decent future.' Diop owns three hectares of land. In 2011, he got together with 34 other rice farmers and founded a cooperative called Mbole Mooy Dalé. The name comes from a saying in Wolof, the most widely spoken language in Senegal, and means 'Together we are stronger'. Together they farm 115 hectares. Although that is equivalent to 161 football pitches, the coopera-

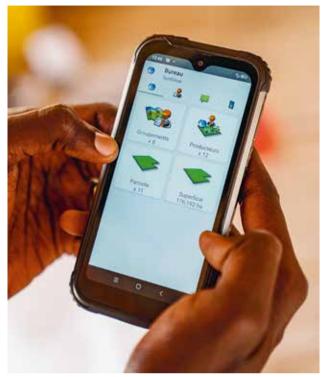
tive is still only small fry – of no interest to lenders. Nobody wanted to take the risk of supporting unknown smallholders. But access to cash is vital for a good harvest. Without funding, cooperatives are unable to invest and grow.

In the meantime, Assane Diop has climbed out of the water. Wiping his wet hands on his trousers, he says, 'We need loans to buy seed.' This is a sentiment frequently expressed in Senegal. There is no shortage of good ideas for setting up businesses, and often training isn't necessarily the problem. Today, more training programmes are available in Senegal. But many projects cannot be realised because the capital is not available.

Ibrahima Seck (28) gets off his motorbike. He visits farmers on their rice paddies at least twice a week. He pulls a smartphone out of the black rucksack he is carrying. For this agricultural science graduate, spades and hoes are not the most important tools, but rather a small phone. The men greet one another, while Seck opens the 'office' app. Every member of the cooperative has their own digital file, including Assane Diop. All sorts of data on rice growing are stored here, including the area of land farmed and, in particular, photos of the rice paddies. New photos are constantly being added, for instance when seeds are planted or the weeding done. The photos also document how the slender green stems grow little by little. Diop tells us that he found it odd at first that his fields were constantly being photographed. But all this offers an opportunity to contact financiers at last, and to become visible. It builds trust.

The agCelerant platform, developed by Manobi Africa, makes it possible. Founder Daniel Annerose (65) calls the concept 'phygital agriculture', a combination of physical and digital farming, the coming together of technology and agriculture. The various parts fit together like cogs in a machine, he explains. Young people like Ibrahima Seck are trained as advisors and can work in new jobs. Farmers like Diop receive sound advice from them, are better able to hold their own on the market and are put in touch with larger buyers. Access to loans is crucial though, stresses Annerose. And the platform offers another benefit: since all the information about farmers' harvests and so on is stored online, little by little a huge dataset is being compiled that will deliver findings about the development of agriculture. Another reason why this has become possible is the steady improvement of internet coverage in Senegal. Even in rural areas, 4G coverage is available almost everywhere. There are very few dead zones. Alongside the platform and





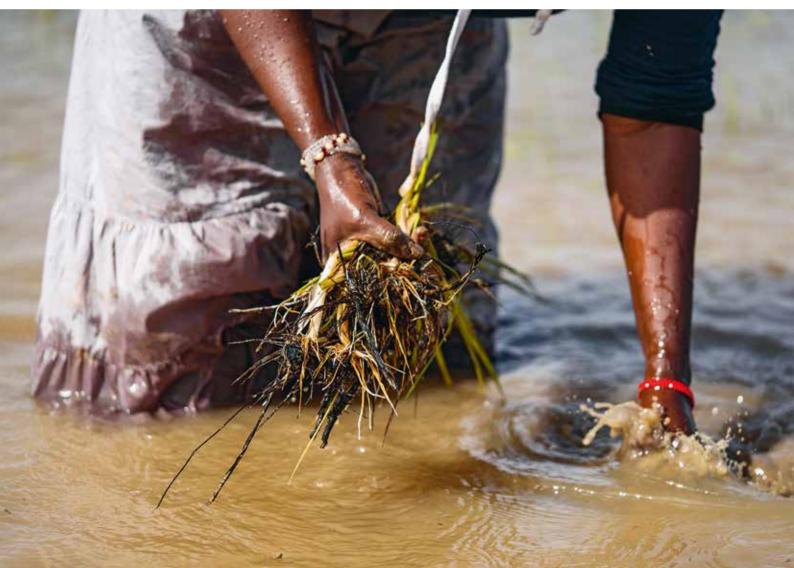


Above: Daniel Annerose and his company Manobi Africa relies on agriculture combined with digital technology. A platform supports smallholders so they can compete more effectively on the market. Left: Agricultural expert Ibrahima Seck visits farmer Diop on his land to document progress on his rice paddies using his smartphone.



Tradition blends with technology in everyday life: members of the Mbole Mooy Dalé cooperative weed the rice paddies. At the same time, they work with digital expert Seck to make their farming more effective.





the app, experts like Ibrahima Seck provide important support for the digital development of agriculture. He and 39 other Senegalese citizens attended training last year at Manobi's Academy. GIZ supported this upgrading measure on behalf of BMZ, along with the international research facility AfricaRice.

A properly functioning agriculture sector is becoming increasingly important. On many occasions, Senegal's President Macky Sall has underscored his conviction that, 'Senegal can feed itself.' Rice growing in the valley of the Senegal River, which snakes its way 1,086 kilometres through the north of the country, plays a pivotal role. This West African state, where rice is a staple part of every meal, is to become independent of imports from Asia and produce high-quality rice – an ambitious goal, given Senegal's considerable population growth. Within 30 years, the country's population has almost doubled to 17 million.

With the growth has come high unemployment. According to the national statistics agency, joblessness stood at almost 25 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2021. Most jobs are created in and around Dakar, home to one in four of the country's inhabitants. Rural areas are losing skilled workers. Ibrahima Seck, who had a master's degree in environmental sciences before he trained in digital agriculture, is bucking the trend and building his future here, where others are leaving. 'I wanted to work here in agriculture,' he stresses. He has been working as an independent advisor for some months now. All he needs is his motorbike and his smartphone. He not only helps smallholders update their files, but also helps calculate how much seed and fertiliser they need and assists with filling in forms in French. The farmers pay him for these services. For every hectare harvested, he receives 80 kilogrammes of rice that he sells on. This gives him a monthly income equivalent to almost 460 euros, which is considered a good wage in rural areas, where rent, food and transport are significantly cheaper than in the capital Dakar.

Both sides are motivated. The farmers want to increase their harvests. Seck has a direct interest in providing his clients with the best possible support and gaining new clients so that he is responsible for more land. Agricultural tradition and modern technology clearly seem to complement one another very well. Assane Diop nods as Ibrahima Seck leaves. 'He even boosted our first harvest by 20 per cent per hectare. That makes me more confident about the future.' —

**KATRIN GÄNSLER** lives in Benin and works as a freelance journalist in West Africa. The Senegalese photographer and cameraman **MOMAR TALLA CISSÉ** joined her on a visit to the fertile river valleys in northern Senegal.

#### WIN-WIN SITUATION

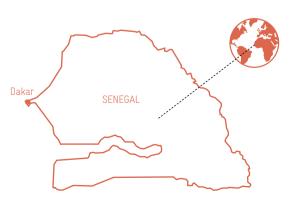
In an effort to open the door to a better future, in particular for young people in African countries, the Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is supporting sustainable private investment. The aim of the Special Initiative, which operates under the banner 'Invest for Jobs', is to create more and better employment. It is therefore contributing to the implementation of the Marshall Plan with Africa and the G20 investment partnership Compact with Africa. In Senegal, the Academy of the agCelerant platform was established with the company Manobi and the AfricaRice research centre to train young people with some prior knowledge to become digital agriculture experts. In 2021, 40 Senegalese citizens were trained in agricultural techniques, management and the use of digital technologies. Equipped with a diploma, they work as advisors in the Saint-Louis region in the north of Senegal. They are helping to improve the quality and yield of local rice production. The approach is set to be rolled out to cover the production of groundnuts and the processing of the leaves and flowers of the Moringa tree. The aim is to generate more jobs for young people, especially in rural areas.

Contact: senegal@invest-for-jobs.com For more information see: www.invest-for-jobs.com

#### **SENEGAL**

Capital: Dakar / Population: 16.7 million / GDP per capita: USD 1,430 / Economic growth: 0.87 per cent / Human Development Index ranking: 168 out of 189

Source: World Bank





#### 9:41 AM

From: Franziska Schmülling To: all akzente readers

## Transporting the diversity of GIZ to the digital world

Hello from Cologne!

For a year now, I've been working as a junior expert in GIZ's Corporate Communications Unit in Bonn, where I'm mainly responsible for social media. It's an exciting time to be working in this area. Social media communication is very fast paced. How can we reach our target groups? What new functions do platforms offer? It's demanding work, but every day it offers me the chance to test myself anew, which I really enjoy.

Online working has become the norm more and more due to the pandemic, and of course it's been common practice at GIZ for years because of our worldwide cooperation. We are a team of some 700 communicators around the globe. My immediate team consists of colleagues in Bonn and Eschborn, so our meetings were always hybrid affairs, even before the coronavirus hit. But what sort of an online team would

What I find particularly exciting in my job is the contact and discussions with colleagues worldwide – whether it's an advisory meeting with a colleague in Rwanda or our regular online morning meeting with the entire Corporate Communications Unit. We always attempt to reflect the full spectrum of projects, countries and issues in GIZ's Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. And we need to weigh up which stories best suit the GIZ website and akzente.

Alongside our corporate accounts, many projects and country offices have their own social media channels. They don't all have the same resources, though. While one team might be considering opening an additional account, other colleagues are grappling with teething problems like an unstable internet connection caused by power outages. But we have seen that adverse circumstances can often lead to particularly creative ideas. Next year, I would like to get an insight into everyday project work on the ground and complete an internship in a country office or project in a partner

Since I took up my job during the pandemic, I have generally worked from home in Cologne. So it will be all the more special for me when I can work regularly with the team on the Bonn Campus. Until then, I'll just make the best of things in my new flat, turn my balcony into a green oasis, and at the weekend work my way through

Best regards, Franziska Schmülling

GIZ is always looking for experts in and beyond Germany. Why not visit our 'Jobs and careers' page: www.giz.de/careers.



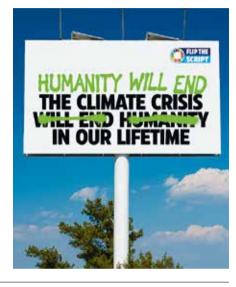
# Editor's DIGITAL PICKS

# Act! Now!

CAMPAIGN Now is the time to act! #FLIPTHESCRIPT, the new campaign for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), kicks off with this call to arms. It encourages young people to be an active part of societal debate, especially when the global situation seems to offer so little hope. The social media campaign skilfully plays on clichés. —

act4sdgs.org/flip-the-script





## **Global Plastics**

WEBSITE The sheer endless flood of plastics is becoming a global problem. To provide information and show what can be done, the OECD has its own dedicated website where you will find in-depth reports and interactive data as well as the organisation's latest report, entitled Global Plastics Outlook. —

www.oecd.org/environment/plastics

### Planted a tree yet today?

SEARCH ENGINE Ninety-three per cent of Europeans use Google. If you're looking for an alternative and want to help the environment, look no further than Ecosia. The company invests a percentage of its turnover in projects to plant trees around the world. It reports monthly on how much money has gone to which countries. —

www.ecosia.org

# Lucky charms

REPORT In dark days more than at any other time it is essential that we do not completely lose sight of the positive. The World Happiness Report, which marks its 10th anniversary in 2022, is a step in the right direction. The accompanying website contains articles about the biology of happiness, why sustainability makes us happy, and how the coronavirus has changed our perception of goodwill, happiness and trust. worldhappiness.report

#### AKZENTE

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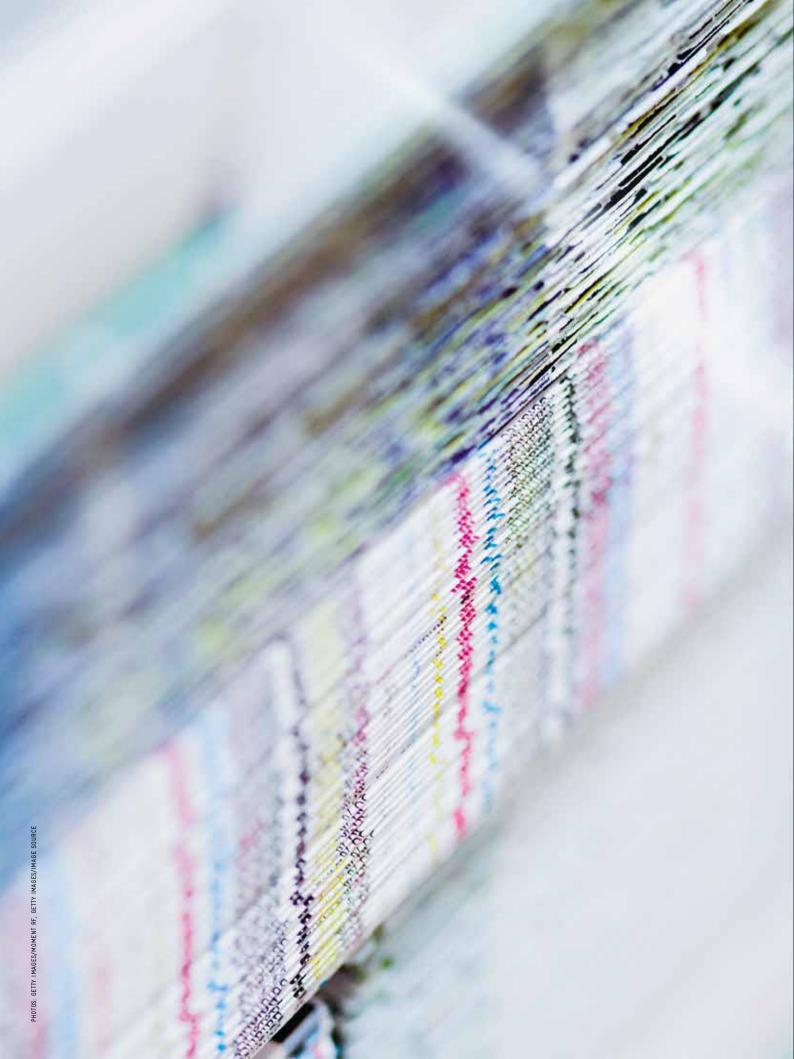
akzente has received several awards for its high-quality journalism and design. In 2022, it won the Best of Content Marketing Award in silver in the crossmedia and website categories.





Nothing is as constant as change. That is also true of akzente. To bring a new dimension to our reporting in future, we are switching to a new medium. What will not change is our enthusiasm for offering you stories from around the world, or the standards we set ourselves to ensure that everything is thoroughly researched and factchecked. Take a look at akzente online and see for yourself.







As a service provider with worldwide operations in the fields of inter-national cooperation for sustainable development and international education, GIZ works with its partners to develop effective solutions that offer people better prospects and sustainably improve their living conditions. GIZ is a public-benefit federal enterprise and supports the German Government and a host of public and private sector clients in a wide variety of areas, including economic development and employment promotion, energy and the environment, and peace and security.

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