

# SDSN Switzerland Assembly

30 January 2019, UniS Bern

## Event Report

# Summary

On 30 January 2019, members and partners of SDSN Switzerland came together during the SDSN Switzerland Assembly to discuss how we as a community of researchers and practitioners can collectively work together on meaningful solutions and create new possibilities. The Assembly also aimed at collecting ideas and impulses for SDSN Switzerland's activities in 2019 and beyond.

At the outset, the participants received an update and insights on SDSN Switzerland's past activities, as well as an outlook for 2019. Mark Halle and Kathy Riklin then set the tone for the remainder of the meeting by giving inspirational talks about the necessity for transformative change as well as about opportunities and challenges in the current political debates on Switzerland's sustainable future.

During the breakout sessions the many participants from various thematic and institutional backgrounds (academia, civil society, business and administration) discussed, brainstormed and came up with interesting and innovative ideas on what SDSN Switzerland as a community should collectively work on to advance the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Switzerland and beyond. During the harvesting and follow up session, participants pitched their ideas to everyone and managed to motivate others to join them to work on these project ideas.

As a next step we would like to prioritize and refine the ideas for projects and actions. **The Follow-up Workshop will take place on 8 May 2019, 16:00 – 19:30 at University of Bern. You are very welcome to join us!**



# Breakout Sessions



**A** - On which potentials and possible solutions could we as SDSN Switzerland work together?

*Facilitator: Daniel Sigrist*



**B** - How can we strengthen the knowledge base in Switzerland and beyond (education, research, innovation) in order to bring about the necessary shifts towards sustainability in the economy and society?

*Facilitator: Katja Breitenmoser*



**C** - How can we ensure that Switzerland's International Cooperation makes a meaningful contribution to achieve the 2030 Agenda, not only in Switzerland but globally?

*Facilitator: Severin von Hünenbein*

A black and white photograph showing a person's hands writing on a white sticky note with a black marker. The sticky note is placed on a dark surface, and several other sticky notes are scattered around it. The person's hair is visible in the upper right corner.

# On which potentials and possible solutions could we as SDSN Switzerland work together?

## KEY OUTCOMES

- SDSN should act as support for action by identifying issues that can have an impact. It should identify tipping points with the highest potential effects for transformative change.
- The establishment of cross-sectoral collaborations is important, including:
  - Multistakeholder Initiatives, which also include business and finance
  - NGOs, Universities and other non-state actors that take part in government working groups
- Transformation needs to happen in Switzerland first, before transforming or helping the world
- Two-step Process: Identify leverage points for more effective change, then deepen/strengthen the knowledge base



How can we strengthen the knowledge base in Switzerland and beyond (education, research, innovation) in order to bring about the necessary shifts towards sustainability in the economy and society?

## KEY OUTCOMES

- With Switzerland's strong focus on fundamental research, transformational research still occupies a niche position in the current Message on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation. However, it is clear that all research in Switzerland – whether fundamental or applied research – should thrive for “excellence”.
- Four clusters for action emerged from the group discussions:
  - Build up Competencies & Knowledge in a transdisciplinary way to shape the sustainability transformation
  - Education to foster (applicable) knowledge for the sustainability transformation
  - (Better) Cooperation to build on already existing knowledge and research
  - Dialogue and public relations to bring SDGs to the “middle of the society”
- How do we as researchers produce applicable knowledge? How do we bring together different angles to look at the relevant challenges on our pathway towards sustainability (e.g. more social scientists that work on environmental questions)? These were open questions that SDSN Switzerland in its activities could directly address and come up with solutions.

# How can we ensure that Switzerland's International Cooperation makes a meaningful contribution to achieve the 2030 Agenda, not only in Switzerland but globally?



## KEY OUTCOMES

- The Agenda 2030 for sustainable development provides a global framework that must benefit everyone, regardless of the circumstances. This is the essential inclusiveness character of the SDGs, the idea that nobody should be left behind.
- There are important values that characterize the Swiss society, one of them is solidarity. Due to this reason solidarity should play a key role in the next Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation.
- Switzerland has the financial capacity and the operational knowledge to make a difference in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 at the international level. Thus SDSN Switzerland should unfold its potential to advise policy makers, including by drafting recommendations / suggestions on behalf of all members and partners.
- We need an international "knowledge society" to reach the SDGs by 2030. SDSN Switzerland should support that researchers work closely together in inter- and transdisciplinary teams on issues relevant to the SDGs.

# Harvesting – Our Joint Action Plan

Action	Who?	Initial next step	What kind of support (from SDSN)	I am interested! # volunteers/action	Priority for SDSN			
					High	Med	low	
A	Science-based roadmap for climate/SDG-action for Switzerland	Project Drawdown	Present to SDSN Switzerland	Connect, synthesize...	2	9	2	5
	Grow civic movement (bottom up)		Have community leaders / student organization take up idea	Coordination, facilitation	3	16	3	6
	Identify high impact tipping points for transition to sustainability	Multi-stakeholder group (incl. Academia)	Kick-start with Academia to generate transformation knowledge	Network to relevant actors in academia	6	9	7	7
B	Education for youth to strengthen SDG competencies		Start conversation with actors of change (education 21, UNESCO, student org., Reatch)	Engaging with education actors / networks	6	12	5	6
	Annual Conference for SDGs by Confederation to raise awareness on Agenda 2030		Convince BR Parmelin to invite to such a conference		3	12	6	5
	Strengthen cooperation among knowledge organization by making cross-referencing to work of others	Everybody	Look for (fin) incentives, new funding body @SEFRI or scientist divert own funding		3	9	6	2
C	Proposal to Parliament by SDSN with recommendations (Lobbying & highlight economic benefit).	SDSN network and Martin Fässler as writer	Recommendation to Parliament (Draft)		4	12	6	0
	Support Sustainable Consumption in CH. Interlinked topic, evtl. food as starting point	SDSN network and/or experts	Do a mapping of what is already done		6	13	6	6
	Research partnership North-South (lobbying for research in parliamentary commission)	SDSN network (KFPE)			2	10	2	11

# Participants List

Name	First Name	Organisation
Albers	Olmar	öbu
Arnold	Nadine	Universität Luzern
Bening	Catharina	ETH, SusTec
Berger	Till	Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung ARE
Bergman	Max	Universität Basel, Social Research and Methodology Group
Bertschinger	Lukas	Agroscope
Breu	Thomas	Universität Bern, CDE & SDSN Switzerland
Bürgi Bonanomi	Elisabeth	Universität Bern, CDE
Cazabat	Christelle	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
Chesney	Marc	Universität Zürich, Institute for Banking and Finance & SDSN Switzerland
Di Giulio	Antonietta	Universität Basel, Dept. Umweltwissenschaften
Dyllick	Thomas	Universität St. Gallen, Institut für Wirtschaft und Ökologie
Fässler	Martin	Biovision & SDSN Switzerland
Frey	Sarah	Zivilgesellschaftliche Plattform Agenda 2030
Frund	Benoît	Université de Lausanne
Graf	Marie-Claire	VSN
Halle	Mark	IISD & SDSN Switzerland
Hauser	Andreas	Bundesamt für Umwelt BAFU
Heidenreich	Franziska	myclimate
Hering	Janet	eawag
Jakobeit	Laura	Hochschule für Agrar-, Forst- und Lebensmittelwissenschaften HAFL
Kammermann	Lorenz	Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft SECO
Kosanic	Davor	EPFL, Tech4Impact





"We have been walking North on a South-bound train. Walking faster will not help. We need to slow down that train and eventually turn it around."

Mark Halle

A big thank you to all participants!