

International Geneva
Directory of Swiss Global Health Actors

Stiftung InnovaBridge

<http://innovabridge.org/>

Contrada al Lago 19 | 6987 Caslano

Tel +41 91 606 63 73 | Fax +41 91 606 63 76 | Email: info@innovabridge.org

BACKGROUND AND MISSION

Innovabridge is a non-profit Swiss consulting foundation based in Caslano committed to innovative solutions in international development. Innovabridge promotes innovative solutions, and believes that an equal and sustainable world can only be achieved by the right balance between social, economic and environmental aspects.

Innovabridge originated from TULUM Ltd., an international development firm established by professionals with long-term experience in international development cooperation. TULUM's team of core advisors, institutional knowledge, and the entire project portfolio transferred to the Innovabridge Foundation in 2011. Innovabridge has experience in systems analysis and in devising tailor-made, hands-on solutions adapted to the local context. It understands the multidimensional character of poverty, and focuses on critical paths that enable people to leave poverty behind. As a non-profit organization, Innovabridge believes in the importance of community outreach and service.

Innovabridge provides expertise and services in three thematic areas: Economic Development, Governance & Rule of Law and Environment & Sustainable Livelihoods. To ensure an emphasis on shared and sustainable prosperity, Innovabridge's strategic advisors are well experienced in integrating and working with cross-cutting themes including gender equality, social inclusion (youth, elderly, minorities), conflict prevention, and citizen participation.

AREAS OF INTEREST

- E-government, e-democracy solutions
- Citizen-centred public service delivery
- Non-medical determinants of health
- Children, disabled people and other vulnerable minorities

HEALTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

In 2014, Innovabridge started offering advice to this Afghan NGO which was established in 2007 by Dr. Rhimullah Rahimi, a pediatrician, and Erica Kessler, a Swiss lady who felt compelled to support war-affected children and women in Kabul. In three decades of war, hundred thousands of children became orphans and many women widows. Most of these children lack access to education, particularly girls. They and their mothers are forced to earn a precarious living, often exposed to dangers, abuses and maltreatment. ARHSO's purpose is to provide a safe and secure place in Kabul where war-affected children and women are assisted in resuming a "normal" life and developing their capacities (health, education, training,

decent income-generating activities, self-confidence). It supports about 150 war-affected children and women per year including young orphans, handicapped and disabled people, returnees, street working children (overall about 60% females). Mrs. Kessler managed and continues to raise funds to finance ARHSO since its start. Innovabridge offers management and fundraising advice and support.

In 2016, SDC selected Innovabridge with the aim to evaluate and learn lessons from the Great Lakes Health Programme in Burundi and Rwanda. The evaluation mission concluded that non-medical determinants of health, such as nutrition and hygiene, were playing a far more important role than previously assumed in both countries. In the framework of a reorientation of the health commitments of Switzerland, it was decided to conduct an action research on monitoring child chronic undernutrition in three districts of the Western Province of Rwanda. The pre-trial stage started in 2017 under the supervision of Innovabridge. One of the immediate consequences was that the participating health centres resumed the monitoring not only of weight per age but also height per age as this indicator is more meaningful for assessing chronic, and not acute, child undernutrition. It turned out that, indeed, virtually no acute malnutrition could be detected, but chronic malnutrition reached up to 50% of the examined children.

Innovation in biotechnology and the perspective of using new applications to address environmental and health challenges such as spread of pests, diseases or invasive alien species, rise specific biosafety questions. Therefore, biological risks need to be assessed carefully. Innovabridge in collaboration with the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, reviewed case studies relevant for Switzerland on the use of gene drives and Wolbachia reproductive manipulations in disease vector mosquitoes, genetically engineered weeds and biological control organisms.

A team from Innovabridge evaluated two projects implemented by the Honduran Red Cross, supported by the Swiss Red Cross. It concluded that there were tangible benefits in the reduction of disaster risks and in the adaptation to climate change. The team applied a method derived from the so-called “Beneficiary Assessment”, which yielded significant insights into co-benefits of improved community health.

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

Innovabridge has a lean management structure. The Board of Trustees is responsible for shaping the strategic direction of the Foundation. It makes key decisions on organizational projects, finances, budget, strategy and policies. The board is composed by Dieter von Blarer, Simone Schoenenberger and Jordanka Tomkova. The Managing Director (Nicola Schoenenberger) is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Foundation.

The professional staff consists of a core team of Strategic Advisors with operational basis in Caslano, Switzerland and of Expert Associates throughout the world. The team of strategic advisors has a wide range of cross-regional and sectoral expertise in the areas of economic development, governance and rule of law and environment and sustainable livelihoods. Team of international expert associates complement the skills of our strategic advisors where needed to jointly collaborate on international development projects.

FUNDING SOURCES AND BUDGET

Thanks to donations and projects, Innovabridge is able to increase the support given to beneficiaries through the foundation's own projects.

PUBLICATIONS

Project-specific publications are available at <http://innovabridge.org/Projects>.

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