

SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHY



Mr. Md. Rubaiyath Sarwar, Chairman of the Value Chain Capacity Building Network (VCB-N)

Md. Rubaiyath Sarwar is a specialist in design, management and evaluation of market driven solutions to poverty challenges. His works builds on the premise that the multidimensional challenges of poverty can be tackled more sustainably through collaborative and mutually reinforcing commercial and social benefits among the private sector, NGOs and the government agencies. He is the co-founder and Managing Director of Innovision Consulting, an international consultancy with its bases in Dhaka, Bangladesh and London, United Kingdom.

Over the last 16 years, Rubaiyath has worked for major DFID, USAID, SDC, EU, GIZ, IFAD projects in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Yemen on solving growth, employment, and inclusiveness challenges in agriculture, health, industries, finance, water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition sectors.

Rubaiyath is serving as the Chairman of the Value Chain Capacity Building Network (VCB-N) for The Asia and the Pacific Region. VCB-N is founded with grant from International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to build a regional resource pool of experts for value chains and market systems development projects. Rubaiyath founded Desperately Seeking Development Expert (DSDE) which is the largest platform of development professionals in Bangladesh. With over 13,000 members, DSDE plays an influential role in ideation, research, placement, discussion, dialogue and advocacy on development agenda in Bangladesh. Rubaiyath also founded D2, a data analytics company for development research and Baggitude, an online retail channel for trendy bags that are primarily made of sustainable materials. Rubaiyath is completed his BBA and MBA from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka. Rubaiyath is an Acumen fellow from Bangladesh.



Mr. Kaushik Barua, Country Manager, IFAD Cambodia

Kaushik Barua is currently managing the IFAD portfolio in Cambodia. He leads the development of the country strategy, design of new projects, supervision and implementation support of ongoing investments, and policy development and knowledge management in the country. He is based in the Mekong Hub office in Hanoi. Previously, he was responsible for the IFAD Somalia portfolio and also worked on the Egypt and Palestine portfolios. He was part of the team that developed the IFAD Fragile Situations Strategy and the Facility for Refugees, Migrants, Forced Displacement and Rural Stability, or FARMS. He also worked on the development of the new results

framework and IFAD's Management Response to independent evaluations.

He has also worked with the International Finance Corporation (IFC, World Bank Group) where he designed and supervised private public partnership based investments in social enterprises, through the IFC's Grassroots Business Initiative. Previously with the World Bank, Kaushik conducted research on pathways out of poverty as a member of the Moving Out of Poverty team. He has also worked for the Government of India's National Knowledge Commission, drafting policy recommendations in the education sector. He secured his Master's in international politics and economics at the London School

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of Economics and his graduate degree in economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University. His writings on social and development issues have been featured in The Guardian, Open Democracy and other publications. He is the author of two novels and won an award from India's Sahitya Akademi (the National Academy of Letters).



Mr. Anirban Bhowmik, Country Director, Swisscontact, Bangladesh

Anirban Bhowmik has 15 years of experience in private sector development, specializing in Market Systems Development approach in agricultural, skills and financial markets. Anirban has co-designed large and complex agricultural market systems development projects in different countries of South Asia. He trained and provided advisory support to project managers of inclusive market systems development projects in Eastern Europe and South East Asian countries. He co-authored ‘Practitioners’ Hand Book for Inclusive Market System Development’, which is being used in 33 Swisscontact country offices.

Anirban is leading the Swisscontact Bangladesh country office, with a versatile portfolio of projects in skills development, financial inclusion, agricultural market systems development and local economic development.



Mr. Andrew Wilson Regional Project Manager, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Andrew Wilson studied rural development, business administration and law. Andrew worked as a lobbyist for the food sector in Canada, before starting his career in development with Helvetas in Laos. Andrew has worked with the MSD approach in Eastern Europe (as Project Director of MarketMakers), the South Caucasus and South-East Asia and is keen to apply systemic thinking in a practical, common-sense way.

Andrew is a specialist in international economic and private sector development using the market system development framework. He is currently based in Hanoi, Vietnam, along with his wife and four children. Andrew he spends 90% of his time managing a regional program to promote sustainable, high-value exports using the remaining 10% delivering advice and backstopping services to other Helvetas projects in Laos and Myanmar.

After completing a Bachelor degree in International Development Studies, Andrew went on to complete a Master of Business Administration and a Juris Doctor degree on the assumption that nobody actually gets jobs in development. Much to his own surprise, after five years of working as a lobbyist and manager in his native Canada, he stumbled into a development career as a marketing advisor in Laos. Over the last 14 years, he has designed and managed projects in SE Asia, the Caucasus and the Western Balkans. Starting with a focus in agriculture, his sector experience has diversified to include tourism, IT, tradeable business services and vocational education.

Intrigued by cutting edge approaches, but recognizing the limitations of the situations we work in, Andrew’s biggest interests are in translation of theory into practice, an analysis into action. As part of these commitments, he is active in a number of international forums; as a member of the board of directors for the Union for Ethical Biotech, as a contributor to BEAM Exchange and Switzerland’s E&I network, and in internal Helvetas initiatives.

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Prof. Yonggong Liu, Professor at College of Humanities and Development (COHD) and Managing Director of Center for Integrated Agricultural Development (CIAD), China Agricultural University (CAU)

Yonggong Liu is a Professor at College of Humanities and Development (COHD) and Managing Director of Center for Integrated Agricultural Development (CIAD), China Agricultural University (CAU) in Beijing. Since 1991 he is the faculty at COHD majored in Rural Development Studies.

His teaching and research focus on Development Studies and Planning; Community Development Management; Climate Change and Community Livelihoods; Natural Resource Management, Poverty Alleviation; and Agricultural Market and Value Chain Development.

Besides the academic activities at the university, he also serves as senior consultant for rural development programs and projects. In the past 30 year, he worked for about 80 agricultural and rural development projects respectively funded by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, State Council Office for Poverty Reduction and by international development organizations, such as World Bank, ADB, UNDP, FAO, IFAD, WFP, GEF, as well as by bilateral development agencies like EU, GIZ, DFID, AusAID, etc.

Currently, Prof. Liu serves as Senior Advisor for Agri-Business Cooperation Platform of China-German Agricultural Center (DCZ), Vice Chair of Steering Committee for Value Chain Capacity Building Network (VCB-N), Chief Technical Advisor for FAO/GEF funded Jiangxi Provincial Wetland Management Project.