

TRILATERAL IN AFRICA

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION ISRAEL – GERMANY – THIRD COUNTRIES

*HE Yakov Hadas-Handelsman, Ambassador
of the State of Israel to Germany*

THE EARLY DAYS OF ISRAELI DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

In Judaism, *tikkun olam* is the duty to do what one can to make the world a better place and to promote a sustainable relationship between humans and nature. It is also one of the guiding principles of Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV), whose purpose is to pass on Israeli expertise and experience to international cooperation partners (particularly in developing countries). Over time, the humanitarian aspect of MASHAV's work has increasingly taken priority over the original outlook of Israeli development cooperation, which had been influenced more strongly by foreign policy considerations.

MASHAV was founded in 1958 subsequent to a visit to Africa by Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister at the time, in order to give Israeli development cooperation a systematic approach. Just ten years after the foundation of the State of Israel, the country itself was still undergoing a development process, besides having to master immense security challenges. After having started out with very simple capacity-building measures, MASHAV has since developed into an actor to be taken seriously and now coordinates Israel's international development cooperation. Over the course of 57 years, measures put in place by MASHAV have helped to upskill over 270,000 individuals from over 140 countries, some of which do not even maintain diplomatic relations with Israel.

In the early period spanning the 1960s and 1970s, MASHAV was at times the largest department within the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and on occasion Israel's means to development



HE Yakov Hadas-Handelsman has been the Ambassador of the State of Israel to the Federal Republic of Germany since March 2012.

cooperation exceeded that of other Western states.¹ During those early years, knowledge transfer through development cooperation characterised a very respected and positively connotated period in Israel's international relations. At that time, a high proportion of the State's development budget was earmarked for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The strong, even emotional connection was rooted in common founding traditions: Both Israel and most of the African states had to rid themselves of colonialism or foreign rule and fight for their independence. Furthermore, in those countries there was a high level of interest in Israel's experiences as a young nation with a rapidly developing and successful economy.²

Both Israel and most of the African states had to rid themselves of colonialism or foreign rule and fight for their independence.

Many Israelis considered the fact that African states turned away from Israeli politics in the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War to be a betrayal. The public disenchantment was followed by a reduction in the MASHAV budget.³ In the course of the Oslo peace negotiations in the 1990s, MASHAV gained fresh impetus through the political will to forge new relations with countries in the Middle East, Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. However, after the peace process had stalled, efforts in the area of development cooperation were scaled back as well.

ISRAELI DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION TODAY

Israeli development cooperation is influenced significantly by the country's foreign policy and security circumstances as well as the situation of the Jewish diaspora. Jordan and the Palestinian Authority as well as Gaza are traditional beneficiaries of public development funding. Israel also provides aid in the context of the Syrian conflict, for instance by supplying medical care to Syrian refugees. In 2013, this aid amounted to 11.26 million U.S. dollars. Ethiopia was one of the main beneficiaries of aid funds for a long time. Although development cooperation with that country had seen a decline due to the emigration of numerous Ethiopian Jews to Israel, it is now being revitalised also through the trilateral cooperation with Germany (TDC⁴). Besides its immediate

1 | Cf. Aliza Belman Inbal/Shachar Zahavi, *The Rise and Fall of Israel's Bilateral Aid Budget 1958-2008*, Tel Aviv, 2009, <http://socsci.tau.ac.il/government/images/PDFs/riseandfall.pdf> (accessed 4 Feb 2015).

2 | Cf. *ibid.*

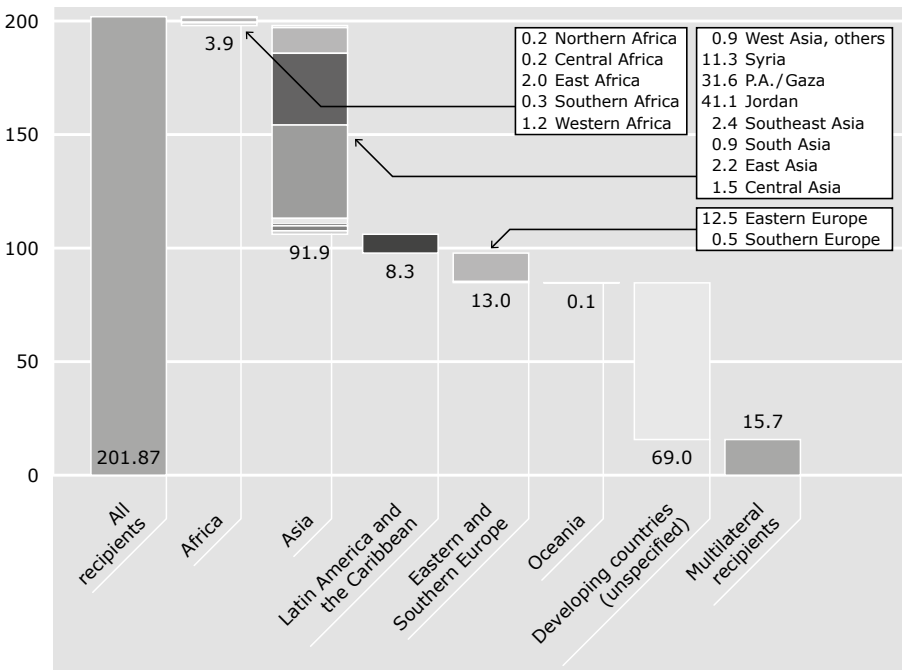
3 | Cf. *ibid.*

4 | TDC hereinafter used exclusively with reference to Germany-Israeli collaboration.

neighbours, Israeli development cooperation focuses on East Africa as well as Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya, Ghana and Ethiopia, are the largest beneficiaries of funds from Israel – those are involved in TDC, too. The other African states involved in trilateral cooperation, Burundi, Burkina Faso and Cameroon, are also on the radar of Israeli development cooperation, and Israel’s involvement there is being expanded in collaboration with Germany.

Fig. 1

Israel’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Recipients, 2013 (in million U.S. dollars at current prices)



Source: Prepared by author based on OECD data as of 28 Dec 2014; net ODA: expended resources less redemption/return on sales.

While multilateral recipients received nearly 40 per cent of German development funds over the last 15 years, most notably intermediary bodies of the European Union and the European Development Fund, but also the International Development Association (IDA) as a part of the World Bank, Israel only involved multilateral agencies with respect to some ten per cent of its development expenditure during the same period. Once again, the World Bank with its International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

(IBRD) played the most prominent intermediary role. Whereas Germany's engagement has increased with its accession to the United Nations (UN) as a full member in 1973, circumstances are making it difficult for Israel to establish international alliances.⁵ There are, however, indications of a positive development. Over the last few years, Israel has become more actively involved in initiating UN resolutions relating to development policy. These resolutions are successfully adopted due to a spirit of pragmatism and in disregard of political animosities. Cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Africa is expanding as well.

Israel's projects concentrate on the areas of poverty reduction, food security, women's rights as well as improving local health and education systems.

MASHAV's annual budget is between ten and eleven million euros. The German ODA expenditure of the Federal Ministry for Development and Cooperation (BMZ) of 6.4 billion

euros (2014) shows why a German-Israeli lever can be effective in development cooperation. In that respect, Israel's approach focuses on the training of multipliers. Its projects concentrate on the areas of poverty reduction, food security, women's rights as well as improving local health and education systems. These key objectives are in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and are also part of Germany's development policy.⁶

Well versed in dealing with the consequences of war and terrorism, Israel can provide reliable, fast and effective assistance particularly in humanitarian crisis situations by supplying mobile clinics, medical equipment as well as search and rescue teams. Currently Israel is heavily involved in the fight against Ebola, amongst other things by providing funding to the UN Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). Israel is the sixth largest contributor to this fund, measured by per capita contributions. The World Health Organization and UNICEF receive funds for operating clinics in the affected region. In addition, MASHAV has sent fully equipped medical clinics to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra

5 | The Middle East conflict is causing various groups of countries to put forward disproportionately high numbers of resolutions against Israel at the UN. In addition, the formation of international blocks means that there is only a limited number of regional groups Israel can associate itself with.

6 | Cf. BMZ, "Leitlinien für die bilaterale Finanzielle und Technische Zusammenarbeit mit Kooperationspartnern der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit", 2008, p. 9, <http://bmz.de/de/mediathek/publikationen/reihen/strategiepaepere/konzept165.pdf> (accessed 28 Dec 2014).

Leone. Israeli experts have been dispatched to Cameroon and Ivory Coast to operate clinics and train health workers.⁷

One fundamental aim of Israel's development policy is to encourage political rapprochement. Experiences from the past have shown that while it may help to expand practical relations, it is unlikely that cooperation will survive major political disputes.⁸ This sobering realisation is tempered by the international attention and recognition of the achievements of Israeli technology in land/water management⁹ during the height of Israeli development cooperation (and beyond). While its own budget is relatively modest, MASHAV successfully achieves valuable synergy effects by relatively high levels of co-funding. In this context, Germany is the most important partner country. Further partnerships involve Denmark, Italy, Japan, Canada and the U.S., among others.

While its own budget is relatively modest, MASHAV is successful in achieving valuable synergy effects due to relatively high levels of co-funding.

THE ISRAELI AGENCIES MASHAV AND CINADCO

MASHAV's activities focus on poverty reduction, food security, sustainable development, the empowerment of women and maternal and children's health, social equality as well as improving public health and education systems. Due to the limited MASHAV budget, funds are used mainly to train multipliers which can take place in two settings. Either individuals attend training courses in Israel with the objective of subsequently implementing projects in their home countries, or Israeli experts go to partner countries in Africa organising trainings locally or working in villages and cities. MASHAV also dispatches experts to analyse conditions on the ground and devise a consultancy concept based on findings. Direct infrastructure investments are rather rare.

MASHAV works closely with the Center for International Agricultural Development Cooperation (CINADCO) of the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, organising training measures and cooperation projects in the areas of water resource management, irrigation and fertilisation, market-oriented agriculture,

7 | Cf. Dave Bender, "UN Identifies Israel as Top Contributor Per Capita in Fight Against Ebola", *The Algemeiner*, 18 Dec 2014, <http://goo.gl/a6CvDi> (accessed 28 Dec 2014).

8 | Cf. Belman Inbal / Zahavi, n. 1.

9 | An example which is often cited is the drip irrigation system from Netafim, which was developed in Israel.

livestock and dairy production as well as agricultural research and development. In TDC, CINADCO is involved in Ethiopia, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

TRILATERAL COOPERATION IN AFRICA INVOLVING GERMANY AND ISRAEL

In connection with the regular evaluation by the members of the DAC¹⁰ as well as the desire for better liaison between development donors,¹¹ the German government has expanded trilateral development cooperation consistently.¹² This applies particularly where the State of Israel is concerned. Both countries are committed to the global agenda for sustainable development, the fight against poverty and the implementation of the MDGs.¹³

Israel and Germany share the vision that, particularly in the era of globalisation, economically strong countries should support countries that are in the process of developing their economy by providing them with resources and expertise to enable them to fulfil their potential. This brings about a triple win situation for all those involved: It strengthens and substantiates Israeli-German cooperation, it helps to realise financial and knowledge synergies, and it is implemented in local projects that support sustainable economic and social development. Building on 50 years of German-Israeli diplomatic relations, there are prospects of expanding the cooperation beyond Africa, particularly to countries of Central Asia, and beyond existing projects. At a special side event to be

- 10 | Germany has been a full member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development since 1961. Israel has been an OECD member since 2010 and regularly attends DAC meetings.
- 11 | Cf. Peter Molt, "A Review of (West) Germany's Relations with Developing Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa", *KAS International Reports*, 11-12/2014, p. 55.
- 12 | This is emphasised in the 2009 Coalition Agreement. In the 2013 BMZ strategy paper "Triangular Cooperation in German development cooperation", the German Government makes specific reference to the standards of the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Declaration A Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, which also has Israeli support. Cf. The Federal Government, "Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und FDP 17. Legislaturperiode", p. 128; BMZ, BMZ Strategy Paper 5, "Triangular cooperation in German development cooperation. Position paper", 2013, p. 4, http://bmz.de/en/publications/type_of_publication/strategies/Strategiepapier334_05_2013.pdf (accessed 29 Jan 2015).
- 13 | Cf. Federal Press Office, "Gemeinsame Erklärung zu den Deutsch-Israelischen Regierungskonsultationen vom 25. Februar 2014", <http://goo.gl/4Z8I5g> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

held at the UN General Assembly in New York this year, Israel and Germany will present the TDC format to draw attention to the successful format of multilateral development collaboration.

The Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel have always been closely linked through their history and their democratic values. Pooling financial and human resources through TDC enriches this unique bilateral relationship and places it on a thoroughly practical base. Former Federal

Development Minister Dirk Niebel used to speak of Israel as a "strategic partner"¹⁴; his successor Gerd Müller considers TDC a success story and an "innovative model for the

Federal Development Minister Gerd Müller considers trilateral cooperation a success story and an "innovative model for the future".

future"¹⁵. Owing to its extensive diplomatic connections, Germany can act in an intermediary role, integrating Israeli experts into German development cooperation delegations or projects. With its wide-ranging projects and internationally established intermediary organisations, such as the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ), Germany has a good understanding of how to plan and fund cooperation projects. For Israel, this is a particularly valuable connecting factor and an important basis for future collaborations.

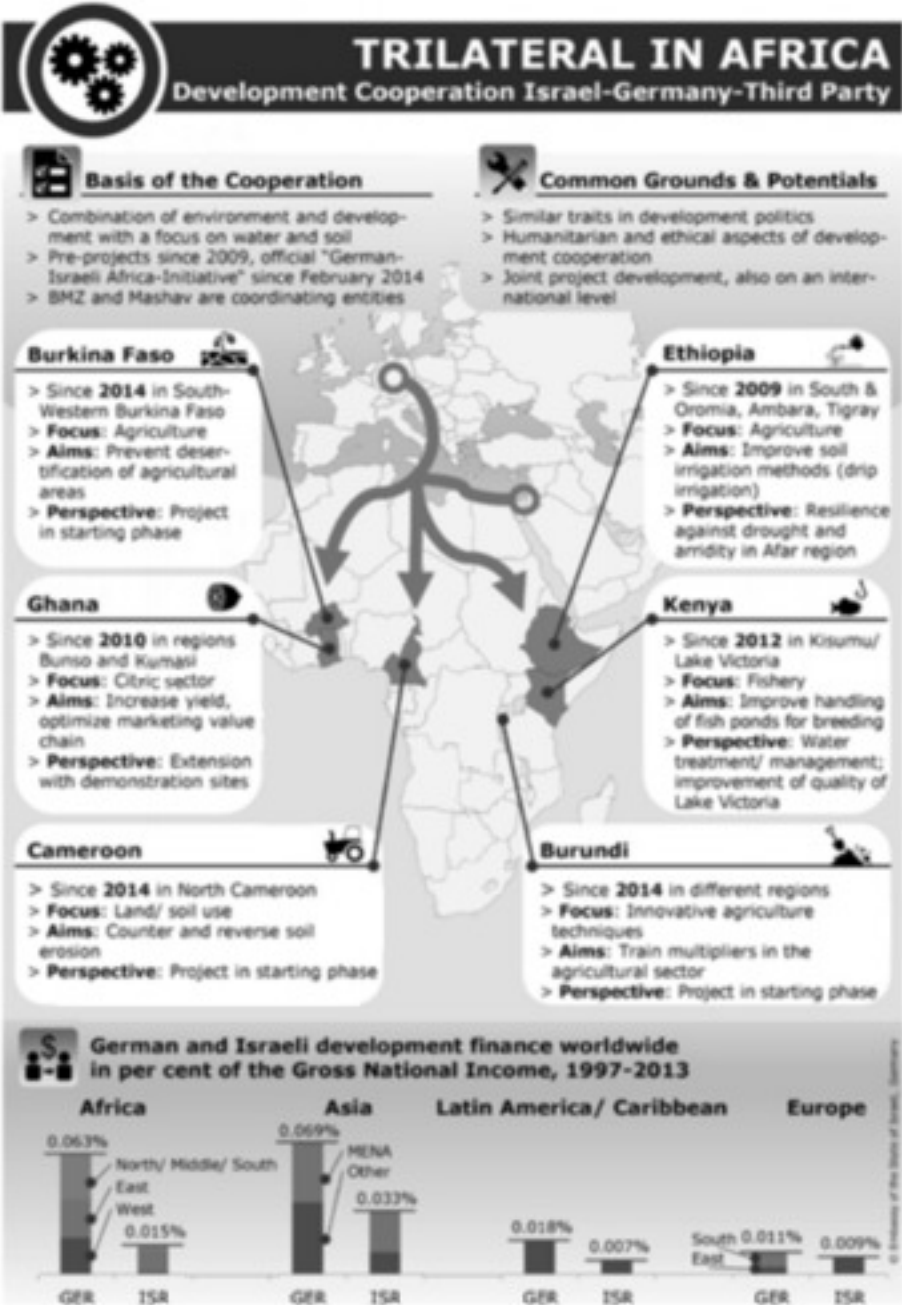
The common denominator of TDC is to apply environmental and development considerations to topics such as agricultural irrigation, effluents, soil degradation and desertification. Projects aimed at sustainable soil management also play an important role. To cover the global demand for food to feed the growing world population, at least a further 120 million hectares of land will be needed for cultivation by 2030. At the same time, climate change will increasingly lead to infertile soils, which, in conjunction with inadequate management methods, will mean the loss of arable land.¹⁶ Sustainable soil management, as promoted by TDC, and the focus on entire value chains will contribute to the dissemination of methods using resources sustainably and economically.

14 | Marcel Fürstenau, "Deutschland und Israel kooperieren in Kenia", *Deutsche Welle*, 18 Aug 2012, <http://goo.gl/0wUWf2> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

15 | Gerd Müller, "Deutsch-israelische Regierungskonsultationen: Trilaterale Kooperation ist eine Erfolgsgeschichte", 25 Feb 2014, <http://goo.gl/xxyfbb> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

16 | According to estimates, the amount of arable land potentially being lost may equal the amount of land that would, in fact, be required to produce the extra food required. Cf. Sergio A. Zelaya, DDD 5th International Conference 2014, Sde Boqer.

Fig. 2





During the German-Israeli Intergovernmental Consultations in February 2014 in Jerusalem it was decided to broaden the cooperations between MASHAV and the BMZ. | Source: © Rainer Jensen, picture alliance/dpa.

The “Israel-Germany Africa Initiative”¹⁷, an example of TDC with African partner countries, is one of the youngest German-Israeli cooperation programs. It was given the official go-ahead by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in December 2012, after the first project had already been initiated in Ethiopia in 2009. In the spirit of celebrating 50 years of German-Israeli diplomatic relations, the signing of the cooperation agreement in February 2014 has further strengthened the collaboration between the two countries. Israel is investing seven million U.S. dollars in this enterprise, with Germany contributing some 70 million U.S. dollars. These funds will support existing projects in Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya as well as new endeavours in Burundi, Burkina Faso and Cameroon¹⁸ during the period from 2015 to 2020. The BMZ and MASHAV will act as coordinating partners. On the Israeli side, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance and the Prime Minister’s Office are the funding parties. The African TDC partners will also contribute funding and have a hands-on involvement in the projects.

17 | The “Israel-Germany Africa Initiative” is not to be confused with the so-called “Afrika-Initiative” of the BMZ and Stiftung Partnerschaft mit Afrika e.V., which was scheduled to run from 2013 to 2015 and focuses on the areas of art, culture and the media, sport and civil society, (vocational) education as well as the economy.

18 | The TDC activities in Burkina Faso, Burundi and Cameroon began in 2014, focusing on projects for adapting to effects of climate change. One important aspect is the up-skilling of multipliers (also in Israel itself) in new agricultural techniques. In existing projects, Israel is providing bursaries for individuals to attend advanced training in Israel.

Ethiopia: Agricultural Irrigation

Trilateral cooperation started with a project in Ethiopia. It was initiated in May 2008 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the State of Israel with the aim of jointly addressing effects of climate change in Ethiopia. Particularly in the desert regions of Ethiopia, the climatic and geological challenges are similar to those in Israel. However, while Israel is capable of wresting productive land suitable for agriculture from the desert using the very latest efficient technologies, this is not yet the case in Ethiopia. Efficient irrigation is the key. If this can be achieved, it could help to boost food security and offer the rural population prospects of making a better living.



The countries of Sub-Saharan Africa are especially affected by climate change. Long-lasting droughts pose the biggest challenge to the people in Ethiopia. | Source: European Commission, DG ECHO, flickr ©©©.

From 2009 to 2013, the TDC focused mainly on efforts to improve the living conditions of farmers and communities engaged in raising livestock and/or agriculture. Effects of climate change such as irregular and more frequently occurring weather phenomena in the form of drought and flooding are among the greatest challenges to the affected people. The partners involved in the projects were the Ethiopian government, the German Environment Ministry via GIZ and MASHAV via CINADCO. The implemented measures included the installation of systems for drip irrigation at twelve locations in the regions of Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and in Southern Ethiopia as well as the training of some 5,000 farmers and their families in cultivation methods and efficient water usage. The irrigation systems consist of locally manufactured tubing with

tiny holes, which offer the advantage of being simple and cheap to handle while providing a high level of efficiency. This innovation enabled several harvests a year, boosting overall yields at the same time. In locations that were deemed unsuitable for drip irrigation, the focus was on improving the traditional irrigation systems. The project was embedded in the BMZ-GIZ "Sustainable Land Management Program". The project partners provided financial and consulting support totalling 2.3 million euros.

The partnership has been extended by a second project phase beginning in June 2014. It strengthens resilience against aridity and drought for (nomadic) communities in the Afar region in Northeast Ethiopia.¹⁹

Ghana: Optimisation of Citrus Production

Ghana was the first African country to establish diplomatic relations with Israel in 1956. Golda Meir's visit to Ghana in 1958 contributed significantly to her motivation in setting up MASHAV during the same year. After almost four decades of Israeli-Ghanaian relations having been frozen due to the Yom Kippur War and one year before the official reopening of the Israeli embassy in Accra, the TDC in Ghana was formalised in 2010.

Germany puts its developmental focus in Ghana on agriculture and sustainable economic development. Israeli development projects also have an agricultural emphasis and in addition cover fishery and water management as well as the expansion of sewage infrastructure.

Israeli development projects in Ghana have an agricultural emphasis and in addition cover fishery and water management as well as the expansion of sewage infrastructure.

Citrus production in Southwest Ghana (including the areas around Bunso and Kumasi) proved to be an ideal starting point for the trilateral cooperation for all sides. The project was inaugurated at a ceremony attended by the then Federal Minister Niebel, the Israeli Ambassador to Ghana Moshe Ram and the Ghanaian Finance Minister Kwabena Duffuor. It operates in line with the market-oriented agriculture program of the Ghanaian Development Agenda 2010-2013 and supports its implementation.

19 | By the submission deadline, the project coordinators were still in the initial project start-up and planning phase. Potential project components comprise the establishment of institutions and measures of further training as well as demonstration plots. Date cultivation is also being considered.



In Ghana, the Israeli development cooperation has been pursuing the modernisation of the citrus industry since 2010. As a result, higher yields can be reported, from which local merchants benefit. | Source: Eileen Delhi, flickr ©①③③.

Initially, the project concentrated on the modernisation of the citrus production in the region through local seminars. While the average yield for citrus fruit in Ghana is 20 to 25 tons per hectare, it is 70 to 80 tons in Israel. Consequently, the objective was to double the yields as well as optimise the value chains to permanently safeguard the economic gain.²⁰ Moreover, since many trees were found to suffer from disease and viruses, the introduction of resistant varieties was initiated as well.

The target group for these measures comprised over 120 specialists from the Ghanaian Ministry of Agriculture as well as local producers. GIZ experts and CINADCO collaborated on this project. Israel's major contribution was its specific expertise in irrigation methods, which were adapted to the circumstances in Ghana. After the first phase proved to be successful, the project was continued and expanded in 2014 by setting up some demonstration plots to convince local producers of their efficacy. Ghanaian and

20 | Cf. MASHAV, "Israel-Ghana Partnership for Development", p. 13, <http://goo.gl/mTdMHU> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

Israeli scientists continue in their efforts to find further cultivation and irrigation methods to increase yields and fruit quality.²¹

Kenya: Fisheries on Lake Victoria

Some 40,000 fishermen operate from the Kenyan shore of Lake Victoria. While catches were as large as 240,000 tons at the turn of the millennium, they dwindled to a fraction of that within a decade. Overfishing and the use of nets with small mesh size have resulted in poorer catches and contributed to the erosion of the sea bed. The water has become cloudier as a result, which inhibits fish reproduction. Lake Victoria is also affected by climate change, as the drier conditions mean that the tributaries are feeding less water into the lake, for instance.



The ecological balance of Lake Victoria is negatively affected by over-fishing. Therefore, trilateral projects with Kenyan, Israeli and German participation focus on sustainable fish farming. | Source: Anita Ritenour, flickr ©.

Germany has been involved in Kenya for over a decade in the optimisation of the value chain comprising the rearing, processing and marketing of fish. Israel has been collaborating with fishermen since 2009 in attempts to reintroduce carp into Lake Victoria.

21 | Cf. Dubi Raber/Shmulik Gross, "Germany-Ghana-Israel: Trilateral Cooperation on Citrus Production", MASHAV, <http://www.moag.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/3E840812-A453-42B9-B246-D739806DA616/0/GhanaCitrusCourse26January2014to6FebruaryfinalByDubiRabberandShmulikGross.pdf> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

Further projects are focused on raising resilience against water shortages as well as the development of the sewage and water management sector. A Kenyan economic development program supports the establishment of fishponds and fish breeders. These measures are intended to allow the fishing grounds to recover and Lake Victoria to regain its ecological balance. The objective of increasing catches is not purely based on economic considerations, but also meant to contribute to food security as the population is increasing, particularly in the area bordering the lake.



Through aquafarming, artificial fish ponds, it was possible to increase fishery for Tilapia in Kenya, which led to new employment and income opportunities. | Source: Mike Lusmore, flickr ©①③③.

This is where the TDC with Kenya, which was formalised in 2012, came in. German and Israeli experts provided joint consulting services on the subject of small-scale Nile perch breeding. The German partners provide their expertise mainly by offering vocational training, while the Israelis concentrate on efficient fish farming (fish food ingredients, the establishing and maintaining of fishponds, breeding methods). In addition, specialists from both countries organise trainings for fish farmers and multipliers on feed production, water quality monitoring and fish breeding. In this context, the Ramogi Institute of Advanced Technology in Kisumu is to be upgraded to an "Aquaculture Competency Center", involving the development of a standardised curriculum among other things. Subjects covered by this curriculum will also include organisational development in order to educate people about the

benefits of joining together in cooperatives. The purpose of networking among producers is to reduce their transport costs and to increase their negotiating power.²² There are also training and demonstration farms for fish farming in Kisumu, with which the project partners collaborate.

The fish farm project is divided into two phases. During the first phase, 8,000 fishermen were trained during the period from June 2012 to June 2014. The total budget was 2.3 million euros. Up to 1.3 million euros are available for the second phase, which is due to run until December 2016. The partners are GIZ, MASHAV and the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture.²³ Initially, the local population greeted the project approach with little enthusiasm. However, as the TDC and the Kenyan economic promotion measures started to show results, acceptance grew. Fish farmers now operate over 40,000 newly established fishponds.

At the end of 2014, the TDC was expanded to include water treatment and management in Bungoma, Kakamega and Siaya. Improvement of the water quality of Lake Victoria is another potential objective of German-Israeli cooperation in the region. A project plan is currently being examined in collaboration with the KfW Development Bank, with the launch planned for 2016.

OUTLOOK: THE MULTI-FACETED NATURE OF COOPERATION FORMS THE BASIS FOR PRAGMATIC INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN THE FUTURE

The TDC format is a recent endeavor in the context of German-Israeli relations, and projects have only been in place for a few years so far. The feedback from the project partners indicates that all sides welcome the collaboration. Due to the different structures of the intermediary organisations and their links with the respective governments, the challenge is to find an agreement between the different actors as to who performs which tasks within the cooperation. This is reflected particularly in the differences between the way MASHAV is linked to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the way the GIZ is linked to the BMZ and thereby the German government. Further challenges for German-Israeli

22 | Cf. BMZ, "Trilaterale Kooperation am Viktoriasee", <http://goo.gl/tmNYpZ> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

23 | Besides the experts, there is a steering committee in place to oversee progress. Cf. IsraelAgri, "Israel and Germany Collaborate in a Fish Farming Project", 14 Aug 2014, <http://goo.gl/UMyhSO> (accessed 29 Jan 2015).

cooperation, as well as cooperation with third partners, lie in the different working cultures and, in some instances, also the large project scope, such as in the case of Ethiopia. In any case, Israel will strive for the confirmation of the cooperation and its expansion beyond existing project horizons. One important point to be made in this context is that it must be provided that local partners continue the projects independently and in a sustainable manner.

In times of limited funds, cooperation is the appropriate means to realise joint development efforts.

Trilateral – to Israel this means not restricting its cooperation exclusively to the German-Israeli relationship, but expanding its activities internationally in a pragmatic manner. In

times of limited funds and distributed competences as well as varying diplomatic relations with third countries, cooperation is the appropriate means to realise joint development efforts. Addressing the effects of climate change in collaboration with countries that are worst hit makes the order of the day. In that respect, development politics is not possible without the environmental core concept of sustainability. In this context it is worth highlighting that Germany and Israel engage in a bilateral climate project since November 2014. Strategies to adapt to climate change are particularly important for Sub-Saharan Africa. However, development cooperation must ask how it can find an approach that will include the issue of climate-warming emissions in agriculture in addition to adaptation efforts. Furthermore, we should jointly contribute to the discussion on development policy, both with respect to the manner of implementation and the scientific foundation, such as the translational sciences. The main question is: how do we proceed from scientific findings to good recommendations for political action and ultimately to implementation?

Trilateral development cooperation does not merely represent an “intrinsic end in itself”. The symbolic power of trilateral collaboration and its effectiveness in notable cooperation projects are of paramount significance to Israel as well as to all other involved actors.

“From aid to trade” is a further aspect that is not to be underestimated; it is not mentioned all that often, but that makes it all the more important. Cooperation offers starting points for sustainable development, potentially involving economic links with other countries; even if for the simple reason that this draws governments’ attention more strongly to those countries, which in turn encourages economic actors to take action.

As a democratic society, Israel occupies an isolated position in the Middle East. However, trilateral development cooperation in particular shows that Israel has good connections throughout the world. As an open and pluralist society, we are prepared to take on a global responsibility.

One disappointing circumstance remains: media reporting about Israel is still dominated by conflict rather than cooperation, however successful the implementation of cooperation projects may be. That said, the positive collaboration encourages further activities building on what has been achieved. Israel has a vast amount of specialist expertise in the areas of semi-arid agriculture and disaster preparedness and response. Both aspects result from Israel's special position politically, historically and geographically. These are the areas where we should further enhance and expand our cooperation.