

— THE —
**Annual
Report
2020**

icra – building trust

Lawickse Allee 11,
6701 AN Wageningen
The Netherlands

www.icra.global



Building Trust
And making IMPACT



Table of Contents

04

About us, an introduction to who iCRA is

05

iCRA's Impact Domains: our focus areas

06

Message from our Executive Director, Mariette Gross

07

Quotes from iCRA's Supervisory Board

08

Statistics on iCRA course participants

09

Statistics on iCRA and project acquisition

10

iCRA Projects and Impact Stories

17

iCRA clients and collaborators



All about iCRA

Building trust as a foundation for success.

iCRA is dedicated to improving the livelihoods of farmers and their communities. We do this by making research, education, innovation and agribusiness work; meaning we help bridge gaps, develop trust & mutual understanding and bring different worlds and actors together – to find solutions that benefit all.

iCRA helps bridge gaps, develop trust, mutual understanding and brings different worlds and actors together to find solutions that will benefit all. iCRA is excellent at training agribusiness actors to form career-changing skills that directly impact the way you negotiate, the work-relationships you

build and how to make yourself a valuable asset to any organisation. Our training is unconventional, focused and highly practical. iCRA staff continually looks for ways in which to be ahead of the game, providing relevant and top-of-the-range content for all enthusiastic participants.

Our Impact Domains



Agribusiness

We invest in people, their skills and business relationships to bring value chains to the next level and improve livelihoods of everyone involved



Education

We invest in people, curricula and building links with the private sector to make (agri) education contribute to youth employment & (local) economies



Research

We invest in people, their skills and their relationships with stakeholders to build bridges between research, rural development and agribusiness



iCRA offers open entry courses for professionals to develop the knowledge, skills and mindset necessary to work across disciplinary and organisational boundaries and engage public and private sectors by:

- Facilitating personal growth and leadership skills
- Helping participants gain insights on aspects of interactive learning, agribusiness, research and rural innovation
- Developing and implementing online learning options; allowing participants to continue the iCRA journey when they go back home

Message from the Executive Director



Mariette Gross

Executive Director

As of the beginning of April 2020, the supervisory board was happy to welcome Mariette Gross, who has been an asset to iCRA for the last 7 and a half years, as the new Executive Director.



"Like everyone else, 2020 was an exciting year for iCRA as an organization. How do you carry out assignments all over the world when you can't travel? I found it a personal challenge, as I took up the position of director just as the whole COVID situation started. Despite the uncertainty, unpredictability, and stress that came with it, the iCRA team and I, are looking back to 2020 as a year of innovation, team spirit, and gratitude.

Innovation because our experience with blended learning and the trust of our partner and clients made it relatively easy for us to make the leap to fully online training. The training of 2SCALE partnership facilitators on trust building and negotiation, with the emphasis on just do it and

learn on the way, was a great example of this.

Team spirit because we all tried as a collective unit to make communicating from behind the scenes as interactive and fulfilling as our trainings that are face-to-face for those all over the world. The iCRA youngster and fresh blood played a very valuable leading role in this.

Gratitude, which we received so much of from our partners, clients, and course participants, because our hands-on and inspiring way of online training delivery. It was their enthusiasm that triggered us to develop our newest open course Making Blended Training Work."

"It has been said by many people already, 2020 was an exceptional year. Many challenges were faced, also by relatively small international organisations like iCRA. Staff and participants of iCRA proved to be very flexible, and many activities were transferred to online versions. It seemed to be without any effort but be assured it took huge effort. It's incredible how flexibly the organisation and its staff worked throughout the pandemic."

"2020 was an extraordinarily difficult year, and a particular challenge for any organisation whose core business is training. The iCRA team is to be congratulated for adapting so effectively, and for continuing to deliver – and grow – its high-quality courses and support projects, against all odds".

"Like all the organisations active in the international arena, the restrictions on cross-border travel due to the COVID 19 pandemic brought specific challenges to iCRA. iCRA responded with amazing adaptability and performed in 2020 extremely well under such circumstances! Building on the strengths of its staff and leadership, iCRA was able to maintain most of its planned training courses by switching them swiftly from face-to-face to virtual mode; and it went further, attracting more participants to its training events and developing a specific curriculum about how to organise virtual training events!"



**Jelle
Maas**

Supervisory
Board Member



**Morag
Webb**

Supervisory
Board Member



**Philippe
Petithuguenin**

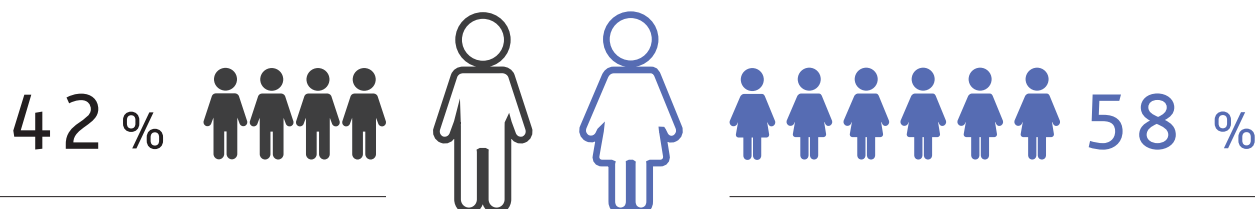
Supervisory
Board Member

Statistics on course participants

2020 was a challenging year for iCRA courses due to the almost immediate switch to a fully online learning environment. Although iCRA provided blended training prior to 2020, it was still a major adjustment from our usually face-to-face trainings.



iCRA staff was dedicated and managed to train 70 participants to successfully complete 2 of our iCRA courses.



Male participants

74 participants

2 iCRA courses were able to go fully online and based on a relationship of trust, be of value to both trainer and participant



37

Making Education Work participants



37

Making Research Work participants



Female participants

70 Certificates awarded
22

countries

Algeria	Nigeria
Bangladesh	Pakistan
Benin	Peru
Burkina Faso	Rwanda
Colombia	Sierra Leone
Egypt	South Africa
Ethiopia	Tanzania
Ghana	Uganda
Iraq	Vietnam
Kenya	Zambia
Mozambique	Zimbabwe

Participants were able to connect from all over the world and participate in our iCRA courses and worked together with us despite troublesome internet connections and time schedules.

Statistics on iCRA and project acquisition in 2020



13 New Projects

Despite going fully online and being in the midst of a pandemic, iCRA was able to acquire 13 new projects.

5 New Staff

iCRA was happy to welcome 5 new members to our "iCRA Family" and to grow our team to further our goals.

iCRA is online 100%

It was a challenge to switch our team to go from very interactive into an entirely online space.

3 New Countries

Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan are new territories for iCRA and we look forward to working there in the years to come.



iCRA builds trust. We believe that when people working within the value chain (producers, transporters, traders..) and those who support the value chain (researchers, universities, service providers..) understand each other and work together – common goals and solutions from the source can be defined.

iCRA Projects and Impact Stories

ATAB (Technical Assistance Agrinatura in Burundi)

Improving research capacities and partnerships in Burundi to help reduce food insecurity and undernutrition

- Budget over 3 years: €1.580.000 (2019-2022)
- 2020: 14 national and 9 international researchers participated in activities

This iCRA-led initiative involves the following academic organisations in Burundi: University of Burundi, CAPAD (farmers' organisation), ISABU (national research institute) and RBU 2000+ (Burundi networking NGO). In 2020, four studies were carried out (two ongoing) on Rural population resilience, the Dairy value chain, and on development approaches & methodologies. An innovation platform was established for the banana value chain. While research takes up 65% of the budget, 25% is covered by trainings. Two trainings took place on pedagogical skills and relationship-building, and four modules initiated. "Beyond mobilising Agrinatura's expertise, the connection iCRA makes at the personal level with our partners counts even more for building trust and a stronger collaboration with and between our Burundian partners". (iCRA trainer and project manager Myriam Perez Dumoulin).



iCRA 's foundation relies on building trust. Through our projects, we help others learn vital skills that aid them in development throughout their fields.



Holeta Polytechnic College, Ethiopia

Ongoing projects with this long-term partner building on success of NUFFIC project (2012-2017)

- Most recently (2020-21) - EARNED project: So far, 10 Holeta participants in iCRA-led Dairy course and 2 participants in iCRA's international Blended Training course

The relationship with iCRA did not stop in 2018 but has been ongoing through: Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Content-specific training. In 2020, Holeta's dairy-training capacity grew as well as its collaborations at the regional level through the EARNED (East African Regional Network of Excellence in Dairy) project, in which iCRA is a key partner. EARNED created the Dairy Training Network between 12 ATVET institutions in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya, to use the Delta Dairy Academy online platform built to enable blended learning in dairy courses at different colleges in the East Africa region. Lastly, the Gender toolkit that was created through iCRA project support is now being shared among project members (Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) in the EASTRIP project.

As stated by Holeta's Dean and Animal Science lecturer-trainer, Merga Nagassa:

"iCRA's NUFFIC-funded Agribizz project which strengthened Holeta's capacity to deliver quality practically-oriented education, established a concrete, strong foundation for the renaissance of Holeta College!"



"We see continuing trends of surpassing the national graduate pass-rate, maintaining high enrolment numbers, and the percentage of female students is now consistently above 50% - and a daycare is being established on the premises. The college plans to increase enrolment 3-4 times and we have the aspiration to upgrade to a Vocational University.

"Building on the great success of iCRA's project, Holeta continues to deepen its educational excellence, and to make major investments in equipment, vehicles and ICT and other facilities.

"In fact, the success of the iCRA-led NUFFIC project helped Holeta to make a strong case for winning massive funding from:

- East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP): USD21.85 mil
- KfW: € 1.5mil."

iCRA Projects

INNOCAP Benin

15 March 2017 – 31 January 2020

Total budget: € 250,106

[73 direct participants in Research and Curriculum development training activities](#)

In the high-potential horticulture region of Atacora-Donga, northwest Benin, lecturer-researchers from University of Parakou's (UP) Agronomy department worked directly with local horticultural producer organisations (URCooPMA, CePEA Souro Bayayé, as well as a local NGO, Germe). The results of the action research component in the field compared 5 methods to improve efficient water use in vegetable production (use of biochar, hand watering, drip-irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, irrigation by micro-jet). Capitalising from this up-to-date experience, a series of writeshops for UP staff and horticulture leaders led to the development of a new professional training course with 12 interactive and practical modules on the theme "Gender-sensitive innovative vocational training on water management in market gardening". In addition, 5 videos and a collection of photos were produced to enrich the university's course multimedia content – which ultimately benefit all students in horticulture and water management courses.



2SCALE II (Toward Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship)

Total budget: € 218.000

2020: 663 direct participants in Agribusiness training, coaching & online platform development

In 2019-2020, iCRA continued its services for its longstanding (since 2012) project partner 2SCALE. In 2020, iCRA trained, coached and backstopped 2SCALE's Partnership Facilitators (PFs) working from eight 2SCALE countries in East and West Africa. The PFs facilitate sustainable public-private partnerships (PPPs) between 'business champions' (leading processors and producer groups) and their partners in the commodity value chain; such as input dealers, traders or aggregators, agricultural extension officers, financial and business support service providers. These partnerships improve business-driven inclusive development processes that contribute to food and nutrition security. From April 2019 until December 2020, iCRA supported 2SCALE staff, partners and PFs through a.o.:

- Coaching on trust building and facilitation skills in agribusiness partnerships
- Training on facilitation of PPP formation, reflection and adaptation processes based on Trust
- Training & coaching on Agribusiness Cluster formation
- Helping create the 2SCALE e-learning platform, improving online learning & collaboration

2SCALE is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS), and awarded to a consortium comprising the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), the Base-of-the-Pyramid Innovation Center (Bopinc) and the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV).



GIRE: MALI – Joint masters Programme in Integrated Water Resources Management

- Joint Masters' programme in IWRM launched in Mali: November 2020
- Total budget: Over 4 years + extension (October 2016 - December 2020)
- Budget: € 1,390,977

In spite of the Covid19 pandemic, a very unique collaboration in Mali was launched on November 26, 2020: for the first time, four higher education institutions (ENI-ABT, IPR/IFRA, USTTB, USJPB) joined forces to offer one joint Masters programme in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), a study that did not exist in Mali before. Each institution hosts its own specialisation, one of which students need to focus on in their second year: Water Quality & Sanitation (USTTB), Governance of Water (USJPB), Water & Engineering (ENI), or Water & Agriculture (IPR/IFRA). In the first year, all students attend a common curriculum, dividing their time between the four institutions. The iCRA-led NUFFIC-funded project provided a series of training to key teaching and research staff of each institution, on competences such as the IWRM approach, Watershed management, using GPS, stimulating Entrepreneurship skills, developing a Competence-based curriculum. Another key theme was Gender equality, ensuring that more attention was given to issues of gender in the curriculum, and prioritising female candidates in the various training courses, in Bamako and abroad. Getting accreditation for a new Master's programme at one institution is challenging enough, but getting four institutions to agree on accreditation of content and procedures in a completely new joint venture asked for huge effort from the Institution leaders - as well as the project leaders. We applaud all their tenacity and good humour in managing to meet the highly ambitious original goal of a timeline of four years!



iCRA Impact

ProAgri3-GIZ Project in Benin – ABC Pilot

Total budget: Over 3 years (20 November - 23 October) € 826,497

In December 2018, iCRA entered a partnership with the ProAgri3-GIZ project, to focus on the operationalization of agribusiness clusters at the local level with agribusiness coaches in support of direct actors, through iCRA's "entrepreneurship coaching services" (Agribusiness Coaching: ABC) approach.

It is important to note that the national strategy for the development of agricultural sectors in Benin has retained and prioritises value chain support through the development of agribusiness clusters. The third phase of the ProAgri project, aims to: "Strengthen the performance of Benin's agriculture while respecting environmental aspects and reducing the poverty of rural populations".

This partnership aims to make 20 shea and soybean value chain clusters truly functional and competitive in a sustainable manner, through the support of this iCRA-GIZ partnership.

Three lines of impact are evident in the case of the Shea value chain: the constitution of almond stocks with own funds, development of access to formal credit, and development of a sales strategy.

Three lines of impact can also be distinguished in the case of the soya value chain: increase in production/sales based on building business relationships, development of soya processing, and development of group sales.






Building Trust

Our Clients

nuffic
meet the world

IFDC
Developing Agriculture from the Ground Up

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

 Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend
Nederland

 **WAGENINGEN**
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Enabel 

giz

Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Delphy 

rikolto
VECO



UFS

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA



+31 (0)317 422 938



info@icra.global



www.icra.global



Lawickse Allee 11,
6701 AN Wageningen
The Netherlands



+33 (0)467 61 26 60



icra-montpellier@icra.global



www.icra.global/fr



1101 Avenue Agropolis, BP 5098
34093 MONTPELLIER Cedex 05
France