



Marion Sodemann and Dr Michael Blank



New Executive Director Marion Sodemann takes over office from Dr Michael Blank

The SES gGmbH has a new Executive Director. Marion Sodemann – previously deputy in this office – is the successor to Dr Michael Blank. Her predecessor has returned to Accra as head of the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Ghana (AHK Ghana). The office was officially handed over on 1 August.

“I will remain associated with the SES and promote this unique organisation in Ghana,” said Dr Blank at his farewell. “I am already looking forward to many joint projects. But above all I am delighted that Marion Sodemann is taking over my previous tasks. I can’t imagine a better successor.”

Marion Sodemann is an economist and an expert in leadership issues for change processes. As deputy executive director at the SES she was most recently responsible for the negotiations with our most important public donor – the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) – as well as for the area of organisational development.

Top positions in the hands of women

With Marion Sodemann, the SES gGmbH has a female executive director for the second time since the organisation was founded in 1983. The first woman to hold this position was Dr Susanne Nonnen, the predecessor of Dr Michael Blank, who today directs the affairs of the SES Foundation on a voluntary basis.

The deputy management of the SES gGmbH is also in the hands of a woman. Here, Bettina Hartmann is in charge, who is also head of the Experts and Business Development.

Dear readers,

I have been in my new position for a few weeks now and I am very pleased to be able to write to you for the first time today. Because of course contact with you is one of my most important tasks.

Naturally, many of you will be asking yourselves: who is Marion Sodemann, what does she bring to the table, where is the journey headed with her? If I were you, I would certainly want to know. That’s why I’m introducing myself in this issue of our newsletter with my curriculum vitae.

You will see that I have been working for the SES for almost 30 years and have held management positions for almost as long. So, I can safely say that I know our organisation inside out. This applies in particular to the development over the last few years, which I have been able to actively shape.

And that’s important, because it’s exactly what will help me to make already initiated and upcoming change processes a success. We are on the right track with new business areas such as our German Senior Experts (GSE) and a fundraising programme, which we only launched recently.

Kind regards,

Marion Sodemann
Executive Director SES gGmbH

Marion Sodemann

Stations at the SES

since August

2024

Executive Director

2023–2024

Deputy Executive Director

2020–2024

Head of Organisational Development

2016–2024

Data Protection Officer

2008–2019

Head of Quality Management and Evaluation

2006–2008

Parental leave in Riyadh and Jeddah,
Saudi Arabia

1998–2006

Head of International Department

1995–1997

Project Manager Africa

Freelance activity

2005–2024

Trainer (leadership and communication)

Education

2023–2025

Training as a systemic organisational
developer, Scientific Institute for Psychology
and Organisational Consulting (WISPO)

2005–2007

Training as a coach, Habichtswald-Seminare
Schauenburg

2003–2005

Training as a conflict counsellor,
Dortmund University of Technology

1996–1997

Postgraduate programme
Total Quality Management (TQM),
Technical University of Kaiserslautern*

1987–1995

Studies in Economics,
University of Cologne

* today: University of Kaiserslautern-Landau (RPTU)

My most important task is ...

... to make the SES fit for the future. Above all, this means minimising our heavy dependence on state funding and tapping into new sources of income.

To this end, we launched the commercially operating German Senior Experts (GSE) on the market this year and have also entered fundraising. The funds that we generate through these channels have the sole purpose of securing and strengthening our voluntary sector.

Speaking of voluntary work – its importance ...

... cannot be overestimated. Our experts do a tremendous job: in 2023 alone, they spent more than 100,000 days working in Germany and abroad.

Always to pass on their knowledge – internationally as a contribution to development cooperation, nationwide in particular to promote the young generation in schools and training. These are the skilled workers of tomorrow that we are currently short of everywhere.

What motivates me ...

... are people who make a difference. For example, when I hear that a young man who fled to Germany in 2015 is now studying because he had the support of our VerAplus initiative, or that occupational safety in a Guatemalan sawmill has improved, or the financial situation of a small farm in Malawi or training in a vocational school in the Republic of Moldova – always because our experts were able to help ... then that really touches me.

Support us with your donation

Securing our future via fundraising



At a time when public funding is becoming scarcer, we are consciously breaking new ground. Supported by our fundraising team, we are pursuing the goal of securing the diversity of our voluntary work in the long term and making it more

independent. Whether funding partnerships with foundations, corporate social responsibility co-operations with companies or private individual and permanent

donations: they all become building blocks to make our voluntary transfer of expertise at home and abroad future-proof.

You too can support our work! We appreciate every contribution: your donation – large or small – makes all the difference. It helps us to achieve our goals. Donate quickly and easily online via the donation button on our website or right here:

Donations account SES gGmbH
Sparkasse KölnBonn
IBAN: DE97 3705 0198 1902 0065 82



Round Table in Berlin



On 25 September at the Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft in Berlin: Dr Achim Dercks (DIHK), State Secretary Jochen Flasbarth (BMZ), Marion Sodemann, Holger Schwannecke (ZDH) (from left)

An event that built the first bridges in our search for funding partnerships with foundations and companies took place on 25 September at the Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft in Berlin. It brought together representatives from business, foundations and politics and gave us the opportunity to present our work in detail, talk about opportunities for cooperation and initiate funding partnerships. One thing became clear: our programmes are of great importance for politics, business and society.

Speeches were made by host Dr Achim Dercks, Deputy Managing Director of the German Chamber of Indus-

try and Commerce (DIHK) and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of our Foundation, our Foundation Board Member Holger Schwannecke, General Secretary of the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH), and Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). All speakers agreed that the voluntary work of the SES is indispensable in Germany and worldwide!

Inspired by the exchange in Berlin, we are now setting out to build more bridges, create synergies and develop partnerships.

Miscellaneous

Annual report 2023

Our new annual report is here. Look back with us on the most important topics and developments of the past year and look forward to examples from all parts of the world.

As always, we recommend the digital version of our report, but we are also happy to provide you with print copies. The report is available in German and English.

Download: www.ses-bonn.de/en > Resources



REGISTER	2023
Experts	13,278
Weltdienst 30+ specialists	1,804
Registrations	1,178
Farewells	665
Average age	69
Proportion of women (in %)	26

ASSIGNMENTS ABROAD	2023
Africa/MENA*	379
Asia/Central Asia	244
Europe/Caucasus	91
Latin America/Caribbean	83
Total	797

* Middle East and North Africa

ASSIGNMENTS IN GERMANY	2023
Initiative VerAplus	3,904 *1,909
Companies/professional bodies/ organisations	35 *6
Schools programme	234 *172
Total	4,173 *2,087

* of which continuing from the previous year(s)

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