

# Everything there is to know about the SuSanA Discussion Forum



[forum.susana.org](http://forum.susana.org)

# Content

- [Part 1](#): General information about the SuSanA Discussion Forum
- [Part 2](#): Statistical information on Forum usage
- [Part 3](#): Slides to initiate discussions and debates about the future of the Forum
- [Appendix](#)

# Part 1: General information about the SuSanA Discussion Forum

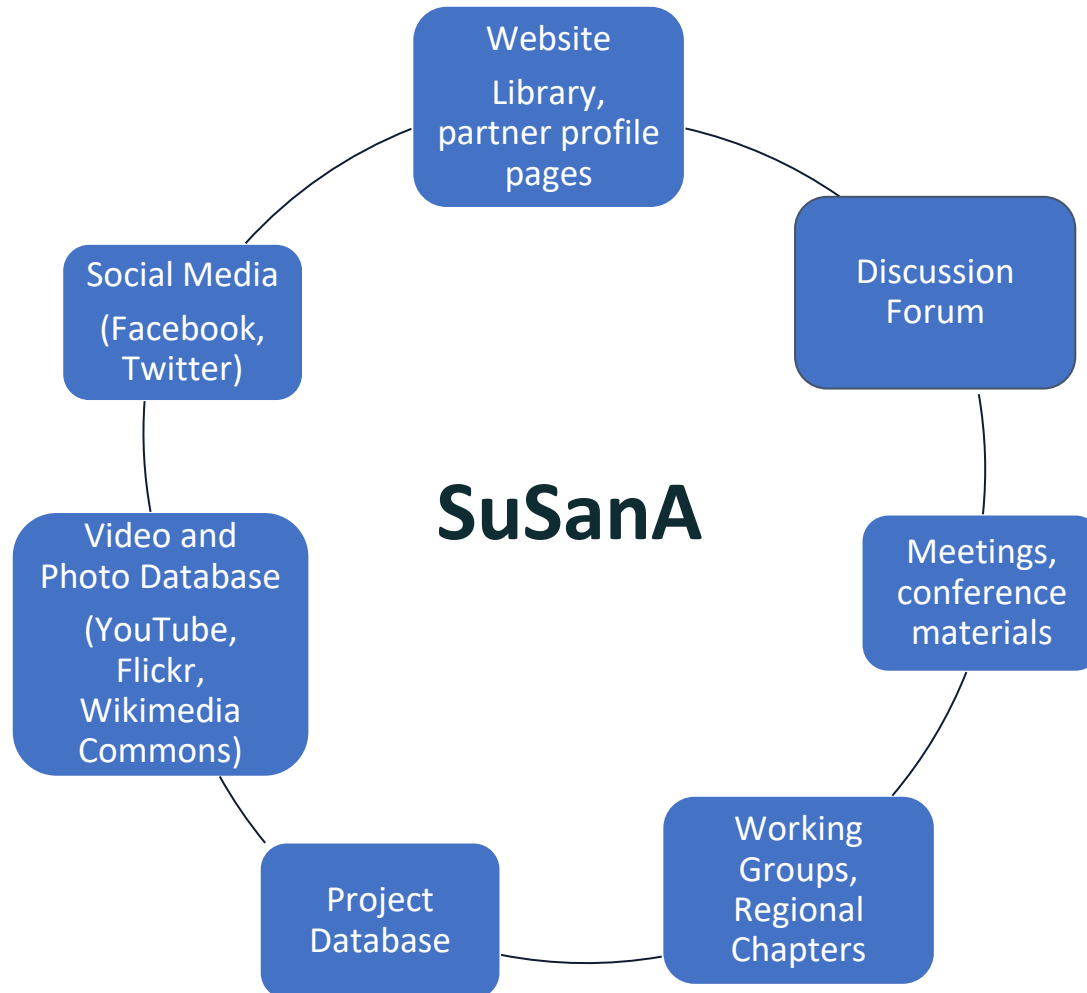
[Back](#)

Table of contents of Part 1:

- 1.1 [Overview and goals](#)
- 1.2 [Structure and setup](#)
- 1.3 [History](#)
- 1.4 [Moderation \(current situation\)](#)
- 1.5 [Funding](#)
- 1.6 [Rules, trust and playfulness](#)
- 1.7 [Visual impressions](#)

# Part 1.1: Overview and goal

## Position of Discussion Forum within overall SuSanA online platform



# Goal and objectives of the Forum

- Goal:
  - The Forum makes knowledge, ideas, and debates around sustainable sanitation accessible to everyone within the network and beyond.
- Objectives:
  - To accelerate learning within the sanitation sector
  - To facilitate sharing of knowledge
  - To help people to network within the SuSanA community, especially young people and those who are new to the sector
  - To ensure people outside of the sector can find SuSanA and good sanitation content via internet search (i.e. even if they don't know that SuSanA exists)

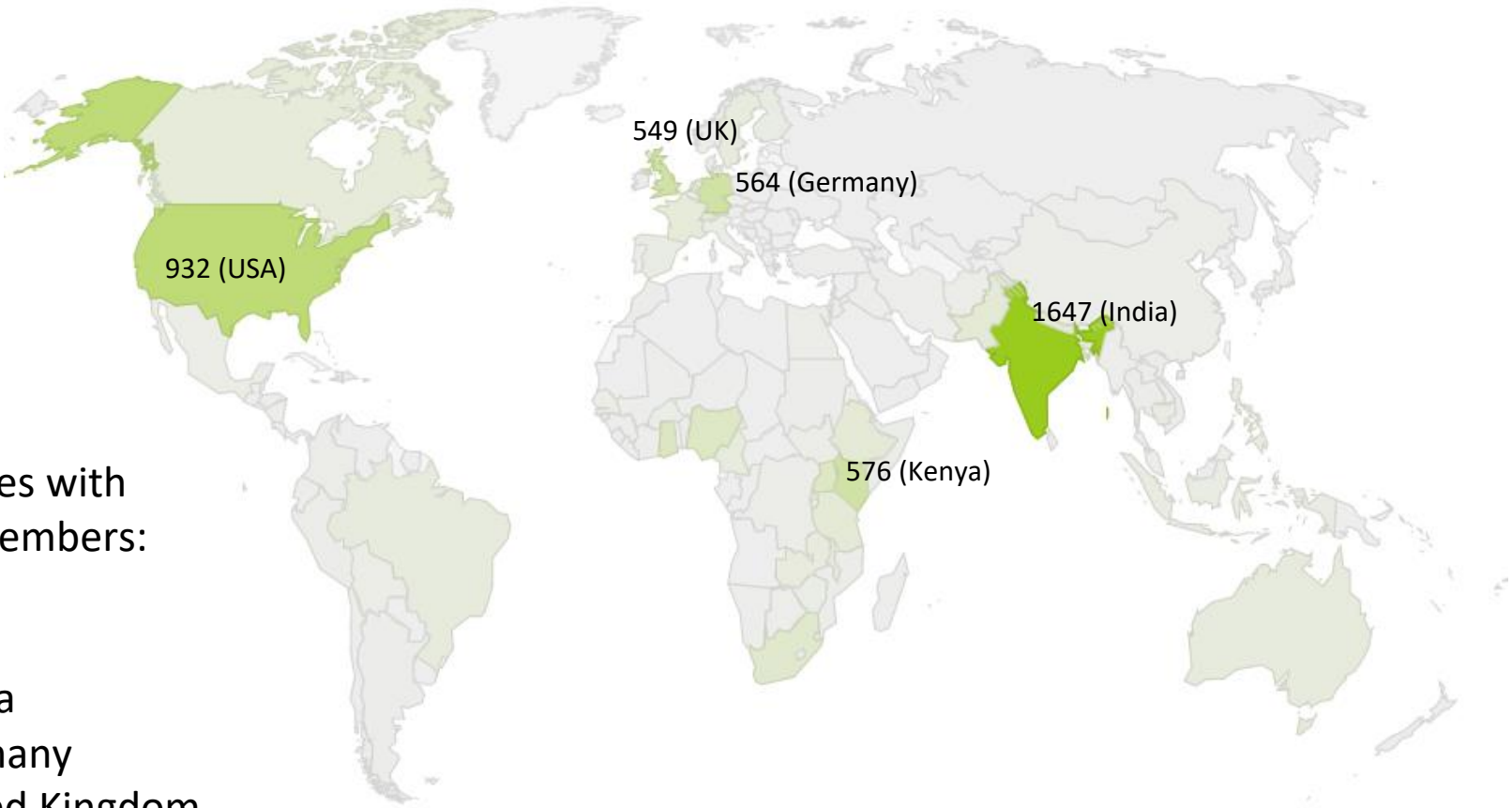
# „We are a global community“



The Forum gives a face and voice to all the SuSanA members, making the networking more personal, direct and trustful.

This collage consists of SuSanA user profile images from 2014

## Location of Forum users (SuSanA members) in 2019 - currently 11,000 members



Countries with most members:

1. India
2. USA
3. Kenya
4. Germany
5. United Kingdom

Date: 9 May 2019

Source: [Forum Statistics Page](#), based on self-identification of members during registration process



## How does the Forum achieve its goals? (1 of 2)

- **Convenience and efficiency:** The Discussion Forum enables convenient and efficient exchanges of information, experiences and practical problem solving ideas.
  - ❑ More efficient overall than e-mails between individuals
  - ❑ Posts can be made online or sent by members via e-mail to [posting@forum.susana.org](mailto:posting@forum.susana.org)
- **Accessible** to anyone with internet access
  - ❑ Posts are found by any internet search engine
  - ❑ All posts can be viewed by anyone (as opposed to other closed fora or discussion groups which require a login for reading posts)
  - ❑ Multiple languages – by using Google Translate plug-in (users can also post in their own language, although most of them post in English)

## How does the Forum achieve its goals? (2 of 2)

- **Inclusiveness:** The community moderators are recreating on the Forum the 'SuSanA spirit'.
  - Openness, friendliness, welcoming atmosphere, respect and passion for the cause.
- **Focus:** The main focus is sustainable sanitation.
  - We also discuss topics that are linked to sanitation, or of broad relevance to the WASH sector as a whole.
- **Personal and fun:** There is an emphasis on communicating in a personal, friendly non-anonymous manner.

## Contributions of the Forum to the WASH sector

- Knowledge management of project and research outcomes
- Making information and reports accessible and allowing for critical feedback
- Dissemination of project or research results
- Networking, finding jobs, helping newcomers to get better known
- Providing a place for announcements and news
- One-stop shop for all sanitation-related topics (less so for water and hygiene)
- Allowing for in-depth, potentially controversial discussions to take place
- Increasing the reach of events (conferences, webinars, trainings) by linking with online discussions on the Forum before, during and after the event
- Increasing the reach of publications e.g. by linking chapters to specific Forum discussion threads (e.g. planned for EmerSan Compendium)

# Contributions of the Forum beyond the WASH sector

- Raise awareness amongst the public about WASH challenges in developing countries and sustainability in general
- Helping the public find information about WASH topics
- Answering questions of lay persons

## Benefits for the organisation who is funding the Discussion Forum moderation (1 of 3)

- Increase your web traffic and outreach
  - increase traffic to your own website or products as the moderator could stress those linkages in posts
  - better interlink and increase traffic to your existing communication products, including social media channels, as the forum moderator could emphasise those
  - increase your visibility in the sector
  - receive credit for being a funder – e.g. placement of the organisation’s logo on the forum front page.
- Market your knowledge products on a wider scale
  - push your own publications and projects more strongly in the sector by instructing the moderator to link to those (we can also discuss how the SuSanA library and your literature or project databases (if they exist) could be merged or interlinked better)
  - ensure that more of your publications are included and cited in relevant Wikipedia articles because forum posts can inform improvements of Wikipedia articles (if the funded moderator is an experienced Wikipedian like Elisabeth von Muench)

## Benefits for the organisation who is funding the Discussion Forum moderation (2 of 3)

- Influence the direction and future of SuSanA
  - As a funder of the Discussion Forum, the organisation would occupy a more important position within the SuSanA core group and could more actively influence SuSanA's future direction (see also [here](#)).
  - influence or change the appearance of the Discussion Forum and how it is linked with the SuSanA website.
- Influence the sector discussion
  - run time-bound thematic discussions on the Discussion Forum (see [here](#) for a list of thematic discussions run in the past)
  - influence which topics would be discussed in the Discussion Forum more often or more in depth in future, thereby influencing the WASH sector discourse.

## Benefits for the organisation who is funding the Discussion Forum moderation (3 of 3)

- Other benefits for the organisation are possible – just suggest them and we can discuss.
- Note that SuSanA now has 11,000 individual members, 350 partner organisations, has been around since 12 years, has 3000 publications in its library, and nearly 500 projects in its project database – so it's a force to be reckoned with.

## Part 1.2: Structure and setup



# The Forum has seven thematic categories

Forum categories:



Health & hygiene,  
schools



Sanitation systems



Attitudes  
& behaviours



Markets, finance  
& governance



Resource recovery



Announcements  
& miscellaneous



Working groups &  
regional chapters

1. Hygiene, health, schools
2. Sanitation systems
3. Attitudes & behaviours
4. Markets, finance & governance
5. Resource recovery
6. Announcements & miscellaneous
7. Working groups & regional chapters

Four of these icons and the forum logo were redesigned in an extensive consultation process in 2014

These categories and especially the sub-categories are modified from time to time (by the moderator or the secretariat) to adapt to changing needs

## Sub-categories within Category 1: “Health and hygiene, schools and other non-household settings”



Sub-category title	Threads *
Menstrual hygiene management (MHM)	120
Health issues and connections with sanitation	115
Nutrition and WASH (including stunted growth)	99
Hygiene and hand washing	81
Schools (sanitation and hygiene in schools)	68
Research on health benefits with improved sanitation	26
Inclusion and disability	21
Other non-household settings (e.g. hospitals, health centres, prisons, train stations, offices, work places)	18

\* The number of discussion threads (or topics) is for 25 May 2019

## Sub-categories within Category 2: “Sanitation systems”



Sub-category title	Threads
Toilets with urine diversion	151
Toilets without urine diversion	149
Faecal sludge management (FSM)	221
Treatment of wastewater, sludges, organic waste, excreta	243
Public toilets, community toilets, shared toilets	50
Challenging environments, emergencies, reconstruction situations, resilience	106
Various topics of sanitation systems	141

## Sub-categories within Category 3: “Attitudes and behaviours”



Sub-category title	Threads
Behaviour change and user psychology issues	90
Capacity development	76
Community-led approaches	87
Public awareness raising	70
Wikipedia	85
Advocacy and civil society engagement	33

## Sub-categories within Category 4: “Markets, finance and governance”



Sub-category title	Threads
Market development in action	76
Sanitation as a business and business models	57
Financing: taxes, tariffs, transfers	66
Government as a driver	109
Cities (planning, implementation, and management processes)	92
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), technical standards, certifications	45
Global and regional political processes	89

## Sub-categories within Category 5: “Resource recovery”



Sub-category title	Threads
Fertiliser, soil conditioner, production of crops	83
Production of insect biomass from excreta or organic waste	14
Greywater, blackwater or wastewater reuse, irrigation	41
Resource recovery from excreta, faecal sludge or wastewater	52
Safety of reuse aspects, legislation, guidelines, policies	27

## Sub-categories within Category 6: “Announcements and miscellaneous”



Sub-category title	Threads
General announcements	404
Events and higher education programmes	446
New publications (books, articles, websites, videos)	98
Miscellaneous - any other topic	107

## Sub-categories within Category 7: “SuSanA working groups & regional chapters”



Sub-category title	Threads
Regional Chapter India	0 *
Regional Chapter West Asia and North Africa (WANA)	2
SuSanA Latinoamérica	0
One sub-category for each of the 13 working groups	130
Relevant for all working groups	7

\* Note that the sub-categories for the regional chapters are new (established in May 2019)



## Sub-categories within Category 8: “Help”

Sub-category title	Threads
Help and tips for this Discussion Forum	46
Help and tips for SuSanA website and other related tools	21
Discussions about possible improvements	19

## Activities that users can do after logging in

- **Make a Forum post**
  - Create a new thread or respond in an existing thread
  - Attach documents and photos to the post
  - Edit or delete their own Forum posts
  - Send posts to the Forum by e-mail ([posting@forum.susana.org](mailto:posting@forum.susana.org))
- **Subscribe to**
  - specific sub-categories or threads to get e-mail notifications of replies
  - the e-mail digest (and select its frequency)
- **Interact** with other users or the moderator:
  - Contact other users via the internal contacting function
  - Click on „I like this post“, increase or reduce karma points of other users
  - Report an offensive Forum post by clicking a flag below the post
- Edit their Forum profile and view the profiles of other users
- Open attachments of other people's Forum posts

## Part 1.3: History

# History of Discussion Forum and its moderation - 1

- **January 2007:** SuSanA began its life with a meeting of several organisations that were active in the sanitation sector at the GIZ office in Eschborn, Germany
  - The sustainable sanitation programme of GIZ took on the role of hosting the SuSanA secretariat with 2 full time person equivalents. This is funded by the German ministry BMZ
  - Soon after, a simple website was created by the SuSanA secretariat
- **Mid 2008:** The website was upgraded and a member-only login for the website was created (with few functionalities initially)
  - Between mid 2008 to mid 2011 the number of members grew slowly from zero to 700
- **July 2011:** The Discussion Forum was launched (see first Forum post [here](#)); this created a new incentive to take up a SuSanA login (Elisabeth von Muench was Forum moderator from mid 2011 until end of 2012 and this was funded by GIZ)
  - Since July 2011: Member numbers rise steadily, reaching 10,000 by end of 2018

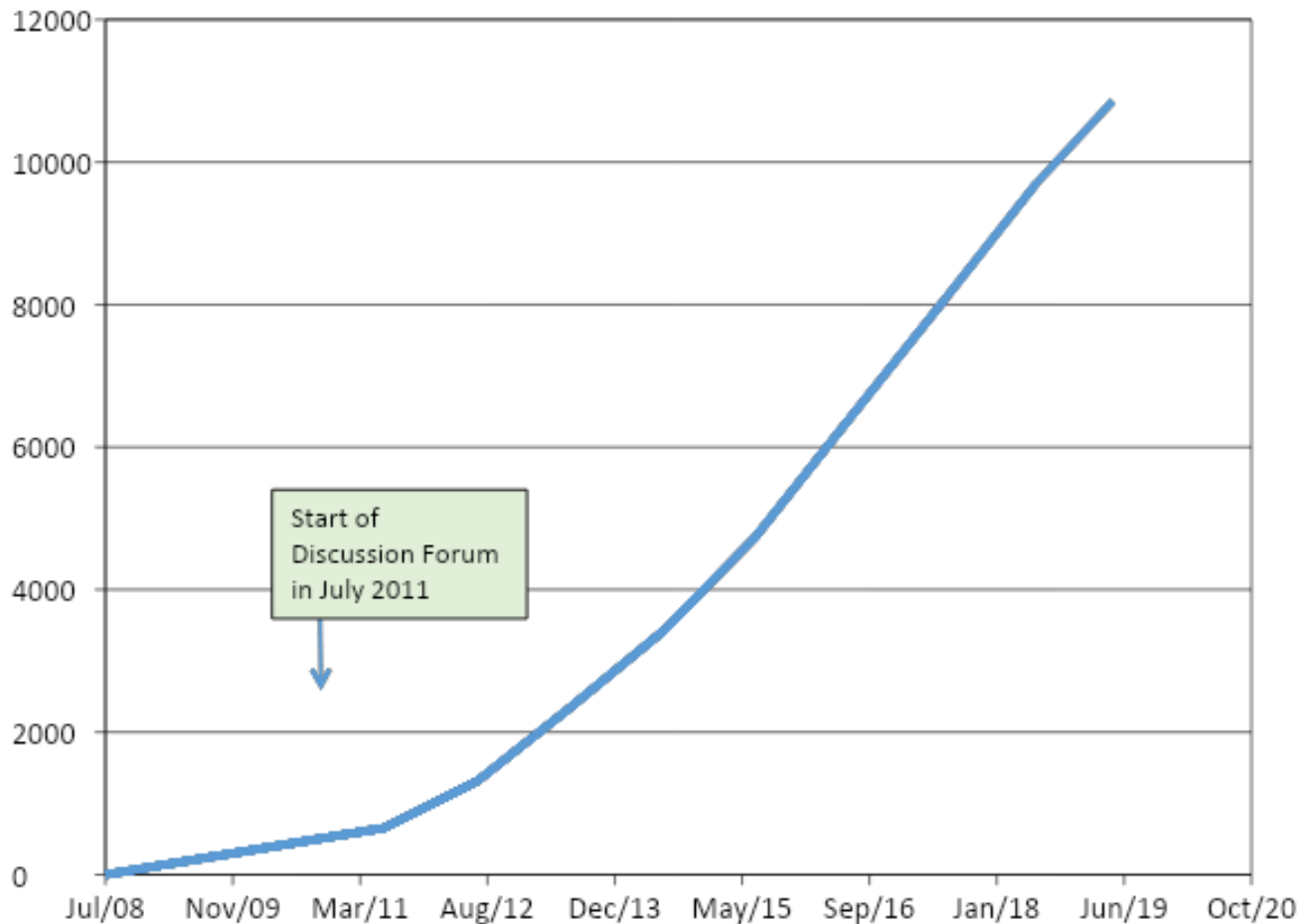
## History of Discussion Forum and its moderation - 2

- **Nov 2012 to March 2019:** The Forum moderation was mainly carried out by Elisabeth von Muench (funded by BMGF grant to SEI)
  - **Years 2013-2014:** Increased number of Forum posts per month for about two years as BMGF grantees were actively encouraged by Elisabeth to post about their research on the Forum
- **April 2017:** Forum was re-launched and upgraded to new Kunena version, style changes made to use same font and colour schemes as on website (funded by BMGF grant)
- **Sept. 2017:** Website was relaunched using a modern mega menu structure, better interlinkages with the Forum (funded by GIZ and some BMGF grant money)
- **Nov. 2018:** SuSanA members were informed on the Forum about uncertainty of future funding for moderation, and asked for suggestions ([here](#))

## History of Discussion Forum and its moderation - 3

- **April to Oct. 2019:** Elisabeth carries out Forum moderation in a reduced capacity with funding by GIZ (only “basic moderation” unlike the “active moderation” of the previous years)
- **April 2019** and ongoing: Selected organisations (mostly SuSanA partners) are being approached by the Secretariat with the proposal to take charge of Forum moderation

## Member increase over time since start of website on 26 June 2008



- When people register to use the Forum they automatically become SuSanA members, and vice versa.
- The number of SuSanA members equals the number of Forum users.

## Comments on member increase

- The launch of the Forum in mid 2011 resulted in a faster increase in SuSanA members (there were only few incentives to become a SuSanA member before the existence of the Forum)
- The member increase has been steady for the last seven years
- About 1-2% of the e-mail addresses in the member database result in bounced e-mails (these get cleaned up regularly)



## Part 1.4: Moderation (current situation)

A detailed Moderator Guide for people learning to be moderators is available in a separate presentation [here](#).

**Future** moderation options are discussed in a separate presentation (available on request)

## Why do we need Forum moderators?

- Ensure the Forum meets its goal: *“The Forum makes knowledge, ideas, and debates around sustainable sanitation accessible to everyone within the network and beyond.”*
- Ensure integrity and quality
- Encourage activity on the Forum
- Ensure positive experiences for all users
  - Ensure users adhere to the Forum rules
- Prevent take over from spammers
- Ensure ongoing improvements to IT infrastructure
- Raise profile of the Forum in the sector
- Interlink with other activities of SuSanA

## The moderators' job is to...

- ensure the users enjoy their experience on the forum
- aim for lots of high quality posts from a diverse range of people from all over the world
- help provide a friendly, fun and supportive online space
- make the forum into a “buzzing” space that everyone in the WASH sector knows about and loves

## Overview of activities of the Forum moderators (1 of 2)

- The moderators may carry out the following admin type actions on a daily basis:
  - ❑ Move posts to other categories or threads where they fit better (and moving posts that have been sent by e-mail)
  - ❑ Break long threads into two, rename thread titles
  - ❑ Delete posts (such as spam) and ban abusive users.
  - ❑ Add a moderator's comment at the end of somebody's post, marked in blue colour (e.g. adding the English translation if the post was not in English, using Google Translate)
  - ❑ Look out for any activities that break the Forum rules, including any subtle comments that might cause offense through innuendo, hidden implication or sarcasm, and then deal with those
  - ❑ Contact members about their posts or help them with any technical issues

## Overview of activities of the Forum moderators (2 of 2)

- The moderators may also get involved in content creation by:
  - making meaningful contributions
  - writing the first reply to unanswered posts to raise attention for them
  - providing links to related previous discussion threads
  - e-mailing others to encourage new contributions

## Moderation before or after a post is made?

- This Forum is moderated after posts are made by users.
  - Advantage: to allow for a more dynamic discussion, without any time delays
  - Disadvantage: There can be several hours (up to one day) delay in removing a post that has violated the rules; however member registrations are approved manually which adds a barrier against spammers
  
- Exception: Posts that are sent by e-mail to [posting@forum.susana.org](mailto:posting@forum.susana.org) are moderated before moving them into the public area

## Two types of Forum moderation: active or basic

	Active moderation	Basic moderation
Time required (for one person or split over several persons)	1.5 days per week	1 hour per business day (or 5 hours per week)
Indicative cost (based on hourly rate of 70 EUR)	44,000 EUR per year	18,000 EUR per year
Daily reading & checking of all posts, moving posts, renaming threads, tidying up	Included	Included
Ensuring all questions are answered	Included	Partially included
In-depth content inputs, innovations, changes or updates, harnessing Wikipedia and conference synergies	Included	Not included or only very limited
Skills required for Head Moderator	> 10 years in the WASH sector, very good network	> 2 years in the WASH sector, small network

## Do we currently have one or several moderators?

In the past and at present:

- Elisabeth has been the main moderator for the entire period (2012 until now) but other persons acted as co-moderators for parts of the forum for some of the time:
  - During the SEI-BMGF grant Phase 2, Dorothee Spuhler was providing some thematic forum moderation - this was related to helping BMGF grantees write about their projects on the Forum; also during that time Danijela Milosevic (Milli) made 31 forum posts under the guidance of Elisabeth - again in order to stimulate discussions about BMGF grantee projects. Both were paid for their work.
  - Nitya Jacob is coordinator for the SuSanA India Chapter and has moderator rights. He regularly acts as moderator for Thematic Discussions run by the India Chapter (he is funded for his time by India Sanitation Coalition).
  - Other people in the SuSanA Secretariat have carried out some basic Forum Moderator functions, e.g. during times when Elisabeth was absent



# Part 1.5: Funding

## Which parts of the Forum cost money?

- Time of one or several moderators; this is variable, depending on level of ambition
- Server (the same server hosts the SuSanA website and Forum; the company is called Strato and is in Germany); this is only a minor cost
- Time for ongoing IT support to fix bugs, improve user experience, upgrades to latest version when required
  - The Forum is based on Kunena software\* which is a free but we have paid IT developers Dotwerkstatt in Berlin to program several additional features (funded by GIZ and BMGF grant) – see later in this presentation for details
  - The time requires is variable, depending on level of ambition
- Optional: regular user surveys or user experience observations

\* Kunena open source communication platform extension for Joomla (Joomla is a free and open-source content management system (CMS) for publishing web content – it is used for the SuSanA website)

## Who was and is funding this Forum?

- The Forum and SuSanA website are administered by the [SuSanA secretariat](#) at the GIZ, Germany who receive funds by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to operate the SuSanA secretariat since early 2007.
  - From Nov. 2012 until Oct. 2018, [co-funding](#) for some aspects of SuSanA's work, including the Forum, was provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

# Funding options for Forum moderation in future

- Options on the table:
  - Option 1: One funder (not GIZ)
  - Option 2: Several institutional funders
  - Option 3: Individual member or crowd funded
  - Option 4a: Sliding scale membership fees
  - Option 4b: Create an independent non-profit support association
- We had a discussion about it [here](#)
- We need a mechanism with which SuSanA can receive small amounts of money, and then spend that money (for Options 2-4).
  - „Friends of SuSanA“ might be the easiest way of doing this
- Yes to volunteer moderators but they need to be under the guidance of a main (funded) moderator
  - Guidelines for co-moderators or volunteer moderators are currently being developed

## Our aspiration for forum moderation funding

- Our current outreach drive aims to find funding for one main moderator who oversees and coordinates everything; in addition we are looking for several co-moderators who would have a range of different regional or thematic focus areas and could be funded by different means.

## Part 1.6: Rules, trust and playfulness

## Common understanding about the workings of the Forum (more details [here](#))

1. The emphasis of this Forum is on individuals coming together, independent of their countries of origin the organisations that they work for. Everyone is welcome who has a personal interest. All members are welcome as equals. Members exchange experience and expertise on sustainable sanitation priorities, activities and trends.
2. Debate is to be encouraged; by contrast, offensive messages, insults, and personal attacks should never reach the public domain of the Forum and will be deleted by the moderators.
3. This Forum is not a place to promote ideological, religious, or political matters. SuSanA is under no obligation to supply any user with space to propound highly unorthodox or scientifically unsupported views.
4. We do not allow plain commercial advertising. On the other hand, we do encourage private sector participation and therefore are open to posts by people working for companies selling sanitation related products and services.
5. The Forum moderators and SuSanA secretariat are not responsible for the quality and accuracy of information posted on the Forum by SuSanA members. Users should always take anything they read on this Forum as “use at your own risk”.

## Forum rules (more details [here](#))

1. Keep all posts friendly, civil and courteous at all times (friendly debate is encouraged).
2. Try to not feel offended when another person uses wording that may sound offensive but was most likely not meant to be.
3. Do not make “one liner” or short “half sentence” posts. Do not write a post just containing the words “Thank you”.
4. Do add some basic information to your [Forum profile](#).
5. Do not resort to “thread bumping”, which is the act of posting in a thread with the sole goal of getting it back to the top of the thread list.
6. Do not post the same post to multiple categories of the Forum.
7. Do not write “off-topic” posts.
8. Do not write post about the same topic too frequently if there is no reaction whatsoever from others.
9. Do not attach documents to your posts if their copyright is not owned by you.
10. Do not post content that is plain commercial advertising. Do not link to any site that contains adult content or might otherwise be considered offensive.



## How can novices know whom to trust (more) on the Forum?

- To gain some confidence about the validity of a statement made by another user, a user can:
  - Check if the post has received any „I like this post“ badges yet (visible below the post)
  - Check if the user has more than 3 karma points (karma points for everyone are visible [here](#)); the top 100 users in terms of karma points all have more than 4 points; if anyone has negative karma points then be very cautious.
  - Check if the person who made the post has been a „featured user“ in the past (he/she will have a „featured user wreath“ showing in their profile)
  - Check the links that the user has provided in his/her Forum profile, regarding the organisation that he/she is affiliated with
  - Read other responses that have already been made in that thread
  - Write a response & ask critical questions about the statements made, e.g. ask for references

## The „featured users“ concept

- The Forum Committee\* selected a new „featured user“ every 2-3 months
- Objectives:
  - To give special recognition to a Forum member who has enriched the Forum with his or her excellent posts in the past.
  - Recognising, praising and thanking a Forum user who is doing more than his or her fair share to enrich the Forum
  - Increasing trust in that person’s statements on the Forum
  - Encourage other users to make more and better posts to also receive the status of featured user in future
- We stopped selecting featured users in June 2016 because it was quite time consuming to do, we had a shortage of candidates and felt there might be fatigue with this format. Now with a break of 3 years it could be interesting to start it up again.

\* Loose group of people consisting of moderator, secretariat and past featured users

## Featured users (2013 – 2016)

1. Kris Makowka (Uganda)
2. Doreen Mbalo (Kenya)
3. Florian Klingel (Switzerland)
4. FH Mughal (Pakistan)
5. Chris Canaday (Ecuador)
6. Ina Jurga (Germany)
7. Jonathan Parkinson (UK)
8. Cécile Laborderie (France)
9. Marijn Zandee (The Netherlands/Nepal)
10. Pawan Jha (India)
11. Sowmya Rajasekaran (India)
12. Hanns-André Pitot (Germany/Uganda)
13. Carol McCreary (USA)
14. Chen Xiangyang - Scott (China)



## Aspects of gamification (elements of play) for additional incentives to make posts

- Users can increase or decrease the „karma“ points of other users (when logged in) to pass a form of judgement; this can serve to warn other users of an unreliable member whose statement may not be that trustworthy
- Users can click on „I like this post“ (when logged in) to indicate a good post
- Users can access the [user list](#) or the [statistics page](#) and view their own and other users' statistics (number of posts, likes received, karma points) – this could create a degree of healthy competition
- Users who were featured users in the past have a clickable „featured user wreath“ in their profile
- The most active users of the week are displayed at the bottom of the „recent topics“ page with their profile pictures

## Part 1.7: Visual impressions

Forum categories:



Health & hygiene, schools



Sanitation systems



Attitudes & behaviours



Markets, finance & governance



Resource recovery



Announcements & miscellaneous



Working groups & regional chapters

Post a new topic

search ...



Forum > Recent topics

## Recent topics

Start Prev 1 2 3 4 ... 32 Next End

### Organisational Development in SuSanA – on the way to SuSanA 2.0

Category: Announcements regarding SuSanA

4  
786

Last Post  
by secretariat  
06 May 2019 11:27

### Compostable sanitary pads: a green solution in menstrual hygiene?

Category: Menstrual hygiene products (e.g. menstrual cups, washable pads, period panties)  
Topic started 04 Apr 2019 05:15, by davmax

2  
48

Last post  
by Alice  
16 May 2019 15:47

### Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) School Research Report 2019 (Zambia)

Category: Menstrual hygiene management (MHM)  
Topic started 10 Apr 2019 18:28, by Maboshe

1  
218

Last post  
by secretariat  
16 May 2019 15:36

### Updated standard set of Powerpoint slides to explain SuSanA

Category: Help and tips for SuSanA website and other related tools

4  
3495

Last post  
by secretariat  
16 May 2019 13:21

Forum front page (showing the list of recent topics)



Recent topics

Forum categories:



Health &amp; hygiene, schools



Sanitation systems



Attitudes &amp; behaviours



Markets, finance &amp; governance



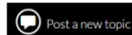
Resource recovery



Announcements &amp; miscellaneous



Working groups &amp; regional chapters



search ...



Health and hygiene, schools and other non-household settings

## Health and hygiene, schools and other non-household settings



This category contains all sanitation topics in relationship to health and hygiene. It also contains topics on sanitation for schools and other non-household settings like prisons and work places

Category

Last post

<p><b>Health issues and connections with sanitation</b> (115 topics)  </p> <p>Topics that deal with diseases caused by lack of sanitation, for example neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), can be discussed here. There is a sub-sub-category specifically for intestinal worm infections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research on health benefits with improved sanitation (26 topics)</li> <li>Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), intestinal worm infections (helminthiases) (20 topics)</li> <li>Antibiotics resistance, micro-pollutants, chemical pollution (7 topics)</li> <li>Female genital mutilation (FGM) and cutting (8 topics)</li> <li>Global guidelines on sanitation and health (WHO, 19 Nov - 18 Dec 2018, Thematic Discussion 13) (7 topics)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Water Currents: WASH and Negle...</b> by <b>campbellb</b> 07 May 2019 21:22</p>
<p><b>Nutrition and WASH (including stunted growth)</b> (99 topics) </p> <p>Links between nutrition and WASH can be discussed here, for example stunted growth in children due to lack of sanitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research on WASH &amp; Nutrition, including environmental enteropathy (29 topics)</li> <li>Advocacy and events on WASH &amp; Nutrition (22 topics)</li> <li>Implementation of WASH &amp; Nutrition (17 topics)</li> <li>BabyWASH (8 topics)</li> <li>Various thematic discussions (time bound) -1 (18 topics)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Re: Impact of WASH on Babies - Wat...</b> by <b>Alejandra</b> 11 Apr 2019 21:06</p>
<p><b>Inclusion and disability</b> (21 topics) </p> <p>Put here topics on making sanitation inclusive and accessible for all - including for people with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>Re: Toilet for Physically Challeng...</b> by <b>muench</b> 28 Nov 2018 16:00</p>
<p><b>Hygiene and hand washing</b> (81 topics)  </p> <p>Awareness campaigns and strategies related to hygiene promotion and hand washing can be discussed here. There is a separate sub-sub-category for handwashing in schools (see above).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hand washing activities at schools (12 topics)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Re: Supertowel, a substitute for s...</b> by <b>torbenholmarsen</b> 10 May 2019 10:31</p>
<p><b>Schools (sanitation and hygiene in schools)</b> (68 topics) </p> <p>In this sub-category any topic surrounding schools and sanitation &amp; hygiene can be discussed. There is a sub-sub-category on handwashing activities at schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various thematic discussions (time bound) -3 (8 topics)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Re: Paper on "Comparison of Studen...</b> by <b>secretariat</b> 29 Mar 2019 16:43</p>
<p><b>Other non-household settings (e.g. hospitals, health centres, prisons, train stations, offices, work places)</b> (18 topics) </p> <p>This section is for WASH in non-household and non-school settings. It is not meant for WASH in schools, community toilets, public toilets as these have their own sections on the forum.</p>	<p><b>Unpacking healthcare waste man...</b> by <b>rochelleholm</b> 21 Feb 2019 07:01</p>
<p><b>Menstrual hygiene management (MHM)</b> (120 topics)  </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Menstrual hygiene products (e.g. menstrual cups, washable pads, period panties) (20 topics) </li> <li>MHM in schools - A neglected issue (Thematic Discussion 12) (5 topics)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Re: Compostable sanitary pads: a g...</b> by <b>daxmax</b> 15 May 2019 09:03</p>

Example for what a page looks like after you have clicked on a category, showing the sub-categories, sub-sub categories and new posts



Wolfgang Berger



Long-term forum user

Publisher and author of a specialist book and various publications on composting toilets; owner of Berger Biotechnik since 1985; project staff of research projects;

Posts: 36  
Karma: 8  
Likes received: 21



Re: Self built Clivus Multrum toilet (Clivus Minimus)

26 Jun 2014 10:21

#9087

Dear Bogdan,

1. Galvanized sheet metal will rust by the time, caused by moisture and acids during the composting process.
2. 20 to 30 cm will fit.
3. I like your suggestions. The building and the inside facilities should be attractive, light and easy to clean. Hand cleansing and drying is a must. Is there any option for disabled visitors? Perhaps you can remind the sponsor for regarding these important aspects. Also some information for the visitors about the function of the system and the use of the compost should be displayed. I hope, you can influence your project as a model for future applications.

Best regards  
Wolfgang

Wolfgang Berger  
BERGER BIOTECHNIK GmbH  
Bogenstr. 17  
20144 Hamburg, Germany  
tel. +49(0)404397875  
fax +49(0)40437848  
This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.  
[www.berger-biotechnik.de](http://www.berger-biotechnik.de)

Reply Action Moderate

I like this post Report This

Example of a discussion thread (2 posts)

BPopov



TOPIC AUTHOR

Re: Self built Clivus Multrum toilet (Clivus Minimus)

25 Jun 2014 20:02

#9080

Dear Wolfgang!

Thank you very much for the very important suggestions! The chances that this highland toilet work OK now grew significantly 😊.

- 1) There is also another idea came what can be used for the air ducts. There is a profile used for fitting gypsum sheets made of galvanized iron. KNAUF for example makes the whole range of different sizes. [www.knauf.ua/products/suhoe-...](http://www.knauf.ua/products/suhoe-...)



# Users can fill in their profile pages

Forum > Profile

## Profile for Elisabeth von Muench (*muench*)

Edit



User Type: Admin  
Rank: Moderator

Register Date: 12 Aug 2008  
Last login: 21 Nov 2017 16:18  
Time Zone: UTC +1:00  
Local Time: 17:19

Posts: 2144  
Karma: 45  
Profile views: 488  
Like received: 624

Location: [Eschborn, Germany](#)

Message >

✉ [Ostella](#)



Dr. Elisabeth von Muench  
Independent consultant in Frankfurt, Germany  
Community manager of this forum via SEI project ([www.susana.org/en/resources/projects/details/127](http://www.susana.org/en/resources/projects/details/127))  
[elisabeth.muench@ostella.de](mailto:elisabeth.muench@ostella.de) Twitter: @EvMuench  
Sanitation Wikipedia project: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_Sanitation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Sanitation)  
E-mail: [wikipedia@susana.org](mailto:wikipedia@susana.org)

About Me:  
*Freelance consultant (former roles: program manager, lecturer, process engineer)*



## Recent Posts (2144 messages)

Start Prev 1 2 3 4 ... 215 Next End

[Strauch \(1991\) 'Pathogen Safety Zone Graph' - collated the thermal death curve of a number of enteric organisms](#) <sup>(6)</sup>

5  
165

Last post  
by [evemackinnon7](#)  
21 Nov 2017 17:16

evemackinnon7 15 Nov 2017 17:36  
Category: Container-based, mobile or bag-based toilets

- User profiles serve to introduce the user, making the Forum less anonymous
- May include links to social media and website
- Gives access to posts made by that user
- People are more likely to respond if they know something about the other person

## Integration of Forum and main website

- The Forum and main website now use the same font type and colour scheme (since Sept. 2017)
- There are numerous links from the main website to the Forum and vice versa (these linkages have been strengthened as part of the website relaunch in Sept. 2017)
  - The intention is that visitors to the main SuSanA website should not be able to overlook the existence of the Forum, and vice versa
- Forum: [Forum.susana.org](https://forum.susana.org)
- Main website: [www.susana.org](https://www.susana.org)

From front page (added advantage is that the ever-changing content helps with Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) for SuSanA website)



## Recent forum posts

The Nano Membrane Toilet (Cranfield University, UK) - latest results and publications since 2016

Reply by [muench](#) (16.05.2019) , further replies by: [AParker](#), [AParker](#)  
(total 26 replies)

Low cost upgrade, SaTo Vs ??? - for communities on the islands of lake Victoria in Tanzania

Reply by [muench](#) (16.05.2019) , further replies by: [Simonewing](#),  
(total 2 replies)

Arno's keynote speech on SBM and behaviour change

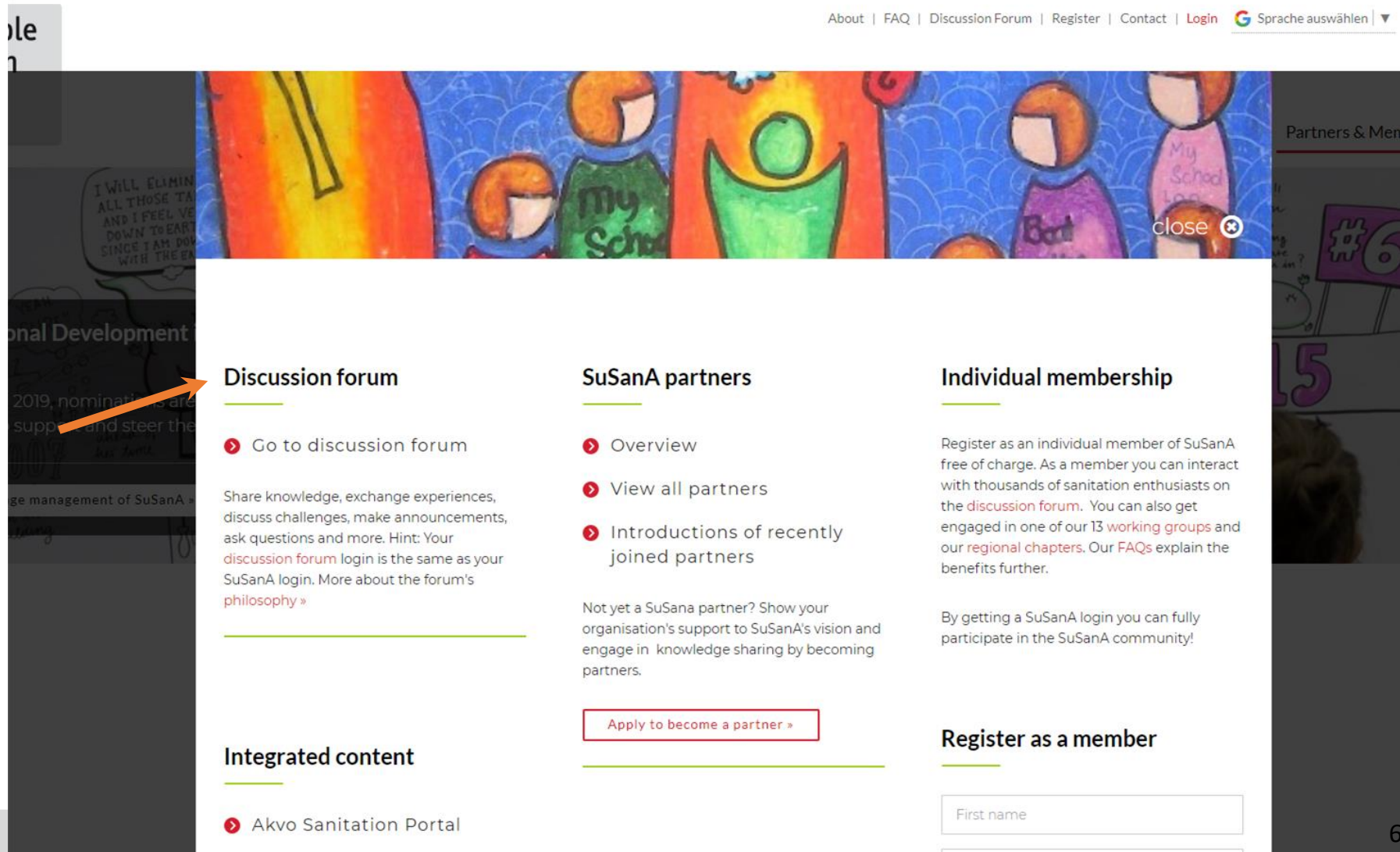
Reply by [muench](#) (16.05.2019) , further replies by: [bracken](#), [drgs](#)  
(total 7 replies)


Bio Toilet Ireland

Reply by [barryfishir](#) (15.05.2019) , further replies by: [barryfishir](#), [ToluPosh](#)  
(total 5 replies)

[Join the forum »](#)

From the mega menu page: „Partners & Members“ and also from the „News“ page



Navigation links: About | FAQ | Discussion Forum | Register | Contact | Login |  Sprache auswählen | ▼

**Discussion forum**

- Go to discussion forum

Share knowledge, exchange experiences, discuss challenges, make announcements, ask questions and more. Hint: Your [discussion forum](#) login is the same as your SuSanA login. More about the forum's [philosophy](#) »

---

**Integrated content**

- Akvo Sanitation Portal

**SuSanA partners**

- Overview
- View all partners
- Introductions of recently joined partners

Not yet a SuSanA partner? Show your organisation's support to SuSanA's vision and engage in knowledge sharing by becoming partners.

[Apply to become a partner »](#)

**Individual membership**

Register as an individual member of SuSanA free of charge. As a member you can interact with thousands of sanitation enthusiasts on the [discussion forum](#). You can also get engaged in one of our 13 [working groups](#) and our [regional chapters](#). Our [FAQs](#) explain the benefits further.

By getting a SuSanA login you can fully participate in the SuSanA community!

**Register as a member**

First name

## Part 2: Statistical information on Forum usage

Table of contents of Part 2:

2.1 [Data collected and customised within Kunena](#)  
(Forum software)

2.2 [Data collected by web analytics](#) (Piwik)

Note: The last comprehensive report about web analytics was compiled in May 2015: Statistics report to monitor SuSanA Discussion Forum and library up to 30 April 2015 Authors: Elisabeth von Muench and Danijela Milosevic (Ostella), available [here](#)

## Part 2.1: Data collected and customised within Kunena (Forum software)

- This data is collected within Kunena coupled with code and graphs written for us by Dotwerkstatt

## Statistical data available about the Forum for all to see in real time (<https://Forum.susana.org/Forum/statistics>)

- SuSanA members (total and new registrations per month)
- Posts per month
- Page actions and visits per month \*
- Number of members by country
- Most active topics by week, month and all time
- Most active users by week, month and all time \*\*
- Most active users (top 50) ranked by posts and likes received
- Likes given and received for posts: Top 50 users
- Top 100 most viewed topics
- List of Top-20 most active topics for a one-month period and all time top 100, measured by number of replies

\* These are the only two parameters in this list for which Piwik is needed; the remainder is monitored from within Kunena (custom programmed)

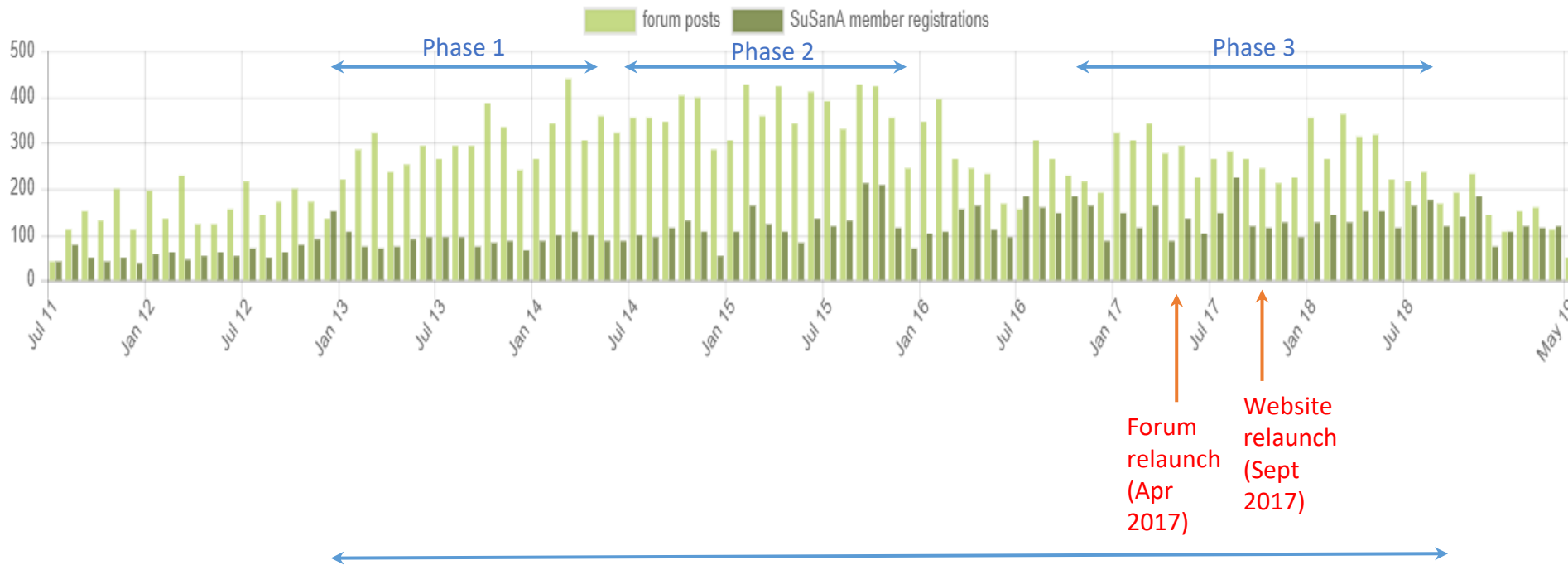
\*\* Moderator is excluded in the user statistics

## Reasons for making those statistics available for all

- Helps new users to judge how active the Forum is in general
- Helps users to find topics that were actively debated
- Users can check their own appearance in the Top 50 list which might motivated them to become more active
- Satisfy curiosity
- Observe trends



# SuSanA member registrations and Forum posts per month (2011 to mid 2019)



Additional support by BMGF (Nov 2012 – Oct 2018)

Phase 1: Nov. 2012 - Apr. 2014

Phase 2: July 2014 - Dec. 2015

Phase 3: Oct. 2016 - Oct. 2018

# Example statistics (May 2019)

List of Top-20 most active topics for a one-month period and all time top 100, measured by number of replies

#	Subject	# Replies in <span>All time</span>
1	<u><a href="#">How should we call the excreta-derived product of a composting toilet or a UDDT? Do we need a new term?</a></u> Reply by <a href="#">Tore</a> - 05.08.2016 - further replies by: <a href="#">hajo</a> , <a href="#">biosanita</a> (93 replies in January 1970 days, total 93 replies)	93
2	<u><a href="#">UDDT versus Pour Flush (with vermi-composting) versus ???: which are sustainable sanitation technologies and systems for peri-urban areas in Africa?</a></u> Reply by <a href="#">Tore</a> - 23.09.2016 - further replies by: <a href="#">christoph</a> , <a href="#">Tore</a> (93 replies in January 1970 days, total 93 replies)	93
3	<u><a href="#">Vermi-Trickling Filters (or vermifilters) for Sewage Treatment (looking for help to design).</a></u> Reply by <a href="#">joymanglani</a> - 02.12.2018 - further replies by: <a href="#">joymanglani</a> , <a href="#">BPopov</a> (74 replies in January 1970 days, total 74 replies)	74
4	<u><a href="#">The Earth Auger Toilet: Innovation in Waterless Sanitation (Fundacion In Terris, Ecuador)</a></u> Reply by <a href="#">muench</a> - 28.08.2015 - further replies by: <a href="#">chuckhenry</a> , <a href="#">vishwanathdalvi</a> (53 replies in January 1970 days, total 53 replies)	53
5	<u><a href="#">Bill Gates blog posts: This Ingenious Machine Turns Feces Into Drinking Water (Omni-processor by Janicki to process sludge) - now in Dakar, Senegal</a></u> Reply by <a href="#">muench</a> - 02.06.2017 - further replies by: <a href="#">jbe</a> , <a href="#">dmrobbins10</a> (50 replies in January 1970 days, total 50 replies)	50
6	<u><a href="#">Please help me with a global survey: how common are squatting toilets in your country?</a></u> Reply by <a href="#">zigazie</a> - 19.03.2019 - further replies by: <a href="#">BPopov</a> , <a href="#">muench</a> (50 replies in January 1970 days, total 50 replies)	50

# Example statistics (May 2019)

## Top 100 Most Viewed Topics

#	Subject	Views
1	<a href="#">Definition of ODF – Open Defecation Free (Indian government publication)</a>	63320
2	<a href="#">Gates Foundation launches several rounds of reinvent the toilet challenge (RTTC) - and RTTC fair in Seattle in August 2012</a>	51631
3	<a href="#">Grant on Advanced Toilet with On-Site Water Recovery (Eawag and EOOS, Switzerland and Austria) – Blue diversion toilet</a>	49768
4	<a href="#">new article: on unused toilets in India (why do some rural people prefer open defecation even if toilets are available)</a>	45630
5	<a href="#">Sustainable Sanitation Alliance receives grant of \$2.7 million to further develop its global knowledge platform</a>	41903
6	<a href="#">Does anyone have a good synthetic/artificial recipe of human faeces? - And information on rheological data such as viscosity</a>	41399
7	<a href="#">How should we call the excreta-derived product of a composting toilet or a UDDT? Do we need a new term?</a>	41378
8	<a href="#">The Earth Auger Toilet: urine-diverting composting toilet (Fundacion In Terris, Ecuador) - updates on progress</a>	41295



# For comparison: Popular Topics (by views) in 2014

Top 50 Most Popular Topics	Views
Hacking Toilets?!!! (sanitation hackathon, sanitation-related Apps for Smartphones)	21698
New "Technology review of UDDTs" by GIZ now published	12266
Additives for pits, septic tanks, lagoons (faecal sludge). (includes EM)	10277
What is Terra Preta Sanitation (TPS) all about? Hype or ingenious?	10178
Health guidelines and standards for pit emptiers and exhauster operators	9876
Self Sustained eToilet for households/ Urban-semi urban Public/ Community Sanitation (Eram Scientific, India)	9818
Can I send a post to the forum by e-mail?	9591
Free sanitary towels for girls in Kenya	9583
Does anyone have a good synthetic/artificial recipe of human faeces? - And information on rheological data such as viscosity	9272
Grant on Advanced Toilet with On-Site Water Recovery (Eawag and EOOS, Switzerland and Austria) – currently testing the blue diversion toilet in urban slums	9106
Faecal Sludge Management Conference, Durban South Africa, 29 - 31 October 2012 (with feedback)	8971
Festival toilets	8872
LaDePa is a faecal sludge pelletising machine in eThekweni (Durban)	8703
SuSanA-SEI webinars with BMGF grantees in 2013 (Number 1-4)	8648
The Ruby cup business idea in Kenya	8335
Black soldier fly larvae (BSFL): productive sanitation, faecal sludge management - and conference "Insects to feed the world"	7954
Sandec FSM video	7475
Using Cocopeat for Treating Septic Tank Effluent (RTI, USA - Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and other countries)	6792

# Example statistics (May 2019)

Most active users [week] [month] [all time]





csk  9  1



Doreen  3  1



campbelldb  4  0





AjitSeshadri  4  0



TNUSSP  2  2



bracken  2  1

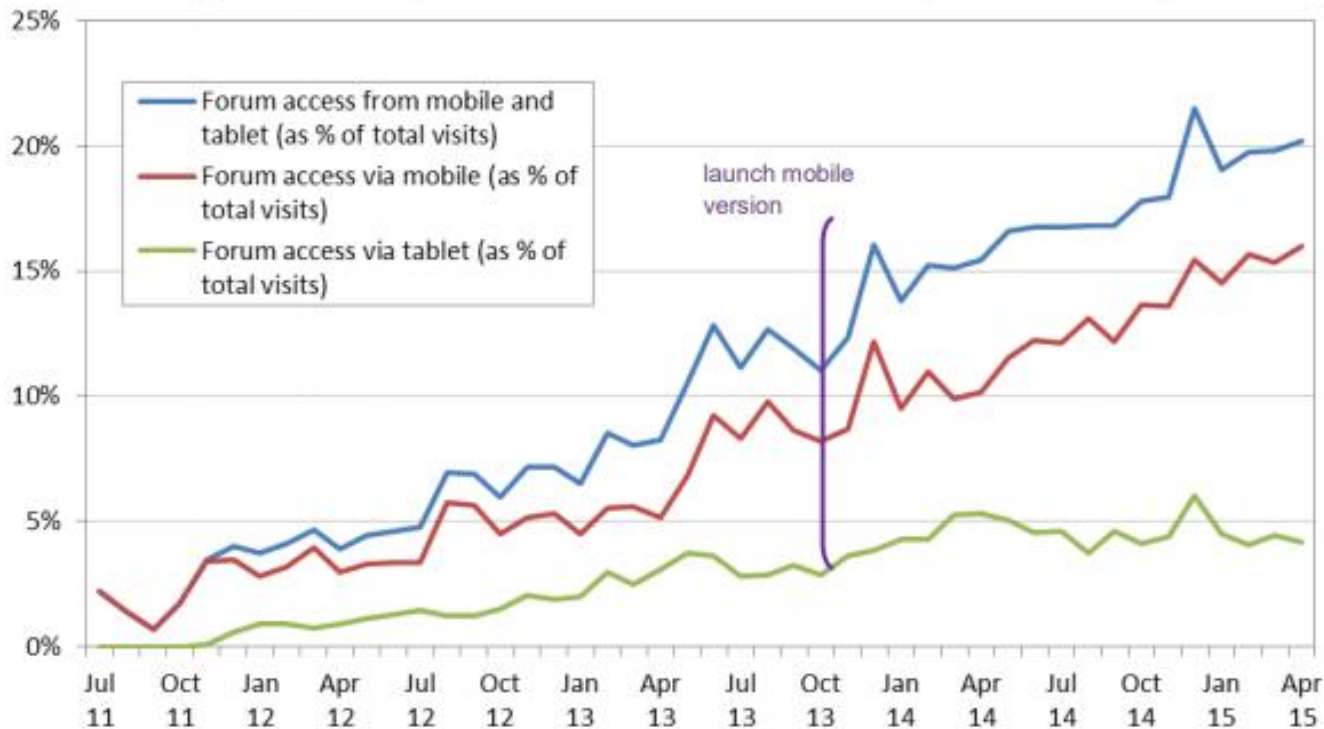
## Part 2.2: Data collected by web analytics (Piwik)

## Collecting statistical data regarding user behavior for Forum

- Up until 2014 we used Google Analytics data to collect data regarding Forum and website usage rates
- After that year, use of GA was discontinued due to concerns regarding the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) at GIZ.
- From then on, Piwik and etracker have been used instead to monitor how much the websites are used.
  - However, some parameters are monitored differently by the different analytics applications (see following slides for data comparisons over different time periods).
  - Piwik, now called Matomo, is a [free](#) and [open source web analytics](#) application.
  - Etracker is used in addition to Piwik because it has other monitoring capabilities (although we haven't fully explored those)

# Usage of Forum website via mobile devices in %

(Forum users who access the Forum from mobile devices, like mobile phones or tablets, compared to all Forum users – data until 2015)



The situation in 2019 is unknown; Piwik does not make this data available in the same way

Source: Google Analytics for SuSanA Forum  
 (http://www.google.com/analytics/). Data: 12 July 2011 – 30 April 2015  
 Taken from 2015 Statistics Report ([here](#))



## Visitor map for one month in 2019



**India** and the **United States** are the two countries where most visitors access the Forum from.

Legend:

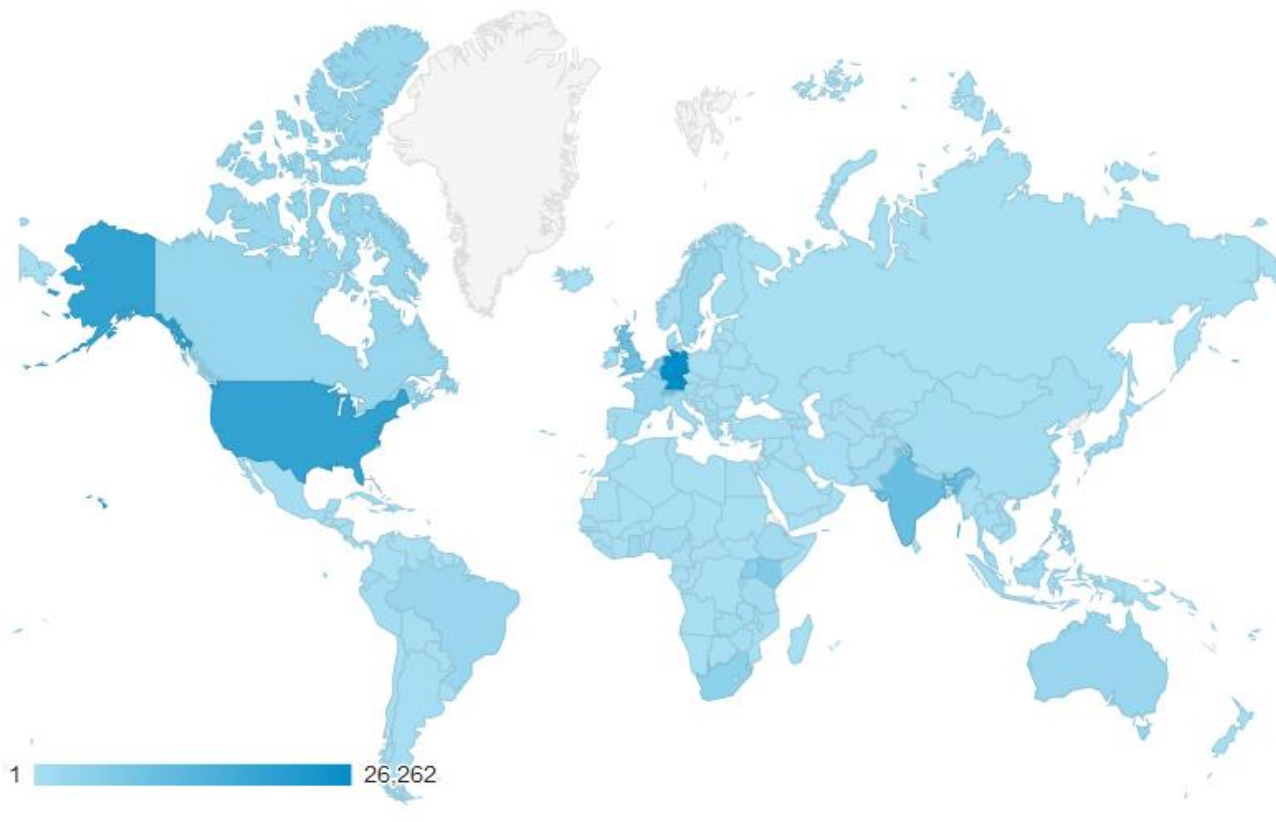
Lightest colour is 1, darkest colour is 2.1 K

Time period: One month period ending 9 May 2019

Source: Piwik for SuSanA Forum

## For comparison: Location of Forum users in 2014

- Visitors from 203 countries / territories in the past 12 months

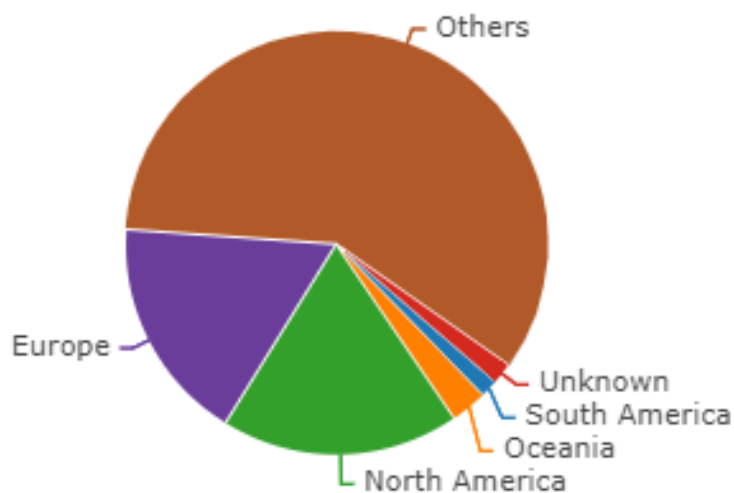


Time period: 1 June 2013 to 1 June 2014  
Source: Google Analytics

# Location of Forum visitors by region in 2019

## Continent

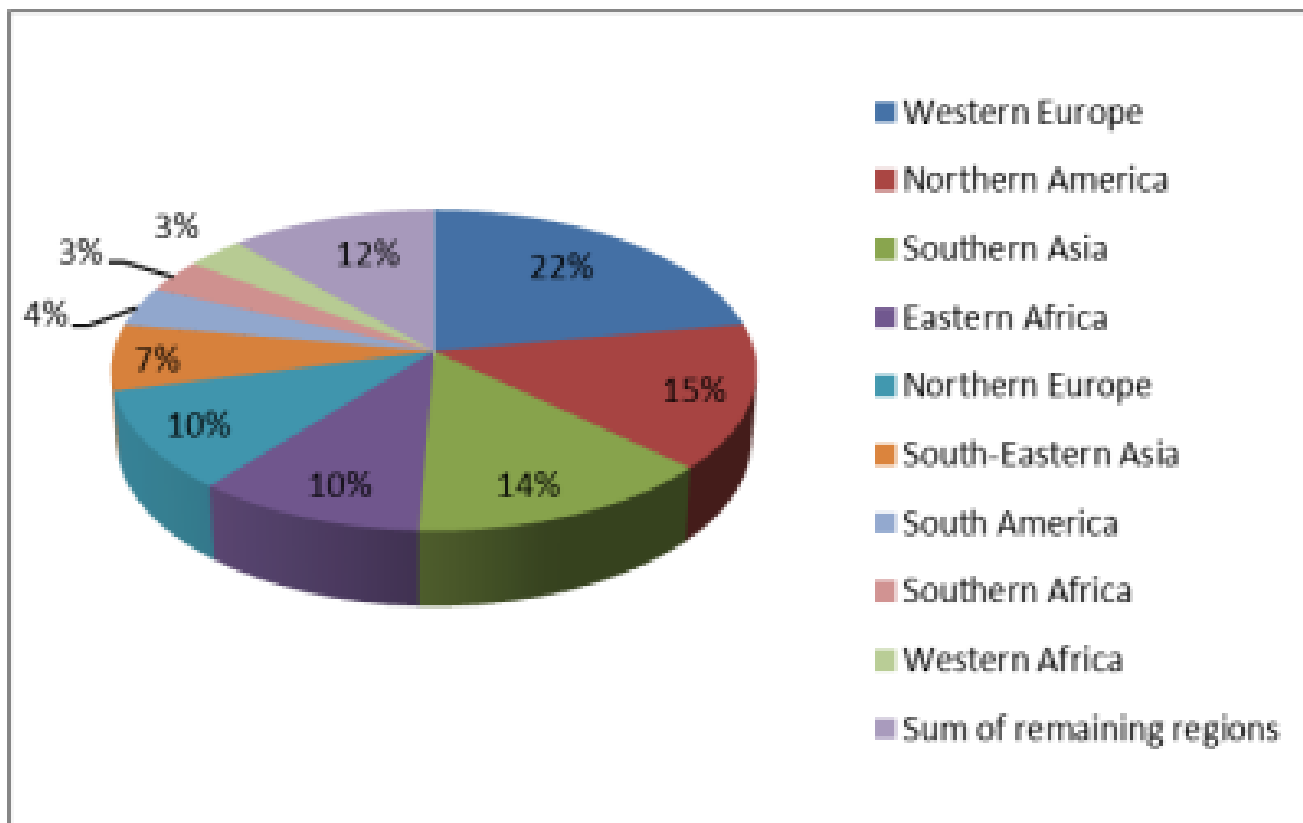
— Visits 



Europe and North America are the two biggest locations but 59% are classified by Piwik as „Others“ – making the data less useful.

Time period: 1 Year period ending 9 May 2019  
Source: Piwik for SuSanA Forum

## For comparison: Location of Forum visitors by region in 2015



Source: Google Analytics for SuSanA Forum (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>). Time period: 01 November 2014 - 30 April 2015  
 Taken from 2015 Statistics Report ([here](#))

## Figures which could be interesting to look into in future analyses

- How much the Forum gets used in comparison to the main website (views, actions, duration)
- What refers traffic to the Forum, compared to traffic to the main website
- Where do the outlinks go to (i.e. from Forum to somewhere else)
- Comparing different time periods, observing trends within the year or by comparing current year to last year

(This kind of work is time consuming though and requires some experience with website analytics)

# Forum page actions and visits per month (2011-2019)



Switch  
from GA  
to Piwik

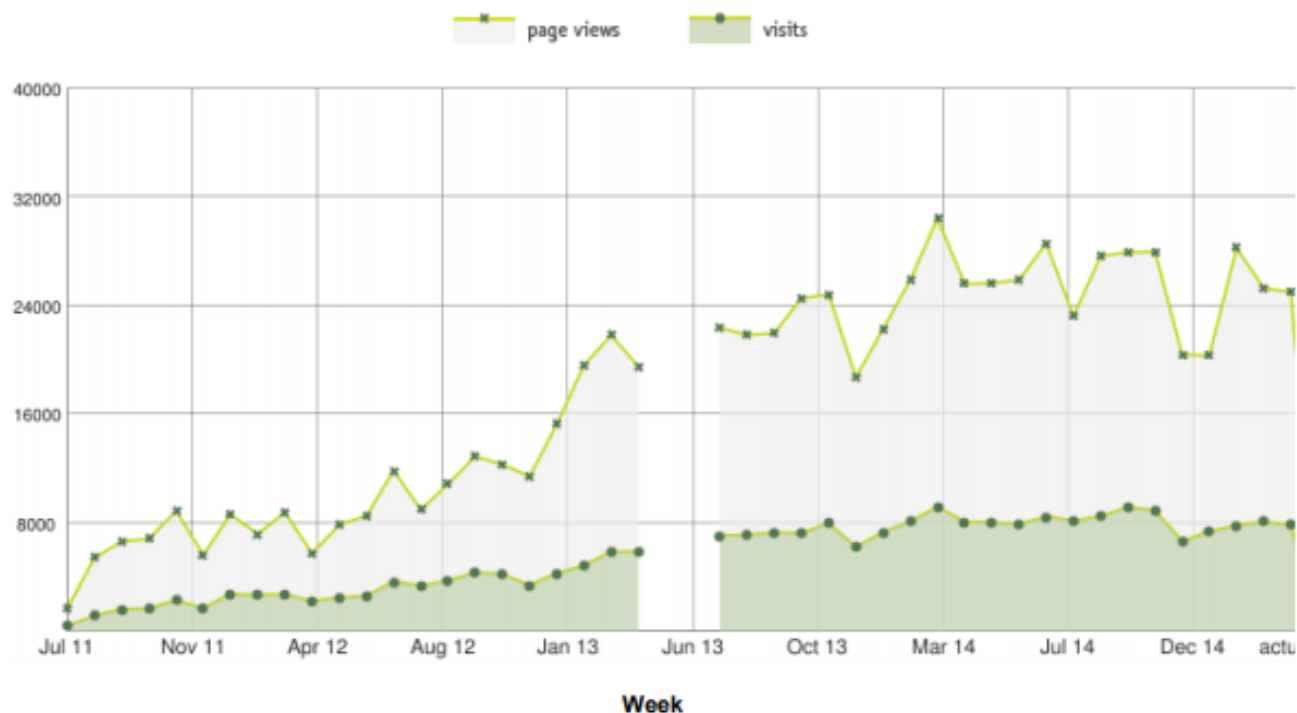
From 1 Nov 2014 onwards, the data shown here is provided by Piwik. Prior to that it was from Google Analytics. Piwik records page actions, whereas GA records page views which could introduce a small discrepancy.  
Period: 1 July 2011 – 30 April 2019

## Explanation about the definitions in Piwik

- **Page actions:** Counts any site loads, downloads, video playbacks etc. from any kind of users
- **Visits:** Value of the sum of unique users from a defined location and device within a defined time period

## For comparison: Discussion Forum – page views and visits in 2011 to 2015

- 76,762 visits to date (number of individual sessions)

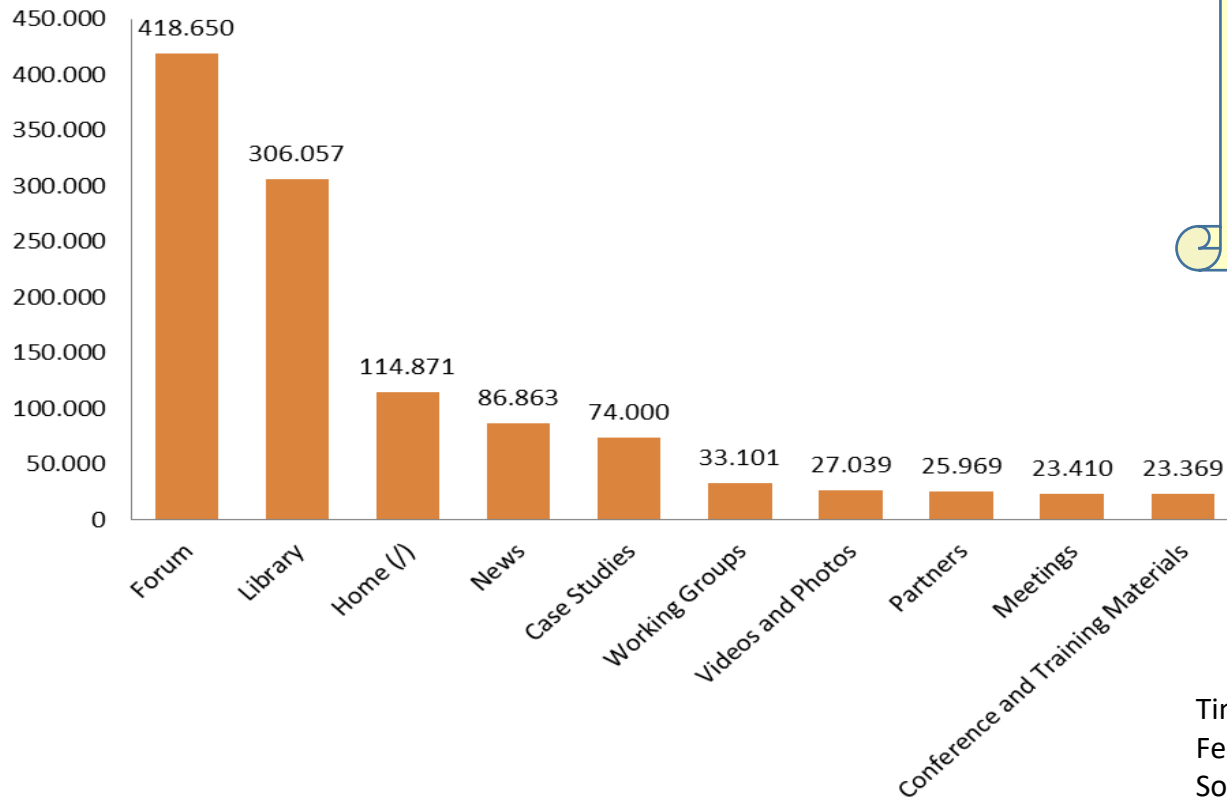


Source: Google Analytics on <http://stats.susana.org/ganalytics/> (accessed : 01 May 2015)  
 or visible for all here: <http://forum.susana.org/forum/statistics> Taken from 2015 Statistics Report ([here](#))



## For comparison: Analysis of website and Forum use in 2014

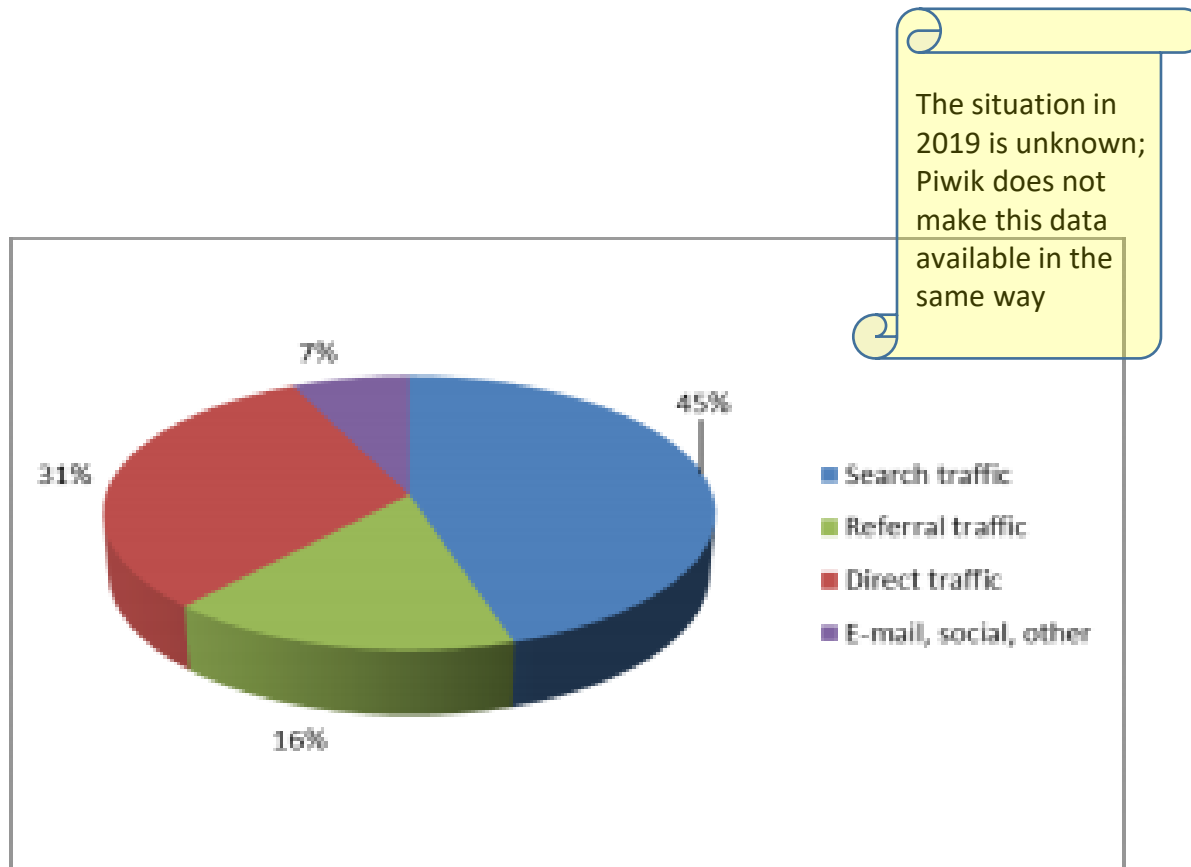
- Over 1.3 million page views
- About 22 % of visits were to the library
- Average time on website: 5:13 minutes



The situation in 2019 is unknown; Piwik does not make this data available in the same way (??)

Time period: 10 July 2010 - 28 February 2014  
Source: Google Analytics

## For comparison: sources of traffic to the Forum in 2015



Tine period: 01 November 2014 – 30 April 2015

Source: Google analytics for SuSanA Forum

(<http://www.google.com/analytics/>)

Taken from 2015 Statistics Report ([here](#))

- “Search traffic” shows visits from people who clicked to the website from a search engine result page.
- “Referral traffic” shows visits from people who clicked to the website from another website.
- “Direct traffic” visits are visits from people who used a bookmark to come to the website or who typed the site URL directly into their browser.
- “Other” includes referrals from emails, social platforms, etc.

## **Part 3: Slides to initiate discussions and debates about the future of the Forum**

Table of contents of Part 3:

3.1 [Review by consultant Sphaera in 2018](#)

3.2 [Other discussions about the future](#)

## Part 3.1: Review by consultant Sphaera in 2018

## Observations from consultants in Sept 2018 (Sphaera), 1 of 2

- *“Key informants report feeling intimidated by the critical reception that lived experience and practical knowledge receive on the Forum”*
- *„The Forum, as the primary interface between SuSanA members must become more focused on inclusive engagement, rather than exclusive moderation“ \**
- *„The Library and Forum are the primary operational interface with SuSanA members“*
- *„Forum categories/sub categories are formally defined, yet arbitrary, and centrally administered“ \*\**

\* The meaning of this statement remained unclear to us (SuSanA secretariat).

\*\* Don't understand why this is a problem, how it could be done otherwise and in which sense it is „arbitrary“

Source: SuSanA 2.0 Final Organisational & Operational Recommendations by Sphaera (Sept 2018)  
<https://www.susana.org/resources/documents/default/3-2042-16-1544196152.pdf>

## Observations from consultants in Sept 2018 (Sphaera), 2 of 2

- *The Forum focuses on moderation over engagement*
- *Some members—significantly those in emerging markets and the global south—report feeling unwelcome*
- *Because the Forum is the primary medium for dynamically engaging the members, it is unduly reliant upon the influence of a single person \* , who is unreliably funded out of a cooperation system*
- *Forum management is not subject to appropriate, structured oversight, and relies upon normative behaviours, as opposed to explicit requirements*

\* This is true, it is/was Elisabeth von Muench who was funded by the BMGF grant

Source: SuSanA 2.0 Final Organisational & Operational Recommendations by Sphaera (Sept 2018)  
<https://www.susana.org/resources/documents/default/3-2042-16-1544196152.pdf>

## Recommendations from consultants in Sept 2018 (Sphaera)

- *Shift the focus from moderation to engagement.*
- *Implement a new membership model that rewards participation with more influence; eventually distribute the moderation functions throughout the community*
- *Engage community managers with an exclusive focus on stimulating discourse, facilitating connections, and otherwise enhancing the sense of community online*

\* Reactions to these recommendations are available in the following table

Source: SuSanA 2.0 Final Organisational & Operational Recommendations by Sphaera (Sept 2018)  
<https://www.susana.org/resources/documents/default/3-2042-16-1544196152.pdf>

## Our responses to Sphaera statements about the Forum (1 of 3)

Statement from Sphaera report (Sept 2017)	Responses by Carol McCreary * (core group member) and Elisabeth (community moderator)
<p><i>The Secretariat, founders, and core group members should seek ways to increase the engagement and leadership of partners and members from emerging markets, the global south, and diverse demographics.</i></p>	<p>Carol: YES! How can the Forum do this better? Elisabeth: agree with Carol</p>
<p><i>The Forum, as the primary interface between SuSanA members must become more focused on inclusive engagement, rather than exclusive moderation.</i></p>	<p>Carol: NOT SURE What does exclusive moderation mean? Is this just clever writing? Elisabeth: agree with Carol</p>
<p><i>Implement a code of conduct for members and partners, and institute punitive measures for behaviours that are non-aligned in order to mitigate reputational risk; e.g. restrict access to Forum; strip member of membership; strip partner of partnership.</i></p>	<p>Carol: NO! Unless I'm missing something, the Forum is a very safe and civil place for people to comment and ask questions, including about all the sanitation topics that are difficult to discuss in "polite company" or even with our own families sometimes. Elisabeth: We already have this: we rarely but regularly ban people from the Forum (and cancel their SuSanA membership), usually because they are spammers but sometimes also because they persistently break the Forum rules, e.g. by posting content that is outside of the scope.</p>

\* Source: Forum post by Carol McCreary (Core group member), 30 Nov 2018

<https://Forum.susana.org/10-announcements-regarding-susana/22973-your-opportunity-to-secure-and-shape-the-future-of-the-discussion-Forum?limitstart=0#26620>



## Responses to Sphaera statements about the Forum (2 of 3)

Statement from Sphaera report (Sept 2017)	Responses by Carol McCreary * (core group member) and Elisabeth (community moderator)
<p><i>The Library and Forum are the primary operational interface with SuSanA members.</i></p>	<p>Carol: NOT SURE Now that so many documents are findable with a Google search, I wonder if the Forum has not become the key interface with and among members.</p> <p>Elisabeth: Yes but they can only be found by Google if they are online. The SuSanA library often is the first place to put something online. I agree that the library and Forum are very important to SuSanA members.</p>
<p><i><u>Recommendation:</u> Shift the focus from moderation to engagement.</i></p>	<p>Carol: INTERESTING. I'm not sure it requires a shift. Community engagement is all important but it takes superb moderation to leverage it.</p> <p>Elisabeth: Agree with Carol.</p>
<p><i><u>Recommendation:</u> Implement a new membership model that rewards participation with more influence</i></p>	<p>Carol: NOT SURE</p> <p>Elisabeth: This is already the case as people who participate a lot can automatically influence SuSanA more</p>

## Responses to Sphaera statements about the Forum (3 of 3)

Statement from Sphaera report (Sept 2017)	Responses by Carol McCreary * (core group member) and Elisabeth (community moderator)
<p><i><u>Recommendation:</u> Eventually distribute the moderation functions throughout the community.</i></p>	<p>Carol: OKAY            Elisabeth: Yes, we can work towards that but it's easier said than done. The whole community cannot be moderators but yes, more than one moderator could be put in place.</p>
<p><i><u>Recommendation:</u> Engage community managers with an exclusive focus on stimulating discourse, facilitating connections, and otherwise enhancing the sense of community online.</i></p>	<p>Carol: GOOD! Community engagement could refer to practitioners of similar technologies and/or of geographic and linguistic groupings. These communities could organize, communicate on the Forum and also initiate their own meetings using simple, transparent, free or low cost conferencing software, such as Zoom. I like the idea of volunteer community moderators and hope we will have "simple guidelines for the volunteer moderators so we could improve our support to Discussion Forum."            Elisabeth: OK so the emphasis is on plural, i.e. several community managers rather than one. Yes we can work towards that but I think one person would have to oversee the process.</p>

## Part 3.2: Other discussions about the future

## Analysis of challenges of the Forum (1 of 3)

Challenge, problem or shortcoming	Solution
<p>People might be scared &amp; embarrassed to ask stupid questions or to be judged by current or future employers for remarks that they make (for example employees of GIZ or consultants); they might also not like to talk about projects, or aspects of the projects that failed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This cannot be overcome without changing the broader culture within organisations and the sector.</li> <li>• The activities around the „Learning from Failure“ approach will help, see e.g. <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Some people have asked if the Forum is for WASH in general or only for sanitation and hygiene topics. They did not want to post about their WASH projects because they were not sure if that would be welcome.</p>	<p>Strengthen the branding information to state that our focus is on sanitation but posts about broader WASH topics are also welcome; possible alternative: rebrand towards more water supply topics</p>
<p>Most of the SuSanA core group members are not actively using the Forum</p>	<p>Continue to promote using the Forum amongst the core group members; there are broader issues with the core group (too large, too non-committal?)</p>
<p>A few people might be dominating the forum and posting too often (one of them could be the main moderator, Elisabeth von Muench, but in the past we also had a few others (those have gone quiet now))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderators have to be mindful to not post too often or too fast on a given day.</li> <li>• The moderators can e-mail any “hyperactive” posters and gently warn them that they might be posting too often (this is not really a problem if the posts are high quality and helpful)</li> </ul>

## Analysis of challenges of the Forum (2 of 3)

Challenge, problem or shortcoming	Solution
<p>Some countries and regions are underrepresented in the posts, usually due to English not being the dominant first or second language there (e.g. Latin America, WANA, China, Japan, Russia, ...)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new SuSanA WANA and Latin America chapter coordinators can motivate new people to use the Forum. We might implement the option of writing in Arabic script in future. Continue the outreach particularly to important countries like China and Brazil etc.</li> <li>• Continue to advertise the translation options available through Google Translate plug-in</li> </ul>
<p>Great number of „lurkers“, low number of active posters (this number seems to be even shrinking)</p>	<p>This is common for many online spaces (the <a href="#">90:9:1 rule</a> applies); lurkers still have benefits from reading but it's hard for us to measure any impact</p>
<p>Forum posts, page actions and visits are declining since about January 2019 (see <a href="#">here</a>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no easy solution for this. It might reflect the lower activity levels of the community moderator due to the end of funding by BMGF.</li> <li>• It could be that the quality of posts have increased, some hyper-active users have moved on, and a lot of content can already be found simply by reading the Forum without a need to actually make a post and asking questions.</li> </ul>

## Analysis of challenges of the Forum (3 of 3)

Challenge, problem or shortcoming	Solution
The editor in Kunena is not a WYSIWYG editor („what you see is what you get“) which some people find rather confusing	Future versions of Kunena are likely to address this; we can just sit back and wait but will have to upgrade to the new version when it is available *
Sometimes spam or advertising posts sometimes stay on the Forum long enough to make it into the Forum e-mail digest which is sub-optimal.	Ensure there are more active moderators (from different time zones) who catch such spam posts early and delete them ASAP.

## Looking into the future: IT aspects

- Creation of an App for the Forum?
- Give Forum icon on mobile phone little red numbers to indicate number of new posts
- Enabling posts in languages that have different characters, e.g. Arabic (request from WANA chapter); this is technically possible but we need some IT time to program the e-mail digest in a sensible way
- It could be useful to commission someone with experience to interpret the analytical data about usage behaviour which we are collecting via Piwik and eTracker - compare with last detailed Statistics Report from 2015 ([here](#))

## Looking into the future: Topic aspects

- Reaching out more to non-English speaking SuSanA members to encourage them to take part, using the embedded Google Translate function
- More thematic discussions (time-bound) but perhaps with different format
- More “community engagement” (whatever that means?)
- Broaden the scope to more openly invite WASH topics, not just sanitation & hygiene, or decide to stick to the relatively narrow scope?



## Looking into the future: Funding aspects

- Discussion about funding of Forum moderation in future is included in the Section on “Funding” in this presentation, see [here](#)
- The Forum funding discussion is linked to the organisational development discussion for SuSanA as a whole (see [here](#))
- We need a mechanism with which SuSanA can receive money, and then spend that money
  - Establishing a „Friends of SuSanA“ NGO or club might be the easiest way of doing this



# Appendix

Forum software update in March 2017

## About the Forum software update in April 2017

- ***The Forum software (Kunena) and Content Management System (Joomla) was upgraded to the most recent version of this open source software and the customized features were re-programmed in the new version***
  - ***Achieved:*** The new Kunena in an actual Joomla CMS has been installed and configured. The Forum website was running on an 8 years old open source CMS software Joomla 1.5.x with the free Forum component/extension Kunena in version 1.7.0. Over the years the core files of the CMS and Kunena component had been modified with own code to implement new functions the systems were not providing (see next slide for details).

Source: Final report to BMGF about SEI-SuSanA project, available [here](#)

## Custom-made functions by Dotwerkstatt which were added to Kunena code (as of April 2017)

- Highlighted discussion threads
- Send user message (e-mail) directly from thread list
- “Likes” instead of “thank you” system
- E-mail digest of new Forum posts
- Create, program own Forum and user statistics
- Connections to the mother website and member administration, user registration, change details and password reset function for users
- Connections to mother website module for showing recent posts (start page), last post in categories (working groups) and any posts (MENA, Indian chapter)
- Support Arabic language inside post titles and messages besides the system still running in English
- Sending posts by e-mail function

⚠ Remember that when we do another Kunena update in future, these functions again have to be adjusted / re-installed, and somebody has to pay for someone’s time to do so.

For more details see [here](#) (short report by Steffen Eißer)

Last updated by Elisabeth von Muench, consultant to GIZ  
Reviewed by Franziska Volk, SuSanA Secretariat, GIZ  
Date: 15 October 2019