![HELVETAS]

CAPABILITY STATEMENT

Where there is a lot to learn, movement and play should not be missing, as an integral part of an active teaching and learning pedagogy © Helvetas/Christian Bobst

BASIC EDUCATION

SUMMARY

Beyond its contribution to economic development as the foundation for any professional skills development, education is a human right and a key factor of social cohesion and peaceful governance. However, basic education is often undermined by a scarcity of resources, an inappropriate teaching workforce, and difficulties in including the most vulnerable, especially those affected by intersectional discriminations.

This document presents how Helvetas supports education ecosystems with its unique mix of expertise. It describes our approaches: second chance schools, bridging and catch-up programs, education for children and young people on the move, education in emergencies in protracted crisis, teacher training innovations, environmental education and peace education. A selection of our programs illustrates our know how and added-value.

ABOUT HELVETAS

Helvetas is committed to a just world in which all men and women determine the course of their lives in dignity and security, using environmental resources in a sustainable manner. Helvetas is an independent organization for development based in Switzerland with affiliated organizations in Germany and the United States. Helvetas supports poor and disadvantaged women, men and communities in about thirty developing and transition countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

HOW WE WORK

We support women and men in taking charge of improving their livelihoods in a sustainable manner and in working together as partners. The impact of our work is the product of a three-pronged approach: project work, thematic and methodological advice as well as policy dialogue at local, regional and international levels.

We are convinced that development can only be effective if the conditions of long-term engagement are met. We have gained a wealth of experience from more than six decades of working in the Global South.

ABOUT OUR WORK IN BASIC EDUCATION

Why basic education?

Beyond its contribution to economic development as the foundation for any professional skills development, education is a human right and a key factor of social cohesion and peaceful governance.

Basic education refers to the fundamental learning that individuals require to function effectively in society. It encompasses foundational skills like literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking. While often associated with formal schooling for children in primary and lower secondary levels, it extends beyond these boundaries. Basic education includes various service delivery models such as non-formal and informal education, tailored education for migrants, learning in emergency situations, and reaches diverse populations including children, youth, adults, those out of school, migrants, ethnic groups, and disadvantaged individuals.

Global challenges for basic education

Basic education is often undermined by a scarcity of resources, an inappropriate teaching workforce, and difficulties in including the most vulnerable, especially those affected by intersectional discriminations.

Even though enrolment in basic education has strongly progressed in recent decades, the **global out-of-school population** of primary and secondary school age stayed at 244 million in 2021. Since 2015, the out-of-school population in sub-Saharan Africa has even grown by 12 million.

Between 2015 and 2021, **global completion rates** increased from 85% to 87% in primary, and from 74% to 77% in lower secondary school. Sub-Saharan Africa remains well below the global average, by more than 20 percentage points in primary (64%) and by almost 30 percentage points in lower secondary (45%). (UNESCO, GEM report, 2023)

Even before COVID-19, the world was facing a **learning crisis**, with nearly 6 out of 10 ten-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries suffering from learning poverty. These children were unable to read and understand even a simple story. Estimations based on the latest available data and evidence indicate that the pandemic has likely caused a sharp increase in global learning poverty, from about 60 to an estimated 70 percent of ten-year olds in low- and middle-income countries. (UNICEF, The State of Global Learning Poverty: 2022 Update, 2023).

Finally, **illiteracy** remains widespread in many countries, especially among women. In 18 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, over half of adult women (25-64 year-old) cannot read. Progress has either stalled at very low levels as in Mali, where less than 17% can read, or been slow as in Congo, which has improved from 72% to 74% over ten years (Education progress, UNESCO, 2023).

Basic education and the continuum between Skills, Jobs and Income (SJI)

Basic education and skills development can make a significant contribution to poverty reduction through personal and economic empowerment, workforce development and improved quality and conditions in education systems. Private sector development activities strengthen market systems, contribute to green economic growth and create jobs for youth and disadvantaged groups.

The impact hypothesis of our working area presented in Figure 1 is a simplified depiction of the change process of SJI interventions.
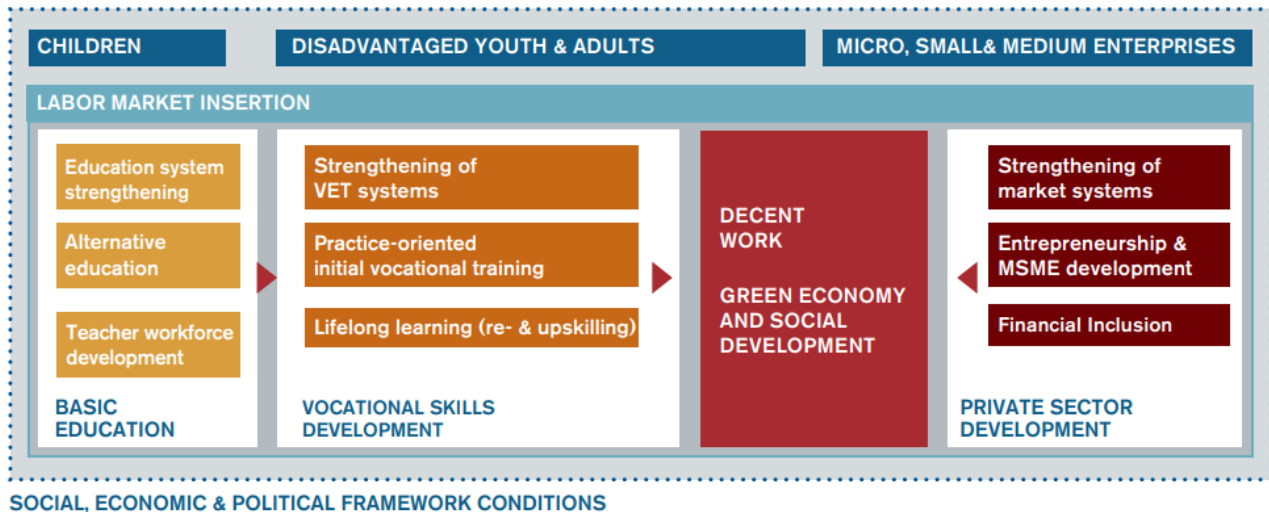

Figure 1: SJI strategy in a nutshell

Inclusive system approach in Basic Education

Helvetas focuses mainly on flexible and cost-effective education services: education alternatives for out-of-school children, the integration of migrants into existing education systems, catch-up of foundation skills in VSD, and the provision of education in emergency situations This entails collaborating with local stakeholders, contributing to the development of the teaching workforce, striving for systemic change, and promoting digital learning.

Our work is based on the Inclusive Systems Approach (ISA) – inspired by the Market Systems Development (MSD) approach. Adapted to education, it means understanding learning and teaching as a system consisting of a demand for and supply of knowledge and skills.

If the core function can usually be described as a transaction between a teacher and students in a classroom, it can also encompass digital remote or blended learning peer-to-peer support, tutoring and community intergenerational learning. To make this happen, a wide range of actors need to provide supporting functions and related policies. (cf. figure 2).

In each context, we first identify the actors involved in these different functions and clarify who does what and who pays for it. Then we can imagine what the project will contribute to, avoiding direct intervention wherever possible. Above all, we gradually build a shared vision of a more efficient and sustainable way of working for the different functions, reducing dependency on external players and funding, and focusing on real scaling up to meet needs.
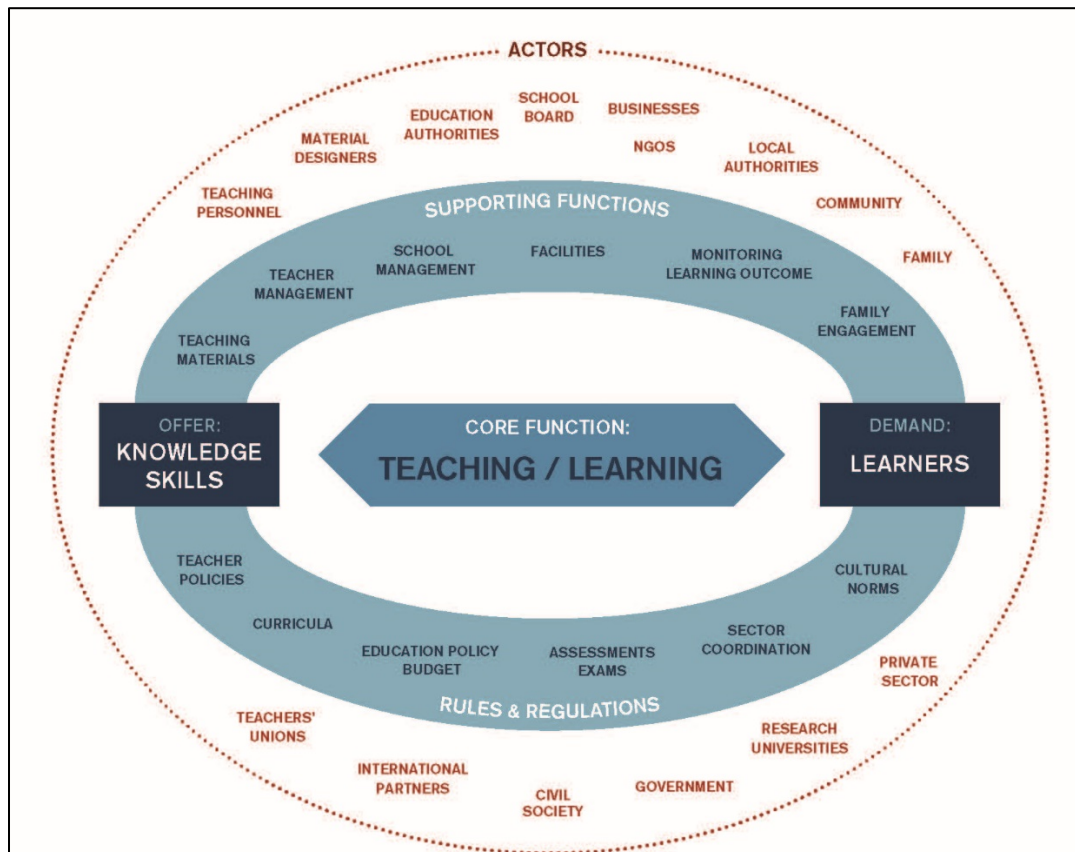
Figure 2: Education ecosystem

Our practice follows three core principles, which are 1) a clear vision for sustainable and scalable change, 2) a deep understanding of the system, 3) a commitment to put local partners into the lead. The latter uses a facilitative approach that emphasizes local ownership of the change processes. This idea is at the heart of Helvetas' work in designing and implementing programs.

In this way, we strive to encourage existing systems to become more inclusive (e.g., education for migrants), contribute to policy change (e.g., second chance programs), support the nexus between humanitarian and development work, and strengthen the link between education, VET, and labor markets.

Helvetas' unique mix of expertise

Making the best of its wide range of expertise ranging from VET and private system development to inclusive finance, climate change, migration and conflict transformation, Helvetas has the capacity to think "outside the education box" and to inspire innovative approaches.
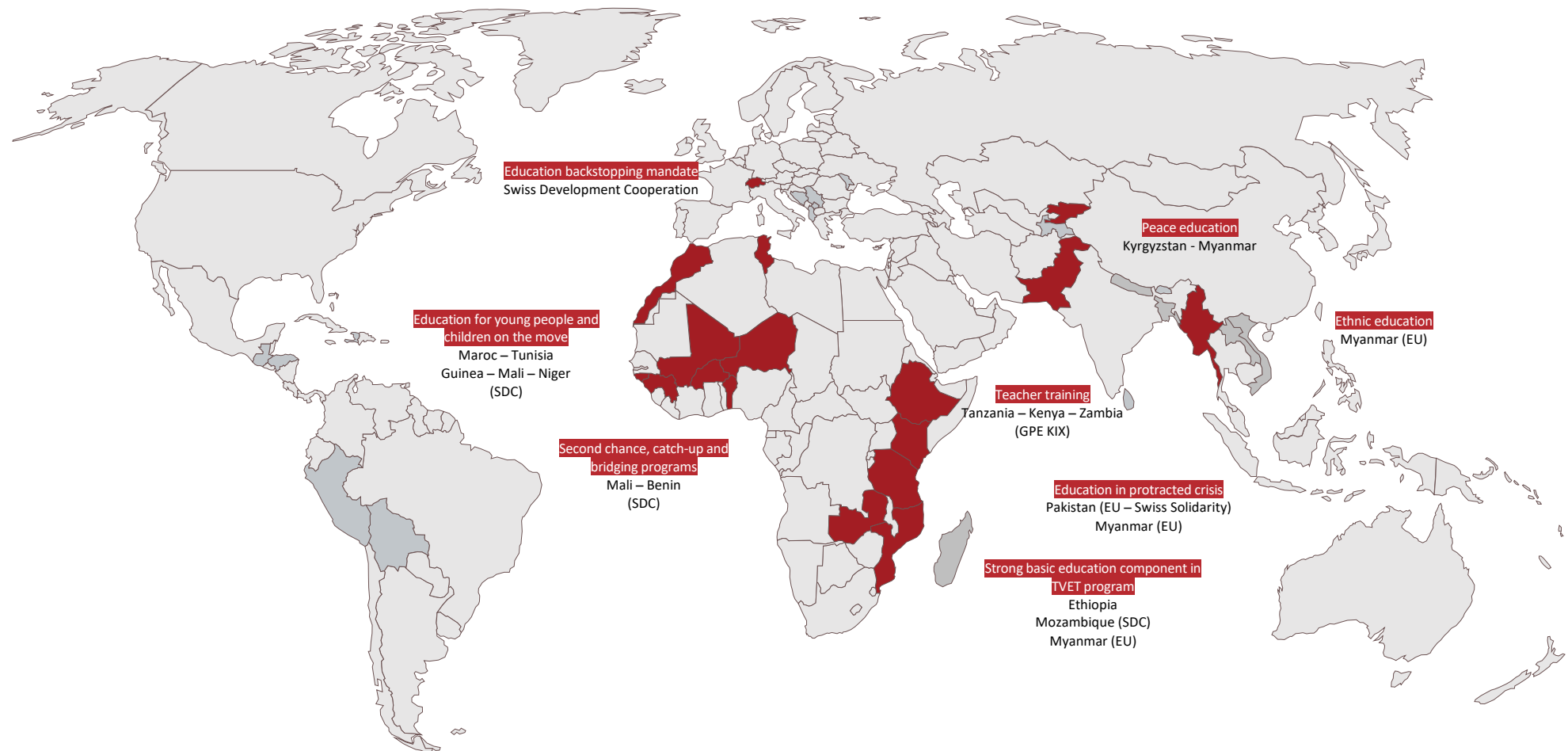
Our expertise in the VET sector enables us to adapt results-based funding mechanisms to basic education. We are considering how non-formal education providers could be contracted on a results-based basis.

We are also seeing how the market systems approach can inspire self-sustaining business models for developing and disseminating learning materials. This is at the heart of our partnership with Zabai, our digital learning partner in Myanmar.

We already have fruitful partnerships with the private sector actors to promote early career orientation in our non-formal education programs. We ambition to go further and experiment with the introduction of entrepreneurship training and financial education into basic education, including for teachers.

Based on the same kind of corporate complementarity, our approaches to environmental education, education for migrants and peace education are also described in the next section.

Education backstopping mandate
Swiss Development Cooperation

Peace education
Kyrgyzstan - Myanmar

Education for young people and children on the move
Maroc – Tunisia
Guinea – Mali – Niger
(SDC)

Ethnic education
Myanmar (EU)

Teacher training
Tanzania – Kenya – Zambia
(GPE KIX)

Second chance, catch-up and bridging programs
Mali – Benin
(SDC)

Education in protracted crisis
Pakistan (EU – Swiss Solidarity)
Myanmar (EU)

Strong basic education component in TVET program
Ethiopia
Mozambique (SDC)
Myanmar (EU)

PAEFE project in Benin ensures basic education for out-of-schools children © Helvetas/Stephane Brabant

Second chance programs

Learners with incomplete basic education are excluded from the formal education and training system and often don't know what jobs are available to them. Therefore, they only have access to low-skilled and precarious work, associated with risks of child labour, social stigmatization and severe poverty.

Second chance programmes (from one to several years) allow learners to develop foundational skills and to have the opportunity to transit to VET, general post-secondary education, or to access decent jobs.

In Benin, PAEFE III (funded by SDC) facilitates implementation of bilingual, non-formal basic education adapted to the local context for excluded children. This enables the transition of graduates into the formal education system or VET.

Catch-up and bridging programs

Because of poor quality compulsory education, many learners who enter VSD lack some foundational skills. VSD providers may not be prepared to compensate for these gaps. Catch-up modules can strengthen foundational skills as a part of VSD training. In Mozambique (SIM! project), we partner with the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB), the Ministry of Education and local alphabetization centres to deliver short literacy and numeracy training, directly in the workplaces.

In Ethiopia, the UP-Women project integrates functional adult literacy with vocational and life skills training to empower girls and young women.

In Myanmar (SCORE project) we foster collaboration between the Private TVET Association and local non formal education providers. This has led to the design of tailor-made bridge programs and the introduction of pre-vocational and employability skills into the curricula.

Group discussion during a training of trainers' workshop (Myanmar) © Helvetas/Peter Schmidt

The EJM project aims at supporting local education to integrate young and children on the move, regardless of their nationality or administrative status © EJM project

Education for young people and children on the move

In West and North African countries, inclusive education faces hurdles due to the mobility of children and youth. Challenges arise on both the demand and supply sides. On the demand side, young migrants may lack the time, desire or resources for education. On the supply side, despite efforts to be inclusive, systems often fall short due to capacity constraints. Bridging these gaps involves influencing demand (e.g., persuading migrants to delay departure for schooling), adapting supply (e.g., flexible schedules), and tailoring integration measures (e.g., language courses). Beyond local efforts, the goal is systemic change, integrating mobility considerations into policies and strategies for sustainable inclusion. It is hoped that these considerations will eventually become as mainstream as gender issues, the inclusion of people with special needs, and more recently, mobile populations such as nomads, refugees, and internally displaced persons.

Education in emergencies and protracted crisis

Education faces immense challenges to access and quality learning in conflict-affected regions such as the Sahel, Pakistan hosting Afghan refugees, and post-coup Myanmar.

The protracted nature of these crises shows the need for new approaches based on the nexus between humanitarian and development strategies.

In Myanmar, we are seeking to work with local legitimate education authorities (including ethnic authorities) to find long-term solutions to fund the operationof temporary learning centers, to manage their teacher workforce and to up-scale our digital learning experience.

In Pakistan, the HR Afghan Community project contributed to provide education for Afghan refugees (see also next section) © Helvetas

The 9 Main Elements of Inclusive School-based In-service Teacher Training (SITT)

Teacher training innovation

Teacher training is essential to equip educators with the skills, pedagogy and tools they need to engage students effectively, adapt to diverse learning needs and create an environment conducive to learning.

One of our longest-running and most effective interventions in this area is the School Based In-Service Teacher Training (SITT) implemented with the Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU): it focus on the use of practical examples and the active involvement of children. Encouraging teacher collaboration through team teaching, peer learning and model lessons is a key element of the strategy.

A recent impact evaluation, led by Bern University, showed that the approach is highly valued by teachers and policymakers, and that pupils achieve significantly better results than their peers.

Conflict sensitivity and peace education

In our education projects in Myanmar, inclusivity and conflict sensitivity are deeply embedded. For example, a number of projects include elements of ethnic inclusion, such as building on ethnic Chin networks for tutoring (Co-LEARN project) or seeking to build bridges by bringing together youth from different ethnic groups (S4RR project in Rakhine). We have also developed a "Pluralism Toolbox" which provides thematic and technical guidance to education practitioners, civil society organizations and local businesses on how to promote social cohesion.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Youth United for Future project aims to build the capacity of young people and adults to engage in constructive communication and participatory work, and ultimately to develop practices to enhance peaceful public discourse through exchanges on religion and democracy at the local level.

Collaborative game as way to foster social cohesion during a training of trainers in Kyrgyzstan © Helvetas

In Burkina Faso's Blue schools, children bring their new knowledge about water and environment home to their families © Helvetas/Nomwinde Sawadogo

Blue schools and environmental education

Since 2009, Helvetas has been promoting the concept of "blue schools" in several countries:
- Pupils and teachers make the link between different water uses, the environment and health through activities such as gardening, reforestation and tree nurseries.
- Basic health and sanitation infrastructure and equipment are in place and properly maintained.
- Access to drinking water is improved through simple technologies and local construction and repair.
This is generally a component of wider WASH or environmental projects.

In Tanzania, the SITT program (see above) integrates climate-related themes and issues into teaching and learning materials. Environmental education is put into practice in the schoolyard, while communities are invited to contribute to the greening of the school and village environment.

PAEFE III, BENIN

Client/Funding Source	Swiss Development Cooperation
Key Partners	Ministries in charge of Education and VSD, local authorities, local NGOs Solidar Suisse
Duration	2013- 25 (currently 3rd phase)
Volume	CHF 9,25 Mio (3rd phase, 4,3 Mio as direct management)

Programme d'Appui à l'Education et à la Formation des Enfants exclus du système éducatif au Bénin (Second chance education)

In its 3rd phase 2021-2025 PAEFE's objective is to support the implementation of education and training offers adapted to the socio-economic realities for 9-15 year olds excluded from the education system. This project has three outcomes:

a) The development of quality, inclusive and sustainable bilingual alternative education inclusive and sustainable for children excluded from the formal education system
b) Decentralized actors participate in the implementation of alternative education
c) Public and private players strengthen the institutional anchoring of alternative education services by mobilizing resources to ensure effective scale-up

Young girls studying in groups (PAEFE, Benin) © Helvetas/Stephane Brabant

Results

Results of phase 1 and 2:

- More than 10,000 children accessed to alternative education services
- 23% increase in reading scores in local language
- 14% decrease of children wishing to work in the agricultural sector
- Partnership with local private sector to facilitate discovery of local trades

Results of current phase 3

- 5,000 + children accessed the programme in 119 centers
- Expansion of teachers and education personnel training (300+ and 100)
- 13 communes involved in center management and contribute financially
- State ownership in operationalising new centers in 2 new regions
- National strategy for education alternatives ready for Government's approval

Key Insights

There is a willingness and commitment on the part of state actors to see PAEFE go to scale, and a desire to institutionalize educational alternatives. The government's endorsement of the National strategy for alternative education should help mobilize resources for national scale up. The results of the Ministry's organizational diagnostic will guide the capacity development strategy accordingly.

A remaining challenge is to facilitate the permeability between alternative education programs and formal vocational training.

Client/Funding Source	Swiss Development Cooperation
Key Partners	Ministries in charge of Education and VSD, local authorities, local NGOs Centre International d'Expertises et de Formation (CIEF)
Duration	2010- 24 (currently 3rd phase)
Volume	CHF 5,5 Mio (3rd phase)

Programme d'appui à l'Education Non Formelle (Non formal education, NFE)

The project contributes to the education, training and socio-economic integration of out-of-school children, young people and adults, in 11 districts in the regions of Sikasso, Mopti and Timbuktu.

3 outcomes are being pursued:

1) Local authorities build partnerships with decentralized education services and civil society organizations to foster an education/training system focused on sustainable local employment.
2) Children, young people (15-24) and adults take ownership of the quality alternative education and/or training to which they have access in order to undertake productive activities or find local jobs.
3) The Ministry of Education integrates proven and relevant educational alternatives into the national education policy.

Results

Since its inception, the action achieved the following results.
- 94 communes have implemented non-formal education (NFE) innovations
- 22 NFE plans have been drawn up and adopted as part of communal development plans
- 1 network of competent trainers is operational
- More than 17,000 children, almost 50% of them girls, regularly attended classes, 90% of whom successfully transferred to the formal education system
- More than 12,000 young people (54% girls) have been trained in the agro-sylvo-

pastoral sectors. 82% of the graduates are active in jobs related to the training
- More than 7,000 people succeeded in literacy, numeracy and life skills courses (80% women).

Taking care of the school garden is a great way to develop practical competences and to practice the basic skills learned in the classroom (PENF ,Mali) © Helvetas

Key Insights

As insecurity escalates in Mali, intervention modalities need to be adapted and conflict sensitivity is now mainstreamed throughout the project management cycle.

The process of validating innovations with state structures is accompanied by advocacy, carried out with several key players to encourage appropriation and scaling up.

The search for sustainable integration alternatives for young people has led to the mapping of trades in order to update the training offer according to the skills demanded by the labour market and the business opportunities in the local and regional economic environment.

Based on our experience in VSD, we have replicated the "local service provider" approach: young trainees who go on to become professionals in a given field, providing technical support/advice to other young people and the local population.

Activities initiated by young people and adults, especially poultry farming, have been really good opportunities for integration, as they have significantly reduced their mobility.

Client/Funding Source	Swiss Development Cooperation
Key Partners	Ministries in charge of Education and VSD, local authorities, local NGOs Terres des Hommes Suisse, GIZ MAEJT, Médecins du Monde, SSI-AO
Duration	2022-25 (Phase 1)
Volume	CHF 23 Mio

Children and Youth on the Move (CYM) in West and North Africa

The goal of this regional project, piloted from Tunisia, is to make children and young people more autonomous by facilitating their integration into existing systems. This means helping them to access social services so that they can find accommodation or a host family as well as food and clothing, and helping them to access health centres, schooling and vocational training.

3 outcomes aim at reinforcing education systems capacities to include this growing population and accommodate their specific needs:

- At micro level, where the services are provided, with local authorities, communities and education providers

- At meso level, to develop national capacities to design and implement appropriate programs to overcome the barriers preventing these children and young to access education

- At macro level, with the ambition to adapt current laws and framework conditions

Results and key insights

The first challenge was to develop innovative survey methods to capture the needs and characteristics of these audiences. We worked with members of the MAEJT, who identified young migrant communities, engaged with reliable informants and collected insightful information.

We also developed a complete conceptual framework to facilitate further analysis and programming: an inventory of the barriers that limit access to services and the identification of different remedies that can be proposed according to need. Prioritization criteria are defined such as feasibility, sustainability, learning opportunities and prospects for replication or scaling up.

The pilot projects in the five countries allow us to test different strategies: access to second chance schools in Niger, integration within primary schools in Guinea, promotion of inclusive education in Tunisia, inclusion in catch-up and bridge programs in Mali.

In Morocco, a promising partnership has been established with the central administration to support the implementation of its national integration strategy at school level.

Client/Funding Source	Tanzanian Teachers Union (TTU), Donations, SDC programme contribution
Key Partners	Ministries in charge of Education, TTU
Duration	2022- 25 (currently 2nd phase)
Volume	CHF 600,000 (2nd phase)

School-Based In-Service Teachers Training

From 2016 to early 2022, the SITT project has been very successful in helping teachers in Tanzania become more competent and confident in their work., especially in teaching mathematics using active methods.

The overall objective for the new 3-year SITT Phase II is to significantly strengthen the capacity of teachers to improve learning and teaching, leading to improved quality of education in Tanzania.

The project intends to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. 8 Teacher colleges and SITT teams will cascade SITT model to 180 primary schools in 9 districts in 7 regions of Tanzania.
2. School environments will be improved to reflect the awareness and importance for a conducive environment
3. Pupils will be empowered to adopt health practices in and out of school (general school and personal cleanliness and menstrual hygiene).

Results

In its early phase, the project has been making a real impact in seven regions of Tanzania. 900 teachers across 20 districts have benefited from the project, with 378 schools reached by the project. Moreover 130 schools reached by the district school, 12 teacher colleges, and 31 schools reached by teacher colleges.

The current phase is reaching 95,000+ students and 500 teachers.

Key Insights

The SITT approach consists of nine key elements: peer learning among teachers, the creation of a SITT team of teachers in the school, the use of local materials as teaching aids, inclusiveness in learning, practice-based teaching and learning, team teaching, model lessons, student participation and the creation of a healthy learning environment and improving students' health. It promotes teacher learning and believes that every teacher is a specialist in their teaching profession.

A team of researchers from the University of Bern conducted a field experiment with 440 teachers from 220 schools in Tanzania, using official standardised student examinations to assess the impact of a pedagogy-centred intervention. They found that five days of teacher training in participatory and practice-based methods improved student test scores by 0.15σ 18 months later. Pupils in programme schools were also up to 6 percentage points more likely to achieve a top grade (i.e. A or B) than their peers in control schools. This corresponds to a 30% increase in top grades, while the failure rate decreased by 10%. Complementary re-

sults from qualitative surveys and interviews suggest that the program was highly appreciated by different stakeholders.

The program is demonstrating cost-effective scalability: the proof of concept has been successful, but the cascading elements in particular will need to be adapted to reach their full potential:

- Raise awareness of SITT's accomplishments among teachers and school leaders.
- Harnessing the expertise of school leaders to facilitate change and increase their commitment.

Extension in lower secondary

Based on the successes of the first phases, SITT has been expanded in 105 secondary schools in practice-based teaching of Mathematics, in Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia through the "*Strengthening In-service Teacher Mentorship and Support (SITMS)*" Project. This was done by engaging 21 Teachers Colleges, in partnership with the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE), Kibabii University (KIBU) from Kenya and the University of Zambia (UNZA). This 30-month research-based initiative started in May, 2021 and ended in October 2023 and was financed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada under the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Peer to peer training fosters active teaching and learning practices in Tanzania (SITT project) © Helvetas

Client/Funding Source	EU-UNOPS Lives in Dignity Grant Facility
Key Partners	Ethnic education authorities, Local implementation partners Zabai (digital company)
Duration	2022-24
Volume	CHF 550,000

Southeast Education and Employment Opportunities Project

The overall impact of this holistic project is that internally displaced persons become productive members of their host communities.

It will strengthen key system actors including educators, skills trainers, entrepreneurs and CSOs in Mon and Kayin States to enable children, youth and the unemployed from 35 IDP camps and host communities to progress from basic education to skills training and to employment. Progress through these stages is facilitated by protection services and peace-building activities, which also benefit the wider community.

Results

35 temporary community learning spaces are supported in coordination with ethnic education authorities. 5,000 school-aged children are taught by 70 education volunteers who are trained and use the digital teaching materials developed with our partner Zabai.

Key Insights

The digital learning management system is an innovation in Myanmar ethnic context. We find out that:

1) We need to adopt an iterative approach to its implementation. A robust monitoring and learning mechanism is crucial to gain comprehensive insights into teachers' and learners' interactions with digital content.

This mechanism should thoroughly evaluate the impact on teaching practices and, more importantly, on learning outcomes. To achieve this,

the embedding of data collection tools into tablets and the Learning Management System (LMS) will be crucial. These tools will efficiently capture recommendations, training needs, information on teaching practices and patterns of tablet use.

This will be complemented with on-site visits from education officers and peer support, giving them access to server data.

2) Empowering teachers to deliver effective blended learning requires an investment of time and resources to enable teachers to deliver blended learning.

Developing comprehensive digital modules that introduce e-learning and blended learning methodologies can significantly support this endeavor.

In addition, creating platforms for peer-to-peer and self-paced learning can further enrich teachers' skills. Encouraging collaboration among educators through these platforms can foster an environment conducive to sharing best practices and continuous learning.

Client/Funding Source	DG-ECHO
Key Partners	CESVI (consortium lead) Local implementing partners
Duration	2022-24
Volume	CHF 250,000

Community-Led Educational Action for Recovery in North-west Region (Magway & Sagaing regions)

Building on previous humanitarian experience in the Dry Zone, the education component extends the focus to previously supported townships. The project targets primary school-aged children affected by conflict in regions where clashes between the military and resistance groups have resulted in widespread displacement, insecurity, disrupted education and diminished livelihoods.

Access to functioning schools is scarce, as they are closed due to conflict or as shelters for displaced people. The project provides non-formal education opportunities for out-of-school children, addressing protection concerns and ensuring equitable access. It prioritizes a conflict-sensitive approach, community engagement and a trans-parent feedback mechanism.

The response addresses multiple barriers such as lack of parental support, enrolment difficulties, school fees, physical access challenges, gender-based violence, language barriers for certain ethnic groups, and lack of trained staff amid unpredictable security concerns.

Results

- 73 Learning Centers set up
- 6,700 students enrolled
- 100 community teachers trained for NFE and CP
- 6,700 student kits and 100 teaching materials (tablets) provided
- Provided educational equipment to 73 LCs
- Digitalization of teaching materials

Key Insights

Apart from ensuring the continuity of learning despite the raging conflict, the main challenge is related to the quality of learning: it is extremely difficult to develop the capacity of community teachers in such a short period of time, not to mention the difficulties of access.

The project focused on equipping teachers with skills to deal with the key issues: psychosocial support, large group management and student-centred approaches.

It was not possible to establish a sustainable peer-to-peer support mechanism, nor to build capacity to manage the quality of learning outcomes. This will be the focus of the second phase.

HR-VAC, PAKISTAN

Client/Funding Source	DG-ECHO
Key Partners	HI (consortium lead) Local implementing partners
Duration	2022-23
Volume	CHF 450,000

Humanitarian response for vulnerable Afghan refugees and host communities

The decades-long conflict in Afghanistan has led to a significant influx of Afghans seeking refuge, security and livelihood opportunities in Pakistan. This has led to a protracted crisis with the creation of parallel systems (health, protection, education) to meet their basic needs, as the public system does not have the capacity to absorb the refugee population.

In theory, Afghan refugees have access to public schools, but there are no mechanisms in place to overcome barriers related to their vulnerable situation.

The operation provided access to education for 1,400 children in 22 non-formal education centres. The first 8-month phase was dedicated to the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and catch-up classes, and the second 10-month phase was dedicated to coordination with public schools to facilitate reintegration into the formal education system.

READ, PAKISTAN

Client/Funding Source	Swiss Solidarity
Key Partners	Rural Community Development Society (IP)
Duration	1st Jan 2022- 31stJan 2024
Volume	CHF 454,546

Resuming Education with Adaptable and Durable solutions amidst COVID-19 Project in Pakistan (READ)

READ project designed to help children resume education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures due the COVID-19 pandemic for more than a year (2020 – 2021) disrupted the education of more than 40 million students across Pakistan. Children from poor households, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, were completely excluded from education. School closures led to a learning crisis for primary school children, who were at the beginning of their learning journey. The project mainly focused on two major components:

1. Promoting the return to school for out-of- school/drop-out children, and
2. Ensuring that children overcome learning losses resulting from the effects of COVID-19 lockdowns.

The geographical focus of the project is the low-income semi-urban industrial areas of Lahore and Sheikhupura districts in Punjab. The beneficiaries of the project are school-age children between the ages of 5 and 15. The project benefited children of industrial workers, agricultural workers, daily wage earners and brick kiln workers in these districts. The project was implemented in 40 government schools in low-income communities.

Results

- 15,000 student and 300 teachers equipped with IT equipment
- 3,000 teachers trained (2,400 women)
- Catch-up classes benefitting to 1,500 students (1,200 girls)

EDU BSM FOR SDC, SWITZERLAND

Client/Funding Source	Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)
Key Partners	NORRAG (consortium lead)
Duration	2022-26
Volume	CHF 3,200,000

Education backstopping mandate – Thematic expertise for SDC

The goal is to support the SDC Education Unit in fulfilling its mandate and core tasks on education for enhanced outreach and capacity particularly in relation to the SDC Education Network and Advisory services.

The key objectives of this mandate are:

1) Supporting the strengthening of thematic and methodological competence of SDC staff and other relevant actors in the field of education, including demand-driven technical advisory services.

2) Leveraging experiences, formulating good practices and supporting the development of innovative tools and approaches in the field of education.

CONTACT

Our team consists of highly professional, dedicated and multilingual advisors with many years of experience in international development cooperation around the world. If you are interested in our work, please contact us!

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- Sabrina Würmli - Head Skills, Jobs & Income section (sabrina.wuermli@helvetas.org)

WHAT WE CAN OFFER

- Thematic and policy advice in basic education
- Feasibility studies and Economic and financial analysis in education
- Design, implementation, adaptation, and review of education projects
- Development of methodological tools and guidelines
- Capacity-building in education for our partners and clients through coaching and training

Strategic program development and support in project cycle management

PARTNERSHIPS, ALLIANCES AND NETWORKS

SDC E+E
Economy and Education Section

RECI
Réseau Suisse Education et Coopération Internationale

NORRAG
Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training

INEE
International Network for Education in Emergencies

EDUCO
Educate, heals

CRED
Center for regional economic development, Bern University

SOLIDAR Suisse
Swiss development NGO

SVEB
Swiss Federation for Adult Learning

ZABAI
e-learning company (Norway, Myanmar, Bangladesh)