

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



HELVETAS



**WHICH  
PATH LEADS TO  
A DIVERSITY  
OF VOICES?**



Our vision is 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.

“When we moved here, we barely heard any animals. Since we’ve started protecting the forest, they’ve come back.”



Sandra Justiniano, açai producer, Bolivia

“My parents were convinced that only men could work as painters. But when they saw how enthusiastic I was, they supported me.”



Regina Msaka, painter, Tanzania

“The bridge has reduced the seven-hour walk to the health center, the market and the district office to just half an hour.”



Dawa Tamang, farmer, Nepal

Only locally driven development can bring about lasting and successful change. This is because people, organizations, authorities and businesses bring in-depth knowledge of their country’s context, they understand the challenges and needs, and they have the people’s trust.

Katia del Castillo and Neison Condezo Pretel, Peru

Title picture: Learning from one another – Christelle Soanirina from Madagascar and Shoma Nangale from Tanzania are coordinating a “twin project.”

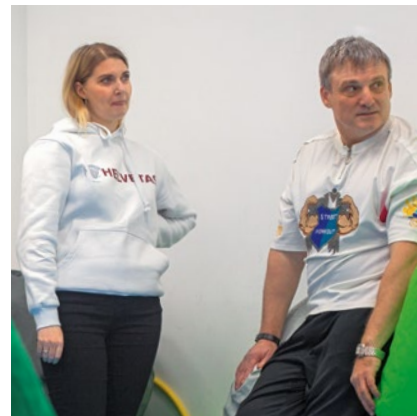




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### Helvetas

has been contributing to efforts to alleviate poverty, working to advance human rights and fighting injustice across the globe since it was founded in 1955. Poor and disadvantaged people and communities are at the center of our work. Everyone has the right to equal opportunities to meet her or his potential. Thus we help people to help themselves. We provide humanitarian response following extreme events and in conflict situations. We always work closely with local partner organizations from civil society and the private sector, as well as with local authorities.

Donations from private individuals, foundations, Swiss cantons, municipalities and businesses and the program contribution from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), enable us to implement our long-term development program in some 35 countries. In addition, we carry out mandated development projects for SDC, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (Seco) and numerous international clients such as the Swedish International Cooperation Agency (Sida). We combine humanitarian response and development support and we provide advisory services to private and public contractors.

Helvetas is a non-profit association, with a strong member base in Switzerland and sister organizations in Germany and the United States. We are a member of Alliance2015, a strategic network of seven European non-governmental organizations. Helvetas is denominationally neutral and politically independent.

# MOVING FORWARD IN UNISON – NOW MORE THAN EVER

**The gap between the rich and the poor is increasing worldwide. At the same time, development cooperation is receiving less and less funding. Helvetas nevertheless continues to work with local partner organizations to overcome hunger, poverty and injustice.**

### Overcoming crises together

For the past few months, the uplifting songs from my youth have been running through my head, such as “Don’t let hard times harden you.” The German Wolf Biermann wrote these lyrics during the time of Chernobyl, apartheid and the Cold War. So much has improved since then – but not because change was simple. It was because countless people the world over were committed to overcoming adversity and creating a better future. They struggled for women’s rights, for our energy transition, for global disarmament treaties, for strong international organizations, for fair trade rules, for food security and to overcome poverty. Today, many of these achievements are under threat, including from newer challenges such as climate change. That’s why I am so deeply inspired when I see Helvetas staff in the countries where we work once more discussing strategies to stay positive in these uncertain times and to advocate for fair opportunities – now more than ever. Moving forward, step by step, staying united and not hardening – that’s how we overcame the crises of the past. And that’s how we’re going to do it this time as well! Thank you for supporting us – morally, financially and actively.

*Regula Rytz, President*



Melchior Lengsfeld, Executive Director, and Regula Rytz, President of Helvetas

### Our commitment to the future

We’re looking back on a turbulent year: wars in Ukraine, Gaza and Myanmar, extreme weather events in Honduras, Mozambique and Spain, the election result in the US, and on parliamentary debates on arms buildups and budget cuts that come at the expense of development cooperation – in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe. The political decisions that we make today will shape the future for years to come, in terms of the economy, security, society and the climate. At the same time, social cohesion is eroding and social conflicts are on the rise. People who claim to be “against the system” are gaining more and more traction. Helvetas is working tirelessly to ensure that disadvan-

tagged people can benefit from the progress in their countries, to ensure that no one is left behind. Participation is important for social stability. Solid partnerships with local authorities, schools and local and international companies, for example, have helped many young people to learn a trade and improve their economic prospects. This shows that development is possible and that it works. This has been made possible by you, whether you are a member, a donor, a foundation, a representative of SDC, Seco, the EU, or a European government. Thank you for your trust in the value and effectiveness of our work, and for your commitment to shared values and goals.

*Melchior Lengsfeld,  
Executive Director*



# WHY CAN DEMOCRACY ALSO GROW IN FORESTS?

In 2008, the King of Bhutan set his country on the path to democracy. Helvetas had already been working there for decades. In all those years, practical projects like cheese production and livestock farming were gradually replaced with initiatives focusing on citizens' participation and good governance. Helvetas strengthened civil society and federal structures, for example by introducing participatory forest management and protection. Work now – after 50 years – taken over by a local organization.

Yeshe Choden and Gyam Phurba are members of the forest committee for their village of Ugyen Choling in Bhutan.

© Patrick Rohr



# LOCALLY DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

**In the 1980s, NGOs began to recognize that development projects are only successful and sustainable when they involve collaboration with local organizations, since they understand the challenges on the ground and have the local population's trust.**

This insight led to long-term, close collaborations with partner organizations, including NGOs, associations, federations and civil society organizations. The focus shifted toward locally driven development. The local population, civil society, the authorities and state governments, as well as the private sector, became increasingly and actively involved in projects. Today, this participatory approach is firmly established in international cooperation – and has become an even greater priority with the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and since the final declaration of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, also known as the “Grand Bargain.” It’s also a core principle of our work at Helvetas.

## More cooperation for true partnership

Local partners bring extensive knowledge of the local context to the table and facilitate access to the population. With its local and international staff, years of experience in project planning and implementation and its international network of experts, Helvetas contributes to the successful implementation of programs and projects developed together with these partners – with the ultimate goal of creating fair opportunities for people to break free from poverty.

## An engaging debate

**The debate over postcolonialism and the “decolonization of development cooperation” has been going on for some time. The postcolonial perspective posits that many development problems in formerly colonized countries have historical roots and can be traced back to exploitative colonial systems. This perspective also comprises locally driven development, which involves a critical review of traditional concepts and practices in development cooperation. This includes the fact that many programs are still shaped by donors from the Global North and are aligned with European or American value systems rather than attempting to make meaningful use of local knowledge.**

The suspension bridge program in Nepal is a perfect example of this. What started as technical assistance from Switzerland and financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is now a nationally owned program for which the Nepalese government bears primary responsibility. Helvetas was a technical advisor to the Nepalese Trail Bridge Support Unit and supported the training of planning and construction professionals. The necessary knowledge and skills are now firmly anchored in the country.

In Sri Lanka, Helvetas supports community-based initiatives. This includes primary schools that strive to reduce the hatred and mistrust that grew between young Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims during the years of civil war. Helvetas staff from Sri Lanka skillfully support these initiatives and incorporate the ideas of the affected population; their efforts have been highly successful. In the Ganges Delta in Bangladesh, local and international experts are working to address the impact of climate change on small-scale farming families. Working together with partner organizations, governmental authorities and universities, they are developing solutions that have even been presented at international conferences.

Many of these partnerships have existed for years. A basis of trust has been established that enables discussions to take place on equal footing. Projects are planned and implemented together, which is the core principle of locally led development. Rightfully, the principle of equality is critically questioned, since NGOs from the Global North most often act as donors, a role that automatically places them in a position of power. This imbalance must be consciously identified and addressed.

## New perspectives on an old issue

Despite all these efforts, decisions are often made without involving the affected people and partners, in part because of short planning times, strict budget constraints and detailed reporting requirements. International and national financing processes are complex



Shared responsibility: Together, representatives of the Honduran Ministry of the Environment, an association of the municipalities and Helvetas discuss the protection of watersheds through proper solid waste management.

and often difficult for smaller organizations to handle. When information, technical expertise and access to key decision-makers are also lacking, it becomes difficult for local partners to act independently.

In humanitarian crises, international NGOs often work with their own staff rather than with local organizations because disasters require a rapid response, logistical capacity and large amounts of material resources. But, not considering the local context brings with it the risk of diminishing the effectiveness of the measures adopted.

A remaining key issue is direct access to donors in the Global North, who tend to trust organizations from their own countries and to use them as intermediaries for monitoring and quality assurance. At the same time, organizations such as Helvetas are more than just technical actors. NGOs in Switzerland play an important communication role; they can convey needs, impacts, opportunities and challenges to a broad audience and raise awareness, thereby promoting an understanding of development cooperation.

## A paradigm shift in our thinking

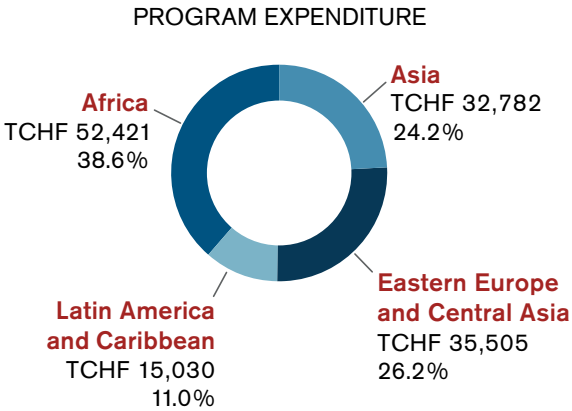
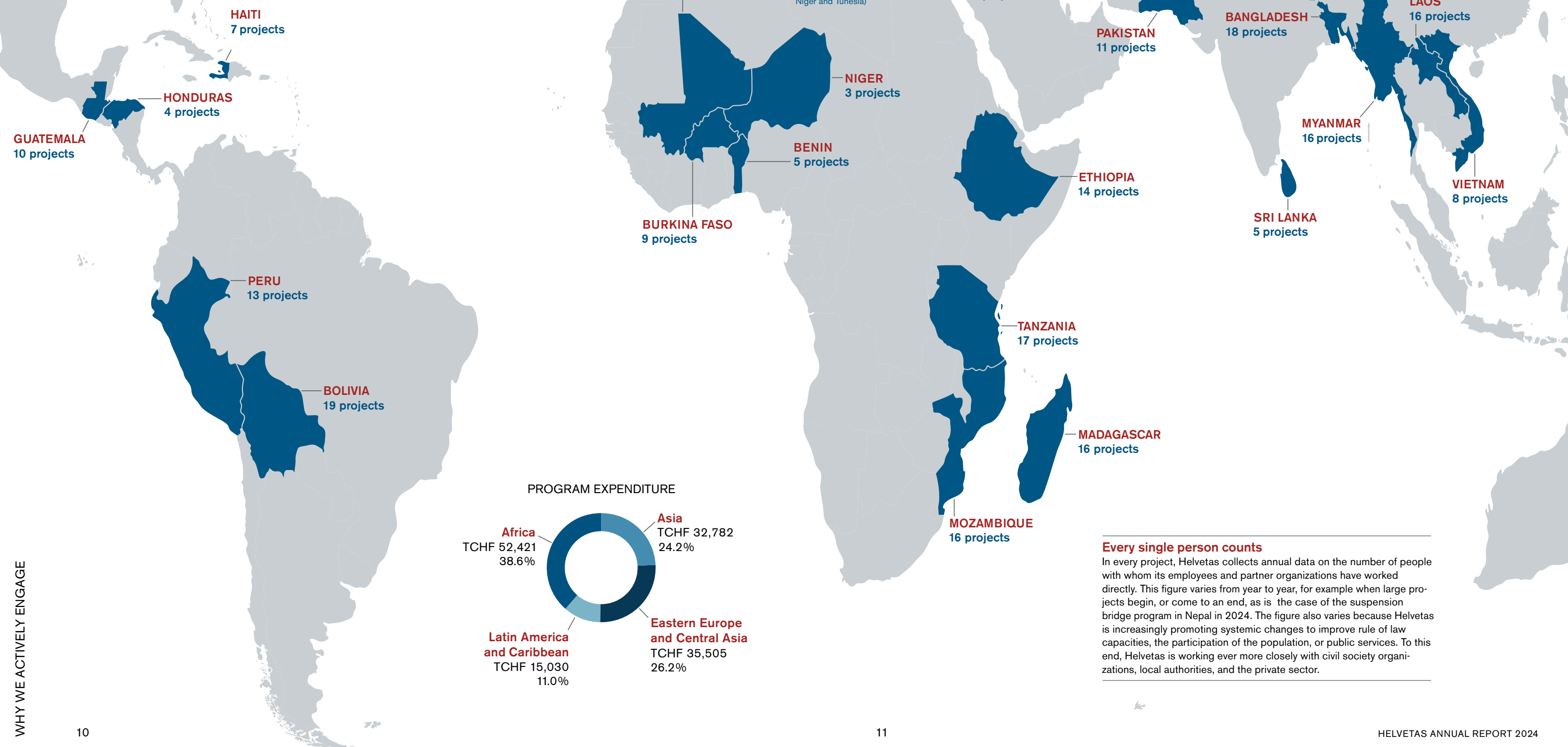
Ultimately, the debate underscores the long-held desire of many actors – from both the Global South and North – to eliminate the unequal distribution of power in development cooperation. This has led to further strengthening organizations in our partner countries so that they can implement their own strategies. The goal is to meaningfully involve all relevant actors, promote locally driven development processes and enhance partners’ sense of responsibility and capacity to act.

For Helvetas, locally driven development cooperation means working on a long-term basis with partners in countries and regions who share similar values. We work together to identify challenges and develop solutions. Each organization contributes its strengths. We are convinced that it is worthwhile to invest in strong and sustainable partnerships with civil society organizations, the private sector and local authorities. The result is a win-win for everyone.



# FAIR OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

Helvetas works with and for people living in poverty. We work in countries that are among the poorest in the world as well as in middle-income countries and in fragile, insecure regions. Because our experience shows that sustainable development takes time, we are committed to the long-term effort of creating fair opportunities for all.



**Every single person counts**

In every project, Helvetas collects annual data on the number of people with whom its employees and partner organizations have worked directly. This figure varies from year to year, for example when large projects begin, or come to an end, as is the case of the suspension bridge program in Nepal in 2024. The figure also varies because Helvetas is increasingly promoting systemic changes to improve rule of law capacities, the participation of the population, or public services. To this end, Helvetas is working ever more closely with civil society organizations, local authorities, and the private sector.



# REGIONAL COLLABORATION – LOCAL TRANSFORMATION

The Reconomy program covers eleven countries and is implemented by Helvetas on behalf of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The goal is to promote green, inclusive and transitioning economies in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Reconomy is an economic development program, its name stemming from “Revitalize, Reconnect, Re-shape.” In particular, the program supports women and young people, including disadvantaged and marginalized groups in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. But the impact extends far beyond individual participants. The intention is to strengthen the economic systems of participating countries and to promote regional networking through new ideas and businesses.

## Learn, connect, adapt

“At its core, Reconomy uses existing knowledge, existing networks and regional opportunities to promote learning and exchange,” explains Elene Tkhlashidze from Helvetas, the deputy manager of Reconomy. “To achieve progress, however, a local, country-specific perspective is needed. Development efforts that ignore this are often unsuccessful,” says Tkhlashidze. But this does not mean that successful innovations are not transferable. And therein lies one of Reconomy’s particular strengths: Proven solutions, such as recycling clothes to meet EU standards, can be adapted and introduced in other countries without having to start from scratch each time.

For the program to have an impact beyond its conclusion, public institutions, nonprofit organizations, universities and businesses have to collaborate. “We bring people together who can work with one another to develop and implement solutions,” emphasizes Tkhlashidze.

## Broad-based support

The eleven-country program takes a multidimensional approach that helps businesses improve their services in order to drive growth and investment. At the same time, it promotes the training of disadvantaged young men and women to help them confidently enter the job market or start their own

businesses. Additionally, the Helvetas Reconomy team supports the reform of economic and political frameworks in the various countries where it is present to help bring about a green, inclusive economy.

The participating countries face similar challenges, such as automation, disruptive technologies, high youth unemployment and a skills shortage due to an aging population. At the same time, much potential is lost, for example, because women or people with disabilities are not perceived as qualified workers. Are these problems or opportunities? Reconomy aims set the ball rolling by transforming problems into opportunities.

## A practical approach

In Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the program promotes sustainability in the textile and fashion industry as a way to access EU markets, preserve existing jobs and create new job opportunities. It also seeks to make the sector competitive with textile giants like Turkey through demonstrably sustainable production. The circular economy and the efficient use of resources lie at the heart of this approach: Fabric use is reduced, scraps are reused, old clothes are recycled, natural dyeing methods are tested and packaging is minimized.

# 15,360

individuals reported increased income due to Reconomy in 2024.

In the Western Balkans, the Helvetas Reconomy team is advocating for a shift towards more sustainable economic models. More and more countries are developing national strategies for a circular economy. New regulatory frameworks are making it easier for the private sector to access EU markets, but there is often



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Manuel Halil, a member of the Roma people, leads a recycling team in Skopje, North Macedonia, with support from the Reconomy program.

a lack of knowledge and skilled professionals. To overcome this bottleneck, the program plans to establish a regional circular economy hub, which will centralize the relevant information and make it accessible to all actors.

Another area of focus is energy efficiency in the construction sector. Although many countries have adopted strategies in this regard, their implementation often fails. Currently, around 60 percent of energy consumption in the region still goes toward heating, cooling and electrical appliances. In response, Reconomy is promoting a certification for energy-efficient buildings, facilitating access to financing and supporting the training of young people in the construction sector in energy-efficient building practices.

## Cross-border collaboration

The focus on economic networking and regional cooperation has additional positive effects, since it helps overcome cultural barriers that go back to the Yugoslav wars and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indeed, shared goals and perspectives bring people together, even in places where people had little or no contact with one another in the past. For example,

chambers of commerce from different countries are now working closely together, despite political differences. And the social status of women, young people, people with disabilities and marginalized groups is improving.

“We respect the local setting, but at the same time we think regionally and recognize that all benefit from cultural diversity,” says Tkhlashidze. “We focus on collaboration and cooperation. The people we interact with every day are not enemies. Borders don’t matter.”

There is still a long way to go on the road to social, sustainable and inclusive economies in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. But with a program like Reconomy, which harnesses the collective intelligence of eleven countries, their populations, businesses, institutions and civil society, local successes can spread quickly and benefit society, the economy and the environment.





# WHAT OFFERS STABILITY WHEN EVERYTHING IS SHAKY?

Yevhen Borodin (right) is a sports coach who fled to Kharkiv when the war in Ukraine started. He now offers sports courses to give young people a chance to connect with one another and cope with war-related trauma. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine not only results in the loss of loved ones and possessions, but also destroys infrastructure, supply chains and professional plans. Helvetas provides support, especially in areas where international organizations are not present, helping local organizations that in turn assist the population in repairing their homes, setting up shelters and even equipping school bunkers with tables and benches. At the same time, Helvetas supports proactive individuals who are working to strengthen both the economy and society.

Oksana Titarenko from Helvetas participates in Yevhen Borodin's sports course.

© Alessandro Parente



# WHAT WE DO

Helvetas implements development and humanitarian aid projects. We ensure basic rights, create new perspectives and strengthen good governance. We also provide technical advisory services, develop subject-specific expertise and engage in political dialogue and advocacy.



## Ensuring basic rights

### Water, food and climate

In 2024 **2,973,440** women and men gained sustainable access to water, sanitation, proper hygiene, better nutrition and natural resources, or have benefited from larger harvests and improved climate resilience. Together with Helvetas, they installed solarpowered wells and latrines, built roads and bridges and learned important hygiene rules and new, climate-adapted cultivation methods.

## Creating new perspectives

### Skills, jobs and income

In 2024 **508,735** young, mostly disadvantaged women and men gained access to education and vocational training, found a job, or started their own business with Helvetas' support. At the same time, **9,859** small and medium-sized enterprises have gained better access to markets, created jobs for disadvantaged people and begun to offer sustainable products and better services.

## Strengthening good governance

### Voice, inclusion and cohesion

In 2024, with Helvetas' support, **160,142** women and men learned techniques to better demand their right to basic public services and to resolve conflicts. Helvetas also worked with local authorities and partner organizations to counsel and support **799,986** women and men in planning their safe, responsible and profitable labor migration.

## Alleviating suffering

### Humanitarian response

In 2024, Helvetas supported **426,722** people in distress meet their most pressing basic needs, gain access to basic, safe and dignified shelter and acquire new means of agricultural production. In its projects, Helvetas supported a total of **1,078,332** people in areas afflicted by natural disasters, crises and conflict in gaining access to water, sanitation, education, and re-training courses. Helvetas combines short-term emergency aid with longer-term measures to enable people to rebuild their livelihoods as swiftly as possible.



In Pakistan, Helvetas is committed to ensuring that children, especially girls, from poor families can return to school after COVID-19. Bisma Qaisar is very glad about this.

**4,869,026**  
people have been  
given a fair  
opportunity thanks  
to your support.



# FOREST CONSERVATION AND WATER KIOSKS

Billions of people are born in countries where clean drinking water is scarce, balanced nutrition is lacking, and climate change threatens their livelihoods. Together with those affected and with partner organizations, Helvetas is developing solutions to improve these situations.

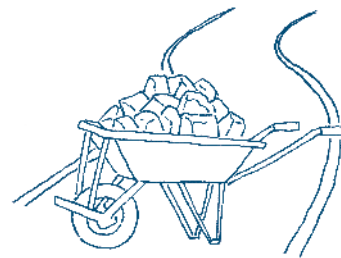


## A greener Tanzania

In **Tanzania's** semi-arid regions, monoculture farming and deforestation have depleted the soil. But the land is turning green – at the hands of women. In collaboration with Helvetas, 1,077 women received Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy to a total of 2,408 hectares of land, which equates to almost 3,380 football fields. In 2024, 2,355 women learned how to regenerate their soil; 343 forest gardens were established and over 545,634 trees were planted. To strengthen their economic independence, the women formed savings groups, enabling them to start businesses and invest in agriculture.

## Factoring in climate change

Climate change and its associated disasters can destroy hard-won, successful investments in production and infrastructure and push people back into poverty as a result. To prevent this, Helvetas reinforces people's climate resilience in all projects by analyzing climate risks, the results of which are systematically integrated into project planning. This enhances both the projects, sustainability and their overall impact. To monitor its progress, Helvetas has developed a "marker" for climate and disaster resilience. The initial tests are promising, and the results will be published in upcoming annual reports.



## Center for Competence

Labor-intensive construction projects such as roads can also benefit the local population during the construction phase, especially when women participate. This has been proven in **Burkina Faso**, where women invest the money they earned from road construction in their own businesses. Social cohesion in the community increases and people gain better access to healthcare, government offices and markets because of their new income and infrastructure. Helvetas has established a Center for Competence and Expertise to promote this method, which involves all stakeholders right from the planning stage – nationally, regionally and even globally.

Helvetas helps to achieve the following Agenda 2030 goals:

- 1** No poverty
- 2** Zero hunger
- 6** Clean water and sanitation
- 9** Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- 12** Responsible consumption and production
- 13** Climate action
- 17** Partnerships for the goals



“After just two years, our forest garden began yielding all year round. We have never eaten so healthily before.”

Jorge Ribera, San Borja, Bolivia

Depleted soils are forcing people in the Bolivian Amazon to clear more and more forest land to grow cassava or plantains to earn money and provide for themselves. Helvetas promotes community-based tree nurseries and trains experts who work with small-scale farming families to create forest gardens. On Jorge and Carmen Ribera's plot, 18 different plant species grow that benefit each other and nourish the soil. The couple will never have to clear forest land again.



# Raising awareness through “social art”

In **Madagascar**, Helvetas has adopted various strategies to improve access to clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in rural communities.

**Hervé Sterkers, does Madagascar need more water connections?**  
Yes, in our project area, only 25% of people have access to clean drinking water. Many people fetch their water from the river because it is free, the nearest well is far away, or they are unaware of the risks of diseases associated with dirty water. In Diana, for example, in the north of Madagascar, there is a lot of rainfall. During the rainy season, the river gets muddy. For people without a water connection, the river becomes even more dangerous when they drink water from it.

**What is the focus of this project?**  
In Madagascar, the public sector is responsible for the water supply, but construction and maintenance have been privatized in the hope of ensuring sustainability. We are supporting the local authorities in planning and awarding contracts to private companies, training their staff and working with these private companies to develop strategies to encourage communities to invest in paid water connections. Many people don’t understand why they should suddenly pay for water when they can get it for free from the river. This requires a lot of awareness-raising and communication. Whether and where a connection is created is decided by the communities themselves. The connections supported by Helvetas currently benefit 370,000 people.

**Why are there different types of connections?**  
In Menabe, in the western part of Madagascar, many people live

in severe poverty. Here, we focus on connections that are shared by six or seven households who pay for one collectively. In the Diana region, many families have additional income from vanilla and cocoa farming and can more easily afford a private, individual connection. In remote villages, we have successfully promoted “water kiosks” where water can be accessed at any time using a token. This was not originally our idea, but we are ensuring that it takes hold.

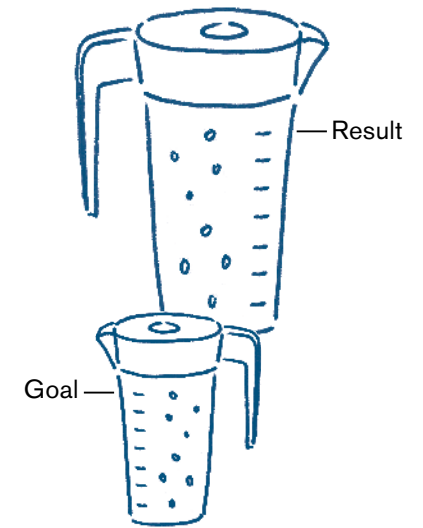
**How do you raise awareness about this?**  
We have theater performances, radio shows, books and songs that focus on the use of drinking water. But rules of basic hygiene and the use of sanitary facilities must also be promoted, since many people still relieve themselves out in the open. So we build latrines at schools and health centers and encourage people to talk about them. Additionally, wall paintings, which are already very popular and successful in West Africa, serve as reminders for people to wash their hands regularly or to pay the water bill on time. This “social art” supplements more traditional measures such as community meetings and home visits. We also encourage people to take an active stance, for example, by demanding specific water and hygiene services from their mayors.



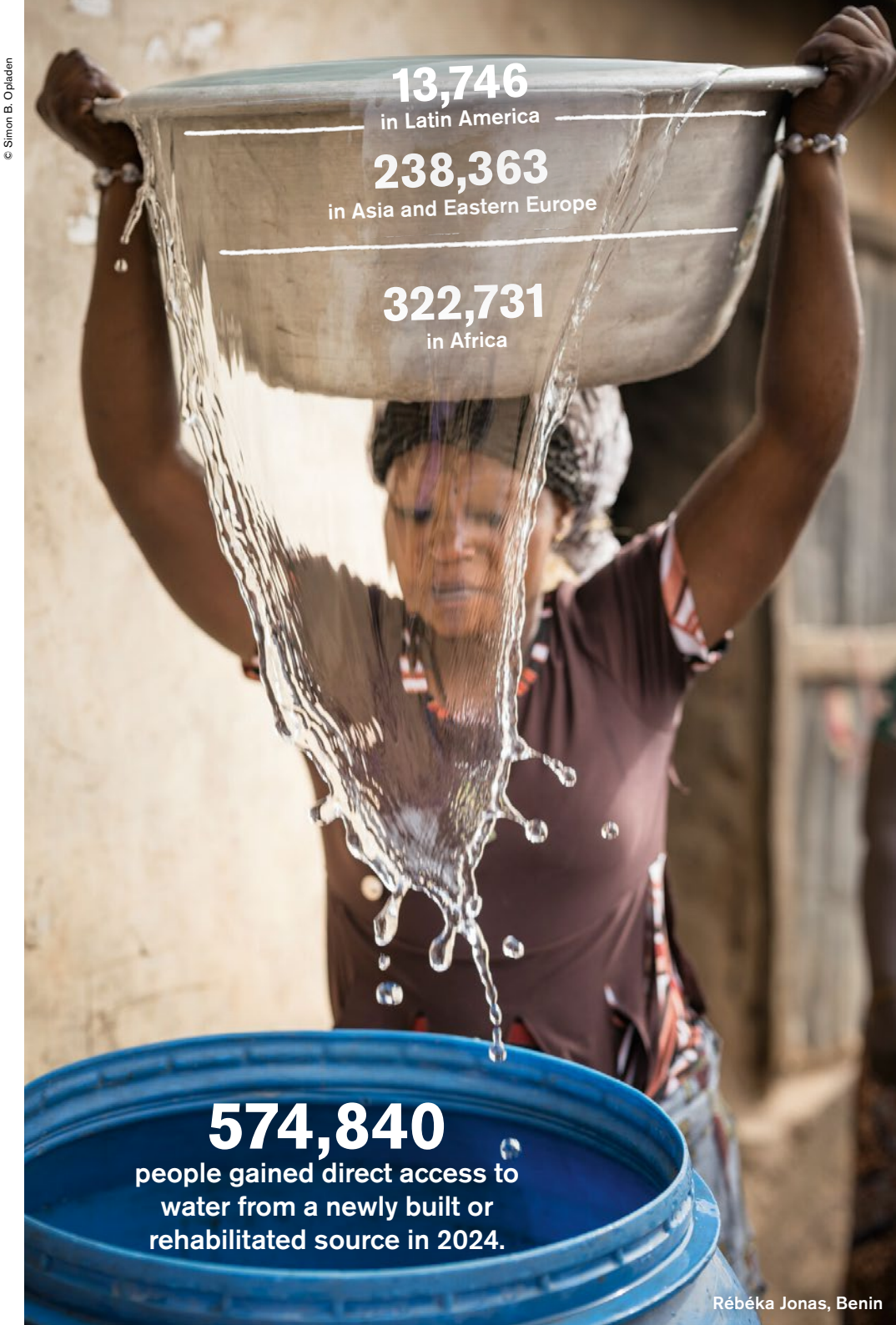
**Hervé Sterkers** is the coordinator of the Ratsantanana water project in Madagascar.

**A GOAL EXCEEDED**  
Helvetas set itself the goal of providing safe drinking water to one million people during its 2021–24 strategy period. We are very pleased that Helvetas, working together with local partners and with the dedicated support of numerous individuals and foundations, has handily exceeded this ambitious goal. In the past four years, we have provided access to water for 2,560,679 people. However, 2.2 billion people still lack access to safe drinking water worldwide, so this commitment must continue. Helvetas is regarded highly in many countries as an effective partner for the implementation of drinking water projects that closely involve local governments, populations and the private sector in an effort to ensure sustainability.

**2,560,679**  
people have gained direct access to safe drinking water since 2021.



More about our working area Water, Food and Climate: [helvetas.org/basicrights](https://helvetas.org/basicrights)

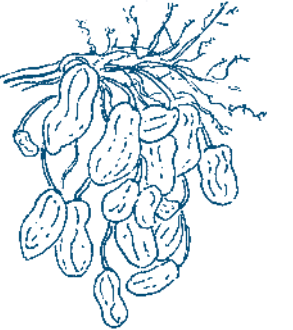


## Proof of success

With the support of Helvetas **Kyrgyzstan**, farmers and water user committees successfully lobbied the national government for a law allowing local authorities to finance the repair of dilapidated irrigation canals. In 2024, due to the extensive sharing of experiences among communities and access to public funds, a total of 342 kilometers of irrigation canals and 45 systems were restored, which are used by 15,500 households and for 18,000 hectares of agricultural land. The results show: Wherever repairs were made, there is less water loss, more land is irrigated, and harvests have increased.

## Mighty children

In a village in **Nepal**, Helvetas has turned children into hygiene ambassadors, and the results are impressive! The children learned how to wash their hands properly, keep water clean and to appreciate the value of toilets. They quickly decided to implement what they had learned at home. Using a code of conduct developed at school, the children encouraged their families to regularly wash their hands, buy water filters and separate waste. At first, their requests went ignored – but the children had learned to be persistent. Today, the health center in the village sees half as many visits due to improved hygiene.



## Agriculture with a future

Over 29,000 farmers in **Mali** have adapted to the effects of climate change in recent years. With Helvetas’ support 6,900 new agricultural enterprises have been established. The direct result is that food security has significantly improved, and 4,700 malnourished children and breastfeeding mothers have received nutritional supplements made from local products. The project in Mali also includes training in agricultural professions, since there is untapped potential in this sector. This gives young people prospects within their own country.



# VALUE CHAINS AND SECOND CHANCES

People can engage socially and politically only when they also have economic prospects. But many young people live in countries where they have few opportunities to attend school or find a job. By working together with its partner organizations, Helvetas helps ensure that fair opportunities for education, training and employment are not a matter of chance.



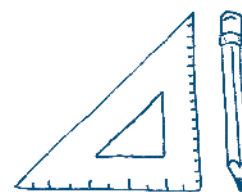
## Eco-paint

In **Nepal**, a private sector development project produces paints made from cow dung. These paints have antibacterial and antifungal properties, are odorless, do not cause allergies, and, unlike chemical paints, they are free of toxins and heavy metals. Through a collaboration with local businesses, the production process has been designed to sell the paint at competitive prices. Since cow dung has become an important resource, farming families can now sell it and benefit from this new market.

**"I train them with respect and dignity. I want them to feel valued."**

Hassan Shahryar

To prevent the exploitation of children, Helvetas promotes training and dignified working conditions for 14- to 18-year-olds in **Pakistan**. Hassan Shahryar was beaten during his apprenticeship as a motorcycle mechanic. When Helvetas offered him the chance to complete his training elsewhere, he jumped at the opportunity. He went on to open his own repair garage, and he now trains young people with respect, fairness and a strong focus on safety and quality.



## A made-to-measure education

When children are not enrolled in school or are forced to drop out, this has serious consequences for their future and for society. In **Benin**, on behalf of SDC, Helvetas has established "schools of second chance" for these children. The project has won over the government, which now offers various educational alternatives to help children and adolescents catch up. Options such as "bridge classes" help these young people to transition into secondary education or directly into vocational training. With strong support from Switzerland, large institutional donors are now also backing these models.

Helvetas helps to achieve the following Agenda 2030 goals:



More about our working area Skills, Jobs and Income:  
[helvetas.org/newperspectives](https://helvetas.org/newperspectives)

**"I always wanted to become a metalworker and work for the railway. Now I have the skills and a job."**

Sofia Afate Mucussete,  
Nacala, Mozambique



In **Mozambique**, many young people drop out of school due to a lack of financial resources. By working together with local businesses and educational institutions, Helvetas offers them the opportunity to pursue market-oriented training and actively supports them in their search for employment. As is the case in projects in **Nepal** and **Ethiopia**, trainers in **Mozambique** receive part of their payment only once the trainees have secured paid employment or successfully started their own businesses. Each year, around 1,200 young people complete this type of training through the Helvetas project, and four out of five are able to support themselves shortly thereafter.



## Improving the image of non-academic professions

In **Kosovo**, young people often have a hard time joining the workforce, which is why Helvetas began to promote non-academic career paths. In December 2024, the project came to an end after twelve years.

**Albina Berisha, looking back, how do you reflect on the project?** With pride. At the start of the project, 45% of 15- to 35-year-olds in Kosovo were unemployed. They lacked prospects, and many chose to emigrate. Thanks to Helvetas, nearly 24,000 young people have completed practical, hands-on training, and over 200,000 have received career guidance. Today, 2,300 companies offer internships, apprenticeships and permanent positions. Youth unemployment now stands at 17.3%, and many people are choosing to stay in the country due to the improved conditions and projects like ours.

**What was the biggest challenge?** Vocational schools used to train students without regard for the needs of the labor market. We supported better coordination between these schools and the private sector, and we worked with companies to develop and offer practical and short training programs. Together with 30 course providers and over 20 vocational schools, we developed 104 training modules in areas including woodworking, IT, baking, graphic design, social media marketing and solar panel installation. We also had to contend with the fact that vocational education had a poor image and that young people generally preferred an academic path. We improved that image through events for parents and businesses, bold TV commercials and even new job titles: “Wood designer” sounds

more appealing than “carpenter.” The result was that for the past two years more students enrolled in vocational schools than in academic high schools – a first in Kosovo.

**Does digitalization open doors?** Yes! When we started this project, companies were still posting job openings almost exclusively in newspapers. This was expensive, and by the next day the ads had disappeared. There were hardly any online job portals at this time, so we invested in building these up. Two of them are now market leaders and serve 60,000 people a day. We also reached out to young people via TikTok and Instagram. A well-known influencer collaborated with us to address topics that were new to many: life-long learning, online courses and soft skills like languages, project management and marketing. His videos reached up to 200,000 people.

**What next?** Vocational training has become an integral activity within many companies. We didn’t just fund training programs; we helped develop and improve them and supported vocational schools in creating sustainable business models. We also set up career counseling centers in these schools. The counselors are paid by them, which means that these services will continue to be provided, even after the end of the project.



**Albina Berisha** was the project manager of the Enhancing Youth Employment (EYE) project in Kosovo, which Helvetas implemented on behalf of SDC.



**A GOAL NOT ACHIEVED**  
In its 2021–24 strategy, Helvetas set itself the goal of providing 320,000 young people with access to hands-on vocational training. With 198,161 young persons who have completed training programs that form the basis for employment, starting a small business and improving their incomes, Helvetas has, at first glance, not achieved this goal. At the same time, the Helvetas approach of compensating vocational training institutes based on results has become a proven model in many places. In Ethiopia, a regional government and major NGOs have adopted and scaled this approach. Thanks to digital solutions, many people in Myanmar, Tanzania and Bangladesh have benefited from training modules, even beyond Helvetas projects. In Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Nepal, Laos and North Macedonia, nationwide systemic changes in vocational education were initiated because governments and the private sector found the Swiss-style dual training model convincing. As a result, many young people in our partner countries now benefit from new vocational training opportunities.



## Business instead of emigration

In **Guatemala**, the local Helvetas team works together with partner organizations to help disadvantaged women and men set up production groups and small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In less than three years, the country has already seen the emergence of 6,254 new entrepreneurs. More than 32,000 people now benefit from improved access to food, jobs and the services offered by these new SMEs. Key to success has been the establishment of communal “one-stop shops,” where job placements, consultations and certified training programs for women and youth are all offered under one roof. This creates opportunities within Guatemala and reduces pressure to emigrate.



Helvetas and iGravity, a consulting firm specializing in impact investment and innovative finance, are developing a Green Bond to provide rice producers and processors in sub-Saharan Africa with access to funding. The goal is to expand the rice value chain in a sustainable and viable way and to help meet Africa’s long-term demand for rice. The development of the Green Bond is being financed by the SDG Impact Finance Initiative (SIFI). The aim is to encourage private sector participation in financing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

## Long-term success

In a large-scale project led by the government of **Nepal** and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to improve the economic situation of families affected by poverty, Helvetas and its Nepalese partner organizations helped train more than 29,000 young people in 36 different professions. The overall employment rate among graduates is 79%, and 56% of those employed are women. A survey of graduates from 2019 and 2020 shows that 69% are still employed today and earning above the minimum wage. On average, their household incomes have increased by 50%.



# PEACE AND AN INCOME

Billions of people are born in countries where basic services are not accessible to everyone. Economic circumstances cause women and men to migrate. Conflicts, violence and climate change force millions of people to leave their homes. Together with its partner organizations, Helvetas works to ensure that people can live in security make their voices heard.



## Honey instead of violence

The civil war in **Sri Lanka** left deep scars that make peaceful coexistence difficult. With Helvetas’ support, young people of different ethnicities and religions have chosen the path of reconciliation. An economic crisis, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, has exacerbated poverty in the country. Helvetas supports young people in starting businesses that help those who have been the most affected by the crisis. While Helvetas provides farming families with beehives, for example, the young entrepreneurs buy their honey at fair prices to process and market it.

## Resolving conflicts

Climate change in the Sahel region is intensifying conflicts between farming families and nomadic herders due to the growing scarcity of land and water. Helvetas helps communities in northern **Benin** resolve such conflicts. With the construction of new wells and water reservoirs, as well as reforestation efforts, people are able to adapt to the consequences of climate change. To ensure that these measures do no harm and do not lead to new conflicts, Helvetas promotes the integration of local, traditional and newer approaches to conflict resolution that involve all stakeholders.



## Balanced nutrition

In the city of Mbeya, **Tanzania**, the climate is perfect for agriculture. That notwithstanding, many citizens have an unbalanced diet due to a lack of time, money or knowledge. The city therefore asked Helvetas to jointly develop a cross-sector nutrition strategy that brings together private, municipal and regional actors, from producers to processors, sellers, consumers and waste management services. The project connects city authorities with the municipal administration in Cox’s Bazar, **Bangladesh**, where a similar initiative is underway, so that the two cities can learn from one another. In March 2024, project leaders and the mayors from both cities met in Zurich to compare their experiences.

Helvetas helps to achieve the following Agenda 2030 goals:

5 Gender equality

10 Reduced inequalities

11 Sustainable cities and communities

16 Peace, justice and strong institutions

More about our working area Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion: [helvetas.org/governance](https://helvetas.org/governance)



“The stench of the wastewater is making us sick. I’m glad someone is trying to do something about it.”

Blažo Đurović, Belgrade, Serbia

Belgrade has no wastewater treatment plant. Industrial and household sewage is discharged directly into the Danube from 130 pipes, generating a toxic stench. A local organization is therefore advocating for wastewater treatment. Civil society organizations expose weaknesses in political, social and economic systems. They are essential for a functioning democracy. A number of Helvetas’ projects focus on strengthening civil society. In Serbia, on behalf of SDC, the goal is to encourage citizens to engage in local politics, for example, by advocating for minority rights and environmental protection.



### A GOAL NOT ACHIEVED

In its 2021–24 strategy, Helvetas set itself the goal of supporting half a million people in raising their voices, claiming their rights and deepening their knowledge of governance, decentralization and democratization. This goal was not achieved. Increasing fragility and escalating crises have made Helvetas' work difficult. Added to this were the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme weather events, authoritarian trends and ensuing restrictions on citizens' rights. These factors have made Helvetas' work riskier. To avoid endangering organizations and individuals – while still encouraging them to pursue their goals – we must exercise sensitivity. At the same time, donors are shifting their priorities in response to global developments. Development cooperation by governments has been cutting back on projects that promote participation and human rights. Nevertheless, the opportunity for voices to be heard, citizens participation, the protection of civil rights and duties, remain essential and are transversal themes that are integrated into all Helvetas projects.

**380,149**  
people have been  
empowered to raise their  
voice and claim  
their rights since 2021.



### Safe migration

Labor migration is a key component of Nepal's economy, but it comes with risks. Since 2011, Helvetas has been implementing a project on safe migration on behalf of SDC and the government of Nepal. As a result, 68 migration service centers have been established, which have to date provided information and support to 1.34 million prospective migrants regarding exploitation and labor rights. 32,000 victims of exploitation have received legal assistance as part of this project. Since migration also has social consequences, over 250,000 family members have been given counseling. To help them invest remittances from family members effectively, 62,209 women and men have received financial training. All levels of government are now providing significant funding to expand the program.



### Sports and culture for peace

Most of the land in Pakistan's tribal areas belongs to each community as a whole. But climate change, mining and water scarcity are increasingly leading to violent conflicts over land and resources. As a result, many young people migrate or align themselves with local powerholders. Helvetas supports peaceful conflict resolution by working with local organizations and community leaders. Sports and cultural events also help bridge divides. As a result, young people have come together and asked their elders to settle disputes.

### ALLEVIATING SUFFERING

## ACTING IN TIMES OF NEED

From wars in Ukraine and elsewhere to fragile contexts across the globe coping with floods, droughts and hurricanes, people's suffering often lasts longer than the media's coverage of such events. In 2024, generous donors and foundations helped hundreds of thousands of people in need to regain their footing and rebuild their homes and livelihoods.

### “Crises require flexibility”

Gang violence, hurricanes and earthquakes have all required the people of Haiti to be resilient. This is why Helvetas Haiti combines long-term development work with short-term and forward-looking humanitarian efforts, a strategy known as the Nexus approach.

#### Gansly Jean, how exactly does the Nexus approach work?

Humanitarian crises continue to occur in Haiti. The ongoing political unrest and violence, along with the threat of earthquakes, heavy rainfalls, floods and hurricanes – with all their consequences – continue to put lives at risk. Such crises make it harder to implement sustainable development measures, and they require flexibility, both from the population and from organizations such as Helvetas. Planning ahead remains crucial. From the very beginning of each project, we

ensure that communities are able to act in times of acute crisis to protect lives and livelihoods. In other words, people have to be resilient even in emergencies and be able to emerge from crises stronger than before. Whatever we do, we always keep one eye on the future.

#### How does Helvetas Haiti bring this about?

By working together with partner organizations, local communities and authorities, we continuously assess risks and plan preventive measures. In the case of earthquakes or extreme weather events, for example, access to drinking water is always at risk. So, we ask, where is water access particularly vulnerable? This involves infrastructure as well as the legal and political frameworks that determine which institutions are responsible at the national, regional and local levels – and the manner of their involvement during emergencies, as well as the political improvements that are needed. Together, we plan coordination, communication and

response strategies for emergency situations. Disaster preparedness is essential, from civil protection protocols to the dry stone walls that prevent erosion and landslides. To avoid blind spots and empower women, we actively involve them in the risk management processes.

#### One has to act quickly in emergencies. How are donors responding?

Thanks to our years of experience, we have pre-established procedures and tools that help us to respond to disasters and address the urgent needs of the population rapidly. This always happens in close coordination with our donors, such as SDC and foundations. It is essential to clarify with them whether we can reallocate approved project funds for emergency relief, or if additional funding might be available. Swiss donors are generally flexible in these situations.



**Gansly Jean** coordinates Helvetas projects in southeastern Haiti.

#### Helvetas helps to achieve the following Agenda 2030 goals:







## A rapid response

Statistically speaking, the flooding in **Niger** in August 2024 was the most devastating in the last 50 years. Nearly 90,000 homes were destroyed, more than 840,000 people lost their belongings, and 304 people lost their lives. Helvetas, which has worked in Niger for the last 12 years, was able to distribute emergency kits in the city of Maradi in a short amount of time, in collaboration with SDC. These included water purification tablets, soap, buckets, water containers, sleeping mats, mosquito nets and blankets for over 24,000 people.

## Preventing child marriages

In Cox's Bazar, **Bangladesh**, over one million Rohingya people live in the world's largest refugee camp. Approximately half of them are children. Formal education is non-existent in the camp. Many parents marry off their daughters at a young age, usually due to financial hardship. In addition to humanitarian aid, Helvetas organizes informational events to sensitize parents that child marriage violates children's rights and has serious consequences. Rohingya activists reached around 4,000 people with information on the topic through awareness-raising theater performances. Youth groups are furthering the awareness-raising work in the camp.

## Prevention works

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is an essential component of Helvetas' work in relation to climate change. The greater the preparedness, the less the damage during a disaster. Helvetas integrates prevention into project planning, for example, in **Laos** with dam projects, in **Moldova**, **Peru** and **Bolivia** with urban planning and water infrastructure, and in **Madagascar**, where drought-related migration movements are factored in. And in **Haiti**, entire villages maintain their dry-stone walls they built five years ago, which protect their fields from storm surges and heavy rains.



## Surviving droughts

In 2024, **Ethiopia** experienced its fourth consecutive major drought. Conflicts over water and grazing land have increased, particularly in the Wag-Hemra zone of the Amhara region, where the political situation remains tense. Helvetas assisted people in the initial months with cash, animal feed and vaccination campaigns for livestock, since these often represent people's only source of income. At the same time, affected people are learning climate-resilient farming methods to better withstand future droughts.



## After the fires

Mega-fires in **Bolivia** have destroyed more than 10 million hectares of forest and land, an area more than twice the size of Switzerland. They have also affected Helvetas' projects. The country team provided families in the project area with urgently needed drinking water. With rapid reforestation and the protection of watersheds, Helvetas ensures that Bolivia's population will continue to have access to water for their daily use and to irrigate their fields.

## Aid after hurricanes

In November, Hurricane Sara damaged 4,400 homes and 976 water conduits in **Honduras**. Helvetas provided 1,000 families with drinking water and hygiene kits and helped repair water supply. One month later, Cyclone Chido struck **Mozambique**, damaging or destroying 70,000 homes and the livelihoods of thousands of people. Helvetas assessed the local needs for all emergency aid organizations in one of the country's districts. It distributed 2,000 emergency kits and is now supporting the restoration of 35 water access points.

More about our Humanitarian Response: [helvetas.org/humanitarianresponse](https://helvetas.org/humanitarianresponse)



Rockets destroyed Oleh Konovalov's bookstore. With donations from Switzerland, he was able to reopen it. The Swiss book trade and the Swiss Book Centre cooperative, together with Helvetas, collected funds in a solidarity campaign for the repair of bookstores and printing shops and the furnishing of school shelters. With its partner organizations, Helvetas is providing financial grants to help business owners reopen their small businesses. In this way, cafes, bakeries, plastering companies and others are creating jobs and strengthening the country's economic resilience.

"I had always dreamed of running a cozy, beautiful bookstore where people would be happy to meet."

Oleh Konovalov, Kharkiv, Ukraine



# RAISING AWARENESS, CONSTANTLY

Last year, the Swiss Parliament passed the new International Cooperation Strategy 2025–28 and decided to cut millions of francs from poverty alleviation efforts. Given the consequences of this decision, Helvetas has joined the debate over these budget cuts.

For the next four years, Switzerland’s International Cooperation will likely have 10.69 billion Swiss francs available, over half a billion less than in the previous four years. CHF 1.5 billion (15%) of this reduced amount is earmarked for humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of Ukraine. In light of Russia’s breach of international law with its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, this money could and should have been allocated through extraordinary funding by the Swiss Parliament. This substantial cut in aid could instead have helped millions of people in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe to improve their livelihoods and escape poverty.

Helvetas clearly outlined the goals, impact and role of Swiss development cooperation in the debate over budget cuts. Independent evaluations in the latest report by the Swiss government confirm that Swiss development cooperation has an average success rate of 80%. And this is despite the fact that development programs are by their very nature conducted in unstable regions and fragile contexts. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of “development aid” has often been broadly questioned by Members of Parliament and the general public, and demonstrably false figures comparing the increase in spending on International Cooperation to that of spending on the Swiss military have been spread. Through awareness-raising efforts, Helvetas has repeatedly



Helvetas ambassadors Kafi Freitag and Patrick Rohr press a solidarity alert button.

refuted such false claims. With Alliance Sud, the Competence Center for International Cooperation and Development Policy, Helvetas was in contact with Members of Parliament and launched a solidarity alert to raise public awareness of international cooperation and sustainable development.

**In addition, in 2024, Helvetas:**

- presented the exhibition “On the Move Across the World” in partnership with the Ballenberg Open-Air Museum, which drew a connection between the historical mobility of the Swiss and today’s migration. It attracted 90,000 visitors.
- raised awareness as a member of the Agenda 2030 Platform on the relevance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

and highlighted that Switzerland is not on track to meet its goals.

- advocated for a responsible and effective Swiss policy on climate and climate justice, for example by recommending to vote “yes” on the Electricity Act.
- argued at the UN Climate Change Conference for a committed Switzerland that is engaged in finding viable solutions to the climate crisis.
- joined Swiss NGOs in encouraging the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the Swiss UN Mission to actively address the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar and the status of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh at the UN Security Council.
- expanded its development policy advisory board to include members from The Centre party and the Council of States.

# BUILDING KNOWLEDGE, SUSTAINABLY

Public and private donors want projects they support to deliver clear and measurable benefits. Binding procedures are in place to ensure that neither people nor the environment suffer adverse impacts. Helvetas trains project managers worldwide on how to put these procedures into practice.

For example, when building a dam, people affected by resettlement or land loss must be fairly compensated. And, before introducing a new variety of rice, its suitability for the expected climate must be assessed. New production methods must not lead to job losses, and newly cultivated land must not threaten biodiversity. While these measures may seem self-evident, experience shows that in development cooperation, environmental and social standards are sometimes not sufficiently upheld, and that safety precautions may be insufficient.

Countries and organizations applying for funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialized agency of the UN, must therefore meet strict criteria relating to topics such as climate protection, gender equality, biodiversity, resource management, cultural heritage and health impacts. This constitutes a challenge for many project teams, which is why IFAD has commissioned Helvetas to train project managers across the globe who are applying for IFAD funding in implementing these procedures.

The trainings involve project managers as well as technical experts and government ministers. This helps spread awareness of the procedures all the way up to the most senior levels of decision-



Zira Mavunganidze, Climate and Environment Specialist for IFAD, training future trainers in Johannesburg.

makers. Helvetas goes beyond the bounds of conventional training. With the firm conviction that shared experience leads to the most effective kind of learning, Helvetas promotes “Communities of Practice.” These networks help experts and project managers to exchange ideas regularly, share knowledge and reflect on their work together, across country and sector boundaries.

Helvetas trains independent trainers who conduct context-specific workshops to facilitate these knowledge exchanges and trainings. These trainers are familiar with the local language, culture, political

dynamics, history and potential of each region. This allows them to teach relevant, practical skills. To date, such trainings have been conducted in 28 countries. “The consultants have to be empathetic and able to inspire and motivate participants. And they have to be digitally skilled to create engaging online workshops,” explains Kai Schrader, who oversees the IFAD mandate at Helvetas. Helvetas acts as a hub in this process, organizing the trainings, connecting stakeholders, mediating between different needs and taking limits into consideration.

Helvetas’ work as part of this IFAD initiative has led to the emergence of a global network of experts committed to implementing environmental, social and climate protection standards in rural development, in full alignment with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The newly trained consultants can also offer their expertise to institutions such as other UN agencies or the World Bank to help applicants meet social and environmental standards, for the benefit of both people and the planet.

**Knowledge is what we use in our work. Learning is how we increase or enhance our knowledge. Innovation is how we leverage knowledge and learning to significantly increase impact.**



# WHO BUILDS THE BRIDGES TO A SAFER FUTURE?

In Nepal, Helvetas, together with SDC and the government of Nepal, has supported the construction of over 10,000 suspension foot-bridges and trained thousands of professionals in this process. Since 2008, these engineers have been sharing their expertise through South-South exchange programs with countries that face similar geographical challenges, including Bhutan, Laos, Indonesia, Honduras, Mozambique, Tanzania, Burundi and Ethiopia, where more than 200 such bridges have already been constructed, 170 of them in Ethiopia alone. In 2024, 20 engineers, 51 consultants, 119 contractors and 14 materials manufacturers were trained in this East African country.

Helvetas engineers Sewnet Assegu from Ethiopia and Pasang Sherpa from Nepal stand together on a bridge that they built together in northern Ethiopia.

© Simon B. Opladen



# GENEROUS DONATIONS AND POSITIVE FINANCIAL RESULT

Donations and bequests of more than CHF 46.4 million testify to the trust that many individuals, foundations and institutions place in Helvetas' work and to their solidarity with people in the Global South. Together with income from services provided of CHF 116.4 million, the 2024 financial statements show an income of CHF 162.8 million and expenses of CHF 167.2 million. After fund withdrawals and due to a satisfactory financial result, the annual result amounts to almost CHF 1.3 million.

### Necessary investments

Never before in Helvetas' history has there been such a large budget for projects as in 2024, and the very satisfactory financial result yielded a year-end financial surplus of CHF 1.3 million. This represents a significant improvement over the previous year, which showed a financial loss. Further investments in digitalization are necessary to ensure that the numerous meaningful projects in our partner countries can continue to be implemented successfully and cost-effectively in the future. These investments will improve and streamline project management and automate processes and controls. Financing such digital systems is becoming increasingly challenging, given the diminishing level of contributions and budgets for international cooperation.

### Financial audit

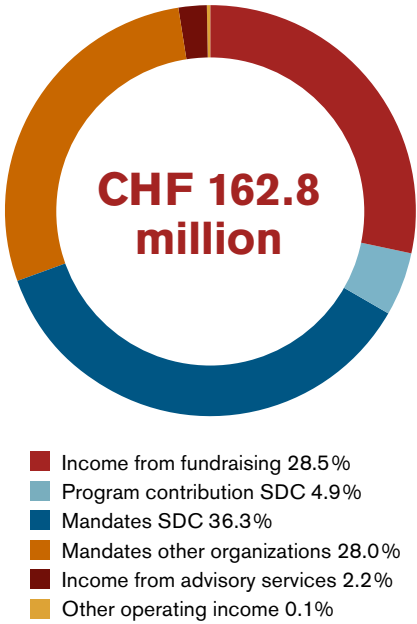
KPMG audited the accounts and financial statements and approved these on May 20, 2025. Their audit report and the complete 2024 financial report can be viewed at the offices of Helvetas, Weinbergstrasse 22a, 8001 Zurich and downloaded in German from our website [helvetas.org/finanzbericht](https://helvetas.org/finanzbericht)

The financial statements are presented in CHF thousand (TCHF). Due to the selected number format, there may be rounding differences between individual amounts and totals.

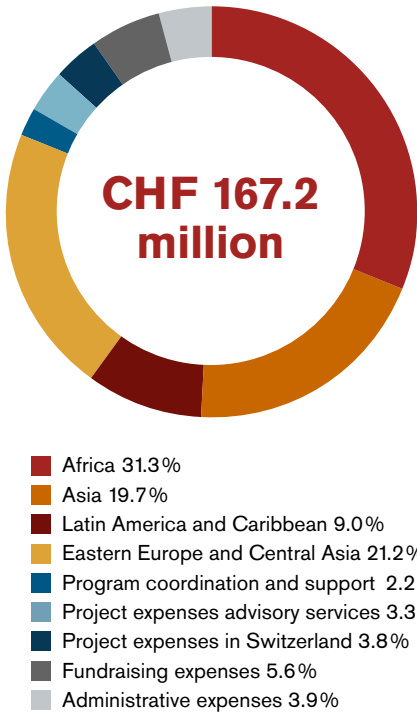
## BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	31.12.2024 in TCHF	31.12.2023 in TCHF
Cash and cash equivalents	61,512	60,396
Marketable securities	20,095	18,831
Receivables	4,715	7,784
Net assets in project countries	19,781	13,252
Prepayments and accrued income	9,020	13,724
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>115,122</b>	<b>113,987</b>
Investments in financial assets	33	36
Tangible fixed assets	486	315
Intangible assets	762	1,063
<b>Non-current assets</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>1,414</b>
<b>Assets</b>	<b>116,402</b>	<b>115,401</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Short-term accounts payable	5,403	4,834
Accrued expenses and deferred income	70,939	70,070
Short-term provisions	0	43
<b>Short-term liabilities</b>	<b>76,342</b>	<b>74,946</b>
Long-term provisions	931	511
<b>Long-term liabilities</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>77,273</b>	<b>75,457</b>
<b>Fund capital</b>	<b>9,707</b>	<b>11,798</b>
<b>Liabilities incl. fund capital</b>	<b>86,980</b>	<b>87,255</b>
Unrestricted capital	13,372	11,347
Restricted capital	16,050	16,799
<b>Organizational capital</b>	<b>29,423</b>	<b>28,146</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>116,402</b>	<b>115,401</b>

### SOURCE OF FUNDS



### USE OF FUNDS



## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

INCOME	2024 in TCHF	2023 in TCHF
Membership fees	2,056	1,934
Donations	42,464	39,865
Inheritances and legacies	1,894	1,503
<b>Income from fundraising</b>	<b>46,415</b>	<b>43,302</b>
Program contribution SDC	8,000	8,000
Mandates SDC	59,115	57,052
Mandates other organizations	45,539	42,945
Income from advisory services	3,583	4,588
Other operating income	196	186
<b>Income from services provided</b>	<b>116,432</b>	<b>112,770</b>
<b>Operating income</b>	<b>162,846</b>	<b>156,072</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Africa	-52,421	-45,192
Asia	-32,782	-32,905
Latin America and Caribbean	-15,030	-19,352
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	-35,505	-32,704
Program coordination and support	-3,713	-3,804
<b>Project expenses international programs</b>	<b>-139,452</b>	<b>-133,956</b>
<b>Project expenses advisory services</b>	<b>-5,571</b>	<b>-6,464</b>
<b>Project expenses Switzerland</b>	<b>-6,280</b>	<b>-5,939</b>
<b>Fundraising expenses</b>	<b>-9,443</b>	<b>-9,582</b>
<b>Administrative expenses</b>	<b>-6,490</b>	<b>-5,824</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>	<b>-167,236</b>	<b>-161,764</b>
<b>Operating result</b>	<b>-4,390</b>	<b>-5,692</b>
Financial result	3,519	479
Other result	56	57
<b>Result before change in fund capital</b>	<b>-814</b>	<b>-5,156</b>
Change in fund capital	2,091	3,327
<b>Annual result before allocation to organizational capital</b>	<b>1,277</b>	<b>-1,829</b>
<b>Allocations/utilizations</b>		
Unrestricted capital	2,026	-1,339
Strategy Acceleration fund	-730	-490
Social fund	-19	0



# COMMITTED AND INFLUENTIAL

Helvetas is a politically and denominationally neutral association, supported by 91,100 members, benefactors and donors. Board members work on an unpaid basis and support Helvetas with generous private donations.


## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Regula Rytz,**  
President, Bern, historian, former National Councillor, consultant, since 2021



**Peter Niggli,**  
Vice President, Zurich, journalist, author, expert in international development, since 2015



**Danièle Castle**  
Chésereux VD, expert for Lifelong Learning EPFL, facilitator Cercle de Legs, founder/owner Genevensis, since 2023



**Jörg Frieden**  
Fribourg, Dr. oec. publ., Development Economist, President of the Board of SIFEM, since 2018




**Angelo Gnädinger**  
Geneva, lic. iur., former General Director of the ICRC (2002–2010), resigned December 2024




**Spring Gombe,**  
Konstanz D, biologist, founder policy/strategy group, since 2023



**René Holenstein**  
Schaffhausen, Dr. phil. I, expert in development and former Swiss ambassador, since 2020




**Chinwe Ifejika Speranza**  
Zurich, Prof. Dr. for Geography and Sustainable Development, Institute of Geography, University of Bern, since 2023



**Jean-Philippe Jutzi**  
Verbier VS/Lausanne VD, journalist, former dipl. advisor to the FDFA, communications consultant, resigned November 2024



**Peter Messerli**  
Bern, Director Wyss Academy for Nature, Prof. for Sustainable Development, University of Bern, since 2020



**Shobhini Mukerji**  
New Delhi (India), development economist, Executive Director of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) – South Asia, since June 2024



**Dina Pomeranz**  
Zurich, Assistant Professor of Applied Economics, University of Zurich, since 2020



**Dominique Schmid**  
Worblaufen BE, lic. rer. pol. MBA/EMBA, indep. consultant, Board member and strategic Project Manager at several companies, since 2021



**Ueli Winzenried**  
Bern, Betr. oec. HWV, SEP GSB Stanford (CA), Business consultant Burkhalter Attorneys in Bern/Zurich, since 2019


The **General Assembly**, the organization's highest body, meets once a year. It elects the members of the Board of Directors and approves the guiding principles

The **Board of Directors**, the highest executive body, is responsible for the organization's strategy and for approving the annual budget.

The **Management Board** is responsible for planning and implementing the projects, programs and actions within Switzerland and abroad.

Potential conflicts of interest of members of the Board of Directors and the Management Board are listed in the financial report.


## MANAGEMENT BOARD




**Melchior Lengsfeld**  
Executive Director




**Stefan Stolle**  
Deputy Director (since August 2024), Director Marketing and Communications




**Barbara Dietrich**  
Director International Programs




**Celestine Krösschell**  
Director International Programs, since Sept. 2024



**Esther Haldimann**  
Director Advisory Services



**Thomas Truninger**  
Director Finance and Controlling



**Manuela Häfeli**  
Director People and Culture (in annual rotation with Kathrin Indermaur, starting each August)

Retirement:  
Remo Gesù  
(August 2024)

## RELATED PARTIES

Besides the members of the Board of Directors and the Management Board of Helvetas, related parties include the following organizations: Alliance2015, Brussels • Alliance for Water Stewardship, North Berwick, Scotland • Alliance Sud, Bern • CAN Climate Action Network, Bonn • cinfo, Biel • Schweizer Forum für Berufsbildung und Internationale Zusammenarbeit FoBBIZ, Renens • Knowledge Management for Development KM4DEV, Zurich • KOFF Die Schweizer Plattform für Friedensförderung, Basel • Max Havelaar-Stiftung (Schweiz), Zurich • NGO-Plattform der Schweizer Entwicklungsorganisationen, Bern • Swiss Sustainable Coffee Platform, Bern • Swiss Solidarity, Geneva • Skat Foundation, St. Gallen • Swiss NGO DRR Platform, Wabern • Swiss Water Partnership, Zurich • Swiss Water & Sanitation NGO Consortium, Zurich.

The subsidiaries HELVETAS Intercooperation gGmbH, Bonn and Helvetas USA Inc., Minneapolis are included in the consolidated financial statements.

## ADVISORY BOARD



**Sibel Arslan**  
Basel, lic. iur., National Councillor



**Mario Fehr**  
Zurich, lic. iur., Member of the government of the Canton of Zurich



**Claudia Friedl**  
St. Gallen, Dr. sc. nat. ETH, National Councillor



**Niklaus-Samuel Gugger**  
Winterthur ZH, social entrepreneur and management consultant, National Councillor, since June 2024



**Giorgio Fonio**  
Mendrisio TI, economist, trade union secretary, National Councillor, since December 2024



**Franziska Roth**  
Solothurn, special needs teacher, States Councillor, since March 2024



**Laurent Wehrli**  
Glion VD, lic. ès lettres, National Councillor

**Regula Rytz and Peter Niggli** represent the Board of Directors in the Advisory Board.



# DEVELOPING NEW IDEAS TOGETHER

Helvetas has a foundation at its side in the Liechtenstein Development Service (LED) that understands the importance of focusing on issues, leveraging synergies and building local capacity.

The LED is a private foundation that has evolved over its 60-year history as Liechtenstein’s official development agency. It used to implement its own projects in countries like the Republic of Moldova. Today, the LED works in nine focus countries in the Global South through partnerships with local, regional and international experts and NGOs “who know the local context well and deliver professional results,” says Andreas Sicks, CEO of the LED. “Helvetas is one such organization.” Together, the LED and Helvetas implement projects for sustainable food systems in West Africa and Mozambique.

“With a team of just seven people, the LED’s capacities are naturally limited,” Andreas Sicks adds. But his team knows how to network. “In Mozambique, for example, we have connected Helvetas with our partner organizations who are running similar projects, and we actively promote these interactions.” The LED also sees itself as a sparring partner: “We brainstorm new ideas and strategies together. We truly value this routine exchange and collaboration,” he adds.

Having a clear focus is key for the LED. In 2023, the organization streamlined its strategy to two core themes: vocational training and employability and sustainable food systems. The LED believes that in the future, strengthening local implementation capacities and empowering partners from the local private sector and civil society organizations will be essential. “This way, our partners can eventually make themselves redundant in certain areas.”



Andreas Sicks is CEO of the Liechtenstein Development Service (LED).



With support from the LED, small-scale farmers in Mali like Korotimi Kamaté are learning new sustainable agriculture techniques.

**THE SDC PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION**  
As an important partner, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) supports Helvetas’ diverse projects with its program contribution. When 70% or more of a project is covered by donations and contributions from foundations, Helvetas can finance the rest from the program contribution. Thanks to the SDC contribution, CHF 70 of donations basically becomes CHF 100 for the project. The SDC’s review of these projects also provides additional assurance that donations and contributions are used in the best way possible. Many of the projects mentioned in this annual report were co-financed by the SDC program contribution.

## WE THANK ALL DONORS, FUNDERS, CLIENTS AND PARTNERS

### SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Project and program contributions

### Cantons, Cities and Municipalities

FEDEVACO, Fédération vaudoise de coopération

FGC, Fédération genevoise de coopération

Cantons of Aargau, Lucerne, Obwalden, Ticino, Valais, Zurich, Canton of Basel-Stadt, Republic and Canton of Geneva

Gemeinsame Entwicklungszusammenarbeit Adliswil (Protestant congregation of Sihltal, Roman Catholic congregation and City of Adliswil), Bettingen, Chiasso, Fribourg, Geneva, Maur, Münsingen, Protestant congregation of Unterseen, Riehen, Sorengo, City Cooperation of Schaffhausen – Frauenfeld – St. Gallen – Winterthur, Schlieren, Vevey, Zurich

### Foundations, associations and other NPOs

Albert Jenny Stiftung  
Alfred Richterich Stiftung  
Alois und Irma Weber-Goldinger-Stiftung  
Alstom Foundation  
Bridges to Prosperity  
Büchi Foundation  
CHARISMA Stiftung für nachhaltige Entwicklung  
charity: water  
Coop Sustainability Fund  
Corrado Stiftung  
Däster-Schild Stiftung  
Drink & Donate and Viva con Agua Switzerland  
Eckenstein-Geigy Foundation  
ESPERANZA – kooperative Hilfe gegen Armut  
Fondation Agnès Delachaux  
Fondation Assistance Internationale – FAI  
Fondation Cordama  
Fondation Johann et Luzia Grässli  
Fondation Loom  
Fondation Lord Michelham of Hellingly  
Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz

Fondation Sauvain Petitpierre  
Fondation SMARTPEACE  
Fondazione Teofilo Rossi di Montelera e di Premuda  
FOSIT, Federazione delle ONG della Svizzera italiana  
Foundation for the Third Millennium  
GCERF, Global Community Engagement & Resilience Fund  
Gebauer Stiftung  
Gemeinnützige Stiftung Accentus  
Gemeinnützige Stiftung Symphasis  
Genossenschaft Schweizer Buchzentrum (SBZ)  
Georg Fischer Water Foundation

**“We value the professional and trusting cooperation with Helvetas highly, especially in the implementation of Zurich’s partnerships with the cities of Cox’s Bazar and Mbeya, because of their commitment and expertise on the ground.”**

Anna Schindler, Director of Urban Development, City of Zurich

Gertrude Hirzel Foundation  
Gottfried und Ursula Schächli-Jecklin Stiftung  
Gruppe Sursee und die Welt  
Happel Foundation  
Hermann Foundation  
Irène M. Staehelin Stiftung  
J&K Wonderland Foundation  
L’OCCITANE Foundation  
Laguna Foundation  
Laudes Foundation  
LED, Liechtenstein Development Service  
Leopold Bachmann Stiftung  
Linsi Foundation  
Medicor Foundation  
Mosamsuisse  
One Drop Foundation  
Renzo und Silvana Rezzonico-Stiftung  
Rütli Foundation  
Solafrica  
Somaha Stiftung  
Stiftung Corymbo  
Tauro Stiftung  
Tsadik Foundation  
UBS Philanthropy Foundation

UK Online Giving Foundation  
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Volkart Foundation  
Von Duhn Stiftung  
Walter Haefner Stiftung  
Water4all Switzerland  
WIR TEILEN: Fastenopfer Liechtenstein  
A generous donor recommended by Carigest SA

### Companies

AMB – Azienda Multiservizi Bellinzona  
AutoForm Engineering GmbH  
Avance AG  
azemos partner AG

### Other Funding Agencies and Clients

ADA, Austrian Development Agency  
AECID, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo  
AFD, Agence française de développement  
AICS, Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo  
Asociación Alterna ONG  
BMEL, German Ministry of Food and Agriculture  
BMZ, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany  
CARITAS Switzerland  
CIAT, International Center for Tropical Agriculture  
CRS, Catholic Relief Services  
Czech Republic Ministry of Interior  
DAI Global UK Ltd  
DANIDA, Danish International Development Agency  
Dar es Salaam University College of Education  
Eawag  
EC European Commission / DEVCO  
ECHO, EU  
Enabel, Belgian Development Agency  
ETH Zürich  
FAO, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations  
Farmahem Doel  
FoBBIZ, Swiss Forum for Skills Development and International Cooperation  
Foundation for the Conservation of Biodiversity (BIOFUND)  
Foundation myclimate  
GFRAS (Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services)  
GIZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH  
Government of Nepal  
HEKS/EPER, Swiss Church Aid  
Humanity International  
IDB, Inter-American Development Bank  
IFAD, International Fund for Agricultural Development  
IFOAM, Organics International  
iGravity AG



THANK YOU

- IOM, International Organization for Migration

ISW, International Secretariat for Water

KEK-CDC AG

LIFT Livelihoods & Food Security Fund UNOPS

Lindt Cocoa Foundation

Luxembourg Development Agency

Mercy Corps Europa

Northwestern University

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Norwegian Trust Fund

OCHA, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

PATRIIP Foundation

People in Need

Pestalozzi Children's Foundation

Plan Binacional de Desarrollo de la Region Fronteriza Peru – Ecuador

Reismühle Nutrex

SECO, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs

SIDA, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Skat Consulting Ltd.

SNV, Netherlands Development Organisation

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property

Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa

Swiss Solidarity

Swiss Water & Sanitation Consortium

Swiss Water Partnership

Swisscontact

UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP, UN Development Programme

UNEP

UNICEF

United Purpose

University of Zurich

UNOPS

Urbaplan

USAID, U.S. Agency for International Development

Vaillant GmbH
- WFP, World Food Programme

WHH, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.

World Bank

World Waternet

WWF

**Partnerships, Alliances and Networks**

AFC, Agriculture and Finance Consultants GmbH

AGUASAN Community of Practice

Alliance for Water Stewardship

Alliance Sud

Alliance2015 (Acted, Ayuda en Acción, CESVI, CONCERN worldwide, HELVETAS, People in Need, Welthungerhilfe)

Basel Institute of Governance

Beam Exchange

Better Cotton Initiative

Canopy Lab

Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) of the University of Bern

Civicus

CLEAR Centers Anglophone Africa and Francophone Africa

Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub

DCED, Donor committee on enterprise development

DDLGN, Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance Network

ECEAT, European Centre for Eco Agro Tourism

fair unterwegs

Fastenaktion

FIAN Switzerland

FiBL, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture

FOEN, Federal Office for the Environment

Fondation Hironnelle

Ford Foundation

GCF, Green Climate Fund

Gemeinsam für Afrika Netzwerk

Gesellschaft Schweiz-UNO

GFA Consulting Group

GNDR, Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction

GWC Global WASH Cluster

HAFL, School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences

ICON-INSTITUTE Consulting Gruppe
- Institute of Development Studies

ISEAL

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature

Klimaallianz Schweiz

KM4DEV

KOFF, The Swiss platform for peacebuilding

LOGIN Asia

Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Institute of Business and Regional Economics

mascontour GmbH

Max Havelaar Switzerland

Mesopartner

Millennium Water Alliance

NetHope

NGO-Plattform Menschenrechte Schweiz

NIRAS A/S

NORRAG, Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training

PEDRR, Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction

PHZH, Zurich University of Teacher Education

Platform Agenda 2030

PROVIA, Global Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation

Public Eye

RECI, Swiss Network for Education & International Cooperation

Rés EAU

Robert Bosch Stiftung

RRI, Rights and Resources Initiative

RWSN, Rural Water Supply Network

Save the Children

SDC Agriculture and Food Systems network

SDC E+E Education and Economy Network

SDC Gender Equality Network

SDC Health Network

SDC Network Climate, DRR and Environment

SDC Peace Governance Equality Network

SEEP Network

SEVAL, Schweizerische Evaluationsgesellschaft
- SFIAR, Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research

SFRAS, Swiss Forum for Rural Advisory Services

SFUVET, Swiss Federal University for Vocational Education and Training

Solidar Suisse

SOS Kinderdorf International

South Pole

SPTF, Social Performance Task Force

SSF, Swiss Sustainable Finance

Sustainable Rice Platform

SVEB Swiss Federation for Adult Learning

Swiss Alliance against SLAPP

Swiss Coalition for Corporate Justice

Swiss Fair Trade

Swiss KM Thinktable

Swiss National FAO Committee (CNS-FAO)

Swiss NGO DRR Platform

Swiss NGO Platform

Swiss Red Cross

SWISSAID

Swisspeace

Terre des Hommes

Textile Exchange

UEBT, Union for Ethical Biotrade

UNFCCC, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNGC, UN Global Compact

University of Zurich, Department of Economics

University of Zurich, Department of Geography

Value Chain Capacity Building Network

VUKA! Coalition for Civic Action

WASH Agenda for Change

Women in Development Europe+

Ximpulse GmbH

ZHAW, Zurich University of Applied Sciences

The list includes institutional donors and clients (from CHF 5,000 upwards) as well as partners.

“I used to get water from the river. My health was worse. We’re doing much better now.”

Maimounatou Soulé,  
Toumarou, Benin

Clean water means a fair chance for a healthy life or an uninterrupted education. Would you also like to contribute to equal opportunities worldwide and make healthy lives a reality?

Account for donations:  
IBAN: CH76 0900 0000 8000 3130 4  
Helvetas is ZEWÖ accredited.





In **2024**, Helvetas received generous donations and bequests adding up to

**46** million Swiss francs and provided services totaling **116** million francs. This

allowed **1,464** committed Helvetas staff and about **1,500** partner

organizations worldwide to support **2.25** million women and **2.6** million men

in **35** countries to forge a life without poverty.

**HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation**  
Weinbergstrasse 22a  
CH-8001 Zurich  
Tel: +41 (0)44 368 65 00  
info@helvetas.org

**Geschäftsstelle Bern**  
Maulbeerstrasse 10  
CH-3001 Bern  
Tel: +41 (0)31 385 10 10  
info@helvetas.org

**Bureau Suisse romande**  
106 route de Ferney  
CH-1202 Genève  
Tel: +41 (0)21 804 58 00  
romandie@helvetas.org

**Ufficio Svizzera italiana**  
Via Rime 38  
CH-6850 Mendrisio  
Tel: +41 (0)91 820 09 00  
svizzeraitaliana@helvetas.org