

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



HELVETAS
USA

**WHAT
MAKES THE UNHEARD,
HEARD?**

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.

“To anyone who thinks that women are worth less than men, I prove them wrong – and that feels good.”



Tsehay Mengistu,
newly trained welder, Ethiopia

“I have a mother’s heart. A better future for my children means a better future for me too.”



Subadhra Timalsina,
Kuwaha producer, Nepal

“Our forest garden is two years old now. After just three months, I was able to harvest corn and after six months, papaya, both to eat and to sell. We never ate such a healthy and varied diet before.”



Jorge Ribera,
farmer and nurse, Bolivia

Decision-makers often do not hear the voices of minorities. A strong civil society stands up for the concerns and rights of these minorities. Strengthening these voices strengthens social cohesion, political participation and democratic control.



Council assembly in Wotet Abay, Ethiopia

Cover photograph: Tahmina Khatun, 30, from Bangladesh, explains what women expect and want.



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BALANCING SHORT- AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

We see wars, conflicts, the climate crisis and authoritarian tendencies everywhere we look. But away from the spotlight, at Helvetas we also see encouraging developments.

Powerful partnerships

On Helvetas USA's first Board of Directors trip I had the opportunity to visit Nepal, where Helvetas launched its first projects over 60 years ago. As a civil engineer and longtime advocate for rural access, I was impressed by the trail bridge program, which Switzerland financed and implemented with the help of local experts. It has changed the lives of 20 million people. Schoolchildren, farmers and midwives can now avoid dangerous paths and river crossings by using more than 10,000 of these bridges (p. 12). Today, the Nepalese government is carrying forward this initiative on its own, and Helvetas can focus on new projects, such as supporting the authorities in building a federal democracy. And learnings continue to be shared across borders through the South-South Cooperation Unit, a group of experts trained through our Nepal collaboration who are now working with governments and NGOs in the Global South to establish and develop trail bridge programs.

I have seen how important long-term partnerships are, especially now, in times of multiple crises. To strengthen civil society and create prospects in low-income countries, you need reliable development cooperation. Thank you for your tireless support, which we don't take for granted and greatly appreciate.

*Avery Bang, Board of Directors
 Vice-Chair, Helvetas USA*



© Anagya Pokharel

U.S. Board of Directors trip to Nepal. Avery Bang (second from left) and Christian Steiner (far left).

Future-focused development cooperation

2023 was a very difficult year for too many people around the world, and not just because of wars and conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ethiopia, Haiti and the Sahel. Climate change and economic crises have also made life difficult for many families. I am grateful that, despite these circumstances, Helvetas and our U.S. partner organizations were able last year to support millions of people on their path out of poverty. We appreciate the support that allows us to increasingly address both short-term and long-term development needs. While development cooperation was originally designed to combat poverty and improve living conditions,

we now also have the opportunity to alleviate the impacts of climate change, address immediate hardships, and support people on the move. Short-term, humanitarian work is needed to save lives and alleviate human suffering. Long-term, comprehensive support is needed to find a way out of the current poly-crisis, to prevent future crises and to create viable alternatives on the ground. All the more reason for us to thank our funding partners and donors for their committed support to creating fair opportunities worldwide, and with that, the basis for a peaceful coexistence.

*Christian Steiner,
 CEO, Helvetas USA*

In rural areas of Benin, menstruation is a taboo subject shrouded in beliefs and prejudices. Girls often don't understand what is happening to them when they get their first period. They're afraid, and they dare not talk about it at home. Helvetas works with courageous women who confront this subject in schools so that everyone, girls and boys alike, learns to see the menstrual cycle as something natural. Gender-separated toilets help girls to meet their needs without being scrutinized. The beginning of the end of a taboo.

© Simon B. Opladen



WHY CAN COMBATTING TABOOS BE THE LIFEBLOOD OF PROGRESS?

RECLAIMING THE SPACE TO ACT

The intimidation of environmental activists, the violent dispersal of demonstrations, the death penalty for homosexuality, accusations of money laundering and arbitrary lawsuits against NGOs are alarm signals: The ability of civil society to act freely is under threat and must be protected.

“Fear and suspicion and hate – these are the values that are being injected into the society. Mistrust is growing,” said Rajagopal P.V., founder of the Indian grass-roots movement Ekta Parishad, at the Helvetas Fall 2023 Symposium on civil society’s shrinking space and ability to act freely in the face of authoritarian power structures. What can we do about it? “If properly organized, we can recreate our space and create a history for the future,” says Rajagopal P.V. Solutions can only come “from the bottom, not from the top.” He added, “Never underestimate the power of the poor.”

Only 2 percent of the world’s population lives in countries where civil society is able to engage for democracy and justice without danger. In contrast, 31 percent of humanity is completely denied this, 40 percent face repression and 15 percent face obstructions in trying to do so. 12 percent live in a country with a narrowed civic space. This has dramatic consequences, because democracies are only viable in the long term if the state, the

The United Nations Human Rights Council In many countries, it is hard for NGOs to engage the government directly on sensitive issues. The UN Human Rights Council in Geneva offers a way out of this predicament. Here, even small NGOs can present their legitimate concerns for discussion in a protected setting. The respective government must then adopt a position and take appropriate measures. Helvetas has been supporting partner organizations in this process for several years with joint reports and targeted advocacy. Many important issues have been addressed in this way in recent years, such as the right to clean drinking water, education and decent working conditions. Ideally, this opens up new opportunities for a constructive dialogue between the state and civil society.

private sector and civil society can participate in public debates on an equal footing.

Whether or not we are free to express our concerns publicly depends on where we are born. Switzerland’s direct democracy, with its substantive votes and elections, gives Swiss citizens many opportunities to express themselves on issues of public interest, and to negotiate and help make decisions.

Approaching Code Red worldwide

On every project, Helvetas works with civil society partner organizations and strengthens these in a targeted manner. But in many partner countries, the stoplight symbol used by Civicus (an international NGO network for the protection of civil rights) to gauge the state of civil society is glowing dark orange to red. In many places, political and economic elites resent when civil society asks critical questions and insists on the rule of law and justice. As a result, many NGOs operate in political environments where freedom of association, assembly and expression are at times severely restricted.

Many of these restrictions are insidious: a threat here and regulatory obstacles there, including hurdles for the registration of NGOs, extremely strict requirements for financial reporting, a ban on foreign funding and accusations of being an agent for a foreign country. Active citizens and journalists are being intimidated, watched, persecuted and arrested. The media are being censored. According to the organization Reporters Without Borders a total of 521 media professionals across the globe were arbitrarily detained in 2023.

Restrictions can also become violent when demonstrations are broken up or human rights advocates and environmentalists are killed. Elections are also a sensitive moment for democracies when opposition activists,



Journalism training in Bhutan. Media diversity is one of the benchmarks of a civil society’s ability to act freely.

journalists and dissidents are legally persecuted or otherwise intimidated and excluded from elections.

With the resurgence of authoritarian regimes and criminal gangs, a well-known, dangerous pattern of repression of civil society is spreading across the world. Nationalism, populism, conservatism and fundamentalism are once again making it socially acceptable to intimidate dissenters, minorities and foreigners and their organizations – and not just in countries with authoritarian regimes. Restrictions are often embedded in legislation with the monitoring, punishment and banning of civil society organizations, for example under the guise of fighting terrorism.

The strength of networking

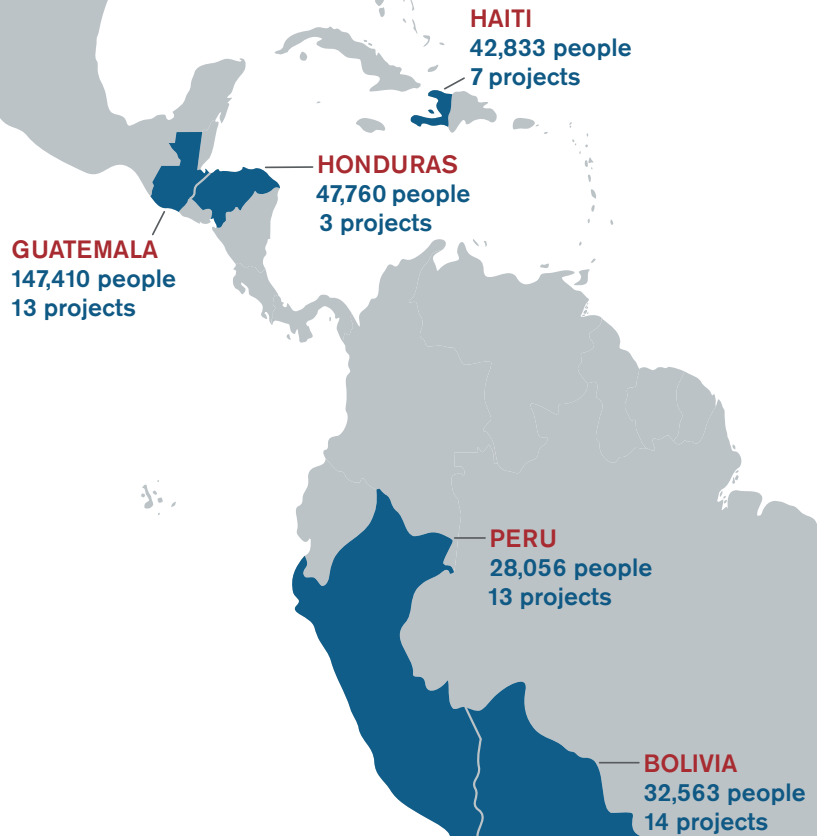
For Agnieszka Kroskowska, leader of Helvetas’ Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion team and an expert in gender and social justice, the key to reopening a space for engagement in civil society resides in local, regional, national and international networking. This involves seeking allies not only among like-minded people, but also in government, the scientific community

and the private sector. “This is how we spread the risks and, at the same time, increase our strengths and influence exponentially.”

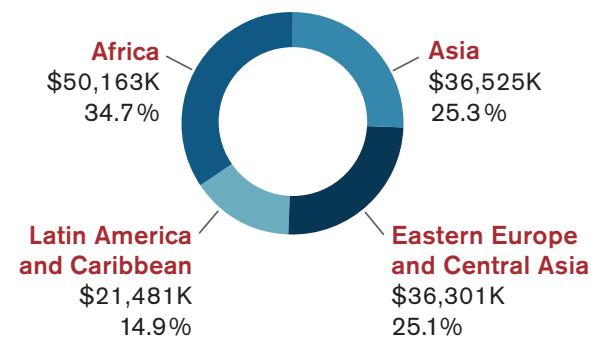
Civil society plays a pivotal role in development cooperation when it comes to social balance and political control, as well as the quality assurance of projects and partnerships. Locally organized and committed people are the ones to point out weaknesses in the political, social and economic system. They are able to voice the concerns of minorities. They negotiate rights and obligations with decision-makers. When the state and the business world refuse to engage with civil society, there is a lack of fair opportunities for the powerless and disadvantaged in a society. This is why Helvetas makes a deliberate effort to protect and, where possible, expand civil society’s ability to act freely, as many examples in this annual report show.

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.



PROGRAM EXPENDITURE



Every single person counts

For each of our 280 projects*, Helvetas collects annual data on how many women and men have directly benefited from improvements such as vocational training courses, new water connections or safer migration, and how many organizations and institutions have been strengthened. In addition, there were emergency response projects in Syria and Morocco carried out by Alliance2015 partners with a total of 12,230 people supported.

The figures reflect the situation as of December 31, 2023. *Due to new counting method, this figure is not comparable with previous years.

10,000 TRAIL BRIDGES IN NEPAL

In Nepal, suspension bridges improve access to education, markets and healthcare for millions of people. They give women, men and children fair opportunities and prospects. The 10,000th bridge was inaugurated in November 2023. This is a success story in which Helvetas has played a part, and which continues in a new form.

Nepal has a very rugged topography with over 6,000 streams and rivers, such as the Melamchi River. During the rainy season, it carries so much water that Dawa Chirring and his fellow students can no longer cross it. “We lived separately from our families in a hostel near the school for several months at a time,” says the 15-year-old. Now a suspension bridge connects the two banks of the Melamchi. Gone are the days of long walks for Dawa and many others who want to sell their vegetables at the market, collect a document from a government office, or see a doctor.

Over the past six decades, 10,000 trail bridges have been built in Nepal. They have eliminated the need for dangerous, and sometimes fatal, river crossings. The travel time of one million people has been reduced by an average of 2.1 hours per day. Some 20 million Nepalese people have been able to improve their living conditions: There is a 17 percent reduction in the cost of food, agricultural production has increased by 10 percent and house hold income by 22 percent. After a new trail bridge is built, an average of 8.5 percent more children attend school and visits to health centers rise by 31 percent. One in five bridges brings the opening of new stores, food stalls and workshops.

Local professionals take over

The suspension bridges date back to an initiative-launched by Helvetas that has been financed and jointly developed since the early 1960s by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The approach has evolved considerably over the years. At first, Helvetas and SDC carried out the construction projects themselves. They planned each bridge individually and the construction teams lived close to the building site for months.

To put the bridges into quasi-mass production, local specialists trained by Helvetas on the technical

Localization: challenging power relations

Localization challenges traditional concepts and approaches to development cooperation, questions unequal power structures and seeks to jointly shape economic and trade relations in a fair way. The power to define and decide on progress, “development” and sustainable policies should lie in the hands of the people who live in the countries of the Global South. To achieve this, both international NGOs and their national partner organizations, as well as donors are called upon to realign partnerships with a view to equal cooperation. The private sector can also contribute to this with resources and expertise for locally managed development. At a time when civil society’s space is shrinking and its ability to act freely is being restricted (p. 8), a close and complementary cooperation with national NGOs in the Global South is all the more essential for credibly combating global and local injustices. Helvetas has principles and guidelines for partnerships that are carefully adapted to each context.

requirements took over the responsibility for bridge construction in 1989. Bridge design was standardized, making it more cost-efficient, and the bridges are now managed locally. This approach fosters local responsibility and ownership, since an operation and maintenance committee that includes future bridge users is formed prior to its construction. It is crucial that women and representatives of ethnic minorities are involved so that they can voice their needs. Before, some 50 bridges were built per year. The average rose to about 150 bridges per year.

All of these elements were incorporated into the Nepalese government’s national bridge strategy in 2006, under which no one in the country should have to make



© Narendra Shrestha

Suspension bridges not only shorten distances, they also empower women and minorities, who are represented on every bridge committee.

a detour of more than an hour to access government services. The bridge design has been continuously optimized, including being widened so that bicycles and motorcycles can be pushed across them. The number of completed bridges in Nepal increases significantly every year. In 2023, local experts, working together with the neighboring villages and under the supervision of local committees, built 740 suspension bridges – including the country’s 10,000th trail bridge, which was officially inaugurated in November 2023.

across the three levels of government – federal, provincial and municipal – and in involving the citizenry. As a result, the once purely technical approach of the bridge program has been expanded to include aspects of civic participation and good governance.

A South-South exchange

Nepalese authorities today have the resources and technical knowledge to continue the program on their own. In early 2024, the Nepalese government took over all aspects of bridge construction, from planning to financing, construction and maintenance.

And the bridges have set an example worldwide: Nepalese experts who gained experience in Helvetas’ trail bridge program are now sharing their knowledge with engineers in other countries that face similar topographical challenges as Nepal, as part of a “South-South” cooperation. Since 2009, 150 suspension bridges based on the Nepalese model have been built or are in the planning stage in Ethiopia, Burundi, Tanzania, Mozambique, Indonesia, Bhutan, Laos and Vietnam.

1,562,146
people have shorter distances to travel and more time, thanks to new bridges and roads built in 2023

As part of the introduction of Nepal’s federal constitution in 2015, Helvetas supported the government in distributing responsibility for bridge construction

WHAT MAKES DUMP SITES BLOOM AGAIN?



Sucre, the constitutional capital of Bolivia, is growing, but its water supply depends on increasingly irregular rainfalls. Helvetas supports the municipal government in urban development to make the city more climate-resilient, for example by transforming waste dumps into green spaces and by creating a legal basis for community gardens that further people's self-sufficiency. These gardens also loosen the soil and make it more permeable to rain. Urban planning requires data and plans, which are being collected and drawn up by students of Carla Jaliri (right) at the University of San Francisco Xavier in Sucre to help the city administration make the optimal decisions.

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 lobbying.



Ensuring basic rights

Water, food and climate

In 2023 **3,352,436** women and men gained sustainable access to water, sanitation, proper hygiene, better nutrition and natural resources, and they have benefited from larger harvests and improved climate resilience. Together with Helvetas, they installed solar-powered 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 2023 **650,683** 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, **16,654** 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 2023, with Helvetas' support, **109,106** women and men learned to demand their right to basic public services and resolve conflicts. Helvetas also worked with local authorities and partner organizations to help **1,340,363** women and men plan for their safe, responsible and profitable labor migration.

Alleviating suffering

Humanitarian response

In 2023, Helvetas supported **384,536** people affected by the war in Ukraine, cyclones in Bangladesh and Myanmar, earthquakes in Syria, Morocco and Nepal, and many people in forgotten crisis areas elsewhere. Helvetas combines short-term humanitarian aid with long-term development cooperation so that people are able to rebuild their daily lives quickly and not remain dependent on aid.



© Simon B. Opladen

Juliana Gonzalez in Guatemala went almost 50 years before she could draw clean water from a tap at home. This is an opportunity for the whole family.

5,837,124
people have been
given a fair
opportunity thanks
to your support

HEALTHY DIET AND LAND RIGHTS

Billions of people are born in countries without access to clean drinking water, a balanced diet or the ability to protect themselves from the consequences of climate change. Together with partner organizations, Helvetas is working to create new opportunities for millions of people.

Planning landscapes

Climate change, the loss of biodiversity, water scarcity, deforestation and soil degradation are factors that make it hard for people to escape poverty. In development cooperation, the “landscape approach” offers a potential opportunity: The local population, governmental authorities, private companies and civil society organizations define a common vision for a specific area, a “landscape.” They then jointly develop a plan for the sustainable use of this area. The goal lies in striking a balance between human development and environmental protection. Helvetas has adopted this promising “landscape approach” in a dozen countries.

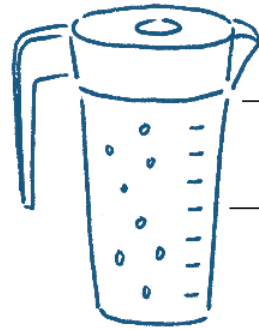


Reducing our climate footprint

Helvetas measures its own greenhouse gas emissions every year. In 2022, these totaled some 8,000 tonnes, 40% of which came from business travel. For every tonne of CO₂ Helvetas has been paying \$11 into its own climate protection fund since 2023; the amount per tonne increases by \$2 each year. The fund is used to finance internal decarbonization measures, such as investments in renewable energies, insulation, or adaptations to shading for our offices in hot countries, as well as alternatives to flying for work.

Our target for 2021–24:

1 million people will have gained direct access to safe drinking water



— 2021–23 result: **1,985,839 people**

— Goal 2024

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

“The price of vanilla is unstable, so we have started to plant corn, ginger and vegetables. This way, we’re no longer dependent on vanilla.”

Albertine Soamanjara, vanilla farmer, with her husband, Jean Renaud Zafilaza, Madagascar



Madagascar’s unique flora and fauna is becoming endangered as people expand their fields into important, protected forests to feed themselves and earn money. Together with Helvetas and local organizations, farmers are diversifying their crops in their existing fields. This enables them to sell their products and gives them food security, even when the price of vanilla on the world market hits rock bottom.

CHALLENGE

Helvetas' water projects promote access to water, and they help local governments and the private sector to adopt a holistic approach. The authorities responsible for building the water systems enter into contracts with the construction companies in accordance with the applicable laws. While it is possible in Switzerland to demand social criteria such as traineeships and fair pay, infrastructure projects in many countries of the Global South must be awarded to the lowest bidder. Experience shows that the infrastructure's quality and therefore also its sustainability suffer as a result.

Well-fed mothers, healthy children

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts in southeastern Bangladesh, 40% of children are developmentally impaired due to malnourishment. Poverty plays a major role in this. Pregnant women are also urged to eat less and to consume no proteins so that their baby is not born too big. Helvetas' partner organizations support volunteers in advising pregnant women and young mothers. The focus is on balanced nutrition and the importance of breastfeeding. Women also learn how to cultivate their own gardens to make them more productive. With this training, young women become more self-confident, safer in their pregnancies, and they give birth to healthier babies. A study shows that 340,000 people have been reached and that eating habits have changed considerably.

More about our working area Water, Food and Climate: helvetas.org/basicrights

Profitable forest protection

In the north of Laos, ethnic minorities are showing that deforestation is not the best way to earn a living. In a Helvetas project, villagers have come together as a collective to negotiate better prices and sell their forest products – red mushrooms, galangal root, cardamom, bamboo shoots and broom grass – as a single entity. Buyers pay a premium for this, which is used for infrastructure or small loans. A forest use plan determines what can be grown and harvested where – or if an area must be protected.

Without subsidies

A Helvetas project in Guatemala is becoming a model for other Latin American countries. The aim is to ensure that the population no longer defecates in the open to reduce the spread of infectious disease and, consequently, diarrheal diseases among young children. The method, which does not include subsidies for communities, convinces them to tackle the problem and to work together to find practical, affordable solutions for all households so that residents can have access to sanitary facilities within six months. Together with Unicef, this method is now being introduced in Nicaragua, Colombia and Peru, and talks are underway with other countries.

Land rights for women

A "twin" project in Tanzania and Madagascar is strengthening women's land use rights, as well as regenerative agriculture and economic development. Women are planting forest gardens and practicing agroforestry to increase the fertility of their land, which is threatened by climate change, and to strengthen biodiversity. To help them become economically stronger and more financially independent, Helvetas helps them set up microenterprises, open up markets and stand up for their political and social concerns. Women lead the project in both countries.



Sayon Samaké, Mali

605,338
people gained direct access to water from a newly built or rehabilitated source.

312,187
in Africa

210,201
in Asia and Eastern Europe

82,950
in Latin America

© Fatoumata Diabate

When water insecurity means anger and shame

No tool so far measures the emotional toll of water insecurity. Helvetas is closing this gap with the HWISE Scale.

What exactly does HWISE measure?

The Household Water Insecurity Experience (HWISE) scale measures people's experiences and feelings in relation to water access: its availability, accessibility in the past four weeks, how reliably it flowed, and how it was used. The scale comprises 12 experiences that go beyond standard drinking water access questions. The goal is to get at the difficulties when there is a lack of water, such as not being able to wash the hands or to prepare food. What is special is that HWISE also asks about feelings and perceptions, such as worry, anger or shame. How often did you worry because there was no water? Or how often did you have to change your plans because of water

problems? How often didn't you have enough water to drink?

Why are these findings important?

Progress in access to drinking water is usually measured by provider side indicators like infrastructure or per capita availability. The HWISE findings go beyond this, to provide insights into user experiences. They show how water insecurity affects people's wellbeing – from diseases and mental health to general quality of life. On this basis, political measures can be developed to ensure equitable access to reliably flowing drinking water. HWISE does more than measure the flow of water; it measures how comprehensively the human right to water and sanitation is actually fulfilled. Helvetas will use HWISE as a strategic indicator to monitor the effectiveness of water and sanitation projects.

Can you give us an example?

In Nepal, Helvetas implements water connection on premises. HWISE surveys revealed that water insecurity declined from 21.7% to 1.3%. The scale showed the details: 71% of households reported specific worries about water problems. Since they have had their own tap, the figure has dropped to 15% after project intervention. This indicates an increased level of well-being – and that this is directly linked to the availability of water and our interventions.



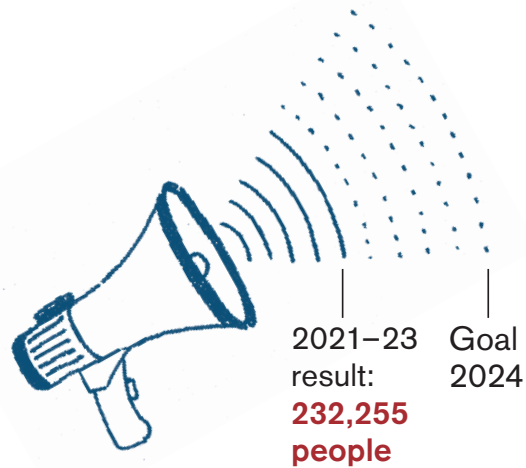
Madan Bhatta is Team Leader of the Integrated Water Resource Management Program with Helvetas Nepal.

FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND A COURAGEOUS MEDIA

Billions of people are born in countries where basic public services are not accessible to all. Economic circumstances force women and men to migrate to make a living. Millions of people are leaving their homes due to conflict, violence and climate change. With partner organizations, Helvetas helps to ensure that people can make their voices heard and live in safety.

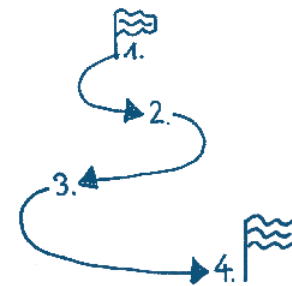
Our target for 2021–24:

500,000 people will have been empowered to raise their voice and claim their rights



Conflicts over land rights

More than 60% of all court cases in Mali involve land rights conflicts. Councils of elders make an important contribution to their prevention, but they put women, young people, and those who have migrated at a disadvantage. Financed by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, Helvetas has trained 240 “peace champions” to help resolve conflicts. 2,479 young people, 1,686 of whom are women, have now received written guarantees of land rights. And in 300 communities, those responsible for allocating land have been sensitized on how to avoid conflicts and to involve women.



Applying lessons learned

Advisory projects on safe migration show that migrant workers often do not take important information to heart. For example, almost half of Bangladeshis know that they should ask for a receipt for money transfers to middlemen. But because this could be interpreted as mistrust, only 1.4% of men and 2.6% of women actually ask for written receipts, which serve as proof in cases of a dispute. Using the Ranas approach, which seeks to initiate changes in behavior (and was developed by spin-off of Eawag, the aquatic research institute of ETH Zurich), Helvetas now encourages people wanting to migrate to draw up a personal plan for their departure. With this level of commitment, they are increasingly able to ask uncomfortable questions.

More about our working area Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion: helvetas.org/governance

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

“Mental and physical violence is terrible. I don’t want other women to have to experience what I went through.”

Vongphet Khamvongsa, 62,
Legal advisor, Laos



Domestic violence is widespread in Laos. Together with a local partner organization, Helvetas has trained 120 local legal advisors, most of whom are women who were affected by violence themselves, and has set up legal clinics staffed by female lawyers and students as volunteers. This gives women a point of contact and enables them to assert their rights. Village mediation committees are also being set up, and law students, the police, investigating magistrates and judges are being educated about women’s rights.

Extreme weather events force people to move to slums

The consequences of climate change are clearly visible in Bangladesh. With their livelihoods destroyed, many migrate to the nearest city to earn a living. Migration is therefore an adaptation measure to climate change and extreme weather events. In the past mostly men migrated, but recently women have also begun to leave in search of new livelihoods.

What impact does climate change have on migration?

We distinguish between gradual and sudden climate events. For example, there are slow-onset events such as slowly rising sea levels followed by the salination of groundwater and flooding of fields. In this case, men usually look for income opportunities in a city and return after a few months. We call this seasonal migration. Migration in this context is an adaptation measure to climate change. And then there are sudden extreme events like cyclones that lead to the displacement of thousands of people because their livelihoods have been destroyed. They often do not return home but try to live in the slums of large cities. What we observe is that people undertaking climate-induced migration usually don't cross borders because that requires resources. Those who have nothing or have lost everything stay in the country, but move to cities, usually into the slums.

Are women and men affected differently?

Women, youth and elderly people are all affected differently. Women staying behind often face hardship, additional burdens and social insecurity. And they bear the health risks of climate change. For example, often

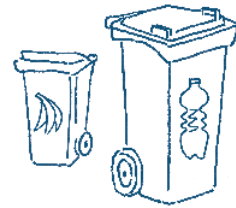
they are the last to drink or they consume salty water. When they migrate, they need to adapt to the new life without family support, sometimes experiencing domestic violence or sexual harassment.

What is Helvetas doing to support affected women?

Following the principle of “nothing about us, without us,” we encourage women to form groups – such as mother’s parliaments – to advocate for their rights: clean water, sanitary infrastructure, agricultural services, etc. They are so successful that younger people are now following their example and making their needs known to the relevant authorities. Women also receive training so that they can earn money to build a livelihood. We encourage them to overcome stereotypes and become drivers or motorcycle mechanics. This was frowned upon at first, but it is slowly gaining acceptance. Helvetas is also working with local administrations to improve the situation of the family members who have been left behind.



Tajmary Akter is Program Manager for Gender and Social Equity with Helvetas Bangladesh.



Inclusive urban development

The government of Tanzania requires municipalities to use 10% of their local revenues and supports them meet the specific concerns of women’s and youth groups and people with disabilities. Helvetas supports the city administration of Singida in central Tanzania in meeting with these groups to listen and respond to their concerns. The aim is to ensure that minorities participate in the planning of services. Even in the first few months, it became clear that affected people have a great deal of knowledge and experience. What they lacked until now was a framework and a space within which they could express themselves freely, where their voices could be heard, and where they could collaborate on turning their ideas and plans into reality. This is now changing.

CHALLENGE

Helvetas has always worked in fragile contexts where governments and authorities do not have the resources or the will to look after their own populations in the face of conflict and climate crises. And this is where most people live in extreme poverty. They have a right to fair opportunities and secure livelihoods. Thus, Helvetas remains a reliable partner in fragile countries. In order to be “fit for fragility,” all project staff worldwide are being trained in conflict sensitivity and security and risk management is being expanded.

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6,643

local governments and councils have been involving citizens more actively in their decision-making since 2023.

4,271
in Africa

2,287
in Asia and
Eastern Europe

85
in Latin America

A workshop on the public space for city councillors in Kosovo



Project with an impact

The dialogue between generations in **Kyrgyzstan** fosters self-confidence in young people and gives older people an understanding of young people’s concerns. Helvetas has developed teaching materials for this purpose, including modules for young people’s upcoming career choices. The result has been so positive that **Uzbekistan** has adopted the method, and a project team from **Sri Lanka** has visited **Kyrgyzstan** to see what the success of this project is based on.

Engaged citizens

Youth participation in **Nepal’s** political life is minimal. Helvetas and its project partners are therefore bringing together young people through “Youth Panels” in rural municipalities across two provinces. Panel members receive comprehensive education on the political system and opportunities for participation. This gives them the space to actively advocate for, and to contribute to, much-needed reforms, working closely with local government entities. Concurrently, local government representatives learn how to work with the Youth Panels and develop activities that benefit the entire population.



Media and civil society

As part of **Bhutan’s** democratic transition, Helvetas is supporting civil society to become more active and more politically involved. This includes promoting the media and training journalists, as free media constitutes an important pillar of a functioning democracy. Today, media professionals in Bhutan report more often on civil society organizations and their concerns. An article about the difficulties faced by small grassroots organizations was even awarded a media prize in 2023.

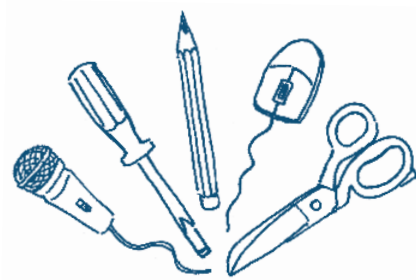
AN APP FOR COCOA AND CAREER COUNSELING

Everyone relies on a solid, basic education to learn a profession and on companies that offer jobs. But many children grow up in countries where the opportunities to attend school and then find work are slim. Together with partner organizations, Helvetas helps ensure that fair opportunities for education and work are not left to chance.

“The training awoke the champion in me and helped me see clearly what I want to do professionally.”

Aissa Dabré, food processor

Over the past few years, Helvetas has been able to support 22-year-old Aissa Dabré from Burkina Faso and 2,224 other young people in developing their very own life project. With the support of their families, communities, coaches, local service providers and role models, they created their own vision of their career – and 2,171 of them have successfully implemented it. The project will be expanded next year to help even more young people find a job, start a business and create jobs for others.



Pioneering career counseling

Since 2013, Helvetas has been promoting career counseling in Kosovo on behalf of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to make it easier for young people to choose and start a career. Kosovo’s career guidance system can now keep pace with international standards. This is possible thanks to many years of commitment, careful confidence-building and cooperation with government agencies, vocational schools and major companies. Over 12,000 vocational school students and over 39,000 ninth graders have since received support at 18 vocational guidance centers and can complete internships or apprenticeships in over 2,200 companies.

More about our working area Skills, Jobs and Income: helvetas.org/newperspectives

Our target for 2021–24:

320,000
women and men will have attended a vocational education and training



2021–23 result:
152,122 people

Goal 2024

Helvetas helps to achieve the following Agenda 2030 goals:

2 Zero hunger



4 Quality education



8 Decent work and economic growth



“As an entrepreneur, I would like to produce solar panels here in my city, in my very own factory!”

Fabiola Llanquipacha, 29,
self-employed solar panel installer,
Bolivia



Many young people in Bolivia are drawn to the cities. Young people seeking an education often live in poverty and need money to finance their education and living expenses. Many of them set up their own business, but 95% of these fail. With the support of Helvetas, authorities, universities, industry associations and companies from Sucre are creating better framework conditions, offering coaching and start-up advice to young entrepreneurs like Fabiola Llanquipacha. After each paid order, she installs another solar panel free of charge – where people need it the most.

458,548

people benefited in 2023 from the support for sustainable growth of micro and small enterprises across economic sectors.



Anita Chaudary, producer of banana-fiber paper, Nepal

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ALLEVIATING SUFFERING

VALUABLE PARTNERSHIPS AND FORGOTTEN CRISES

Whether due to earthquakes, the war in Ukraine, fragile contexts around the world, droughts, or hurricanes people's plight usually outlasts the attention they receive from the media. Donors and foundations have generously supported people in need in 2023. They helped thousands of people to start anew and rebuild their homes and livelihoods.

Legal residence status

More than seven million Venezuelans have left their home country in recent years due to the desperate political and economic situation. **Peru** is their second most chosen destination after Colombia. However, migrants entering the country are denied access to health services and education. Peru lowered the hurdles for residence permits for a short period in 2023. During this period, Helvetas supported single mothers in particular in obtaining legal papers so that they can live without fear and have better prospects of finding fairly paid jobs.



A forgotten crisis

Long-lasting crises fall out of the spotlight of international attention. Consider, for example, the situation of the Rohingya refugees in **Bangladesh**, for whom there are still no signs of a solution. The refugees have been dependent on support since 2017, and Helvetas is still active in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. On March 5, a fire broke out in a camp once again, and 12,000 people lost their few belongings. Volunteers trained by Helvetas were able to save lives and fight the fire. In addition, two destructive cyclones have hit Cox's Bazar in 2023. Here, too, Helvetas provided emergency aid for thousands of people.

Emergency aid, Year two

The heavy rains and subsequent floods in **Pakistan** in 2022 destroyed entire stretches of land and livelihoods. Little emergency aid reached the outlying regions due to washed-away roads and bridges. Together with partner organizations, Helvetas provided affected populations across the entire country with essential support such as food supplies, water filtration, blankets and warm clothes for the winter. With the destruction of agricultural land and irrigation systems, they also distributed vegetable and wheat seeds so that affected families could resume farming and reduce dependence on food aid. Since the floods, Helvetas has also commissioned the repair of 40 schools, provided access to clean drinking water for 445,000 people through water filters in community facilities, and delivered water supplies for 90,000 individuals with tanker trucks. Help is still needed even after the floods have receded, because a lack of support means that reconstruction will take years.

Helvetas helps to achieve the following Agenda 2030 goals:



More about our Humanitarian Response: helvetas.org/humanitarianresponse

CHALLENGE

Some 281 million migrants, refugees and forcibly displaced people worldwide live in a country other than the one of their birth – including many children and young people. They are poorly protected against exploitation, and they have no access to education. For them to develop their potential and become empowered, they need protection and access to schools and education. However, many countries, especially fragile ones, lack the resources to take care of migrant children and to integrate them into their national education system. This is where organizations such as Helvetas provide important support by working with ministries, local authorities, educational institutions, business associations and private companies to find solutions.



Cocoa without deforestation

Since June 2023, the EU has required imported forest products, including cocoa, to be deforestation-free. But how can small producers prove this? Helvetas is supporting the development of a digital solution in **Peru**. In future, everyone involved in the value chain will be able to enter the necessary information using their cell phone; buyers and consumers will be able to trace origins using a QR code. The related app provides producers with information on fair prices and forest-friendly production methods. This helps preserve forests.

Professional training in a fragile context

Unlike other Asian countries, **Myanmar's** economy has not recovered after the pandemic, due to the armed conflict and economic crisis resulting from the military seizure of power in 2021. In Rakhine State, home to the Rohingya ethnic minority, the unemployment rate is higher than anywhere else in the country. Helvetas promotes vocational training for the many internally displaced people here, as well as for young people and women. Despite the volatile situation, which is typical of a fragile context, more than 50 small and medium-sized enterprises are participating in the vocational training initiative because they need a skilled and motivated workforce.

“Education in emergencies is crucial for the future of children”

After the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan, thousands of people, many of them children, fled to Pakistan. Children have a right to education, and even in emergency situations, they must be able to go to school.

In emergency situations immediate focus is on providing essential humanitarian support such as shelter, food and healthcare. Education seems to be neglected. Why? Education is considered a secondary concern that requires stability and longer-term planning. There are challenges in providing education to refugees, such as language barriers, a lack of infrastructure and qualified teachers. Armed conflicts and political instability further complicate efforts. As a result, long-term investments in education are often overlooked in favor of immediate relief efforts.

Why is education in emergencies so important?

Education in emergencies is crucial for the future of refugee and migrant children. It provides stability, protection from risks such as child labor and early marriage, and it allows children to develop skills for their future. Education also contributes to the overall recovery of affected families and communities. By ensuring access to education during emergencies, Helvetas and its partners can safeguard the well-being and development of children and youth.

What can be done to secure education in emergencies?

First, there should be an immediate assessment of the educational backgrounds and needs of refugee and migrant children. This includes understanding the differences in curricula and languages. Based on the assessment, catch-up curricula and language courses can be developed to bridge the learning gaps. Collaboration with local authorities is vital to address capacity gaps in the educational sector of the host country. This often involves having to increase the capacities of the local education system to accommodate refugee children and provide training for teachers. Establishing temporary learning spaces in displacement camps or damaged schools can also create a safe learning environment. Providing educational materials and psychosocial support is necessary for the continuity of education. By prioritizing and securing education in emergencies, we can provide the building blocks for a brighter future for affected children.



Asad Salim is National Program Officer for Helvetas Pakistan.

CHALLENGE

What should we do when humanitarian aid suddenly has to be provided, but Helvetas is not on site? Helvetas was faced with this question on September 8, 2023, when the 6.8-magnitude earthquake in Morocco afflicted thousands of people, causing enormous damage. Over 2,000 people lost their lives and at least as many were injured, some of them seriously. Thanks to the proven cooperation in the Alliance2015, Helvetas was able to provide emergency aid quickly through its French partner Acted.



Planning ahead

The escalation of conflict in the Middle East is also changing Helvetas’ work in the region. To be prepared, Helvetas has been looking for, and talking with potential partner organizations since autumn, for example in southern **Lebanon**, so that it can launch humanitarian projects quickly if the conflict spreads. As always, in fragile contexts, it is important to navigate the political situation carefully and to be able to act credibly as an independent humanitarian organization.



Alleviating the effects of war

With the end of the fighting in Tigray in northern **Ethiopia**, organizations like Helvetas are finally able to once more provide emergency aid in this war-torn region. The short-term goal is to improve the food and income situation with emergency aid. Agricultural aid includes seeds for vegetables and grains as well as goats and sheep for breeding. Farming families and cooperatives are being strengthened so that they can once again provide for themselves. Support for women’s savings groups also helps to foster social cohesion.

“Ever since the war started, I have not been feeling secure anymore in my home city. I visit the collective heating point to warm up and charge my phone.”

Olesya Semenenko from Kharkiv, Ukraine

Thanks to donations from the Swiss population and funds from Swiss Solidarity, Helvetas has created places in Ukraine where people can warm up in winter and charge their electronic devices. Together with partner organizations, Helvetas is also supporting small and medium-sized enterprises to adapt their products and services to the war situation. Craftspeople can borrow tools from repair hubs and a “repair ambulance” is on the road almost daily to deal with emergencies and make initial repairs to newly damaged homes.



BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN MOLDOVA

Helvetas and our partners are working with local communities to identify, prioritize and mitigate the social, economic and environmental risks that already exist and are exacerbated by the war in neighboring Ukraine.

Bordering the Transnistria region and Ukraine, Ștefan Vodă, a district in the southeast of Moldova, is at high risk of conflict, food and economic insecurity, extreme weather and other disasters. Since Russia's war of aggression began in Ukraine in February 2022, more than one million Ukrainian refugees have fled to Moldova, making places like Palanca Village a hotspot in the Ukraine displacement crisis. The refugee influx to Palanca Village stressed local infrastructure, creating social and healthcare service access difficulties for more than 63,000 residents. As of April 2023, 31% of households in Ștefan Vodă reported having experienced increased difficulties accessing basic services.

In addition to the challenges of managing so many new arrivals, several hazards exist and are exacerbated by the war. These include possible poisoning and contamination from accidental ammonia leaks due to the proximity to Odessa, flooding, snowstorms, widespread fires, conflict spillover, and the scarcity of basic goods – all ongoing risks that have to be managed.

Preparing a community-level emergency response

Emergency response capabilities currently exist in Ștefan Vodă, but there have been no concerted efforts to enact preparedness measures at the community level.



Disaster preparedness activities are ongoing in the Building Resilient Communities project in Ștefan Vodă.

“As vulnerabilities among Ukrainian refugees and hosting households in Moldova compound and the conflict in Ukraine becomes protracted, Helvetas' Emergency Response Team is helping build the resilience of Moldovan communities in Ștefan Vodă Rayon,” said Hector Vivero, the Emergency Response Representative for Helvetas Moldova. “By helping these communities identify, prioritize, and mitigate social, economic, and environmental risks using an all-hazard approach, the project will strengthen localities across Ștefan Vodă through concrete risk management actions that can be championed at the local level.” These actions include an assessment of all hazards and risks present in communities, followed by a ranking of these hazards and vulnerabilities and the

development of proposals to address them. Emergency preparedness plans and early warning systems will also be created and will identify responsible entities, specific actions to take to reduce risks, and emergency response procedures.

This is the first United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance prime award for Helvetas, and the second USAID prime award in our portfolio (joining the ongoing USAID/Bangladesh Shamortha Plus Activity).

This project is made possible by the generous support of the American people through USAID. This text is the responsibility of Helvetas and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

INNOVATIONS WITH POTENTIAL

Innovation can be very diverse: a technology, a new type of service or a product, such as a trail bridge. While the latter are now commonplace in Nepal, they are still considered new and innovative in Ethiopia. Helvetas promotes innovation in a targeted manner, on- and offline, with financial resources and know-how.

Experience has shown that innovations come about when people from different walks of life and with diverse experiences and backgrounds can intensively exchange ideas to find solutions to complex problems and challenges. This is the case at Helvetas, which specifically encourages this. Ideas can be submitted by employees, project teams or country teams to the Helvetas “Innovation Challenge.” The winner receives financial and technical support to implement the innovation and scale it so that other projects and countries can benefit from it.

One winning idea was **#DevPolHack**, a platform through which advocacy experts from various countries who work in different teams can find solutions to a real challenge, similar to a hackathon. At the end, the best pitch and the best idea wins. Over the past two years, the organizers have developed a “toolbox” so that experts outside Helvetas can also use the hackathon method for advocacy challenges, on- and offline.

Another winning idea is the **Tuji Chatbot**, which helps young people in Tanzania choose their career. It helps them to think about their future career options, which reduces their school drop-out rate. They can use the chatbot, which currently runs on WhatsApp and Facebook,



The Tuji Chatbot helps young Tanzanians to choose a career. They can also use it to acquire financial knowledge and strengthen their social skills.

to acquire financial knowledge, and it also provides course modules on social skills. A third example comes from Guatemala, where the Helvetas team is adapting the internationally recognized Ranas method (p. 22) to improve equality for women. The Ranas method encourages changes in behavior. Helvetas Guatemala is adapting it so that men and women share domestic tasks more equally. This will give women more time to participate in society.

Innovations demand time and resources, and Helvetas has set up a fund to help finance their

development. Solutions and challenges can be discussed online across the organization within our newly created innovation incubator. The aim is to actively exchange knowledge and learn together, across all borders.

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 IS MAKING HOPE GROW BETWEEN THE BELL PEPPERS?

In Tanzania, 800,000 young people enter the labor market every year. To keep young people out of dangerous, poorly paid odd-jobs, some 3,600 unemployed or disadvantaged young people, including those without a diploma, are currently receiving hands-on vocational training. Available courses range from catering and construction trades to cosmetics and agricultural training. The trainees are supported until they have found a properly paid job or have successfully set up their own small business.

PARTNERSHIPS FLOURISH DESPITE CHALLENGING YEAR

Helvetas USA continues to build new relationships each year and expand existing ones, raising almost \$13 million in 2023 – 30% more than in 2022 – from our generous funding partners. The financials of our affiliate organization are incorporated into Helvetas’ financial overview on these pages and shared in detail on page 38.

Significant investments in humanitarian aid

In 2023, Helvetas’ global finances saw a drop in donation income, but there were investments in strategically important areas, such as the continued expansion of humanitarian aid. This resulted in our first-ever collaboration with the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance. Helvetas’ global operations closed the year 2023 with a smaller loss than in 2022, which it will impute to the organizational capital.

2023 was also characterized by the debate over the financing of Ukraine’s reconstruction at the expense of international development projects, which impairs long-term planning, jeopardizes the reliability of NGOs as partners in development cooperation, and threatens the fight against poverty. Helvetas is committed to ensuring that reconstruction in Ukraine is financed separately from development cooperation.

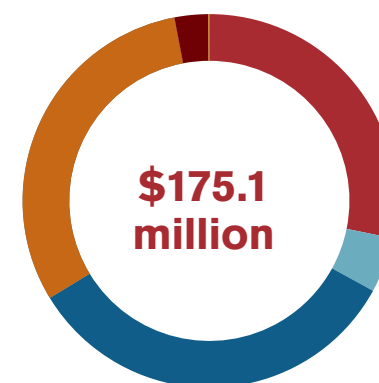
Financial audit

KPMG audited Helvetas’ Switzerland accounts and financial statements and approved these on May 25, 2024, in Swiss Francs. The consolidated numbers are shown in USD (exchange rate 2022 CHF 1 = USD 1.08, 2023 CHF 1 = 1.11 USD). Mullins PC audited and approved Helvetas USA’s accounts and financial statements on March 4, 2024. This audit report and the 2023 Form 990 can be downloaded at helvetasusa.org

HELVETAS’ GLOBAL BALANCE SHEET

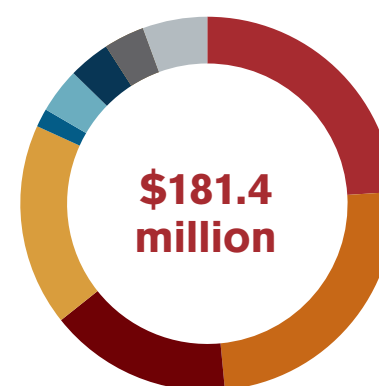
ASSETS	31.12.2023 USD	31.12.2022 USD
Cash and cash equivalents	68,538,775	59,059,315
Marketable securities	20,830,914	19,631,956
Receivables	6,525,128	6,422,407
Net assets in project countries	14,811,615	15,215,544
Prepayments and accrued income	17,350,312	18,587,188
Current assets	128,056,744	118,916,410
Investments in financial assets	5,551	2,172,455
Tangible fixed assets	348,720	499,094
Intangible assets	1,175,615	1,467,142
Fixed assets	1,529,886	4,138,691
Assets	129,586,630	123,055,101
LIABILITIES		
Short-term accounts payable	5,475,445	7,100,747
Accrued liabilities	78,558,465	64,863,027
Short-term provisions	47,038	1,242,937
Short-term liabilities	84,080,948	73,206,711
Long-term provisions	564,979	432,189
Long-term liabilities	564,979	432,189
Liabilities	84,645,927	73,638,900
Restricted fund capital	13,290,312	16,640,817
Liabilities incl. fund capital	97,936,239	90,279,717
Elaborated unrestricted capital	13,214,192	12,686
Foreign currency effects	-147,381	-78,785
Elaborated restricted capital	18,583,580	18,686,310
Organizational capital	31,650,391	32,775,383
Liabilities	129,586,630	123,055,101

SOURCE OF FUNDS



- Income from fundraising 27.4%
- Program contribution SDC 5.1%
- Mandates SDC 36.0%
- Project funding from organizations 28.5%
- Income from advisory services 2.9%
- Other operating income 0.1%

USE OF FUNDS



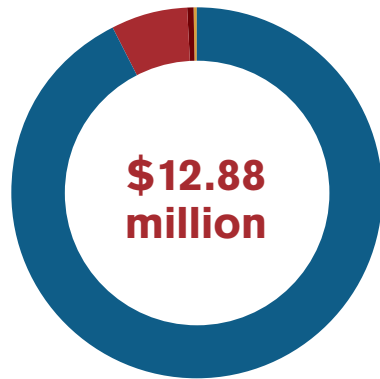
- Africa 27.6%
- Asia 20.9%
- Latin America and Caribbean 11.9%
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia 20.4%
- Program coordination and support 2.1%
- Expenditure on advisory services 3.9%
- Expenditure on projects Switzerland 3.6%
- Expenditure Head Office 3.9%
- Expenditure Fundraising 5.7%

HELVETAS’ GLOBAL STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

INCOME	2023 USD	2022 USD
Membership fees	2,139,311	2,904,279
Donation from the public	44,154,266	44,651,364
Legacies	1,663,147	3,234,732
Income from fundraising	47,956,724	50,790,375
Program contribution SDC	8,849,636	8,646,517
Mandates SDC	63,110,676	59,494,333
Project funding from organizations	49,972,188	56,636,032
Income from advisory services	5,075,150	5,185,942
Other operating income	178,041	261,138
Income from services provided	127,185,692	130,223,962
Income	175,142,416	181,014,337
EXPENDITURE		
Africa	-49,982,697	-40,616,319
Asia	-37,868,181	-43,130,809
Latin America and Caribbean	-21,514,673	-26,850,962
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	-36,950,281	-29,934,586
Program coordination and support	-3,917,740	-2,934,086
Expenditure on international programs	-150,233,571	-143,466,762
Expenditure on advisory services	-7,067,605	-6,587,710
Expenditure on projects in Switzerland	-6,569,325	-6,095,846
Head Office	-7,205,170	-5,929,852
Fundraising	-10,319,327	-9,794,476
Head Office and fundraising	-17,524,497	-15,724,328
Expenditure from services delivered	-181,394,997	-171,874,646
Operating profit/loss	-6,252,582	9,139,691
Financial result	628,909	-3,187,749
Other result	54,067	-3,112,444
Result before change in funds capital	-5,569,606	2,839,498
Change in funds capital	3,741,421	-5,940,939
Annual result before allocation to organizational capital	-1,828,185	-3,101,441
Allocations/utilizations		
Free capital	-1,286,489	-584,155
Strategy Acceleration fund	-541,696	-124,287
Social fund	0	-2,393,000

HELVETAS USA FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

SOURCE OF FUNDS



- Foundation Contributions and Grants
- Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
- Individual and Board Member Contributions
- Other Income

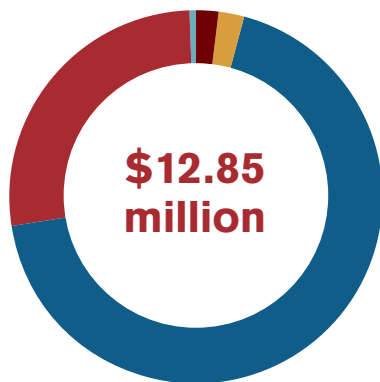
HELVETAS USA STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

SUPPORT AND REVENUES	2023 in USD	2022 in USD
Foundation Contributions and Grants	11,925,519	9,354,866
Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation	877,713	504,799
Individual and Board Member Contributions	60,867	44,957
Other Income	12,875	2,076
Total Support	12,876,974	9,906,698

EXPENSES	2023 in USD	2022 in USD
Program Services	12,312,471	9,421,883
Supporting Services	270,948	226,162
Fundraising	267,387	194,532
Total Expense	12,850,806	9,842,577

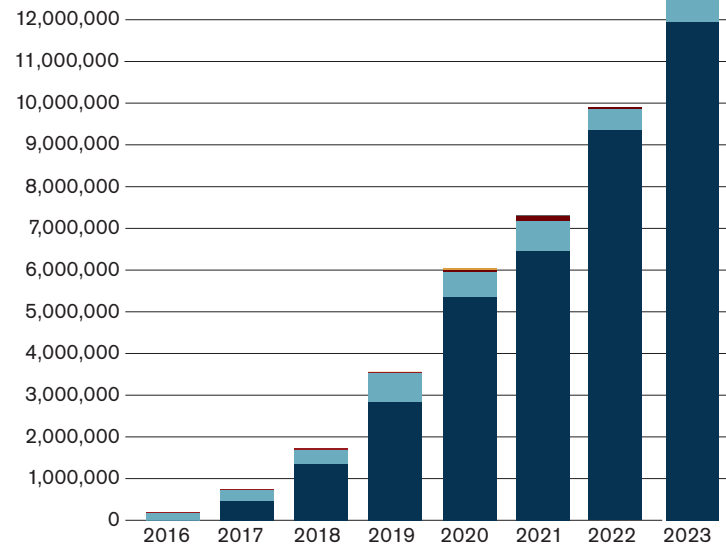
Change in Net assets	26,168	64,121
Net assets, Beginning of Year	543,879	479,759
Net assets, End of Year	570,047	543,879

USE OF FUNDS



- Africa 68.3%
- Asia 27%
- Supporting Services 2.1%
- Fundraising 2.1%
- US 0.5%

SUPPORT GROWTH




- Foundation Contributions and Grants
- Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
- Individual and Board Member Contributions
- Other Income


PURPOSE-DRIVEN RELATIONSHIPS

Helvetas is a politically and denominationally neutral association, supported by over 97,000 members, benefactors and donors as well as regional volunteer groups. Helvetas USA Board members lead the U.S. affiliate through their invaluable oversight and advisement.


OFFICERS




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Chairperson, Executive Director of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation




Avery Bang
Vice-Chair, Senior Principal, Mulago Foundation



Stefan Stolle
Secretary, Head Communications and Fundraising and Member of the Management Board of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation




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Mark Way
Former Head of Sustainability Underwriting, Zurich North America

BROADENING UNDERSTANDING OF WATER INSECURITY IN INSTITUTIONS

In 2023, Helvetas USA made its first grants to two U.S. universities to support and drive research on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in schools and healthcare facilities.

The Household Water Insecurity Experiences (HWISE) scales developed by Northwestern University and piloted by Helvetas in Nepal have proven to be a useful tool for broadening our understanding of individuals' feelings and perceptions about their water access. These scales are now integrated as a measurement tool for water programs in Helvetas' partner countries and have been adopted by some of our partner organizations.

But how can these scales provide a more comprehensive look at a community's WASH access? There are numerous non-household settings – such as schools and healthcare facilities – where WASH impacts the health, well-being, education, productivity and livelihoods of populations. These settings serve many individuals who are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of poor WASH services, including schoolchildren and immunocompromised individuals seeking care at health facilities.

Despite the importance of the adequacy of WASH services in non-household settings, access in these spaces is far less systematically tracked than it is in households. This knowledge gap presents substantial challenges for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6, to “ensure access to water and sanitation for all.”

Building upon the HWISE work funded through grants from Helvetas USA, Northwestern University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have now developed the Institutional WISE scales, a version of the scales for non-household settings. The institutional-level WASH data that will be gathered has several valuable uses. First, it can pinpoint which populations are most acutely impacted by poor WASH access. Second, the data can identify determinants of health and well-being that have traditionally been overlooked. Third, the findings can be used by local authorities, health and education ministries at regional and national levels, local civil society organizations and local research institutes to inform the development of more



A student washes her hands at a Blue School in Benin.

effective policies and interventions within and outside the WASH sector. Finally, the scales can provide compelling evidence to increase investments for WASH services.

This new measurement tool will serve as an important resource across Helvetas' water programming in healthcare facilities and schools – in particular, we plan to integrate it into our “Blue Schools” approach, which focuses on students' access to clean water and functional and well-maintained latrines. In Blue Schools, students also learn why hygiene is important and become ambassadors of good practices in their families.

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, Fribourg, Schaffhausen, Ticino, Valais, Zurich, Republic and Canton of Geneva
Gemeinsame Entwicklungszusammenarbeit Adliswil (Protestant congregation of Sihltal, Roman Catholic congregation and City of Adliswil), Baar, Geneva, Muri b. Bern, Münsingen, Rapperswil-Jona, Riehen, Vevey, Zollikon, Zurich

Foundations, associations and other NPOs

Albert Jenny Stiftung
Alfred Richterich Stiftung
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CHARISMA Stiftung für nachhaltige Entwicklung
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Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz
Fondation SMARTPEACE
Fondazione Vidar Suisse
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 Symphysis
Georg Fischer Clean Water Foundation
Gruppe Sursee und die Welt
Happel Foundation
Hermann Foundation
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Laguna Foundation
Laudes Foundation
LED, Liechtenstein Development Service
Leopold Bachmann Stiftung
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CESVI – cooperazione e sviluppo
CIAT, International Center for Tropical Agriculture
cinfo, Center for Information, Counselling and Training for Professions relating to International Cooperation
CRS, Catholic Relief Services
DAI Global UK Ltd
DANIDA, Danish International Development Agency
Dar es Salaam University College of Education
Eawag
EBP Switzerland Ltd.
ECHO, EU
Enabel, Belgian Development Agency
ETH Zurich
EuropeAid, EU
FAO, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
Farmahem Dooel
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office – GOV.UK
German Federal Foreign Office
GIZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH

“Partnering with Helvetas means the certainty of supporting an impactful project, contributing to change and a constant, transparent dialogue with the teams on the ground.”

Marjorie Beltranda, Philanthropy Manager, L'Occitane Foundation

L'OCCITANE Foundation
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WIR TEILEN: Fastenopfer Liechtenstein

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SIGE, Service Intercommunal de Gestion
Swan Analytische Instrumente AG
Technische Betriebe Flawil
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Other Funding Agencies and Clients

Acted
ADA, Austrian Development Agency
AECID, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo
Aequilibrium Consulting GmbH
AFD, Agence française de développement
AICS, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
Ayuda en Acción
BMZ, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Government of Nepal
Humanity International
IDB, Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD, International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFOAM, Organics International
ILO, International Labour Organisation
Institute of Development Studies (IDS)
INTEGRATION Consulting Group
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IOM, International Organization for Migration
ISW, International Secretariat for Water
Itad Limited, Great Britain
KEK-CDC AG
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LIFT Livelihoods & Food Security Fund UNOPS
Lindt Cocoa Foundation
Mercy Corps Europe
Municipalidades San Pedro
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

THANK YOU

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Norwegian Trust Fund
OCHA, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP)
PATRIP Foundation
People in Need
Pestalozzi Children's Foundation
Plan Binacional de Desarrollo de la Region Fronteriza Peru – Ecuador
Reismühle Nutrex
RESET Plus Innovation Fund, Ethiopia
SECO, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SIDA, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
Skat Consulting Ltd.
SNV, Netherlands Development Organisation
Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa
Swiss Solidarity
Swiss Water & Sanitation Consortium
Swiss Water Partnership
Swisscontact
TTU, Tanzania Teachers' Union
UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP, UN Development Programme
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
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, HIVOS, 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
CGAP, Consultative Group to Support the Poor
Civicus
CLEAR Centers Anglophone Africa and Francophone Africa
Conflict Sensitivity Community Hub

We value our long-standing, trusted partnership with Helvetas in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly because of their professionalism and focus on systemic change in the area of sustainable food systems.

Andreas Sicks, CEO, Liechtenstein Development Service (LED)

DCED, Donor committee on enterprise development
DDLGN, Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance Network
ECEAT, European Centre for Eco Agro Tourism
fairjourney
Fastenaktion
FiBL, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
FoBBIZ, Swiss Forum for Skills Development and International Cooperation
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
HEKS/EPER, Swiss Church Aid

ICON-INSTITUTE Consulting Group
iGravity
Institute of Development Studies
ISEAL
IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature
Klimaallianz Schweiz
KOFF, The Swiss platform for peacebuilding
LOGIN Asia
Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Institute of Business and Regional Economics
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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
Réseau
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, Swiss Evaluation Society
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
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The list includes institutional donors and clients (from \$5,550 upwards) as well as partners.

“Since we have been able to draw clean water from the well, I no longer have a stomachache. It's clear why I used to get sick.”

Wassila Woroumounou, 22, Benin

In **2023**, Helvetas has received generous donations and bequests adding up to

almost **\$48 million** and provided services totaling **\$125 million**.

This allowed **1,484** committed Helvetas staff and about **1,100** partner

organizations worldwide to support **2.8 million** women and **3 million** men in

35 countries to forge a life without poverty.



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